



No Birds Land

sound poem by Tamsin Grainger

This is the Trinity Tunnel
You are entering No Birds Land

What can you hear he he he hear hear hear hear. What? What can you, what can you hear? hear hear hear. What? Here in the tunnel you can hear, hear what? What here?

This is No Birds Land

Feather and feather, as the fairly weather, fair weather, and feather flight. Of feather flight. Flight of feather, and whether, the birds land I know not not not. Do you know? Do they? I wonder, do they fly, flight, fly with feather, on the wing, wiiiiing? Do they swim? Swim or fly, they fly, they hatch, they nest, they search and search and then they fly, they fly and then they fly happily in the clear air. The curlew's ecstatic call, it's ecstatic call. Can you hear it, can you hear it? Are there birds here? Are they?

If birds were here.. He he he, here happily, if birds were here, if they landed here, landed quietly, on land quietly, if they landed here what would happen to them? Would they feed safely, would they feed and sleep comfortably, would they? There's nowhere to land.

Ca ca ca ca cacaca Can they land, here? They cannot, not not. Not land here. If birds could sing here, hear the birds calling a cacaca, caw caw, cawl, would you recognise them? Caw caw caw cooooo. Caw. Coo. Cuckoo. Curl-yo-o. Would you, would you know them if you saw them? If you knew them would you see them? Could you tell? Claaaaou. Caw caw, could you hear them if they sang? Sang here. he he he

“One my land, Two I land, Three they land, Three they land, Three they land, Two land, two land, One they land

Versed, verbal, vocal, they are versified diversified well-versed in how to find food, their voices are varied, varied voices, languages we barely decipher, notes so fast our ears can't hear them, wonder of variety and



variation, of sound and volume and tone, sweet szwit szwit szwit szwit
melody, of rhythm, Ra-a-a-at-t-t-tle. Ra-a-a-at-t-t-tle.

Speed and wondrous variation. Variation. Wondrous to hear, spell-
binding to hear. Can you hear? Sweet szwit szwit szwit szwit melody.
Hear hear. Will you listen, listen to them?

Is the air clear, is it clear? It was before, it was then wasn't it, wasn't it
clear? Clear click cry creyeyeyeye. Click cr-y, ayayay, crayayayay. Do
they cry? I cry, sometimes I cry, to think, to think that they have nowhere
to go, nowhere to come back to, nowhere to land on. Where to sleep?
Where
to serenade? And to call, to chirp. Where to chirp? When they call ca ca
ca call call call chirp.

Will you listen? AWaaa awaaa awaawaawaa waa-oo waa-oo.

Extinct. Tk tk tk tk. Exterminated, extra smooth surfaces, extra cold, it is
cold it is dark - no light no light no light. They are extinct, they are
disappearing, are they extinct, some say extinct, are disappearing,
extinct are they, so disappearing, they are extinct, are they?
Disappearing? Yes. This is so. Because.

Because

New buildings. Glass buildings, smart glass buildings made of glass,
they are made of glass. Do you not see? They do not see. They fly fly fly
and crash, in flight fly they crash.

And. Hedgerows. Hedgerows are being grubbed, grubbed up. They
grub, they grub and grub grubbing, they grub up hedgerows to make
bigger fields. They move their fences move they do, do move their
fences outwards. And outwards. They move so the birds can't hide.

Tic tic tic tic tic

Tic tic tic tic tic

Tweet tweet twitter. Tweet that there are no birds here, tweet this, that
they don't land here. Cheep cheep no tic tic tic tic tic.



In the 2 minutes it takes you to walk through this tunnel, 2 pairs of breeding birds will have disappeared (source: Birdlife.org)

No birds land here, no birds here, no birds here. You can't hear the birds, here. Where are they? Where are, where are, where? Where are the birds, to hear. Not here, are they? Then, then, then, then, where to listen to the birds? Where do you go? Where where wh wh wh wh wh where do they live then if they can't live here. Are they alive here? Alive are they?

Or, are they dead?

When you get back in the open air, take a deep breath and

Stop! Listen to the birds

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<https://www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia/news/uk-has-lost-44-million-birds-1966#:~:text=Experts%20say%20breeding%20birds%20have,of%20one%20pair%20every%20minute>

The sound poem was inspired by Gertrude Stein's *If I Told Him: A Completed Portrait of Picasso* (1912) and the quotes are by Stein and Gail Simmonds' in *The Country of Larks*