

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


All my re-la-tions, come Ev-'ry na-tion, come All my re-la-tions un - der the  
 sun We are one. We are pray - ing, come We are pray - ing, come  
 We are the song and we are the drum. We are one. We are the riv - er, come  
 We are the riv - er, come We are the boat, the pad - dle, the shore, We are one.  
 M - ni wi - čo - ni, sing M - ni wi - čo - ni, sing  
 M - ni wi - čo - ni, "wa - ter is life" for ev-'ry - thing. We are the wa-ter, sing

35



We are the wa-ter, sing                      We are the wa-ter, We are where all life be - gins.

41



We are the an-cient ones                      We are the an-cient ones                      In your breath and bones we sing

47




on, We are one.                      We are the mead-ow, come                      We are the mead-ow, come

53



We are the lark that sings the new day has be - gun.                      We are the new day, run, run, run!

59



We are the new day, run, run, run!                      We are the old and we are the young, We are one. **To Chorus**

65




We are the earth and sky!                      We are the thun-der cries!                      We are the fi - re, We are the

71




light in your eyes.                      We are stand - ing strong!                      Like a rock, like a stone!

77



On this sac-red ground we be - long, we are home                      All my re-la-tions, come. **To Chorus**

83



Ev-'ry na - tion, come.                      All my re-la-tions un - der 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”

---