

WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 18 May 2024
7.30pm

Konstantin Krimmel baritone
Ammiel Bushakevitz piano

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

Abendbilder (1877)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Songs of Travel (1901-4)

The vagabond • Let beauty awake • The roadside fire • Youth and love • In dreams • The infinite shining heavens • Whither must I wander? • Bright is the ring of words • I have trod the upward and the downward slope

Interval

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Hoffnung D637 (c.1819)
Am Bach im Frühling D361 (1816)
Nachtstück D672 (1819)
Totengräbers Heimweh D842 (1825)
Gruppe aus dem Tartarus D583 (1817)
Wandrer's Nachtlied I D224 (1815)

Hugo Wolf

From *Mörike Lieder* (1888)
Gebet • Der Feuerreiter



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Wolf composed his 'Abendbilder' in 1877, at the age of 16 and while finding his compositional voice through fast-paced penning of song. The structure is striking: it comprises settings of three odes by Nikolaus Lenau on pastoral, spiritual and classical themes. Wolf's early songs often bear distinct traces of his forebears, and this is no exception: Wolf likely came across the poetry of Lenau in the first place via Schumann's songs; the stringing together of separate songs into a through-composed whole nods to precedents like Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte* and some of Schubert's episodic songs; there are lightning-bolt harmonic shifts – often playing with third-relations – and adventurous transitional passages both characteristic of Schubert; and there is a Wagnerian air to the expansive, reverential ending. As the shepherd sets down his staff and his flute to pray, the sights and sounds of the landscape resonate in our ears; traversing and understanding the land is a recurring trait among this recital's protagonists.

Vaughan Williams selected nine poems from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Songs of Travel* for his eponymous song cycle, which was widely influential upon both contemporaries and younger generations of English song writers. The first eight songs were published – albeit not all together – by 1904, and were **premièred** in this hall by Walter Creighton and Hamilton Harty in December that year. The final song, which acts as a postlude and references themes from the beginning and end of the cycle, was not published until after the composer's death. 'The Vagabond', which begins both Stevenson's and Vaughan Williams's collections, was written by Stevenson 'to an air of Schubert'. The regular, footstep-like chords of the musical setting may call to mind the trudging piano part that so famously opens Schubert's *Winterreise*, but Vaughan Williams's wanderer sets out with a certain spring in his step and rather less existential dread, more like the protagonist of Schubert's *Die Schöne Müllerin*; there is a palpable world-weariness to this traveller, but also a resolute acceptance of his destiny. Prospects of love and domesticity are played off against the freedom (and loneliness) of the wandering lifestyle, and the musical mood shifts from song to song, enhancing poetic visions of bittersweet nostalgia, love and loss and sheer delight in life, art and nature.

'Hoffnung' D367 is Schubert's second setting of a Schiller poem which thematises the persistence of hope and the human urge towards continual self-betterment; there is something stoic in the regular piano figure that underpins the song. In 'Am Bach im Frühling', the piano ripples as does the brook, but here is a protagonist disenchanting by the beauty of the world around him, no longer given hope by the

arrival of spring. Hope seems to drain from the music following the forthright recitativo opening to the third stanza, but the reprise of the flowing opening – literally, as the song follows a *da capo* aria structure – reminds us that rivers will continue to flow, and spring will come again. Another song infused with recitative-like passages, 'Nachtstück' tells the story of an old man turning to the forest with his harp, utterly at one with nature and with death, and greeting death with a lullaby. When he begins to play and sing, we sink into one of Schubert's most magnificent nocturnes, with a gentle arpeggiated 'harp' accompaniment and religious overtones in comforting plagal harmonic motion.

Next, we come crashing back to earth (literally) with the highly contrasting vision of a gravedigger greeting death in 'Totengräbers Heimweh'. It is clear from Schubert's restless, relentless opening music that the gravedigger is not a happy soul – soon confirmed by his agonised articulations of existential exhaustion, abandonment and loneliness – but Schubert adds layers and dimensions to the miserable stock character. The last of the four stanzas is reached around halfway through the song, and with it the music is transformed, not least through the arrival of the steady (if slippery) tonic major key and a slower pace. Towards the end, as the protagonist expresses his desire to 'sink' into death, the right-hand piano figures reach higher and higher in their aspirational ascent towards heaven. We descend into the underworld for 'Gruppe aus dem Tartarus', which is one of Schubert's most striking songs on classical themes – the music vividly brings to life Schiller's visceral, horrifying images of the condemned and their environs. After this, the simplicity of the set's final song is all the more enchanting: the concise, distilled setting (only 11 bars!) of Goethe's 'Wandrer's Nachtlied I' is a paean to calm and inner peace.

Two Wolf songs end the recital, each returning to themes visited before. Both are from the *Mörike Lieder*, setting poetry by the troubled pastor-poet Eduard Mörike; the cycle was written over a decade after the 'Abendbilder', but amidst a similarly prolific flurry of songwriting. In 'Gebet', Wolf's music begins piously, with the air of a church chorale, but as the prayerful protagonist seems to break free from dogma in the second stanza, so too does the music, flowering into lyrical, searching piano lines. The frenzied, supernatural riding song 'Der Feuerreiter' unfolds in a whirl of fire; when the morality tale is over, the protagonist is reduced to ash and – as 'Ruhe wohl' is intoned – we wonder how peaceful his rest will be.

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Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

Abendbilder (1877)

Nikolaus Lenau

Images of evening

1 Friedlicher Abend senkt
sich aufs Gefilde;
Sanft umschlummert Natur,
um ihre Züge
Schwebt der Dämmerung
zarte Verhüllung, und sie
Lächelt, die holde;

A peaceful evening
descends on the fields;
nature gently falls asleep,
around her features
floats the soft veil of
twilight, and she,
the gracious one, smiles;

Lächelt, ein schlummernd
Kind in Vaters
Armen,
Der voll Liebe zu ihr sich
neigt; sein göttlich
Auge weilt auf ihr, und es
weht sein Odem
Über ihr Antlitz.

Smiles, a slumbering
child in the arms of her
father,
who bends lovingly over
her; his divine
eye dwells on her, and his
breath passes
over her countenance.

2 Schon zerfließt das
ferne Gebirg
mit Wolken
In ein Meer; den Wogen
entsteigt der
Mond, er
Grüsst die Flur, entgegen
ihm grüsst
das schönste
Lied Philomelens

Now the distant
mountains dissolve
with the clouds
into a sea; the moon
emerges from the
waves, and
greets the meadow, and
Philomel's most
beautiful song returns
its greeting

Aus dem Blütenstrauche, der
um das Plätzchen
Zarter Liebe heimlichend
sich verschlinget:
Mirzi horchet am Busen des
Jünglings ihrem
Zauberflöte.

From the flowering shrub
that secretly garlands
this place of
tender love:
Mirzi, in her lover's arms,
listens to the
magical fluting.

Dort am Hügel weiden die
Schafe beider
Traulichen Gemenges in
einer Herde,
Ihre Glöcklein stimmen so
lieblich ein zu
Frohen Akkorden.

There on the hillside both
their herds graze
close together in one
single pasture,
their little bells ringing in
charming
harmony.

3 Stille wird's im Walde; die
lieben kleinen
Sänger prüfen schaukelnd
den Ast, der durch die
Nacht dem neuen
Fluge sie trägt,
den neuen
Liedern entgegen.

Silence falls on the forest;
the dear little
singers, shaking the
branch that
bore them during the
night, test it for their
new flights,
and new songs.

Bald versinkt die Sonne; des
Waldes Riesen

Soon the sun sinks, the
forest giants

Heben höher sich in die
Lüfte, um noch
Mit des Abends flüchtigen
Rosen sich ihr
Haupt zu bekränzen.

reach higher into the air,
to garland
their heads awhile yet
with evening's
fleeting roses.

Schon verstummt die Matte;
den satten
Rindern
Selten nur enthallt das
Geglock am Halse,
Und es pflückt der wählende
Zahn nur lässig
Dunklere Gräser.

The meadow now falls
silent; the sated
bullocks
only rarely tinkle the bells
round their necks,
and only casually do they
munch
darker grasses.

Und dort blickt der
schuldlose Hirt
der Sonne
Sinnend nach; dem
Sinnenden jetzt entfallen
Flöt' und Stab, es falten die
Hände sich zum
Stillen Gebete.

And there the innocent
shepherd looks
pensively
at the sun; meditatively
he lets fall
his flute and staff and
folds his hands
in silent prayer.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Songs of Travel (1901-4)

Robert Louis Stevenson

The vagabond

Give to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me,
Give the jolly heaven above,
And the byway nigh me.
Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river -
There's the life for a man like me,
There's the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me;
Give the face of earth around,
And the road before me.
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me;
All I seek, the heaven above,
And the road below me.

Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.

Or let autumn fall on me
Where afield I linger,
Silencing the bird on tree,
Biting the blue finger.
White as meal the frosty field—
Warm the fireside haven—
Not to autumn will I yield,
Not to winter even!

Let the blow fall soon or late...

Let beauty awake

Let beauty awake in the morn from beautiful dreams,
Beauty awake from rest!
Let beauty awake
For beauty's sake
In the hour when the birds awake in the brake
And the stars are bright in the west!

Let beauty awake in the eve from the slumber of day,
Awake in the crimson eve!
In the day's dusk end
When the shades ascend,
Let her wake to the kiss of a tender friend,
To render again and receive!

The roadside fire

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night,
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests, and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the
broom;
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body
white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside
fire.

Youth and love

To the heart of youth the world is a highwayside.
Passing for ever, he fares; and on either hand,
Deep in the gardens golden pavilions hide,
Nestle in orchard bloom, and far on the level land
Call him with lighted lamp in the eventide.

Thick as stars at night when the moon is down,
Pleasures assail him. He to his nobler fate
Fares; and but waves a hand as he passes on,
Cries but a wayside word to her at the garden gate,
Sings but a boyish stave and his face is gone.

In dreams

In dreams unhappy, I behold you stand
As heretofore:
The unremember'd tokens in your hand
Avail no more.

No more the morning glow, no more the grace,
Enshrines, endears.
Cold beats the light of time upon your face
And shows your tears.

He came and went. Perchance you wept awhile
And then forgot.
Ah me! but he that left you with a smile
Forgets you not.

The infinite shining heavens

The infinite shining heavens
Rose, and I saw in the night
Uncountable angel stars
Showering sorrow and light.

I saw them distant as heaven,
Dumb and shining and dead,
And the idle stars of the night
Were dearer to me than bread.

Night after night in my sorrow
The stars looked over the sea,
Till lo! I looked in the dusk
And a star had come down to me.

Whither must I wander?

Home no more home to me, whither must I wander?
Hunger my driver, I go where I must.
Cold blows the winter wind over hill and heather:
Thick drives the rain and my roof is in the dust.

Loved of wise men was the shade of my roof-tree,
The true word of welcome was spoken in the door -
Dear days of old with the faces in the firelight,
Kind folks of old, you come again no more.

Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces,

Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child.
Fire and the windows bright glittered on the
moorland;
Song, tuneful song, built a palace in the wild.

Now when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,
Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is
cold.
Lone let it stand, now the friends are all departed,
The kind hearts, the true hearts, that loved the place
of old.

Spring shall come, come again, calling up the
moorfowl,
Spring shall bring the sun and rain, bring the bees
and flowers;
Red shall the heather bloom over hill and valley,
Soft flow the stream through the even-flowing hours.

Fair the day shine as it shone on my childhood -
Fair shine the day on the house with open door;
Birds come and cry there and twitter in the chimney
-

But I go for ever and come again no more.

Bright is the ring of words

Bright is the ring of words
When the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs
When the singer sings them,
Still they are carolled and said -
On wings they are carried -
After the singer is dead
And the maker buried.

Low as the singer lies
In the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring
The swains together.
And when the west is red
With the sunset embers,
The lover lingers and sings
And the maid remembers.

I have trod the upward and the downward slope

I have trod the upward and the downward slope;
I have endured and done in days before;
I have longed for all, and bid farewell to hope;
And I have lived and loved, and closed the door.

Interval

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Hoffnung D637 (c.1819) Hope

Friedrich von Schiller

Es reden und träumen die Menschen viel Von bessern künftigen Tagen, Nach einem glücklichen goldenen Ziel Sieht man sie rennen und jagen; Die Welt wird alt und wird wieder jung, Doch der Mensch hofft immer Verbesserung.	Men talk and dream a great amount of better days to come, we see them chasing and running after a golden, happy goal; the world grows old, grows young again, but man always hopes for better things.
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Die Hoffnung führt ihn ins Leben ein, Sie umflattert den fröhlichen Knaben, Den Jüngling begeistert ihr Zauberschein, Sie wird mit dem Greis nicht begraben; Denn beschliesst er im Grabe den müden Lauf, Noch am Grabe pflanzt er – die Hoffnung auf.	Hope brings man into the world, it hovers round the happy boy, its magic radiance inspires youth, nor is it buried with old age; for though his tired life ends in the grave, by that grave he sows seeds of hope.
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Es ist kein leerer, kein schmeichelnder Wahn, Erzeugt im Gehirne des Toren, Im Herzen kündigt es laut sich an: Zu was Besserm sind wir geboren! Und was die innere Stimme spricht, Das täuscht die hoffende Seele nicht.	Hope is no vain, flattering illusion, begotten in the foolish mind, loud it proclaims in the hearts of men: we are born for better things! And what the inner voice declares does not deceive the hopeful soul.
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Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

Am Bach im Frühling

D361 (1816)

Franz von Schober

Du brachst sie nun die kalte
Rinde,
Und rieselst froh und frei
dahin;
Die Lüfte wehen wieder
linde,
Und Moos und Gras wird neu
und grün.

Allein mit traurigem Gemüte
Tret' ich wie sonst zu deiner
Flut,
Der Erde allgemeine Blüte
Kommt meinem Herzen
nicht zu gut.

Hier treiben immer
gleiche Winde,
Kein Hoffen kommt in
meinen Sinn –
Als dass ich hier ein
Blümchen finde,
Blau, wie sie der Erinnerung
blühen.

Nachtstück D672 (1819)

Johann Mayrhofer

Wenn über Berge sich der
Nebel breitet,
Und Luna mit Gewölken
kämpft,
So nimmt der Alte seine
Harfe, und schreitet,
Und singt waldeinwärts
gedämpft:

„Du heil'ge Nacht!
Bald ist's vollbracht.
Bald schlaf' ich ihn
Den langen Schlummer,
Der mich erlöst
Von allem Kummer.“

Die grünen Bäume rauschen
dann,
Schlaf süß, du guter alter
Mann;
Die Gräser lispeln wankend
fort,
Wir decken seinen
Ruheort;

By the stream in

spring

Now you have broken the
cold crust,
and ripple along, free and
happy;
the breezes blow gently
again,
moss and grass grow
fresh and green.

Alone and heavy-hearted,
I come to your banks, as
of old,
the flowering of the entire
earth
cannot gladden
my heart.

Here the same winds still
are blowing,
no hope enters
my heart –
unless I find a flower here,
blue, like the flowers of
remembrance.

Nocturne

When mist spreads over
the mountains,
and Luna battles with the
clouds,
the old man takes up his
harp, and steps
into the forest, singing
softly:

'O holy night!
Soon it shall be done.
Soon I shall sleep
the long sleep,
that shall free me
from all affliction.'

Then the green trees will
rustle:
sleep well, good old
man;
the swaying grass will
whisper:
we will cover his resting-
place;

Und mancher liebe Vogel
ruft,
O lass ihn ruh'n in
Rasengruft!“ –

Der Alte horcht, der
Alte schweigt –
Der Tod hat sich zu ihm
geneigt.

Totengräbers

Heimweh D842 (1825)

*Jacob Nicolaus Craigher de
Jachelutta*

O Menschheit – o Leben! –
Was soll's – o was
soll's?!
Grabe aus – scharre zu!
Tag und Nacht keine Ruh! –
Das Treiben, das Drängen –
Wohin! – o
wohin?! – –
„Ins Grab – tief
hinab!“ –

O Schicksal – o traurige
Pflicht –
Ich trag's länger nicht! – –
Wann wirst du mir schlagen,
O Stunde der Ruh?! –
O Tod! komm und drücke
Die Augen mir zu! – –
Im Leben da ist's ach! so
schwül! –
Im Grabe – so friedlich, so
kühl!
Doch ach, wer legt mich
hinein? –
Ich stehe allein! – so ganz
allein!! –

Von allen verlassen
Dem Tod nur verwandt,
Verweil' ich am Rande –
Das Kreuz in der Hand,
Und starre mit sehndem
Blick,
Hinab – ins tiefe
Grab! –

O Heimat des Friedens,
Der Seligen Land!
An dich knüpft die Seele
Ein magisches Band. –
Du winkst mir von Ferne,
Du ewiges Licht: –

Es schwinden die Sterne –

and many a sweet bird
will call:
O let him rest in his
grassy grave! –

The old man listens, the
old man is silent –
death has inclined
towards him.

Gravedigger's longing

O mankind – O life! –
To what end – oh what
end?!
Digging out – filling in!
Day and night no rest! –
The urgency, the haste –
where does it lead! – ah
where?! – –
'Deep down – into the
grave!' –

O fate – O sad
duty –
I can bear it no more! – –
When will you toll for me,
O hour of peace?! –
O death! come
and close my eyes! – –
Life, alas, is so
oppressive! –
The grave so peaceful, so
cool!
But ah! who will lay me
there? –
I stand alone! – so utterly
alone!! –

Abandoned by all,
with death my only kin,
I linger on the edge –
cross in hand,
and stare longingly
down – into the deep
grave! –

O homeland of peace,
land of the blessed!
A magic bond
binds my soul to you. –
Eternal light
you beckon me from afar:
–

the stars vanish –

Das Auge schon bricht! – –	my eyes close in death! –
	–
Ich sinke – ich sinke! – Ihr	I am sinking – I am
Lieben –	sinking! – Loved ones –
Ich komme! – – –	I come! – – –

**Gruppe aus dem
Tartarus D583 (1817)**
Friedrich von Schiller

Horch – wie Murmeln des empörten Meeres, Wie durch hohler Felsen Becken weint ein Bach, Stöhnt dort dumpfigtief ein schweres, leeres, Qualerpresstes Ach!	Hark! – like the angered ocean's murmuring, like a brook weeping through rocky hollows there rises up, dank and deep, a heavy, empty tormented cry!
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Schmerz verzerrt Ihr Gesicht, Verzweiflung sperret Ihren Rachen fluchend auf. Hohl sind ihre Augen – ihre Blicke Spähen bang nach des Cocytus Brücke, Folgen tränend seinem Trauerlauf.	Pain distorts their faces, despair opens wide their jaws in imprecation. Their eyes are hollow – their gaze fixes fearfully on Cocytus Bridge, weeping they follow the river's doleful course.
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Fragen sich einander ängstlich leise, Ob noch nicht Vollendung sei? – Ewigkeit schwingt über ihnen Kreise, Bricht die Sense des Saturns entzwei.	Anxiously, softly, they ask each other if the end is nigh? – Eternity sweeps in circles above them, breaks Saturn's scythe asunder.
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**Wandrer's Nachtlied I
D224 (1815)**
*Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe*

Der du von dem Himmel bist,	You who come from heaven,
Alles Leid und Schmerzen stillst,	soothing all pain and sorrow,
Den, der doppelt elend ist,	filling the doubly wretched
Doppelt mit Entzückung füllst,	doubly with delight,
Ach, ich bin des Treibens müde!	ah, I am weary of this restlessness!
Was soll all der Schmerz und Lust?	What use is all this joy and pain?
Süßser Friede!	Sweet peace!
Komm, ach komm in meine Brust!	Come, ah come into my breast!

Scene from Hades

**Wanderer's
nightsong I**

Hugo Wolf

From *Mörike Lieder* (1888)
Eduard Mörike

Gebet

Herr! schicke, was du
willt,
Ein Liebes oder Leides;
Ich bin vergnügt, dass beides
Aus deinen Händen quillt.

Wollest mit Freuden
Und wollest mit Leiden
Mich nicht überschütten!
Doch in der Mitten
Liegt holdes Bescheiden.

Prayer

Lord! send what Thou
wilt,
pleasure or pain;
I am content that both
flow from Thy hands.

Do not, I beseech Thee,
overwhelm me
with joy or suffering!
But midway between
lies blessed moderation.

Der Feuerreiter

Sehet ihr am Fensterlein
Dort die rote Mütze wieder?
Nicht geheuer muss
es sein,
Denn er geht schon auf und
nieder.
Und auf einmal welch
Gewühle
Bei der Brücke, nach dem
Feld!
Horch! das Feuerglöcklein
gellt:
Hinter'm Berg,
Hinter'm Berg
Brennt es in der Mühle!

Fire-rider

See, at the little window
there, his red cap again?
Something must be
wrong,
for he's pacing
to and fro.
And suddenly, what a
seething throng
at the bridge, heading for
the fields!
Hark! how the fire bell
shrills:
behind the hill,
behind the hill,
the mill's on fire!

Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.

Schaut! da sprengt er wütend schier Durch das Tor, der Feuerreiter, Auf dem rippendürren Tier, Als auf einer Feuerleiter! Querfeldein! Durch Qualm und Schwüle Rennt er schon und ist am Ort! Drüben schallt es fort und fort: Hinter'm Berg, Hinter'm Berg Brennt es in der Mühle!	Look, there he gallops frenziedly through the gate, the fire- rider, straddling his skinny mount like a fireman's ladder! Across the fields! Through thick smoke and heat-haze He rides and has reached his goal! The distant bell peals on and on: behind the hill, behind the hill, the mill's on fire!
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Der so oft den roten Hahn Meilenweit von fern gerochen, Mit des heil'gen Kreuzes Span Frentlich die Glut besprochen – Weh! dir grinst vom Dachgestühle Dort der Feind im Höllenschein. Gnade Gott der Seele dein! Hinter'm Berg, Hinter'm Berg Ras't er in der Mühle!	You who have so often smelt a fire from many miles away, and blasphemously conjured the blaze with a splinter of the True Cross – look out! there, grinning at you from the rafters, is the Devil amid the flames of hell. God have mercy on your soul! Behind the hill, behind the hill he's raging in the mill!
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Keine Stunde hielt es an, Bis die Mühle barst in Trümmer; Doch den kecken Reitersmann Sah man von der Stunde nimmer. Volk und Wagen im Gewühle Kehren heim von all' dem Graus; Auch das Glöcklein klinget aus: Hinter'm Berg, Hinter'm Berg Brennt's! –	In less than an hour the mill collapsed in rubble; but from that hour the bold rider was never seen again. Thronging crowds and carriages turn back home from all the horror; and the bell stops ringing too: behind the hill, behind the hill a fire! –
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Nach der Zeit ein Müller fand Ein Gerippe samt der Mützen Aufrecht an der Kellerwand Auf der beinern Mähre sitzen: Feurreiter, wie so kühle Reitest du in deinem Grab!	Some time after a miller found a skeleton, cap and all, upright against the cellar wall, mounted on the fleshless mare: fire-rider, how coldly you ride in your grave!
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Husch! da fällt's in Asche ab. Ruhe wohl, Ruhe wohl Drunten in der Mühle!	Hush - now it flakes into ash. Rest in peace, rest in peace down there in the mill!
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