Perhaps one of the defining qualities of the past year has been physical separation, born out of care for our loved ones and vulnerable members of our society. Sadly, the loss has still been great: some members of Kitka have lost beloved family members, an experience all too widely shared.

We want to acknowledge this loss, this pain—and also move through it towards a brighter future, where we never again take for granted being able to visit our parents and grandparents, kiss a friend’s baby on the cheek, share a meal with wine and song, and rehearse together in a room!

In the early stages of this vision, our dear friend Christos Govetas shared an article about the tradition of the panayiri as it is practiced in the Northern Greek region of Epirus. From the ancient Greek for “gathering,” the panayiri is a festival where the whole community comes together in song and dance; in the Epirot version, the event begins with bitter lamentations and then gradually turns to more joyful songs, as a way to include all: every member of society, and the range of experiences we all share—ultimately to better affirm our deepest values, and life itself. This image of a community moving together from sorrow to joy has been something of a touchstone for us ever since, and we humbly offer our own version of this ancient ritual.

Many aspects of this project were constrained by quarantine. With the exception of the first song, which was recorded outside, with extra-protective “singers’ masks” complete with bio-filters, they were all recorded in isolation, at home or in a quiet church basement or empty office, with mysterious microphones that emerged out of boxes (with instructions passed around by email), and sometimes with an obliging partner, a sister, or a roommate to help sort through input and output channels, click “record,” and maybe even add an accompaniment! It has been a surreal experience to stitch these recordings together digitally, anticipating the day when we can join our physical voices in real air, in real time.

Our prayer is that the hardships, the illnesses, the separations, even the deaths, we have endured will be woven together into a fabric of remembrance and healing, and an ever greater awareness of just how much friendship, the bonds of family, and the love of community mean; how marvellous is the simple joy of sitting together and singing; and that these connections will emerge stronger than ever, cast in a new light.
1. **Stis Elénis to kreváti** — Epirus, Northwestern Greece; from the Petro-Loukias Chalkias Ensemble and Christos Govetas — solos by Janet Kutulas, Shira Cion, and Kelly Atkins

Στης Ελένης το κρεβάτι,
Γύρο-γύρο ήταν γιατροί.

Γαλλικά τά κουβεντιάζαν,
Πώς δέν έχει πια ζωή.

Μπράτσα πού δέν τά είδ’ ο ἕλιος,
Τ’ς τά είδεν οι γιατροί.

By Eleni’s bedside,
All around, there were doctors.

They were discussing in French,
How she would no longer live.

Her arms the sun never saw,
They were seen by the doctors.

Stis Elénis to kreváti,
Yíro-yíro ítan yiatrí.

Ghalliká ta kouvendiázan,
Pos dhen éxi pia zoí.

Brátsa pou dhen ta idh’ o ʰλιος,
T’is ta idhan i yiatrí.

2. **Măi puiuț de rândune** — Bessarabia, Moldova; from Suzana Popescu — solo by Lily Storm

Măi puiuț de rândune,
N-ai văzut pe mama me, măi?

Am văzut-o lângă jatrá,
Frământa la chite albă,
Chite albă frământa,
Lăcrimi amari versa, măi.

Chite albă nu frământa,
Dupa mine nu să cânte, măi,
Că unde m-o dat nu mi-i ghine.

Unde m-o dat nu mi-i ghine,
Pătuț’ mi-i de căline,
Perina din flori de schini e, măi.

"Dear little swallow,
Have you seen my mother?"

“I have seen her near the kitchen,
She was punching down flat bread,
Flat bread she was punching down,
And she was shedding large tears.”

“She shouldn’t punch down flat bread,
And she shouldn’t sing a song about me,
Because I am not in a good place.

Because I am not in a good place,
My bed is made of bitter fruit,
My pillow is made of thorns.”
3. **Rufinka bolna legnala** — Pomak, Rhodope region of Bulgaria; from Georgi Chilingirov, Vasil Mihailov, and many others — solo by Maclovia Quintana

Rufinka was lying sick
On a high mountain,
Without any person by her side.

Руфинка болна легнала
На високана планина,
Никой до нее немаше.

— Че се е пролет пукнала,
Всичко от земя излиза,
Пък я ще в земя да влеза.

“*The spring in full bloom,
Everything coming out of the earth
Just as I am going in it.”*

4. **Letila zozulja** — Ukraine; from Nina Matvienko — solo by Hannah Levy

The cuckoo flew from mountain to valley,
She perched on my fence.
The cuckoo sang, and spoke truthfully,
My mother was no longer in this world.
Oh Mama, Mama, who will I turn to?
Who will paint your portrait lovingly?
Artists came from distant lands,
They painted her on a white canvas.
They painted her eyes, and her eyebrows,
But not our conversations of the heart.

Letila zozulja z hory ta v dolynu,
та й сіла кувати коло моєго тину.
Зозуля кувала, правдюньку казала,
що моєї неньки на світі не стала.
Ой матінко-мати, де ж тебе узяти,
чи пніи купити чи намалювати?
Наїхали малярі з далекої сторони,
намалювали неньку на білій оселі.
Змалювали очі, змалювали брови.
та не змалювали щирої розмови.

Oj matinko-maty de zh tebe uzjaty?
chy pity kupyty chy namaljuvaty?
Najikhaly maljary z dalekoj storony,
Zmaljuvaly nen’ky na biliy oseli.
Zmaljuvaly ochi, zmaljuvaly brovy.
Ta ne zmaljuvaly shchyroji rozmovi.
5. **Iavnana** — Rach’a, North-Central Georgia; from Ensemble Mzetamze and Trio Kavkasia — duet by Shira Cion and Janet Kutulas

Os'vadoba, sash’rdo’bo,  
Dat’k’bit, Dat’k’bit,  
Lullaby of violets, Oh spirit lords*,  
A rose, Oh spirit lords.

Dat’k’bit, Dat’k’bit,  
Dashoshindit,  
Amuse yourselves,  
Calm yourselves,  
A rose, Oh spirit lords.

Iavnana ba’onebo,  
Dat’k’bit, Dat’k’bit,  
*Bat’onebi are the lords, or spirits, of disease, who must be soothed with flowers and song, and convinced to depart.

Vardo bat’onebo.

6. **Kićeno nebo zvezdama** — Serbia; from Svetlana Spajić — duet by Erin Lashnits Herman and Janet Kutulas

Kiće novo nebo zvezdama,  
Kiće novo polje ovćama.  
The sky is adorned with stars,  
Like a broad field filled with sheep.

K’o ravno polje ovćama.  
The morning star is not with her sisters,  
The shepherd is not with his flock.

Danice nema zvezdama,  
Ovćama nema čobana.

Danice nema zvezdama,  
Ovćama nema čobana.
7. **Dochushachka matku u gosti zvala** — Smolensk, Western Russia; from the Water of Life Ensemble (*Живая Вода*), arranged by Lily Storm — duet by Kelly Atkins and Hannah Levy

Дочушачка матку у гости звала,
— Ты приед’ матушка, ко мне в гостики,
— А як жа мне к табе приехать? Не могу нияк.
А зимою за снегами,
А ясною за ручьами,
А по летичку за страдами,
— Ты приед’ матушка, зимою у возочку,
А ясною у челночку,
А по летичку у карети.

*Dochushachka matku u gosti zvala,*
— *Ty prijed’ matushka, ko mne v gostiki.*
— *A jak zha mne k tabe prijekhat’? Ne mogu nijak.*

The daughter invited the mother to visit,
“You must come, dear mother, as a guest.”

“As how can I come? I cannot do it:
In the winter there is snow,
In the spring there are rivers,
In the summer distance.”

“In the winter you will come in a sled,
In the spring, in a boat,
In the summer, in a carriage.”

8. **Oj davno-davno** — Krjachkivka, Cherkasy region of Central Ukraine; from the Krjachkivka singers, Mariana Sadovska, and Nadia Tarnawsky, arranged by Mariana Sadovska — voice and shruti box by Katya Schoenberg

Ой давно-давно в матінки була,
Що вже та доріжка терном заросла.
Ой не так терном, як шипшинкою,
Де ми походили із матінкою.
Колючу шипшину в приніл виломлю,
До своєї неньки в гості ж полечу.
Ой лечу-лечу поміж галичок,
Прилетіла-сіла в матінки в саду.

*Oj davno-davno v matinky bula*
*Shto vzhe ta dorizhka ter(y)nom(y) zarosla.*
*Oj ne tak ternom, jak shyshynokoju.*
*De my pokhodyly iz matinkoju.*
*Koljouchu shyshynu v prynil vilomlyu.*
*Do svojej nen’ky v hosti zh polechu.*
*Oj lechu-lechu pomizh galychok.*
*Pryletila-sila v matinky v sadu.*

Oh, long ago, I was with my mother,
But now that path is overgrown with thorns.
Not so much with thorns, as with wild roses,
Where we walked with mother.
The prickly wild roses I will break apart,
To my mother as a guest I will fly.
Oh, I fly among the jackdaws,
I flew in and sat in my mother’s garden.
9. **Bat’onebis nanina** — Imereti, West-Central Georgia; from Ensemble Mzetamze — trio by Katya Schoenberg, Maclovia Quintana, and Kelly Atkins

Nininana bat’onebo,
nininana bat’oneiebs nana,
dar’k’bit t’k’bilad bat’ono.
Am bat’onebis dedasa,
nininana didov ba’tono.
Udgia okros ak’vani…
Shig uts’evt bat’onishvili…
Khandikhan gadaarts’even…
Khandikhan nanas et’qvian…
Nininana bat’onebo,
nininana t’k’bilad ba’tono.

Lullaby, oh spirit lords*,
nininana, oh lords,
nana, amuse yourselves sweetly, oh spirit lord.
By the mother of these lords,
(nininana, great lord)
There stands a golden cradle…
Within lies the lord’s prince…
From time to time one rocks it…
From time to time one tells him…
Lullaby, oh lords,
nininana, amuse yourselves, oh lord.

*Bat’onebi are the lords, or spirits, of disease, who must be soothed with flowers and song.

10. **Zhenala e Ganka** — Dobrudzha, Northern Bulgaria; from Galina Durmushliyska — solo by Briget Boyle

Женала е Ганка, женала,
С нейните девет девера.
Най-малкуту и деверчи
То на буля си думаше,
— Карай булю, край обирай,
Че на край пъстра сенчица,
Под сянка малка люлчица.

Ganka was harvesting.
With her nine brothers-in-law.
The youngest of them
Said to her, the young bride,
“Go on, sister, to the end.
Where there is dappled shade,
And in the shade a little cradle.”

Zhenala e Ganka, zhenala,
S nejnite devera.
Naj-malkutu i deverchi
To na bulja si dumashe,
— Karaj buljo, kraj obiraj,
Che na kraj pustyra senchitsa,
Pod sjanka malka ljulchitsa.
11. **Sus în vârful muntelui** — Transylvania, Central Romania; from Nineta Popa — voice and piccolo by Janet Kutulas; guitar by Peter Simcich

Sus în vârful muntelui
îi casa ciobanului,
Cu iarbă verde podită
și cetină acoperită.
Acolo pasc oile
prin poieni cu florile.

Când se lasă zorile
badea mulge oile,
Când răsare soarele
smântânește laptele
și fierbe urda din cas,
Dă gură la ciobănaș!

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12. **Tha traghoudhíso** — Thrace, Northeastern Greece; from Hronis Aidonidis and Christos Govetas — voice by Lily Storm; violin by Aya Davidson; laouto, darbouka and defi by Tano Brock

Θα τραγουδήσω n-αγαλινά,
~ τώρα το βράδι-βράδι, ~
και θα ακούσω αλάργα,
~ Κατάκαη µένη αγάπη µ',
tώρα το βράδι-βράδι. ~

Να άκουσαν τα εννιά χωριά,
τα δεκαπέντε κάστρα.

Να ακούσει η μόνα µ πέρδικα,
η αδελφή µ τρίγωνα.

Tha traghoudhíso n-aghaliná,
~ tóra to vrádhi-vrádhi, ~
Ki tha akoústo alárga,
~ Katákaiméní aghápi m',
tóra to vrádhi-vrádhi. ~

Na ákousan ta enniá xoriá,
Ta dhekapedéni kástra.
Na akoúsi i mána m' pérdhika,
I adheli m' trígona.
13. **Lale li si, zjumbjul li si, gjul li si? — Dobrudzha, Northern Bulgaria; from Verka Siderova, arranged by Philip Koutev**

Why were you so hasty, young sir, to fall asleep?
You have missed the wonderful things that passed by!
Are you a tulip, a hyacinth, or a rose?

There passed by three dark-haired shepherds:
The first one was carrying a bouquet of golden primroses,
The second one was carrying sparkling red wine,
The third was carrying a honey-sweet flute to play,
They were going to the girls' work party.
Are you a tulip, a hyacinth, or a rose?

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Shto pobûrza mlad chelebi, ta zaspa,
Ta ne vide kakvo chudo pomina,
Lale li si, zjumbjul li si, gjul li si?

Che minakha dor tri vakli ovcherja:
Pûrvi nosi kitka zhûlta iglika,
Vtori nosi rujno vino cherveno,

Treti nosi meden kaval da sviri,
Che otiva na momina sedjanka.
Lale li si, zjumbjul li si, gjul li si?

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Special thanks to: Anais Adair, Velvy Appleton, Tano Brock, Jesse Burson, Aya Davidson, Marielle de Winter, Darina Drapkin, Christos Govetas, David Gumbiner, Daniel, Ada, and June Herman, Lysander Jaffe, Carl Linich, Rachel MacFarlane, Katie Mingle, eO (Eric Oberthaler), Matt and Oliver Palmer, Howe Pearson, Bill Richardson, Mariana Sadovska, Rumen Sali Shopov, Peter Simcich, Svetlana Spajić, Derek Sup, Nadia Tarnawsky, Corey Todd, Tzvetanka Varimezova, Wayne Vitale, Adam Waite, Sarah Willner, and Grace Woodford.

Performed and recorded live and in quarantine by Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble:
Kelly Atkins, Briget Boyle, Shira Cion, Erin Lashnits Herman, Janet Kutulas, Hannah Levy, Maclovia Quintana, Katya Schoenberg, and Lily Storm.

Music direction by Lily Storm
Film direction and editing by Kelly Atkins
Forest videography by Velvy Appleton
Sound design by eO (Eric Oberthaler)
Produced by Lily Storm and Kelly Atkins