

I AM NEVER ALONE

1st May 2020

This poem by **Marian Jervis née Campbell (1802-1861)** #2766 on the web family tree was published in a collection titled '**Gleanings. Poems.**' in 1840.

It seems particularly pertinent at this time of lockdown when, constrained, we all thirst for more of the natural world around us.

Marian lived during the reigns of **George III, George IV, William IV and Victoria**. Throughout the collection, there are many references to the traditional poetic language of plants and flowers known as Florigraphy; the coded significance of flowers in the 19th century culture which enabled ladies to express what they could not say in words. In 1853 she published the partly translated 'Tales of the Boyhood of Great Painters' and in 1854 'Painting and Celebrated Painters Ancient and Modern' in two volumes copies of which are in the Trust library. Marian's son, **Col. Henry Jervis-White-Jervis (1825-1881)** #183 married **Lucy (1828-1916)** #115 eldest daughter of **John Chevallier Cobbold (1797-1881)** #114 in 1855.

Many of the poems in 'Gleanings' have been illustrated by her three times great granddaughter, **Victoria Parker-Jervis (born 1963)** #8700. Victoria was born in Suffolk and grew up in the village of Rendham near Saxmundham. It was at Felstead School that an exceptional art teacher, **Trevor Goodman** really taught her to paint and at the Chelsea School of Art that she obtained her degree. She is fascinated by the Topography of Suffolk; the bleakness of its landscape in winter and the colourfulness of its coastal towns in summer. Exactly this is illustrated by her painting, shown here, of Aldeburgh Beach, oil on canvas (58 x 83cm) used on the cover of *Aldeburgh, A Song of the Seas* by Tim Coates, by kind permission of the artist and courtesy of The Orwell Press.

Poem: I am never alone

I am never alone - at early dawn,
When the lark pours her joyous notes on high,
When the diamond dew-drop gems the lawn,
And the daisy opens her tearful eye -
I am never alone - with fragrant hair,
The spirit of the first young Hour is there.

In one loud paeon our songs arise –
“Thanks to our God for the earth and skies,
“For the early dawn, the glittering dews,
“For the heaven of song, the glow of hues,
“For the life, the light, the love we share,
“Thanks! Thanks! For the thoughts of praise and
prayer.”

I am never alone - at warm noon-day,
When the breeze is drunk by the scorching heat,
When the lark has hushed his thrilling lay,
And the flowers shut up their odours sweet –
I am never alone – beside me lies
The Spirit of the Wood, with deep dark eyes.

My heart is stilled with flower and bird,
My soul is with that spirit heard:

Low, soft as summer’s breath arise –
“Thanks to our God for the earth and skies,
“For the glowing noon, the cooling glade,
“For the sweets of rest, the calm of shade;
“For the life, the love, the peace we share,
“Thanks! thanks! for the thoughts of praise and
prayer,”

I am never alone – at evening’s close,
When the twittering birds bid earth good night,
When the insect hums round the laurel-rose,
And the bat flies in the dim twilight –
I am never alone – on bended knee
The Spirit of the Night-wind prays with me.



Victoria Parker-Jervis

