

Texts and Translations

Paulo Tosti (1846–1916)

Selected Songs

Aprile

Non senti tun e l'aria
Il profumo che spande Primavera?
Non senti tu ne l'anima
Il suon id nova voce lusinghiera?
È l'April! È la stagion d'amore!
Deh! vieni o mia gentil su' prati'n fiore!

Il piètrarrai fra mammole,
Avrai su'l petto rose e cilestrine
E le farfalle candide
T'aleggereanno intorno al nero crine
È l'April! È la stagion d'amore!
Deh! vieni o mia gentil su' prati'n fiore!

Chanson de l'Adieu

Partir c'est mourir un peu
C'est mourir à ce qu'on aime
On l'aisse un peu de soi- même
En toute heure et dans tout lieu
C'est toujours le deuil d'un vœu
Le dernier vers d'un poème

Partir c'est mourir un peu
C'est mourir à ce qu'on aime
Et l'on part, et c'est un jeu
Et jusqu'à l'adieu suprême
C'est son âme que l'on sème
Que l'on sème en chaque adieu
Partir c'est mourir un peu

April

Do you not smell in the air
The perfume of spring?
Do you not hear in your soul
The sound of a new flattering voice?
It is April! It is the season of love!
Ah! Come, my dearest to the flowering meadow!

Your feet will tread among violets
On your breast will rest roses and bluebells
And the snow-white butterflies
Will flatter about your black hair
It is April! It is the season of love!
Ah! Come, my dearest to the flowering meadow!

Song of Farewell

To part is to die a little
To die to that which one loves
One leaves a little of one's self
In every hour and in every place
It is always the mourning for a vow
The last verse of a poem

To part is to die a little
To die to that which one loves
And one leaves, and it is a game
And until the final farewell
It is his soul which the one sows
Which one sows in each goodbye
To part is to die a little

Texts and Translations

La Serenata

Vola,
O serenata:
La mia diletta è sola,
E, con la bella testa abbandonata,
Posa tra le lenzuola:
O serenata,
Vola.
Splende
Pura la luna;
L'ale silenzio stende,
E dietro i veli dell'alcova bruna
La lampada s'accende:
Pura la luna
Splende.
Vola,
O serenata:
La mia diletta è sola;
Ma, sorridendo ancor mezzo assonnata,
Torna fra le lenzuola:
O serenata,
Vola.
L'onda
Sogna su 'l lido,
E'l vento su la fronda;
E a' baci miei ricusa ancora un nido
La mia signora bionda!
Sogna su 'l lido
L'onda.

Italian lyrics: Giovanni Alfredo Cesareo, 1860-1937

Serenade

Fly now,
O thou serenade:
My beloved is all alone,
And, with her lovely head thrown back and disarrayed,
Midst silken sheets she doth repose:
O thou serenade,
Fly now.
Shining
Brightly comes the moon;
Soft silence spreads its wing,
And through a darkening veil from the alcove's gloom
The lamplight yet is glowing:
Brightly comes the moon,
Shining.
Take flight,
O my serenade:
My beloved is yet alone;
She's but half asleep while, by her sly smile betrayed,
She snuggles into the bedclothes:
O my serenade,
Take flight.
Dreaming
Waves kiss the hushed sands,
As branches dance in balmy air;
But into their nest find my kisses no entrance,
Thus refused by my damsel fair!
Waves kiss the hushed sands
And dream.

Texts and Translations

L'alba separa dalla luce l'ombra

L'alba separa dalla luce l'ombra,
E la mia voluttà dal mio desire.
O dolce stelle, è l'ora di morire.
Un più divino amor dal ciel vi sgombra.

Pupille ardenti, O voi senza ritorno
Stelle tristi, spegnetevi incorrotte!
Morir debbo. Veder non voglio il giorno,
Per amor del mio sogno e della notte.

Chiudimi, O Notte, nel tuo sen materno,
Mentre la terra pallida s'irrorà.
Ma che dal sangue mio nasca l'aurora
E dal sogno mio breve il sole eterno!

Dawn divides the darkness from the light

Dawn divides the darkness from the light
And my sensual pleasure from my desire,
O sweet stars, it's the hour of death.
A more divine love clears you away from the sky.

Burning eyes, o you who will not return,
sad stars, fade away uncorrupted!
I must die. I don't want to see the day
for love of my dream and of the night.

Close me, o night, in your maternal bosom
while the pale earth is being bedewed.
But from my blood may the dawn arise
and from my brief dream the eternal sun!

Gustav Mahler (1860–1911) Selections from *Rückert-Lieder*

Texts by Friedrich Rückert, Translations by Richard Stokes

Ich atmet' einen linden Duft!

Ich atmet' einen linden Duft!
Im Zimmer stand
Ein Zweig der Linde,
Ein Angebinde
Von lieber Hand.
Wie lieblich war der Lindenduft!
Wie lieblich ist der Lindenduft!
Das Lindenreis
Brachst du gelinde!
Ich atme leise
Im Duft der Linde
Der Liebe linden Duft.

I breathed a gentle fragrance!

I breathed a gentle fragrance!
In the room stood
a sprig of the linden tree,
a gift
from a dear hand.
How lovely was the linden fragrance!
How lovely is the linden fragrance!
That linden twig
you broke off so gently!
Softly I breathe in
the fragrance of linden,
love's gentle fragrance

Texts and Translations

Liebst du um Schönheit

Liebst du um Schöheit,
O nicht mich liebe!
Liebe die Sonne,
Sie trägt ein gold'nes Haar!
Liebst du um Jugend,
O nicht mich liebe!
Liebe den Frühling,
Der jung ist jedes Jahr!
Liebst du um Schätze,
O nicht mich liebe.
Liebe die Meerfrau,
Sie hat viel Perlen klar.
Liebst du um Liebe,
O ja, mich liebe!
Liebe mich immer,
Dich lieb'ich immerdar.

If you love for beauty

If you love for beauty's sake,
Oh, do not love me!
Love the sun,
it has golden hair!
If you love for youth's sake,
Oh, do not love me!
Love the spring;
Which is young every year!
If you love for treasure's sake,
Oh, do not love me!
Love the mermaid;
She has many bright pearls!
If you love for love's sake,
Oh yes, do love me!
Love me always,
I'll love you now and forever

Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder

Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder!
Meine Augen schlag' ich nieder,
Wie ertappt auf böser Tat.
Selber darf ich nicht getrauen,
Ihrem Wachsen zuzuschauen.
Deine Neugier ist Verrat!

Look not into my songs!

Look not into my songs!
My eyes I lower,
as if I've been caught in a misdeed.
I can't even trust myself
to watch them grow.
Your curiosity is treason!

Bienen, wenn sie Zellen bauen,
Lassen auch nicht zu sich schauen,
Schauen selbst auch nicht zu.
Wenn die reichen Honigwaben
Sie zu Tag gefördert haben,
Dann vor allen nasche du!

Bees, when they build cells,
do not let anyone observe them either;
even themselves they do not observe.
When the rich honeycombs
have been brought out to the light of day,
then you shall taste them before everyone else!

Um Mitternacht

Um Mitternacht
Hab' ich gewacht
Und aufgeblickt zum Himmel;
Kein Stern vom Sternengewimmel
Hat mir gelacht
Um Mitternacht.

At midnight

At midnight
I awoke
and gazed up to the sky;
No star in the throng of stars
smiled down at me
at midnight.

Texts and Translations

Um Mitternacht
Hab' ich gedacht
Hinaus in dunkle Schranken.
Es hat kein Lichtgedanken
Mir Trost gebracht
Um Mitternacht.

At midnight
My thoughts went
out to the dark barriers.
No thought of light
brought me comfort
at midnight.

Um Mitternacht
Nahm ich in acht
Die Schläge meines Herzens;
Ein einz'ger Puls des Schmerzes
War angefacht
Um Mitternacht.

At midnight
I paid close heed
to the beating of my heart;
One single pulse of agony
flared up
at midnight.

Um Mitternacht
Kämpft' ich die Schlacht,
O Menschheit, deiner Leiden;
Nicht konnt' ich sie entscheiden
Mit meiner Macht
Um Mitternacht.

At midnight
I fought the battle,
Oh Mankind, of your sufferings;
I could not decide it
with my power
at midnight.

Um Mitternacht
Hab' ich die Macht
In deine Hand gegeben!
Herr! über Tod und Leben
Du hältst die Wacht
Um Mitternacht!

At midnight
I surrendered my power
into your hands!
Lord! over death and life
You keep watch
At midnight!

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

“Hai già vinta la causa!”

from *Le Nozze di Figaro*

Hai già vinta la causa!
cosa sento?
In qual laccio cadea?
Perfidi!
io voglio di tal modo punirvi!
a piacer mio la sentenza sarà

We have won the case!
Is that what I hear?
Have I fallen into a trap?
Scoundrels!
I'll punish you!
Sentencing you shall be my pleasure.

Texts and Translations

Ma s'ei pagasse
La vecchia pretendente?
Pagarla!
in qual maniera?
e poi v'è Antonio
Che a un incognito Figaro ricusa
Di dare una nipote in matrimonlo.
Coltivando l'orgoglio di questo mentecatto.
Tutto giova a un raggio ...
Il colpo è fatto.

Vedrò mentr'io sospiro,
Felice un servo mio?
E un ben, che invan desio,
Ei posseder dovrà?
Vedrò per man d'amore
Unita a un vil oggetto
Chi in me destò un affetto
Che per me poi non ha?

Vedro?

Ah no! lasciarti in pace
Non vo' questo contento,
Tu non nascesti, audace,
Per dare a me tormento,
E forse ancor per ridere
Di mia infelicità.

Già la speranza sola
Delle vendette mie
Quest anima consola
E giubilar mi fa.

But wait.
What if he pays off the old plaintiff?
Pay her?
With what money?
And then there's Antonio
Who would never give his daughter's hand
in marriage to a fool like Figaro.
I shall nurture that imbecile's pride.
It is all part of my plot ...
The die is cast!

Shall I, while sighing,
See one of my servants happy?
And the thing which I in vain desire,
Shall he have it?
Shall I see the woman who lit in me
A flame that she doesn't have also?
United to a beastly object
By the hand of love?

Shall I?

Ah no! I will not leave this be
This happiness in peace,
You were not born vile person,
To torture me,
And perhaps even laugh,
At my misfortune.

Now I hold hope
For my revenge
Which will console my soul
And make me rejoice.

Henri Duparc (1848–1933)

Lamento

Connaissez-vous la blanche tombe
Où flotte avec un son plaintif
L'ombre d'un if?
Sur l'if, une pâle colombe,
Triste et seule, au soleil couchant,
Chante son chant;

Do you know the white tomb
upon which, with a plaintive sound,
the shadow of a yew-tree floats?
On the yew-tree, a pale dove,
sad and alone, in the setting sun,
sings its song;

Texts and Translations

On dirait que l'âme éveillée
Pleure sous terre à l'unisson
De la chanson,
Et du malheur d'être oubliée
Se plaint dans un roucoulement
Bien doucement.

Oh! jamais plus, près de la tombe
Je n'irai, quand descend le soir
Au manteau noir,
Écouter la pâle colombe
Chanter sur la pointe de l'îfi
Son chant plaintif.

One would say the awakened soul
weeps beneath the earth in unison
with the song,
and complains,
of the misfortune of being forgotten
very gently, in a cooing.

Oh! Never again, close to the tomb
shall I go, when the evening falls
with its black coat,
to listen to the pale dove
at the top of the yew-tree, sing
its plaintive song.

Reynaldo Hahn (1874–1947) *Selected Songs*

L'heure exquise

La lune blanche luit dans les bois
De chaque branche part une voix
Sous la ramée... O bienaimée!

L'étang reflète, profonde miroir,
La silhouette du saule noir
Où le vent pleure... Rêvons! C'est l'heure...

Un vaste et tendre apaisement semble
descender du firmament que l'astre irise...
C'est l'heure exquise.

- Paul Verlaine

The Exquisite Hour

The white moon shines in the woods
Each branch shares a voice
Under the arbor... O beloved!

The pond reflects, deep mirror
The silhouette of the black willow
Where the wind weeps.. Dream! It is the hour...

A vast and tender appeasement seems to
Descend from the sky where the stars gleam...
It is the exquisite hour.

- Translation by Youngmi Kim

Texts and Translations

Infidélité

Voici l'orme qui balance
Son ombre sur le sentier;
Voici le jeune églantier,
Le bois où dort le silence.
Le banc de pierre où le soir
Nous aimions à nous asseoir.
Voici la voûte embaumée
D'ébéniers et de lilas,
Où, lorsque nous étions las,
Ensemble, ma bien aimée!
Sous des guirlandes de fleurs,
Nous laissions fuir les chaleurs.
L'air est pur, le gazon doux ...
Rien n'a donc changé que vous.

- Théophile Gautier

Infidelity

Here is the elm that sways
Its shadow on the path;
Here is the young wild rose,
The wood where silence sleeps;
The stone bench where, at evening,
We would love to sit.
Here is the fragrant canopy
Of ebony and lilac trees,
Where, when we were tired,
Together, my beloved!
Beneath garlands of flowers,
We would let the heat waft by.
The air is pure, sweet the grass...
Nothing has changed but you.

- English Translation © Richard Stokes

Si Mes Vers avaient des ailes

Si Mes Vers avaient des ailes
Mes vers fuiraient, doux et frêles,
Vers votre jardin si beau,
Si mes vers avaient des ailes,
Comme l'oiseau.

Ils voleraient, étincelles,
Vers votre foyer qui rit,
Si mes vers avaient des ailes,
Comme l'esprit.

Près de vous, purs et fidèles,
Ils accourraient nuit et jour,
Si mes vers avaient des ailes,
Comme l'amour.

- Victor Hugo

If my verses had wings

If my verses had wings
My verses would flee, sweet and frail,
To your garden so fair,
If my verses had wings,
Like a bird.

They would fly, like sparks,
To your smiling hearth,
If my verses had wings,
Like the mind.

Pure and faithful, to your side
They'd hasten night and day,
If my verses had wings,
Like love

- English Translation © Richard Stokes

Texts and Translations

Kurt Weill (1900–1950)

Selected Songs

Speak Low

Speak low when you speak, love,
Our summer day withers away
Too soon, too soon.

Speak low when you speak, love,
Our moment is swift, like ships adrift,
We're swept apart too soon.

Speak low, darling speak low,
Love is a spark lost in the dark,
Too soon, too soon,
I feel wherever I go
That tomorrow is near, tomorrow is here
And always too soon.

Time is so old and love so brief,
Love is pure gold and time a thief.
We're late darling, we're late,
The curtain descends, ev'rything ends
Too soon, too soon,
I wait darling, I wait
Will you speak low to me,
Speak love to me and soon.

Lost in the Stars

Before Lord God made the sea or the land
He held all the stars in the palm of his hand
And they ran through his fingers like grains of sand
And one little star fell alone

Then the Lord God hunted through the wide night air
For the little dark star on the wind down there
And he stated and promised he'd take special care
So it wouldn't get lost no more

Now, a man don't mind if the stars get dim
And the clouds blow over and darken him
So long as the Lord God's watching over them
Keeping track how it all goes on

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But I've been walking through the night and the day
Till my eyes get weary and my head turns gray
And sometimes it seems maybe God's gone away
Forgetting his promise and word he'd say

And we're lost out here in the stars
Little stars, big stars, blowing through the night
And we're lost out here in the stars

Here I'll Stay

There's a far place, I'm told,
Where I'll find a field of gold,
But here I'll stay with you;

And they say there's an isle deep with clover,
Where your heart wears a smile all day through.

But I know well they're wrong,
And I know where I belong,
And here I'll stay with you.

For that land is a sandy illusion,
It's the theme of a dream gone astray;
And the world others woo
I can find loving you,
And so here I'll stay.

For that land is a sandy illusion,
It's the theme of a dream gone astray;
And the world others woo
I can find loving you,
And so here I guess I'll stay.