

## **Pradės aušrelė aušti** **Dawn Begins to Break**

*Lithuanian folk song*

*Arrangement: Bronius Budriūnas*

“Dawn Begins to Break” is a song (also a dance) in the matchmaking / wedding category. It’s early morning, the approaching dawn begins to lighten the sky and disperse the darkness. For farmers, the morning and evening stars would mark the workday’s beginning and end.

The first verses describe the upcoming day: dawn begins to break, roosters begin to crow; they won’t let the young man sleep. Or perhaps he can’t sleep because he has a young girl on his mind. The rooster is an ancient symbol of dawn, awakening, alertness, and rebirth. A rooster also signifies orderliness. Primarily, however, a rooster is a symbol of fertility.

The young man rides as fast as he can and stops his horse by the building where he thinks the young girl is sleeping. The hurried ride is impressive, but also suspicious – why is the young man making an appearance before sunrise? His business is urgent – to catch the young girl by surprise, unawares and without her parents.

“Is this a door, or is it a wall, or is my fair maiden sleeping alone?” The young man is having his doubts. He has ridden into unfamiliar surroundings and begins to wonder, whether the young girl is sleeping alone or with her mother. Young girls would be protected by their parents and brothers to ensure that nothing untoward would occur before a wedding to a suitably selected man. Unfortunately for the rider, the young girl is sleeping with her mother watching over her. The mother chastises the young man for showing up uninvited so early in the morning, and orders him to let her daughter sleep in peace. Evidently this young man was not approved of by the parents. The fact that the young girl needs her sleep may also indicate that she is too young for marriage.