

WIGMORE HALL

Monday 3 April 2023
7.30pm

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Christiane Karg soprano
Anneleen Lenaerts harp

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Clair de lune from *Fêtes galantes Book I* (1891)
Le jet d'eau from *5 poèmes de Baudelaire* (1887-9)
Nuit d'étoiles (1880)
Beau soir (c.1887-8)
Colloque sentimental from *Fêtes galantes Book II* (1904)

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Van li effluvi de le rose (1909)
Serenata indiana (1909)
Piccola mano bianca (1912)
Storia breve (1904)
Su una violetta morta (1912)
Nebbie (pub. 1906)

Interval

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Zueignung Op. 10 No. 1 (1885)
Heimliche Aufforderung Op. 27 No. 3 (1894)
Allerseelen Op. 10 No. 8 (1885)
Befreit Op. 39 No. 4 (1898)
4 Last Songs (1948)
*Frühling • September •
Beim Schlafengehen • Im Abendrot*

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Adaptation is inherent to song: the genre is predicated upon the transformation of poetry into music. The history of song in transcription, arrangement, and other forms of musical adaptation is long and dynamic, with new versions inviting listeners to challenge or expand their understanding of original songs and poems. Some of tonight's songs are best known in orchestral guise, while others are mainstays of the voice-piano repertoire; a handful of the Strauss songs are widely celebrated in both orchestral and piano versions, while the Respighi songs are altogether much less well known. In a sense, the harp levels the playing field, as all the songs will inevitably be heard afresh in this programme of illuminating transcriptions.

The selection of five **Debussy** songs spans two decades, four poets, and various stages of the composer's stylistic development. They are bound together by themes of romance, and are enshrouded by the mystery of the night. A lute is mentioned early on in Verlaine's 'Clair de lune' – a poem that cast a long spell over Debussy. In this setting, the lute is delicately prefigured within the song's opening figuration, the effect of which may be heightened through its delivery here on the plucked strings of the harp. The Baudelaire setting 'Le jet d'eau' (1889), which is formally simple in three verses plus refrain, boasts an extraordinarily smooth transference of poetic rhythm into music. It is an expansive and lyrical song, which Debussy briefly began to orchestrate in 1907 (others later completed the task). Next comes the contained harmonic movement of the 1880 Théodore de Banville setting 'Nuit d'étoiles' – which was Debussy's first published song – and the evocative depiction of a beautiful evening in 'Beau soir' (to a poem by Paul Bourget). The group ends with the sparser sonic realm of the ethereal 'Colloque sentimental' – a ghostly dialogue of love and loss.

Respighi is best known today for his large-scale music – especially the three major orchestral tone poems. A multi-talented musician, Respighi was an active violinist, arranger and musicologist as well as a composer, and he wrote songs throughout his life. Like Debussy and Strauss, he fell in love with a singer who would be both a major source of musical inspiration and a duo partner: in Respighi's case, it was the mezzo-soprano (and notable composer) Elsa Olivieri-Sangiaco, who outlived her husband by almost 60 years and worked tirelessly to promote his legacy. Today, though, we hear early songs, written before the couple met – some had the voice of Chiarina Fino-Savio, another mezzo, in mind. We hear two songs each from the *6 liriche* series 1 (1909) and series 2 (1912). Vibrant images and emotions within poems by Gabriele D'Annunzio, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Francesco Rocchi are keenly felt and conveyed. The standalone 'Storia breve' of 1904 sets a poem by Ada Negri: the course of the 'brief story' of ill-fated love is traced through responsive shifts in the accompaniment. The most famous of Respighi's songs – the highly-charged

'Nebbie' – is another setting of Negri, apparently composed in a flash of inspiration during a spell of depression.

Strauss was born in 1864 and wrote songs prolifically throughout his life, from his first in 1870, aged six, to his last in 1948, the year before his death. He married the soprano Pauline de Ahna, and together they performed his music around the world, with Strauss at the podium or, if at the piano, freely embellishing his piano parts. 'Zueignung' and 'Allerseelen' were both composed in 1885 to poems by Hermann von Gilm, and published two years later within Strauss's first song opus, Op. 10. The short and punchy 'Zueignung' begins with quiet, contained excitement in its driven melody and near-constant triplets, but loses its restraint by the end. The radiant 'Allerseelen' brings a wistful remembrance, on All Souls' Day, of lost love. The music again builds towards a peak in the final stanza, after which the closing repetition of the recurring line 'Wie einst im Mai' ('As once in May') brings with it a chromatically-infused cadence and an arpeggiated affirmation of peaceful, melancholic closure. Between the two Op. 10 songs we hear the sentimental 'Heimliche Aufforderung', in which the protagonist invites a fellow partygoer to a secret nocturnal tryst. Along with the rest of the Op. 27 set, it was given as a wedding gift to Pauline. The Richard Dehmel setting 'Befreit', of 1898, brings a return to regular triplet figuration and arpeggiation that will transfer magically to the harp. It ends with serene, prolonged pronouncements of the phrase 'O Glück!' ('Oh happiness!').

Now we move forward 50 years. The luxurious orchestration and soaring vocal writing of the *4 Last Songs* have a close affinity with Strauss's large-scale works of the *fin-de-siècle*, but the passing of time is crucial to bear in mind, as Europe had changed unimaginably – musically as well as politically – in that half-century. The songs were written between May and September 1948, when Strauss was 84 and living with Pauline in Switzerland; he was exonerated at a denazification tribunal in June. Strauss died in 1849, before the songs were premièreed or published, and Pauline died eight months later. The four poems – three by Hermann Hesse and one by Joseph von Eichendorff – share nostalgic, autumnal themes. The title of this recital is borrowed from the opening of 'Im Abendrot', a beautiful, aching song of two lovers approaching the end of their lives together. These are familiar songs, but the performance version will not be. Unfamiliar transcriptions distil orchestral splendour in unexpected and often surprising ways – it is always interesting to hear how duos navigate the transformation of full orchestral textures into something chamber-like and intimate, and how the transcription handles characteristic instrumental touches like the piccolo trill that closes 'Im Abendrot'.

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Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Clair de lune from *Fêtes galantes* Book I (1891)

Paul Verlaine

Votre âme est un paysage
choisi
Que vont charmant masques
et bergamasques
Jouant du luth et dansant et
quasi
Tristes sous leurs
déguisements fantasques.

Your soul is a chosen
landscape
bewitched by masquers
and bergamaskers,
playing the lute and
dancing and almost
sad beneath their fanciful
disguises.

Tout en chantant sur le
mode mineur
L'amour vainqueur et la vie
opportune,
Ils n'ont pas l'air de croire à
leur bonheur
Et leur chanson se mêle au
clair de lune,

Singing as they go in a
minor key
of conquering love and
life's favours,
they do not seem to
believe in their fortune
and their song mingles with
the light of the moon,

Au calme clair de lune triste
et beau,
Qui fait rêver les oiseaux
dans les arbres
Et sangloter d'extase les jets
d'eau,
Les grands jets d'eau sveltes
parmi les marbres.

The calm light of the
moon, sad and fair,
that sets the birds
dreaming in the trees
and the fountains sobbing in
their rapture,
tall and svelte amid
marble statues.

Le jet d'eau from 5 *poèmes de Baudelaire*

(1887-9)

Charles Baudelaire

Tes beaux yeux sont las,
pauvre amante!
Reste longtemps, sans les
rouvrir,
Dans cette pose nonchalante
Où t'a surprise le
plaisir.
Dans la cour le jet d'eau qui
jase
Et ne se tait ni nuit ni jour,
Entretient doucement
l'extase
Où ce soir m'a plongé
l'amour.

Your beautiful eyes are
fatigued, poor lover!
Rest awhile, without
opening them anew,
in this careless pose,
where pleasure surprised
you.
The babbling fountain in
the courtyard,
never silent night or day,
sweetly prolongs the
ecstasy
where love this evening
plunged me.

La gerbe d'eau qui berce
Ses mille
fleurs,
Que la lune
traverse
De ses pâleurs,

The sheaf of water
swaying its thousand
flowers,
through which the moon
gleams
with its pallid light,

Tombe comme une averse
De larges pleurs.

falls like a shower
of great tears.

Ainsi ton âme qu'incendie
L'éclair brûlant des
voluptés
S'élançe, rapide et hardie,
Vers les vastes cieux
enchantés.
Puis, elle s'épanche,
mourante,
En un flot de triste langueur,
Qui par une invisible pente
Descend jusqu'au fond de
mon cœur.

And so your soul, lit
by the searing flash of
ecstasy,
leaps swift and bold
to vast enchanted
skies.
And then, dying, spills
over
in a wave of sad listlessness,
down some invisible incline
into the depths of my
heart.

La gerbe d'eau qui berce
Ses mille
fleurs,
Que la lune
traverse
De ses pâleurs,
Tombe comme une averse
De larges pleurs.

The sheaf of water
swaying its thousand
flowers,
through which the moon
gleams
with its pallid light,
falls like a shower
of great tears.

O toi, que la nuit rend si belle,
Qu'il m'est doux, penché vers
tes seins,
D'écouter la plainte
éternelle
Qui sanglote dans les
bassins!
Lune, eau sonore, nuit
bénie,
Arbres qui frissonnez autour,
Votre pure mélancolie
Est le miroir de mon amour.

O you, whom night
renders so beautiful,
how sweet, as I lean
toward your breasts,
to listen to the eternal
lament
sobbing in the fountain's
basin!
O moon, lapping water,
blessed night,
trees that quiver all around,
your sheer melancholy
is the mirror of my love.

La gerbe d'eau qui berce
Ses mille
fleurs,
Que la lune
traverse
De ses pâleurs,
Tombe comme une averse
De larges pleurs.

The sheaf of water
swaying its thousand
flowers,
through which the moon
gleams
with its pallid light,
falls like a shower
of great tears.

Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

Nuit d'étoiles (1880)

Théodore de Banville

Nuit d'étoiles,
Sous tes voiles,
Sous ta brise et tes
parfums,
Triste lyre
Qui soupire,
Je rêve aux amours défunts.

La sereine mélancolie
Vient éclore au fond de mon
cœur
Et j'entends l'âme de ma
mie
Tressaillir dans le bois
rêveur.

Nuit d'étoiles,
Sous tes voiles,
Sous ta brise et tes
parfums,
Triste lyre
Qui soupire,
Je rêve aux amours défunts.

Je revois à notre
fontaine
Tes regards bleus comme
les cieux;
Cette rose, c'est ton haleine,
Et ces étoiles sont tes
yeux.

Nuit d'étoiles,
Sous tes voiles,
Sous ta brise et tes
parfums,
Triste lyre
Qui soupire,
Je rêve aux amours défunts.

Beau soir (c.1887-8)

Paul Bourget

Lorsque au soleil couchant
les rivières sont roses,
Et qu'un tiède frisson court
sur les champs de blé,
Un conseil d'être heureux
semble sortir des choses
Et monter vers le cœur
troublé;

Un conseil de goûter le
charme d'être au monde
Cependant qu'on est jeune
et que le soir est beau,

Night of stars

Night of stars,
beneath your veils,
your breeze and your
fragrance,
sad lyre
that sighs,
I dream of bygone loves.

Serene melancholy
now blooms deep in my
heart,
and I hear the soul of my
love
quiver in the dreaming
woods.

Night of stars,
beneath your veils,
your breeze and your
fragrance,
sad lyre
that sighs,
I dream of bygone loves.

Once more at our
fountain I see
your eyes as blue as the
sky;
this rose is your breath,
and these stars are your
eyes.

Night of stars,
beneath your veils,
your breeze and your
fragrance,
sad lyre
that sighs,
I dream of bygone loves.

Beautiful evening

When at sunset the rivers
are pink
and a warm breeze ripples
the fields of wheat,
all things seem to advise
content –
and rise toward the
troubled heart;

Advise us to savour the
gift of life,
while we are young and
the evening fair,

Car nous nous en allons,
comme s'en va cette onde:
Elle à la mer – nous au
tombeau!

for our life slips by, as that
river does:
it to the sea – we to the
tomb.

Colloque sentimental from *Fêtes galantes*

Book II (1904)

Paul Verlaine

Dans le vieux parc solitaire et
glacé,
Deux formes ont tout à
l'heure passé.

Leurs yeux sont morts et
leurs lèvres sont molles,
Et l'on entend à peine leurs
paroles.

Dans le vieux parc solitaire et
glacé
Deux spectres ont évoqué le
passé.

– Te souvient-il de notre
extase ancienne?
– Pourquoi voulez-vous donc
qu'il m'en souvienne?

– Ton cœur bat-il toujours à
mon seul nom?
Toujours vois-tu mon âme en
rêve? – Non.

– Ah! Les beaux jours de
bonheur indicible
Où nous joignons nos
bouches! – C'est possible.

– Qu'il était bleu, le ciel, et
grand, l'espoir!
– L'espoir a fui, vaincu,
vers le ciel
noir.

Tels ils marchaient dans les
avoines folles
Et la nuit seule entendit leurs
paroles.

Lovers' dialogue

In the ancient park,
deserted and frozen,
two shapes have just
passed by.

Their eyes are dead and
their lips are lifeless,
and their words can
hardly be heard.

In the ancient park,
deserted and frozen
two spectres were
recalling the past.

– Do you remember our
past rapture?
– Why would you have
me remember?

– Does your heart still surge
at my very name?
Do you still see my soul
when you dream? – No.

– Ah, the beautiful days of
inexpressible bliss
when our lips met! – It
may have been so.

– How blue the sky, how
hopes ran high!
– Hope has fled,
vanquished, to the
black sky.

So they walked on through
the wild grasses
and the night alone heard
their words.

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Van li effluvi de le rose **The scent of roses drifts**

(1909)

Gabriele D'Annunzio

Van li effluvi de le rose dai
verzieri,
Da le corde van le note de
l'amore,
Lungi van per l'alta
notte
Piena d'incantesimi.

The scent of roses drifts
from the gardens,
from the strings drift
notes of love,
traveling through the
deep night
full of enchantments.

L'aspro vin di giovinezza
brilla ed arde
Ne le arterie umane: reca
l'aura a tratti
Un tepor voluttuoso
D'aliti feminei.

The bitter wine of youth
gleams and burns
in human veins: at intervals,
the breeze brings
the voluptuous warmth
of feminine breaths.

Spiran l'acque a i
solitari lidi;
vanno,
Van li effluvi de le rose dai
verzieri,
Van le note de l'amore
Lungi e le meteore.

They blow the waters
towards distant shores;
vanish;
the scent of roses drifts
from the gardens,
the notes of love drift
far among the falling stars.

Serenata indiana (1909) **Indian serenade**

*Roberto Ascoli after Percy
Bysshe Shelley*

Del sonno tra i fantasimi
Di te sognavo, o
amore!
Mi desto: i venti trepididi
sospirano,
È delle stelle vivido il
fulgore.
Ti sognavo; e uno
spirito
M'addusse, come
fu?
Oh amor, sotto il
balcone
Della camera, ove dimori tu!

In sleep among the spectres
I was dreaming of you, oh
beloved!
I awaken: the anxious
winds are sighing,
vivid brightness coming
from the stars.
I was dreaming of you;
and a spirit
came toward me, how
could it have been?
Oh beloved, beneath the
balcony
of the room where you live!

Le aure errabonde
languono
Sulle mute correnti.
Dei gigli neri vagano gli
effluvii,
Come in sogno pensieri
evanescenti.
All'usignolo il querulo
canto
Nel petto muor:
Così debbo morire, o fior
dell'anima,

The wandering breezes
languish
on the silent currents.
The scents of the black
lilies roam
Like vague thoughts in a
dream.
The querulous song of
the nightingale
dies in its breast:
thus must I die, oh flower
of my soul,

Così sopra il tuo cuore! thus, upon your heart!

Oh! Da terra sollevami!
Io muoio, io languo, io
manco.
Piova in baci il tuo amor
sulle miei palpebre
Bianche, sul labbro sitibondo
e bianco.
Ah! La mia guancia è pallida!
Il cuore battiti dà impetuosi!
Oh! Ancor contro il tuo
stringilo:
Lvi s'infrangerà.

Oh! raise me from the earth!
I am dying, I am languishing,
I am falling.
Rain your love in kisses
upon my white eyelids,
upon my white, thirsty
lips!
Ah! my cheek is pale!
My heart is beating wildly!
Oh! press it again against
yours:
there it will break.

Piccola mano bianca **Little white hand**

(1912)

Francesco Rocchi

Piccola mano bianca,
Che tanto destino
racchiudi,
Porgi l'esili dita
Sul mio tumido cuore.
Senti? Il palpito preme
frequente
Con rapidi balzi. Porgi
l'orecchio:
Suona d'amore il canto.
Suona le brevi gioie che
limpide teco
Suggeriva ne la purezza d'oro
Del meriggio d'estate,
Suona la lunga pena de
l'animo laborioso,
Che ti brama, ti adora
e ti venera e
teme.
Oh ne le chiome lunghe,
Fluenti su l'alabastro
De le nitide spalle,
Premere il bacio mio!
Oh a la piccola mano,
Che tanto destino
racchiude,
Dare l'ultima gioia
De l'esistenza vana!

Little white hand,
which holds so much
destiny,
place your slender finger
over my swelling heart.
Hear it? The heartbeat
pounds frequently
with rapid pulses. Incline
an ear:
it sounds the song of love.
It sounds your brief joys
which clearly
suckle the golden purity
of the summer afternoon,
it sounds the long sentence
of the labouring soul,
which longs for you, adores
you and worships you and
fears you.
Oh, on your long tresses,
flowing over the alabaster
of your fine back,
I'll press my kiss!
Little white hand,
which so much destiny
holds,
give the ultimate joy
of this vain existence!

Storia breve (1904)

Ada Negri

Ella pareva un sogno di poeta;
Vestia sempre di bianco, e
avea sul viso
La calma d'una sfinge
d'Oriente:

Le cadea sino ai fianchi il crin
di seta;
Trillava un canto nel suo
breve riso,
Era di statua il bel corpo
indolente.

Amò, non fu riamata. In
fondo al core,
Tranquilla in fronte, custodi
la ria
Fiamma di
quell'amor senza
parole.

Ma quel desio la consumò...
Nell'ore
D'un crepuscol d'Ottobre ella
moria,
Come verbena quando
manca il sole.

Su una violetta morta

(1912)

Francesco Rocchi, after
Percy Bysshe Shelley

È vanito l'odor di questo
fiore,
Che, come il bacio tuo, tenero
ardente respirava su me.
Anche di questo fior fuggì il
colore,
Che rilucea deliziosamente
di te, solo di te.

Forma languida e vana ella
riposa
Sul mio povero cuor, Che non
oblia, povero stanco cuor;
Immobile, di gel,
silenziosa
Ella irride così l'anima mia,
l'anima calda ancor.

In vano, in vano io piango a
lei d'accanto;
E sospirando invan su lei mi
chino: oh! tutto in lei finì!
Il suo destino è muto, senza
pianto.

Brief story

She seemed the dream of
a poet;
always dressed in white,
and had in her face
the calmness of a Sphinx
of the East.

He silky hair reached her
waist;
she trilled a song in her
lover's brief smile,
her indolent body
seemed a statue.

She fell in love - but was
not loved in return.
Deep in her heart, in her
mind, she preserved
the vivid flame of her love
without saying any
words about it.

But she was consumed
by desire
in the twilight hour of an
October day she died
like verbena without
sunlight.

On a faded violet

The odour from the
flower is gone
which like thy kisses
breathed on me;
the colour from the flower
is flown
which glowed of thee and
only thee!

A shrivelled, lifeless,
vacant form.
It lies on my abandoned
breast,
and mocks the heart
which yet is warm,
with cold and silent
rest.

I weep - my tears revive it
not!
I sigh - it breathes no
more on me;
its mute and
uncomplaining lot

Il suo destino è muto. Oh! il mio
destino dovrebbe esser così!

is such as mine should
be.

Nebbie (pub. 1906)

Ada Negri

Soffro, lontan lontano
Le nebbie sonnolente
Salgono dal tacente
Piano.

Alto gracchiando, i corvi,
Fidati all'ali
nere,
Traversan le brughiere
Torvi.

Dell'aere ai morsi crudi
Gli addolorati tronchi
Offron, pregando, i bronchi
Nudi.

Come ho freddo! Son sola:
Pel grigio ciel sospinto
Un gemito distinto
Vola

E mi ripete: Vieni;
È buia la vallata.
O triste, o
disamata,
Vieni! Vieni!

Mists

I suffer; far, far away;
the drowsy mists
rise from the silent
heath.

Shrilly cawing, the crows,
on their steadfast black
wings,
traverse the sinister
moors.

To the air's pitiless bite
the mournful tree trunks
offer, praying, their naked
branches.

How cold I am! I am alone:
driven through the grey sky
a dying cry
flies

And repeats to me: 'Come,
the valley is dark.
Oh, sad one; oh, unloved
one,
come! Come!'

Interval

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Zueignung Op. 10 No. 1 Dedication

(1885)

Hermann von Gilm

Ja du weisst es, teure Seele,
Dass ich fern von dir mich
quäle,
Liebe macht die Herzen krank,
Habe Dank.

Einst hielt ich, der Freiheit
Zecher,
Hoch den Amethysten-Becher
Und du segnetest den
Trank,
Habe Dank.

Yes, dear soul, you know
that I'm in torment far
from you,
love makes hearts sick,
be thanked.

Once, revelling in
freedom, I held
the amethyst cup aloft
and you blessed that
draught,
be thanked.

Und beschworst darin die
Bösen,
Bis ich, was ich nie gewesen,
Heilig, heilig an's Herz dir
sank,
Habe Dank.

**Heimliche
Aufforderung Op. 27
No. 3 (1894)**
John Henry Mackay

Auf, hebe die funkelnde
Schale empor zum Mund,
Und trinke beim
Freudenmahle dein Herz
gesund.

Und wenn du sie hebst, so
winke mir heimlich zu,
Dann lächle ich, und dann
trinke ich still wie du...

Und still gleich mir betrachte
um uns das Heer
Der trunknen Schwätzer –
verachte sie nicht zu sehr.

Nein, hebe die blinkende
Schale, gefüllt mit Wein,
Und lass beim lärmenden
Mahle sie glücklich sein.

Doch hast du das Mahl
genossen, den Durst
gestillt,
Dann verlasse der lauten
Genossen festfreudiges Bild,

Und wandle hinaus in den
Garten zum
Rosenstrauch, -
Dort will ich dich dann erwarten
nach altem Brauch,

Und will an die Brust
dir sinken, eh du's
gehöfft,
Und deine Küsse trinken, wie
ehmals oft,

Und flechten in deine Haare
der Rose Pracht –
O komm, du wunderbare,
ersehnte Nacht!

And you banished the evil
spirits,
till I, as never before,
holy, sank holy upon your
heart,
be thanked.

Secret invitation

Come, raise to your lips
the sparkling goblet,
and drink at this joyful
feast your heart to
health.

And when you raise it,
give me a secret sign,
then I shall smile and
drink as quietly as you...

And quietly like me, look
around at the hordes
of drunken gossips – do not
despise them too much.

No, raise the glittering
goblet, filled with wine,
and let them be happy at
the noisy feast.

But once you have
savoured the meal,
quenched your thirst,
leave the loud company
of happy revellers,

And come out into the
garden to the rose-
bush, -
there I shall wait for you
as I've always done,

And I shall sink on your
breast, before you
could hope,
and drink your kisses, as
often before,

And twine in your hair the
glorious rose –
Ah! come, o wondrous,
longed-for night

**Allerseelen Op. 10
No. 8 (1885)**
Hermann von Gilm

Stell' auf den Tisch die
duftenden Reseden,
Die letzten roten A stern trag'
herbei
Und lass uns wieder von der
Liebe reden
Wie einst im Mai.

Gib mir die Hand, dass ich
sie heimlich drücke,
Und wenn man's sieht, mir ist
es einerlei,
Gib mir nur einen deiner
süssen Blicke
Wie einst im Mai.

Es blüht und duftet heut' auf
jedem Grabe,
Ein Tag im Jahr ist ja den
Toten frei;
Komm' an mein Herz, dass
ich dich wieder habe,
Wie einst im Mai.

All Souls' Day

Set on the table the
fragrant mignonettes,
bring in the last red
asters,
and let us talk of love
again
as once in May.

Give me your hand to
press in secret,
and if people see, I do not
care,
give me but one of your
sweet glances
as once in May.

Each grave today has
flowers and is fragrant,
one day each year is
devoted to the dead;
come to my heart and so
be mine again,
as once in May.

Befreit Op. 39 No. 4

(1898)

Richard Dehmel

Du wirst nicht weinen. Leise,
leise
Wirst du lächeln; und wie zur
Reise
Geb ich dir Blick und Kuss
zurück.
Unsre lieben vier Wände! Du
hast sie bereitet,
Ich habe sie die zur Welt
geweitet –
O Glück!

Released

You will not weep. Gently,
gently
you will smile; and as
before a journey
I shall return your gaze
and kiss.
Our dear four walls! You
prepared them,
I have widened them into
a world for you –
O happiness!

Dann wirst du heiss meine
Hände fassen
Und wirst mir deine Seele
lassen,
Lässt unsern Kindern mich
zurück.
Du schenktest mir dein
ganzes Leben,
Ich will es ihnen wiedergeben
–
O Glück!

Then ardently you will
seize my hands
and you will leave me
your soul,
leave me to care for our
children.
You gave your whole life
to me,
I shall give it back to them
–
O happiness!

Es wird sehr bald sein, wir
wissen's Beide,
Wir haben einander befreit
vom Leide,
So gab ich dich der Welt
zurück.
Dann wirst du mir nur noch
im Traum erscheinen
Und mich segnen und mit
mir weinen –
O Glück!

It will be very soon, we
both know it,
we have released each
other from suffering,
so I returned you to the
world.
Then you'll appear to me
only in dreams,
and you will bless me and
weep with me –
O happiness!

4 Last Songs (1948)

Frühling

Hermann Hesse

In dämmrigen Grüften
Träumte ich lang
Von deinen Bäumen und
blauen Lüften,
Von deinem Duft und
Vogelsang.

Spring

In twilight caverns
I have long dreamt
of your trees and blue
skies,
your fragrance and
birdsong.

Nun liegst du erschlossen
In Gleiss und
Zier
Von Licht übergossen
Wie ein Wunder vor mir.

Now you lie revealed
in shining graceful
splendour,
bathed in light
like a miracle before me.

Du kennest mich
wieder,
Du lockest mich zart,
Es zittert durch all meine
Glieder
Deine selige Gegenwart.

You recognise me once
more,
you lure me tenderly,
my whole frame
quivers
with your blissful presence.

September

Hermann Hesse

Der Garten trauert,
Kühl sinkt in die Blumen der
Regen.
Der Sommer schauert
Still seinem Ende entgegen.

September

The garden mourns,
the cool rain sinks into
the flowers.
Summer shudders
quietly to its close.

Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt
Nieder vom hohen
Akazienbaum.
Sommer lächelt erstaunt und
matt
In den sterbenden
Gartentraum.

Leaf after golden leaf
falls from the tall
acacia.
Summer smiles, astonished
and drained,
into the garden's dying
dream.

Lange noch bei den Rosen
Bleibt er stehn, sehnt sich
nach Ruh.
Langsam tut er die
Müdgewordnen Augen zu.

For a long time it lingers
by the roses, yearning for
rest.
Slowly it closes
its now wearied eyes.

Beim Schlafengehen

Hermann Hesse

Nun der Tag mich müd
gemacht,
Soll mein sehnliches Verlangen
Freundlich die gestirnte
Nacht
Wie ein müdes Kind
empfangen.

Going to sleep

Now that day has wearied
me,
may my yearning desire
be received by the starlit
night
like a tired
child.

Hände lasst von allem Tun,
Stirn vergiss du alles Denken,
Alle meine Sinne nun
Wollen sich in Schlummer
senken.

Hands, refrain from all work,
brow, forget all thought,
all my senses now
long to sink in
slumber.

Und die Seele unbewacht
Will in freien Flügen schweben,
Um im Zauberkreis der
Nacht
Tief und tausendfach zu
leben.

And the unwatched soul
longs to soar up freely,
to live in night's magic
circle
profoundly and a
thousandfold.

Im Abendrot

Joseph, Freiherr von
Eichendorff

Wir sind durch Not und
Freude
Gegangen Hand in Hand,
Vom Wandern ruhen
wir
Nun überm stillen Land.

Rings sich die Täler
neigen,
Es dunkelt schon die
Luft,
Zwei Lerchen nur noch
steigen
Nachträumend in den Duft.

Tritt her, und lass sie
schwirren,
Bald ist es Schlafenszeit,
Dass wir uns nicht verirren
In dieser Einsamkeit.

O weiter stiller Friede!
So tief im Abendrot
Wie sind wir
wandernde –
Ist dies etwa der
Tod?

At sunset

We have gone hand in
hand
through joys and distress,
now we rest from our
wanderings
high above the quiet land.

Around us the valleys
slope down,
the skies have begun to
darken,
only two larks, recalling a
dream,
soar up into the haze.

Come, and leave them to
fly,
soon it will be time to sleep,
we must not lose our way
in this solitude.

O vast and silent peace!
So deep in the sunset glow,
how weary we are with
wandering –
could this perhaps be
death?

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