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ENGLISH TEXTS

for the

SONGS

of

NICHOLAS MEDTNER

by

Henry S. Drinker

NICHOLAS MEDTNER

By Alfred J. Swan

(Written by Professor Swan for the recital of Medtner's songs by Mme. Maria Kurenko and Paule Bailly at the Juilliard School on April 24, 1946)

Nicholas Medtner was born in Moscow in January 1880. He came from one of those Baltic families long settled in Central Russia for purposes of trade or business. Nothing seemed to predestine him to become a composer. Yet at the age of 12 music was already so living a force in his life that his parents transferred him from a regular Gymnasium to the famous Conservatory then directed by Safonoff. There was nothing spectacular about his musical endowment, but step by step he proceeded to master the musical language, for he had definitely chosen it as a medium for the expression of his as yet undeveloped thoughts and emotions.

After long years of hard work he graduated from Safonoff's class in piano. In presenting the customary medals and distinctions Safonoff turned to him saying: "And to you I would give the diamond medal, but unfortunately this institution's highest award is only a gold medal." Safonoff inaugurated a concert tour for him abroad and insisted that he play everywhere the Hammerclavier Sonata of Beethoven. But he went only reluctantly, for he now wanted to devote himself entirely to composition. Whether it was now that he became a pupil of Taneieff in counterpoint, or had studied with him while learning the piano with Safonoff, is not quite clear. But it is immaterial. The important thing is that he destroyed one completed work after the other (six sonatas), determined to speak the language of music in his own particular way before saying anything at all. So when his first works appeared in the early years of this century their individuality was strongly marked. But since it was again devoid of any startling, spectacular features, it remained undetected for long. Safonoff was disgusted and sniffed at the effusions of his pupil of whom he had been so proud as a pianist.

Medtner betrays from the first an almost gigantic sweep of thought and emotions. The layout is symphonic, though confined to his own instrument and the voice (this, by the way, has remained the most serious handicap in the propagation of his art. The pianist who would play him, or the singer who would sing him were put before a task commensurate only with that of the conductor of a symphony orchestra): sonatas, "novels", long fairy tales, tragedy-fragments, dithyrambs. Even the would-be miniatures are of solid granite and belie their names of idyls and arabesques. Anyone wanting to come to a thorough reckoning with his art must always bear in mind this will to exhaust dimensions. Rachmaninoff, one of the first to understand him and even at one time under his influence, could not take in those dimensions and always tried to induce him to curtail his works. This shows a fundamental misconception. Cutting Medtner is like cutting essential psychological stages from the novels of Dostoyevsky.

His idiom is grafted upon that of the 19th, not the 20th century. Impressionist and later formations are quite alien to him (a curious exception to this are the very occasional inroads into the harmonic domain that we associate with the middle—Poem of Extasy—period of Scriabin). He has been referred to as the Russian Brahms. Nothing could be more mistaken. The whole point of view, the whole approach to harmony and rhythm of these two composers is entirely different. While Brahms, after stating an idea, is fond of halting on a diminished chord, Medtner characteristically dashes forward (al rigore del tempo) until his whole exposition is complete. Where Brahms is content with the minimal proportions, Medtner's expositions are limitless tableaux, while his codas are always an intensification, a mustering of forces (all themes are drawn

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up for a parade before the listener). Compare this with the recoiling of Brahms, as in the 2nd and 3rd symphonies. The same elemental strength as lies in his rhythms lies also in his harmonies and there is nothing here of the harmonic hesitation of Brahms, his delicate wavering between major, minor, or mode. Only in their attitude to the invention of the thematic material and its subsequent treatment do they seem to be equally compelling, equally uncompromising. Nor is he in any way connected with the Russian school, in which only Tschaikovsky might be looked upon as in some sort his spiritual ancestor, but only the greatest Tschaikovsky, not the singer and fosterer of despondent "week-day" moods. To Medtner art is the "holy of holies" of life. From the divine Muse—his teacher and counsellor—he draws all the wisdom, all the depth, all the intensity of living and creating. The insignificant is eliminated altogether from his frugal existence.

In rigid discipline pass his uniform days in London, interrupted only by concert appearances and radio performances of his works. Work, like Schubert, from early morning till 2 P. M., a meal, a short period of rest, a walk, then tea, another short period of work and then friends and conversations about all the vital things of life around an endlessly drawn out supper. Going to a concert, or a movie, or the theatre, are rare and festal occasions, but a constant communion with a group of warmly devoted friends, an absolute, almost daily necessity. Here the foundations of his art are discussed, his attitude to modern phenomena, his utmost perplexity at them, in short all and more than has gone into his epoch-making book "The Muse and the Fashion" which appeared in 1935 and has now at last been translated into English. The above routine of life has probably always prevailed. For about a decade, from 1909-19 he regularly appeared before the musical public of Moscow and Petrograd, presenting his works, occasionally playing Beethoven, Chopin and Scarlatti, all of whom, especially Beethoven, he can interpret in an unforgettable way. These concerts of his music belong to the high points of the very rich Russian musical life shortly before the Revolution.

The outbreak of the first world war and his refusal to be drawn into the chauvinistic ideology and shouts of hatred and violence, resulted in a greater seclusion of him from public life. The revolution soon drove him out with the great stream of Russian emigration. He lived successively in Germany, France and England, but only in England did he find anything like a response to his ideals (as formerly in Russia). Twice he came to America—in 1924 and 1929—playing widely with orchestras and alone, but it cannot be said that there was a real understanding here of his music. People expected outward sensations and got none, they expected explosions of tonality and form, but they were confronted by a vigorous affirmation of all that our musical heritage rests on. Now, in 1946, our public is apparently tired of sensational inventions in musical speech and wants to return to a solid, wholesome diet. The second world war, with its increased destruction of things of beauty, has evidently awakened an intense thirst for what has as yet been preserved to us. To all this the recent concerts of Medtner's music at Swarthmore College and at the Juilliard School in New York eloquently testified.

Medtner has completed 59 opuses which is a large output, considering the grandeur of his works and also the fact that whole groups of them are quite often united in one opus number. By the side of his piano music his songs (103 of them) occupy a most important place. He has set to music the poetry of Goethe, Nietzsche, Chamisso, Eichendorff, Heine among the Germans, and Pushkin, Tutcheff, Foeth and Lermontoff among the Russians. Only names of the first magnitude, none of the inferior poetry that we find in Schubert, Schumann or Tschaikovsky. The poems continue their independent life, only enhanced by the greatness of the music that surrounds them. In such songs as "To the Dreamer" of op. 32, or "The Muse" of op. 29, or "Sleepless Nights" of op. 37, we find the clue to his whole philosophy of life, which is very much akin to the Hellenic souls of Goethe and Pushkin and partly also to the singer of night and chaos (Tutcheff). He has also used the voice as an instrument.

The indication "vocalezzare" we find in many songs when the words have given out, yet the musical thought runs on. This "vocalezzare" has finally led to the Sonata and Suite Vocalise, op. 41, where no words whatever are scored under the line of melody. A less important field is his violin music, while the orchestra figures only as the background to his three piano concerti.

THE ENGLISH TEXTS

These translations of all the solo songs composed by Nicholas Medtner were made with a view to the possible publication by G. Schirmer, Inc., of about twenty-five of them, which project, it is hoped will be consummated in the near future. Being made primarily to be sung with Medtner's music, they do not purport in all cases to be literal, but rather endeavor to express in English, which is not just translated Russian or German, the basic thought and spirit of the originals. We often find, in poetry, words or phrases which have a peculiar significance and association which it is impossible to reproduce in another language. To attempt to do so literally is not only awkward, but wholly fails to convey the poet's idea or picture. It is much better to attempt to reproduce the latter by reason of an indigenous phrase or figure.

Occasionally in these translations there will be found lines where the rhythm seems uncertain or faulty. These passages are all deliberate, to make the text fit the rhythm of the music; were the translations not for the music they could readily be smoothed out. Thus in No. 2 of Opus 59 I have considerably altered the rhythmic and rhyme structure of the poem, to fit the music.

My Russian advisor having told me that no Russian could tell what Foeth really meant in Impromptu (Op. 37, No. 3), I felt at liberty to construct a theory of my own.

Opus 3, No. 2, and Opus 29, No. 5 were composed by Medtner to the same poem by Pushkin. The differences in my texts follow the different music.

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THE POETS
of the
MEDTNER SONGS

Brussov,	Op. 28, No. 4	(1)	Pushkin,	Op. 3, No. 2; Op. 13, No.	
Byely,	Op. 13, No. 2	(1)		1; Op. 29, Nos. 1-7; Op.	
Chamisso,	Op. 46, Nos. 6 & 7	(2)		32, Nos. 1-6; Op. 36,	
Eichendorff,	Op. 46, Nos. 3-5	(3)		Nos. 1-6; Op. 45, Nos.	
Foeth,	Op. 24, Nos. 5-8; Op. 28,			1-2; Op. 52, Nos. 1-7;	
	Nos. 1-3; Op. 37, Nos.			Op. 50, Nos. 1-2; Op.	
	3-4	(10)		59, No. 2	(33)
Goethe,	Op. 3, No. 3; Op. 6, Nos.		Tutschev,	Op. 24, Nos. 1-4; Op. 28,	
	1-9; Op. 15, Nos. 1-15;			Nos. 5-7; Op. 37, Nos. 1,	
	Op. 18, Nos. 1-6; Op. 46,			2 & 5; Op. 45, Nos. 3	
	Nos. 1-2	(30)		& 4; Op. 59, No. 1	(13)
Heine,	Op. 12, Nos. 1-3	(3)			
Lermontoff,	Op. 1, No. 1; Op. 3, No. 1	(2)			
Nietzsche,	Op. 19, Nos. 1-3; Op. 19a,				
	Nos. 1-2	(5)			
				Total	103

ENGLISH TEXTS
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Opus 1, No. 1

THE ANGEL
Lermontoff

At midnight an Angel flew over the sky,
and softly was singing a song;
the clouds and the moon and the planets on
high
were listening all the night long.

He sings of the souls that are free of all
wrong,
in Paradise blest and secure;
of God in His Heaven he sings, and his song
is noble and simple and pure.

He bears a young soul in his arms thru the
skies,
away from this Valley of Tears;
his song, although ended as onward he flies,
the soul that he carries still hears.

And vainly on earth did this young spirit
long
for music as lovely as this,
but found it at last in the Angel's sweet song
of heavenly beauty and bliss.

Opus 3, No. 1

AT THE CLOISTER GATE
Lermontoff

Before the holy cloister gate
a beggar stands in supplication;
ill-nourished, feeble, pale and gaunt
from poverty and slow starvation.

He asks for but a bit of bread,
with boney fingers eager reaching;
and in them someone puts a stone,
and scornful mocked his vain beseeching.

"Sir, I had prayed that I be loved,
in bitter agony befriended;
your scorn has mocked my purest hope,
my faith in love forever ended."

Opus 3, No. 2

ALAS, FOR I OUTLIVE MY YEARNINGS
Pushkin

Alas, for I outlive my yearnings,
my dreams are gone, my hopes depart,
and naught is left to me but anguish,
the fruit of emptiness of heart.

The storms of cruel fate assail me,
my wreath is dead, my limbs are numb;
alone in sorrow, what is left me?
I wait the end, when will it come?

And thus, when autumn cold approaches,
and winds of winter blare and blow,
a leaf is clinging, sad and lonely,
and helpless, flutters to and fro.

Opus 3, No. 3

ON THE LAKE
Goethe

The air I breathe is in my blood,
and tingles in my breast.
Ah, Mother Nature, sweet it is,
upon thy bosom to rest!

The rocking waves and dipping oars
together wait our boat;
while down the mountain dewy mists
toward us gently float.

Look, O look, and cease your dreaming;
though your dreams be golden gleaming.
Look not down, look but above,
where are beauty, life and love.

In the waves the stars
in myriad particles glimmer;
ghosts of distant mountains
loom thru the magical shimmer.

Zephyrs bear the scent of orchard,
meadow and plain,
in the bay is mirrored gold of
ripening grain.

Opus 6, No. 1

WANDERER'S NIGHT-SONG
Goethe

On the heights is all still as death, as death.
No air disturbs the tree-tops, not even a
breath.

The birds in the forest are silent.
Be patient, peace will soon come to you.

Opus 6, No. 2

SPRING SONG
Goethe

In the barley and corn,
thru the thicket and thorn,
in the bushes and grass,
O where are you, my sweet lass?

My beloved is not at home;
in the meadow she must roam;
where the flow'rs are green and fair.
I will find my dearest there.

In the spring-time, in May,
where I kissed her that day,
by the old apple tree,
I see something. Is it she?

Opus 6, No. 3

SONG OF THE ELVES
Goethe

At twelve o'clock, when the people are
sleeping,
when over us floats the moon, and all the
stars are out,
we sing and we dance and go roaming about.

At twelve o'clock, when the people are
sleeping,
we gather in the meadow, under the starry
gleam,
and play in the moonlight, and dance a fairy
dream,
we dance and we sing like the fairies in a
dream.

Opus 6, No. 4

I ROAMED THE MEADOWS
Goethe

I roamed the meadows, thru wheat and rye,
I knew not whither, I knew not why.
I found a flower, so fresh, so blue,
the like I saw not my whole life thru.

I stooped to pluck it, but quick it stopped me:
"My roots are buried deep down below me,
and they are needed to feed and grow me;
and that's the reason I stand so neatly,
and ev'ry season I bloom so sweetly.
O do not pluck me, but just transplant me."

I roamed the meadows, thru wheat and rye;
far on I wandered, and joyous pondered,
so happy I.

Opus 6, No. 5

LOVELIEST LASS
Goethe

Loveliest lass, can you not tell me,
tell me now why
souls are tormented,
silent and shy,
self-discontented,
ever are grieving,
ever believing
Lady Luck will be there where they are not.
Can you not tell me, loveliest lass?

Opus 6, No. 6

CONSCIENCE
Goethe

Conscience tormenting, never relenting,
striving and straining, never attaining,
fighting and flying, living and dying,
earth is a Hell, ended, were well.
Earth is but Hell; ended 'twere well.

Opus 6, No. 7

HEAR ME, LORD
Goethe

Hear me, Lord, to Thee I cry,
poor unworthy sinner I;
woe and anguish, grief and care,
fill my heart with dark despair.

Here before Thee, undisguised,
Lord, by all the world despised.
Ah, we were so young and free,
ah, so dear and good was he!
Ah, he loved me faithfully!
Ah, he suffered so for me!

Hear me, Lord, to Thee I cry,
poor unworthy sinner I!

I had heard his silent plea
knew his faith and hope in me,

how it hurt when I, perchance,
gave him not a tender glance.

Here before Thee, undisguised,
Lord, by all the world despised.

Ah, and how I tortured him!
Now his tender eyes are dim.
Grief and torment, awful dread!
I have lost him! He is dead!

Hear me, Saviour, hear my cry,
poor unworthy sinner I!

Opus 6, No. 8

FIRST LOVE
Goethe

Who, ah who can bring me back
the happy days of love's first rapture?
Who, ah who is it can bring
one blessed moment back again?

Lonely mourn I for the hours
that I never can recapture,
mourn them here alone in vain.

Who can bring me back my rapture,
bring it back to me again?

Opus 6, No. 9

ROOTED FIRM
(Epithalamion)
Goethe

I roamed the forest with naught in mind,
nor was I thinking what I might find;
and in the shadow, to my surprise,
I found a flower with starry eyes.

I almost plucked it, but heard it say:
"Must I be broken, and wilt away?"
I took it with me, its roots and all,
to my pretty house by the garden wall;
and there I set it with tender care,
and now it blooms again, all fresh and fair.

Opus 12, No. 1

THE CARPENTER
Heine

O come, put your hand on my heart, my dear;
just feel how it pounds and it thumps in here.
A carpenter lives there, a bad man he;
a coffin there he is making me.

He knocks and he hammers all night and all
day,
and drives ev'ry thought of sweet sleep away.
So hasten you, make my coffin strong,
for there I'll sleep for O so long!

Opus 12, No. 2

LYRICAL INTERMEZZO
Heine

A lonely fir-tree towers
far north on a barren height.
It slumbers beneath its mantle
of snow and ice, cold and white.

It dreams and sees a palm-tree,
far off where hot suns blaze,
facing, alone and silent,
the pitiless scorching rays.

Opus 12, No. 3
THE VOICE OF THE MOUNTAIN
Heine

A knight is riding thru the wood,
absorbed and wrapped in gloom:
"Ah! do I go now to my true love?"
And answer the mountain gave: "To find
your grave."

As on he rides he heaves a sigh,
his heart is sore distressed:
"Must I so soon in the grave then lie?
Yet in the grave is rest."

"There" said the voice, "is peace,
there care will cease—"

Then down the cheek of the gallant knight
a tear of sorrow fell:
"And if in the grave there is peace for my
soul,
to be in the grave is well."
The voice, with hollow knell
replied: "'Tis well."

Opus 13, No. 1
WINTER EVENING
Pushkin

Whirling winter snow and vapor
drive in clouds across the sky,
like a moaning creature calling,
like a weeping infant's cry.

In our thatch of straw they rustle,
round our crumbling roof they roar,
now they knock upon our windows,
now they rattle at our door.

Our old hut is dark and dreary,
and the fire is burning low,
as you sit there old and silent,
gently rocking to and fro.

You are drowsy from the droning
of the spinning-wheel, no doubt,
and are weary from the raging
of the winter storm without.

Let us drink, my good companion,
to the days when we were young;
drink in sorrow, drink to cheer us,
sing the songs we both have sung;

sing the song of how the tit-mouse
lived so happy in the dell,
how the maiden, in the morning,
fetched the water from the well.

Whirling snow and clouds of vapor
drive in clouds across the sky,
like a moaning creature calling,
like a wailing infant's cry.

Let us drink, my good companion,
grief is futile, sorrow vain;
fill the flagon, drain it empty,
it will make us glad again.

Opus 13, No. 2
EPITAPH
Byely

I aspired to soar in sun-light,
its arrows of fire made me fall;

heaven and earth I measured
but how to live not at all.

Despise not the poet who lies here,
but gladden his grave with flowers;
for my porcelain wreath is crumbling,
from the frost and the mid-summer showers.

All mouldy is the ikon
and the flow'rs decay;
the grave-stones are heavy,
ah come and lift them away!

I loved the peace of the sunset,
and the bell,
and ah, then, why must I suffer?
None can ever tell.

Oh take pity upon me,
my faded wreath calls to you,
and implores you to love me,
for my soul has not perished,
but yet will be born anew.

Opus 15, No. 1
WANDERER'S NIGHT-SONG
Goethe

Thou from whom all blessings flow,
ev'ry grief and anguish stillest;
him who suffers double woe,
Thou with double comfort fillest.

Tired am I of rush and riot!
Ah, why all this joy and pain?
Peace and quiet,
come, ah come to me again!
Come, ah come to me again!

Opus 15, No. 2
THE BEGGAR
Goethe

As from door to door I wander,
shy and silent I will stand,
asking bread to bear me yonder,
given me by loving hand.

Ev'ry-one will greet me gladly,
when before him I appear;
then, with moistened eyes and sadly;
yet I know not why the tear.

Opus 15, No. 3
SELF-DECEIT
Goethe

She moves the curtain to and fro,
she whom I hold most dear;
I think she listens, seeks to know
if I am really here,

and wonders if the jealous rage
still rankles in my breast,
that no mere smiling can assuage,
or set my soul at rest.

Alas, alas, my Lady Fair
had no such thoughts as these;
the hand that moved the curtain there
was but the ev'ning breeze!

Opus 15, No. 4

SHE LOVES ME!

Goethe

She loves me, she loves me!
What fantasies teeming!
Am I alive now,
or am I dreaming?

She loves me, she loves me!
Now nothing matters!
Is this the sun-light?
Is that my cottage?
How can you bear it, rapturous heart?
She loves me, she loves me!

Opus 15, No. 5

SO DANCE YE

Goethe

So skip ye, and dance ye,
you girl and you boy,
for dancing is seemly
for youth to enjoy.

To sit at the distaff,
to work all the day,
makes anyone sleepy,
so up and away!

Our dancing gives faint love
a fresh and new start;
it heightens the courage,
and gladdens the heart.

Opus 15, No. 6

BEFORE THE COURT

Goethe

From whom I have it, this child that I bear,
no one shall ever know.
"Fie! Spit her out! The harlot there!"
Nay, for I am not so.

With whom I was wedded I never will tell;
my man is true and good,
be he one who wears a chain of gold,
be he one whose shoes are of wood.

If shame and scorn must needs be borne,
they shall be mine to bear.
I know him well, he knows me well,
and God is everywhere.

I pray ye, Mister Judge and Priest,
I pray ye now let me go!
My child it is, and will remain;
come tell me, is this not so?

Opus 15, No. 7

SEA CALM

Goethe

Brooding stillness on the water,
not a ripple, not a sound,
while the anxious sailor wonders
at the quiet all around.

Neither air nor life nor motion,
utter silence, still as death,
over all the mighty ocean,
not a murmur, not a breath.

Opus 15, No. 8

HAPPY VOYAGE

Goethe

The fog-bank has lightened,
the heavens have brightened,
and Aeolus loosens the reins in his hand.
The tackles are whirring,
the canvas is stirring!
Up anchor! Alive all!
The white-caps are foaming,
we're back from our roaming,
Look! There is the land!

Opus 15, No. 9

NEAR THE BELOVED

Goethe

I think of thee when shafts of sunlight
shimmer
across the sea;
and when the pool mirrors the moon's bright
glimmer,
I think of thee.
I think of thee when in the distance yonder
the dust ascends,
and when at night on alien paths I wander,
afar from friends.
I hear thy voice, there where the clear
brooks glisten,
on rocky hill;
and when in silent wood I pause to listen,
where all is still;
far tho I be, of thee alone am thinking,
for thou art near, forever near.
The sun has set, and myriad stars are
blinking.
Would thou wert here!

Opus 15, No. 10

THE FAITHLESS LAD

Goethe

A lad there was, a faithless knave,
with varlets he consorted.
He wooed a maid with phrases brave,
and her with ardor courted.
She gave her all at his behest;
alas, 'twas but a cruel jest,
for with her he but sported.

And when the lad returned no more,
she well-nigh lost her reason;
she laughed and wept and prayed and swore,
and cursed his shameless treason.
When in her grave the maiden lay,
the lad in terror rode away,
with all that he could seize on.

With whip and spur, in deadly dread,
his aimless way he wended;
uphill and then down he pressed ahead,
his fear would not be ended.
Six days and nights, on, on he dashed;
the thunder roared, the lightning flashed,
the rain in floods descended.

And as he rode 'mid crash and din,
he found a little shelter;
he tied his horse and crept within,
to come from out the welter;
and as he felt his way around,

a fissure opened in the ground.
He fell in, helter-skelter!

A hundred fathoms down he dropped,
thru endless spaces sinking;
but when at last his fall was stopped,
he saw a faint light blinking.
He followed it for miles and miles,
thru mouldy rooms with bones in piles,
and cellars, foul and stinking!

A banquet-hall at length he spies,
a hundred grinning devils!
They look at him with empty eyes,
and bid him join their revels.
And there among them is the maid,
in winding-sheet of white arrayed.
SHE SCORNS HIM!

Opus 15, No. 11

LIKE TO LIKE

Goethe

A little snow-drop, quite early in May,
sprang up and blossomed, one lovely spring
day.

A bee came buzzing, and sipped its dew.
You must have been made for each other,
you two!

Opus 15, No. 12

THE SPIRIT'S GREETING

Goethe

High on the ancient turret's tip,
the Hero's spirit stands.
He bids God-speed to ev'ry ship
that sails to foreign lands.

"Lo, for my sinews were so tough,
my blood so hardly spilled,
my limbs and bones such sturdy stuff,
my cup was brimming filled."

"I spent my life 'mid storm and strife,
in days now past and gone;
and thou, O little ship of man,
sail ever, ever on!"

Opus 18, No. 1

THE FLIRT

Goethe

Once at dawn in lovely spring-time,
came a shepherdess and sang;
young and fair and so light-hearted,
sweet and clear her carol rang.

Then said Thyrsis: "Will you kiss me,
if I give you lamb-kins twain?"
Coy, she looked at him a moment,
laughed and sang and laughed again.

And another offered ribbons,
and a third would give his heart!
But she laughed at all their offers,
with a song bade all depart.

Opus 18, No. 2

CONQUERED

Goethe

In the glow of the ev'ning sun-set
thru the wood I made my way;

Damon played his flute so sweetly,
sweet its echo, clear and gay.

In his arms he took me and kissed me,
ah, so dear, so tender he!
And I told him: "Play forever."
And the dear boy played for me!

Peace of mind I can hope for never,
all my little joys have flown;
in my ears is the echo ever
of the flute's pervading tone.

Opus 18, No. 3

SOLITUDE

Goethe

Ye who dwell 'mid the rocks and the trees,
benign forest maidens,
give ye freely to each
what each in secret desires:
comfort to him who is sad,
to them who waver give courage;
grant to lovers to find
the bliss that lovers so crave.
To you has been given
what gods denied unto mortals:
verily, to help and comfort
all them whose trust is in you.

Opus 18, No. 4

MIGNON

Goethe

None but an aching heart
can know my anguish;
alone, from joys apart,
I grieve and languish.

The spacious firmament,
relentless turning,
knows how my days are spent
in hopeless yearning.
My very soul is rent,
my heart is burning.

None but an aching heart
can know my anguish;
alone, from joys apart,
I grieve and languish.

Opus 18, No. 5

THE VIOLET

Goethe

A violet in the meadow grew,
among the leaves, and hid from view;
it was a lovely flower.
A shepherdess fair there came along,
with nimble step and merry song,
to cross the meadow from beyond the stile.

"Ah," thought the violet, "were but I
the fairest flow'r beneath the sky,
if only for an hour!
she'd pluck me then, this lass so fair,
and pin me on her heart to wear,
ah me! ah me! just for a little while!"

But ah, alas! her careless tread,
unheeding passed the violet-bed,
and crushed the little flower.
It sank and died, but happy said:
"Tho die I must, I gladly die,
I die beneath her feet, by her,
at her dear feet I lie;
tho die I must, I gladly die, by her,
by her, by her and at her feet to lie."

Opus 18, No. 6
HUNTER'S EVEN-SONG
Goethe

Afar I wander, still and free,
and hold my flint-lock tight.
Your image fair appears to me,
so tender, sweet and bright.

You walk, I doubt not, fancy-free,
thru meadows dear to you;
and ah! do you not sometimes see
my fleeting image too?

Here am I, who am doomed to roam
unhappy, sick at heart,
from East to West, far away from home,
I, who from you must part.

Your image, cool and calm I see,
calm as the moon on high;
and sudden peace comes over me,
nor can I tell you why.

Opus 19, No. 1
GREETING
Goethe

Ye birds, aloft in tree-tops,
go sing ye loud and clear,
to greet my home of child-hood,
my birth-place,—ah, so dear!

Ye larks, come take these blossoms,
and with them fly away,
to drop them on my father's house,
my home of yesterday.

You nightingale, O hear me,
where on the branch you wave;
come bear for me this rose-bud,
to my dear father's grave.

Opus 19, No. 2
LITTLE OLD MOTHER
Nietzsche

The noon-day sun shines down upon
the alms-house in the square.
A little mother, frail and wan,
is at the window there.

Her eyes are dull, her hair snow-white,
her bodice fresh and neat;
she seems content, and smiles to see
the sun-shine, warm and sweet.

Beside her window blooms a rose,
the bees are swarming round;
nay, it disturbs her not at all,
this busy humming sound.

She gazes on the sunny scene,
so peaceful, bright and clear.
In Heaven 'twill be fairer still,
O little mother dear!

Opus 19, No. 3
LONGING FOR HOME
Nietzsche

The bells of ev'ning pealing,
echo over the moor.

They say that nothing, ever,
on earth here is secure.

Comforts that we obtain
are momentary flashes;
we all are sprung from ashes,
soon turn to ashes again.

And so the bells up yonder
bid me no longer roam;
the goal to which we wander
is our eternal home.

Happy indeed is he,
who, scorning earthly pleasures,
regards alone the treasures
of that Eternity.

Opus 19a, No. 1
RETURNING HOME
Nietzsche

The day of my departure
was one of bitter pain;
my heart was far, far sadder
when I came back again.

The hopes that I had cherished,
at one blow all dashed away!
O hapless, hapless hour,
O thrice unhappy day!

Before my father's grave-stone
I often stood and wept,
and there in bitter sorrow,
a lonely vigil kept.

With all so dull and cheerless,
so dreary there at home,
I sometimes sought the forest,
within its shade to roam.

And there, amid the shadows,
my dreariness would cease;
sweet dreams would come to cheer me,
my heart would be at peace.

The joy of youth, the lark's song,
roses and humming bees,
appeared to me, as dozing,
I lay there beneath the trees.

Opus 19a, No. 2
DESPAIR
Nietzsche

To tolling bells depress me so,
the night, so sultry, hastens on.
What I should do, I do not know,
my heart is sad, my joy is gone.

The hours fly, like ghosts they pass,
far off the world, its pomp and show;
I know not what to do, alas!
My joy is gone, my heart sinks low.

So dank the night, so death-like, too,
the moon-light's ghostly rays appear;
I know not what, indeed, to do?
Wild roars the storm; no sound I hear.

I have no peace, I have no rest,
but wander, silent, sore, depressed,
among the graves along the shore.
My heart is sad, my joy no more.

Opus 24, No. 1
DAY AND NIGHT
Tutschev

Above the gulf that has no name,—
the vast expanse where spirits hover,—
the gods have spread a golden cover;
by their command it thus became.

Life once it gave to what was clay;
life now it gives to sick and ailing,
the friend of mortals, never failing,
glorious mantle,—'tis the Day!

But darkness comes to hide the day,
our comfort and our consolation;
night, from its gloomy nether station,
has seized and torn the veil away!

The chasm gapes, a fearful sight,
mist-covered, horrible, portentous!
'Til dawn no bar from it is sent us.
So mortals ever dread the night.

Opus 24, No. 2
THE WILLOW
Tutschev

Why, O willow, are you bending,
ever stooping over so?
Are your drooping leaves intending
thus to take a sip by blending
with the cooling stream below?

But the brook, in sun-light speeding,
hurries onward to the bay,
all unconscious, all unheeding
of the thirsty branches pleading,—
ripples laughing on its way.

Opus 24, No. 3
WAVES AND THOUGHTS
Tutschev

Wave follows wave as does thought follow
thought,
both of identical elements wrought;
thoughts in the heart, ever restless, in motion,
waves in the boundless expanse of the ocean.
Ceaseless the flood and the ebb of the tides;
all evanescent, with naught that abides.

Opus 24, No. 4
TWILIGHT
Tutschev

Dark, grey twilight comes descending,
thru the world its shadows creep,
changing colors, moving, blending,
bid all nature fall asleep.
Moths, unseen, are faintly whirling,
soft the fading shadows fall;
sweetest pain within me stirring,
all is in me, I in all.

Come, O twilight, sleep-compelling,
pour thy balm across my soul;
with thy breath, of nectar smelling,
cover me and make me whole.
Let me taste thy consolation,
petty thoughts and motives purge;
make me one with all creation,
in the Infinite to merge.

Opus 24, No. 5
HUMBLE YET VALIANT
Foeth

Humble am I when thunder roars,
when down the crag the torrent pours,
when in the night the lightning flashes;
in awe, when on a rocky shore,
untiring, and with ceaseless roar,
untamed, the mighty ocean dashes.

Radiant and mute am I that hour,
possessed by strange, unearthly power,
when your bright angel, near me soaring,
is whisp'ring words, as in a dream,
that thru my being glow and gleam,
my weary soul with life restoring.

I am on fire, and madly burn,
I strive and struggle, soar and yearn,
the clouds of Heav'n beneath me treading.
Yea, in a moment, I will fly,
in very truth to Heaven High,
on sprouting pinions, soon outspreading.

Opus 24, No. 6
BEAUTY
Foeth

When your glances, enchanting, you fling,
loving smile with another returning,
of your beauty it is that I sing,
not at all of my love and my yearning.

When I sing of the blossoming rose,
and its fragrance perfuming the morning,
tho I love it, the song I compose
is of beauty, the garden adorning.

Beauty gladdens us all our life long,
lucky they on whom gods may bestow it;
although beauty be needed for song,
beauty never has need for a poet;
no poet.

Opus 24, No. 7
DAWN IN THE GARDEN
Foeth

Whisp'ring, timid, softly breathing,
trills the nightingale.
Silver brooklet, lazy weaving,
ripples thru the vale;
flick'ring visions, gleams of beauty,
fantasies of grace;
magic changes, gone, returning,
in a loving face;
purple shadows, smoothly stealing,
creep across the lawn,
tears and laughter, sighs and kisses,
and the dawn, the dawn!

Opus 24, No. 8
GREETING
Foeth

Love I come today to tender,
for the morning breeze is blowing,
and the sun, in all its splendor,
on the trembling leaves is glowing.

Ev'ry bud, to blossom bursting,
all awakened, new awakened,

with the spring, alive is thirsting,
on the dew its thirst has slakened.

I have come to love and serve you,
with the same devotion ever;
that I may in truth deserve you,
is my hope and my endeavor.

I have come, my greetings bringing,
filled with mirth and joy and singing,
with the music of the growing song,
that in my heart is ringing.

Opus 28, No. 1

PRAYER FOR RAIN

Foeth

Ye vapors, rain-clouds, hear ye me,
for all the earth is scorched and drying.
What winged angel may it be
that wafts you where the fields are dying?

Ah, pity now this thirsty land,
that blazing, cruel sun is parching!
Soon may the kindly rain-bow stand,
above us mercifully arching.

Be humble, O presumptuous bard,
the living water, soul-regaling,
is but a blessing undeserved,
thru Heaven's bounty, never-failing.

All I can do alone in vain,
'tis He who sends the rain to nourish
the field, the grass, the vine and grain,
that man and beast may grow and flourish.

Opus 28, No. 2

SERENADE

Foeth

All the little birds I see that flutter,
send a flutter deep within my heart,
and the sigh I cannot help but utter,
tells you more than words could e'er impart.

Calm and placid there you stand before me,
neither blush nor pallor on your cheek;
how it pains that you can ignore me,
see me not nor hear me when I speak.

In your triumph, radiantly victorious,
you must bear with me, O Lady Mine;
radiant dawn could never be so glorious,
had the sun no cloud on which to shine.

Opus 28, No. 3

THE BUTTERFLY

Foeth

You're right, whatever of me charms and
pleases,
are airy things.

These velvet pennons, flutt'ring in the breezes
are my two wings.

Ask not from where I come in such a hurry,
or where I go;

here on this flow'r I settle, free from worry,
no care I know.

Do you suppose that aimless here I'll flitter
the whole long day?

Just wait, and soon my spreading wings will
glitter,

I'll fly away!

Opus 28, No. 4

IN THE CHURCH-YARD

Brussov

Blank and dull the dingy, heavy stone;
he beneath it is unknown;
gone the name-plate, withered is the moss,
bent and mouldering the cross,
and this little daisy, pale and wan
by tomorrow will be gone.

At the seat the weeping willow grieves,
bending down its trembling leaves,
seeks to whisper to the passer-by:
"One day you yourself must die."
Yonder where the silver lichen grows,
silver-white the river flows.
There the church's steeple rises tall,
with its time-encrusted wall.

And the breeze that dying softly waves
grasses on the silent graves,
whispers, as the shadows slowly creep;
"Storms there were, but sleep has come, so
sleep."

Opus 28, No. 5

ELEGY

Tutschew

O, not with cold earth, alas, cover me over!
O, not with raw earth, alas, cover me over!
Bury me warm in the grass,
deep in the clover!

The gentle breeze from out the trees,
softly stirs the grasses.

The shepherd's pipe is heard afar,
and calm the cloud, the quiet star,
that over me passes.

Opus 28, No. 6

DEJECTION

Tutschew

I sit dejected and apart,
and watch with tears and heavy heart
the fire die out.

The past I see before me there;
words fail to tell of my despair,
my dreary doubt.

Will what is past return again?
Will that that is in truth remain,
forever here?

Or will it pass, as all has passed,
down time's dark corridor at last,
and disappear?

Year after year, span after span,
what is this earthly thing called man,
that strives in vain?

He withers quickly, quickly, yea!

Yet all the world, another day,

will live again;
the leaf, the golden-rod, the grain,
the thistle, too.

But, little flower, here on earth,
this changeless cycle, this rebirth,
is not for you.

I plucked and pinned you next my heart,
with what sweet bliss, what cruel smart,

God only knows;
so stay you here upon my breast,
'til my last sigh has gone to rest,
my little rose!

Opus 28, No. 7

THE PAUPER

Tutschev

Vouch-safe, O Lord, to bless the pauper,
who, in the scorching summer heat,
is straggling on, past lovely gardens,
along the swelt'ring city street.

Thru gates forbidden stealthy gazing,
the luscious verdure there he sees,
the meadow where the sheep are grazing,
the welcome shade of fragrant trees.

'Tis not for him the trees are throwing
this cool and hospitable shade.
'Tis not for him the fountains, flowing,
spread clouds of mist thruout the glade.

The azure grotto, mist-embowered,
in vain invites his ling'ring look;
nor will there on his head be showered,
the fountain's spray, the limpid brook.

Ah, pity, Lord, that sorry mortal,
him fated all his life to stand
in futile gaze, out-side the portal,
nor ever gain the Promised Land.

Opus 29, No. 1

THE MUSE

Pushkin

She loved me as a child,
ah yes, she loved me ever,
and handed me the pipe,
and bade that I endeavor,
with childish lips and eager fingers, if I can,
to play for her the seven-reeded pipe of Pan.
And with a gentle smile she listened to me
striving
to play the stately airs from hymns of gods
deriving,
and then the peaceful songs the Phrygian
shepherds play.

Beneath the oak on many a sunny summer
day,
with diligence I strove to profit by her
teaching;
and then, at times, the Mystic Maid, at my
beseeching,
with toss of golden curls from off her lovely
brow,
herself took up the reed and sought to show
me how.

And as the tones, with breath divine I heard
her capture,
my heart and soul, rejoicing, thrilled with
holy rapture.

Opus 29, No. 2

THE SINGER

Pushkin

And have you heard the singer in the night?
his song of love, his song of love despairing,
the plaintive pipe, his lonely vigil sharing,
in silent fields before the morning light?
—have heard him there?

And have you met him in the darkling wood?
this singer from the grave, alone, despairing,
and seen the tears, the smile that none is
sharing,
his silent look of sorrow understood?
—have met him there?

And when you heard the singer, did you
sigh?
—his song of love, his song of love despair-
ing,
—the voice of sorrow far beyond all bearing,
—this youth who gazes out from empty eye?
—and did you sigh?

Opus 29, No. 3

SLEEPLESS

Pushkin

All is darkness, naught I see;
in the silence, lying weary,
hearing but the clock that near me,
ticks endingly at me.

I can seem to hear the mutter
that the Spinning Sisters utter;
teeming life, with restless sound,
like the mice that run around,
life, with all its fuss and flutter.

Why disturb me? Is it that my life is aim-
less, nowhere bound?
Dreary whisper, do you want me?
Why do you forever taunt me?
Do you call, or prophesy?
Nay, I know not why, O why.

Opus 29, No. 4

THE WAR HORSE

Pushkin

"Say, my noble steed, why neigh you?
Why do you thus hang your head?
Why not shake you your mane, say you,
'champ your bit, foam-flecked, instead?"

"Do I not attend and heed you?
give you choicest oats to feed you?
silver shoes you wear; behold!
Is your bridle not the fairest,
reins of woven silk, the rarest,
are your stirrups not of gold?"

And the horse thus sadly answers:—
"To the fray I'm harkening.
I can hear the host of lancers,
trumpets call and arrows sing."

"You have asked me why I neigh thus.
'Tis because so well I know
I've so short a time to stay thus,
not for long in comfort so."

"For the cruel foe will smite you,
take my trappings, gay and neat,
all my gaudy gear, despite you,
tear my shoes from off my feet."

"And my spirit sad is moaning,
that my loins, where you have been,
will be covered, sweating, groaning,
with your torn and gory skin."

Opus 29, No. 5

LOST HOPES

Pushkin

Life has outdistanced all my yearnings;
dreams all are gone, and hopes depart;
alas, have left me naught but sorrow,
the fruit of emptiness of heart.

The storms of cruel fate assail me,
my wreath is dead, my limbs are numb;
alone in sorrow, what is left me?
I wait the end, that soon will come?

Thus, when the autumn cold approaches,
and winds of early winter blow,
a leaf is clinging, sad and lonely,
and helpless flutters to and fro.

Opus 29, No. 6

THE ROSE

Pushkin

Where, where (is) the rose-bud, the child
of dawn?

Our rose has faded away and gone.
O do not say: "Thus youth is passing."
O do not say: "No joy is lasting."
View not the rose with gloom; but ponder;
for see you yonder! Lilies in bloom!

Opus 29, No. 7

THE SUMMONS

Pushkin

O if it be that, in the night,
when all that is alive is sleeping,
the moon-beams' vitalizing light
among the hidden dead is creeping;
O if it be that then the dumb
and silent graves give up their dwellers,
I call to you, my one beloved,
to come to me! O come, O come!

O come, beloved shade, arise,
as last I saw you, pallid lying,
with tortured gaze from haggard eyes,
in torment there before me dying.

Come floating like a distant star,
come like a whisper, light, to taunt me,
or like a fearful ghost to haunt me!
It matters not, but come! O come!

The punishment of none I crave,
nor would I peer beyond the curtain
that hides the mysteries of the grave.
I call you not because uncertain,
but only, only, that I may,
in aching sorrow bow before you,
and tell you how I still adore you,
and will for aye. O come, O come!

Opus 32, No. 1

THE ECHO

Pushkin

Tho be it cry of baying hounds,
or hunting horn that ringing sounds,
or maiden's voice that gay resounds
behind the hill,
to each your answer quick rebounds,
and all is still.

You hear the thunder's rolling roar,
the voice of breakers on the shore;
the shepherds calling, clear and true,
you answer too.

To you none answers more.
O poet, such are you.

Opus 32, No. 2

RETROSPECT

Pushkin

When thru the world at last there comes
the close of day,
and streets are still for night's duration,
to man and beast comes sleep, to waft us far
away,
for daily toil the compensation.

To me the silent hours move with feet of
lead,
an endless time of weary waiting;
the serpent whispers to me words of doubt
and dread,
that sting with burning unabating.

My fancies boil, illusions fill my saddened
brain,
with dismal thoughts all too abundant;
and memory unrolls its endless scroll again,
with faults and futile deeds redundant.

And as I read of my mistakes, I am aghast,
at dreary life and how to face it;
but this I know full well, that what has
passed is past,
nor can I change it, or erase it.

Opus 32, No. 3

MESSAGE

Pushkin

Far from home are you, my brother,
there with God you find another.
Bright the moon has waxed and waned;
To the dregs the cup is drained.

Better thus than from a fever;
free you lived, and free you died.
Slain your foe,—your son pursued him,
as he fled in wanton pride.

Do not let your heart forget us,
brother dear, beloved and brave.
Give our father all our greetings,
there with you beyond the grave.

Tell him all my wounds are mended,
I am sound in ev'ry limb.
I've a son, his name is Ivan,
so called, tell him, after him.

He will be, I'm sure, delighted,
proud to hear of this my son.
He can wield a sword already,
shoot an arrow or a gun.

Tho my daughter lives in Lisgov,
she is happy with her man.
Tvark's a sailor, dead or living,
you will know if any can.

Far from home are you, my brother,
there with God you find another.
Bright the moon has waxed and waned;
to the dregs the cup is drained.

Opus 32, No. 4
I LOVED YOU WELL
Pushkin

I loved you well, and still I think I love you,
a latent spark yet smould'ring in my heart.
Let not, however, this be on your conscience,
to mar your peace, or cause you any smart.

My love for you was silent, yes, was hopeless,
with torture racked, now jealous and now shy.
But yet I doubt if God in Heav'n will send
you
another love as pure and true as I.

Opus 32, No. 5
WALTZ
Pushkin

O moment of rapt'rous bliss!
Can I forget it?
I live alone for you, you only, only you!
We two together, madly whirling,
your bold, inviting eyes, that pierced me
through!

Let it not pass,
but keep us dancing forever!
we two together, ever faster, whirling on,
my eyes mirrored in yours,
in magic rapture thus,
until oblivion enfold and cover us.

Opus 32, No. 6
TO A DREAMER
Pushkin

To surge in passion's mighty throes is your
enjoyment,
with bitter tears to moan your plight,
imagined ecstasy your favorite employment,
to nurse despondency is your supreme delight.
Believe me, you indeed are but an idle
dreamer,
you who but toy with loving are a mere
blasphemer;
if love itself should ever chance to seize your
soul,
to coil about your heart with pow'r beyond
control,
if once its venom in your blood and veins
were seething,
if you yourself should ever truly feel its
might,
and lie and yearn the whole long night,
with sleepless eyes and fevered breathing,
if you should come to know the agony of love,
and from your eyes the scalding tears were
really streaming,
believe me, you would have an end of make-
believe and idle dreaming.
Then, humble, meekly suppliant, and shorn
of all your tinsel armor,
you'd kneel before your haughty charmer,
and pray to all the gods above:
"Ye gods, I pray you give me back my
reason,
that I no longer do or say I know not what.
Have mercy on me, pity my unhappy lot."

And yet, though love may be forgotten for a
season,
'twill never really be forgot.

Opus 36, No. 1
THE ANGEL
Pushkin

At Heaven's gate there stood an Angel;
about her head a halo glowed.
A demon, filled with wrath and hatred,
flew over the gulf of Hell's abode.

Then he who scoffed at truth and beauty,
looked up and saw the Angel fair,
and in his heart for once was kindled
a Spark of Light that smouldered there.

"Not all in vain have I beheld thee,
and seen the Truth that glorifies!
Not all in Heav'n to me is hateful,
not all on earth do I despise."

Opus 36, No. 2
THE FADED FLOWER
Pushkin

A faded flower, dried and scentless,
forgotten in this book I see,
and lo, already, fancies thronging,
and musings strange come over me.

And when, and where and in what springtime
did you first bloom?—beneath what sky?
and who it was that stooped to pluck you?
and whose the hand that placed you there,
and why?

In mem'ry of a tender meeting?
or of a parting, fraught with pain?
or of an afternoon together,
in silent wood, or shady lane?

Are He and She among the living?
and where their little nook or bow'r?
or are they also dust and ashes,
forgotten like this faded flow'r?

Opus 36, No. 3
WHEN ROSES FADE
Pushkin

When roses are about to fade,
ambrosia fills the air;
their souls float to Elysium,
in peace forever there.

The drowsy waves roll onward,
far on thru Lethe's gloom,
to find in Paradise
all the roses again in bloom.

Opus 36, No. 4
SPANISH ROMANCE
Pushkin

The night is still, a soft breeze blows.
by field and hill the river flows.

Bright the moon, with golden aura.
Silence! Hark! Guitars I hear!
See the lovely young senora
on her balcony appear.

The night is still, a soft breeze blows.
by field and hill the river flows.

Doff your gay mantilla; veiling
 beauty fair as fairest rose;
 thru the latticed iron railing
 let there peep your little toes.

The night is still, a soft breeze blows,
 by field and hill the river flows.

Opus 36, No. 5

NIGHT
Pushkin

For you my voice is filled tonight with love
 and longing;
 the melody I sing disturbs the starry still-
 ness;
 alone by dreary candlelight I lie and yearn
 for you.
 My song is all of you, with tender fervor
 glowing,
 a stream of love, to you, devoted, flowing.
 From out the dark your radiant eyes look
 down upon me;
 they seem to smile at me as here I lie alone.
 My dear, my dearest dear, my heart is all
 your own.

Opus 36, No. 6

ARION
Pushkin

Ah, there were many of us there;
 the sailors heaving at the halyards,
 the oarsmen pulling all together,
 lustily rowing!

Not a sound the helmsman uttered, as with
 sure hand he steered the heavy boat along,
 while, free of care and full of hope, to them
 I sang:

Swift came the storm, and fierce the tempest
 blared and bellowed.
 They perished, all that motley crew.
 But I alone am cast ashore, alone am saved,
 mysterious singer.
 Care-free I sing my song again:

I dry my clothes beneath the rock,
 and lie and sing there in the sun-shine:

Opus 37, No. 1

SLEEPLESS
Tutschev

Monotonous the hours toll,
 a weary tale for all who read it;
 like conscience, clear to ev'ry soul,
 yet strange to them who fail to heed it.

Who is there of us has not heard
 its voice, thru endless hours of waiting,
 in silence, tense and suffocating,
 the moan of Time's prophetic word?

One well might think that orphaned nature
 beneath resistless fate were prone,
 and we, at war with all creation,
 deserted, have been left alone.

And all our life is clear before us,
 a ghost upon the brink of space,

and with our age and our companions,
 is vanishing, to leave no trace.

A new young tribe, in vigor growing,
 has meanwhile blossomed in the sun,
 while we, our time, our friends and neighbors,
 are swallowed in oblivion.

With weary repetition rolling,
 the hours sound their dreary knell,
 a melancholy cadence tolling
 for us and ours a sad fare-well.

Opus 37, No. 2

TEARS
Tutschev

Tears never ending, forever descending,
 fall from the eyes of the mortals who mourn;
 of sorrow portending, sad and heartrending,
 vast inexhaustible deluge, from eyes forlorn,
 fall like the torrents before 'tis light,
 late in the autumn, in dead of the night.

Opus 37, No. 3

IMPROMPTU
Foeth

(Written, it may be, by a middle aged
 bachelor who has been asked to tea
 by a charming young lady. H. S. D.)

He would have me go mad who invented
 this rose,
 with its petals and stem and aroma so
 fragrant.

He would have me go mad who has woven
 those braids,
 so enchantingly rich, and the little curls
 vagrant.

So before my old age has descended on me,
 and converted me into a hideous spectre,
 I have flown over here with a buzz like a
 bee,
 to get drunk on this fragrant and honey-
 sweet nectar.

And the thought of this day, from all worri-
 ment free,
 in my heart will preserve it perpetually
 sunny.

What for others is nothing but wax will for
 me
 in my memory ever be sweet-scented honey.

Opus 37, No. 4

WALTZ
Foeth

So lithe and so dainty and slender,
 around with me whirling she flies;
 so warm are her hands and so tender,
 so warm are the stars in her eyes.

And yesterday noon ah, I saw her,
 with her red cheeks all ashen and grey;
 asleep and enshrouded in velvet
 they took her and bore her away.

Ah! Ah!
 High above thru my window,
 pale like a ghost looks the moon.
 I dream that we two are still dancing;
 ah, how could it happen so soon?

Opus 37, No. 5

NIGHT WINDS

Tutschev

And why your moaning, winds of night?
Of what do you complain so madly?
What means your eerie voice of fright,
that cries now harsh and now so sadly?

In words that speak to heart and soul
you tell of suffering unending;
again, with blast beyond control,
you groan and wail with voice heart-rending.

O sing you not such direful songs,
of worlds in ferment at creation!
How hungrily the dark soul longs
to hear these tales of desolation.

It yearns to leave this mortal breast,
with all the Infinite uniting.
Wake not the storms, but let them rest,
beneath is Chaos, dire and blighting!

Opus 45, No. 1

ELEGY

Pushkin

I love your secret hidden flowers,
your twilight that so mystic gleams,
O poetry, thou gift of Heaven,
well-beloved child of blessed dreams.

You poets tell us that the shadows,
pellucid band from Lethe's firth,
descend again to seek the places
which were most dear to them on earth.

Unseen they visit haunts beloved,
a sleeping loved one each attends,
and in a vision thus appearing,
they comfort their deserted friends.

They wait, these loved ones in Elysium,
these shades with life immortal blest,
as mortals at a fam'ly banquet
await a tardy, welcome guest.

But yet, mayhap, this, too, is dreaming;
perhaps, when in my burial shroud,
I will forget all earthly feelings,
and all of which I am so proud.

Perhaps, where all is clothed in glory,
in beauty that cannot decay,
the sacred flame that shines eternal
will burn the thought of earth away,

my soul will lose life's transient image,
'mid all the beauty there above,
know not regret, nor joy, nor yearning,
forget the bitter pangs of love.

Opus 45, No. 2

THE COACH OF LIFE

Pushkin

Although at times, the load is heavy,
ever the coach is on the go;
without a halt it hastens forward,
enmeshed in Time's eternal flow.

At early dawn we urge the driver
to spur the horses, fast and free;
with ardor fired, we scorn to loiter,
and shout: "The whip for them, all three!"

But when 'tis noon, harassed and shaken,
our fiery spirits grow more cool;
we fear the curves and dread the ditches,
and call: "Go easy there, you fool!"

Yet all the while the coach rolls onward,
and when our journey's end is nigh,
we sit and doze, contented waiting,
but faster yet the horses fly!

Opus 45, No. 3

SONG OF NIGHT

Tutschev

Around the globe the mighty seas extend,
so thus is life engulfed in seas of dreaming.
The night comes on, imagination teeming,
the flooding tides of life ascend.

Night calls us forth, with voice insistent
urging,
the magic bark is waiting at the shore;
on sombre waves, with swelling tide up-
surging,
the great unknown our dreams explore.

The vast abyss, the firmament unbounded,
with myriad stars reflected in its face,
looks up to where we float, our bark sur-
rounded
by boundless void of flaming space.

Opus 45, No. 4

OUR TIME

Tutschev

'Tis not our flesh that now-a-days is weak;
the soul is soft, man desperately yearning.
He craves the light, and for the light would
seek,
but finding it, rejects it undiscerning.

His lack of faith has scorched and dried his
soul;
unending woe he bears in desolation.
He senses doom with faith the longed-for
goal,
for which he will not pray in supplication.

And never will he say, in prayer and tears,
no matter how he mourns out-side the portal:
"I do believe! O help my faith in Thee
to open wide the gate to life immortal!
O let me in!"

Opus 46, No. 1

PRÆLUDIUM

Goethe

To endless end of time recurring,
all things go on, nor pause nor halt,
the present, past and future blurring,
enclosed in one vast arching vault.

Joy does not come of man's contriving,
but follows from the soul's accord,
and all our turmoil, strife and striving
will merge in the peace of God our Lord.
Hallelujah!

Opus 46, No. 2
THE HALLOWED PLACE
Goethe

When in the hallowing moon-light the
Nymphs are assembled together,
and the Graces in secret come down from
Olympus to join them,
then the listening poet can hear their ex-
quisite singing,
feel the rhythmical pulse of their strange,
mysterious dancing.

All the beauty that Heaven has made, all
loveliness earth has happily borne unto man,
stands revealed to the soul of the dreamer.
All he describes to the Muses who, lest the
gods be offended,
hasten to teach him awe for their secrets, to
speak of them humbly.

Opus 46, No. 3
SERENADE
Eichendorff

Come, my fairest, up the mountain,
thru the lovely, sunny hours,
gather wreaths of wood-land flowers;
at the cool and crystal fountain,
with your rosy lips, and smiling,
sip the cup, with laugh beguiling.

Drinking, kissing, sings the poet,
none can rule his mind, or know it;
ballads from his heart come, dancing,
life is wondrous fair,—entrancing!

Opus 46, No. 4
IN THE FOREST
Eichendorff

A wedding procession comes gaily by,
the birds are all glad and singing;
far up on the mountain the huntsmen cry,
with shouts the valley is ringing.

But soon they are gone, and ev'rything still,
and none is left but me only.
Softly the wood sighs, high up on the hill,
and my heart is forlorn and lonely.

Opus 46, No. 5
WINTER NIGHT
Eichendorff

The snow lies heavy ev'rywhere,
all gladness has been banished.
A lonely tree stands bleak and bare
its leaves have long since vanished.

The wind is blowing from the north,
thru empty branches streaming;
the tree, though rocking back and forth,
is yet expectant dreaming.

It dreams of sunny days to come,
of spring, and forest voices,
of brooks and buds no longer numb,
when all again rejoices.

Opus 46, No. 6
THE SPRING
Chamisso

In the shade of fragrant lindens,
wells our spring, with crystal flow;
and the birds sing there so sweetly,
nay, I think not many know!

To the spring there came a maiden,
with a jug in either hand;
as she quickly filled her pitchers,
there she saw a young lad stand.

Long they chatted there together,
longer than she was aware:
"Mother dear, you must not scold me,
for 'twas you that sent me there.

Jugs are light when empty, heavier
far there at the spring they grow;
and the birds there sing so sweetly,
mother, nay, you cannot know."

Opus 46, No. 7
SINGING
Chamisso

At home we sit in a circle,
at ease on the sweet-smelling grass,
and when we're singing together,
how happy the hours pass.

And when, alone, I am tortured,
by cares that drive me insane,
no sooner I begin singing,
than all will be well again.

And many a time when I'm boiling
with anger I cannot restrain,
I only have to start singing,
and all will be well again.

So tell us not of your troubles,
nor yet of your woes complain,
but just start gaily singing,
and all will be well again.

Opus 52, No. 1
THE WINDOW
Pushkin

Where is the world that harks to fancy?
The one I know is bleak and bare.
My fate it is to breathe in boredom,
and nothing matters, naught I care.

What matters that the wind, in summer,
delights to play among the trees,
to sway the grain and meadow flowers,
where buzz the busy honey-bees?

What matters, that the summer lightning
is flaring high and ever higher?
or that the setting sun is bursting
thru rifts of cloud in stream of fire?

or when, in purple ev'ning shadows,
the sleeping world grows gently dim?
or when the flooding moon-light blanches
the maples at the water's brim.

Last ev'ning, as the twilight faded,
with misty moon-light all about,
I saw a maiden at her window,
in silent waiting, looking out.

Her bosom heaved in secret anguish,
she watched and watched, intent and still,
the little path that passed her doorway
from over yonder down the hill.

"'Tis I!" There is a hurried whisper;
I see a figure there, and soon,
it moves! The window softly opens!
A cloud comes by and hides the moon.

"How lucky!" thought I, sadly musing,
"How happy one indeed can be!"
Alas—will ever, some still ev'ning,
a window open thus for me?

Opus 52, No. 2

THE RAVENS
Pushkin

Ravens high aloft are soaring,
keen-eyed, all below exploring:
"Raven, what good dinner spy you?
tasty food to satisfy you?"

Says the second raven: "Yea,
I know where we dine today.
In the field to which we're flying,
I can see a warrior lying.

How he died and who his foe,
that his hawk alone can know,
and the steed who bore him there,
and the maid he thought so fair.

Swiftly flew the hawk away,
horse and gear were victor's prey;
she who should be faithful to him,
welcomes him who fought and slew him."

Opus 52, No. 3

ELEGY
Pushkin

The fire of youth is gone, its madness jaded,
the bloom of life is dull, its brightness faded;
like wine, the sorrows of a bygone day
grow strong with age, in secret hid away.

My path is sad, and offers naught but sorrow,
a sea of doubt, a dreary, bleak tomorrow.

But, O my friends, I do not want to die,
I want to live, to ponder and to sigh.
I know that joys at times will come to bless
me
amid the countless worries that distress me.

My soul will thrill with music's sweet delight,
or bathe in tears at fancied lovers' plight;
and best of all, as sunset draws yet nearer,
they whom I love will love me ever dearer.

Opus 52, No. 4

VISIONS
Pushkin

I ride to you, and happy dreams
in eager throng pursue me lightly;

the moon, with fair and friendly beams,
upon my right is shining brightly.

When I return,—ah, all too soon,—
ill-omened visions rise to taunt me,
while on my left the dreary moon,
portending sorrow, seems to haunt me.

For thus it is the poet's role,
ever pursued by endless dreaming,
sifting the visions, vague and teeming,
to plumb the secrets of the soul.

Opus 52, No. 5

SPANISH ROMANCE
Pushkin

To the noble senorita,
came two knights in courtly guise.
Bold and free in turn they greet her;
both look straight into her eyes.

Both are clad in shining armor,
both lean heavy on their swords;
(not that either one would harm her,
both are brave and noble lords.)

She is dear to them as glory,
rather life than her they'd lose;
one she loves, (so runs the story,)
which one did the maiden choose?

"Which of us shall be your lover?
which of us shall win the prize?"
And, with knightly optimism,
both look straight into her eyes.

Opus 52, No. 6

SERENADE
Pushkin

I come, Inesilla, my sweetest and best,
in silent Sevilla, where all are at rest.
la, la, etc.

My mantle around me, with sword and guitar,
I fear no opponents, whoever they are.

What matters the old man asleep there by
you?
If he should awaken, I'll cut him in two!

Your long silken ladder will reach to the
ground.
Why wait you? Perhaps there's a rival
around?

I come, Inesilla, my sweetest and best,
in silent Sevilla, where all are at rest.

Opus 52, No. 7

THE PRISONER
Pushkin

Alone by the bars at the window I lay.
Below a young eagle was tearing his prey.
Bold emblem of freedom, he spreads out his
wings,
his blood-spattered booty away from him
flings,
looks up at the window where shackled I lie,
and seems to be thinking the same thought as I.

He calls to me sadly, as if he would say:
"Come fly with me, brother, come fly far
away.

For us who love freedom, 'tis high time to go;
see there where the mountain-tops shimmer
with snow!

High over the blue of the sea let us fly,
where free as the winds and the waters am I."

Opus 59, No. 1

MID-DAY

Tutschev

The lazy mid-day mist is rising,
from lazy rivers to the sky,
where thru the azure vault of Heaven
the melting clouds float slowly by.

A drowsy languor fills the world,
across the face of nature creeping,
and hidden in some fairy cave,
the great god Pan himself is sleeping.

Opus 59, No. 2

IN AN ALBUM

Pushkin

My friend, what is my name to you?
Like roar of waves in wintry weather,
'twill pass and vanish altogether,
—like forest sounds and morning dew.

I wrote it long ago for you
upon the album leaf.
Alas! It is seldom read,
as on a tomb-stone, in a foreign tongue,
of one long dead.

Leave it there,
Amid the turmoil of your daily doings
you will heed it not;
the thought of me will bring no
tender sigh,
and I will be forgot, heeded not.

But yet, when sorrows come, and despair,
you then may find it there,
to cheer you,
and say;
that still one heart is true,
though far away
is ever near you.

My friend, what is my name to you?