**38. Sounds of Spring: Lifestyle Tips, Poetry & Personal Stories**

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:00:00] You know, that smell after it rains? That freshness of green and soil, the feeling of a spring breeze on your face.

**Intro** [00:00:17]

 Hello and welcome to ALSO in PINK. The podcast all about lifestyle design. How we live, the clothes we choose and how we organise our space. I'm your host, Alexandria Lawrence, a certified KonMari consultant and personal stylist. I'm here to guide you on your journey to live a happy, fulfilled life.

Every Tuesday you'll get new insight on what it means to live well. Plus actionable tips.

Redefine what's possible and create your ideal life.

Today we'll explore the joy of nature and its power to refresh and restore. Yes. And that glorious feeling of spring. The sounds and smells and essence of spring. So wherever you are in the world, whether you're surrounded by cityscapes or green space or desert or mountains, whether or not, you have easy access to nature from the place you call home. Whatever your environment or circumstances, I'm bringing you a taste of spring in the form of lifestyle tips, poetry and personal stories.

 I was never all that aware of the change of season during my childhood in LA. There weren't many trees that lost their leaves. The forecast was mostly sunshine with occasional crazy weather. Hollywood style weather. Floods, hail, strong winds, fires, drought, earthquakes, that sort of thing.

If anything happened weather-wise it was at the epic end of the scale. Floods meant homes would slide down the Hollywood Hills or fires rip through them. And the LA River was always dry, perfect though for car chase, scenes and movies. Maybe you've seen a few of those.

And every year strong winds would tear the creeping fig off the exterior walls of my Dad's artist studio.

His studio was the stucco building next door to our little home. Separated only by a few feet, this created kind of a wind tunnel between the house and studio. If you're not familiar with creeping fig, it likes to cling. So it's no mean feat that winds would rip it off the building every year.

But that's LA style weather for you. Mostly sunny with a chance of drama. It wasn't until I moved to London nearly 18 years ago that I truly began to appreciate spring. Unlike the high drama of LA weather, UK weather is more predictable. Four distinct seasons. And it never gets crazy hot or crazy cold. No disaster movie scenarios here. At least not yet.

So, yes, you could say the UK really is a green and pleasant land. And for me, the first sign of spring is daffodils sprouting up everywhere, in parks, gardens, on hills, all around. A lovely reminder of the change of season. And I've always loved that poem by Wordsworth celebrating the daffodil, ever since I first heard it back in my school days.

I don't remember ever seeing a daffodil in LA, but they pop up everywhere on this side of the Pond. So I now associate daffodils with the start of my favorite season, spring. Here is

**I Wandered Lonely As A Cloud** [00:03:58]

I Wandered Lonely As A Cloud

By William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o’er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

I also loved lying in the grass. That smell of earth and greenness. And simple pleasures. Like tying little nuts in a blade of grass. Have you ever done that? I don't know if it's just me, but I've always loved doing that ever since childhood.

 Yes, the joy of lying on your back in the grass, shoes off, with the sky and interlacing branches of trees above you. Pluck a blade of grass and tie a knot here or there. Or maybe take time to evenly space out, lots of little knots in your blade of grass. You know, grass is surprisingly resilient and hard to break. So perfect for tying into knots.

But if you're not someone who generally ties knots in grass, I recommend it. Give it a go sometime. It's very relaxing. So here's a poem that for me, celebrates the idea of taking time for yourself.

**The Grass by Emily Dickinson** [00:06:35]

The Grass by Emily Dickinson.

The grass so little has to do, —

A sphere of simple green,

With only butterflies to brood,

And bees to entertain,

And stir all day to pretty tunes

The breezes fetch along,

And hold the sunshine in its lap

And bow to everything;

And thread the dews all night, like pearls,

And make itself so fine, —

A duchess were too common

For such a noticing.

And even when it dies, to pass

In odors so divine,

As lowly spices gone to sleep,

Or amulets of pine.

And then to dwell in sovereign barns,

And dream the days away, —

The grass so little has to do,

I wish I were the hay!

Yes, having that time to dream the days away.

In the hustle and bustle and busy-ness of modern life, it's easy to forget to give yourself that time to dream.

 I recently watched Sara Blakely's masterclass where she teaches self-made entrepreneurship. It's so inspiring. If you're not familiar with Sara, she's the founder of Spanx. She redefined the shapewear industry, and with $5,000 of personal savings, created a billion dollar business, helping women feel confident and comfortable in their skin.

And she's done it with humor and integrity and style. Sara is officially my hero. I feel like I need to put up a sign in my little studio saying, what would Sara do? You know, something to inspire me when I feel a bit lost or am at a crossroads in my business.

Anyway, in Sara Blakely's masterclass, she talks about the importance of giving yourself time and space for your mind to wander. She's an inventor at heart. And for her, her mind wanders best when she's in the car. It's that space that she's come up with her best inventions and innovations, including the name Spanx. And Sara is not alone. There are all sorts of studies that talk about the link between creative innovation and letting your mind wander.

I've found over the years that I really need time to let my thoughts wander. That's where I've come up with my best ideas too. And that's how ALSO in PINK started, sitting on a fuzzy bean bag and letting my mind drift.

I also know what it feels like to not give yourself that creative space.

When I had a full-time job as a software developer, I really missed that time to daydream and drift. I found my job incredibly depleting and didn't take the time I needed for myself. I didn't realize how important that was, but that doesn't have to be you. If you feel depleted by your job, you can do something about it. Why not set aside some time each day to let your mind wander, and rekindle your creative spark.

So let's dive into nature. Spending time in nature is a wonderful way to let your mind wander.

 And here's a poem that conjures full on spring.

**On A Lane In The Spring** [00:10:13]

On a lane in the spring by John Clare.

A Little Lane, the brook runs close beside

And spangles in the sunshine while the fish glide swiftly by

And hedges leafing with the green spring tide

From out their greenery the old birds fly

And chirp and whistle in the morning sun

The pilewort glitters ‘neath the pale blue sky

The little robin has its nest begun

And grass green linnets round the bushes fly

How Mild the Spring Comes in; the daisy buds

Lift up their golden blossoms to the sky

How lovely are the pingles and the woods

Here a beetle runs; and there a fly

Rests on the Arum leaf in bottle green

And all the Spring in this Sweet lane is seen

 Lately I've been spending more time at Kew Gardens. If you're not all that familiar with Kew it's a world-leading botanical garden in Richmond, a leafy part of Southwest London. Funnily enough, Kew has come up in my chats with several guests on this podcast. For a start there's episode five, where I chat with Ines a graphic designer and photographer who works at Kew Gardens. She absolutely loves Kew and I totally get it. You could even say Kew Gardens is my new, nearly weekly self-care retreat. A couple hours wandering about the gardens, taking a picnic and snapping some pics is exactly what I need to regenerate, restore and inspire.

I saw some daisies the other day at Kew Gardens.

**Daisy Time** [00:12:17]

So, here's Daisy Time by Marjorie Pickthall.

 See, the grass is full of stars,
Fallen in their brightness;
Hearts they have of shining gold,
Rays of shining whiteness.

Buttercups have honeyed hearts,
Bees they love the clover,
But I love the daisies’ dance
All the meadow over.

Blow, O blow, you happy winds,
Singing summer’s praises,
Up the field and down the field
A-dancing with the daisies.

 I have a confession to make. I've highlighted the importance of self care on this podcast. Sure, I've talked the talk. But just between us, I haven't exactly walked the walk.

This past year, especially in the last nine to 10 months, work has taken over my life. In my eagerness to make things happen and go all in on ALSO in PINK. I've neglected pretty much everything else. I thought, oh, I can work all day, every day. It's only temporary.

It's only a short-term push. I can do this, right.

But I've learned something. It's just not sustainable or healthy or fun. And when does it stop? There's always something else that needs to be done. It's easy to say, oh, I'll just schedule these posts. I'll just wait and I've got my site ready for the Forbes article. I'll just get through this affiliate launch. I'll just wait until I've prepared for such and such coaching session. I'll just wait until I'm six weeks ahead with creating podcast episodes and content, which let's just say is definitely not the case, at least not yet.

And as a result of my relentless drive to push ahead, I simply ran out of steam.

So, let this be a cautionary tale for me and for you. Pause and take a break. Find time every week, every day to do something for yourself. Let's all do our best to live well, always.

 **Leisure** [00:14:49]

So, with this in mind, here's Leisure. By W H Davies.

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?—

No time to stand beneath the boughs,
And stare as long as sheep and cows:

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:

No time to turn at Beauty’s glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance:

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began?

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

**Promo** [00:15:49]

Imagine... if you lived the life you really want. You know, your dream life.

Have you ever taken time to picture what it would look like? I mean, what it would really look like?

We're not talking about the life you feel you should have, but, deep down, the life you secretly want. Your ideal life. Maybe you already have a vision.

 You wake up after a good night's sleep on the most comfortable mattress ever. With pillows that support your head just the way you like. You go to your organized closet and choose colorful, unique clothes that fit you and make you feel good. Then pad through a clean, warm, uncluttered home to the kitchen. Your refrigerator offers up the most delicious, healthy options for breakfast. And you have a day of unstructured time stretching ahead of you to do with as you like. But. That's never going to happen, right? Wouldn't it be nice to take a step back, sweep aside all your worries... and imagine...

That's where I come in.

 I'm your host, Alexandria Lawrence, and I've developed an exclusive questionnaire for the ALSO in PINK community to help you create a vision of your ideal life.

Simply join the ALSO in PINK email list and you'll get instant access to our Ideal Lifestyle Vision Questionnaire. Go on then, make a cup of your favorite tea, or whatever floats your boat... Go to alsoinpink.com and click Start Now. Redefine what's possible & Create your ideal life.

**Interview Resumes** [00:17:34]

Or hey, maybe we'd all benefit from being more like trees. Like this poem.

**Trees** [00:17:47]

Trees by Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth’s sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me
But only God can make a tree.

And yes, whether or not you believe in God or the universe or some higher power, it's undeniable that nature is a force more powerful than we are, which is why we need to look after our planet, our world for our sake, and for generations to come. Let's make more sustainable choices in our lives from the clothes we buy to what we eat to what businesses and brands we support.

For more environmental tips, check out the show notes from episode 35. Plant enthusiast and author Jonathan Drori has some wonderful suggestions about how we can all get more environmentally active.

 Which rather abstractly leads me to.

**The Rose That Grew From Concrete** [00:19:17]

The rose that grew from concrete. By Tupac Shakur.

Did you hear about the rose that grew

from a crack in the concrete?

Proving nature’s law is wrong it

learned to walk with out having feet.

Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams,

it learned to breathe fresh air.

Long live the rose that grew from concrete

when no one else ever cared.

And as long as we're drifting in this more fanciful direction, here's the delightfully fantastical poem.

**In Perpetual Spring** [00:19:59]

In perpetual spring by Amy Gerstler.

Gardens are also good places
to sulk. You pass beds of
spiky voodoo lilies
and trip over the roots
of a sweet gum tree,
in search of medieval
plants whose leaves,
when they drop off
turn into birds
if they fall on land,
and colored carp if they
plop into water.

Suddenly the archetypal
human desire for peace
with every other species
wells up in you. The lion
and the lamb cuddling up.
The snake and the snail, kissing.
Even the prick of the thistle,
queen of the weeds, revives
your secret belief
in perpetual spring,
your faith that for every hurt
there is a leaf to cure it.

 May is a special month for me. It's my birthday month. And when I was growing up in Los Angeles. May meant the jacaranda trees were in bloom. Yes. People also call them jacarandas. But then in the UK, people also tend to say Los Angeles instead of Los Angeles. So I'm not entirely convinced.

Anyway, I grew up knowing these flowering trees as jacarandas so that's what we'll call them here. And they have the most gorgeous purple-y flowers and the blossoms scatter everywhere, covering the ground and trees with glorious color.

 Just as daffodils herald in the spring, the jacaranda is spring in full bloom. Here is.

**A Jacaranda Tree** [00:21:53]

A Jacaranda Tree by Ann Beard.

A Jacaranda tree stands tall, and sways as if to say,
Look! At this magnificence, I’m wearing blue today.
forgive the way I shout aloud, my lack of modesty,
but nowhere in this troubled world is finery like me.

Light rays slide between each leaf, to settle on the tips
to lightly kiss your face with a hundred million tiny lips.
You only have to lift your eyes to greet the filtered sun
a sight I guarantee will warm the heart of everyone.
Though very tall, my leaf is small, its form is one of fern,
large panicles of bluebells swell to trumpet unconcern.
A Bee collecting nectar from an ample deep white throat,
takes flight to join its family, and of its feast to gloat.

Look up to see each fern like leaf, floating up on high,
like footprints of a centipede that stroll across the sky
See how far my branches reach, admire their greenery,
so beautiful and strong, I am the Jacaranda tree.

 So, what does your perfect day look like? This time we're talking weather. So what would the temperature be? My perfect day is about 18 degrees Celsius. Mid sixties, if you're talking Fahrenheit.

So as you can imagine, California weather never entirely agreed with me when I was growing up. Especially those hot summers. Give me a balmy winter day in LA anytime. Or spring in London.

So what does your perfect spring day feel like? The kind of day that makes you grateful to be alive.

**Today** [00:24:14]

This is Today by Billy Collins.

If ever there were a spring day so perfect,
so uplifted by a warm intermittent breeze

that it made you want to throw
open all the windows in the house

and unlatch the door to the canary’s cage,
indeed, rip the little door from its jamb,

a day when the cool brick paths
and the garden bursting with peonies

seemed so etched in sunlight
that you felt like taking

a hammer to the glass paperweight
on the living room end table,

releasing the inhabitants
from their snow-covered cottage

so they could walk out,
holding hands and squinting

into this larger dome of blue and white,
well, today is just that kind of day.

 A spring day so perfect, you just have to get out there and experience glorious nature.

 Finally then, let's finish full circle with a bit of Wordsworth.

 **To A Butterfly** [00:25:24]

To a Butterfly by William Wordsworth.

I’ve watched you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little Butterfly! Indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless! – not frozen seas
More motionless! And then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my Sister’s flowers.
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We’ll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

 If you feel like time is getting away from you, going quicker as the years go by, instead of mourning those passing days or dwelling in the past, try this. Be more deliberate with your time. Take time for yourself every day. Whether that means time to dream, time in nature, watching butterflies or knotting blades of grass. Time to read. Time to watch your favorite shows, time to spend with people you love. Time for yourself.

Don't wait. Take time today and time tomorrow. And the next day and the next.

However much time you have in this life, take time every day to live it well.

**Key Takeaways** [00:27:25]

Well, hope you enjoy this celebration of spring. Would you like to hear more episodes that combine poetry and stories with lifestyle tips and personal anecdotes?

 Drop me a line Alexandria at ALSO in PINK dot com. And let me know what kind of episodes you especially enjoy hearing. After all a lovely listener, this podcast is created for you. So, here's some key takeaways from the show today. Take time for yourself every day, every week. If there's one thing you take away from this episode, let it be that. And while you're at it, set aside some time to let your mind wander and rekindle your creative spark, who knows maybe you'll come up with your own million dollar or million pound idea.

As inventor Sara Blakely says everyone is capable of a million dollar idea. It's just that most people don't take action on it. So give yourself that space to invent and dream. And get out there in nature. It's glorious.

**Outro** [00:28:55]

That's our show then. Thank you so much for listening. I'm Alexandria, and this is ALSO in PINK. The podcast, all about lifestyle design. If you enjoyed the show, please subscribe to ALSO in PINK, wherever you get your podcasts. And the absolute best way to show your support is to write a review on Apple Podcasts or iTunes. This really helps more than anything to promote the show. And, of course, tell all your friends. Thank you so much for your support. Until next time, have a wonderful week. Redefine what's possible and create your ideal life.