

# Olive Tree

Dar Williams

Long ago in a Mediterranean land  
There was a king, only one man  
And his crookedest friends, that's where the story could end

You worked every day in a field full of stones  
The bounty was laid at the feet of the thrones  
That were mountains away, many days and mountains away

But out of the earth, that never gave you anything free  
Came the fruit on the branch from the olive tree  
There's oil for your lamps, you can see by their light  
I'll teach you to read, I'll teach you to write

Under an olive tree. Under an olive tree

Aristotle walked away from the walls  
Wandered from Plato's academy halls  
He was putting his trust  
In the total of all of us

Out on a peripatetical mission  
Challenging all take a position  
A logic of sorts, a way to learn in the back and the forth

And in the heart of the land  
From near and from far, you could be one of them  
You'd choose a black or white stone  
And go to the hill, they showed up to vote

Under an olive tree, under an olive tree

While the self-appointed tyrants try to tear it all apart  
The olive tree grows in the light of a constant star  
We're printing our books, we're pressing the fruit  
In the light of the sun and coming up from the roots

It's ten forty-five and I'm thinking about  
Civilization, the moon has come out  
For these strangers and friends  
I'm at a party of strangers and friends

All of these arguments everyone makes  
Discussing the planet, discussing the state  
Of the government  
All of these strangers and friends

It's like we have returned to that hill  
But there are more of us now, and the circle is widening still  
In the back and the forth, it's like we're holding a trust  
Like we know that we count, like something's counting on us

And I hear all these voices rise up like an offering  
We're a part it all, when no one promised us anything  
And this is my life, it's the air that I breath  
This most enlightened of groves, this most sacred of trees

California, back in 1913

Professors came up from Berkeley  
They'd studied the dirt  
Planted olive trees in the earth

Collegial friends, hopeful and patient  
No chemicals needed and no irrigation  
They were planting their trust  
In the future of all of us

As they watered each sapling tree  
They'd stop and look up to see what their children would see  
They'd come to the hill, the trees would be here, and  
Would continue to grow over one thousand years

Under an olive tree, under an olive tree