

WIGMORE HALL

Thursday 2 December 2021 7.30pm

Tenebrae Juliet Stevenson narrator

Rachel Haworth soprano	Elisabeth Paul alto	Charlie Baigent bass
Victoria Meteyard soprano	Martha McLorinan alto	Joseph Edwards bass
Eleanor Minney soprano	Tom Lilburn alto	Nathan Harrison bass
Anita Monserrat soprano	Ben Alden tenor	Oliver Morris bass
Katie Trethewey soprano	Jeremy Budd tenor	Owain Park bass
Rosanna Wicks soprano	Nicholas Madden tenor	
Hannah Cooke alto	Toby Ward tenor	

*Tenebrae's 20th Anniversary Programme is supported by
The London Community Foundation and Cockayne – Grants for the Arts*



Programme interspersed with poems by Emily Dickinson

Roderick Williams (b.1965)

Lucis Creator Optime (2020) *London première*
A Tenebrae commission, supported by PRS Foundation's The Open Fund



Philip Moore (b.1943)

3 Prayers Of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1980)
Morning Prayers • Prayers in Time of Distress • Evening Prayers

Josephine Stephenson (b.1990)

Into the Wreck (2021) *London première*
A Tenebrae commission, supported by the RVW Trust



Interval

Rudolf Mauersberger (1889-1971)

Wie liegt die Stadt so wüst (1945)

Roderick Williams

Lucis Creator Optime Postlude (2020) *London première*

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Figure humaine (1943)
*Bientôt • Le Rôle des Femmes • Aussi bas que le silence •
Patience • Première marche la voix d'un autre • Un loup •
Un feu sans tache • Liberté*

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Since its formation 20 years ago, Tenebrae has won plaudits for its singing of repertoire ranging from medieval chant to the music of the present day. Tonight's programme takes us across the borders of conflict, and into both the sacred and secular spheres, while showing us how choral music can express the deepest feelings and highest aspirations of our common humanity.

The first piece on the programme continues Tenebrae's longstanding commitment to refreshing the choral repertoire with new commissions. Though he's already one of Britain's most admired baritones, **Roderick Williams** is making a steady name for himself as a choral composer. His new work *Lucis Creator Optime* sets a hymn for the evening office of Compline, the last of the 'canonical hours', and traditionally a time of stillness. Its words call on the creator of light to hear our prayers during fearful times of darkness. The music grows from a quiet beginning, gradually bringing in the voices together, but it also incorporates elements of chance at the discretion of the singers, which will make tonight's performance an especially unique experience. The second movement, *Postlude*, will be sung as this evening's penultimate work.

Philip Moore is the former organist and Master of Music at York Minster, and has composed a large body of choral music over his long career. His *3 Prayers Of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* sets words by the influential German theologian - a man who vocally opposed Nazi rule, and was tragically executed at Flossenbürg concentration camp in 1945, only two weeks before its liberation. Moore's writing has a soul-baring intensity, moving between phases of bleakness, agitation and calm, while drawing on the natural intimacy of vocal solos. 'Morning Prayers' begins and ends with an ambiguous wavering across a semitone interval, while 'Prayers in Time of Distress' makes particular use of irresolute dissonance. But in 'Evening Prayers' we reach a moving conclusion. Moore takes the tune of 'Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland', a chorale Bonhoeffer loved, and turns it into a gentle fugue, before its strands come together under a soprano solo that serenely floats on high. Here, at last, the music seems to find transcendence.

The young French-British composer and soprano **Josephine Stephenson** has collaborated with an impressive array of musical ensembles, theatre groups and songwriters. Her new piece *Into the Wreck* was composed for Tenebrae, and includes a part for narrator. The title refers to a 1974 collection of poetry by Adrienne Rich, whose title poem, 'Diving into the Wreck', is narrated here. But the sung parts use fragments of text by various women authors across the centuries in myriad languages, stretching back to Sappho of ancient Greece. Stephenson has revealed that Rich's decision to share her

National Book Award with Audre Lorde and Alice Walker - doing so on behalf of the countless unheard women living under patriarchy - inspired her to assemble this collage of literary solidarity around her poem. Many of these lines touch on the nautical theme of Rich's diving expedition, and the whole effect should be an extended voyage of discovery.

The German composer and choral conductor **Rudolf Mauersberger** is not exactly a household name in the UK, but his motet 'Wie liegt die Stadt so wüst', composed shortly after the devastating bombing of Dresden in 1945, has become a popular work. It draws on the text of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, that Old Testament response to the destruction of Jerusalem which has accrued a rich tradition of choral settings. Mauersberger creates a sense of desolate grandeur, coloured by the sound of bare fifths - chords with the heart ripped out of them - and moments of intensely felt emotion. While it's an uncomfortable fact that the composer was a member of the Nazi party, there is significant evidence that throws doubt on his commitment to their ideology. What's not in doubt is this music's powerful expression of the desolation wrought on the city he lived and worked in for the majority of his life.

The final work on the programme is a tour de force of choral writing. **Francis Poulenc's** cantata *Figure Humaine* was composed under Nazi occupation in 1943, when the composer had left war-torn Paris for the relative peace of his country retreat at Noizay. Poulenc sets eight poems by his contemporary Paul Eluard, written and shared in secret during the war. The first seven poems provide impressions of the sickening unease running through everyday life during the occupation, and in a nation under profound mental stress. Poulenc's decision to score the work for a double choir of 12 parts gives him a wide scope for his lush harmonic language, which he deploys with great sensitivity, while allowing him to create oppositional textural effects. It is also very typical of him that he manages to create playful moments out of Eluard's grave subject matter.

But the mood turns on the final poem, 'Liberté', the longest of the cantata, and a pivotal point that transforms the climax of the work into one of optimism. In comparison to the previous seven poems, it's a disarmingly direct statement of patient defiance - Eluard lists a variety of commonplace objects and places, and pledges on each to write the name of liberty. The potential of these words to boost the morale of the Resistance was such that the poem was printed on leaflets which were parachuted into occupied France by the RAF. Poulenc skilfully draws out a sense of gathering momentum from its 21 stanzas, gradually building us up to a roof-raising finish.

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Roderick Williams (b.1965)

Lucis Creator Optime

(2020)

from the Roman Breviary

Lucis Creator optime
Lucem dierum
proferens,
Primordiis lucis novae,
Mundi parans originem:

Qui mane junctum vesperi
Diem vocari
praecipis:
Illabitur tetrum
chaos,
Audi preces cum
fletibus.

Ne mens gravata
crimine,
Vitae sit exsul munere,
Dum nil perenne
cogitat,
Seseque culpae
illigat.

Caeleste pulset
ostium:
Vitale tollat praemium:
Vitemus omne noxium:
Purgemus omne pessimum.

Praesta, Pater piissime,
Patrique compar
Unice,
Cum Spiritu paraclito
Regnans per omne saeculum.

O Blest Creator of the Light

O Blest Creator of the light,
Who mak'st the day with
radiance bright,
and o'er the forming world didst call
the light from chaos first of all;

Whose wisdom joined in meet array
the morn and eve, and named
them Day:
night comes with all its darkling
fears;
regard Thy people's prayers and
tears.

Lest, sunk in sin, and whelmed
with strife,
they lose the gift of endless life;
while thinking but the thoughts
of time,
they weave new chains of woe
and crime.

But grant them grace that they
may strain
the heavenly gate and prize to gain:
each harmful lure aside to cast,
and purge away each error past.

O Father, that we ask be done,
through Jesus Christ, Thine only
Son;
Who, with the Holy Ghost and Thee,
doth live and reign eternally.

Philip Moore (b.1943)

3 Prayers Of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1980)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Morning Prayers

O God, early in the morning do I cry unto thee, help me to pray, and to think only of thee. I cannot pray alone.
In me there is darkness, but with thee there is light.
I am lonely, but thou leavest me not. I am feeble in heart, but thou leavest me not.
I am restless, but with thee there is peace. In me there is bitterness, but with thee there is patience.

Thy ways are past understanding, but thou knowest the way for me.

O heavenly Father I praise and thank thee for the peace of the night. I praise and thank thee for this new day.

I praise and thank thee for all thy goodness and faithfulness throughout my life.

Thou hast granted me many blessings: now let me accept tribulation from thy hand.

Thou will not lay on me more than I can bear.

Thou makest all things work together for good for thy children.

Lord Jesus Christ, thou wast poor and in misery, a captive and forsaken as I am.

Thou knowest all man's distress; thou abidest with me when all others have deserted me; though dost not forget me but seekest me.

Thou willest that I should know thee and turn to thee. Lord I hear thy call and follow thee; do thou help me.

Chiefly do I remember all my loved ones, my fellow prisoners, and all who in this house perform their hard service.

Lord have mercy, restore me to liberty, and enable me so to live now that I may answer before thee and before the world.

Lord, whatever this day may bring, thy name be praised.

Prayers in Time of Distress

O Lord God, great is the misery that hath come upon me; my cares would overwhelm me, I know not what to do.

O God, be gracious unto me and help me.

Grant me strength to bear what thou dost send, and let not fear rule over me.

As a loving father, take care of my loved ones, my wife and children.

O merciful God, forgive me all the sins I have committed against thee, and against my fellow men.

I trust in thy grace, and commit my life wholly into thy hands.

Do with me as seemeth best to thee, and as is best for me.

Whether I live or die, I am with thee, and thou art with me, my God.

Lord I wait for thy salvation, and for thy kingdom.

Evening Prayers

O Lord my God, I thank thee that thou hast brought this day to a close.

I thank thee that thou hast given me peace in body and in soul.

Thy hand has been over me and has protected and preserved me.

Forgive my puny faith, the ill that I this day have done, and help me to forgive all who have wronged me.

Grant me a quiet night's sleep beneath thy tender care, and defend me from all the temptations of darkness.

Into thy hands I commend my loved ones and all who dwell in this house.

I commend my body and soul.

O Lord God, thy holy name be praised.

Josephine Stephenson (b.1990)

Into the Wreck (2021)

Adrienne Rich, Sappho, Anne Bradstreet, Hedvig Charlotta Nordenflycht, Charlotte Smith, Sagawa Chika, Alfonsina Storni, Margaret Fuller, Edit Södergran, Else Lasker-Schüler, Christina Rossetti, Anne Wharton, Mary Coleridge, Emily Dickinson and Sarojini Naidu compiled with help from Bethany Hocken and Giuliana Kiersz

First having read the book of myths,
and loaded the camera,
and checked the edge of the knife-blade,
I put on
the body-armor of black rubber
the absurd flippers
the grave and awkward mask.
I am having to do this
not like Cousteau with his
assiduous team
aboard the sun-flooded schooner
but here alone.

Δέδυκε μὲν ἃ σελάβνα καὶ Πληΐαδες, μέσαι δέ νύκτες, πάρα δ' ἔρχετ' ὄρα, ἔγω δὲ μόνα κατεύδω	The moon has sunk it is midnight time passes but I sleep alone
--	---

Silent alone where none or saw, or heard,
In pathless paths I lead my wand'ring feet.

Långt från den storm, som världen skakar, i Lugnet jag min hydda fäst.	Far from the storm that shakes the world, in the calm I fixed my hut.
--	---

Musing, my solitary seat I take,
And listen to the deep and solemn roar.

眠れるものの帰りを待つ	I wait for the return of those who sleep
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There is a ladder.
The ladder is always there
hanging innocently
close to the side of the schooner.
We know what it is for,
we who have used it.
Otherwise
it is a piece of maritime floss
some sundry equipment.

I go down.
Rung after rung and still
the oxygen immerses me
the blue light
the clear atoms

of our human air.

I go down.

My flippers cripple me,
I crawl like an insect down the ladder
and there is no one
to tell me when the ocean
will begin.

En el fondo del mar, hay una casa de cristal.	At the bottom of the sea there's a house made of crystal.
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There is no end, and there need be no path.

Jag är främmande i detta land	I am a stranger in this land
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私は大声をだし訴へようとし 波はあとから消してしまふ	I try to protest, raising my voice - the waves come erase it from behind.
-------------------------------	---

Nor youth, nor strength, nor wisdom spring again

nu hör jag verklighetens hårda klang mot mina sköra sköra drömmar.	now I hear reality's hard clang against my fragile fragile dreams.
--	--

Mein silbernes Blicken rieselt durch die Leere	My silver gaze ripples in the void.
---	--

[...] myself is that one only thing
I hold [...]

Men ett har jag funnit och ett har jag verkligen vunnit - vägen till landet som icke är.	But I have found one thing and one thing I have truly gained the path to the land that is not.
--	--

First the air is blue and then
it is bluer and then green and then
black I am blacking out and yet
my mask is powerful
it pumps my blood with power
the sea is another story
the sea is not a question of power
I have to learn alone
to turn my body without force
in the deep element.

And now: it is easy to forget
what I came for
among so many who have always
lived here
swaying their crenellated fans
between the reefs
and besides
you breathe differently down here.

Tropfen an Tropfen erlöschen Und reiben sich wieder, In den Tiefen taumeln die Wasser [...] Und wie alles drängt und sich engt Ins letzte Bewegen	Liquid drops dissolve in drops and rub on drops again. Water tumbles in the deep What an urging there is and a narrowing down in the last impulse that seeks a shape!
---	---

A human secret, like my own, I trace

En el bosque verde que me circunda, -din don ... din dan-	In the green woods that surround me -ding dong...ding dang-
---	---

Det är makten, som darrar i min sko, det är makten, som rör sig i min klännings veck, det är makten, för vilken ej avgrund finns, som står framför eder.	It is the power that quivers in my shoes, it is the power that moves in the folds of my garments, it is the power that stands before you - there is no abyss for it.
--	--

Yo soy esa mujer que vive alerta	I am that woman who lives alert.
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Jag är en del av alltets stora kraft, en ensam värld inom miljoner världar	I am a part of the all's great power, a lonely world inside millions of worlds
---	---

One presence fills and floods the whole serene;
Nothing can be, nothing has ever been,
Except the one truth that creates the scene.

Und ein Punkt wird mein Tanz In der Blindnis.	And my dance is turning into a speck upon the blindness that surrounds it.
--	---

I came to explore the wreck.
The words are purposes.
The words are maps.
I came to see the damage that was done
and the treasures that prevail.
I stroke the beam of my lamp
slowly along the flank
of something more permanent
than fish or weed

the thing I came for:
the wreck and not the story of the wreck
the thing itself and not the myth
the drowned face always staring
toward the sun
the evidence of damage
worn by salt and sway into this threadbare beauty
the ribs of the disaster

curving their assertion
among the tentative haunters.

Finnes det ingen som fattar [...]?	Is there no one who understands?
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When the tempestuous sea did foam and roar,
Tossing the bark from the long-wish'd-for shore,
With false affected fondness it betray'd,
Striving to keep what perish'd, if it stay'd.

Yo tengo el corazón como la espuma	I have a heart like foam
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Jag är en flamma, sökande och käck, jag är ett vatten, djupt men dristigt upp till knäna	I am a flame, searching and brazen. I am water, deep but daring up to the knee
---	---

"I am she!"

Jag följer ingen lag. Jag är lag i mig själv.	I follow no law. I am a law unto myself.
--	---

Only upon the old can build the new

Jag är den befallande styrkan. Var finnas de som följa mig?	I am the commanding strength. Where are those who will follow me?
---	---

This is the place.
And I am here, the mermaid whose dark hair
streams black, the merman in his armored body.
We circle silently
about the wreck
we dive into the hold.
I am she: I am he

whose drowned face sleeps with open eyes
whose breasts still bear the stress
whose silver, copper, vermeil cargo lies
obscurely inside barrels
half-wedged and left to rot
we are the half-destroyed instruments
that once held to a course
the water-eaten log
the fouled compass

Y sobre mi cabeza, arden en el crepúsculo, las erizadas puntas del mar.	And overhead, little risen peaks of the sea flare up in twilight.
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Tell all the truth but tell it slant —

私は海へ捨てられた	I was abandoned in the ocean.
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O, ich wollte, dass ich wunschlos schlief, Wüsst ich einen Strom, wie mein Leben so tief, Flösse mit seinen Wassern.	O that I slept a wishless sleep, that a river ran as deep as my life, and I with its waters.
--	--

Vad fruktar jag? Jag är en del av oändligheten.	What have I to fear? I am a part of infinity.
--	--

[...] we must rise, [...] we must wander again
let us gather the dreams that remain

All Naturens ljus oss lærer At wi ej sku stilla stå.	Of nature's wisdom must we learn that standing still is not our fate.
---	--

Μνάσεσθαί τινά φαμι καὶ ὑστερον ἀμμέων	I say that someone will remember us even in the future
---	---

We are, I am, you are
by cowardice or courage
the one who find our way
back to this scene
carrying a knife, a camera
a book of myths
in which
our names do not appear.

Interval

Rudolf Mauersberger (1889-1971)

Wie liegt die Stadt so wüst (1945)	How lonely sits the city
---	---------------------------------

Lamentations of Jeremiah

Wie liegt die Stadt so wüst, die voll Volks war. Alle ihre Tore stehen öde. Wie liegen die Steine des Heiligtums Vorn auf allen Gassen zerstreut. Er hat ein Feuer aus der Höhe In meine Gebeine gesandt und es lassen walten.	How lonely sits the city that was full of people! All her gates are desolate. How the stones of her sanctuary lie scattered at the head of every street. He sent fire from on high; into my bones he made it descend.
---	--

Ist das die Stadt, von der man sagt, Sie sei die allerschönste, der sich Das ganze Land freuet.	Is this the city which was called the most beautiful, that in which the whole land rejoices?
---	--

Sie hätte nicht gedacht, Dass es ihr zuletzt so gehen würde; Sie ist ja zu greulich heruntergestossen	She had not thought that this would be her final end; therefore her fall is terrible,
--	--

Und hat dazu niemand, der sie tröstet.	and she has no one to comfort her.
---	---------------------------------------

Darum ist unser Herz betrübt Und unsere Augen sind finster geworden: Warum willst du unser so gar vergessen Und uns lebenslang so gar verlassen!	This is why our heart has become sick, these things have caused our eyes to grow dim. Why do you forget us for ever, why do you so long forsake us?
---	--

Bringe uns, Herr, wieder zu dir, Dass wir wieder heimkommen! Erneue unsere Tage wie vor alters. Herr, siehe an mein Elend!	Bring us, O Lord, back to you, that we come home again! Renew our days as of old. O Lord, behold my affliction!
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Roderick Williams (b.1965)

Lucis Creator Optime

Postlude (2020)

from the Roman Breviary

Cum Spiritu Paraclito Patrique compar Unice, Praesta Pater piissime, Regnans per omne saeculum.	Who, with the Holy Ghost and Thee, through Jesus Christ, Thine only Son; O Father, that we ask be done, doth live and reign eternally.
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Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Figure humaine (1943)	The human face
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Paul Éluard

Bientôt

De tous printemps du
monde,
Celui-ci est le plus laid
Entre toutes mes façons d'être
La confiante est la meilleure

L'herbe soulève la neige
Comme la pierre d'un tombeau
Moi je dors dans la tempête
Et je m'éveille les yeux clairs

Le lent le petit temps s'achève
Où toute rue devait passer
Par mes plus intimes retraites
Pour que je recontre quelqu'un

Je n'entends pas parler les
monstres

Soon

Of all the springs that have
occurred
this one is the most vile.
Of all my ways of living,
the trusting manner is the best.

The grass lifts the snow
as if it were a tombstone,
but I sleep through the storm
and wake with bright eyes.

The slow, short time closes,
where every route has to pass,
through my innermost secrets
so that I might meet someone.

I do not hear the monsters
talking:

Je les connais ils ont tout dit
Je ne vois que les beaux visages
Les bons visages sûrs d'eux mêmes

I know them, they have said it all.
I see only beautiful faces,
good faces sure of themselves.

Sûrs de ruiner bientôt leurs
maîtres

Sure to spoil their masters all
too soon.

Le Rôle des Femmes

The Women's role

En chantant les servantes
s'élancent
Pour rafraîchir la place où l'on
tuait
Petites filles en poudre vite
agenouillées
Leurs mains aux soupiraux de la
fraîcheur
Sont bleues comme une
expérience
Un grand matin joyeux

The maids rush forward
singing
to freshen the place where
someone has been killed.
little girls in powder kneeling
swiftly,
their hands to the window for
fresh air,
are blue like some new
experience
on a great day of joy.

Faites face à leurs mains les morts
Faites face à leurs yeux liquides
C'est la toilette des éphémères
La dernière toilette de la vie
Les pierres descendent
disparaissent
Dans l'eau vaste essentielle

Turn to their hands, the dead,
turn to their limpid eyes,
this is the ritual of may-flies,
the final ritual of life.
The stones fall and
disappear
into the vast primeval waters.

La dernière toilette des heures
A peine un souvenir ému
Aux puits taris de la vertu
Aux longues absences
encombrantes
Et l'on s'abandonne à la chair
très tendre
Aux prestiges de la faiblesse.

The final ritual of time,
scarcely a poignant memory,
at wells dry of virtue,
at long awkward
absences,
surrendering to such soft
flesh,
to the honour of weakness.

Aussi bas que le silence

As deep as the silence

Aussi bas que le silence
D'un mort planté dans la terre
Rien que ténèbres en tête

As deep as the silence
of a dead man buried in the earth,
only shadows in his head,

Aussi monotone et sourd
Que l'automne dans la mare
Couverte de honte mate

As monotonous and deaf
as autumn in a pond
covered with dull shame,

Le poison veuf de sa fleur
Et de ses bêtes dorées
Crache sa nuit sur les hommes

Poison widowed of its flower
and of its gilded creatures,
spits its night over mankind.

Patience

Patience

Toi ma patiente ma patience ma
parente
Gorge haut suspendue orgue de
la nuit lente
Révérence cachant tous les
ciels dans sa grâce
Prépare à la vengeance un lit
d'où je naîtrai

For you, my patient one, my
patience, my parent
throat held high, soft organ of
the night
respect hiding all heaven in its
grace
prepare in vengeance a bed
where I might be born

Première marche la voix d'un autre

First march, the voice of another

Riant du ciel et des planètes
La bouche imbibée de confiance
Les sages veulent des fils
Et des fils de leurs fils
Jusqu'à périr d'usure
Le temps ne pèse que les fous
L'abîme est seul à verdoyer
Et les sages sont ridicules

Laughing at the sky and the planets
the mouth dripping confidence
the wise long for sons
and for sons for their sons
until death from exhaustion
time does not only burden the mad
only the abyss is green
and the wise are fools

Un loup

A wolf

Le jour m'étonne et la nuit me
fait peur
L'été me hante et l'hiver me
poursuit

Day shocks me and night makes
me scared
summer haunts me and winter
pursues me

Un animal sur la neige a posé
Ses pattes sur le sable ou dans
la boue
Ses pattes venues de plus loin
que mes pas
Sur une piste où la mort
A les empreintes de la vie

An animal has placed its paws on
the snow on the sand or in the
mud
its paws travelled further than
my steps
on a route where death
holds the marks of life

Un feu sans tache

A flawless fire

La menace sous le ciel rouge
Venait d'en bas des mâchoires
Des écailles des anneaux
D'une chaîne glissante et lourde

The threat beneath the red sky
came from below the jaws
the scales the rings
of a slippery and heavy chain

La vie était distribuée
Largement pour que la mort
Prît au sérieux le tribut
Qu'on lui payait sans compter

Life was apportioned
generally so that death
could seriously take the tribute
men paid it without thinking

La mort était le Dieu d'amour
Et les vainqueurs dans un baiser
S'évanouissaient sur leurs victimes

Death was the God of love
and the conquerors with a kiss
faint onto their victims

La pourriture avait du cœur gangrene grabbed the heart

Et pourtant sous le ciel rouge And yet beneath the red sky
Sous les appétits de sang beneath the lust for blood
Sous la famine lugubre beneath the gloomy hunger
La caverne se ferma the cave closed up

La terre utile effaça The useful earth covered up
Les tombes creusées d'avance the graves dug in advance
Les enfants n'eurent plus peur the children do not fear
Des profondeurs maternelles the maternal depths

Et la bêtise et la démente And madness and idiocy
Et la bassesse firent place and baseness gave way
A des hommes frères des hommes to men to brothers of men
Ne luttant plus contre la vie no longer struggling against life

A des hommes indestructibles To an indestructible human race

Liberté

Sur mes cahiers d'écolier On my school books
Sur mon pupitre et les arbres on my desk and the trees
Sur le sable sur la neige on the sand on the snow
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur toutes les pages lues On every page that is read
Sur toutes les pages blanches on every blank page
Pierre sang papier ou cendre stone blood paper or ash
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur les images dorées On gilded statues
Sur les armes des guerriers on warriors' weapons
Sur la couronne des rois on the crown of kings
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur la jungle et le désert On the jungle and the desert
Sur les nids sur les genêts on nests on the broom
Sur l'écho de mon enfance on the echo of my childhood
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur les merveilles des nuits On night-time wonders
Sur le pain blanc des journées on the white bread in the morning
Sur les saisons fiancées on the merging seasons
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur tous mes chiffons d'azur On all my blue rags
Sur l'étang soleil moisi on the pond decayed sun
Sur le lac lune vivante on the lake living moonlight
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur les champs sur l'horizon On fields on the horizon
Sur les ailes des oiseaux on the wings of birds
Et sur le moulin des ombres and on the mill of shadows
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Liberty

Sur chaque bouffée d'aurore On each morning mist
Sur la mer sur les bateaux on the sea on the boats
Sur la montagne démente on the wild mountain
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur la mousse des nuages On the wisps of clouds
Sur les sueurs de l'orage on sweat of the storm
Sur la pluie épaisse et fade on the rain heavy and insipid
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur les formes scintillantes On sparkling figures
Sur les cloches des couleurs on the colourful bells
Sur la vérité physique on physical truth
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur les sentiers éveillés On the waking paths
Sur les routes déployées on the laid out roads
Sur les places qui débordent on the bustling places
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur la lampe qui s'allume On the light which is lit
Sur la lampe qui s'éteint on the light which is extinguished
Sur mes maisons réunies on my reunited houses
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur le fruit coupé en deux On fruit cut in two
Du miroir et de ma chambre between the mirror and my room
Sur mon lit coquille vide on my bed seashell empty
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur mon chien gourmand et tendre On my dog greedy and tender
Sur ses oreilles dressées on his alert ears
Sur sa patte maladroite on his clumsy paw
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur le tremplin de ma porte On the springboard of my door
Sur les objets familiers on familiar objects
Sur le flot du feu béni on the stream of blessed fire
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur toute chair accordée On all matched flesh
Sur le front de mes amis on the face of my friends
Sur chaque main qui se tend on each hand held out
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur la vitre des surprises On the windows of surprises
Sur les lèvres attentives on attentive lips
Bien au-dessus du silence well above silence
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur mes refuges détruits On my destroyed places of refuge
Sur mes phares écroulés on my collapsed beacons
Sur les murs de mon ennui on the walls of my boredom
J'écris ton nom I write your name

Sur l'absence sans désirs On absence without desire
Sur la solitude nue on bare solitude

Sur les marches de la mort J'écris ton nom	on the march of death I write your name
Sur la santé revenue Sur le risque disparu Sur l'espoir sans souvenir J'écris ton nom	On health regained on risk disappeared on hope without remembrance I write your name
Et par le pouvoir d'un mot Je recommence ma vie Je suis né pour te connaître Pour te nommer	And through the power of a word I restart my life I was born to know you to name you
Liberté	Liberty

'Lucis Creator Optime' translation by J. M. Neale.

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