

[1] Chanson de Barberine*Alfred de Musset (1810-57)*

Beau chevalier qui partez pour la guerre
 Qu'allez-vous faire
 Si loin d'ici?
 Voyez-vous que la nuit est profonde
 Et que le monde
 N'est que souci?

Vous qui croyez qu'une amour délaissée
 De la pensée
 S'enfuit ainsi.
 Hélas! Hélas! chercheurs de renommée
 Votre fumée
 S'envole aussi.

Beau chevalier qui partez pour la guerre
 Qu'allez-vous faire
 Si loin de nous?
 J'en vais pleurer, moi qui me laissais dire
 Que mon sourire
 Était si doux.

Deux Morceaux de prose*Pierre Loti (1850-1923)***[2] I. Crépuscule**

C'était bien un crépuscule de juin; il y avait des parfums de fleurs dans ce cimetière, des parfums si suaves, si pénétrants, qu'ils me grisèrent; il y avait des guirlandes de roses partout sur les tombeaux et de hautes herbes fleuries, au-dessus desquelles les phalènes et les moucheron dansaient leurs rondes légères. Tout cela m'enivrait de désirs de vie et d'amour, moi qui étais mort...

[3] II. Tristesse

Jean, lui, tous les jours flânait et songeait, avec une vague tristesse, visible pour la première fois dans ses yeux perdus par instants et dans son allure un peu ralentie.

Dans le jardin à l'abandon, envahi par la poussée des chrysanthèmes et des astères d'automne, il demeurait enfermé, des heures, entre les murs gris peuplés de lézards, tandis que les oranges jaunissaient au soleil d'octobre.

Avec l'été allait finir son enfance: avec la splendeur de ce soleil, déjà déclinant et mélancolique, allait s'enfuir son passé d'insouciance heureuse; et il sentait cela douloureusement, avec une impression inconnue de regret et d'effroi.

[4] II en est de l'amour*Charles-Albert Costa de Beauregard (1835-1909)*

Il en est de l'amour comme de tant de choses, charmantes à leur printemps, nobles et belles seulement à leur automne.

On s'aime à vingt ans comme les oiseaux de mai, qui, par delà leur nid et leurs gazouillements, ne savent rien; mais, après, vient la brise qui emporte le nid et la chanson d'amour: de ce qu'elle disait l'écho ne se souvient pas. Il nous faudrait mourir, alors, si nous étions de la terre, si, à ces destructions, ne survivaient les tendresses de l'âme, immortelles comme l'âme elle-même.

Il en est de l'amour comme de tant de choses, charmantes à leur printemps!

To Nellie*Francis Burdett Money-Coutts (1852-1923)***[5] I. Home****[1] Barberine's Song***Alfred de Musset (1810-57)*

Handsome knight, going off to war,
 what will you do
 so far from here?
 Do you see that the night is dark
 and that the world
 is nothing but care?

You who believe that an abandoned love
 will flee thus
 from the mind.
 Alas! alas! you who seek renown,
 your smoke too
 will fade away.

Handsome knight, going off to war,
 what will you do
 so far from here?
 I shall weep about it, I who was told
 that my smile
 was so sweet.

Two Prose Excerpts*Pierre Loti (1850-1923)***[2] I. Twilight**

It was a twilight night in June; there was a fragrance of flowers in that graveyard, a fragrance so sweet, so penetrating, that it intoxicated me; there were wreaths of roses on every tomb and tall grasses in bloom, above which moths and midges danced their fleeting rounds. All of this filled me with the desire to live and love, I who was dead...

[3] II. Sadness

As for Jean, he went out every day and wandered, dreaming, with a vague sense of sadness visible for the first time in his eyes, that at times seemed lost, and in his slightly trudging pace.

In the overgrown garden, filled with chrysanthemums and autumn asters, he shut himself away for hours, between grey walls that were home to lizards, while the oranges yellowed in the October sun.

His childhood would end with the summer: as the melancholy setting sun's splendour faded, so would his past of carefree happiness vanish; the thought pained him, leaving him with an unfamiliar sensation of regret and fear.

[4] Love is like so many things*Charles-Albert Costa de Beauregard (1835-1909)*

Love is like so many things that have such charm in their springtime, but only gain nobility and beauty in their autumn.

At twenty we love one another like birds in May who, beyond their nests and twitterings, know nothing; but later comes the breeze that carries both nest and love song away: the echo does not remember what the song said. We too ought to die, then, if we were of the earth, if the tender qualities of the soul, immortal like the soul itself, did not survive such destruction.

Love is like so many things that have such charm in their springtime!

Home is not home when thou art gone!
 My heart in blindness seems to grope;
 Where love's accustomed light has shone
 'Tis dark as disappointed hope,
 When thou art gone.

The oft appeal, the quick reply,
 Still more, maybe, the silent sense
 Of sympathy, when thou art by.

These, these are home! And they are hence,
 When thou art gone.

[6] II. Counsel

Wear not the rubies that I gave!
 Like wine, aglow with lurid heats;
 But diamonds; whiter than the wave
 That down the northern channel beats.

Press pallid jewels to thy breast;
 For they are free from dangerous fires;
 They are not reddened with unrest,
 Nor fierce unsatisfied desires.

Keep thine affection free from blame;
 Austere, yet ardent, purely shine;
 To set thy crystal heart aflame
 Shall never be a sin of mine.

[7] III. May Day Song

Rainbow showers of sunlight falling
 Tint the dew on every spray,
 Loud across the valley calling,
 Hark the jolly cuckoo's lay!
 Children, bringing
 Wreaths, are singing
 "Come away".

Meadows now are primrose-spangled;
 Holly laughs no more at may;
 Rills, no more by winter tangled,
 Rippling down the coppice play!
 Maids are maying,
 Boys are straying!
 Come away!

Holt and hurst, to spring awaking,
 Birds in rapturous roundelay,
 Sing you shame for money making,
 Losing for the World To-day!
 Leave your labours,
 Careful neighbours!
 Come away!

[8] IV. To Nellie

I ask thee for a kiss no more.
 As once I asked (and not in vain);
 For now thy spirit I adore,
 To wed thy spirit I am fain.

Thy face is fair, thine eyes are fond
 Thy form was cast in beauty's mould;
 But far beneath, or far beyond,
 Dwells she, whom I would fain enfold!

She tends a shrine of vestal fire,
 A fount of virgin fancy sips;
 Immured from intimate desire,
 She hides her heart and locks her lips.

Mock me no more, but let us wed!
 Come forth, come forth, secluded bride!
 No other way, when we are dead,
 Shall we rejoice that we have died.

[9] V. A Song of Consolation

Again, dear heart, we snatch an hour
 From Time, who grudges bliss;
 Thy lips unfold, like morning flower,
 To pout the promised kiss!

Deep hues arise within thine eyes;
 Love's soft suffusion stealing,
 Fills all thy face with tender grace
 And all thy torm with feeling.

Beside thee I can still forget
 Life's purposes, how vain;
 The force that dissipates in fret;
 The disproportioned pain.

Who so may preach, can never reach
 (Too careful comfort doling)
 The soothing power of one dear hour
 Of thy complete consoling.

[10] VI. A Song

"That not impossible She" (Crashaw)

Love comes to all!
 When will he come to me?
 Love be kind!

Let her be fair, and let her be tall,
 Let her laugh merrily!
 Love, be kind!

Love comes to all!
 So she is fair to me,
 Never mind!

Let her seem fair, and fair must befall!
 We shall live merrily!
 Love is blind!

Love comes to all!
 Love, when you come to me,
 Be not blind!

Let her be fair, and let her be tall,
 Let her laugh merrily!
 Love, be kind!

Six Songs

Francis Burdett Money-Coutts

[11] I. Art thou gone for ever, Elaine,

Art thou gone for ever, Elaine,
 Thou with the starry eyes
 In a twilight of tangled hair?

In the lonely night I complain,
 Till the memoried moon arise
 With her lesson of dumb despair.

Oh! for thy voice to calm
 My heart that so beat astray
 Set it to rhythm aright.

Oh! for thy love to balm

The wounds of the warring day,
And the fever of friendless night!

Would I had taken Elaine
Kiss'd the two starry eyes,
Tangled the tangled hair;

Laugh'd for a day at pain
Ceas'd for a day to be wise
And let the silly world stare!

[12] II. A Song

Laugh at loving if you will
But no laughing Love can kill!
Still he reigns in maiden's eyes,
Conquers with a sweet surprise
And still, though all the world is dark and sleeps,
Love like a sunbeam through the shadow creeps,
And gentle hearts in warmest passion steeps.

Cities he will overskip,
For he loves a country lip,
That no shame nor lying sears,
And an eye undimmed with tears:
So oft you'll find him at the country fairs,
Where kirtled Prudence sells her homely wares,
Fresh locks of butter or ripe Katherine pears.

Laugh at loving as you may,
Love will laugh another day!
If he laugh not, you shall weep
For his favour, ere you sleep!
Bring to his altar, then, – in time be wise, –
Bring Venus' apples, that poor lover's prize,
And pansies, softer than their mistress' eyes!

[13] III. Will you be mine?

These eyes, where laughing loves recline,
These lips that just divided pout,
To let the fluttering kisses out,
Like birds from love's own shrine.

To pain or please
You gave me these;
But still I ask,
"Will you be mine?"

These glances that so ardent shine,
These words that come with reckless rout
And rush of passion thronging out
Sweet vows at love's own shrine.

To pain or please
you give me these;
But still I ask,
"Will you be mine?"

In weal or woe, in love's eternal bond,
In life and death, and all that lies beyond;
"Will you be mine?"

[14] IV. Separated!

Alas! when thou wert near I wish'd thee far;
But now thy distance is a jangling pain
That all the harmony of life must mar;
All day I murmur, "Wilt thou come again?"

Unless thou wilt return, I sing no more;
A hawk o'ertowers the song-bird of my heart;
Leagues have I drifted on toward the shore

Of mute remorse since we were driven apart!

For though to sing is more to me than breath, –
If I might only sing one worthy song, –
Who sings beneath the basilisk eyes of death?
Or, worse than death, the hovering wings of wrong?

They hover o'er me, like a brooding mist,
That blurs the mountains in the morning light,
And blemishes the clustered amethyst
Of pleasures's grapes with grey mysterious blight.

[15] V. The Caterpillar

Caterpillar on the wall,
Whither, whither do you crawl?
You know not, yourself, methinks,
Strange and wandering little sphinx!

I will tell you where to go,
Underneath the winter snow
In an old tree's secret hole
You shall hide your little soul.

There, with summer, you shall learn,
Thence with summer, you shall leap,
Wave your fairy wings on high,
Sip the flowers and kiss the sky.

Emblem worm of many a thing,
So the joyous mind can spring
Through the hush of brooding hours,
Kiss the sky and sip the flowers.

[16] VI. The Gifts of the Gods

Once with life and love enamour'd
We besought the gods above;
"Send us love and life!" we clamour'd
And they sent us life and love.

Soon they overfill'd the measure
Soon we pray'd them "Grant us calm!"
But they answer'd, "Pain is pleasure!"
"Crush from bitter herbs the balm!"

"Forms of beauty ye may fashion
From the anguish of the heart;"
"Only by the cross of passion
Can ye win the crown of Art."

Quatre Mélodies

Francis Burdett Money-Coutts

[17] I. In Sickness and Health

When you in sickness lie,
No more the field is green, nor blue the sky;
No more invisible and lovely things
The forest haunt with songs and rustling wings,
Back from my stricken sense the world recedes
And beauty's garden is a patch of weeds.

Then can I hear in music's blithest tone
Nought but the closing cadence of a moan;
Then can I joy no more in sound unheard
Save in the silence of the written word;
The melodies that once could charm my ear
Forbode some final dissonance of fear.

Earth has no health, when health from you is fled;
No angel stands between the quick and death;
The awful unity of life and death

Is sacramental in your labouring bread;
And as I watch you I can hear Him call
Who is the king of nothing or of all.

But ah, your nature surely cannot owe
To that grim tyrant such an overthrow;
You seem a creature of an alien strain
From force and fate, and unallied to pain;
Could you but meet their Master, little while
Would lapse ere you had won him to a smile.

[18] II. Paradise Regained

There is a garden somewhere set,
Where singing birds abound,
And plashing founts the marble fret
With soft persistent sound.

Sorrow and sighing thence shall flee,
And none shall there intrude,
Save those who by simplicity
Have won beatitude.

The simple heart and simple mind,
Sincere in trust and troth,
From honest pleasure unconfin'd
For honest love unloth;

And there shall you be queen; but I,
Shall I find entrance too?
Or must I roam eternity,
To search, sweet heart, for you?

[19] III. The Retreat

I live no more in the outer world; for me
The rose is faded and the wine-cup dry;
Not that I fall to vainer apathy,
Nor sated with false pleasure, vainly sigh.

But having proved the world in all its ways,
With sense, with dignity, nor fond nor mad,
I find not there a single thing to praise,
No, nor a single thing to make me glad.

A staggering drunken animal I see,
Careering o'er bare mountains and bare plains,
Intent upon its own absurdity,
And loving pleasure only for its pains;

That is the world, ah, friend let us retire
In to the spacious chamber of our mind
To sit and talk before the cozy fire
And listen to the winter, wailing wind!

[20] IV. Amor, Summa Injuria

Forgive me for the wrong I did
To make you love me. Well I know
In that injurious hour were hid
Long hours of woe.

If judgment be pronounc'd on sin
Hereafter, then shall I be lost,
Because your love I dare to win
At such a cost;

At such a cost to you; ah, me,
How often have your eyes o'erbrimm'd
By alien infelicity,
Unjustly dimm'd.

When from my heart, without a sign,

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Some random lightning of unrest,
Some folly or misword of mine,
Has pierc'd your breast.

Forgive me, dear! If you forgive
Methinks I shall not wholly die;
For love will surely let me live,
If you comply.

Seis baladas

*Paulina Spreca y Piccolomini della Triana, marquesa de Bolaños
(1866-1916)*

[21] Barcarola

Tacita è l'onda,
tranquillo il mar,
e s'ode il canto
del marinar.

La luna ascosa
in bianco vel,
d'amor gli sguardi
ne invia dal ciel.

Rista natura
e s'ode sol
il remo lieve
del barcaiuel.

Deh! tutto tace,
non far rumor;
la notte parla
mistero e amor!

[22] La lontananza

Lungi, o cara, da te, chi mi consola?
Il mio pensiero teco ognor soggiorna
e se il chiamo non ode e a me s'invola,
non ode la mia voce e più non torna.
Deh!, che farò, qui abbandonata e sola?...
lungi, o cara, da te, chi mi consola?

Se de bei dì passati al cor mi viene
dolcissima talor la rimembranza,
non fia ch'abbian conforto le mie pene;
dura troppo è per me la lontananza!
E sempre il mio pensier a te s'envola...
ma lungi, oh Dio!, da te, chi mi consola?

[23] Una rosa in dono

Ecco un bel fior:
le foglie ha porporine
d'amor favella al cor.

E più in April,
spande soave odore
e appare più gentil.

L'accetta in don,
e leggi in questa imago
i miei desir qual son.

Ei sembra dir:
del tuo fedele ardenti
sono per te i sospir.

Tal rosa ognor
interprete leggiadro
di me ti parli al cor.

Six Italian Songs

*Paulina Spreca and Piccolomini della Triana, marquess of Bolaños
(1866-1916)*

[21] Barcarole

Silent is the wave,
peaceful the sea,
and the sailor's song
can be heard.

The moon, hidden
in a white veil,
sends looks of love
from the sky.

Nature is stilled,
and all that is heard
is the boatman's
lightly sculling oar.

Ah! all is quiet,
don't make a sound;
night is speaking
of mystery and love!

[22] Separation

Now that I'm far from you, my love, who will comfort me?
My thoughts are always with you,
and if I call to them, they hear not and fly from me,
they ignore my voice and return no more.
Ah, what shall I do here, abandoned and alone?...
Now that I'm far from you, my love, who will comfort me?

Though the sweetest memory of happy days
gone by sometimes comes to my heart,
it brings my grief no consolation;
our separation is too much to bear!
And my thoughts fly ever to you...
But now that I'm far from you, my love, who will comfort me?

[23] The gift of a rose

Look at this lovely flower,
it has scarlet petals
and speaks to the heart of love.

And then in April
it gives off its perfume
and appears lovelier still.

Accept it as my gift,
and in this symbol
discover what I desire.

It seems to say:
your faithful suitor
sighs with love for you.

May such a rose ever be
my eloquent interpreter
and speak of me to your heart.

[24] Il tuo sguardo

Colmo egli è di dolcezza!...
 incanta ed innamora!
 E all'anima dolce ebbrezza
 infonde, e il cor ristora.
 Se la nera pupilla
 mesta mi figgi in viso
 l'amorosa scintilla
 d'angelo par d'Eliso.

Sia rubello od avaro,
 mesto egli sia, o sereno,
 sempre il tuo sguardo è caro,
 e amor suscita in seno!...
 Se mi guardi mi bei
 e insiem mi fai soffrir,
 viver, mio ben, vorrei
 d'un tuo sguardo e morir!

[25] Morirò!!!

Qual fiorellin novello
 che all'aura spande il suo soave odor
 e il verde praticello
 adorna solo un giorno e poi s'en muor.

Così la vita mia
 qui sulla terra breve passerà
 e il cor la pena ria,
 figlia d'amor, non mai ti narrerà.

Morirò y come il fiore
 dopo aver l'aura piena di sospir;
 ma lieta pur in core
 di non aver turbato il tuo gioir.

E quando in breve, oh Dio!,
 d'amor consunta e di dolor sarò,
 mandando a te, ben mio,
 l'ultimo mio sospiro... morirò!

[26] T'ho riveduta in sogno

Avvolta in bianco celestial splendore,
 ti vidi l'altra notte, angelo mio;
 eri sì bella e sì spiravi amore
 che ti credetti un angelo di Dio.

Ah!, eternamente io ti credea perduta,
 ma in sogno, pur ben mio, t'ho riveduta!

Io piangeva d'amor, e lieve intanto
 la tua morbida mano rasciugava
 quel mio diretto, ah!, troppo dolce pianto
 che le gote consunte m'irrigava...

Ah!, in eterno non sei dunque perduta
 se l'altra notte, in sogno, t'ho veduta!

Favellasti d'amor, diletta mia,
 e il suon della tua voce mi pareva
 soavissima del ciel un'armonia
 che in giù dall'alte sfere a me scendeva.

Ah! Se, dolce amor mio, non sei perduta
 deh!, riedi quale in sogno t'ho veduta!

Rimas de Bécquer

Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer (1836-70)

[27] Besa el aura que gime blandamente

Besa el aura que gime blandamente

[24] Your gaze

Your gaze overflows with sweetness!
 It charms and captures hearts!
 It instils sweet rapture
 in one's soul, and restores one's heart.
 If you turn your sad
 dark gaze upon me,
 its loving sparkle is like
 that of an angel from Elysium.

Be it obdurate or ungenerous,
 melancholy or serene,
 your gaze is always dear to me,
 inspiring love within me!...
 If you look at me, you bring me
 both joy and suffering,
 I should like to live, my love,
 for just one glance from you, then die!

[25] I shall die!!!

Just as the fresh little flower
 which fills the air with its perfume
 adorns the green meadow
 for a single day and then dies,

So will my life here
 on earth soon be over,
 and my heart will never tell you
 of its suffering, born of love.

Like the flower, I shall die
 having filled the air with my sighs;
 but with happiness in my heart
 for not having troubled your joy.

And when, before long, oh God,
 I am consumed by love and sorrow,
 as I send my last sigh to you,
 my love... I shall die!

[26] I saw you again in a dream

I saw you the other night, my angel,
 wreathed in white, celestial light;
 you were so beautiful and such love flowed from you
 that I thought you were one of God's angels.

Ah!, I thought I had lost you for ever,
 but then, my love, I saw you again in a dream!

I was weeping with love, and then
 your soft hand gently dried
 the torrent, alas, of sweetest tears
 that were raining from my eyes...

Ah!, you are not, then, lost for ever,
 if the other night I saw you in a dream!

You spoke words of love, my darling,
 and to me your voice sounded
 like the loveliest harmony
 descending on me from heaven.

Ah! If, my sweet beloved, you are not lost,
 alas, return just as I saw you in my dream!

Poems by Bécquer

Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer (1836-70)

[27] The softly murmuring air

The softly murmuring breeze kisses

las leves ondas que jugando riza;
el sol besa a la nube en occidente
y de púrpura y oro la matiza;
la llama en derredor del tronco ardiente
por besar a otra llama se desliza;
y hasta el sauce, inclinándose a su peso,
al río que le besa vuelve un beso.

[28] Del salón en el ángulo oscuro

Del salón en el ángulo oscuro,
de su dueña tal vez olvidada,
silenciosa y cubierta de polvo,
veíase el arpa.

¡Cuánta nota dormía en sus cuerdas,
como el pájaro duerme en las ramas,
esperando la mano de nieve
que sabe arrancarlas!

¡Ay!, pensé; ¡cuántas veces el genio
así duerme en el fondo del alma,
y una voz como Lázaro espera
que le diga «Levántate y anda»!

[29] Me ha herido recatándose en la sombra

Me ha herido recatándose en la sombra,
sellando con un beso su traición.
Los brazos me echó al cuello y por la espalda
partióme a sangre fría el corazón.

Y ella prosigue alegre su camino,
feliz, risueña, impávida. ¿Y por qué?
Porque no brota sangre de la herida.
Porque el muerto está en pie.

[30] Cuando sobre el pecho inclinas

Cuando sobre el pecho inclinas
la melancólica frente,
una azucena tronchada
me pareces.

Porque al darte la pureza
de que es símbolo celeste,
como a ella te hizo Dios
de oro y nieve.

[31] ¿De dónde vengo?

¿De dónde vengo?... El más horrible y áspero
de los senderos busca;
las huellas de unos pies ensangrentados
sobre la roca dura;
los despojos de un alma hecha jirones
en las zarzas agudas,
te dirán el camino
que conduce a mi cuna.

¿Adónde voy? El más sombrío y triste
de los páramos cruza,
valle de eternas nieves y de eternas
melancólicas brumas;
en donde esté una piedra solitaria
sin inscripción alguna,
donde habite el olvido,
allí estará mi tumba.

the gentle waves as it playfully ripples them;
the sun kisses the cloud in the west
and tinges it with crimson and gold;
the flame creeps around the burning
log in order to kiss another flame;
and even the willow, bowing beneath its own weight,
returns a kiss to the river that kisses it.

[28] In a dark corner of the drawing room

In a dark corner of the drawing room,
perhaps forgotten by its mistress,
silent and covered in dust
stood the harp.

How many notes slept amid its strings,
as a bird sleeps amid the boughs,
waiting for the snow-white hand
that can draw them forth!

Alas, I thought, how often does genius
sleep thus deep within the soul,
waiting, like Lazarus, for a voice
to say to it, "Arise, and walk!"

[29] She wounded me as she hid in the shadows

She wounded me as she hid in the shadows,
sealing her betrayal with a kiss.
She flung her arms around my neck, then stabbed
me in the back, piercing my heart in cold blood.

And now she's going merrily on her way,
happy, laughing, unafraid. And why?
Because no blood is flowing from the wound.
Because the dead man is still standing.

[30] When you lay your melancholy brow

When you lay your melancholy brow
upon my breast,
you seem to me
like a plucked white lily.

For when he gave you the purity
of which the lily is the heavenly symbol,
God made you, as he did the flower,
all of gold and snow.

[31] From where do I come?

From where do I come?... Look for
the most fearful, rugged path;
look for bloodied footprints
on the hard rock;
look for the remains of a soul torn to shreds
by the briar's sharp thorns,
they will show you the way
that leads to my cradle.

Where am I going? Travel across
the darkest, bleakest plateau,
a valley of eternal snow and eternal
melancholy mists;
travel to where stands a solitary stone,
bare and unscribed,
where oblivion dwells,
there my tomb will be.