Songs, Music and Storytelling

Songs

The Algonquin Water Song, also known as the Nibi Song, is a traditional song deeply connected to the Indigenous Algonquin people of Canada and their reverence for water. The lyrics, primarily in the Algonquin language (Nishnaabemowin), translate to a powerful message: "Water is the lifeblood of our Mother Earth, and water is the lifeblood of our own bodies". It is a song of gratitude, respect, and a call to protect water as a vital resource.

Phonetic Lyrics:

Nee bee wah bow

En die en

Aah key mis kquee

Nee bee wah bow

Hey ya hey ya hey ya hey

Hey ya hey ya hey ya ho

“We sing this song like a lullaby. The song means the water is the life's blood of our mother the earth. Water is the life's blood of our own bodies” — Grandma Nancy

https://www.youtube.com/embed/KC2FHciQ0sU

Here's a breakdown of the song's significance and meaning:

- **Spiritual Connection:** The song emphasizes the sacredness of water in Algonquin culture, viewing it as a living entity and the source of all life.

- **Lifeblood of Mother Earth:** The lyrics highlight the essential role water plays in sustaining the planet, recognizing it as the foundation of all ecosystems.
- **Lifeblood of Humanity:** The song also acknowledges water's crucial role in human life, emphasizing its importance for physical and spiritual well-being.
- **Call to Action:** The Water Song is not just a song of praise but also a call to action, urging listeners to protect water resources and be mindful of their relationship with water.
- **Grandmother Nancy Andry:** The song is associated with Grandma Nancy Andry, who is known for her work in promoting water awareness and protection.
- **Singing for Water:** The tradition involves singing the song, often four times, facing the four cardinal directions (east, south, west, north), as a way to connect with and honor water.
- **Symbolic Representation:** In some traditions, women are seen as the keepers of water, while men are the keepers of fire, highlighting a balanced and complementary relationship with nature.

The Algonquin Water Song serves as a reminder of the interconnectedness of all things and the importance of respecting and protecting the natural world, particularly water.

The Climate Choir Movement have songs to learn and a growing number of choirs around the UK that you could connect with.

Other suggestions:

Backwater Blues - Bessie Smith

The River is Flowing - Native American song

The River - kids song

When the Levee Breaks – Led Zeppelin

'Old Macdonald'

Possible rewording of 'Old Macdonald had a farm for children with actions

This old river's full of life
Ee eye ee eye oh
And in its care it has some fish
Ee eye ee eye oh
With a splash splash here and a splash there, here a splash, there a splash, everywhere a splash splash
This old river's full of life
EE eye ee eye oh

beaver-dive/ kingfisher-zoom/ frog-croak etc

Accompanied with handouts for adults about the actual state of our rivers and seas.

You can find more songs here.

Music & Storytelling

- Song of the Thames (YouTube 29min) by Sam Lee - singer and song collector.
- Traditional Native Storytelling - Salmon Boy (YouTube 12min) with Roger Fernandes.
- The Lost Words Blessing - (YouTube 4min) a song created from Robert Macfarlane's book The Lost Words.
- Collect stories.
- Water Stories for Children - You can find a selection of water stories for children here and the beautiful Water Princess here.
