

### Three Marian Carols

#### [1] I sing of a Maiden

*Anonymous 15th Century English*

I sing of a maiden  
That is makéles;  
King of all kings  
To her son she ches.  
I sing of a maiden  
That is makéles;  
King of all kings  
To her son she ches.

He came all so still  
Where his mother was,  
As dew in April  
That falleth on the grass.  
He came all so still  
To his mother's bow'r,  
As dew in April  
That falleth on the flower.

He came all so still  
Where his mother lay,  
As dew in April  
That falleth on the spray.

Mother and maiden  
Was never none but she;  
Well may such a lady  
Godès mother be.

#### [2] Dormi, Jesu! (The Virgin's Cradle Hymn)

*Anonymous 16th-Century Flemish/German*

Dormi, Jesu! Mater ridet  
Quae tam dulcem somnum videt,  
Dormi, Jesu! blandule!  
Si non dormis, mater plorat,  
Inter fila cantans orat,  
Blande, veni, somnule.  
Dormi, Jesu!

Sleep, sweet babe! my cares beguiling:  
Mother sits beside thee smiling;  
Sleep, my darling, tenderly!  
If thou sleep not, mother mourneth,  
Singing as her wheel she turneth:  
Come, soft slumber, balmily!

*Translation: Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)*

#### [3] Mary laid her child

*Norman Nicholson (1914-87)*

Mary laid her child among  
The bracken fronds of night  
And by the glimmer round his head  
All the barn was lit.  
Mary held her child above  
The miry, frozen farm –  
And by the fire within his limbs  
The resting roots were warm.  
Mary hid her child between  
Hillocks of hard sand –  
By singing water in his veins  
Grass sprang from the ground.  
Mary nursed her child beside  
The gardens of a grave –  
And by the death within his bones  
The dead became alive.

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**Mangan Triptych**

*James Clarence Mangan (1803-49)*

**[4] Visions**

**And then no more**

I saw her once, one little while, and then no more:  
'Twas Eden's light on Earth a while, and then no more.  
Amid the throng she passed along the meadow-floor:  
Spring seemed to smile on Earth awhile, and then no more:  
But whence she came, which way she went, what garb she wore  
I noted not; I gazed a while, and then no more!

I saw her once, one little while, and then no more:  
'Twas Paradise on Earth a while, and then no more.  
Ah! What avail my vigils pale, my magic lore?  
She shone before mine eyes awhile, and then no more.  
The shallop of my peace is wrecked on Beauty's shore.  
Near Hope's fair isle it rode awhile, and then no more!

I saw her once, one little while, and then no more:  
Earth looked like Heav'n a little while, and then no more.  
Her presence thrilled and lighted to its inner core  
My desert breast a little while, and then no more.  
So may, perchance, a meteor glance at midnight o'er  
Some ruined pile a little while, and then no more!

I saw her once, one little while, and then no more:  
The earth was Peri-land awhile, and then no more.  
Oh, might I see but once again, as once before,  
Through chance or wile, that shape awhile, and then no more!  
Death soon would heal my griefs!  
    This heart, now sad and sore,  
Would beat anew a little while, and then no more.

**[5] Siberia**

In Siberia's wastes  
The Ice-wind's breath  
Woundeth like the toothèd steel;  
Lost Siberia doth reveal  
Only blight and death,

Blight and death alone.  
No Summer shines.  
Night is interblent with Day.

In Siberia's wastes alway  
The blood blackens, the heart pines.  
In Siberia's wastes  
No tears are shed,

**Shapes and Signs**

I see black dragons mount the sky,  
I see earth yawn beneath my feet,  
I feel within the asp, the worm  
That will not sleep and cannot die,  
Fair though may show the winding-sheet!  
I hear all night as through a storm  
Hoarse voices calling, calling  
My name upon the wind:  
All omens monstrous and appalling  
Affright my guilty mind.

I exult alone in one wild hour –  
That hour in which the red cup drowns  
The memories it anon renews  
In ghastlier guise, in fiercer power –  
Then Fancy brings me golden crowns,  
And visions of all brilliant hues  
Lap my lost soul in gladness,  
Until I awake again,  
And the dark lava-fires of madness  
Once more sweep through my brain.

For they freeze within the brain.  
Nought is felt but dullest pain,  
Pain acute, yet dead;

Pain as in a dream,  
When years go by  
Funeral-paced, yet fugitive,  
When man lives, and doth not live,  
Doth not live – nor die.

In Siberia's wastes  
Are sands and rocks,  
Nothing blooms of green or soft,  
But the snow-peaks rise aloft  
And the gaunt ice-blocks.

And the exile there  
Is one with those;  
They are part, and he is part,  
For the sands are in his heart,  
And the killing snows.

Therefore, in those wastes  
None curse the Czar.  
Each man's tongue is cloven by  
The North Blast, that heweth nigh  
With sharp scimitar.

And such doom each drees,  
Till, hunger-gnawn,  
And cold-slain, he at length sinks there,  
Yet scarce more a corpse than ere  
His last breath was drawn.

**[6] Motet (Gone in the Wind)**

Solomon! where is thy throne? It is gone in the wind.  
Babylon! where is thy might? It is gone in the wind.  
Like the swift shadows of Noon, like the dreams of the Blind,  
Vanish the glories and pomps of the earth in the wind.  
Man! canst thou build upon aught in the pride of thy mind?  
Wisdom will teach thee that nothing can tarry behind;  
Though there be thousand bright actions embalmed and enshrined,  
Myriads and millions of brighter are snow in the wind.  
Solomon! where is thy throne? It is gone in the wind.  
Babylon! where is thy might? It is gone in the wind.  
All that the genius of Man hath achieved or designed  
Waits but its hour to be dealt with as dust by the wind.  
Say, what is Pleasure? A phantom, a mask undefined;  
Science? An almond, whereof we can pierce but the rind;  
Honour and Affluence? Firmans that Fortune hath signed  
Only to glitter and pass on the wings of the wind.  
Solomon! where is thy throne? It is gone in the wind.  
Babylon! where is thy might? It is gone in the wind.  
Who is the Fortunate? He who in anguish hath pined!  
He shall rejoice when his relics are dust in the wind!  
Mortal! be careful with what thy best hopes are entwined;  
Woe to the miners for Truth – where the Lampless have mined!  
Woe to the seekers on earth for – what none ever find!  
They and their trust shall be scattered like leaves on the wind.  
Solomon! where is thy throne? It is gone in the wind.  
Babylon! where is thy might? It is gone in the wind.  
Happy in death are they only whose hearts have consigned  
All Earth's affections and longings and cares to the wind.

Pity, thou, reader! the madness of poor Humankind,  
Raving of Knowledge, – and Satan so busy to blind!  
Raving of Glory, – like me, – for the garlands I bind  
(Garlands of song) are but gathered, and – strewn in the wind!  
Solomon! where is thy throne? It is gone in the wind.  
Babylon! where is thy might? It is gone in the wind.  
I, Abul-Namez, must rest; for my fire hath declined,  
And I hear voices from Hades like bells on the wind.

[7] Amen/Alleluia

[8] Proud Songsters

*Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)*

The thrushes sing as the sun is going,  
And the finches whistle in ones and pairs,  
And as it gets dark loud nightingales  
In bushes  
Pipe, as they can when April wears,  
As if all Time were theirs.

These are brand-new birds of twelve-months' growing,  
Which a year ago, or less than twain,  
No finches were, nor nightingales,  
Nor thrushes,  
But only particles of grain,  
And earth, and air, and rain.

[9] The Lily-White Rose (from "Songs of the Garden")

*Anonymous English, c. 1500*

This day day dawes  
This gentil day day dawes,  
This gentil day dawes,  
And I must home gone.

This gentil day dawes,  
This day, day dawes,  
This gentil day dawes,  
And we must home gone.

In a glorius garden green  
Sawe I sitting a comely queen  
Among the floures that fresh been.

She gaderd a floure and set between.  
The lily-white rose me thought I sawe,  
The lily-white rose me thought I sawe,  
And ever she sang:  
[repeat "This day..."]

In that garden be floures of hewe,  
The gelofir gent that she well knewe;  
The flour-de-luce she did on rewe,  
And said, 'The white rose is most trewe  
This garden to rule by rightwis lawe.'  
The lily-white rose me thought I sawe,  
And ever she sang:  
[repeat: "This day..."]

[10] The Morning Watch

*Henry Vaughan (1621-95)*

O joys! Infinite sweetness! With what flow'rs  
And shoots of glory my soul breaks and buds!  
All the long hours  
Of night, and rest,  
Through the still shrouds  
Of sleep, and clouds,  
This dew fell on my breast;  
Oh, how it *bloods*  
And *spirits* all my earth! Hark! In what rings  
And *hymning circulations* the quick world  
Awakes and sings!  
The rising winds  
The falling springs,  
Birds, beasts, all things  
Adore him in their kinds.  
Thus all is hurl'd  
In sacred *hymns* and *order*, the great *chime*  
And *symphony* of nature. Prayer is  
The world in tune,

A spirit voice,  
And vocal joys  
Whose *echo* is heav'n's bliss.  
O, let me climb  
When I lie down! The pious soul by night  
Is like a clouded star, whose beams, though said  
To shed their light  
Under some cloud,  
Yet are above  
And shine and move  
Beyond that misty shroud.  
So in my bed,  
That curtain'd grave, though sleep, like ashes, hide  
My lamp and life, both shall in thee abide.

**[11] The Evening Watch**

*Henry Vaughan (1621-95)*

A DIALOGUE

*Body*

Farewell! I go to sleep; but when  
The day-star springs, I'll wake again.

*Soul*

Go, sleep in peace; and when thou liest  
Unnumbered in thy dust, when all this frame  
Is but one dram, and what thou now descriest  
In several parts shall want a name,  
Then may his peace be with thee, and each dust  
Writ in his book, who ne'er betrayed man's trust!

*Body*

Amen! but hark, ere we two stray,  
How many hours dost think 'till day?

*Soul*

Ah! go, th'art weak, and sleepy. Heaven  
Is a plain watch, and without figures winds  
All ages up; who drew this circle even  
He fills it; days and hours are blinds.  
Yet, this take with thee; the last gasp of time  
Is thy first breath, and man's eternal prime.

**[12] Great Lord of Lords**

*Anonymous, possibly 16th Century,  
reworked by Henry Ramsden Bramley (1833-1917)*

Great Lord of Lords, supreme immortal King,  
O give us grace to sing Thy praise,  
Which makes earth, air, and heav'n to ring.  
O Word of God, from ages unbegun,  
The Father's only Son,  
With Him in pow'r, in substance,  
Thou art one.  
O Holy Ghost,  
Whose care doth all embrace,  
Thy watch is o'er our race,  
Thou Source of life,  
Thou Spring of peace and grace.  
One living Trinity,  
One unseen Light,  
All, all is Thine,  
Thy light  
Beholds alike the bounds of depth and height.  
Amen.

**[13] A Hymne to God the Father**

*John Donne (1572-1631)*

Wilt thou forgive that sinne where I begunne,  
Which is my sin, though it were done before?  
Wilt thou forgive those sinnes, through which I runne,  
And do run still: though still I do deplore?  
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,  
For, I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sinne by which I have wonne  
Others to sinne? and, made my sinne their doore?  
Wilt thou forgive that sinne which I did shunne  
A yeare, or two: but wallowed in, a score?  
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,  
For I have more.

I have a sinne of feare, that when I have spunne  
My last thred, I shall perish on the shore;  
Sweare by thy selfe, that at my death thy sonne  
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;  
And, having done that, thou hast done,  
I fear no more.

**[14] The Last and Greatest Herald**

*William Drummond (1585-1649)*

The last and greatest Herald of Heaven's King  
Girt with rough skins, hies to the deserts wild,  
Among that savage brood the woods forth bring,  
Which he more harmless found than man, and mild.  
His food was locusts, and what young doth spring,  
With honey that from virgin hives distill'd;  
Parch'd body, hollow eyes, some uncouth thing  
Made him appear, long since from earth exiled.  
There burst he forth: 'All ye whose hopes rely  
On God, with me amidst these deserts mourn,  
Repent, repent, and from old errors turn!'  
—Who listen'd to his voice, obey'd his cry?  
Only the echoes, which he made relent,  
Rung from their flinty caves, 'Repent! Repent!'