Hello – I’m Dawn Keetley, Professor of English and Film at Lehigh University in Bethlehem Pennsylvania.

Part of the *Gothic* Elements series, *this* element - *Folk Gothic* – emerged from my sense of the ubiquity of folk horror: suddenly it seemed like every other new novel or film was being advertised as folk horror’. But was it? I began to think that perhaps the term was being stretched too far – and that there were meaningful distinctions to be made between folk *horror* and what I’m calling folk *gothic*.

The first two chapters of my element take up two fundamental and unsurprising questions: what is folk horror? And what is folk gothic? I lay out definitions - and then I explore what the distinction actually looks like by reading 6 films on a continuum from folk horror at one end to folk gothic at the other. I begin with Neil Marshall’s *The Descent* from 2005, which illuminates how straight up ‘horror’ becomes folk horror. I then read films that progressively exemplify folk horror – [FIGURE 1] Eli Roth’s *The Green Inferno* from 2013 and Ari Aster’s *Midsommar* from 2019. Finally, I look at films that move toward folk gothic – [FIGURE 2] David Bruckner’s 2017 film *The Ritual,* Mary Lambert’s *Pet Sematary* (from 1989) and – [FIGURE 3] the perfect example of the folk gothic - Ben Wheatley’s 2021 film *In the Earth*.

In the final two chapters, I offer readings of texts that form a potential Folk Gothic tradition. All of them center recursive not linear time, artefacts, rituals that are absent people, and place. You’ll find fiction by Eleanor Scott and E. F. Benson from the 1920s, Alan Garner’s 1967 novel *The Owl Service* and its TV adaptation, and Lee Haven Jones’ 2021 Welsh film *The Feast*. All stand, I argue, as Folk Gothic.

This book offers, I hope, a lot of provocative definitions of the distinctly “Folk Gothic” as well as readings of both folk horror and folk gothic texts that support my argument about their difference. Above all, I hope this book is much less the last word than the start of a conversation.