

Hello ladies,

I'm sure, like me, that you're starting to fret about this long period during which we aren't able to do all the things we used to when they involve other people. Your houses and gardens are as spick and span as you can bring yourself to make them and you've started, and put down, more books and projects than you ever thought you could. Communicate, they say, with friends and family, but what do you say when you haven't done anything different today from yesterday?

So I have tried to think of something just a bit different to help us all keep our spirits up, even as we face such an uncertain future.

The countryside round Collingham is full of the sound of larks. That got me thinking about poetry and I looked up Shelley's To a skylark - you're all, naturally, familiar with 'hail to thee blythe spirit. . . ' However, this goes on interminably in very fancy language, so I didn't think it would help so I found this instead - much shorter and a better reflection of how we might react to the natural world. I know I did today, watching house martins and swallows swooping after invisible insects and have done to the larks singing above our fields.

The skylark by Christina Rossetti

The earth was green, the sky was blue:
I saw and heard one sunny morn,
A skylark hang between the two,
A singing speck above the corn.

A stage below, in gay accord,
White butterflies danced on the wing,
And still the singing skylark soared,
And silent sank and soared to sing.

The cornfield stretched a tender green
To right and left beside my walks;
I knew a nest he had unseen
Somewhere among the million stalks.

And as I paused to hear his song,
While swift the sunny moments slid,
Perhaps his mate sat listening long,
And listened longer than I did.

Take care and stay safe. Remember to contact any of us or Village Care if you need any assistance whatsoever, Chris