

From **Twelve Poems from Rückert's 'Springtime of Love', Op. 37**

**1** **1. Heaven wept a tear**

Heaven wept a tear  
That resolved to be lost in the sea.  
The mussel came and encircled her:  
You must now be my pearl.  
You must not flinch before the waves,  
I will carry you calmly through them.  
O you my pain, you my pleasure,  
You tear of Heaven in my bosom!  
Grant, Heaven, that I in pure mind  
May keep your purest tear.

**2** **3. O you lords**

O you lords,  
Great rich lords all!  
Do you need in your fair  
Gardens then no nightingale?  
Here is one who a quiet  
Place seeks throughout the world.  
Clear a place for me and I will  
Pay you with song.

**3** **5. I have drunk in**

I have drunk in  
The spring, true and dear,  
That having flown the world  
She may stay here in my breast.

Here are the blue skies,  
Here are the green meadows,  
The flowers here, the fragrance,  
The flowering rose-hedge.

And here on my bosom leans  
With the sweet sigh of love,  
The beloved, who longs  
For the delights of spring.

She leans to listen  
And hear in quiet pleasure  
The murmur of spring streams  
In her poet's breast.

Then well forth the songs

And stream over her  
The great fullness of spring  
That God bestowed on me.

And like her, drunk therefrom,  
There looks round in space,  
Flowers too from its bursts of light  
The world, a dream of spring.

#### **4 6. Beloved, what can part us then?**

Beloved, what can part us then?  
Can fear?  
Can fear part us?  
No. Although we may avoid seeing each other,  
We shall be unparted in our hearts.  
Mine and yours, yours and mine  
We shall be, my beloved.

Beloved, what can part us then?  
Forest and heath?  
Can distance part us?  
No. Our love is not here below,  
Unparted shall we be in Heaven.  
Mine and yours, yours and mine  
We shall be, my beloved.

Beloved, what can part us then?  
Fortune and sorrows?  
Can either part us?  
No. Whether fortune or woe be our lot,  
Unparted shall be my lot from yours.  
Mine and yours, yours and mine  
We shall be, my beloved.

Beloved, what can part us then?  
Hate and envy?  
Can the world part us?  
No. No-one shall disturb your peace,  
Unparted shall we be for ever.  
Mine and yours, yours and mine  
We shall be, my beloved.

#### **5 7. Fair is the feast of spring.**

Fair is the feast of spring.  
Yet it lasts only three days!  
Have you a love, crown it  
With roses, before it passes away!

Have you a glass, present it,  
O tavern, and sing to me besides:  
Fair is the feast of spring  
Yet it lasts only three days!

## **6** 8. Wings! Wings! To fly

Wings! Wings! To fly  
Over hill and dale,  
Wings to cradle my heart  
On the beam of morning.

Wings, to soar over the sea  
With the dawn,  
Wings, wings over life,  
Over grave and death!

Wings, as those of youth  
As it flew by me,  
Wings as fortune's shadow  
That deceived my heart!

Wings, to fly after the days  
That have gone!  
Wings, to chase after joys  
That have flown away in the wind.

Wings, like the nightingales,  
When the roses bloom,  
From the land where mist hovers  
To follow them! Wings! Wings!

Ah! From the exile shore  
Where no boat beckons,  
Wings, Wings to our homeland  
Where the crown shines!

Freedom, as to the butterfly  
The caterpillar grows,  
When the spirit's wing stretches out  
And the shell breaks!

Often in the quiet midnight  
I feel myself lifted up  
By wings from the dream's power  
To the stars' gateway.

Yet feathers grown  
In the fragrance of the night

I see again plucked from me  
At the breeze of morning.

The sun's burning melts the pinion,  
Icarus falls to the sea,  
And the roar of his purpose overwhelms  
His spirit.

### **7 9. Rose, sea and sun**

Rose, sea and sun  
Are a picture of my beloved,  
Who with her rapture  
Embraces my whole life.

All lustre, overflowing,  
All dew of spring's meadow  
Lies enclosed in one  
In the calyx of the rose only.

All colours struggle together,  
All fragrance in spring's field,  
To bring up  
Together the image of the rose.

All streams have merely  
Their course on earth,  
To bury themselves  
In longing in the sea's bosom.

All springs flow  
In the unexhausted ground  
To make a circle  
About the earth's flourishing round.

All stars in the air  
Are a loving glance of the night,  
In the morning's fragrance  
Dying, when the day awakes.

All the flames of the world,  
The diffused splendour of Heaven,  
Flow clearly together  
In the sun's garland of rays.

### **8 10. O sun, O sea, O rose**

O sun, O sea, O rose!  
As, when the sun in triumph

Rises above the stars that stood in the sky,  
A glimmer after the others fade  
Until all are brought together into one glow,  
So have I, beloved, found you:  
You came, were there, what my heart felt,  
Brought together in you.

O sun, O sea, O rose!  
As, when the arms of the sea start up  
In streams that wind after them,  
Rushing on in fervour  
Until they have found rest in the deep bosom of the earth,  
So beloved have I felt you:  
My heart with all its wounds of yearning  
Is set free in you.

O sun, O sea, O rose!  
As when in spring a thousandfold  
A bright green has struggling freed itself,  
A quarrelling people, until the rose, majestic,  
Entering, takes it for a garland,  
So, beloved, have I entwined you:  
The garland of being must blossoming be rounded off,  
Bound together in you.

## 9 12. So true the sun shines

So true the sun shines,  
So true the cloud weeps,  
So true the flame flashes,  
So true spring blossoms;  
So truly have I felt  
As I held you in embrace:  
You love me, as I you,  
You I love, as you me.

The sun may be dimmed,  
The clouds no longer weep,  
The flame may flash the less,  
Spring blossom no more!  
We will embrace  
And always feel so;  
You love me, as I you,  
You I love, as you me.

## Lieder and Songs from 'Wilhelm Meister', Op. 98a

### 10 2. The Harper's Ballad

'What do I hear sounding  
From the bridge before the gate?  
Let the song before our ears  
Resound in the hall!'  
The king spoke, the page ran,  
The page came, the king cried out:  
'Let the old man in!'

'Greetings, noble lords,  
Greetings you fair ladies!  
How rich a heaven! Star on star!  
Who knows their names?  
In the hall so splendid and glorious  
Be shut, eyes, here is not the time  
To indulge in wonder.'

The singer shut his eyes  
And struck up in full tones:  
The knights looked boldly forward  
And the fair ones to their laps.  
The king, whom the song pleased,  
To honour him for his playing,  
Sent to fetch a golden chain.

'Give me not the golden chain,  
Give the chain to the knights,  
Before whose brave looks  
Your enemies' lances splinter.  
Give it to the chancellor, whom you have,  
And let him bear this noble burden  
With his other burdens.

'I sing as the bird sings  
That lives in the branches;  
The song that comes from my throat  
Is reward, rewards richly.  
Yet if I may, I would beg one thing:  
Let me have the best beaker of your wine  
In a pure gold cup.'

He puts it to his lips and drinks:  
'O drink of sweet refreshment!  
Oh, most fortunate is the house  
Where this is a small gift!  
When things go well for you, think of me  
And thank God as warmly

As I thank you for this drink.'

**11 3. Only he who knows what yearning is  
(Mignon's Song)**

Only he who knows what yearning is  
Knows what I suffer!  
Alone and parted  
From all joy,  
I look up to the firmament  
In that direction.  
Ah! He who loves and knows me  
Is far away.  
I am dizzy, my inmost parts  
Burn.  
Only he who knows what yearning is  
Knows what I suffer.

**12 4. Who never ate his bread with tears  
(The Harper's Song)**

Who never ate his bread with tears,  
Who never through troubled nights  
On his bed sat weeping,  
He knows you not, you heavenly powers.

You lead us into life,  
You let poor beings become guilty,  
Then you leave him in pain:  
For all guilt is avenged on earth.

**13 5. Tell me not to speak  
(Mignon's Song)**

Tell me not to speak, tell me to be silent,  
For my secret is my duty,  
I would show you my whole inner being,  
Only fate will not allow it.

At the right time the sun's course sends away  
Dark night, and it must be light again,  
The hard rock unlocks its bosom,  
The earth grudges not its deep hidden springs.

Each one seeks peace in a friend's arms,  
There can the breast pour forth its complaints,  
Only an oath seals my lips  
And only a god may unlock them.

**14 6. He who gives way to solitude  
(The Harper's Song)**

He who gives way to solitude,  
Ah! He is soon alone;  
Everyone lives, everyone loves  
And leaves him to his suffering.  
Yes! Leave me to my torment!  
And can I only once  
Be truly solitary,  
Then I am not alone.

There creeps a lover going to see  
If his mistress is alone?  
So creeps over me by day and night  
The pain of solitude,  
The torment of solitude.  
Ah, if I were once  
Solitary in the grave,  
Then I will be left alone!

**15 7. Sing not in tones of mourning  
(Philine's Song)**

Sing not in tones of mourning  
Of the solitude of night.  
No, it is, O gentle beauties,  
Made for companionship.

Could you enjoy the day  
That only interrupts pleasure?  
It is good for distraction;  
For anything else it is useless.

But when in the hours of night  
The sweet lamp gives out its weak light  
And from lips to near lips  
Joking and love pours forth;

When the bold, dissolute boy,  
Who once hurried, wild and fiery,  
Often with a small gift  
And amid light play lingers;

When the nightingale for lovers  
Full of love sings a little song,  
That to the prisoner and troubled  
Sounds only as ache and woe;

With what light-stirring heart then  
You hear not the bell  
That with twelve deliberate strokes  
Promises rest and safety.

Therefore in the long day  
Mark it, dear heart;  
Every day has its troubles  
And the night has its pleasure.

**16 8. To the doors will I creep  
(The Harper's Song)**

To the doors will I creep,  
Quietly and modestly will I stand,  
Pious hands will give me food,  
And I shall go again.  
Everyone will seem to himself happy  
When my image appears before them,  
Some tears he will weep,  
And I know not why he weeps.

**17 9. So let me seem, until I be so  
(Mignon's Song)**

So let me seem, until I be so,  
Do not take off my white dress!  
I hasten from the fair earth  
Away to that secure home.

There I rest a short quiet time,  
Then a fresh look will open for me;  
I leave behind then this pure clothing,  
The girdle and the crown.

And those heavenly beings  
Do not ask whether man or woman,  
And no clothing, no robes  
Enclose the body transfigured.

I lived indeed without sorrow and trouble,  
Yet I felt deep pain enough.  
For care I grew old too early;  
Make me for ever young again!

## Solo Songs from 'Love's Game', Op. 101

### 18 1. My music quiet and cheerful

My music quiet and cheerful  
Rise up to my beloved!  
Oh that I climbing with it  
Cannot reach you.

Lay, O sweet music,  
My sorrow on her breast  
Since the stern beauty will not  
That I lay me by her heart.

The beloved has silently  
Opened the window,  
Smiling bending forward  
At my look,  
As with cloudless  
Look she offers a greeting,  
Since she has fair roses  
Strewn on me from above.

She smiles with her mouth  
And with her cheeks too;  
There blossoms the world at this hour  
For me like a rose-bush;  
She smiles roses down,  
She smiles over me  
And shuts the window again,  
And smiles yet to herself.

She smiles in her chamber  
With her light of roses;  
But I dare, O misery,  
Not be with her together;  
Oh if I dared to caress her  
In her little chamber for a year!  
She has smiled it full of roses  
Quite all!

### 19 2. Beloved, your words steal

Beloved your words steal  
From your bosom to my heart.  
Oh how can I keep secret from you  
My delight, my pain!

Beloved, your music draws

Me upwards from myself,  
Let us fly from the earth  
To the holy choir of spirits!

Beloved, your strings carry me  
Through the Heaven dancing,  
Let me cast my arms about you  
That I sink not down in the glow of light!

Beloved, your songs entwined  
About me, a garland of rays about my head,  
Oh how can I thank you  
As you so richly garlanded me.

**20 3. I am your tree, O gardner**

I am your tree, O gardner, whose faithfulness  
Keeps me in loving care and sweet growth,  
Come, that I in your bosom in thanks may strew  
The ripe fruit, grown for you alone.

I am your gardner, O tree of faithfulness!  
At another's good fortune I feel no envy,  
The lovely boughs I find always again  
Decked with fruit, where I plucked the fruit.

**21 4. My fair star**

My fair star, I beg you,  
Oh let your cheerful light  
Be dimmed by the steam in me,  
But help the steam in me to the light  
My fair star, to be made clear!

My fair star, I beg you,  
Do not sink down to earth,  
Since you see me still here below,  
Rather raise me up to Heaven,  
My fair star, where you already are!

**22 6. O friend, my shield, my shelter**

O friend, my shield, my shelter!  
O friend, my ornament, my finery!  
My pride, my comfort, my defiance!

My bulwark, O my buckler!  
Where there is a struggle,

I find refuge in your image.

If into the valley of misery  
The world seeks to force me down,  
I take refuge in you;

If bitter suffering  
Threatens me  
I complain to you of my wretchedness.

You send without a word  
Comfort not away,  
You are and remain my sanctuary.

The woe of the earth is a jest,  
Here lay I on your heart  
Myself and my pain.

O world, whatever you do to me,  
I rest in quiet pleasure  
On my friend's breast!

*English versions by Keith Anderson*