



Anthem: This Is My Father's World

Maltbie F. Babcock (1858-1901)

Traditional English melody

adpt. Franklin L. Sheppard (1852-1930) / arr. Mack Wilberg



**Genesis 1:1 – In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. NIV**

Maltbie Babcock, a Presbyterian minister, wrote the hymn “This Is My Father’s World.” He was an amateur musician, playing the organ, piano and violin. He was a recognized university athlete in swimming and baseball, and an outdoorsman with broad shoulders and a muscular build.

While a pastor in Lockport, N.Y., Babcock took morning walks to the top of a hill where he had a full view of Lake Ontario and the surrounding area. He frequently said before leaving for these walks, “I’m going out to see my Father’s world.”

At first look, the hymn’s lyrics may seem simple and lovely; however, literary devices (visual & auditory images, personification), a philosophical reference, and closing thoughts show them to be beautifully poetic and contemplative.

- 1) visual images of nature — rocks, trees, skies, seas, birds, morning light, the lily white, grass
- 2) personification/auditory images: “listening ears” and “nature sings” and “birds their carols raise” and “rustling grass”
- 3) philosophical reference – The “music of the spheres” is a concept from Greek philosophy---the most perfect sounds cannot be heard by human ears. They take place in the orderly movements of planets and stars. The actual sounds humans hear on earth are but a “weak imitation.”
- 4) closing thought – There is a shift from describing the beauty of nature to the reality that all is not right with the world. Babcock observes “that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.” The closing couplet, poses and answers a question; it offers hope: “Why should my heart be sad?... God reigns, let the earth be glad.”

*portions adapted from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-this-is-my-fathers-world>*

**Prayer: Creator God, slow my pace so that I save time to go outside and to look around and to feel the inspiring and awesome aspects of Your creation--- clouds, birds, trees, wind, flowers, sunshine, and moon.... Call me out to take a walk, to sit outside, and to single out those things that I may have come to take for granted. Let me see Your world as evidence to Your goodness, power and glory. Amen.**

**Anthem Text**

This is My Father’s world, and to my list’ning ears, All nature sings, and ‘round me rings  
the music of the spheres.

This is my Father’s world: I rest me in the thought of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;  
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father’s world: The birds their carols raise, the morning light, the lily white,  
declare their Maker’s praise.

This is my Father’s world: He shines in all that’s fair; in the rust’ling grass I hear Him pass,  
He speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father’s world, O let me ne’er forget that though the wrong seems oft so  
strong, God is the Ruler yet.

This is my Father’s world: Why should my heart be sad? The Lord is King: let the heavens  
ring! God reigns: let the earth be glad!