

AFTER WORDS (2013)

Song Cycle for Soprano, Tenor, and Piano

[1] Lied Vom Kindsein / Der Leiermann

(Text: Peter Händke (b. 1942) (Roman) / Wilhelm Müller (1794–1827) (**bold**), adapted and translated by the composer.

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Soprano	Tenor	Translation
Als das Kind Kind war, ging es mit hängenden Armen, wollte der Bach sei ein Fluß,		When the child was a child, he swung his arms, and wanted the brook to be a river, Out back
	Drüben hinterm Dorfe Steht ein Leiermann Und mit starren Fingern Dreht er was er kann.	There stands an Organ-Grinder Who, with frozen fingers, Plays what he can.
der Fluß sei ein Strom, und diese Pfütze das Meer.		the river to be a torrent, and this puddle a sea.
	Als das Kind Kind war, wußte es nicht, daß es Kind war, alles war ihm beseelt, und alle Seelen waren eins.	When the child was a child, <i>he didn't know he was a child,</i> everything had a soul, and all souls were a single soul.
Barfuß auf dem Eise Wankt er hin und her Und sein kleiner Teller Bleibt ihm immer leer.		Barefoot on the ice He staggered back and forth And his little plate Was empty.
Als das Kind Kind war, hatte es von nichts eine Meinung,		When the child was a child, he had no opinions,
	Keiner mag ihn hören, Keiner sieht ihn an,	No one wants to hear him, No one wants to see him,
Als das Kind Kind war, war es die Zeit der folgenden Fragen:		When the child was a child, He asked the following question: Why am I me, and not you?
Und die Hunde knurren Um den alten Mann.	Warum bin ich ich und warum nicht du?	And the dogs growl Around the old man.
Und er läßt es gehen, Alles wie es will,	Warum bin ich hier und warum nicht dort?	Why am I here, and not there? And he lets it all go, Everything as it will.
Ist das Leben unter der Sonne nicht bloß ein Traum? Dreht, und seine Leier Dreht, Steht ihm nimmer still.	Als das Kind Kind war,	<i>Isn't life under the sun just a dream?</i> He stands and plays, Never stopping.
	Ist das Leben nicht bloß ein Traum? und seine Leier Steht ihm nimmer still. Wie kann es sein, daß ich, ich der ich bin,	How can it be that the I, the I who I am, <i>didn't exist before me</i> and that, someday, the I that I am will somehow cease to be? Strange old man! Shall I go with you?
und daß einmal ich, der ich bin, nicht mehr der ich bin, seine werde?	bevor ich wurde, nicht war,	
Wunderlicher Alter!	Wunderlicher Alter! Sol lich mit dir geh'n?	

Als das Kind Kind war...
Warum bin ich ich und
warum nicht du?
Warum?

**Willst zu meinen Liedern
Deine Leier dreh'n?**

Warum bin ich ich und
warum nicht du?
Warum?

**Willst zu meinen Liedern
Deine Leier dreh'n?**

When the child was a child...
Why am I me and not you?
Why not you?
Why?

**Will you play my songs
On your Organ?**

These texts have not been cleared for reproduction:

[2] **An Artist** (Text: Seamus Heaney (1939–2013))

[3] **Widgeon** (Text: Seamus Heaney)

[4] **The Rain Stick** (Text: Seamus Heaney)

[5] **Rimas – X** (Text: Rubén Darío (1867–1916), translated by Gilda Lyons (b. 1975). Reprinted with permission.)

Tenor

En to ojos un misterio:
en tus labios un enigma,
y yo, fijo en tus miradas
y yo, fijo en tus miradas
y extasiado en tus sonrisas.

Soprano

In your eyes a mystery;
in your lips an enigma,
and I am fixed on your glances
and ecstatic in your smile.
y yo, fijo en tus miradas
y extasiado en tus sonrisas.

[6] Da Ich ein Kind War

(1 Corinthians 11-13, translations: Martin Luther (1534) and the King James Bible (1611))

Da ich ein Kind war, da redete ich wie ein Kind,
und war klug wie ein Kind und hatte kindische Anschläge;
da ich aber ein Mann ward, tat ich ab, was kindisch war.

When I was a child, I spake as a child,
I understood as a child, I thought as a child:
but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

For now we see through a glass, darkly;
but then face to face: now I know in part;
but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three;

Nun aber bleibt Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe, diese drei;
aber die Liebe ist die größte unter ihnen.

The greatest of these is love.

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE (2007)

Song Set for Voice and Piano

[7] 1. Youth, Day, Old Age, and Night

(Text: Walt Whitman (1819–1892))

Youth, large, lusty, loving – youth full of grace,
force, fascination,
Do you know that Old Age may come after you
with equal grace, force, fascination?

Day full-blown and splendid – day of the immense sun,
action, ambition, laughter,
The Night follows close with millions of suns,
and sleep and restoring darkness.

[8] 2. Amelia's Song

(Text: Gardner McFall (b. 1952). Reprinted with permission.)

If I could fly
I'd fly up to the stars and there
I'd shine upon the earth below

and those I loved would see me guarding them
and they'd know they're mine
as I am yours,
Oh Stars!

[9] 3. Wisdom

(Text: Sara Teasdale (1884–1933))

It was a night of early spring,
The winter-sleep was scarcely broken;
Around us shadows and the wind
Listened for what was never spoken.

Though half a score of years are gone,
Spring comes as sharply now as then –
But if we had it all to do
It would be done the same again.

It was a spring that never came;
But we have lived enough to know
That what we never have, remains;
It is the things we have that go.

[10] 4. Elegy for Ray Charles

(Text: Stephen Dunn (b. 1939). Reprinted with permission.)

He was proof
if one man's sadness
can find a language
and a song,
others might
need to hear it
endlessly,
letting it name some
deep down thing,
hurting us good
into a kind of joy.

[11] 5. The Stranger's Grave

(Text: Emily Lawless (1845–1913))

Little feet too young and soft to walk,
Little lips too young and pure to talk,
Little faded grass-tufts, root and stalk.

I lie alone here, utterly alone,
Amid the pure ashes my wild ashes mingle;
A drowned man, with name unknown,
A drifting waif, flung by the drifting shingle.
Oh, plotting brain, and restless heart of mine,
What strange fate brought you to such a strange shrine?

Little feet too young and soft to walk,
Little lips too young and pure to talk,
Little faded grass-tufts, root and stalk.

[12] 5. Two Butterflies

(Text: Emily Dickinson (1830–1886))

Two Butterflies went out at Noon –
And waltzed upon a Farm –
Then stepped straight through the Firmament
And rested, on a Beam –

And then – together bore away
Upon a shining Sea –
Though never yet, in any Port –
Their coming, mentioned – be –

If spoken by the distant Bird –
If met in Ether Sea
By Frigate, or by Merchantman –
No notice – was – to me –

PHANTOMS OF MYSELF (2000)

Song Cycle for Voice and Piano on Poetry of Susan Griffin (b. 1943). Reprinted with permission.

[13] 1. I Wake Thinking of Myself as a Man

And as I rise slapping my feet
on the wooden floor
I begin to imagine myself
quite tall
with broad shoulders, a
painter who puts his feet
into dirty tennis shoes, does
not comb his hair and lumbers
largely into the kitchen, laces
loose in all this space.
I am this man, giant in my
female house, as I eat
my huge hands dwarf these bowls,
this breakfast!
I have become so big
I need a larger meal, more
eggs, more coffee, and the newspaper
rests like a delicate letter in
my enormous grasp.

[14] 2. A Story

My mind is etching a place
full of dark lines
where you and I slept together
like sheep and the body
of a mother lay between
and the past like a coal
sat inside you
(as if you had eaten ash).

And this couple is etched in the center
of a story: I peer
in the shadows and as if through
a window am carried
back into the heart of a night
I slept near you thinking
I had captured nearness
forever.

See how ignorant the
bodies of sleepers
and how you
ignorant are sleeping
still when I
have walked to the window,
how the story tells
of weeping and ruin
how the blackness of lines
keeps saying

The story is ended,
I call out to you
ended but you
unhearing and curled in
sameness, you mute sheep darken
the form.

[15] 3. Confession

I wasn't any saint
I burned with earth
and cried
and bit what I could bite
and shied, strange
animal at phantoms of myself
dreaming of what
could not be
and felt a sting
between my thighs
for days I would not
touch, taking
vengeance

for my loneliness.

[16] 4. Her Sadness Runs Beside Her Like a Horse

Her sadness runs beside her
like a horse
now she is
riding the horse of her sadness
riding, riding, riding.
Does she wear a hat?
No.

That is her hair you see
which the wind
whips in her eyes.
Does she cry?
No.
The wind cries
the horse cries
she grips his body
with her thighs,
they are changing
direction
riding into the sun.
Who knows the way,
the woman or the
horse-of-her-sadness?
Her thighs know
his body knows.
Will they ever stop riding?

What?
Look,
now they have
traveled
below the horizon
Now we can
only wait.
Will they
ever return?
But they are
here now.
Where?
Listen,
don't you hear
them
galloping
under this earth?

[17] 5. "Quiet, quiet heart"

Quiet, quiet heart
she is not ready
let her sleep a while longer.

You can imagine
her sleeping face.
Just think
you who are already awake
this alone
nearly sweeps you away.

[18] 6. Absence

You still think of those who
have died, and I tell you, Don't worry,
we have their absence,
and music is as sensual as ever
sliding like a tongue
over the ear that first heard
the words of death.
What would you call this?
You could perhaps say anything.
That it is winter now
but still warm, that there are
two kinds of butter, one called
sweet, that the heart
you have some to think of
as your own
keeps beating.

[19] 7. "I wake to your gestures..."

I wake to your gestures
which break over me
like honey.
You who are uncertain
pull me as certainly
into you
as gravity
Am I this gravity
in my dream of you
or the one who
supple as a branch makes
her way unerring
to earth.

FOUR IRISH FOLK SONGS (2009)

For Two Voices and Piano

[20] 1. The Bard of Armagh

Oh list' to the lay of a poor Irish harper
and scorn not the string of his old withered hands,
but remember those fingers they once could move sharper
to raise up the strains of his dear native land.

It was long before shamrock, dear isle's lovely emblem,
Was crushed in its beauty by the Saxon lion's paw;
And the pretty colleens all around me would gather,

to call Phelem Brady the Bard of Armagh.

How I love to muse on the days of my childhood,
Though four score and three years have fled by them;
It's king's sweet reflection that every young joy,
For merry hearted boys make the best of old men.

In truth, I have wandered this wide world over,
Yet Ireland's my home and a dwelling for me;
And, oh, let the turf that my old bones shall cover,
Be cut from the land that is trod by the free.

And when Sergeant Death embraces me, lulls me to sleep,
by the side of my Kathleen, my dear pride, oh place me,
then forget Phelem Brady the Bard of Armagh.
Forget Phelem Brady, the Bard of Armagh.

[21] 2. The Praties

Oh the praties they grow small over here, over here,
Oh the praties they grow small over here.
Oh the praties they grow small and we dig them in the fall,
and we eat them coats and all,
over here, over here.

Oh I wish that we were geese, night and morn, night and morn,
Oh I wish that we were geese, night and morn.
Oh I wish that we were geese and could live our lives in peace
Till the hour of our release,
eating corn, eating corn.

Oh we're down into the dust over here, over here,
Oh we're down into the dust over here.
Oh we're down into the dust but the Lord in whom we trust
will repay us crumb for crust,
over here, over here.

[22] 3. Danny Boy

Oh Danny Boy the pipes, the pipes are calling,
From glen to glen and down the mountainside.
The summer's gone and all the roses falling
'Tis you, 'tis you must go and I must bide.
But come ye back when summer's in the meadow,
Or when the valley's hushed and white with snow.
'Tis I'll be here in sunshine or in shadow.
Oh Danny Boy, Oh Danny Boy, I love you so.

And when ye come and all the flowers are dying,
If I am dead, as dead I well may be,
You'll come and find the place where I am lying,
And kneel and say an Ave there for me.
And I shall hear tho' soft you tread above me.
And all my grave will warmer, sweeter be

If you will bend and tell me that you love me,
Then I shall sleep in peace until you come to me.

[23] 4. Little Boats

Little boats rock on billows of blue,
Little birds rock up on tree tops too,
Rock-a-by baby, baloo, baloo, rock-a-by baby, baloo, baloo!

Boats sail away to countries new
And birds will be crossing the billows of blue.
Rock-a-by baby, baloo, baloo, rock-a-by baby, baloo,
baloo!

Troubles are many, pleasures are few,
But I have a treasure while I have you.
Rock-a-by baby, baloo, baloo, rock-a-by baby, baloo, baloo!

FOUR DICKINSON SONGS (2014)

For Voice and Piano on Poetry of Emily Dickinson

[24] 1. Of All the Souls

Of all the souls that stand create
I have elected on.
When sense from spirit files away,
And subterfuge is done;

When that which is and that which was
Apart, intrinsic, stand,
And this brief tragedy of flesh
Is shifted like a sand;

When fingers show their royal front
And mists are carved away, –
Behold the atom I preferred
To all the lists of clay!

[25] 2. A Dying Eye

I've seen a dying eye
Run round and round a room
In search of something, as it seemed,
Then cloudier become;
And then, obscure the fog,
And then be soldered down,
Without disclosing what it be,
'T were blessed to have been.

[26] 3. If You Were Coming

If you were coming in the Fall,
I'd brush the Summer by
With half a smile,
As housewives do a Fly.

If I could see you in a year,
I'd wind the months in balls –
And put them each in separate Drawers,
For fear the numbers fuse –

If only Centuries, delayed,
I'd count them on my Hand,
Subtracting, til all my fingers dropped
Into Van Dieman's Land,

If certain, when this life was out –
That yours and mine, should be
I'd toss it yonder, like a Rind,
And take eternity –

But now, uncertain of the length
Of this, that is between,
It goads me, like the Goblin Bee –
That will not state – its sting.

[27] 4. Wild Nights

Wild nights – Wild nights!
Were I with thee
Wild nights should be
Our luxury!

Futile – the winds –
To a heart in port –
Done with the Compass –
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden –
Ah – the Sea!
Might I but moor – tonight –
In thee!