

**TRANSFORMATION OF ENGLISH
POETRY INTO FRENCH**

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PREFACE

It has been a fascinating task to attempt transforming poems from one language into another. It has also been a difficult one because of the effort of attempting the same syllabic count, rhyme scheme, imagery, nuance, and metaphysical meaning of the thirty poems included here. I hope that I have preserved the original intent of each poet and that my translations are perhaps worthy of being read by a wider audience someday.

It is a pleasure to tender my deep appreciation to Dr. Geoffrey Pill of the French Department who has continued to give me his help and encouragement. Without his great knowledge, the translations would have been far less polished. Dr. David S. Berkeley of the English Department has been extremely kind and patient with my frequent letters, visits, and telephone calls. Dr. Jane Marie Luecke, my major adviser, has been of inestimable help in lending me her expertise in poetic terminology and the general study of prosody.

Finally and most importantly, I could not possibly have attempted a Master of Arts Degree without the constant understanding and support of my beloved husband Harold. It is to him that this work is dedicated.

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INTRODUCTION

The process of transforming English poetry into French involves some complexities needing careful consideration and treatment, the greatest of which is the totality or integrity of the poem. In these translations I have tried to reproduce on a hypothetical French mind the total effect made by the original poems on a like English mind. I have tried to be faithful to the English poetry by using the same figures of speech where idiom allowed, the same rhyme scheme where vocabulary allowed, the same rhythmic effect, form, and the same literal and metaphysical meanings. Because of the foregoing considerations it was impossible to use either the classic alexandrine at one extreme or a prose equivalent of the poem at the other extreme.

Since my major purpose was to achieve a French equivalent of an English poem, I had to work with two different poetic methods: French versification and English prosody. Perhaps the greatest difference between the two poetic schools lies in the linguistic fact that French has no stress or emphasis on a particular syllable; whereas in English, stress is the rhythming element. Therefore, although both poetic types have an interplay of rhythm and "beat," French poetry is more highly dependent on the "count" of syllables, or patterning of syllables in breath groups than English poetry which receives its particular effect from the interplay of a semantic rhythm and a poetic meter. Rhyme has also remained more important in French poetry than it has in English

because it strengthens the poem's syllabic pattern which is a less forceful poetic unit than stressed-patterned units.

For the most part, my translations are confined to traditional forms such as the sonnet. To illustrate the process that has been attempted, I would like to describe how I worked on, and translated, one of the greatest sonnets in the English language, Sonnet #73 by William Shakespeare (p. 13).

In the first stanza the poet compares himself to a tree in winter. One can see the black branches, naked but for a leaf or two. The pitiful uncertainty of "or none or few," referring to the leaves, adds to the poem's poignancy. The entire first quatrain vibrates to the motion of the phrase "shake against the cold." The "sweet birds" of line four re-create the summer just past, showing in the single word, "late," how short a time has elapsed. In four short lines almost an entire human life passes in review.

Shakespeare employs long vowels to render a slowing and remorsefully plaintive effect in such phrases as "time of year," "shake," "cold," and "bare, ruin'd choirs." The culmination of human anguish is contained in the glide of the diphthong /ai/ of "fire," "lie," and "expire," and "by."

"Where late the sweet birds sang" begins on the long frontal vowel of "late," continues with the long /i/ of "sweet," and is muted at the end in "sang," suggesting a three-noted birdsong to the ear.

It seemed to me that to achieve the same effect in French the first quatrain would have to be rich in assonance. Words and phrases like "Tu vois en moi," "temps mort," "jaunes," "moins," "tremblent," "branches," and "oiseau qui chante" retain Shakespeare's imagery fairly

well, and the assonance lends a feeling of richness and internal rhyme to the quatrain.

It was necessary for the sake of rhythm and rhyme to modify the "bare, ruin'd choirs" to "branches ruinées" (ruined branches) and to cause "every singing bird" to have disappeared. The general winter atmosphere remains in the French translation, although it was impossible to duplicate exactly the magnificent word pictures.

The second quatrain in the original sonnet continues the general tone of life's fading, but it differs in context. The poet now presents himself as "the twilight of such day" which "fadeth in the west." He is using stronger imagery here, mentioning "black night" as "death's second self." The beautiful alliteration emphasizes the transitory nature of life with the comforting thought that death "seals up all in rest." Shakespeare continues to use long vowels, lending sadness and poignancy to the quatrain.

My second quatrain retains most of Shakespeare's imagery: "Tu vois aussi le crépuscule en moi/Dans l'ouest après que le soleil se couche," (You see also the twilight in me/In the west after the sun sets). "Death's second self" becomes the "fille de la mort," the "daughter of death." The last couplet of the second quatrain translates: "That soon black night will carry away/The daughter of death who heals by her touch."

Quatrain three in the English version evokes an image of the poet as a dying fire which burns no longer but merely glows "on the ashes of his youth." This is by far the strongest imagery in the sonnet. It creates a powerful picture. "Glowing" brings to mind a feeble flickering of life's flame. "Ashes," connoting grayness or age, has a soft

sibilance which gives way to the drum-roll of hard consonants in "as the death bed," "consum'd," and "nourish'd by."

This was a very difficult quatrain to translate. I wanted to keep the sibilance, the hard consonants, and the imagery. After several unsuccessful attempts, I finally succeeded in retaining most of these components. The lines, "Puis, tu vois le rougeoiment d'un tel feu/Dont les cendres de jeunesse font leur lit," (Next, you see the glowing of such fire/From which youth's ashes make their bed) give almost the same image as Shakespeare's "In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire/ That on the ashes of his youth doth lie." The sibilance is present in "cendres" and "jeunesse," simulating the hissing of the dying fire. In the last two lines, I used monosyllabic words as much as possible to slow down, emphasize, and lend finality to them: "Lit de mort où, même si tu ne veux,/Tu meurs de ce qui t'a longtemps nourri." (The death bed where, even if you don't want to/You die of what has nourished you for a long time.) The word "nourri" lends a dying quality to the line especially when the French uvular r is used, contributing an ironic tone, as Shakespeare probably intended in his sonnet, by using "nourished" to kill the end of the line.

In the final couplet, Shakespeare exhorts the one to whom he speaks "To love that well which thou must leave ere long." In so doing, he reinforces the entire meaning of the poem: to take the love that is offered and enjoy it because life is transitory and one cannot go back in time. But Shakespeare neatly turns the meaning of death to the attention of his beloved. He has been playing tricks with his own age and now reminds the other that he, himself, will soon die.

My final couplet is similar to the English: "Tu vois cela qui

rend plus fort l'amour/Aime-moi bien car tu mourras un jour." (You see that which makes love stronger/Love me well for you will die some day.) I think that this couplet paraphrases both the literal and the metaphysical meaning of Shakespeare's version.

I have used Shakespeare's sonnet as an example of the processes undergone in attempting to rewrite a poem from its original language into another while still retaining its integrity. In order to effect this transformation, I have had to try to understand the mind of the poet and attempt to reproduce his words as nearly as possible in French. Unfortunately for any translator, one language does not neatly translate into another. For a would-be poetry translator the unhappy realization comes that the only possibility available is a close approximation of the original mood, theme, form, rhyme scheme, and rhythmic feel.

Cucu Song

Sumer is icumen in,
Lhude sing cuccu;
Groweth sed and bloweth med
And springth the wude nu.
Sing cuccu!
Awe bleteth after lomb,
Lhouth after calve cu;
Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth;
Murie sing cuccu.
Cuccu, cuccu,
Wel singes thu, cuccu,
Ne swik thu naver nu.
Sing cuccu nu! Sing cuccu!
Sing cuccu! Sing cuccu nu!

--Anonymous

TRANSFORMATION

Cucu Song

Le bel été va commencer;
Chante, chante, coucou;
Poussent les prés, poussent les graines,
Verts les bois, verte la plaine.
 Chante, coucou!
Le brebis bêle à son agneau,
Les vaches beuglent aux nouveaux.
Le boeuf bondit. Le cerf se cache;
 Chante galement, coucou,
 Cocou, cocou!
Tu chantes bien, coucou,
Ne cesse pas, coucou.
Chante coucou, si fou!
Si fou, chante coucou!

--Anonymous

Lines from Love Letters

(1)

De Amico ad Amicam

A CELUY que pluy eyme en mounde,
Of alle tho that I have founde
Carissima,
Saluz od treyé amour,
With grace and joye and alle honoure,
Dulcissima.

Sachez bien, pleyasant et beele,
That I am right in goode heele
Laus Christo!
Et moun amour doné vous ay,
And also thine owene, night and day
In cisto.

Ma tres duce et tres amé,
Night and day for love of thee
Suspiro.
Soyez permanent et leal;
Love me so that I it fele,
Requiro.

A vous jeo suy tut doné;
Mine herte is full of love to thee
Presento;
Et pur ceo jeo vous pry,
Sweting, for thin curtesy,
Memento.

Jeo vous pry par charité
The wordes that here wreten be
Tenete;
And turne thy herte me toward
O à Dieu que vous gard!
Valete!

--Anonymous

Lines from Love Letters

(1)

De Amico ad Amicam

A une amie la plus aimée
De toutes que j'ai trouvées,
Carissima;
Salut, ma belle adorée,
Grâce et joie à mon honorée
Dulcissima.

Sache bien, belle et plaisante,
Ma santé est satisfaisante,
Laus Christo!
Mon amour, je te l'ai donné
A jamais, hiver et été
In cisto.

Ma très douce amie, ma foi,
Jour et nuit d'amour de toi
Suspiro.
Sois fidèle, sois constante.
Que tu m'aimes, que je le sente,
Requiro.

A toi suis-je tout donné;
Mon coeur plein de toi, aimée,
Presento.
Et pour cela, je t'en prie,
Chérie, de la courtoisie,
Memento.

Je te prie par charité
Les mots que j'ai présentés
Tenete;
Et tourne ton coeur envers moi.
Que Dieu t'ait en garde, toi!
Valete!

--Anonymous

Lines from Love Letters

(ii)

Responcio

A SOUN tres chere et special,
Fer and ner and overal

In mundo,

Que soy ou saltz et gré
With mouth, word and herte free

Jocundo.

Jeo vous pry sans debat
That ye wolde of myn estat

Audire;

Sertfyés a vous jeo fay
I wil in time whan I may

Venire.

Pur vostre amour, allas, allas!
I am werse than I was

Per multa:

Jeo suy dolourouse en tut manere,
Woulde God in youre armes I were

Sepulta!

Vous estes ma morte et ma vye,
I preye you for your curteisie

Amate,

Cestes maundes jeo vous pry
In youre herte stedefastly

Notate.

--Anonymous

Lines from Love Letters

(ii)

Responcio

A mon très cher et spécial,
Loin et près, le plus loyal
In mundo,
Que je sois de bonne santé,
De bon gré et libérée
Jocundo.

Je t'en prie sans débat,
Veuille bien de mon état
Audire:
Certes, tu as ma promesse.
Un jour tu verras ta déesse
Venire.

Pour ton amour, hélas, hélas!
Je souffre plus et suis plus lasse
Per multa:
Je suis douleureuse de ça;
Dieu! Si j'étais dans tes bras
Sepulta!

Tu es ma mort; tu es ma vie;
Je t'en prie, par courtoisie
Amate;
Cette prière, s'il te plaît,
Dans ton coeur sans oublier
Notate.

--Anonymous

Beginning of Prologue from

The Canterbury Tales

Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye
That slepen al the night with open ye
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages):
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmers for to seken straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes couthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende
The holy blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.

--Geoffrey Chaucer

Beginning of Prologue from

The Canterbury Tales

Quand doux avril par ses eaux de printemps
A la soif de mars donne étanchement,
Et lave chaque herbe d'un tel liqueur
Que cette vertu crée les belles fleurs;
Quand Zéphire avec son souffle sirène
Inspire tous les bois, aussi les plaines
Et les verdit, le beau soleil jeunet
Est sous Bélier à mi-point du trajet;
Les petits oiseaux font un bruit heureux;
Toute la nuit ils ouvrent bien les yeux.
(Ainsi la nature attendrit le cœur):
Et puis l'on veut s'en aller tous les jours
A l'étranger. On voit les pèlerins
Qui voudraient explorer des pays lointains
De tous côtés d'Angleterre partir,
De partout à Cantorbéry venir
Pour voir le très saint martyr bienveillant
Qui les aide, tous les hommes souffrants.

--Geoffrey Chaucer

Lullay, Lullay

With, Lullay, lullay, like a childe
Thou slepist to long, thou art begilde.

"My darling dere, my daisy flowre,
Let me, "quod he, "ly in your lap."
"Ly still, "quod she, "my paramoure,
Ly still hardely, and take a nap."
His hed was hevy, such was his hap,
All drowsy dreming, drownd in slepe,
That of his love he toke no kepe,
With, Hey, lullay, etc.

With ba, ba, ba, and bas, bas, bas,
She cherished him both cheke and chin,
That he wist never where he was;
He had forgotten all dedely sin,
He wantid wit her love to win:
He trusted her payment, and lost all his pay:
She left him sleeping, and stale away.

The river routh, the waters wan;
She sparid not to wete her fete;
She wadid over, she found a man
That halsid her hartely and kist her swete:
Thus after her cold she cought a hete.
"My lefe," she said, "routith in his bed;
Ywis he had an hevy hed."

What dremist thou, drunchard, drousy pate!
Thy lust and liking is from thee gone;
Thou blinkerd blowboll, thou wakist to late,
Behold, thou lieste, luggard, alone!
Well may thou sigh, well may thou grone,
To dele with her so cowardly:
Ywis, poule-hachet, she blerid thine i.

--John Skelton

Lullay, Lullay

Avec "dodo" comme un bébé
Qui dort longtemps, t'es enchanté.
"Ma très chérie, ma mignonette,"
"Si je te penchais là ma tête."
"Tais-toi," dit-elle à son tour.
"Sois sage et dors, mon cher amour."
La tête lourde, il prit l'idée
Et s'endormit, presque noyé
A sa rêverie il succombait.
Avec "Dodo," etc.

Avec "là là" et "là là là"
Elle le front lui caressa
Jusqu'à ce qu'il fût dérangé
Qu'il oubliât chaque péché;
Il voulait son amour gagner.
Il avait foi en elle, mais
Sa fraude fut de s'en aller.

Ni fleuve rude ni eau pâle
Ne l'empêcha; elle vit un mâle,
Guea l'eau et gagna son but:
En l'embrassant, son aimée fut
Si bien qu'elle après froid, chaud sut.
"Mon homme," dit-elle, "est au lit."
"Je crois qu'il est très endormi."

De quoi, assoupi, rêves-tu,
Ta jolie fille disparue?
Toi, idiot, laissé là-bas,
Te voilà bête, seul et las.
Soupire en vaine, homme trop fat!
Avec "là là" d'un temps si court
Elle te fit un vilain tour!

--John Skelton

There is a Lady

There is a Lady sweet and kind,
Was never face so pleased my mind;
I did but see her passing by,
And yet I love her till I die.

Her gesture, motion, and her smiles,
Her wit, her voice my heart beguiles,
Beguiles my heart, I know not why,
And yet I love her till I die.

Cupid is wingèd and doth range,
Her country so my love doth change:
But change she earth, or change she sky,
Yet will I love her till I die.

--Anonymous

There is a Lady

J'ai vu une dame douce et fine,
Je n'ai pas vu de telle mine;
Et elle n'a fait que me croiser
Mais jusqu'à la mort je l'aimerai.

Ses airs, ses gestes, son sourire,
Son esprit, sa voix me font plaisir;
Je ne sais pourquoi je suis blessé
Mais jusqu'à la mort je l'aimerai.

L'Amour est ailé et il parcourt
Son pays, qui change mon amour:
Qu'elle change terre, ou bien soleil
Ah, jusqu'à la mort je l'aimerai.

--Anonymous

Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

--William Shakespeare

Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow

Le lendemain, le lendemain, le lendemain
Va si lentement de jour en jour
A la dernière syllabe enrégistrée
Du temps; et tout hier nous a éclairé
La voie du tombeau noir. Meurs, meurs, chandelle!
La vie, ce n'est qu'un spectre, un pauvre acteur
Qui se vante et se plaint sur la scène
Et puis ne s'entend plus: c'est une histoire
Racontée par un sot, pleine de furie,
Et qui ne signifie rien.

--William Shakespeare

Sonnet #73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

--William Shakespeare

Sonnet #73

Tu vois en moi ce temps mort de l'année
Où quelques feuilles jaunes, moins ou plus,
Tremblent sur des branches ruinées
D'où tout oiseau qui chante a disparu.
Tu vois aussi le crépuscule en moi
Dans l'ouest, après que le soleil se couche,
Que bientôt la nuit noire entraînera,
Fille de la mort qui guérit par sa touche.
Puis, tu vois le rougeoiment d'un tel feu
Dont les cendres de jeunesse font leur lit,
Lit de mort où, même si tu ne veux,
Tu meurs de ce qui t'a longtemps nourri.
Tu vois cela qui rend plus fort l'amour;
Aime-moi bien, car tu mourras un jour.

--William Shakespeare

Oh Western Wind

Oh, western wind, when wilt thou blow
That the small rain down may rain?
Christ! If my love were in my arms
And I in my bed again!

--Anonymous

Oh Western Wind

Vent de l'ouest, quand souffleras-tu
Pour apporter la pluie?
Jésus-Christ! Que mon amie
Fût encore avec moi au lit!

--Anonymous

Batter My Heart

Batter my heart, three personed God; for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn and make me new.
I, like an usurped town, to another due,
Labour to admit you, but Oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captived and proves weak or untrue.

Yet dearly I love you and would be loved fain,
But am betrothed unto your enemy:
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

--John Donne

Batter My Heart

Bats mon coeur, ô mon Dieu de trinité;
Car tu ne fais que briller jusqu'ici;
Renverse-moi que je sois élevé,
Courbe ta force et refais-moi, ébloui.
Moi, à un autre, comme un bourg vaincu,
J'essaie de t'admettre, mais en vain;
Bon sens, ton aide en moi, m'aurait rendu
A toi, mais dompté, il est faible enfin.

Je t'aime bien et voudrais que tu m'aimes,
Mais je me fiance à ton ennemi:
Divorce d'avec moi; casse-moi la chaîne,
Emmène-moi à toi, enferme-m'y.
Sans ta puissance, moi, jamais affranchi
Ne serais pas pur sans être séduit.

--John Donne

Upon Julia's Clothes

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then (methinks) how sweetly flows
That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave vibration each way free;
O how that glittering taketh me!

--Robert Herrick

Upon Julia's Clothes

Ah, quand en soie ma Julie va,
C'est un mouvement doux, je crois,
Cette fluidité de soie.

Quand je jette un coup d'oeil sur elle
Et sur sa vibration femelle,
Que ce rayonnement m'appelle!

--Robert Herrick

On His Deceased Wife

Methought I saw my late espousèd Saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great Son to her glad Husband gave,
Rescu'd from death by force though pale and faint.
Mine as whom wash'd from spot of child-bed taint,
Purification in the old Law did save,
And such, as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind:
Her face was veil'd, yet to my fancied sight,
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
But O as to embrace me she inclin'd
I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my night.

--John Milton

On His Deceased Wife

Je vis, me sembla-t-il, ma sainte aimée,
Me rendue comme Alceste du tombeau
A son mari par Hercule, héros,
Dérobée à la mort, si pâle et troublée
Comme mère tachée de nouveau-né.
D'après la loi biblique, mais en l'eau
Lavée, purifiée, et de nouveau
Celle que je crois bien que je verrai
Complètement aux cieux. Son cher visage
Fut voilé de blanc. A ma fantaisie
Aveuglée, elle apparut douce et sage;
Mais, ô! Comme elle arrivait à mon lit
Pour m'embrasser, hélas! ma chère image
Me réveilla. Le jour rendit ma nuit.

--John Milton

I Saw a Chapel All of Gold

I saw a Chapel all of gold
That none did dare to enter in,
And many weeping stood without,
Weeping, mourning, worshipping.

I saw a Serpent rise between
The white pillars of the door,
And he forc'd and forc'd and forc'd;
Down the golden hinges tore,

And along the pavement sweet,
Set with pearls and rubies bright,
All his shining length he drew,
Till upon the altar white

Vomiting his poison out
On the Bread and on the Wine.
So I turned into a sty,
And laid me down among the swine.

--William Blake

I Saw a Chapel All of Gold

J'ai vu une chapelle d'or
Où personne n'osait entrer;
Des hommes se tenaient debout
Tristes, qui voulaient y prier

Entre les pilastres en blanc
J'ai vu un serpent se dresser
Et il a forcé et enfin
Tous les gonds en a déchirés.

Sa longueur sale il a trainée
Tout le long des chemins doux
Jusqu'à, enfin, le maître-autel
Orné d'ivoire et de bijoux.

Sur le pain et sur le vin
Son poison noir il a vomi.
Donc je suis entré dans l'étable,
Parmi les porcs j'ai fait mon lit.

--William Blake

The Lamb

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life and bid thee feed,
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, wooly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is callèd by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are callèd by his name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

--William Blake

The Lamb

P'tit agneau, qui t'a fait?
Sais-tu vraiment qui t'a fait?
T'a donné ta vie si gaie,
T'a ordonné de manger?
T'a donné des vêtements
Moelleux et purs et ravissants;
Et puis, une telle voix
Qui fait réjouir les bois?
P'tit agneau, qui t'a fait?
Sais-tu vraiment qui t'a fait?

P'tit agneau, je le dirai,
P'tit agneau, je le dirai:
Il s'appelle de ton nom
Car Il est, Lui-même, bon
Comme toi, mon agneau, Lui
Est humble, doux et très gentil,
Devenu petit enfant.
Moi, enfant, et toi, agneau,
Sommes appelés comme Dieu
P'tit agneau, Dieu te bénisse!
P'tit agneau, Dieu te bénisse!

--William Blake

The Tiger

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? What the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

--William Blake

The Tiger

Tigre, tigre brûlant, luis
Dans les forêts de la nuit.
Quelle main immortelle, quel oeil
Pourrait former ta dure taille?

Dans quels gouffres ou quels cieux
Brillait le feu de tes yeux?
Sur quelle aile est-ce qu'il vole?
Quelle main le feu contrôle?

Et quel bras, quelle magie
Tordrait le nerf de ton esprit?
Et quand ton coeur a commencé
A battre, quels terribles pieds?

Quelle chafne? Quel marteau?
Dans quel grand forge ton cerveau?
Quelle enclume? Quel lutteur
Ose supporter ses terreurs?

Les étoiles jetaient leurs armes
Arrosant les cieux de leurs larmes;
A-t-Il souri de ses travaux?
T'ayant fait, a-t-Il fait l'agneau?

Tigre, tigre brûlant, luis
Dans les forêts de la nuit
Quelle main immortelle, quel oeil
Ose former ta dure taille?

--William Blake

Bright Star! Would I Were Steadfast as Thou Art

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art--
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors--

No--yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever--or else swoon to death.

--John Keats

Bright Star! Would I Were Steadfast as Thou Art

Etoile d'or, que je fusse constant--
Comme toi, pas seul dans le beau ciel,
Je pourrais observer, toujours patient,
Comme un vieil ermite aux yeux immortels,
Les eaux adonnés à leur tâche sainte
Du lavage sacré de notre terre
Et regarder la neige pure peinte,
Comme un masque, sur pic et sur bruyère--

Non--mais toujours constant, sans changement,
Et bercé tendrement sur les seins doux
De mon aimée, sentir leur mouvement,
Eveillé à jamais et presque fou
D'extase à cause de son souffle tendre,
Je voudrais vivre--ou mon coeur pourrait fendre.

--John Keats

When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,
Before high-pilèd books, in charactery,
Hold like rich garners the full-ripened grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starred face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love;--then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone and think,
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

John Keats

When I have Fears That I May Cease to Be

Quand j'ai grand'peur de voir cesser ma vie
Avant d'avoir glané mon cerveau plein,
Quand je vois ces tomes riches ici
Pleins de sagesse, entassés, prêts à main:
Quand je regarde la nuit étoilée,
Ces lumières symboliques d'amour,
Je crois même que je ne tracerai
Jamais d'une main mortelle leur cours.

Et quand je sens, mon bel être d'une heure!
Que je ne vivrai plus te regarder;
Je ne serai plus ravi du saveur
Magique de l'amour; --sur ce côté
Du monde ici je reste et pense au jour
Où à l'oubli tombera notre amour.

--John Keats

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew,
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful--a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said--
"I love thee true!"

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

Qu'est-ce que tu as, chevalier,
Pale et seul qui traîne là?
La lafche du lac est disparue,
L'oiseau ne chante pas.

Qu'est-ce que tu as, chevalier,
Si triste et si affligé?
Le grenier d'écureuil est plein
Et la moisson rentrée.

Je remarque un lis sur ton front
D'angoisse humide et fiévreux
Et les deux roses de tes joues
Quittent leur lieu.

J'ai rencontré dans la prairie
Une dame--enfant de fée
Au pied léger, aux cheveux longs,
Aux beaux yeux égarés.

J'ai guirlandé sa belle tête,
Ses poignets blancs, et sa ceinture.
Coquette, elle m'a regardé,
M'a roucoulé d'amour.

Je l'ai placée sur mon cheval,
N'ai vu qu'elle ce jour si long,
Car elle chantait bas pour moi
--Féérique chanson!

Elle m'a trouvé du miel,
De la manne et de la rosée
Et d'une langue étrange a dit:
"Je t'aimerai!"

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dreamed--ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamed
On the cold hill's side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried--"La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering
Though the sedge is withered from the lake
And no birds sing.

--John Keats

Dans sa grotte féerique
Elle a pleuré et soupiré.
Je lui ai fermé là les yeux
De quatre baisers.

C'est là qu'elle m'a endormi;
Et je rêvais pendant des mois
Le pire cauchemar jamais
Sur ce coteau froid.

J'ai vu des rois, des princes pâles,
Des guerriers blêmes; tous criaient:
"La belle dame sans merci"
"T'a captivé!"

J'ai vu leurs lèvres affamées
Et mornes qui m'avertissaient.
Soudain je me suis réveillé
Sur ce coteau froid.

Ah! C'est pourquoi je suis toujours
Pâle et seul qui traîne là
Où toute laïche est disparue
Et l'oiseau ne chante pas.

--John Keats

Music, When Soft Voices Die

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory--
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heap'd for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

--Percy Bysshe Shelley

Music, When Soft Voices Die

La musique, voix douces mortes,
Dans la mémoire se porte--
L'odeur de violette éteinte
S'est dans ton odorat rejointe.

Les roses si vite fanées
Pour ton amant sont entassées;
Ainsi tes pensées, toi partie,
L'amour en fera un beau lit.

--Percy Bysshe Shelley

Pippa's Song

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearl'd;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His heaven--
All's right with the world!

--Robert Browning

Pippa's Song

L'année au printemps,
Le jour au matin,
Matin à sept heures,
La colline est perlée;
L'alouette au vent,
L'escargot sur l'épine
Mon Dieu est aux cieux--
Le monde est parfait!

--Robert Browning

The Soul Selects Her Own Society

The soul selects her own society
Then shuts the door;
On her divine majority
Obtrude no more.

Unmoved, she notes the chariot's pausing
At her low gate;
Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling
Upon her mat.

I've known her from an ample nation
Choose one;
Then close the valves of her attention
Like stone.

--Emily Dickinson

The Soul Selects Her Own Society

L'âme seule choisit sa société,
Puis ferme la grille;
Envers sa divine majesté
Soyez gentil.

Pas touchée, elle voit pauser le char
Devant son oeil;
Froide, elle voit s'agenouiller un tsar
Devant son seuil.

Je l'ai vue dans une grande nation
Ne choisir qu'un;
Puis fermer ses valves d'attention--
Comme moellon.

--Emily Dickinson

Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

--A. E. Housman

Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now

Le plus bel arbre, le cerisier
Est déjà fleuri parmi les branches,
Debout sur la route boisée
Vêtu pour Pâques de robe blanche.

De mes soixante-dix années
Vingt n'en reviendront plus;
Vingt de soixante-dix soustrait,
Il m'en reste cinquante dûes.

Puisque, pour regarder des fleurs
Cinquante printemps sont très peu,
Je passerai au bois mes heures
A voir le cerisier neigeux.

--A. E. Housman

Richard Cory

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him;
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich--yes, richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

--Edwin Arlington Robinson

Richard Cory

Quand Richard Cory venait en ville, oh,
Nous sur les trottoirs l'avons observé.
C'était un gentilhomme jusqu'aux os,
Impérial et beau à regarder.

Il était toujours simplement vêtu
Toujours humain chaque fois qu'il parlait,
Il nous a fait vibrer avec "Salut!"
Et il étincelait quand il marchait.

Il était riche, plus riche qu'un roi
Et très bien instruit dans chaque grâce;
Enfin, nous rêvions d'être une fois,
Une fois seule, chacun, dans sa place.

Donc, sans viande, nous maudissions le pain;
Sans espoir nous bossions comme des bêtes,
Et Richard Cory de sa propre main
S'est tué d'une balle dans la tête.

--Edwin Arlington Robinson

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

--Robert Frost

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

A qui ces bois? Je crois savoir,
Mais il habite au hameau noir;
Il ne me verra pas qui vois
La neige tomber dans ses bois.

Mon cheval le trouve bizarre
Cet arrêt loin de ferme, à part,
Entre forêt et lac gélés
Le soir le plus gris de l'année.

Il secoue bien ses grelots pour
Demander si je joue des tours;
Puis, il ne reste à écouter
Que vent doux, flocon duveté.

Les pins verts semblent m'accueillir,
Mais j'ai des vœux à accomplir
D'où je suis loin; il faut partir,
D'où je suis loin; il faut partir.

--Robert Frost

Music I Heard

Music I heard with you was more than music,
And bread I broke with you was more than bread;
Now that I am without you, all is desolate;
All that was once so beautiful is dead.

Your hands once touched this table and this silver,
And I have seen your fingers hold this glass.
These things do not remember you, beloved,
And yet your touch upon them will not pass.

For it was in my heart you moved among them,
And blessed them with your hands and with your eyes;
And in my heart they will remember always,--
They knew you once, O beautiful and wise.

--Conrad Aiken

Music I Heard

La musique avec toi fut plus que musique,
Le bon pain avec toi fut plus que pain;
Et maintenant, sans toi, tout, tout est désert,
Sans vie tout ce qui fut si beau avant.

Ta main toucha l'argenterie de table,
Et je vis tes doigts toucher là ce verre;
Ces choses ne vont pas te rappeler,
Mais sur elles reste ta trace chère.

Car ce fut dans mon coeur que tu remuas;
Tu bénis ces meubles par ton image, --
Et dans mon coeur ils se rappelleront, eux,
Qu'ils te comurent, ô ma belle et sage.

--Conrad Aiken

Anthem for Doomed Youth

What passing-bells for those who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,--
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

--Wilfred Owen

Anthem for Doomed Youth

Pour ceux morts comme du bétail quels glas?
Seule la rage horrible des canons,
Seul le bruit rapide des fusillades
Peut caqueter leurs brusques oraisons.
Ni moqueries, ni chants, ni glas pour eux;
Aucune voix triste mis à part le chœur,--
Chœur gémissant et fou d'obus affreux;
Et un clairon que les sonne à chaque heure.

De quel cierge ferait-on leur prière?
Pas à la main des garçons, mais aux yeux
Brûlera la sainte flamme d'adieu.
La pâleur des amies sera leur suaire;
Pour leurs fleurs la patience et la tendresse;
Tout crépuscule un store qui se baisse.

--Wilfred Owen

The End of the World

Quite unexpectedly, as Vasserot
The armless ambidextrian was lighting
A match between his great and second toe,
And Ralph the lion was engaged in biting
The neck of Madame Sossman while the drum
Pointed, and Teeny was about to cough
In waltz-time swinging Jocko by the thumb--
Quite unexpectedly the top blew off:

And there, there overhead, there, there hung over
Those thousands of white faces, those dazed eyes,
There in the starless dark the poise, the hover,
There with vast wings across the cancelled skies,
There in the sudden blackness the black pall
Of nothing, nothing, nothing--nothing at all.

--Archibald MacLeish

The End of the World

Tout imprévu, pendant que Vasserot
Notre ambidextre sans bras éclairait
Entre les orteils un petit flambeau,
Et Ralph, le grand lion féroce, mordait
Brave Madame Sossman, le tambour
Battait le temps et Teeny a commencé
A tousser, valsant Jocko tour à tour--
Tout imprévu la tente a éclaté:

Et le voilà, là-haut là, là, suspendu
Dessus mille visages, mille yeux,
L'équilibre au vol haut dans la nuit nue
A l'aile vaste, oblitérant les cieux,
Là dans le noir soudain le linceul fou
D'absolument rien, rien, rien--ô, rien du tout.

--Archibald MacLeish

The Too-Late Born

We too, we too, descending once again
The hills of our own land, we too have heard
Far off--Ah, que ce cor a longue haleine--
The horn of Roland in the passages of Spain,
The first, the second blast, the failing third,
And with the third turned back and climbed once more
The steep road southward, and heard faint the sound
Of swords, of horses, the disastrous war,
And crossed the dark defile at last, and found
At Roncevaux upon the darkening plain
The dead against the dead and on the silent ground
The silent slain--

--Archibald MacLeish

The Too-Late Born

Nous, nous aussi redescendions les plaines,
Les flancs nataux, et avons entendu
De loin--Ah, que ce cor a longue haleine--
Le grand cor de Roland au col d'Espagne où,
Ses trois sonneries ayant échoués,
Il s'est retourné et, ne montant guère
La route raide au sud, qu'il entendait
Encore le bruit des chevaux, de guerre;
En franchissant la gorge, il a trouvé
A Roncevaux dessus la plaine sombre
Les morts contre les morts muets, à l'ombre,
Les assassinés--

--Archibald MacLeish

Death

Nor dread nor hope attend
A dying animal;
A man awaits his end
Dreading and hoping all;
Many times he died,
Many times rose again.
A great man in his pride
Confronting murderous men
Casts derision upon
Supersession of breath;
He knows death to the bone--
Man has created death.

--William Butler Yeats

Death

Ni peur ni foi ne viennent
A l'animal qui meurt;
Un homme attend sa fin
Plein d'espoir et de peur;
Bien des fois tué,
Et levé de nouveau,
L'homme de fierté
Affronte les brutaux.
Il connaît bien son sort,
La mort lui est égal:
L'homme a créé sa mort
Et son souffle final.

--William Butler Yeats

Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

--Dylan Thomas

Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night

Ne file pas doux dans la bonne nuit,
La vieillesse doit brûler à la fin;
Enrage-toi contre un jour qui s'enfuit.

Le sage sait bien le droit de la nuit,
Car ses mots n'ont produit aucun éclair;
Ne file pas doux dans la bonne nuit.

Les bons, les flots passés, crient qu'il luit,
Leur petit oeuvre vanté dans la baie,
Et s'enragent contre un jour qui s'enfuit.

Le fier qui chante un soleil accompli,
Et doit pleurer plus tard à son départ,
Ne file pas doux dans la bonne nuit.

Les graves moribonds qui voient, éblouis,
Aux yeux aveugles, pourraient flamboyer
Et s'enrager contre un jour qui s'enfuit.

Toi, mon père, au comble de l'agonie,
Maudis-moi, bénis-moi de tes sanglots.
Ne file pas doux dans la bonne nuit,
Enrage-toi contre un jour qui s'enfuit.

--Dylan Thomas

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