

“Ach, bleibe doch.”

Ach, bleibe doch, mein liebstes Leben,
ach, fliehe nicht so bald von mir.
Dein Abschied, und dein frühes Scheiden,
bringt mir das allergrößtes Leiden.
Ach ja, so bleibe doch noch hier.,
sonst werd ich ganz von Schmerz um geben.

Trasparente

Aqua profunda
Troppo profonda?
Brillante, oscura,
blu, verde.
Trasparente
a rischio della vita!

(Text and translation, Ilmari Mäenpää)

Soai vaicciiga buohtalaga

Soai vácciiiga buohtalaga
eadni ja need
vuostbiggii mii sohalalai sieðggaid
loktii muohttaga ja sudno helmmiid
Guoldu sázai ratti
Ii lean sät velojaš jurddašit geasi ja cizažiid
Fáhkkestaga goappašagat nolliehaigga
ja riegádahtiiga rabasnjálmmat nieidamánáid
maid soai govččaiigga muohttagiin
vai njuoraguovttos bivašeaigga
leža soai velledeigga bálddi
ja lávlugoðiiga geassesálma.
Go soai leaigga vuosttas vearssa gergehan
iðii miehtebiekkas eatni eadni

Ah, remain here, my beloved,
ah, fly not so soon from me.
Your farewell, and your early departure,
brings to me the greatest sorrow.
Ah, yes, so remain here
otherwise I will be utterly consumed by
pain.

Deep water
too deep?
Brilliant, obscure,
blue, green
Transparent
life threatening!

They walked side by side,
mother and daughter,
against a wind that made junipers bend
and the snow and their hemlines rise
wind lashing their chests
One could no longer think of summer and
birds. Suddenly they both squatted
and gave birth to gaping baby girls
whom they covered with snow
so they would not freeze.
Then they lay down by the newborns
and began a summer hymn
As they were through with the first verse
the mother’s mother appeared from upwind

velledii stun njuoratguokta raskii
ja čuovvolii sálma.

(Poem by Rauini Magga Lukkari,
translations by Ralph Salisbury)

she lay down between the babies
and joined the singing.

“I, being born a woman”

I being born a woman and distressed by all
the needs and notions of my kind,
am urged by your propinquity to find your
person fair
and feel a certain zest to bear your body’s
weight upon my breast.

So subtly is the fume of life designed,
to clarify the pulse and cloud the mind.
And leave me once again undone possessed.
Think not for this, however,
the poor treason of my stout blood
against my staggering brain.

I shall remember you with love or season
My scorn with pity, let me make it plain;
I find this frenzy insufficient reason
for conversation
when we meet again.

(Poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay)

Three Irish Country Songs

“I know my love”

I know my love by his way of walkin’
and I know my love by his way of talkin’
and I know my love dress in a suit of blue
and if my love leaves me what will I do?

And still she cried, ‘I love him the best,
and a troubled mind, sure, can know no rest.
and still she cried, ‘Bonny boys are few
and if my love leaves me what will I do?’

There is a dance house in Maradyke
and there my true love goes every night
he takes a strange one upon his knee,
and don’t you think now that vexes me?

If my love knew I could wash and wring,
if my love knew I could weave and spin,
I’d make a coat of all of the finest kind,
But the want of money, sure, leaves me
behind.

“I know where I’m goin’”

I know where I’m goin’
and I know who’s goin’ with me,
I know who I love,
but the dear knows who I’ll marry.

I have stockings of silk,
shoes of fine green leather
combs to buckle my hair,
and a ring for every finger.

Some say he’s black,
but I say he’s bonny,
the fairest of them all,
my handsome, winsome Johnny

Feather beds are soft,
and painted rooms are bonny,
But I would leave them all
to go with my love Johnny..

“As I was goin’ to Ballynure”

As I was goin’ to Ballynure
the day I well remember,
For to view the lads and lasses
on the fifth day of November.
With a marin’ do-a-day,
with a marin’ a-do-a daddy-oh.

Said the wee lad to his wee lass,
‘It’s will ye let me kiss ye?
For it’s I have got the cordial eye
that far exceeds the whiskey.’

‘This cordial that ye talk about,
there’s very few o’ them gets it,
for there’s nothin’ now but crooked combs
and muslim gowns can catch it.’

(Poems by A.E. Houseman)

Vedem Songs

“Memories of Prague”

How long since I last saw
The sun sink low behind Petrín Hill?
With tearful eyes I gazed at you, Prague,
Enveloped in your evening shadows.
How long since I last heard the pleasant
rush of water Over the weir in the Vltava
River?
I have long since forgotten the bustling life
on Wenceslas Square.
Those unknown corners in the Old Town,
Those shady nooks and sleepy canals, How
are they? They cannot be grieving for me
As I do for them. Almost a year has passed.
For almost a year I have huddled in this
awful hole.
A few poor streets replace your priceless
beauty. Like a beast I am, imprisoned in a
tiny cage. Prague, you fairy tale in stone, how
well I remember!
(Poem by Petr Ginz)

“Five”

This morning at seven, so bright and so
early
Five novels lay there, sewn up in a sack
Sewn up in a sack, like all of our lives,
They lay there, so silent, so silent all five.
Five books that flung back the curtain of
silence,

Calling for freedom, and not for the world,
They're somebody's novels, someone who
loves them...

They called out, they cried, they shed tears,
and they pleaded

That they hadn't been finished, the pitiful
five.

They declared to the world that the state
trades in bodies

Then slowly they vanished and went out of
sight.

They kept their eyes open, they looked for
the world

But nothing they found.

They were silent, all five.

(Poem by Hanuš Hachenburg)

“Just a little warmth”

I envy you a little warmth, my friends,
When, numb with cold, I crawl out of my
bed,
When nothing else but coldness could I feel
Still wrapped in all the lovely dreams I had.
No wish have I to wash under the cold tap
Slowly I drown, not in my shame, but filth.
Oh, lovely warmth, oh warmth so dearly
purchased,
I want to warm myself in your kind lap. And
when at last, with heavy heart I wake,
And know that I am starving, I would weep
For all the hope that I must now abandon.
I only want to sleep and sleep and sleep.
(Poem by Zdeněk Ornest)

“Thoughts”

I stood at the corner and looked out the window
To a place where heart is divided from heart
On the bed lay Had's limp shadows,
When a madman suddenly lifted his hand,
crying: “Mummy!...
Mummy come here, let's play together
And kiss and talk to each other!”
Poor people, madmen, miserable figures,
Wrapped against the weather, they went
Shivering with cold, and wanting to shout
Before their days were done:
“Mummy, hold me, I'm a leaf about to fall.
Look how I wither, I feel so cold!”
As the awful chorale echoed across the barracks,
I swept up in it sing along with them.
(Poem by Hanuš Hachenburg)

“Love in the Floodgates”

My darling, I'd love to kiss you so
But you're all wrapped up from head to toe.
Five panties, two dresses, a cap and a hat,
How can a chap get his arms around that?
(Poem by Josef Taussig)

“Farewell to Summer”

I should like to write as you do, poets,
Of spring's end, of love and sunny days,
Of tender evenings spent in the moonlight
Of birds and flowers, of trees in bud.

I should like to say farewell, as you who are free,
With a walk in the woods, with a river, and fruit,
As in times of old when we were like you are
When I was not, as today, broken and forlorn.
I would like to take leave of the summer as you do,
In the sun, stopped short by my prison grate,
To fondle a fading bud for a while
I cannot, I cannot
for I live behind bars.
(Poem by Zdeněk Ornest)