

Dawn Chorus

By Sasha Dugdale

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Every morning since the time changed
I have woken to the dawn chorus
And even before it sounded, I dreamed of it
Loud, unbelievably loud, shameless, raucous

And once I rose and twitched the curtains apart
Expecting the birds to be pressing in fright
Against the pane like passengers
But the garden was empty and it was night

Not a slither of light at the horizon
Still the birds were bawling through the mists
Terrible, invisible
A million small evangelists

How they sing: as if each had pecked up a smoldering coal
Their throats singed and swollen with song
In dissonance as befits the dark world
Where only travelers and the sleepless belong

Notes:

The epigraph of this poem was originally omitted in the changeover to the new website. Because of this, reciting the epigraph is optional for the 2019-2020 Poetry Out Loud season.

Source: *Poetry* (May 2011)



Poet, playwright, and translator Sasha Dugdale was born in Sussex, England. She has worked as a consultant for theater companies in addition to writing her own plays. From 1995 to 2000, she worked for the British Council in Russia. She is author of the poetry collections *The Estate* (2007), *Notebook* (2003), and *Red House* (2011) and has translated Russian poetry and drama, including Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*.

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