

## Larks over Oglethorpe Hills

From early morn , exuberant on the wing ,  
In wild and joyous song , the lark  
Looks out on all who toil to reach  
The grassy summit far below .

Mere speck of black on farthest blue ,  
His rearing crest and flash of white on dappled brown unseen ,  
Yet from this hovering sentinel breaks forth  
A wondrous solo , incandescent , free ,  
Melodious beyond the purity of art .

What matter this diversion hides another ,  
Endlessly mundane , of primal worth ,  
Protection of the nest , the heritage ,  
From tramlings of mankind ,  
Intended , careless , or malign ?

For larks have flown these hills  
Through dynasties when Romans , Saxons , Normans  
Claimed to own a land now held  
In transient title by a modern lord .

They doubtless saw great Percy fall ,  
As fleetingly he sought a kingly power ;  
And from their lofty perch they watched ,  
Across the plain , the Minster grow , pre - eminent  
Against the moor and wold .

Witness to Nature ' s pageant , guardian of its soul ,  
Can lark survive , much less avert ,  
The depredations modern man will force  
In name of progress , need or gain ?

Will Oglethorpe , secure two thousand years  
Inviolate , now celebrate  
Millennium dawn in monumental tar - macadam ?

Or will the talismatic lark retain  
Imperious triumph , soaring overhead ?

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[ Written as we awaited the decision on a projected 10 ,000 home new town  
on the University Farm at Headley . ]