

Texts and Translations

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Selections from *Songs of Travel*

Text by Robert Louis Stevenson

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I. The Vagabond

There is a story in the *Songs of Travel* created, not by Stevenson in his poetry, but by Vaughan Williams in his ordering of the songs. The main character is the Vagabond introduced in the first song. In this poem, the first of the poetic set as well, the Vagabond is ready to begin his journey. This is a young man, full of enthusiasm to leave the nest and strike out on his own. He challenges Nature and Fate to only provide a road and sky and he will be able to make do with whatever else he finds, eating bread he dips in a river for sustenance. There is a profound sense of bravado in the Vagabond's character. This type of characterization may have appealed to Vaughan Williams in his quest for a national musical identity in pre-war England.

II. Let Beauty Awake

In the second song of the cycle, the Vagabond is already abroad and is reveling in the beauty of nature personified as a young woman. The images of the poem are clear references to a sunrise and sunset. The beauty of nature as it appears in both day and night is enough to move the Vagabond emotionally. There are no complications to his existence; he is able to commune with and appreciate the splendor of the world around him.

III. The Roadside Fire

By the third song of the cycle, however, there is another character introduced. A young maiden, who will always be addressed and never be the main persona, has appeared in his life and apparently won his heart. This song begins an episode within the Vagabond's travels that will be covered in three successive songs. Here, the relationship is new, and plans are made and discussed about the life they can share together. The Vagabond is willing to share the journey with the young maiden, providing for her all she will need from the elements around him.

IV. Youth and Love

Youth and Love brings about a change in the relationship. The Vagabond, still young, is unable to commit truly to a relationship and must continue the journey. The "pleasures" of a domesticated life "assail him." The Vagabond is unable, and unwilling, to continue the relationship. To protect himself, he leaves in an aloof manner, as is witnessed in the words "And but waves a hand as he passes on / Cries but a wayside word to her." The Vagabond has ended the relationship with the young maiden and has continued his journey.

V. In Dreams

The final song in this episode is In Dreams. In his dream, the Vagabond manifests his own feelings of loneliness after the separation by imagining the young maiden's torment and despair. It is an admission of regret on the Vagabond's part that the life he has chosen does not allow for a substantial relationship with another person. It can also be seen as an admission of regret over the way the relationship ended. "But he that left you with a smile forgets you not" seems to speak directly to the end of Youth and Love and the casual manner in which the Vagabond departed.

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VI. The Infinite Shining Heavens

In a moment of reflection, the Vagabond looks to the stars that have guided him on the journey and have been his constant companion for consolation and solace. He spends many nights wallowing in sorrow and despair, presumably over the lost love and the void it has created in his life. The stars are now represented with mixed language. They showered “sorrow and light,” were “distant as heaven” and were “dumb and shining and dead.” These seemingly contradictory images reveal a growing maturity in the Vagabond as he accepts the true nature of his life and his journey and the sacrifices made. The Vagabond admits that these “idle stars” mean more to him than the bread that sustains him physically. Ultimately, a shooting star signals the end of this grieving process and he is able to move on. Banfield comments that “the effect of the ending is perfectly gauged; it sounds right, even though it is difficult to explain why the music has to go up as the star comes down.”³ The explanation may be simpler than expected. This event, the shooting star, revitalizes and reaffirms the Vagabond. Such sentiments are well suited to the almost fanfare-like quality of an ascending perfect fifth. Vaughan Williams cheats some of that bravado with the sudden decrescendo, however, perhaps again signaling the increased maturity and loss of innocence this episode has brought to the Vagabond.

VII. Whither Must I Wander

An older and wiser Vagabond finds someone else to interact with in Whither Must I Wander? Here the Vagabond relates stories of his youth, presumably to a younger person, perhaps someone else beginning a similar journey, perhaps only a young person interested in the experiences of the Vagabond. The Vagabond relates warm stories about the innocence of his childhood, the safety and security of home, the multitude of friends, the songs and stories shared around a fire. As he goes on in his narration, however, we discover more regrets over this nomadic lifestyle. Today the house is empty, the “chimney-stone is cold,” and he has no home to which he can return. Regrets which had been reserved for lost love have now expanded to include all aspects of a stable home environment. He acknowledges with the line “but I go for ever and come again no more” how his fate is sealed. He is consigned to this existence and resigned to accept that whatever joys it brings, it does so with a price. In many respects this song can be viewed as a “mid-life crisis” for the Vagabond.

VIII. Bright is the Ring of Words

Bright is the Ring of Words begins with a feeling of bravado not experienced in the cycle since The Vagabond. The “mid-life crisis” is over and the older, more mature Vagabond once again revels in his existence. He speaks again of the nobility of his lifestyle comparing his existence with that of musicians, both composers and singers. He begins to speak of his legacy, the impact he has made on those he has encountered along the way. The “sunset embers” are a clear metaphor for the end of life. During this twilight of his life he is able to recall, fondly, the maiden he left behind and envision her reminiscing about him and the songs he sang then and continues to sing now.

IX. I Have Trod the Upward and the Downward Slope

The epilogue is clearly the death of the Vagabond. This phase of his journey is about to end. He reflects again on the breadth of his experiences and the richness of his life. He comments on his ability, through it all, to move forward, to close the door. With that statement he closes the door on this existence and moves on to the next.

Texts and Translations

I. The Vagabond

Give to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me,
Give the jolly heaven above,
And the byway nigh me.
Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river—
There's the life for a man like me,
There's the life for ever.
Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me;
Give the face of earth around,
And the road before me.
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me;
All I seek, the heaven above,
And the road below me.
Or let autumn fall on me
Where afield I linger,
Silencing the bird on tree,
Biting the blue finger.
White as meal the frosty field—
Warm the fireside haven—
Not to autumn will I yield,
Not to winter even!

II. Let Beauty Awake

Let Beauty awake in the morn from beautiful dreams,
Beauty awake from rest!
Let Beauty awake
For Beauty's sake
In the hour when the birds awake in the brake
And the stars are bright in the west!
Let Beauty awake in the eve from the slumber of day,
Awake in the crimson eve!
In the day's dusk end
When the shades ascend,
Let her wake to the kiss of a tender friend,
To render again and receive!

III. The Roadside Fire

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night,
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests, and blue days at sea.
I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom;
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.
And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

IV. Youth and Love

To the heart of youth the world is a highwyside.
Passing for ever, he fares; and on either hand,
Deep in the gardens golden pavilions hide,
Nestle in orchard bloom, and far on the level land
Call him with lighted lamp in the eventide.
Thick as stars at night when the moon is down,
Pleasures assail him. He to his nobler fate
Fares; and but waves a hand as he passes on,
Cries but a wayside word to her at the garden gate,
Sings but a boyish stave and his face is gone.

V. In Dreams

In dreams unhappy, I behold you stand
As heretofore:
The unremember'd tokens in your hand
Avail no more.
No more the morning glow, no more the grace,
Enshrines, endears.
Cold beats the light of time upon your face
And shows your tears.
He came and went. Perchance you wept awhile
And then forgot.
Ah me! but he that left you with a smile
Forgets you not.

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VI. The Infinite Shining Heavens

The infinite shining heavens
Rose, and I saw in the night
Uncountable angel stars
Showering sorrow and light.
I saw them distant as heaven,
Dumb and shining and dead,
And the idle stars of the night
Were dearer to me than bread.
Night after night in my sorrow
The stars looked over the sea,
Till lo! I looked in the dusk
And a star had come down to me.

VII. Whither Must I Wander?

Home no more home to me, whither must I wander?
Hunger my driver, I go where I must.
Cold blows the winter wind over hill and heather:
Thick drives the rain and my roof is in the dust.
Loved of wise men was the shade of my roof-tree,
The true word of welcome was spoken in the door—
Dear days of old with the faces in the firelight,
Kind folks of old, you come again no more.
Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces,
Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child.
Fire and the windows bright glittered on the moorland;
Song, tuneful song, built a palace in the wild.
Now when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,
Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is cold.
Lone let it stand, now the friends are all departed,
The kind hearts, the true hearts, that loved the place of old.
Spring shall come, come again, calling up the moorfowl,
Spring shall bring the sun and rain, bring the bees and flowers;
Red shall the heather bloom over hill and valley,
Soft flow the stream through the even-flowing hours.
Fair the day shine as it shone on my childhood—
Fair shine the day on the house with open door;
Birds come and cry there and twitter in the chimney—
But I go for ever and come again no more.

VIII. Bright is the Ring of Words

Bright is the ring of words
When the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs
When the singer sings them,
Still they are carolled and said—
On wings they are carried—
After the singer is dead
And the maker buried.
Low as the singer lies
In the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring
The swains together.
And when the west is red
With the sunset embers,
The lover lingers and sings
And the maid remembers.

IX. I Have Trod the Upward and the Downward Slope

I have trod the upward and the downward slope;
I have endured and done in days before;
I have longed for all, and bid farewell to hope;
And I have lived and loved, and closed the door.

Texts and Translations

Jacques Ibert

Chansons de Don Quichotte

Summary synopsis provided by Adrian Rosu, Faculty of Arts, University of Constanta.

Jacques Ibert's retelling through four songs of the storied adventures of Don Quixote, the aging and feeble countryman who reimagines himself a knight errant. A madness which results from the reading of too many chivalric fantasies grips the storyteller. Originally composed for the Russian bass Feodor Chaliapin for television broadcast, Ibert's song cycle presents four vignettes of the life of Don Quixote. We see the would-be hero set out on adventure, suffer heartache from the memory of his beloved Dulcinea, recount his list of heroic deeds, and with his final breaths address his faithful companion Sancho.

I. Chanson du Départ

Ce château neuf, ce nouvel édifice
Tout enrichi de marbre et de porphyre,
Qu'amour bâtit château de son empire,
Où tout le ciel a mis son artifice,

Est un rempart, un fort contre vice,
Où la vertueuse maîtresse se retire,
Que l'œil regarde, et que l'esp
Forçant les cœurs à lui faire rit admire,service.

C'est un château, fait de telle sorte
Que nul ne peut approcher de la porte
Si des grands Rois il n'a sauvé sa race,
Victorieux, vaillant et amoureux.

Nul chevalier, tant soit aventureux,
Sans être tel ne peut gagner la place.

II. Chanson à Dulcinée

Un an me dure la journée
Si je ne vois ma Dulcinée.
Mais, Amour a peint son visage,
Afin d'adoucir ma langue,
Dans la fontaine et le nuage,
Dans chaque aurore et
chaque fleur.
Un an me dure la journée
Si je ne vois ma Dulcinée.
Toujours proche et toujours lointaine,
Étoile de mes longs chemins.
Le vent m'apporte son haleine
Quand il passe sur les jasmins.

I. Song of departure

This new castle, this new edifice
All adorned with marble and porphyry,
This castle, built by love from its empire,
Upon which all of heaven has used its skill,

Is a rampart, a fortress against evil,
Where the virtuous mistress retires,
That the eye observes and the spirit admires,
Bringing hearts to servitude.

It is a castle, built in such a way
That none can approach the portal
If he has not saved his lineage from the great Kings,
Victorious, brave and amorous.

No knight, however adventurous he may be,
Without being such, can enter the place.

II. Song for Dulcinea

A day lasts a whole year
if I do not see my Dulcinea.
But, so as to sweeten my languor,
Love has painted her face,
in the fountain and the sky,
in each dawn and
each flower.
A day lasts a whole year
if I do not see my Dulcinea.
Ever close and ever far,
Star of my long paths.
The wind carries her breath to me
When it blows over the jasmines.

Texts and Translations

III. Chanson du Duc

Je veux chanter ici la Dame de mes songes
Qui m'exalte au dessus de ce siècle de boue
Son cœur de diamant est vierge de mensonges
La rose s'obscurcit au regard de sa joue
Pour Elle, j'ai tenté les hautes aventures
Mon bras a délivré la princesse en servage
J'ai vaincu l'Enchanter, confondu les parjures
Et ployé l'univers à lui rendre hommage.
Dame par qui je vais, seul dessus cette terre,
Qui ne soit prisonnier de la fausse apparence
Je soutiens contre tout Chevalier téméraire
Votre éclat non pareil et votre précellence.

IV. Chanson de la mort de Don Quichotte

Ne pleure pas Sancho, ne pleure pas, mon bon.
Ton maître n'est pas mort.
Il n'est pas loin de toi.
Il vit dans une ile heureuse
Où tout est pur et sans mensonges.

Dans l'île enfin trouvée où tu viendras un jour.
Dans l'île désirée, O mon ami Sancho!
Les livres sont brulés et font un tas de cendres.
Si tous les livres m'ont tué Il suffit d'un pour que je vie
Fantôme dans la vie, et réel dans la mort.
Tel est l'étrange sort du pauvre Don Quichotte.

III. Song of the Duke

I want to sing here of the Lady of my dreams,
who raises me above this century of mud.
Her heart of diamond is untarnished by lies.
The rose pales at the sight of her cheek.
For Her, I have attempted lofty adventures.
My arm has delivered the princess in servitude. I have
conquered the Enchanter, confounded the perjures
and bent the universe to offer her homage.
Lady for whom I, who alone is not a prisoner of the false
appearance, go over this earth,
I proclaim, against any rash Knight,
your unequalled splendour and your excellence.

IV. Song of the death of Don Quixote

Do not cry Sancho, do not cry, good friend.
Your master is not dead.
He is not far from you.
He lives on a happy isle
Where all is pure and free of lies.

On the isle at last discovered where you will come one day.
On the desired isle, O my friend Sancho!
The books are burned and make a heap of ash.
If all the books have killed me just one is enough for me to
live on, Phantom in life, and real in death.
Such is the strange destiny of poor Don Quixote.

Translations from French to English © Christopher Goldsack from melodietreasury.com

Franz Schubert

Selections from *Winterreise*

From Encyclopedia Britannica: *Winterreise*, (German: "Winter Journey") is a cycle of 24 songs for male voice and piano composed in 1827 by Austrian composer Franz Schubert, with words by German poet Wilhelm Müller. Schubert was reviewing the publisher's proofs of the cycle in the weeks before his death, shortly before his 32nd birthday. He had already performed the songs for a gathering of friends, but they had not yet reached the public.

The poetry is written in the voice of a young man who, upon seeing his beloved marry another, sets out on foot in the deepest winter to escape memories of her. His heart is broken, and his life is a torment of memories, dreams, and present pain.

Texts and Translations

I. Gute Nacht

Fremd bin ich eingezogen,
Fremd zieh' ich wieder aus.
Der Mai war mir gewogen
Mit manchem Blumenstrauss.
Das Mädchen sprach von Liebe,
Die Mutter gar von Eh' –
Nun ist die Welt so trübe,
Der Weg gehüllt in Schnee.

Ich kann zu meiner Reisen
Nicht wählen mit der Zeit:
Muss selbst den Weg mir weisen
In dieser Dunkelheit.
Es zieht ein Mondenschatten
Als mein Gefährte mit,
Und auf den weissen Matten
Such' ich des Wildes Tritt.

Was soll ich länger weilen,
Dass man mich trieb' hinaus?
Lass irre Hunde heulen
Vor ihres Herren Haus!
Die Liebe liebt das Wandern,
Gott hat sie so gemacht –
Von einem zu dem andern –
Fein Liebchen, gute Nacht.

Will dich im Traum nicht stören,
Wär' Schad' um deine Ruh',
Sollst meinen Tritt nicht hören –
Sacht, sacht die Türe zu!
Schreib' im Vorübergehen
An's Tor dir gute Nacht,
Damit du mögest sehen,
An dich hab' ich gedacht.

V. Der Lindenbaum

Am Brunnen vor dem Tore,
Da steht ein Lindenbaum;
Ich träumt' in seinem Schatten
So manchen süssen Traum.

Ich schnitt in seine Rinde
So manches liebe Wort;
Es zog in Freud' und Leide
Zu ihm mich immer fort.

I. Good Night

I arrived a stranger,
a stranger I depart.
May blessed me
with many a bouquet of flowers.
The girl spoke of love,
her mother even of marriage;
now the world is so desolate,
the way is covered in snow.

I cannot choose the time
for my journey;
I must find my own way
in this darkness.
A shadow thrown by the moon
is my companion;
and on the white meadows
I seek the tracks of deer.

Why should I tarry longer
and be driven out?
Let stray dogs howl
before their master's house.
Love delights in wandering –
God made it so –
from one to another.
Beloved, good night!

I will not disturb your dream,
It would be a shame to spoil your rest.
You shall not hear my footsteps;
Softly, softly the door is closed.
As I pass I write
'Good night' on your gate,
so that you might see
that I thought of you.

V. The Lindentree

By the well, before the gate,
stands a linden tree;
in its shade I dreamt
many a sweet dream.

In its bark I carved
many a word of love;
in joy and sorrow
I was ever drawn to it.

Texts and Translations

Ich musst' auch heute wandern
Vorbei in tiefer Nacht,
Da hab' ich noch im Dunkel
Die Augen zugemacht.

Und seine Zweige rauschten,
Als riefen sie mir zu:
Komm her zu mir, Geselle,
Hier findest du deine Ruh'!

Die kalten Winde bliesen
Mir grad' in's Angesicht,
Der Hut flog mir vom Kopfe,
Ich wendete mich nicht.

Nun bin ich manche Stunde
Enfernt von jenem Ort,
Und immer hör' ich's rauschen:
Du fändest Ruhe dort!

XI. Frühlingstraum

Ich träumte von bunten Blumen,
So wie sie wohl blühen im Mai,
Ich träumte von grünen Wiesen,
Von lustigem Vogelgeschrei.

Und als die Hähne krächten,
Da ward mein Auge wach;
Da war es kalt und finster,
Es schrieten die Raben vom Dach.

Doch an den Fensterscheiben
Wer malte die Blätter da?
Ihr lacht wohl über den Träumer,
Der Blumen im Winter sah?

Ich träumte von Lieb' um Liebe,
Von einer schönen Maid,
Von Herzen und von Küssen,
Von Wonne und Seligkeit.

Und als die Hähne krächten,
Da ward mein Herze wach;
Nun sitz' ich hier alleine
Und denke dem Traume nach.

Die Augen schliess' ich wieder,
Noch schlägt das Herz so warm.
Wann grünt ihr Blätter am Fenster?
Wann halt' ich mein Liebchen im Arm?

Today, too, I had to walk
past it at dead of night;
even in the darkness
I closed my eyes.

And its branches rustled
as if they were calling to me:
'Come to me, friend,
here you will find rest.'

The cold wind blew
straight into my face,
my hat flew from my head;
I did not turn back.

Now I am many hours' journey
from that place;
yet I still hear the rustling:
'There you would find rest.'

XI. Spring Dream

I dreamt of bright flowers
that blossom in May;
I dreamt of green meadows
and merry bird-calls.

And when the cocks crowed
my eyes awoke:
it was cold and dark,
ravens cawed from the roof.

But there, on the window panes,
who had painted the leaves?
Are you laughing at the dreamer
who saw flowers in winter?

I dreamt of mutual love,
of a lovely maiden,
of embracing and kissing,
of joy and rapture.

And when the cocks crowed
my heart awoke;
now I sit here alone
and reflect upon my dream.

I close my eyes again,
my heart still beats so warmly.
Leaves on my window, when will you turn green?
When shall I hold my love in my arms?

Texts and Translations

Marques L. A. Garrett

Selections from *A Love Cycle*

Birthered out of hurt and despair, this song cycle is an outpouring of pure yet confusing emotions of betrayal, heartbreak, and, overall, love. The loss of a love that never left is likely the most difficult love with which to deal. Never in my compositional life to date have I given so much of myself to my music. This cycle is simply my emotions expressed through the wonderful poetry of different languages and poets as well as the sheer beauty of black and white notes waiting to be shared by vocalist and pianist.

I. A Love Song

Ah, love, my love is like a cry in the night
A long loud cry to the empty sky
The cry of a man alone in the desert
With hands uplifted, with parching lips

Oh, rescue me, rescue me
Thy form to mine arms
The dew of thy lips on my mouth
Dost thou hear me? – my call thro' the night?

Darling, I hear thee and answer
Thy fountain am I
All the love of my soul will I bring to thee
All the pains of my being shall wring to thee
Deep and forever the song of my loving shall sing to thee
Ever and ever thro' day and thro' night shall I cling to thee
Hearest thou the answer?
Darling, I come, I come

II. Hertz, mein Herz

Herz, mein Herz, sei nicht beklommen,
und ertrage dein Geschick,
neuer Frühling gibt zurück,
was der Winter dir genommen.

Und wie viel ist dir geblieben,
und wie schön ist noch die Welt!
Und, mein Herz, was dir gefällt,
alles, alles darfst du lieben!

II. Heart, my Heart

Heart, my heart, don't be oppressed,
and bear your fate:
a new Spring will give back
what Winter has taken from you.

And how many things remain,
and how beautiful is the world!
And, my heart, whatever you wish,
anything, everything you may love!

Text by Heinrich Heine (1797 - 1856) Translation © by Emily Ezust, from lieder.net

Texts and Translations

III. Adieu, jusque je vois revoye

Adieu, jusque je vous revoye
Adieu le droit fleuve de joye,
Mon confort, mon espoir joieux,
Le partir m'est tant doulereux
Que scay que faire doye.
Estre joyeux je ne poroye
Quant j'eslonge que ne vous voye
Mon bien et mon heur gracieux.
Adieu, jusque je vous revoye
Adieu le droit fleuve de joye,
Mon confort, mon espoir joieux.
Adieu vous dy, dont trop m'annoye,
Adieu le mieulx qu'amours m'envoye,
Autant de biens vous envoit dieux
Que pour moi mesmes le voudroye.

III. Farewell, until I see you again

Farewell until I see you again
Farewell my direct stream of joy
My comfort, my joyous hope.
Parting is so painful to me
That I know not what to do.
I cannot be joyful
When I go away and no longer see you
My love, my gracious fortune.
Farewell until I see you again
Farewell my direct stream of joy
My comfort, my joyous hope.
Farewell I say to you, though it pains me too much,
Farewell the best that love could send me
send you as many good things
As I wish for myself.

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