

OPUS ARTE

A portrait of a man with short brown hair and a light beard, wearing a dark sweater. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. His right hand is visible, pointing upwards with the index finger. The background is dark and out of focus.

FRANCESCO MELI

BRITTEN Michelangelo Sonnets
LISZT Petrarch Sonnets

MATTEO PAIS

Britten Michelangelo Sonnets
Liszt Petrarch Sonnets

Benjamin Britten 1913–1976

Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo
Op.22

1	Sì come nella penna (Sonnet XVI)	2.08
2	A che più debb'io (Sonnet XXXI)	1.20
3	Veggio co' bei vostri occhi (Sonnet XXX)	3.25
4	Tu sa ch'io so (Sonnet LV)	2.01
5	Rendete agli occhi miei (Sonnet XXXVIII)	1.50
6	S'un casto amor (Sonnet XXXII)	1.15
7	Spirto ben nato (Sonnet XXIV)	5.19

Jules Massenet 1842–1912

8	En fermant les yeux (<i>Manon</i>)*	4.09
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Charles Gounod 1818–1893

9	Ah, lève-toi, soleil (<i>Faust</i>)*	4.25
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Paolo Tosti 1846–1916

10	L'ultima canzone	4.05
11	Tristezza	3.53
12	L'ultimo bacio	2.15

Gioachino Rossini 1792–1868

13	La danza (No.8 from <i>Soirées musicales</i>)	2.53
14	Le sylvain (from <i>Péchés de vieillesse</i> Vol.3 No.9)	6.22

Giuseppe Verdi 1813–1901

15	La mia letizia infondere (<i>I lombardi alla prima crociata</i>)*	1.56
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Gaetano Donizetti 1797–1848 /
Matteo Salvi 1816–1887

16	Angelo casto e bel (<i>Le Duc d'Albe</i>)*	4.47
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Franz Liszt 1811–1886

Tre sonetti del Petrarca

17	No.1 Pace non trovo (Canzone CXXXIV)	7.20
18	No.2 Benedetto sia 'l giorno (Canzone LXI)	6.18
19	No.3 I' vidi in terra angelici costumi (Canzone CLVI)	6.17

72.15

*Live recordings

Francesco Meli *tenor* · **Matteo Pais** *piano*

Francesco Meli

Born in Genoa in 1980, he began studies in singing at 17 with soprano Norma Palacios at his hometown's School of Music. In 2002 he made his debut in *Macbeth*, *Petite Messe solennelle* and Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* (the latter broadcast by RAI) at the Festival dei due Mondi in Spoleto, and later sang in *Don Giovanni* and *L'elisir d'amore* at the Opera Giocosa in Savona as well as in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (the role of Almaviva) with AsLiCo.

These engagements were soon followed by his debuts in Lisbon (Edmondo in *Manon Lescaut*), Bologna (*L'elisir d'amore* and *La sonnambula*) and La Scala (*Dialogues des Carmélites* with Riccardo Muti and *Otello*); in *Fidelio*, *L'elisir d'amore* and *Don Pasquale* at the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa; and in *Così fan tutte* in Florence and Verona. He has opened the Rossini Festival in Pesaro for two consecutive seasons (*Bianca e Falliero* and *Torvaldo e Dorliska*), in addition to Genoa's 2005/06 season (*Don Giovanni*) and La Scala's (*Idomeneo*). He made his debut in Zurich in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, in Paris and at the Barbican in *Don Giovanni*, and opened new productions of *Don Giovanni* at La Scala and in Valencia. He has sung *La sonnambula* in Lyon and Paris (released on CD by Virgin Classics), *Anna Bolena* in Verona, *L'elisir d'amore* and *Falstaff* in Turin, *Maria Stuarda* at La Scala, and made his debut in Verona's Arena in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. He also made his debut in Vienna in *Così fan tutte*, conducted by Riccardo Muti, and sang in new productions of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Bologna, *Falstaff* in Paris and *Maometto II* in Pesaro.

He has worked with Luc Bondy, Robert Carsen, Hugo De Ana, André Engel, Mario Martone, Pier Luigi Pizzi and Graham Vick, and has appeared under the baton of Bruno Campanella, Daniel Harding, Lorin Maazel, Riccardo Muti and Gianandrea Noseda, among others.

Francesco Meli

Né à Gênes en 1980, il a commencé à suivre des classes de chant à l'âge de dix-sept ans avec la soprano Norma Palacios au Conservatoire de musique de sa ville natale. En 2002, il a fait ses débuts dans *Macbeth*, la *Petite Messe solennelle* et la *Messa di Gloria* de Puccini (cette dernière a été diffusée par la radiotélévision italienne) au Festival dei Due Mundi de Spolète, puis s'est produit dans *Don Giovanni* et *L'elisir d'amore* à l'Opéra Giocosa à Savone ainsi que dans *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (dans le rôle d'Almaviva) avec l'association AsLico.

Ces engagements ont rapidement été suivis par ses premières apparitions à Lisbonne (Edmondo dans *Manon Lescaut*), à Bologne (*L'elisir d'amore* et *La sonnambula*) et à La Scala (*Dialogues des Carmélites* sous la direction de Riccardo Muti) ; il a également joué dans *Fidelio*, *L'elisir d'amore* et *Don Pasquale* au Teatro Carlo-Felice ainsi que dans *Così fan tutte* à Florence et à Vérone. Il a ouvert deux éditions consécutives du Rossini Opera Festival à Pesaro (*Bianca e Falliero* et *Torvaldo e Dorliska*), était à l'affiche de la saison 2005–2006 de Gênes (*Don Giovanni*) et a chanté à La Scala (*Idomeneo*). Il s'est produit pour la première fois à Zurich dans *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, à Paris et au Barbican Centre dans *Don Giovanni*, et a chanté dans de nouvelles productions de *Don Giovanni* à La Scala et à Valence. Il a interprété *La sonnambula* à Lyon et à Paris (publiée sur CD chez Virgin Classics), *Anna Bolena* à Vérone, *L'elisir d'amore*

et *Falstaff* à Turin, *Maria Stuarda* à la Scala, et a fait sa première apparition à Vienne dans *Così fan tutte* sous la direction de Riccardo Muti ; il a également chanté dans de nouvelles productions de *Lucia di Lammermoor* à Bologne, de *Falstaff* à Paris et de *Maometto II* à Pesaro.

Il a travaillé avec Luc Bondy, Robert Carsen, Hugo De Ana, André Engel, Mario Martone, Pier Luigi Pizzi et Graham Vick, et a été dirigé par Bruno Campanella, Daniel Harding, Lorin Maazel, Riccardo Muti et Gianandrea Noseda entre autres.

Francesco Meli

Er wurde 1980 in Genua geboren und begann im Alter von 17 Jahren, am Konservatorium seiner Heimatstadt Gesangsunterricht bei der Sopranistin Norma Palacios zu nehmen. 2002 debütierte er in *Macbeth*, der *Petite Messe solennelle* und Puccinis *Messa di Gloria* (Letztere wurde von RAI übertragen) beim Festival dei due Mondi in Spoleto. Später sang er in *Don Giovanni* und *L'elisir d'amore* an der Opera Giocosa in Savona sowie für AsLiCo den Grafen Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

Auf diese Engagements folgten bald seine Debütauftritte in Lissabon (Edmondo in *Manon Lescaut*), Bologna (*L'elisir d'amore* und *La sonnambula*) und an der Scala (*Dialogues des Carmélites* mit Riccardo Muti und *Otello*); außerdem debütierte er mit *Fidelio*, *L'elisir d'amore* und *Don Pasquale* am Teatro Carlo Felice in Genua; und mit *Così fan tutte* in Florenz und Verona. Er eröffnete zwei Saisonen in Folge das Rossini Festival in Pesaro (mit *Bianca e Falliero* und *Torvaldo e Dorliska*), außerdem die Saison 2005/06 in Genua (*Don Giovanni*) und an der Scala (*Idomeneo*). Sein Züricher Debüt hatte er in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, in Paris und an der Londoner Barbican in *Don Giovanni*, und er eröffnete neue Produktion von *Don Giovanni* an der Scala und in Valencia. In Lyon und Paris sang er in *La sonnambula* (erschieden auf CD bei Virgin Classics), in Verona in *Anna Bolena*, in Turin in *L'elisir d'amore* und *Falstaff*. An der Scala trat er in *Maria Stuarda* auf, und sein Debüt in der Arena in Verona feierte er mit *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Außerdem debütierte er in Wien unter dem Dirigat von Riccardo Muti mit *Così fan tutte* und sang in neuen Produktionen von *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Bologna, *Falstaff* in Paris und *Maometto II* in Pesaro.

Er hat mit Luc Bondy, Robert Carsen, Hugo De Ana, André Engel, Mario Martone, Pier Luigi Pizzi und Graham Vick zusammengearbeitet und ist unter anderem unter dem Dirigat von Bruno Campanella, Daniel Harding, Lorin Maazel, Riccardo Muti und Gianandrea Noseda aufgetreten.

Matteo Pais

Born in 1979, Matteo Pais appeared with Francesco Meli in his first Rosenblatt Recital in 2007. He studied at the Conservatorio Paganini in his native Genova, receiving top honours when he graduated at the age of 19, and then spent 2005/06 at the city's Teatro Carlo Felice. Conductors with whom he has collaborated include Riccardo Frizza, Massimo Zanetti and the late Richard Hickox.



The Music

In the second act of Massenet's *Manon* (1884), the poor but honest Chevalier Des Grieux, living with the even younger heroine, is unable to support her in the manner to which she aspires; the fact that she is already planning to move on to a wealthier lover when he sings his aria 'En fermant les yeux', describing his dream of an ideal future together, makes it especially poignant.

Written at various times during his long life, Rossini's songs were conceived for use in domestic circles or sophisticated salons. *La danza* is a whirlwind of anticipation in tarantella rhythm as a young man looks forward to the delights of dancing in the moonlight; it comes from Rossini's collection *Soirées musicales*, published in 1835, while the romance *Le sylvain* comes from his extensive series of smaller compositions collected together as *Péchés de vieillesse* (Sins of Old Age), assembled in Paris between 1857 and 1868; in it the ugly wood-god Silvanus laments his unattractiveness to blonde-haired nymphs.

Verdi's early opera *I lombardi alla prima crociata* (1843) is set at the time of the First Crusade, in which knights from Lombardy travel to the Holy Land intent upon capturing Jerusalem. The tenor aria 'La mia letizia infondere', however, is sung by the Muslim prince Oronte, who has fallen in love with his father's captive, Giselda.

Britten's *Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo* (1940) were the first set of songs he composed specifically for his partner Peter Pears to sing, and their first public performance was given at the Wigmore Hall following their joint return to England from America in 1942. As well as documenting their artistic and personal relationship, the settings remind us of a less familiar aspect of the creativity of the great Italian artist, whose sonnets as selected by Britten variously consider love, beauty and art.

Donizetti began work on his French opera *Le Duc d'Albe* in Paris in 1839 in anticipation of a premiere at the Paris Opera; the theatre, though, changed its mind about the subject and the project was laid aside. Nearly 40 years after Donizetti's death, his pupil Matteo Salvi produced a completed Italian version from Donizetti's fragment as *Il duca d'Alba*, composing anew the tenor aria 'Angelo casto e bel'. In it Marcello di Bruges, one of the leaders of the Flemish insurrection against their Spanish overlords, ponders his love for fellow-conspirator Amelia, who believes him a traitor to the cause.

Sir Francesco Paolo Tosti was born in Ortona in 1848 and died in Rome in 1916, but his heyday was spent in England, where he taught singing to members of high society (including the royal family) and where his songs setting various languages proved enormously popular. Francesco Meli sings three of them: *L'ultima canzone* (which Tosti composed in Folkestone in 1905 to a text by Francesco Cimmimo), *Tristezza* (1908, setting a melancholy text by Riccardo Mazzola) and *L'ultimo bacio* (a setting of Emilio Praga).

Second in popularity among his works only to *Faust*, Gounod's 1867 *Roméo et Juliette* provides a delicately lyrical operatic version of Shakespeare's tragedy, nowhere more so than in Romeo's Act II aria 'Ah, lève-toi, soleil', which corresponds to a section of the play's famous balcony scene.

Liszt's Three Petrarch Sonnets (1843–5) represent his enthusiasm for Italian culture at the time of his years of European travel. Settings of the 14th-century Italian poet (his sonnets Nos. 104, 47 and 123), they express the mingled conflict and ecstasy inspired by Petrarch's obsession with his unattainable Laura in music that challenges both the tenor soloist and his pianist to rise to virtuoso levels.

George Hall

La musique

Dans le deuxième acte de *Manon* de Massenet (1884), le chevalier Des Grieux, jeune homme pauvre mais honnête, vit avec la très jeune héroïne éponyme mais ne peut lui offrir la vie à laquelle elle aspire ; le fait qu'elle ait déjà prévu de partir avec un amant plus fortuné lorsqu'il chante « En fermant les yeux » décrivant son rêve d'un avenir parfait ensemble, rend cet air particulièrement poignant.

Écrits à différentes époques de sa longue existence, les airs de Rossini étaient destinés à être chantés dans les cercles intimes et les salons raffinés. *La danza* est un tourbillon d'anticipation sur un rythme de tarentelle alors qu'un jeune homme attend impatiemment les joies de danser sous la lune ; elle est tirée du recueil de Rossini *Soirées musicales* publié en 1835 tandis que la romance *Le sylvain* provient de sa vaste série de petites compositions réunies comme *Péchés de vieillesse*, et composées à Paris entre 1857 et 1868 ; elle présente la lamentation de Sylvanus, dieu des forêts dont la laideur rebute les nymphes blondes.

L'un des premiers opéras de Verdi, *I lombardi alla prima crociata* (1843), se déroule à l'époque de la Première Croisade, pendant laquelle les chevaliers lombards se rendent en Terre Sainte pour essayer de prendre Jérusalem. L'air du ténor « La mia letizia infondere » est toutefois chanté par le prince musulman Oronte qui est tombé amoureux de la prisonnière de son père, Giselda.

Les *Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo* de Britten (1940) sont le premier cycle de mélodies qu'il composa tout particulièrement pour son partenaire Peter Pears, et qui fut créé au Wigmore Hall après leur retour d'Amérique en Angleterre en 1942. Les compositions, outre leur valeur documentaire sur leur relation artistique et personnelle, nous rappellent un aspect moins connu de la créativité du grand artiste italien, dont les sonnets choisis par Britten abordent de différentes façons l'amour, la beauté et l'art.

Donizetti commença à travailler à son opéra français *Le Duc d'Albe* à Paris en 1839 dans la perspective d'une création à l'Opéra de Paris ; le théâtre, cependant, changea d'avis concernant le sujet et le projet fut mis de côté. Presque quarante ans après la mort de Donizetti, son élève Matteo Salvi écrivit une version italienne intégrale à partir du fragment de son maître qu'il intitula *Il duca d'Alba*, et recomposa l'air pour ténor « Angelo casto e bel » où Marcello di Bruges, l'un des chefs de l'insurrection flamande contre la domination des maîtres espagnols, songe à son amour pour Amelia, complice de la conspiration, qui le croit traître à la cause.

Sir Francesco Paolo Tosti naquit à Ortona en 1848 et mourut à Rome en 1916, mais passa ses années de gloire en Angleterre où il enseignait le chant aux membres de la haute société (y compris à la famille royale) et où ses airs composés dans diverses langues étaient extrêmement populaires. Francesco Meli en chante trois : *L'ultima canzone* (que Tosti composa à Folkestone en 1905 sur un texte de Francesco Cimmino), *Tristezza* (composé en 1908 sur un texte mélancolique de Riccardo Mazzola) et *L'ultimo bacio* (sur un poème d'Emilio Praga).

Œuvre la plus populaire de Gounod après *Faust*, *Roméo et Juliette* (1867) propose une version opératique lyrique et délicate de la tragédie de Shakespeare, notamment dans l'air de Roméo à l'Acte II « Ah, lève-toi, soleil », qui correspond à la célèbre scène du balcon dans la pièce.

Les *Trois Sonnets de Pétrarque* de Liszt (1843–1845) sont représentatifs de son enthousiasme pour la culture italienne pendant la période de ses voyages à travers l'Europe. Ses adaptations musicales des sonnets n^{os} 104, 47 et 123 du poète italien du XIV^e siècle expriment le sentiment de conflit mêlé d'extase inspiré par l'obsession de Pétrarque pour l'inaccessible Laure dans une musique qui met au défi à la fois le soliste ténor et son pianiste d'atteindre des niveaux virtuoses.

George Hall

Die Musik

Im zweiten Akt von Massenets *Manon* (1884) ist der arme, aber ehrliche junge Chevalier Des Grieux, der mit der noch jüngeren Heldin zusammenlebt, nicht in der Lage, ihr den Lebensstil zu ermöglichen, den sie sich erhofft. Besonders schmerzhaft wird dies darin deutlich, dass sie bereits den Plan gefasst hat, sich einen wohlhabenderen Liebhaber zu suchen, während er noch seine Arie „En fermant les yeux“ singt, in der er seinen Traum von einer perfekten Zukunft miteinander beschreibt.

Rossini schrieb seine Lieder zu verschiedenen Zeiten im Laufe seines langen Lebens. Sie waren sowohl für den häuslichen Kreis als auch für elegante Salons gedacht. *La danza* ist ein Wirbelwind der Vorfreude im Tarantella-Rhythmus, in dem ein junger Mann die Freuden des Tanzes im Mondlicht herbeisehnt. Dieses Stück stammt aus Rossinis 1835 veröffentlichter Sammlung *Soirées musicales*, während die Romanze *Le sylvain* aus seiner umfangreichen Reihe kleinerer Kompositionen mit dem Namen *Péchés de vieillesse* (Alterssünden) stammt, die er zwischen 1857 und 1868 in Paris zusammenstellte. Darin beklagt der hässliche Waldgott Sylvanus, dass blonde Nymphen ihn wenig attraktiv finden.

Verdis frühe Oper *I lombardi alla prima crociata* (1843) spielt zur Zeit des ersten Kreuzzugs: Es geht um Ritter aus der Lombardei, die ins Heilige Land reisen, um Jerusalem einzunehmen. Die Tenorarie „La mia letizia infondere“ wird allerdings vom muslimischen Prinzen Oronte gesungen, der sich in Giselda, die Gefangene seines Vaters, verliebt hat.

Brittens *Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo* (1940) waren die ersten Lieder, die er speziell für seinen Partner Peter Pears komponierte, und ihre erste öffentliche Aufführung fand 1942 in Wigmore Hall nach ihrer gemeinsamen Rückkehr aus Amerika statt. Die Vertonungen dokumentieren nicht nur ihre künstlerische und persönliche Beziehung, sie erinnern auch an eine weniger bekannte Seite der Kreativität des großen italienischen Künstlers, dessen von Britten ausgewählte Sonette Liebe, Schönheit und Kunst zum Thema haben.

Donizetti nahm die Arbeit an seiner französischen Oper *Le Duc d'Albe* 1839 in Paris auf, wobei er von einer Premiere an der Pariser Opéra ausging. Das Theater änderte allerdings seine Meinung zu diesem Thema und das Projekt wurde auf die Seite gelegt. Beinahe vierzig Jahre nach Donizettis Tod erstellte Matteo Salvi mit *Il duca d'Alba* eine komplettierte italienische Version aus Donizettis Fragment, wobei er die Tenorarie „Angelo casto e bel“ neu komponierte. Darin sinnt Marcello di Bruges, einer der Anführer des flämischen Aufstandes gegen die spanischen Oberherren, über die Liebe zu seiner Mitverschwörerin Amelia nach, die ihn für einen Verräter an der Sache hält.

Sir Francesco Paolo Tosti wurde 1848 in Ortona geboren und starb 1916 in Rom, doch seine Glanzzeit verbrachte er in England, wo er den Angehörigen der Oberschicht Gesangsunterricht gab (unter anderem auch der königlichen Familie), und wo sich seine Lieder in

verschiedenen Sprachen als enorm beliebt erwiesen. Francesco Meli singt drei von ihnen: *L'ultima canzone* (welches Tosti 1905 in Folkestone auf einen Text von Francesco Cimmino komponierte), *Tristezza* (1908, die Vertonung eines melancholischen Textes von Riccardo Mazzola) und *L'ultimo bacio* (eine Vertonung von Emilio Praga).

Unter Gounods Werken ist höchstens *Faust* noch beliebter als *Roméo et Juliette* von 1867. Ein Höhepunkt dieser zarten, lyrischen Opernversion der Shakespeare-Tragödie ist Romeos Arie „Ah, lève-toi, soleil“ im zweiten Akt, die mit einer Passage aus der berühmten Balkonszene des Theaterstücks korrespondiert.

Liszts *Tre sonetti del Petrarca* (1843–45) zeigen seine Begeisterung für die italienische Kultur zur Zeit seiner jahrelangen Reisen durch Europa. Diese Sonette (Nr. 104, 47 und 123) des italienischen Dichters aus dem 14. Jahrhundert drücken in einer musikalischen Umsetzung, die sowohl an den Solo-Tenor als auch an den Pianisten virtuose Ansprüche stellt, die Mischung aus Konflikt und Ekstase aus, die von Petrarcas Vernarrtheit in seine unerreichbare Laura inspiriert wurde.

George Hall

Rosenblatt Recitals

Rosenblatt Recitals is the only major operatic recital series in the world. Since its foundation by Ian Rosenblatt in 2000, it has presented over 130 concerts, featuring many of the leading opera singers of our times. It has also given debuts to many artists who have gone on to enjoy acclaimed international careers. *Rosenblatt Recitals* was conceived to celebrate the art of singing, and to give singers an opportunity to demonstrate their skills – to move, thrill and amaze – and also to explore rarely-heard repertoire or music not normally associated with them in their operatic careers.

Outside the formal presentation of lieder and song, and apart from the occasional 'celebrity concert', there was, until *Rosenblatt Recitals*, no permanent platform for the great opera singers of today to present their art directly to an audience, other than in costume and make-up on the operatic stage. *Rosenblatt Recitals* created such a platform, exploiting the immediacy and intimacy of renowned London concert halls.

In the course of the series, *Rosenblatt Recitals* has presented singers from all over the globe – from the majority of European countries, from China and Japan in the East to Finland and Russia in the North, from the African continent, and, of course, from the USA. Many recitalists have been or become world superstars, and some have now retired – but all of them, in their *Rosenblatt Recital*, whether in concert or in the studio, have given something unique and unrepeatable, and this essence is surely captured in these recordings, available for the first time on Opus Arte.

Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo Op.22

1 Sonnet XVI

Si come nella penna e nell'inchostro
è l'alto e 'l basso e 'l mediocre stile,
e ne' marmi l'immagin ricca e vile,
secondo che 'l sa trar l'ingegno nostro;
così, signor mie car, nel petto vostro,
quante l'orgoglio, è forse ogni atto umile:
ma io sol quel c'a me proprio è e simile
ne traggo, come fuor nel viso mostro.
Chi semina sospir, lacrime e doglie,
(l'umor dal ciel terrestre, schietto e solo,
a vari semi vario si converte),
però pianto e dolor ne miete e coglie;
chi mira alta beltà con sì gran duolo,
dubbie speranze, e pene acerbe e certe.

2 Sonneto XXXI

A che più debb'io mai l'intensa voglia
sfogar con pianti o con parole meste,
se di tal sorte 'l ciel, che l'alma veste,
tard' o per tempo, alcun mai non ne spoglia?
A che 'l cor lass' a più morir m'invoglia,
s'altri pur dee morir? Dunque per queste
luci l'ore del fin fian men moleste;
ch'ogn' altro ben val men ch'ogni mia doglia.
Però se 'l colpo, ch'io ne rub' e 'nvolò,
schifar non poss'; almen, s'è destinato,
ch'entrerà 'nfra la dolcezza e 'l duolo?
Se vint' e pres' i' debb'esser beato,
maraviglia non è se nud' e solo,
resto prigion d'un Cavalier armato.

3 Sonnetto XXX

Veggio co' bei vostri occhi un dolce lume,
che co' miei ciechi già veder non posso;
porto co' vostri piedi un pondo addosso,
che de' mie zoppi non è già costume.
Volo con le vostr'ale senza piume;
col vostr'ingegno al ciel sempre son mosso;
dal vostr'arbitrio son pallido e rosso,
freddo al sol, caldo alle più fredde brume.
Nel voler vostro è sol la voglia mia,
i mie' pensier nel vostro cor si fanno,
nel vostro fiato son le mie parole.
Come luna da sè sol par ch'io sia;
chè gli occhi nostri in ciel veder non sanno
se non quel tanto che n'accende il sole.

4 Sonnetto LV

Tu sa ch'io so, signor mie, che tu sai
ch'i veni per goderti più da presso;
e sai ch'i' so, che tu sa' c'i' son desso:
a che più indugio a salutarci omai?
Se vera è la speranza che mi dai,
se vero è 'l buon desio che m'è concesso,
rompasi il mur fra l'uno e l'altro messo;
chè doppia forza hann' i celati guai.
S'i' amo sol di te, signor mie caro,
quel che di te più ami, non ti sdegni;
che l'un dell'altro spirito s'innamora,
quel che nel tuo bel volto bramo e 'mparo,
e mal compres' è degli umani ingegni,
chi 'l vuol veder, convien che prima mora.

Sonnet XVI

Just as in pen and ink
there is a high, low, and medium style,
and in marble are images rich and vile,
according to the art with which we fashion it,
so, my dear lord, in your heart,
along with pride, are perhaps some humble thoughts:
but I draw thence only what is proper for myself
in accordance with what my features show.
Who sows sighs, tears and lamentations
(dew from heaven on earth, pure and simple,
converts itself differently to varied seeds)
will reap and gather tears and sorrow;
he who gazes upon exalted beauty with such pain
will have doubtful hopes and bitter, certain sorrows.

Sonnet XXXI

To what purpose do I express my intense desire
with tears and sorrowful words
when heaven, which clothes my soul,
neither sooner or later relieves me of it?
To what purpose does my weary heartlong to die,
when all must die? So to these
eyes my last hour will be less painful,
all my joy being less than all my pains.
If I cannot avoid the blow,
even seek them; since it is destined,
who will stand between sweetness and sorrow?
If I must be conquered in order to be happy,
no wonder then that I, unarmed and alone,
remain the prisoner of an armed cavalier.

Sonnetto XXX

I see through your lovely eyes a sweet light
which through my blind ones I yet cannot see;
I carry with your feet a burden
which with my lame ones I cannot;
I fly with your wings, having none of my own;
with your spirit toward heaven I am always moving;
by your will I turn pale or blush,
cold in the sun, warm in the coldest weather.
Within your will alone is my will,
my thoughts within your bosom are born,
in your breath are my words.
I am like the moon, alone,
which our eyes cannot see in the heavens
except that it is illumined by the sun.

Sonnetto LV

You know that I know, my lord, that you know
I have come to take pleasure in your presence;
and you know that I know that you know I am
constant.
Why then do we hesitate to greet one another?
If it is true, this hope that you give me,
if these desires are true which come over me,
break down the wall between one and the other;
for hidden sorrows have twice the force.
If I love only in you, my dear lord,
that which you love most, do not be angry;
let love spring up between our two souls.
That which in your noble face I seek
is but ill-understood by humankind,
and he who wishes to see it must first die.

5 Sonnetto XXXVIII

Rendete agli occhi miei, o fonte o fiume,
l'onde della non vostra e calda vena.
Che più v'innalza, e cresce, e con più lena
che non è 'l vostro natural costume.
E tu, folt'air, che 'l celeste lume
tempi a' tristi occhi, de' sospir miei piena,
rendigli al cor mio lasso e rasseren
tua scura faccia al mio visivo acume.
Renda la terra i passi alle mie piante,
ch'ancor l'erba germogli che gli è tolta;
e 'l suono Ecco, già sorda a' miei lamenti;
gli sguardi agli occhi mie, tue luci sante,
ch'io possa altra bellezza un'altra volta
amar, po' che di me non ti contenti.

6 Sonnetto XXXII

S'un casto amor, s'una pietà superna,
s'una fortuna infra dua amanti eguale,
s'un'aspra sorte all'un dell'altro cale,
s'un spirito, s'un voler duo cor governa;
s'un'anima in duo corpi è fatta eterna,
ambo levando al cielo e con pari ale;
s'amor c'un colpo e d'un dorato strale
le viscer di duo petti arda e discerna;
s'amar l'un l'altro, e nessun se medesmo,
d'un gusto e d'un diletto, a tal mercede,
c'a un fin voglia l'uno e l'altro porre;
se mille e mille non sarien centesmo
a tal nodo d'amore, a tanta fede;
e sol l'isdegno il può rompere e sciorre.

7 Sonnetto XXIV

Spirto ben nato, in cui si specchia e vede
nelle tue belle membra oneste e care
quante natura e 'l ciel tra no' puo' fare,
quand'a null'altra suo bell'opra cede;
spirto leggiadro, in cui si spera e crede
dentro, come di fuor nel viso appare,
amor, pietà, mercè, cose sì rare
che mà furn'in beltà con tanta fede;
l'amor mi prende, e la beltà mi lega;
la pietà, la mercè con dolci sguardi
ferma speranz'al cor par che ne doni.
Qual uso o qual governo al mondo niega,
qual crudeltà per tempo, o qual più tardi,
c'a sì bel viso morte non perdoni?

Michelangelo Buonarroti 1475–1564

8 En fermant les yeux

En fermant les yeux, je vois là-bas une humble
retraite,
une maisonnette toute blanche au fond des bois !
Sous ses tranquilles ombrages,
les clairs et joyeux ruisseaux,
où se mirent les feuillages,
chantant avec les oiseaux !
C'est le Paradis !
Oh ! non ! Tout est là triste et morose,
car il y manque une chose :
il y faut encor Manon !

*Henri Meilhac 1831–1897 / Philippe Gille
1831–1901*

Sonnetto XXXVIII

Give back to my eyes, o fountains and rivers,
the waves of powerful currents that are not yours,
which swell you and surge with such force
than was ever in your nature.
And you, dense air, heaven's light
obscuring from my sad eyes, full of sighs,
give them back to my weary heart, and lighten
your dark features to my sight.
Let the earth return to me the traces of my steps,
that the grass may grow where it was crushed;
give back the sounds, Echo, yet deaf to my laments;
their glances back to my eyes, you blessed pupils,
that I may sometime love some other beauty,
since with me you are not satisfied.

Sonnetto XXXII

If there is a chaste love, a heavenly pity,
an equal fortune between two lovers,
a bitter fate shared by both,
and if a single spirit and one will governs two hearts;
if one soul in two bodies is made eternal,
raising both to heaven on the same wings;
if love with one blow and one golden arrow
can burn and pierce two hearts to the core;
if each loves the other rather than himself,
with a pleasure and delight so rewarding,
that to the same end they both strive;
if thousands upon thousands are not worth a
hundredth
part of such a loving bond of such a faith;
then shall anger alone break and dissolve it?

Sonnet XXIV

Noble spirit, in whom is reflected,
and in whose beautiful limbs, honest and dear, one
can see
all that nature and heaven can achieve within us,
excelling any other work of beauty;
graceful spirit, within whom one hopes
and believes dwell – as they outwardly appear in
your face –
love, pity, mercy, things so rare
and never found in beauty so truly;
love takes me captive, and beauty binds me;
pity and mercy with sweet glances
fill my heart with strong hope.
What law or power in the world,
what cruelty of this time or of a time to come,
could keep Death from sparing such a lovely face?

When I close my eyes

When I close my eyes I see far away a modest
retreat,
a little cottage lost in the middle of the woods!
Under the quiet shade,
the clear and joyous streams,
in which the leaves are reflected,
sing with the birds!
It's Paradise!
Oh no, everything there is sad and melancholy,
because one thing is missing:
Manon ought to be present!

9 Ah, lève-toi, soleil
 Ah ! lève-toi, soleil ! fais pâler les étoiles
 qui, dans l'azur sans voiles,
 brillent au firmament,
 ah ! lève-toi ! parais ! parais !
 Astre pur et charmant !
 Elle rêve ! elle dénoue
 une boucle de cheveux
 qui vient caresser sa joue.
 Amour ! Amour ! porte-lui mes vœux !
 Elle parle ! Qu'elle est belle !
 Ah ! Je n'ai rien entendu !
 Mais ses yeux parlent pour elle,
 et mon cœur a répondu !
 Ah ! lève-toi, soleil ! fais pâler les étoiles, etc.
Jules Barbier 1825–1901/Michel Carré 1821–1872

10 L'ultima canzone
 M'han detto che domani
 Nina vi fate sposa,
 ed io vi canto ancor la serenata!

Là nei deserti piani,
 là, ne la valle ombrosa,
 oh, quante volte a voi l'ho ricantata!

Foglia di rosa, o fiore d'amaranto,
 se ti fai sposa,
 io ti sto sempre accanto.

Domani avrete intorno
 feste sorrisi e fiori,
 nè penserete ai nostri vecchi amori.

Ma sempre, notte e giorno,
 piena di passione,
 verrà gemendo a voi la mia canzone.

Foglia di menta , o fiore di granato,
 Nina, rammenta i baci che t'ho dato!
 Nina, rammenta i baci che t'ho dato!
 Foglia di menta... Ah!... Ah!... Ah!... Ah!
Francesco Cimmino 1862–1938

11 Tristezza
 Guarda; lontan lontano muore ne l'onde il sol;
 stormi d'uccelli a vol tornano al piano.
 Una malinconia io sento in cuore e pur non so
 perchè;
 guardandoti negli occhi, o bella mia, muto mi
 stringo a te.
 Copre l'ombria d'un manto le cose, il cielo, il mar;
 io sento tremolar ne gli occhi il pianto.
 Suona l'avemaria ed è sì triste e pur non so per-
 chè:
 devotamente preghi, o bella mia, io prego insieme
 con te.
 Tenera ne la sera che s'empie di fulgor,
 dai nostri amanti cuor va la preghiera.
 E la malinconia mi fa pensare e pur non so perchè,
 che un giorno, ahimè, dovrà la vita mia perdere il
 sogno e te!

Riccardo Mazzola 1892–1922

Ah, arise, o sun!
 Ah, arise, o sun! Turn pale the stars
 that, unveiled in the azure,
 do sparkle in the firmament.
 Ah, arise! Ah, arise! Appear! Appear,
 thou pure and enchanting star!
 She is dreaming, she loosens
 a lock of hair
 which falls to caress her cheek.
 Love! Love, carry my vows to her!
 She speaks! How beautiful she is!
 Ah, I heard nothing.
 But her eyes speak for her
 and my heart has answered!
 Ah, arise, o sun! turn pale the stars, etc.

The last song
 They told me that tomorrow
 Nina, you will be a bride,
 yet still I sing my serenade to you!

Up on the barren plateau,
 down in the shady valley,
 oh, how often I have sung it to you!

Rose-petal, o flower of amaranth,
 though you marry,
 I shall be always near.

Tomorrow you'll be surrounded
 by celebration, smiles and flowers,
 and will not spare a thought for our past love.

Yet always, by day and by night,
 passionately moaning,
 my song will sigh to you.

Mint-flower, o pomegranate flower,
 Nina, remember the kisses I gave you!
 Nina, remember the kisses I gave you!
 Mint-flower... Ah!... Ah!... Ah!... Ah!

Sadness
 Look, far in the distance the sun is dying on the wave
 flocks of birds are flying back to the plain.
 I feel a sadness in my heart and yet I don't know
 why.
 Looking into your eyes my beauty, I silently press
 you close to me.
 A shadow cloaks creation the sky and the sea,
 I feel tears brimming in my eyes.
 The Angelus bell rings and sounds so sad and yet I
 don't know why.
 You pray devoutly, my beauty and I pray with you.
 Tenderly the prayer goes out from our loving
 hearts into the splendour of the evening.
 The sadness makes me think and yet I don't know
 why,
 that one day, alas, my heart will lose this dream
 and you!

12 L'ultimo bacio
 Se tu lo vedi gli dirai che l'amo,
 che l'amo ancora come ai primi dì,
 che nei languidi sogni ancor lo chiamo,
 lo chiamo ancor come se fosse qui.
 E gli dirai che colla fé tradita
 e gli dirai che basta alla mia vita
 l'ultimo bacio che l'addio finì.
 Nessun lo toglie dalla bocca mia
 l'ultimo bacio che l'addio finì.
 Ma se vuoi dargli un altro
 in compagnia digli che l'amo,
 e che l'aspetto qui.

Emilio Praga 1839–1875

13 La danza
 Già la luna è in mezzo al mare,
 mamma mia, si salterà!
 L'ora è bella per danzare,
 chi è in amor non mancherà.
 Già la luna è in mezzo al mare,
 mamma mia, si salterà!

Presto in danza a tondo, a tondo,
 donne mie venite qua,
 un garzon bello e giocondo
 a ciascuna toccherà,
 finchè in ciel brilla una stella
 e la luna splenderà.
 Il più bel con la più bella
 tutta notte danzerà.

Mamma mia, mamma mia,
 già la luna è in mezzo al mare,
 mamma mia, mamma mia,
 mamma mia, si salterà.
 Frinche, frinche, frinche,
 frinche, frinche, frinche,
 mamma mia, si salterà.

La la ra la ra
 la ra la la ra la

Salta, salta, gira, gira,
 ogni coppia a cerchio va,
 già s'avanza, si ritira
 e all'assalto tornerà.
 Già s'avanza, si ritira
 e all'assalto tornerà!

Sera, sera, colla bionda,
 colla bruna v'è qua e là
 colla rossa v'è a seconda,
 colla smorta fermo sta.
 Viva il ballo a tondo a tondo,
 sono un Re, sono un Pascià,
 è il più bel piacer del mondo
 la più cara voluttà.

Mamma mia, mamma mia,
 già la luna è in mezzo al mare,
 mamma mia, mamma mia,
 mamma mia, si salterà.
 Frinche, frinche, frinche,
 frinche, frinche, frinche,
 mamma mia, si salterà.

La la ra la ra
 la ra la la ra la
 (repeated twice)
 la la ra la ra
 la la la la ra la!

Conte Carlo Pepoli 1796–1881

The last kiss
 If you see him, tell him of my love,
 that I love him still, like the first day,
 that in my languid dreams I call him still,
 that I call out to him as though he were here.
 And tell him that despite betrayal
 my life is complete
 with the last kiss that ended in our adieu.
 No one can remove from my mouth
 the last kiss that ended in our adieu.
 But if you want to give him another
 in company tell him that I love him,
 and that I yearn for his return.

The dance
 Now the moon is over the ocean;
 mamma mia, we're going to leap!
 The hour is beautiful for dancing,
 anyone in love will not miss it.
 Now the moon is over the ocean;
 mamma mia, we're going to leap!

Soon we'll be dancing, round and round,
 my ladies, come here,
 a beautiful and playful lad
 will have a turn with everyone.
 As long as in heaven sparkles a star,
 and the moonbeams will shine,
 the most beautiful boy and girl
 will dance all night.

Mamma mia, mamma mia,
 now the moon is over the ocean;
 mamma mia, mamma mia,
 mamma mia, we're going to leap!
 Faster, faster, faster,
 faster, faster, faster,
 mamma mia, we're going to leap!

La la ra la ra
 la ra la la ra la

Hopping, jumping, turning, spinning,
 every couple have a turn,
 now advancing, now receding,
 and returns to the excitement.
 Now advancing, now receding,
 and returns to the excitement.

Dance, dance with the blonde,
 with the brunette of here and there,
 with the redhead follow along,
 with the pale one, keep still.
 Long live dancing, round and round!
 I am a king, I am a lord,
 it is the world's greatest pleasure,
 the most beautiful delight!

Mamma mia, mamma mia,
 now the moon is over the ocean;
 mamma mia, mamma mia,
 mamma mia, we're going to leap!
 Faster, faster, faster,
 faster, faster, faster,
 mamma mia, we're going to leap!

La la ra la ra
 la ra la la ra la
 (repeated twice)
 la la ra la ra
 la la la la ra la!

14 Le sylvain

Belles Nymphes blondes
des forêts profondes,
des moissons fécondes
et des vertes ondes,
vous fuyez le Sylvain
qui vous appelle en vain.
L'heure est solitaire,
tout semble se taire
l'ombre et le mystère
règnent sur la terre.
Sois moins cruel, moins cruel,
Dieu de Cythère,
c'est pour mon cœur,
pour mon cœur trop de rigueur !
Rêves d'esperance,
cette indifférence
qui fait ma souffrance,
vous bannit désormais.
Ô peine extrême,
celle que j'aime
n'entend pas même
mon vœu suprême.
Grands Dieux, non, non, jamais !
Ô peine extrême, non, jamais !

La laideur sauvage de mon
noir visage semble faire
outrage à l'Amour volage...
Adonis ! Ta beauté
pour ma divinité !
Que la pâle Aurore
dise aux fleurs d'éclore,
que Phoebe colore
le vallon sonore.
Seul, le Sylvain, le Sylvain supplie,
implore et nuit et jour,
nuit et jour languit d'amour.
Nymphes immortelles, à Vénus
rebelles pourquoi donc, cruelles,
me percer de vos traits ?
Ô peine extrême, celle que
j'aime n'entend pas même
mon vœu suprême.
Grands Dieux, non, non, jamais !
Ô peine extrême, non, jamais !

Émilien Pacini 1810–1898

15 La mia letizia infondere

La mia letizia infondere
vorrei nel suo bel core!
Vorrei destar co' palpiti
del mio beato amore
tante armonie nell'etere
quanti pianeti egli ha.
Ah! ir seco al cielo, ed ergermi
dove mortal non va.

Temistocle Solera 1815–1878

Sylvanus

Lovely blonde nymphs
of the deep forests,
of the fruitful harvests
and the green waves,
you flee Sylvanus
who calls you in vain.
It is the hour of solitude,
all seems to fall silent
shadows and mystery
reign over the earth.
Be less cruel, less cruel,
God of Cythera,
this is too much harshness
for my heart to bear!
Dreams of hope,
this indifference
which gives me such pain.
banishes you from now on.
O extreme of suffering,
she whom I love
does not even hear
my supreme vow.
Great Gods, no, no never!
O extreme of suffering, no, never!

The savage ugliness of my
black face seems to do
insult to flighty Love...
Adonis! Your beauty
for my divinity!
Let pale Aurora sleep
to the opening flowers,
let Phoebus reddens
the echoing valley.
Alone, Sylvanus prays,
implores night and day,
night and day languishes for love.
Immortal nymphs, rebels against
Venus why then, cruel ones,
do you pierce me with your darts?
O extreme of suffering, she whom
I love does not even hear
my supreme vow.
Great Gods, no, no never!
O extreme of suffering, no, never!

Would that I could instil

Would that I could instil
my happiness into her dear heart!
Would that with the throbbing
of the love which inspires me
I could awake as many harmonies
in the universe as it has planets.
Ah! To go with her to heaven
and to fly aloft where no mortal can go!

16 Angelo casto e bel

Inosservato, penetrava
in questo sacro recesso,
asil solitario
consacrato alle lagrime!
Qui move ogni sera a pregar
pel padre suol
L'attenderò! La riverdrò!

Angelo casto e bel,
non turbi un solo vel
d'affanno e di terror, ah!
no di questa cara il cor!
Pietosa al mio pregar,
deh! possa Iddio serbar
a lei le gioie,
a me i dolor!

Ma... se prosritto e reo
mi manca il tuo sospiro,
la mia memoria, Amelia,
almen non maledir!
La voce mia morendo ancora
ancora non può che dir...

Angelo casto e bel,
non turbi un solo vel
d'affanno e di terror, ah!
no di questa cara il cor!
Pietosa al mio pregar
Deh! possa Iddio serbar
A lei le gioie, a me i dolor!

*Eugène Scribe 1791–1861/
Charles Duveyrier 1803–1866*

Tre sonetti del Petrarca

17 No.1 Pace non trovo

(Canzone CXXXIV)
Pace non trovo,
e non ho da far Guerra.
E temo, e spero, ed ardo,
e son un ghiaccio.
E volo sopra 'l cielo,
e giaccio in terra.
E nulla stringo,
e tutto 'l mondo abbraccio.

Tal m'ha in priggion
che non m'apre
né serra.
Né per suo mi ritien
né scioglie il laccio.
E non m'uccide Amor
e non mi sferra;
né mi vuol vivo,
né mi trahe d'impaccio.

Veggio senz'occhi,
e non ho lingua e grido;
e bramo di perir,
e chieggo aita;
ed ho in odio me stesso,
ed amo altrui.

Angel sweet and pure

I've crept inside
this sacred burial place
where she comes alone each night
to shed her tears!
Here each night to pray for the soul
of her dead father!
I'll wait for her! I'll see her once again!

Oh, angel sweet and pure,
let not the slightest hint
of any dread or suffering
torment my dear one's heart!
Please listen to my prayers,
almighty God, I beg of you,
bring her only happiness,
leave me in despair!

But... if you can feel no sympathy
for this wretched hunted man,
Amelia, don't curse my memory
in the name of abiding love!
As I lie dying in this tomb
my voice can barely utter...

Oh, angel sweet and pure,
let not the slightest hint
of any dread or suffering
torment my dear one's heart!
Please listen to my prayers,
almighty God, I beg of you,
bring her happiness, to me despair!

Three sonnets by Petrarch

I can find no peace

(No.134, sometimes listed as Sonnet 104)
I can find no peace,
but for war am not inclined.
I fear, yet hope, I burn,
yet am turned to ice.
I soar in the heavens,
but lie upon the ground.
I hold nothing,
though I embrace the whole world.

She has put me in a prison
which will not open
although it is not locked.
She does not consider me hers
but my ties are not loosened.
Love neither claims me for his own
nor loosens my halter;
he would not have me live,
yet leaves me with my torment.

I am blind, yet can see,
and mute I cry out;
I long to die,
yet plead for succour;
I hate myself,
but love another.

Pascomi di dolor,
piangendo, rido;
egualmente mi spiace
morte e vita.
In questo stato son,
Donna, per voi.
O Laura, per Voi.

18 No.2 Benedetto sia 'l giorno

(Canzone LXI)
Benedetto sia 'l giorno,
e 'l mese, e l'anno,
e la stagione, e 'l tempo,
e l'ora, e 'l punto,
e 'l bel paese e 'l loco,
ov'io fui giunto
da'duo begli occhi
che legato m'hanno.

E benedetto il primo dolce affanno
ch'î' ebbi ad esser
con Amor congiunto,
e l'arco e la saette
ond' î' fui punto,
e le piaghe
ch'insino al cor mi vanno.

Benedette le voci tante,
ch'io chiamando
il nome di Laura ho sparte,
e i sospiri e le lagrime e 'l desio.

E benedette sian tutte le carte
ov'io fama le acquisto,
e il pensier mio,
ch'è sol di lei,
si ch'altra non v'ha parte.

19 No.3 l' vidi in terra angelici costumi

(Canzone CLVI)
l' vidi in terra angelici costumi,
e celesti bellezze
al mondo sole,
tal che di rimembrar mi giova,
e dole che quant'io miro,
par sogni, ombre, e fumi.

E vidi lagrimar
que' duo bei lumi,
ch'han fatto mille volte
invidia al sole
ed udi' sospirando dir parole
che farian gir i monti
e stare i fiumi.

Amor, senno, valor,
pietate e doglia,
facean piangendo
un più dolce concerto
d'ogni altro che
nel mondo udir si soglia.

Ed era 'l cielo all'armonia
s'intento che non si vedea
in ramo mover foglia...
tanta dolcezza
avea pien l'aer e 'l vento.

Francesco Petrarca 1304–1374

I feed on grief,
yet weeping, laugh;
death and life
alike distress me.
And I find myself in this state,
my Lady, because of you.
Because of you, o Laura.

Blessed be the day

(No.61, sometimes listed as Sonnet 47)
Blessed be the day,
the month, the year,
the season, the hour,
the moment, the lovely scene,
and the place
where I was enslaved
by two lovely eyes
which bind me fast.

And blessed be the first sweet pang
I suffered when
Love overwhelmed me,
the bows and arrows
which stung me,
and the wounds
which pierced my heart.

Blessed be the many voices
which have echoed
when I have called Laura's name,
the sighs and tears and the longing.

And blessed be all those writings
in which I have spread her fame,
and my thoughts,
which are so full of her
that there is no room for any other woman.

I beheld on earth angelic grace

(No.156, sometimes listed as Sonnet 123)
I beheld on earth angelic grace
and heavenly beauty
unmatched in this world,
such as to rejoice and pain
my memory, which is so clouded
with dreams, shadows and mists.

And I beheld tears spring
from those two bright eyes,
which many a time
have put the sun to shame, and
heard such whispering of words
as to move the mountains
and stay the rivers.

Love, wisdom, courage,
compassion and grief,
made in that lament a sweeter
harmony with their tears
than any other
to be heard on earth.

And heaven listened so attentively
to this harmony that not a leaf
stirred upon any branch...
such sweetness
had filled the air and the breeze.

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