SONG NOTES: This song was inspired by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in North Dakota and all the tribes, nations, native and non-native people who came together to protect the land and water threatened by the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. The song came to me on my return from Standing Rock. That morning before leaving, a meadowlark was singing right outside my tent. “Be a lark from the meadow. Be a lark from this meadow,” I heard it sing. We, too, can be larks from the meadow. We, too, can sing in the new day. —ST

The chorus contains two phrases in Lakota:
Mni wičoni (mini we-cho-nee) —“Water is life.”
Mitakuye Oyasin (mee-dah-koo-yeh o-yah-seen) —“All My Relations”

My gratitude to Jeremy Davis, of Lakota and Anishinaabe heritage, who suggested adding, and helped me to incorporate, the phrase “Mitakuye Oyasin.”

“The phrase Mitakuye Oyasin has a bigger meaning than just our blood relatives. Yes, it’s true; we are all one human race. But the word Mitakuye means relations and Oyasin means more than family, more than a Nation, more than all of humankind, everything that has a spirit. The Earth herself, Maka Unci, is our relation, and so is the sky, Grandfather Sky, and so is the Buffalo and so are each of the two-leggeds, the four-leggeds, those that swim, those that fly, the root nation and the crawling beings who share the world with us. Mitakuye Oyasin refers to the interconnectedness of all beings and all things. We are all interconnected. We are all One.” —Chief Arvol Looking Horse, from his book White Buffalo Teachings (Dreamkeepers Press, 2001)

Water Is Life ~ Mni Wičoni

A song for Standing Rock

Words and Music by
Sara Thomsen

We are the water, sing, we are the water, we are where all life begins.

We are the ancient ones, we are the ancient ones, in your breath and bones we sing on, we are one.

We are the lark that sings the new day has begun, we are the new day, run, run, run!

We are the earth and sky! We are the thunder cries! We are the fire, we are the light in your eyes.

We are standing strong! Like a rock, like a stone!

On this sacred ground we belong, we are home. All my relations, come.

Ev’ry nation, come. All my relations under the sun, we are one.
Water Is Life ~ Mni Wičoni

Inspired by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and all the tribes, nations, people coming together to protect the water.

“We are the river, and the river is us. We have no choice but to stand up.”
— LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, Founder of Sacred Stone Camp

All my relations, come
Every nation, come
All my relations under the sun
We are one

We are praying, come
We are praying, come
We are the song and we are the drum
We are one

We are the river, come
We are the river, come
We are the boat, the paddle, the shore
We are one

Chorus:
Mni wičoni, sing (Mitakuye Oyasin...)
Mni wičoni, sing
Mni wičoni, “water is life”
For everything

We are the water, sing
We are the water, sing
We are the water
We are where all life begins

We are the ancient ones
We are the ancient ones
In your breath and bones we sing on
We are one

We are the meadow, come
We are the meadow, come
We are the lark that sings
The new day has begun

We are the new day, run, run, run
We are the new day, run, run, run
We are the old and we are the young
We are one

To Chorus

We are the earth and sky
We are the thunder cries
We are the fire
We are the light in your eyes

We are standing strong
Like a rock, like a stone
On this sacred ground we belong
We are home

To Chorus

All my relations, come
Every nation, come
All my relations under the sun
We are one

—Music and lyrics by Sara Thomsen

To listen to the recording visit:
https://echoesofpeace.org/water-is-life

The chorus contains two Lakota phrases:
Mni wičoni (mini we-cho-nee) — “Water is life”
Mitakuye Oyasin (mee-dah-koo-yeh o-yah-seen)
—“All My Relations”