



Songs for the Orchard

'When You Are Gone'

These words were written to fit the beautiful, slow tune 'Leaving Whiby' by Helen Bell. A reaction to the news and research reports that represent a climate crisis and appalling consequences for many people, right now; a lament to what may be lost; a call to action...

When you are gone and the warm wind blows through branches bare,
Then I will weep, looking back, grieving , chances lost to show we care.

The life gone, heat rising, fires burning, razing all, crops and homes destroyed.
Storms and floods sweeping all away. "Too late?" they cry. "Is it too late?"
Is it too late?

Singing suggestion (to help the words fit!)

A)

When yo-ou ar-are gone
And the wa-rm wind blows thro-ough branches ba-re,
The-n I-i will we-ep, lo-o-ki-ng back,
Grieving, cha-an-ces lost
To-o sho-ow we care.

B)

The li-fe gone, he-eat rising,
Fi-res burning, ra-azing all,
Crops and homes destroy-ed.
Sto-orms and floods
Sweeping all a-w-ay
"To-o late?" they cry
"Is it too late?"
Is i-it too late?

Tune: 'Leaving Whitby' Helen Bell.

Words © Phil Heasman

Suggested format:

‘Leaving Whitby’:

- A1 instrumental / A2 sing first part
- B1 sing second part / B2 instrumental (or vice versa?)
- Instrumental A and B straight through without repeats

Just a couple of sobering reports and references – relating to Europe:

Current wildfire situation in Europe

230,049 ha burnt since the beginning of the year. Last year in the same period the area burnt was 106,587 ha.

1,203 fires detected since the beginning of the year. Last year in the same period the number of fires was 783.

https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/projects-and-activities/natural-and-man-made-hazards/fires/current-wildfire-situation-europe_en (accessed 15/07/2025)

Extreme weather: floods, droughts and heatwaves

That Europe is the fastest-warming continent in the world is becoming increasingly perceptible. [The year 2024](#) was the hottest on record, both in Europe and globally.

<https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/extreme-weather-floods-droughts-and-heatwaves> (accessed 16/07/2025)

Climate change is worsening floods, droughts and is reducing water quality, posing an increasing threat to our health, according to an EEA report.

Already today, one in eight Europeans lives in areas potentially prone to river floods and around 30% of people in southern Europe face permanent water stress.

Phil Heasman

July 2025 (for the COREchestra)

