

WIGMORE HALL

Sunday 13 November 2022
3.00pm

Samsara

Kate Lindsey mezzo-soprano
Gary Matthewman piano

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Frauenliebe und -leben Op. 42 (1840)

*Seit ich ihn gesehen • Er, der Herrlichste von allen •
Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben •
Du Ring an meinem Finger • Helft mir, ihr Schwestern •
Süßes Freund, du blickest •
An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust •
Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan*

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

La chanson d'Eve Op. 95 (1906-10)

*Paradis • Prima verba • Roses ardentes •
Comme dieu rayonne • L'aube blanche • Eau vivante •
Veilles-tu, ma senteur de soleil? •
Dans un parfum de roses blanches • Crépuscule •
O mort, poussière d'étoiles*

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The representation of women in song is a fraught topic. In poems written by men and set to music by male composers – the configuration that dominates the common repertoire – women are often absent except as objects of a protagonist’s desire. The two song cycles in this concert, by the poet-composer pairings of Adelbert von Chamisso and Robert Schumann, and Charles van Lerberghe and Gabriel Fauré, present something unusual in their extended and very different visions of womanhood and femininity. Both address ideas of archetypal women, be that the nameless domestic ‘everywoman’ of *Frauenliebe und -leben*, or the original Biblical woman of *La chanson d’Eve*.

There is likely no other song cycle that has been the subject of such vociferous feminist debate as Schumann’s *Frauenliebe und -leben* – a cycle that traces a woman’s life through the stages of her relationship with a man. The cycle was one of several major works written in Schumann’s abundantly creative *Liederjahr* (‘year of song’) of 1840, the year in which he was finally able to marry Clara Wieck. Schumann’s sense of anticipation for the milestones of their life together was surely behind his enthusiasm for Chamisso’s poems, but the domestic woman of the songs is clearly not an image of his own future wife, who would maintain a busy career as a pianist, composer and editor during her married life, motherhood and widowhood. In the first song, the protagonist encounters her future husband for the first time, and the rest of the world fades away; in the second, she extols his beauty and character but feels unworthy of his love; next comes her giddy excitement that he *does* love her. The middle sequence concerns the run-up to and aftermath of marriage, with her pregnancy implied in the sixth (Schumann omits the verse that makes the pregnancy explicit); the seventh concerns the joys of motherhood, and the eighth brings the pain of the husband’s death. Chamisso’s final poem shifts the temporality of the cycle into the future: the woman advises her granddaughter as she passes similar milestones. While Schumann didn’t include this poem, he did incorporate a sense of retrospection into his final song, through the return of the music of the cycle’s opening in the piano’s postlude. Throughout, there is little indication of the woman’s life outside of this romantic-domestic narrative.

To many, the cycle seems prescriptive, oppressive, and fundamentally out of kilter with modern gender norms (it is, after all, a 19th-century work). Pioneering feminist musicologists have all reached very different conclusions about whether historical contextualisation can allow us to understand the cycle more positively; singers and pianists too have been split in their stances towards performing the songs. One point often made is that Chamisso was in fact known for his progressive politics, and that his poems were ahead of their time in presenting a woman’s perspective, especially with such clear depictions of emotion and aspiration – in a sense, the story is of a

successful romantic catch on the woman’s part. Another consideration is that *Frauenliebe und -leben* has typically been championed by women rather than men. The cycle was recorded by Julia Culp as early as 1909, and its discography boasts many of the great female singers of the 20th Century; when women sing the cycle today, they build upon this rich performance history. Ultimately, many feel that the cycle expresses fundamental human emotions that transcend matters of gender, and that the music stands amongst Schumann’s best.

Schumann’s songs were written in a creative flurry during a year of youthful romantic excitement. Fauré’s situation was quite different: by the time he started composing *La chanson d’Eve* in 1906, he was in his 60s, and at the height of his career as director of the Conservatoire de Paris – a position of enormous prestige, influence and responsibility. During his tenure, Fauré brought about many modernising changes at the famously conservative institution, including in relation to the teaching of vocal students and composers: the rarified tradition of French *mélodie* had reigned supreme for decades, but Fauré wished for German Lieder to be incorporated into the curriculum to a greater degree. The composer’s own song-writing style was also undergoing a shift: while his earlier songs were famed primarily for their melodic inspiration, his late songs brought greater harmonic sophistication, and refined and spare textures. The musicologist Katherine Bergeron has contextualised Fauré’s innovations in *La chanson d’Eve* within a wider reform of French song in the early 20th Century that drove towards a ‘more intimate, more intelligent, more human art of singing’.

Fauré selected ten poems out of 96 from Lerberghe’s *La chanson d’Eve*, which was published in 1904. Lerberghe was a Belgian symbolist author, and his epic vision of Eve is filled with potent images of nature and femininity. Fauré worked on the cycle from 1906, and selections of the songs were premièred in 1908 and 1909; the complete cycle was premièred in April 1910, sung by Jeanne Raunay with Fauré at the piano. The opening of the first song, ‘Paradis’, demonstrates the composer’s pared-back style to great effect: the song introduces the creation of the world through elemental musical building-blocks of basic intervals and steps; increased textural complexity comes thereafter. Following our introduction to Eve in ‘Paradis’ – which is by far the longest song – the remaining songs mostly unfold from her perspective. In ‘Prima verba’ she marvels as her voice brings the world around her to life; following songs are ecstatic meditations upon roses, the radiance of God, the dawn, water, and so on. In ‘Crépuscule’, Eve hears a piercing cry of pain, and begins to confront her mortality; her death comes in the beautiful, stark final song, ‘O mort, poussière d’étoiles’.

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Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Frauenliebe und -leben Op. 42 (1840)

Adelbert von Chamisso

Seit ich ihn gesehen

Since first seeing him

Seit ich ihn gesehen,
Glaub' ich blind zu sein;
Wo ich hin nur blicke,
Seh' ich ihn allein;
Wie im wachen Traume
Schwebt sein Bild mir vor,
Taucht aus tiefstem
Dunkel
Heller nur empor.

Since first seeing him,
I think I am blind;
wherever I look,
I see only him;
as in a waking dream
his image hovers before me,
rising out of deepest
darkness
ever more brightly.

Sonst ist licht- und farblos
Alles um mich her,
Nach der Schwestern Spiele
Nicht begehrt ich mehr,
Möchte lieber weinen
Still im Kämmerlein;
Seit ich ihn gesehen,
Glaub' ich blind zu sein.

All else is dark and pale
around me,
my sisters' games
I no more long to share,
I would rather weep
quietly in my little room;
since first seeing him,
I think I am blind.

Er, der Herrlichste von allen

He, the most wonderful of all

Er, der Herrlichste von
allen,
Wie so milde, wie so gut!
Holde Lippen, klares Auge,
Heller Sinn und fester
Mut.

He, the most wonderful of
all,
how gentle and loving he is!
Sweet lips, bright eyes,
a clear mind and firm
resolve.

So wie dort in blauer
Tiefe,
Hell und herrlich, jener
Stern,
Also er an meinem Himmel,
Hell und herrlich, hehr und
fern.

Just as there in the deep-
blue distance
that star gleams bright
and brilliant,
so does he shine in my sky,
bright and brilliant,
distant and sublime.

Wandle, wandle deine
Bahnen;
Nur betrachten deinen
Schein,
Nur in Demut ihn betrachten,
Selig nur und traurig sein!

Wander, wander on your
way;
just to gaze on your
radiance,
just to gaze on in humility,
to be but blissful and sad!

Höre nicht mein stilles
Beteten,
Deinem Glücke nur
geweiht;
Darfst mich niedre Magd
nicht kennen,
Hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!
Nur die Würdigste von
allen
Darf beglücken deine Wahl,
Und ich will die Hohe
segnen,
Viele tausendmal.

Do not heed my silent
prayer,
uttered for your
happiness alone;
you shall never know my
lowly self,
you noble star of splendour!
Only the worthiest
woman of all
may your choice bless,
and I shall bless that
exalted one
many thousands of times.

Will mich freuen dann und
weinen,
Selig, selig bin ich dann;
Sollte mir das Herz auch
brechen,
Brich, o Herz, was liegt
daran?

I shall then rejoice and
weep,
blissful, blissful I shall be;
even if my heart should
break,
break, O heart, what does
it matter?

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben

I cannot grasp it

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht
glauben,
Es hat ein Traum mich
berückt;
Wie hätt' er doch unter
allen
Mich Arme erhöht und
beglückt?

I cannot grasp it, believe
it,
a dream has beguiled me;
how, from all women,
could he
have exalted and
favoured poor me?

Mir war's, er habe gesprochen:
„Ich bin auf ewig dein“ –
Mir war's – ich träume noch
immer,
Es kann ja nimmer so sein.

He said, I thought,
'I am yours forever,'
I was, I thought, still
dreaming,
after all, it can never be.

O lass im Traume mich sterben,
Gewieget an seiner Brust,
Den seligsten Tod mich
schlüpfen
In Tränen unendlicher Lust.

O let me, dreaming, die,
cradled on his breast;
let me savour blissful
death
in tears of endless joy.

Du Ring an meinem Finger

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringelein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

Ich hatt' ihn ausgeträumet,
Der Kindheit friedlich
schönen Traum,
Ich fand allein mich, verloren
Im öden unendlichen Raum.

Du Ring an meinem Finger
Da hast du mich erst belehrt,
Hast meinem Blick erschlossen
Des Lebens unendlichen,
tiefen Wert.

Ich will ihm dienen, ihm leben,
Ihm angehören ganz,
Hin selber mich geben und finden
Verklärt mich in seinem Glanz.

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
Mein goldenes Ringelein,
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern
Freundlich mich schmücken,
Dient der Glücklichen heute mir,
Windet geschäftig
Mir um die Stirne
Noch der blühenden Myrte Zier.

Als ich befriedigt,
Freudigen Herzens,
Sonst dem Geliebten im Arme lag,
Immer noch rief er,
Sehnsucht im Herzen,
Ungeduldig den heutigen Tag.

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
Helft mir verscheuchen
Eine törichte Bangigkeit;
Dass ich mit klarem

You ring on my finger

You ring on my finger,
my golden little ring,
I press you devoutly to my lips,
to my heart.

I had finished dreaming
childhood's peaceful dream,
I found myself alone, forlorn
in boundless desolation.

You ring on my finger,
you first taught me,
opened my eyes
to life's deep eternal worth.

I shall serve him, live for him,
belong to him wholly,
yield to him and find
myself transfigured in his light.

You ring on my finger,
my golden little ring,
I press you devoutly to my lips,
to my heart.

Help me, O sisters

Help me, O sisters,
with my bridal attire,
serve me today in my joy,
busily braid
about my brow
the wreath of blossoming myrtle.

When with contentment
and joy in my heart
lay in my beloved's arms,
he still called,
with longing heart,
impatiently for this day.

Help me, my sisters,
help me banish
a foolish fearfulness;
so that I with bright eyes

Aug' ihn empfangen,
Ihn, die Quelle der Freudigkeit.

Bist, mein Geliebter,
Du mir erschienen,
Gibst du mir, Sonne, deinen
Schein?

Lass mich in Andacht,
Lass mich in Demut,
Lass mich verneigen dem
Herren mein.

Streuet ihm, Schwestern,
Streuet ihm Blumen,
Bringet ihm knospende
Rosen dar,
Aber euch, Schwestern,
Grüss' ich mit Wehmut,
Freudig scheidend aus eurer
Schar.

Süsser Freund, du blickest

Süsser Freund, du blickest
Mich verwundert an,
Kannst es nicht begreifen,
Wie ich weinen kann;
Lass der feuchten Perlen
Ungewohnte Zier
Freudig hell erzittern
In dem Auge mir!

Wie so bang mein Busen,
Wie so wonnevoll!
Wusst' ich nur mit Worten,
Wie ich's sagen soll;
Komm und birg dein Antlitz
Hier an meiner Brust,
Will ins Ohr dir flüstern
Alle meine Lust.

Weisst du nun die
Tränen,
Die ich weinen kann,
Sollst du nicht sie sehen,
Du geliebter Mann?
Bleib' an meinem Herzen,
Fühle dessen Schlag,
Dass ich fest und fester
Nur dich drücken mag.

Hier an meinem Bette
Hat die Wiege
Raum,
Wo sie still verberge
Meinen holden Traum;
Kommen wird der Morgen,
Wo der Traum erwacht,

may receive him,
the source of my joy.

Have you, my love,
really entered my life,
do you, O sun, give me
your glow?
Let me in reverence,
let me in humility
bow before my lord.

Scatter flowers, O sisters,
scatter flowers before him,
bring him budding roses.
But you, sisters,
I greet with sadness,
as I joyfully take leave of you.

Sweet friend, you look

Sweet friend, you look
at me in wonder,
you cannot understand
how I can weep;
let the unfamiliar beauty
of these moist pearls
tremble joyfully bright
in my eyes!

How anxious my heart is,
how full of bliss!
If only I knew
how to say it in words;
come and hide your face
here against my breast,
for me to whisper you
all my joy.

Do you now understand
the tears
that I can weep,
should you not see them,
beloved husband?
Stay by my heart,
feel how it beats,
that I may press you
closer and closer.

Here by my bed
there is room for the
cradle,
silently hiding
my blissful dream;
the morning shall come
when the dream awakens,

Und daraus dein Bildnis
Mir entgegen lacht.

and your likeness
laughs up at me.

**An meinem Herzen, an
meiner Brust**

**On my heart, at my
breast**

An meinem Herzen, an
meiner Brust,
Du meine Wonne, du meine
Lust!

On my heart, at my
breast,
you my delight, my
joy!

Das Glück ist die Liebe, die
Lieb' ist das Glück,
Ich hab's gesagt und nehm's
nicht zurück.

Happiness is love, love is
happiness,
I've always said and say
so still.

Hab' überschwenglich mich
geschätzt,
Bin übergücklich aber
jetzt.

I thought myself
rapturous,
but now am delirious with
joy.

Nur die da säugt, nur die da
liebt
Das Kind, dem sie die
Nahrung gibt;

Only she who suckles,
only she who loves
the child that she
nourishes;

Nur eine Mutter weiss allein,
Was lieben heisst und
glücklich sein.

Only a mother knows
what it means to love and
be happy.

O, wie bedaur' ich doch den
Mann,
Der Mutterglück nicht fühlen
kann!

Ah, how I pity the
man
who cannot feel a
mother's bliss!

Du lieber, lieber Engel, Du,
Du schauest mich an und
lächelst dazu!

You dear, dear angel, you,
you look at me and you
smile!

An meinem Herzen, an
meiner Brust,
Du meine Wonne, du meine
Lust!

On my heart, at my
breast,
you my delight, my
joy!

**Nun hast du mir den
ersten Schmerz getan**

**Now you have
caused me my first
pain**

Nun hast du mir den ersten
Schmerz getan,
Der aber traf.
Du schläfst, du harter,
unbarmherz'ger Mann,
Den Todesschlaf.

Now you have caused me
my first pain,
but it struck hard.
You sleep, you harsh and
pitiless man,
the sleep of death.

Es blicket die Verlassne vor
sich hin,
Die Welt ist leer.
Geliebet hab' ich und gelebt,
ich bin
Nicht lebend mehr.

The deserted one stares
ahead,
the world is void.
I have loved and I have
lived,
and now my life is done.

Ich zieh' mich in mein Innres
still zurück,
Der Schleier fällt,
Da hab' ich dich und mein
verlornes Glück,
Du meine Welt!

Silently I withdraw into
myself,
the veil falls,
there I have you and my
lost happiness,
you, my world!

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

La chanson d'Eve

Op. 95 (1906-10)

Charles van Lerberghe

The song of Eve

Paradis

C'est le premier matin du monde.

Comme une fleur confuse exhalée de la nuit,

Au souffle nouveau qui se lève des ondes,

Un jardin bleu s'épanouit.

Tout s'y confond encore et tout s'y mêle,

Frissons de feuilles, chants d'oiseaux,

Glissements d'ailes,

Sources qui sourdent, voix des airs, voix des eaux,

Murmure immense;

Et qui pourtant est du silence.

Ouvrant à la clarté ses doux et vagues yeux

La jeune et divine Ève S'est éveillée de Dieu.

Et le monde à ses pieds s'étend comme un beau rêve.

Or Dieu lui dit: Va, fille humaine,

Et donne à tous les êtres

Que j'ai créés, une parole de tes lèvres,

Un son pour les connaître.

Et Eve s'en alla, docile à son seigneur,

En son bosquet de roses,

Donnant à toutes choses

Une parole, un son de ses lèvres de fleur:

Chose qui fuit, chose qui souffle, chose qui vole ...

Cependant le jour passe, et vague, comme à l'aube,

Au crépuscule, peu à peu,

L'Eden s'endort et se dérobe

Dans le silence d'un songe bleu.

Paradise

It is the first morning of creation.

Like an abashed flower breathed on the night air,

with the pristine whisperings that rise from the waves,

a blue garden blooms.

Everything is still blurred and indistinct,

trembling leaves, singing birds,

gliding wings,

springs that rise, voices of air and water,

an immense murmuring; which yet is silence.

Opening to the light her soft and vacant eyes,

young, heaven-born Eve is awakened by God.

And the world lies at her feet like a lovely dream.

Now God says to her: Go, daughter of man,

and bestow on all beings

that I have created a word from your lips,

a sound that we might know them by.

And Eve went, obedient to her Lord,

into her rose grove,

bestowing on all things

a word, a sound from her flower-like lips:

On all that runs, that breathes, that flies ...

Day meanwhile passes, and hazy, as at dawn,

Eden sinks slowly to sleep in the twilight and steals away

in the silence of a blue dream.

La voix s'est tue, mais tout l'écoute encore,

Tout demeure en attente;

Lorsque avec le lever de l'étoile du soir,

Eve chante.

The voice is hushed, but everything still hearkens,

waiting in expectation;

when with the rising of the evening star,

Eve sings.

Prima verba

Comme elle chante

Dans ma voix,

L'âme longtemps murmurante

Des fontaines et des bois!

Air limpide du paradis,

Avec tes grappes de rubis,

Avec tes gerbes de lumière,

Avec tes roses et tes fruits;

Quelle merveille en nous à cette heure!

Des paroles depuis des âges endormies

En des sons, en des fleurs,

Sur mes lèvres enfin prennent vie.

Depuis que mon souffle a dit leur chanson,

Depuis que ma voix les a créées,

Quel silence heureux et profond

Naît de leurs âmes allégées!

The first words

How it sings

in my voice,

the constantly murmuring soul

of the springs and woods!

Clear air of paradise

with your ruby grape-clusters,

with your sheafs of light,

with your roses and your fruits;

How we marvel at such a moment!

Words that had slumbered for aeons

finally come to life on my lips as sounds, as flowers.

Since my breath uttered their song,

since my voice created them,

what deep and blissful silence

is born from their unburdened souls!

Roses ardentes

Roses ardentes

Dans l'immobile nuit,

C'est en vous que je chante,

Et que je suis.

Fiery roses

Fiery roses

in the motionless night,

it is in you that I sing

and have my being.

En vous, étincelles,

A la cime des bois,

Que je suis éternelle,

Et que je vois.

It is in you, gleaming stars

high in the forests,

that I am eternal

and given sight.

O mer profonde,

C'est en toi que mon sang

Renaît vague blonde,

Et flot dansant.

O deep sea,

it is in you that my blood

is reborn, white wave

and dancing tide.

Et c'est en toi, force

suprême,

Soleil radieux,

And it is in you, supreme

force,

radiant sun,

Que mon âme elle-même
Atteint son dieu!

that my very soul
reaches its God!

Comme Dieu rayonne How radiant is God

Comme Dieu rayonne
aujourd'hui,
Comme il exulte, comme il
fleurit
Parmi ces roses et ces
fruits!

How radiant is God
today,
how he exults and
blossoms
among these roses and
fruits!

Comme il murmure en cette
fontaine!
Ah! comme il chante en ces
oiseaux ...
Qu'elle est suave son haleine
Dans l'odorant printemps
nouveau!

How he murmurs in this
fountain!
Ah! how he sings in these
birds...
How sweet is his breath
in the new fragrant
spring!

Comme il se baigne dans la
lumière
Avec amour, mon jeune dieu!
Toutes les choses de la terre
Sont ses vêtements radieux.

How he bathes in
light
with love, my young God!
All earthly things
are his dazzling raiments.

L'aube blanche The white dawn

L'aube blanche dit à mon
rêve:
Eveille-toi, le soleil luit.
Mon âme écoute, et je
soulève
Un peu mes paupières vers lui.

The white dawn says to
my dream:
awake, the sun is shining.
My soul listens, and I raise
my eyes a little towards it.

Un rayon de lumière touche
La pâle fleur de mes yeux
bleus;
Une flamme éveille ma
bouche,
Un souffle éveille mes
cheveux.

A ray of light touches
the pale flower of my blue
eyes;
a flame awakens my
mouth,
a breeze awakens my
hair.

Et mon âme, comme une rose
Tremblante, lente, tout le
jour,
S'éveille à la beauté des
choses,
Comme mon cœur à leur
amour.

And my soul, like a rose
that is trembling and
listless all day,
awakens to the beauty of
things,
as my heart awakens to
their love.

Eau vivante Spring water

Que tu es simple et
claire,
Eau vivante,
Qui, du sein de la
terre,

How simple and clear you
are,
spring water,
who, from the heart of the
earth,

Jaillis en ces bassins et
chantes!

surges into these pools
and sings!

O fontaine divine et pure,
Les plantes aspirent
Ta liquide clarté;
La biche et la colombe en toi
se désaltèrent.

O divine, pure fountain,
the plants breathe in
your liquid limpidity;
the doe and the dove
quench in you their thirst.

Et tu descends par des
pentes douces
De fleurs et de mousses,
Vers l'océan originel,
Toi qui passes et vas, sans
cesse, et jamais lasse
De la terre à la mer et de la
mer au ciel.

And you descend by the
gentle banks
of flowers and moss
towards the primeval ocean,
you who come and go,
without cease or fatigue,
from the land to the sea and
from the sea to the sky.

Veilles-tu, ma senteur de soleil? Are you awake, my fragrant sun?

Veilles-tu, ma senteur de
soleil,
Mon arôme d'abeilles
blondes,
Flottes-tu sur le
monde,
Mon doux parfum de miel?

Are you awake, my
fragrant sun,
my scent of bright-
coloured bees,
do you drift across the
world,
my sweet aroma of honey?

La nuit, lorsque mes pas
Dans le silence rôdent,
M'annonces-tu, senteur de
mes lilas,
Et de mes roses
chaudes?

At night, while my steps
prowl in the silence,
do you, who scent my
lilacs
and vivid roses, proclaim
me?

Suis-je comme une grappe
de fruits
Cachés dans les feuilles,
Et que rien ne décèle,
Mais qu'on odore dans la
nuit?

Am I like a bunch of
fruit
hidden in the foliage,
that nothing reveals
but whose fragrance is
felt at night?

Sait-il, à cette heure,
Que j'entr'ouvre ma
chevelure,
Et qu'elle respire;
Le sent-il sur la terre?

Does he know at this hour
that I am loosening my
tresses
and that they are breathing;
does he sense it on earth?

Sent-il que j'étends les
bras,
Et que des lys de mes vallées

Does he sense that I
reach out my arms,
and that my voice – which
he cannot hear –

Ma voix qu'il n'entend pas
Est embaumée?

is fragrant
with lilies from my valleys?

Dans un parfum de roses blanches

Dans un parfum de roses blanches
Elle est assise et songe;
Et l'ombre est belle
comme s'il s'y mirait un ange.

L'ombre descend, le bosquet dort;
Entre les feuilles et les branches,
Sur le paradis bleu s'ouvre un paradis d'or.

Une voix qui chantait, tout à l'heure, murmure.
Un murmure s'exhale en haleine, et s'éteint.

Dans le silence il tombe des pétales ...

Crépuscule

Ce soir, à travers le bonheur,
Qui donc soupire, qu'est-ce qui pleure?
Qu'est-ce qui vient palpiter sur mon cœur,
Comme un oiseau blessé?

Est-ce une voix future,
Une voix du passé?
J'écoute, jusqu'à la souffrance,
Ce son dans le silence.

Ile d'oubli, ô Paradis!
Quel cri déchire, dans la nuit,
Ta voix qui me berce?

Quel cri traverse
Ta ceinture de fleurs,
Et ton beau voile
d'allégresse?

O mort, poussière d'étoiles

O mort, poussière d'étoiles,
Lève-toi sous mes pas!

Viens, ô douce vague qui brille
Dans les ténèbres;

Amid the scent of white roses

Amid the scent of white roses
she sits and dreams;
and the shade is fair, as if
an angel were mirrored there.

Darkness falls, the grove sleeps;
among the leaves and branches,
a golden paradise opens out over the blue.

A voice which sang but now, now murmurs.
A murmur is breathed, and dies away.

In the silence petals fall ...

Twilight

This evening, amid the happiness,
who is it that sighs and what is it that weeps?
What comes to flutter in my heart,
like a wounded bird?

Is it a premonition,
a voice from the past?
I listen, till it hurts,
to that sound in the silence.

Isle of oblivion, O paradise!
What cry in the night cracks
your voice that cradles me?

What cry pierces
your girdle of flowers,
and your lovely veil of
happiness?

O death, starry dust

O death, starry dust,
rise up where I tread!

Come, gentle wave that shines
in the darkness:

Emporte-moi dans ton néant!

Viens, souffle sombre où je vacille,
Comme une flamme ivre de vent!

C'est en toi que je veux m'étendre,
M'éteindre et me dissoudre,
Mort, où mon âme aspire!

Viens, brise-moi comme une fleur d'écume.
Une fleur de soleil à la cime
Des eaux,

Et comme d'une amphore d'or
Un vin de flamme et d'arome divin,
Epanche mon âme
En ton abîme, pour qu'elle embaume
La terre sombre et le souffle des morts.

bear me off into your void!

Come, dark sigh in which I tremble,
like a wind-intoxicated flame!

It is in you that I wish to be absorbed,
to be extinguished and dissolved,
death, to which my soul aspires!

Come, break me like a flower of foam,
a speck of sun in the crest of the waves,

And like a golden amphora's
flaming wine of heavenly fragrance,
pour my soul
into your abyss, that it might perfume
the dark earth and the breath of the dead.

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