I’m Rebecca Sheir from WAMU 88.5’s Metro Connection, and welcome to Escape to the Forest of Arden. The Shakespeare Theatre Company, in partnership with the U.S. Botanic Garden, presents this interactive walking journey inspired by the upcoming production of As You Like It, beginning October 28th, 2014 at the Lansburgh Theatre. An examination of nature through the lens of William Shakespeare’s writing—as performed by some of D.C.’s finest actors—this unique podcast takes participants on a journey through the U.S. Botanic Garden, using the Bard’s poetry as the compass for an immersive detour from the busyness of city life. Hear Romeo call to his love from between greenhouse branches, journey through a fern-filled primeval forest with the fairies of A Midsummer Night’s Dream, remember Ophelia’s watery reflection amidst the flowers she adored, and challenge your imagination without leaving the boundaries of the National Mall. Or, if you want to escape farther, you can download this podcast in its entirety at www.ShakespeareTheatre.org/Escape, and take it with you on your own journeys.

Edward Gero reading the part of Oliver; Nathan Winkelstein reading the part of Charles, from As You Like It act 1, scene 1.

OLIVER. Where will the old Duke live?

CHARLES. They say he is already in the Forest of Arden and many merry men with him, and there they live like old Robin Hood of England. They say many young gentlemen flock to him every day and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world.
PERDITA. O Persephone,
   For the flowers now that, frightened, thou let’st fall
   From Hades’ wagon! Daffodils,
   That come before the swallow dares, and take
   The winds of March with beauty; violets, dim,
   But sweeter than the lids of Juno’s eyes
   Or Cytherea’s breath; pale primroses
   That die unmarried ere they can behold
   Bight Phoebus in his strength – a malady
   Most incident to maids; bold oxlips, and
   The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,
   The flower-de-luce being one. O, these I lack
   To make you garlands of, and my sweet friend,
   To strew him o’er and o’er.

FLORIZEL. What, like a corpse?

PERDITA. No, like a bank, for love to lie and play on,
   Not like a corpse – or if, not to be buried,
   But quick and in mine arms. Come, take your flowers.
   Methinks I play as I have seen them do
   In Whitsun pastorals; sure this robe of mine
   Does change my disposition.

FLORIZEL. What you do
   Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet.
   I’d have you do it ever; when you sing,
I’d have you buy and sell so, so give alms,  
Pray so, and for the ordering your affairs,  
To sing them too. When you do dance, I wish you  
A wave o’th’ sea, that you might ever do  
Nothing but that, move still, still so,  
And own no other function. Each your doing,  
So singular in each particular,  
Crows what you are doing in the present deed,  
That all your acts are queens.

Kevin Hasser reading the part of Lorenzo; Allison Leigh Corke reading the part of Jessica, from The Merchant of Venice act 5, scene 1.

LORENZO. The moon shines bright. In such a night as this,  
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,  
And they did make no noise, in such a night  
Troilus methinks mounted the Trojan walls,  
And sigh’d his soul toward the Grecian tents  
Where Cressid lay that night.

JESSICA. In such a night  
Did Thisbe fearfull o’ertrip the dew,  
And saw the lion’s shadow ere himself,  
And ran dismayed away.

LORENZO. In such a night  
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand  
Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love  
To come again to Carthage.
JESSICA. In such a night
Medea gathered the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Aeson.

LORENZO. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice,
As far as Belmont.

JESSICA. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne’er a true one.

LORENZO. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica (like a little shrew)
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

JESSICA. I would out-night you did nobody come:
But hark, I hear the footing of a man.

[...]

LORENZO. How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears—soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony:
Sit, Jessica—look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold,
There’s not the smallest orb which thou behold’st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls,
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it:
Come ho! and wake Diana with a hymn,
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress’ ear,
And draw her home with music.

Philip Goodwin reading the part of Oberon; Alex Piper reading the part of Puck, from A Midsummer Night’s Dream act 2, scene 1.

OBERON. My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin’s back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the sea-maid’s music?

PUCK. I remember.

OBERON. That very time I saw (but thou couldst not)
Flying between the cold moon and the earth
Cupid all armed: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal thronèd by the west,
And loosed his loveshaft smartly from his bow
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
But I might see young Cupid’s fiery shaft
Quenched in the chaste beams of the watery moon;
And the imperial votress passèd on
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before, milk-white; now purple with love’s wound:
And maidens call it ‘love-in-idleness’.
Fetch me that flower, the herb I showed thee once;
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb, and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

Jenny Donovan reading the part of Olivia; Shayna Blass reading the part of Viola, from Twelfth Night act 1, scene 5.

VIOLA. If I did love you in my master’s flame,
   With such a suffering, such a deadly life,
   In your denial I would find no sense;
   I would not understand it.

OLIVIA. Why, what would you?

VIOLA. Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
   And call upon my soul within the house;
   Write loyal cantons of contemned love
   And sing them loud even in the dead of night;
   Halloo your name to the reverberate hills
   And make the babbling gossip of the air
   Cry out ‘Olivia!’ O, you should not rest
   Between the elements of air and earth,
   But you should pity me!
Ted van Griethuysen reading the part of Caliban, from *The Tempest* act 3, scene 2.

CALIBAN. Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises,
   Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
   Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
   Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices,
   That if I then had waked after long sleep,
   Will make me sleep again; and then in dreaming,
   The clouds, methought, would open and show riches
   Ready to drop upon me, that, when I waked
   I cried to dream again.

Hannah Yelland reading the part of the Fairy, from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* act 2, scene 1.

FAIRY. Over hill, over dale,
    Thorough bush, thorough briar,
    Over park, over pale,
    Thorough flood, thorough fire;
    I do wander everywhere
    Swifter than the moon’s sphere;
    And I serve the Fairy Queen,
    To dew her orbs upon the green.
    The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
    In their gold coats spots you see –
    Those be rubies, fairy favours,
    In those freckles live their savours.
I must go seek some dewdrops here,  
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

Nathan Winkelstein reading the part of Romeo from *Romeo and Juliet* act 2, scene 2.

ROMEO. But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?  
   It is the east and Juliet is the sun!  
   Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
   Who is already sick and pale with grief,  
   That thou her maid art far more fair than she.  
   Be not her maid, since she is envious;  
   Her vestal livery is but sick and green,  
   And none but fools do wear it. Cast it off.  
   It is my lady, O, it is my love!  
   O that she knew she were!  
   She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that?  
   Her eye discourses, I will answer it.  
   I am too bold: 'tis not to me she speaks.  
   Two of the fairest stars in all the heavens,  
   Having some business, do entreat her eyes  
   To twinkle in their spheres till they return.  
   What if her eyes were there, they in her head?  
   The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,  
   As daylight doth a lamp. Her eyes in heaven  
   Would through the airy region stream so bright  
   That birds would sing and think it were not night.  
   See how she leans her cheek upon her hand  
   O that I were a glove upon that hand,  
   That I might touch that cheek!
JULIET. Ay me!

ROMEO. She speaks.
O, speak again, bright angel, for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o’er my head,
As is a winged messenger of heaven
Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
When he bestrides the lazy-puffing clouds
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

Jessica Shearer reading the part of Hero; Jenny Donovan reading the part of Margaret; Shayna Blass reading the part of Ursula from Much Ado About Nothing act 3 scene 1.

HERO. Good Margaret, run thee to the parlor,
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice,
Proposing with the prince and Claudio,
Whisper her ear and tell her I and Ursley
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her, say that thou overheard’st us,
And bid her steal into the pleachèd bower,
Where honeysuckles ripened by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter: like favorites
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride,
Against that power that bred it: there will she hide her,
To listen our propose: this is thy office,
Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.
MARGARET. I’ll make her come I warrant you, presently.  

HERO. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,  
As we do trace this alley up and down,  
Our talk must only be of Benedick:  
When I do name him, let it be thy part,  
To praise him more than ever man did merit:  
My talk to thee must be how Benedick  
Is sick in love with Beatrice: of this matter  
Is little Cupid’s crafty arrow made,  
That only wounds by hearsay: now begin,  

Enter BEATRICE  

For look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs  
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.  

URSULA. The pleasant’st angling is to see the fish  
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,  
And greedily devour the treacherous bait:  
So angle we for Beatrice, who even now,  
Is couchèd in the woodbine coverture:  
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

Tara Giordano reading Sonnet 104, by William Shakespeare.

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,  
For as you were when first your eye I ey’d,  
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold,  
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd,
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah! yet doth beauty like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceiv'd;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceiv'd:
   For fear of which, hear this thou age unbred:
   Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

Edward Gero reading the part of Lear; Nathan Winkelstein reading the part of Kent, from *King Lear* act 3, scene 2.

LEAR. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage! Blow!

   You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drenched our steeplees, drowned the cocks!
   You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
   Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
   Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
   Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
   Crack nature's molds, all germens spill at once,
   That make ingrateful man!
   [...]  
   Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! Spout, rain!
   Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
   I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
   I never gave you kingdom, called you children,
   You owe me no subscription: then let fall
   Your horrible pleasure: here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man: 
But yet I call you servile ministers, 
That have with two pernicious daughters joined 
Your high-engendered battles 'gainst a head 
So old and white as this. O! O! ‘tis foul!

[...] 

KENT. Alas, sir, are you here? Things that love night
Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,
And make them keep their caves: since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard: man’s nature cannot carry
The affliction nor the fear.

LEAR. 
Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pother o’er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipp’d of justice: hide thee, thou bloody hand;
Thou perjured, and thou similar man of virtue
That art incestuous: caitiff, to pieces shake,
That under covert and convenient seeming
Hast practiced on man’s life: close pent-up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents, and cry
These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man
More sinned against than sinning.

Jenny Leone reading the part of Juliet; Sam Lilija reading the part of
Romeo, from *Romeo and Juliet* act 3, scene 5.

JULIET. Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day:
   It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
   That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;
   Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree:
   Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

ROMEO. It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
   No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks
   Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:
   Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
   Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.
   I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

JULIET. Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I:
   It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
   To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
   And light thee on thy way to Mantua:
   Therefore stay yet; thou need'st not be gone.

ROMEO. Let me be ta’en, let me be put to death;
   I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
   I'll say yon grey is not the morning’s eye,
   ’Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia’s brow;
   Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
   The vaulty heaven so high above our heads:
   I have more care to stay than will to go:
   Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.
   How is’t, my soul? Let’s talk; it is not day.
JULIET. It is, it is: hie hence, be gone, away!
   It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
   Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.
   Some say the lark makes sweet division;
   This doth not so, for she divideth us:
   Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes,
   O, now I would they have changed voices too!
   Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,
   Hunting thee hence with hunt's-up to the day,
   O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

ROMEO. More light and light; more dark and dark our woes!

Allison Leigh Corke reading Sonnet 130, by William Shakespeare.

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:
   And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
   As any she belied with false compare.
Tom Story reading the part of The Clown; Ted van Griethuysen reading the part of The Shepherd, from The Winter’s Tale act 3, scene 3.

CLOWN. I have seen two such sights, by sea and by land! But I am not to say it is a sea, for it is now the sky; betwixt the firmament and it you cannot thrust a bodkin’s point.

SHEPHERD. Why, boy, how is it?

CLOWN. I would you did but see how it chafes, how it rages, how it takes up the shore; but that’s not to the point. O, the most piteous cry of the poor souls! Sometimes to see ‘em, and not to see ‘em; now the ship boring the moon with her mainmast, and anon swallowed with yeast and froth, as you’d thrust a cork into a hogshead. And then for the land-service, to see how the bear tore out his shoulder-bone, how he cried to me for help, and said his name was Antigonus, a nobleman! But to make an end of the ship – to see how the sea flapdragoned it! But first, how the poor souls roared, and the sea mocked them, and how the poor gentleman roared, and the bear mocked him, both roaring louder than the sea or weather.

SHEPHERD. Name of mercy, when was this, boy?

CLOWN. Now, now. I have not winked since I saw these sights. The men are not yet cold under water, nor the bear half dined on the gentleman – he’s at it now.
Hannah Yelland reading the part of Gertrude; Tom Story reading the part of Laertes from Hamlet, act 4, scene 2.

GERTRUDE. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
    That show his hoar leaves in the glassy stream
    Therewith fantastic garlands did she make
    Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples
    That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
    But our cold maids do dead men’s fingers call them:
    There, on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds
    Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
    When down her weedy trophies and herself
    Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
    And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:
    Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds;
    As one incapable of her own distress,
    Or like a creature native and indued
    Unto that element: but long it could not be
    Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
    Pulled to the poor wretch from her melodious lay
    To muddy death.

LAERTES. Alas, then, she is drown’d?

GERTRUDE. Drown’d, drown’d.

Alex Piper reading the part of Valentine from Two Gentlemen of Verona, act 5, scene 4.
VALENTINE. How use doth breed a habit in a man!
   This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,
   I better brook than flourishing peopled towns:
   Here can I sit alone, unseen of any,
   And to the nightingale's complaining notes
   Tune my distresses and record my woes.
   O thou that dost inhabit in my breast,
   Leave not the mansion so long tenantless,
   Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall
   And leave no memory of what it was!
   Repair me with thy presence, Silvia;
   Thou gentle nymph, cherish thy forlorn swain.
   What halloing and what stir is this today?
   These are my mates, that make their wills their law,
   Have some unhappy passenger in chase.
   They love me well; yet I have much to do
   To keep them from uncivil outrages.
   Withdraw thee, Valentine: who's this comes here?

Jenny Donovan reading Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare.

   Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
   Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
   Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
   And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
   Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
   And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
   And every fair from fair sometime declines,
   By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed:
   But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,
  So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
  So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

**Philip Goodwin reading the part of Duke Senior from As You Like It, act 2, scene 1.**

**DUKE SENIOR.** Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile
  Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
  Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
  More free from peril than the envious court?
  Here feel we not the penalty of Adam.
  The seasons’ difference – as the icy fang
  And churlish chiding of the winter’s wind –
  Which when it bites and blows upon my body
  Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say,
  ‘This is no flattery’ – These are counselors
  That feelingly persuade me what I am.
  Sweet are the uses of adversity
  Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
  Wears yet a precious jewel in his head,
  And this our life exempt from public haunt,
  Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
  Sermons in stones, and good in everything.