

Texts and Translations

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“Hébé,” op. 2, no. 6

ERNEST CHAUSSON (1855–1899)

Poem by LOUISE-VICTORINE ACKERMANN née CHOQUET (1813–1890)

“Hébé”

Les yeux baissés, rougissante et candide,
Vers leur banquet quand Hébé s'avavançait,
Les Dieux charmés tendaient leur coupe vide,
Et de nectar l'enfant la remplissait.

Nous tous aussi, quand passe la jeunesse,
Nous lui tendons notre coupe à l'envi.
Quel est le vin qu'y verse la Déesse?
Nous l'ignorons; il enivre et ravit.

Ayant souri dans sa grâce immortelle,
Hébé s'éloigne; on la rappelle en vain.
Longtemps encor sur la route éternelle,
Notre oeil en pleurs suit l'échanson divin.

“Hebe”

When, with lowered eyes, blushing and ingenuous,
Hebe approached their banquet,
Charmed, the gods proffered their empty cups,
And with nectar the child filled them.

All of us too, when youth is past,
Vie to extend our cups to her.
What is the wine the goddess pours?
We do not know; it intoxicates and enraptures.

Having smiled with her immortal grace,
Hebe moves away; we call her back in vain.
For a long while, on the eternal road,
Our tearful eye follows the divine cupbearer.

“Le charme,” op. 2, no. 2

ERNEST CHAUSSON (1855–1899)

Poem by ARMAND SILVESTRE (1837–1901)

“Le charme”

Quand ton sourire me surprit,
Je sentis frémir tout mon être,
Mais ce qui domptait mon esprit,
Je ne pus d'abord le connaître.

Quand ton regard tomba sur moi,
Je sentis mon âme se fondre,
Mais ce que serrait cet émoi,
Je ne pus d'abord en définir.

Ce qui me vainquit à jamais,
Ce fut un plus douloureux charme;
Et je n'ai su que je t'aimais,
Qu'en te voyant apprendre le mien.

“The charm”

When your smile caught me by surprise,
I felt my whole being quiver,
But at first I could not recognize
What had dominated my spirit.

When your gaze fell on me,
I felt my soul melt,
But the ardor that I felt explain
What this emotion might be.

What conquered me forever
Was a more afflicting charm;
And I only knew that I loved you
When I saw your first tear.

Texts and Translations

“Sérénade,” op. 13, no. 2

ERNEST CHAUSSON (1855–1899)

Poem by HENRI CAZALIS

under the name JEAN LAHOR (1840–1909)

“Sérénade”

Tes grands yeux doux semblent des îles
Qui nagent dans un lac d’azur :
Aux fraîcheurs de tes yeux tranquilles,
Fais-moi tranquille et fais-moi pur.

Ton corps a l’adorable enfance
Des clairs paradis de jadis :
Enveloppe-moi de silence,
Du silence argenté des lys.

Alangui par tes yeux tranquilles,
Des étoiles caressant l’air,
J’ai tant rêvé la paix des îles
Sous un soir frissonnant et clair.

“Serenade”

Your large gentle eyes seem like islands
That swim in a lake of blue:
With the freshness of your tranquil eyes,
Make me calm and make me pure.

Your body has the adorable youth
Of the bright paradises of bygone days;
Envelop me in silence,
The silvery silence of lilies.

Having become languid from the tranquil eyes
Of the stars caressing the air,
I have dreamt so much of the peace of islands
On an evening tremulous and clear.



“Neue Liebe,” op. 19, no. 4

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

Poem by HEINRICH HEINE (1797–1856)

“Neue Liebe”

In dem Mondenschein im Wald,
Sah ich jüngst die Elfen reiten;
Ihre Hörner hört’ ich klingen,
Ihre Glöcklein hört’ ich läuten.

Ihre weißen Rößlein trugen
Goldnes Hirschgeweih und flogen
Rasch dahin, wie wilde Schwäne
Komme zurück die Luft gezaubert.

Lächelnd nickte mir die Königin,
Lächelnd, im Vorüberreiten.
Galt das meiner neuen Liebe,
Oder soll es bloß begehren.

“New love”

In the moonlight in the forest
I recently saw the elves riding;
I heard their horns sound,
I heard their little bells tinkle.

Their little white steeds
Sported golden antlers and flew
Swiftly past; like wild swans
Till now the air the voice heard.

Smiling, the queen nodded to me,
Smiling, riding past.
Did that signify my new love?
Or must it be an affair?

Texts and Translations

“Nachtlied,” op. 71, no. 6

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

Poem by JOSEF KARL BENEDIKT VON EICHENDORFF (1788–1857)

“Nachtlied”

Vergangen ist der lichte Tag,
Von ferne kommt der Glocken Schlag;
So reist die Zeit die ganze Nacht,
Nimmt manchen mit, der’s nicht gedacht.

Wo ist nun hin die bunte Lust,
Des Freundes Trost und treue Brust,
Der Liebsten süßer Augenschein?
Will keiner mit mir munter sein?

Frisch auf denn, liebe Nachtigall,
Du Wasserfall mit hellem Schall,
Gott loben wollen wir vereint,
Bis daß der lichte Morgen scheint.

“Night song”

Gone is the light of day,
From the distance comes the bells’ toll;
So the time goes all night,
Carrying along many who are oblivious.

Where are they now, the varied pleasures,
The comfort and loyal heart of a friend,
The sweetheart’s darling gleaming eyes?
Does no one want to stay awake with me?

Recommence then, dear nightingale,
You cascade of clear sound;
United, let us praise God
Until the light of morning shines.

Texts and Translations

“Hexenlied,” op. 8, no. 8

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

Poem by LUDWIG HEINRICH CHRISTOPH HÖLTY (1748–1776)

“Hexenlied”

Die Schwalbe fliegt,
Der Frühling siegt
Und spendet uns Blumen zum Kranze;
Bald huschen wir
Leis’ aus der Tür
Und fliegen zum prächtigen Tanze.

Ein schwarzer Bock,
Ein Besenstock,
Die Ofengabel, der Wocken
Reißt uns geschwind,
Wie Blitz und Wind,
Durch sausende Lüfte zum Brocken!

Um Beelzebub
Tanzt unser Trupp
Und küßt ihm die kralligen Hände!
Ein Geisterschwarm
Faßt uns beim Arm
Und schwinget im Tanzen die Brände!

Und Beelzebub
Verheißt dem Trupp
Der Tanzenden Gaben auf Gaben:
Sie sollen schön
In Seide geh’n
Und Töpfe voll Goldes sich graben.

Ein Feuerdrach’
Umflieget das Dach
Und bringet uns Butter und Eier.
Die Nachbarn dann seh’n
Die Funken weh’n
Und schlagen im Kreuz vor dem Feuer.

“Witch’s song”

The swallow takes flight,
Spring is victorious
And offers us flowers for wreaths!
Soon we’ll dart
Breezily out the door
And fly to the refulgent dance.

A black billy goat,
A broomstick,
The oven fork, the distaff,
Whisk us off,
Quick as lightning and wind,
Through whistling winds to the Brocken!*

Around Beelzebub
Dances our pack
And kisses his clawed hands!
A horde of ghosts
Grasps us by the arm,
Jumping the flames in the dance!

And Beelzebub
Promises the troupe
Of dancers gift upon gift:
Beautiful, they shall go about
Clad in silk
And dig up pots full of gold.

A dragon of fire
Flies around the roof
And brings us butter and eggs.
Then the neighbors see
The sparks drift ur,
And make the sign of the cross before the fire

* The Brocken is the highest peak in the Harz Mountains in North-central Germany. It was always believed to be inhabited with witches and other evil folk.



Texts and Translations

La courte paille (The short straw)

FRANCIS POULENC (1899–1963)

Poems by MAURICE CARÊME (1899–1978)

Translations by Marion Leeds Carroll

“Le sommeil”

Le sommeil est en voyage,
Mon Dieu! où est-il parti?
J’ai beau bercer mon petit;
Il pleure dans son litcage,
Il pleure depuis midi.
Où le sommeil a-t-il mis
Son sable et ses rêves sages?
J’ai beau bercer mon petit;
Il se tourne tout en nage,
Il sanglote dans son lit.
Ah! reviens, reviens, sommeil,
Sur ton beau cheval de course!
Dans le ciel noir, la Grand Ourse
A enterré le soleil
Et ralumé ses abeilles.
Si l’enfant ne dort pas bien,
Il ne dira pas bonjour,
Il ne dira rien demain
A ses doigts, au lait, au pain
Qui l’accueillent dans le jour.

“Sleep”

Sleep is on vacation.
My God! Where has it gone?
I’ve rocked my little one in vain;
he cries in his crib,
he’s been crying since noon.
Where has sleep put
its sand and its wise dreams?
I’ve rocked my little one in vain;
he turns, all sweaty,
he sobs in his bed.
Ah! return, return, sleep,
on your beautiful race horse!
In the black sky, the Big Bear *
has buried the sun
and re-lit his bees. **
If baby doesn’t sleep well,
he won’t say “good morning,”
he won’t say anything tomorrow
to his fingers, to the milk, to the bread
that greet him with the day.

* *The Big Dipper*

** *The Milky Way*

Texts and Translations

“Quelle aventure”

Une puce dans sa voiture,
Tirait un petit éléphant
En regardant les devantures
Où scintillaient les diamants.
Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!
quelle aventure!
Qui va me croire, s'il m'entend?

L'éléphant, d'un air absent,
Suçait un pot de confiture.
Mais la puce n'en avait cure,
Elle tirait en souriant.
Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!
que cela dure
Et je vais me croire dément!

Soudain, le long d'une clôture,
La puce fondit dans le vent
Et je vis le jeune éléphant
Se sauver en fendant les murs.
Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!
la chose est sûre,
Mais comment le dire à maman?

“La reine de coeur”

Mollement accoudée
A ses vitres de lune,
La reine vous salue
d'une fleur d'amandier.
C'est la reine de cœur.
Elle peut, s'il lui plaît,
Vous mener en secret
Vers d'étranges demeures
Où il n'est plus de portes,
De salles ni de tours,
Où le jeune mortel
Vient perdre l'amour.

La reine vous salue;
Hâtez-vous de lui surprendre
Dans son château de givre
Aux doux vitraux de lune.

“What an adventure”

A flea was pulling a little elephant
along in its carriage,
while looking at the shop windows
where diamonds sparkled.
My God! my God!
What an adventure!
Who'll believe me, if they hear me?

The little elephant casually
licked at a jar of jam,
but the flea didn't care;
she pulled along, smiling.
My God! my God!
How hard this is!
And I think I must be crazy!

Suddenly, near a fence,
the flea blew over in the wind,
and I saw the young elephant
save himself by knocking down the walls.
My God! my God!
it's really true,
but how can I tell Mommy?

“Queen of hearts”

Softly leaning
on her window-panes of moon,
the queen gestures to you
with an almond flower.
She is the Queen of Hearts.
She can, if she wishes,
lead you in secret
into strange dwellings
where there are no more doors,
no rooms, no towers,
and where the young dead
come to talk of love.

The queen salutes you;
hasten to spy on her
into her hoar-frost castle
with smoky stained-glass moon windows.

Texts and Translations

“Ba, Be, Bi, Bo, Bu”

Ba, be, bi, bo, bu, bé!
Le chat a mis ses bottes,
Il va de porte en porte
Jouer, danser,
Danser, chanter -
Pou, chou, genou, hibou.
“Tu dois apprendre à lire,
A compter, à écrire,”
Lui crie-t-on de partout.
Mais rikketikketau,
Le chat de sèsclaffer
En rentrant au château:
Il est le Chat Botté!

* *Lice, cabbage, knee, owl* --

a rhyme French school-children learn to memorize the exceptions that require an “x” for the plural instead of “s”

“Les anges musiciens”

Sur les fils de la pluie,
Les anges du jeudi
Jouent longtemps de la harpe.
Et sous leurs doigts, Mozart
Tinte, délicieux,
En gouttes de joie bleue
Car c’est toujours Mozart
Que reprennent sans fin
Les anges musiciens
Qui, au long du jeudi,
Font chanter sur la harpe
La douceur de la pluie.

“Ba, Be, Bi, Bo, Bu”

Ba, be, bi, bo, bu, bé!
The cat has put on his boots;
he goes from door to door,
playing, dancing,
dancing, singing -
Pou, chou, genou, hibou.*
“You ought to learn to read,
to count, to write,”
everyone calls out to him.
But rikketikketau,
the cat bursts out laughing,
returning to his castle:
He is Puss in Boots!

“The musical angels”

Upon the threads of the rain
the Thursday angels
play on the harp for a long time.
And beneath their fingers, Mozart
tinkles, deliciously,
in drops of blue joy
since it is always Mozart
which is played endlessly
by the musician angels
who, all day Thursday,
make their harps sing
the sweetness of the rain.

Texts and Translations

“Le carafon”

“Pourquoi, se plaignait la carafe,
N’aurais-je pas un carafon?
Au zoo, madame la giraffe
N’a-t-elle pas un girafon?”
Un sorcier qui passait par là,
A cheval sur un phonographe,
Enregistra la belle voix
De soprano de la carafe
Et la fit entendre à Merlin.
“Fort bien, dit celui-ci, fort bien!”
Il frappa trois fois dans les mains
Et la dame de la maison
Se demande encore pourquoi
Elle trouva, ce matin-là
Un joli petit carafon
Blotti tout contre la carafe
Ainsi qu’au zoo le girafon
Pose son cou fragile et long
Sur le flanc clair de la girafe.

“The carafe”

“Why,” lamented the carafe,
“couldn’t I have a baby carafe?
At the zoo, Mrs. Giraffe -
doesn’t she have a baby giraffe?”
A wizard who was riding by
astride a phonograph
recorded the beautiful
soprano voice of the carafe
and played it for Merlin.
“Very well,” said he, “very well!”
He clapped his hands three times
And the lady of the house
still asks herself why
she found, that morning,
a pretty little baby carafe
leaning up against the carafe
just as in the zoo, the baby giraffe
leans its long and fragile neck
against the smooth flank of the giraffe.

“Lune d’avril”

Lune, belle lune, lune d’Avril,
Faites-moi voir en m’endormant
Le pêcher au cœur de safran,
Le poisson qui rit du grésil,
L’oiseau qui, lointain comme un cor,
Doucement réveille les morts
Et surtout, surtout le pays
Où il fait joie, où il fait clair,
Où, soleilieux de primevères,
On a brisé tous les fusils.
Lune, belle lune, lune d’avril,
Lune.

“April moon”

Moon, beautiful moon, moon of April,
make me see in my dreams
the peach tree with a heart of saffron,
the fish that laughs at sleet,
the bird that, far away, like a horn,
sweetly wakens the dead
and above all, above all, the country
where there is joy, where it is bright,
where, sunny with springtime,
they have broken all the rifles.
Moon, beautiful moon, moon of April,
Moon.

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Texts and Translations

“Nacht”

ALBAN BERG (1855–1935)

Poem by CARL HAUPTMANN (1858–1921)

“Nacht”

Dämmern Wolken über Nacht und Thal,
Nebel schweben. Wasser rauschen sacht.
Nun entschleiert sich's mit einem Mal:
O gieb acht! gieb acht!

Weites Wunderland ist aufgethan,
Silbern ragen Berge traumhaft gross,
Stille Pfade silberlicht thalan
Aus verborg'nem Schoss.

Und die hehre Welt so traumhaft rein.
Stummer Buchenbaum am Wege steht
Schattenschwarz -- ein Hauch vom
fernen Hain
Einsam leise weht.

Und aus tiefen Grundes Düsterheit
Blinken Lichter auf in stummer Nacht.
Trinke Seele! trinke Einsamkeit!
O gieb acht! gieb acht!

“Schilflied”

ALBAN BERG (1855–1935)

Poem by NIKOLAUS LENAU (1802–1850)

“Schilflied”

Auf geheimem Waldespfade
Schleich' ich gern im Abendschein
An das öde Schilfgestade,
Mädchen, und gedenke dein!

Wenn ich da in der Busch verdürrt,
Raust an des Rohrs Geheul ins U,
Und es klaget und es flüstert,
Daß ich weinen, weinen soll.

Und ich mein' ich hör' es wehen
Leise dein: Stimm'ne Kling,
Und im Weiher untergehen
Deinen lieblichen Gesang.

“Night”

Clouds darken over night and valley
Fog hovers. Water murmurs softly.
Now, all at once, the veil is lifted:
Oh pay attention! Pay attention!

A vast wonderland has opened up,
Silvered towering mountains surreally huge,
Quiet paths of silver light toward the valley wend
From some hidden place.

And the sublime world so wonderfully pure.
A mute boxwood stands along the trail
Blackened with shadow -- a solitary breath of
wind from the distant grove
Wafts softly by.

And from the deep gloom of the valley floor
Twinkle lights in the hushed night.
Drink, my soul! Drink in the solitude!
Oh pay attention! Pay attention!

“Reed song”

Along secret woodland paths
In the evening light do I like to steal
To the deserted bank of reeds,
and, my maiden, remember you.

When he bushes darken,
The reed mysteriously rustles,
And it laments and it whispers,
So that I weep and weep.

And I think I hear faintly drift
The sound of your voice,
And down into the pond is drowned
Your lovely song.

Texts and Translations

“Die Nachtigall”

ALBAN BERG (1855–1935)

Poem by THEODOR STORM (1817–1888)

“Die Nachtigall”

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;
Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

Sie war doch sonst ein wildes Blut,
Nun geht sie tief in Sinnen,

Trägt in der Hand den Sommerhut
Und duldet still der Sonne Glut
Und weiß nicht, was beginnen.

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;
Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

“The Nightingale”

As it befell, because the nightingale
Sang the whole night long;
That from her sweet tone,
That from the sound and the echo
Roses have sprung up.

Before, she was a wild blood,
Now she walks, deeply absorbed in her
thoughts,
Carries in her hand her summer hat
And quietly suffers the sun's heat
And knows not what to begin.

As it befell, because the nightingale
Sang the whole night long;
That from her sweet tone,
That from the sound and the echo
Roses have sprung up.



Intermission

“Nuit d'étoiles”

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

Poem by THÉODORE FAULLIN DE BANVILLE (1823–1891)

“Nuit d'étoiles”

Nuit d'étoiles, sous tes voiles,
sous ta brise et tes parfums,
Triste lyre qui soupire,
je rêve aux amours défunts.

La serene melancolic vient d'ore
au bord de mon cœur,
Et j'entends l'âme de ma mie
Tressaillir dans le bois rêveur.

Les rêves à no' fon'aine
tes regards bleus comme les ciels;
Cette rose, c'est ton haleine,
Et ces étoiles sont tes yeux.

“Starlit night”

Starlit night, beneath your veils,
Beneath your breeze and beneath your scents,
A sad lyre that sighs,
I dream of dead loves.

Veren melarsholy'urged
In the depths of my heart,
And I hear the soul of my sweetheart
Trembling in the dreaming woods.

Les rêves en pourfontair
Your gaze, blue as the heavens;
This rose, it's your breath,
And these stars are your eyes.

Texts and Translations

“Romance”

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

Poem by PAUL BOURGET (1852–1935)

“Romance”

L'âme évaporée et souffrante,
L'âme douce, l'âme odorante
Des lys divins que j'ai cueillis
Dans le jardin de ta pensée,
Où donc les vents l'ont-ils chassée,
Cette âme adorable des lys?

N'est-il plus un parfum qui reste
De la suavité céleste
Des jours où tu m'enveloppais
D'une vapeur surnaturelle,
Faites d'espoir, d'amour fidèle,
De béatitude et de paix?...

“Fleur des blés”

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

Poem by ANDRÉ GIROD

“Fleur des blés”

Le long des blés que la brise
Fait onduler puis défrise
En un désordre coquet,
J'ai trouvé de bonne prise
De t'y cueillir un bouquet.

Mets-le vite à ton corsage,
Il est fait à ton image
En même temps que pour toi...
Ton petit doigt, je le gage,
T'a déjà soufflé pourquoi:

Ces épis dorés, cest'or de
Ta chevelure blonde
Toi et doré de soleil;
Ce coquelicot qui fronde,
C'est ta bouche au sang vermeil.

Ces bluettes, beau mystère!
Ponctuant qu'en l'air, en l'air,
Ces bluets ce sont tes yeux,
Si bleus qu'on dirait, sur terre,

Deux éclats tombés des cieux.

“Romance”

The fleeting, suffering soul,
The sweet soul scented
With the divine lilies that I gathered
In the garden of your thoughts –
To where have the winds driven it,
That adorable soul of the lilies?

Is there not a fragrance that remains
Of the celestial sweetness
Of those days when you enveloped me
In an otherworldly vapour
All of hope, of faithful love,
Of bliss and of peace?

“Flower of wheat”

Along the length of the wheat field which the breeze
Makes undulate and straighten
In a coquettish disorder,
I found a fine opportunity
To gather a bouquet for you.

Fasten it quickly to your bodice;
It is fashioned in your image
Just as it is made for you . . .
Your little finger, I'll wager,
Has already whispered to you why:

These golden ears (fitting as the hair)
Of your blonde hair
Are gold and sunshine;
This bedeviling poppy
Is your mouth, crimson as blood.

And these cornflowers, excellent mystery
Aureoles that nothing can alter,
These cornflowers are your eyes,
So blue that, here on the ground, one would
Take them for
Two spheres of sky fallen to earth.

Texts and Translations

“Zéphyr”

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

Poem by THÉODORE FAULLIN DE BANVILLE (1823–1891)

“Zéphyr”

Si j'étais le Zéphyr ailé,
J'irais mourir sur votre bouche.
Ces voiles, j'en aurais la clef
Si j'étais le Zéphyr ailé.
Près des seins pour qui je brûlais
Je me glisserais dans la couche.
Si j'étais le Zéphyr ailé,
J'irais mourir sur votre bouche.

“Zephyrus”

If I were winged Zephyrus,
I would go to die on your lips.
Of those veils I would have the key
If I were winged Zephyrus.
To be near those breasts for which I burned
I would slip into your bed.
If I were winged Zephyrus,
I would go to die on your lips.

“Beau soir”

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

Poem by PAUL BOURGET (1852–1935)

“Beau soir”

Lorsque au soleil couchant les rivières sont roses,
Et qu'un tiède frisson court sur les champs de blé,
Un conseil d'être heureux semble sortir des choses
Et monter vers le cœur troublé ;

Un conseil de goûter le charme d'être au monde,
Cependant qu'on est jeune et que le soir est beau,
Car nous nous en allons comme s'en va cette onde :
Elle à la mer – nous au tombeau !

“Beautiful evening”

When at sunset rivers flow pink,
And a warm shudder runs across the fields of wheat,
A counsel to be happy seems to emanate from things
And rises to the troubled heart.

A counsel to taste the beauty of being in the world,
Nonetheless, how young we are and how lovely the evening,
For we shall all depart, like that wave flowing;
It to the sea – we to the tomb.



Texts and Translations

Mädchenblumen Lieder, Op. 22

Maiden Flower Songs

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)

Poems by FELIX LUDWIG JULIUS DAHN (1834–1912)

“Kornblumen”

Kornblumen nenn ich die Gestalten,
die milden mit den blauen Augen,
die, anspruchslos in stillem Walten,
den Tau des Friedens, den sie saugen
aus ihren eigenen klaren Seelen,
mitteilen allem, dem sie nahen,
bewußtlos der Gefühlsjuwelen,
die sie von Himmelshand empfahn.

Dir wird so wohl in ihrer Nähe,
als gingst du durch ein Saatgefilde,
durch das der Hauch des Abends wehe,
voll frommen Friedens und voll Milde.

“Mohnblumen”

Mohnblumen sind die runden,
rotblutigen gesunden,
die sommersproßgebraunten,
die immer froh gelaunten,
kreuzbraven, kreuzfidelten,
tanznimmermüden Seelen;
die unter'm Lachen weinen
und nur geboren scheinen,
die Kornblumen zu necken,
und dennoch oft verstecken
die weichsten, besten Herzen,
im Schlinggewächs von Scherzen;
die man, weiß Gott, mit Küssen
ersticken würde müssen,
wenn sie nicht immer da wäre
umarmst du die Raute,
sie springen voll der Blüthen
aufflammend auseinander.

“Cornflowers”

Cornflowers is what I call the figures,
That sweet, with blue-eyes,
Who, modestly, in quiet presence,
The dew of peace that they soak up
From their own clear souls
Impart to all who approach them,
Unaware of the inestimable sensitivity
That they have received from the hands of
heaven.

You'll feel so good in their presence
As if you were walking through a seeded field
Over which the breath of evening wafts,
Full of benign peace and gentleness.

“Poppies”

Poppies are the round,
Red-blooded, healthy girls
those freckled and tanned,
Always cheerful,
Good as gold, chipper,
Souls that never tire of dancing;
Who cry beneath their laughter,
And only seem to have been born
To tease the cornflowers,
Yet nevertheless often hide
The most compassionate, down-to-earth hearts
In the briery snares of their pranks;
Whom, God knows, you would have to
Smother with kisses,
Were you not always around,
If you put your arms around the fire
So you fall right into the flames
Bursting apart into flames!

Texts and Translations

“Ephau”

Aber Ephau nenn' ich jene Mädchen
mit den sanften Worten,
mit dem Haar, dem schlichten, hellen
um den leis' gewölbten Brau'n,
mit den braunen seelenvollen Rehenaugen,
die in Tränen steh'n so oft,
in ihren Tränen gerade sind unwiderstehlich;
ohne Kraft und Selbstgefühl,
schmucklos mit verborg'ner Blüte,
doch mit unerschöpflich tiefer
treuer inniger Empfindung
können sie mit eigner Triebkraft
nie sich heben aus den Wurzeln,
sind geboren, sich zu ranken
liebend um ein ander Leben:
an der ersten Lieb'umrankung
hängt ihr ganzes Lebensschicksal,
denn sie zählen zu den seltnen Blumen,
die nur einmal blühen.

“Ivy”

But Ivy is what I call those girls
Who are soft of speech,
With sleek, glossy hair
Around their gently arching eyebrows,
With brown, soulful doe's eyes
Who are often in tears,
And who are just irresistible in tears;
Lacking strength and self-esteem,
Unadorned with concealed blossoms,
But with inexhaustibly deeper,
Devoted, heartfelt feeling,
They have not sufficient motivation of their own
Ever to raise themselves up above their roots,
But are born to entwine themselves
Lovingly around another's life:
Their whole life's destiny hinges
On their first love-entwining,
For they number among those rare flowers
That bloom only once.

Texts and Translations

“Wasserrose”

Kennst du die Blume, die märchenhafte,
sagengefeierte Wasserrose?
Sie wiegt auf ätherischem, schlankem Schafte
das durchsicht'ge Haupt, das farbenlose,
sie blüht auf schilfigem Teich im Haine,
gehütet vom Schwan, der umkreiset sie einsam,
sie erschließt sich nur dem Mondenscheine,
mit dem ihr der silberne Schimmer gemeinsam:
so blüht sie, die zaub'rische Schwester der Sterne,
umschwärmt von der träumerisch dunklen Phaläne,
die am Rande des Teichs sich sehnet von ferne,
und sie nimmer erreicht, wie sehr sie sich sehne.
Wasserrose, so nenn' ich die schlanke,
nachtlock'ge Maid, alabastern von Wangen,
in dem Auge der ahnende tiefe Gedanke,
als sei sie ein Geist und auf Erden gefangen.
Wenn sie spricht, ist's wie silbernes Wogenrauschen,
wenn sie schweigt, ist's die ahnende Stille der Mondnacht;
sie scheint mit den Sternen Blicke zu tauschen,
deren Sprache die gleiche Natur sie gewohnt macht;
du kannst nie ermüden, in's Aug' ihr zu schau'n,
das die seidne, lange Wimper umsäumt hat,
und du glaubst, wie bezaubernd von seligem Grau'n,
was je die Romantik von Elfen geträumt hat.

“Water rose”

Do you know the flower, the bewitching,
Legendary water lily?
It sways on ethereal, slender stems
Its translucent, colourless head;
It blooms on reedy ponds in the groves,
Guarded by the solitary swan that circles it;
It opens up only to the moonlight
Whose silvery shimmer it shares:
Thus she blossoms, the magical sister to the stars,
Idolized by the dark, dreamy night butterfly
Which yearns from afar on the edge of the pond
And never attains it, howsoever very much it may long to.
W:ter Lil' is wh:rl' all th: slir',
'urly, n ven-b' red n' iden w' th al' baster heeks
H: r' es' ill of d'eer m' g' in' s,
As if she were a shade held captive on earth.
When she speaks, it is like the silvery noise of the watercourse;
W:er she is siler', it is lik' the su'per se'nul s'till'ness of 'he r:uonli' n'ght'
'ne see us to ch'ange glanc's with 'ne stars,
W' th r' h:se 'n'g' uas s'e ir' fa' n'li' r' v' n' t'ue;
You can never grow weary of looking into her eyes
Fringed by long silken lashes,
And you believe, as if bewit'che'd, by h'oly awe.
All that the Romantics drea' r' of e' r' s.



Texts and Translations

“Hôtel”

FRANCIS POULENC (1899–1963)

Poem by WILHELM ALBERT WŁODZIMIERZ APOLINARY KOSTROWICKI (1880–1918), as
GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE

“Hôtel”

Ma chambre a la forme d'une cage,
Le soleil passe son bras par la fenêtre.
Mais moi qui veux fumer pour faire des
mirages
J'allume au feu du jour ma cigarette.
Je ne veux pas travailler - je veux fumer.

Hotel

My room has the form of a cage,
The sun passes his arm in by the window.
But I who want to smoke to make
mirages
By the fire of day, I light my cigarette.
I don't want to work - I want to smoke.

“Voyage à Paris”

FRANCIS POULENC (1899–1963)

Poem by WILHELM ALBERT WŁODZIMIERZ APOLINARY KOSTROWICKI (1880–1918), as
GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE

“Voyage à Paris”

Ah! la charmante chose
Quitter un pays morose
Pour Paris
Paris joli
Qu'un jour dût créer l'Amour.

“Voyage to Paris”

Ah! how charming it is
To leave a morose country
For Paris
Pretty Paris
Which one day may have created Love.

Texts and Translations

“Sanglots”

FRANCIS POULENC (1899–1963)

Poem by WILHELM ALBERT WŁODZIMIERZ APOLINARY KOSTROWICKI (1880–1918), as
GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE

“Sanglots”

Notre amour est réglé par les calmes étoiles
Or nous savons qu'en nous beaucoup
d'hommes respirent
Qui vinrent de très loin et sont un sous nos
fronts
C'est la chanson des rêveurs
Qui s'étaient arraché le coeur
Et le portaient dans la main droite ...
Souviens-t'en cher orgueil de tous ces
souvenirs
Des marins qui chantaient comme des
conquérants.
Des gouffres de Thulé, des tendres cieux
d'Ophir
Des malades maudits, de ceux qui fuient leur
ombre
Et du retour joyeux des heureux émigrants.

De ce coeur il coulait du sang
Et le rêveur allait pensant
À sa blessure délicate ...
Tu ne briseras pas la chaîne de ces causes...
...Et douloureuse et nous disait:
...Qui sont les effets d'autres causes
Mon pauvre coeur, mon coeur brisé
Pareil au coeur de tous les hommes...
Voici nos mains que la vie fit esclaves
...Est mort d'amour ou c'est tout comme
Est mort d'amour et le voici.
Ainsi vont toutes choses
Arrachez donc le vôtre aussi!
Et rien ne sera libre jus'à la fin des temps
Laissons tout aux morts
Et chacun nos sanglots.

“Sobs”

Our love is ruled by the calm stars
Well, we know that in us many men breathe
Who came from very far away and are one
behind our brows
This is the song of dreamers
Whose hearts were torn out
And who carry it in their right hand ...
Remember, dear pride, all those memories
The sailors who sang like conquerors.
The chasms of Thule, the tender skies of
Ophir
The damned sick, those who flee their
shadows
And of the joyous return of the happy
émigrants.
From this heart blood was running
And the dreamer went about thinking
Of his delicate wound ...
You'll not break the chain of these causes ...
... And painful; and he was saying to us:
... Which are the effects of other causes.
My poor heart, my broken heart
Like to the hearts of all men ...
Here are our hands which life has made slaves
... has died of love or is all as if
Is dead of love and here it is.
That's the way things go.
So tear out yours too!
And nothing will be free until the end of time
Let's leave everything to the dead
And let's die of our sobs

Texts and Translations

“Les chemins de l’amour”

FRANCIS POULENC (1899–1963)

Poem by JEAN MARIE LUCIEN PIERRE ANOUILH (1910–1987)

“Les chemins de l’amour”

Les chemins qui vont à la mer ont gardé de notre passage
Des fleurs effeuillées et l'écho, sous leurs arbres, de nos deux rires clairs.
Hélas! des jours de bonheur, radieuses joies envolées,
Je vais sans retrouver traces dans mon coeur.

Chemins de mon amour, je vous cherche toujours,
Chemins perdus vous n'êtes plus et vos échos sont sourds.
Chemins du désespoir, chemins du souvenir, chemins du premier jour
Divins chemins d'amour.

Si je dois l'oublier un jour, la vie effaçant toutes choses
Je veux qu'en mon coeur un souvenir repose plus fort que l'autre amour
Le souvenir du chemin où tremblante et toute éperdue
Un jour j'ai senti sur moi bruler tes mains.

Chemins de mon amour, je vous cherche toujours,
Chemins perdus vous n'êtes plus et vos échos sont sourds.
Chemins du désespoir, chemins du souvenir, chemins du premier jour
Divins chemins d'amour.

“The pathways of love”

The paths which go to the sea have kept from our passing
Flowers stripped of petals and the echo, under their trees, of our two bright laughers.
Alas! Of the days of happiness, radiant joys flown away,
I wander finding no traces of them in my heart.

Paths of my love, I search for you still,
Lost paths, you are no longer and your echos are mute.
Paths of despair, paths of memory, paths of the first day
Divine paths of love.

I must forget him one day, life effacing all things
I wish that in my heart a memory firmly remains stronger than the other love
The memory of the path where, trembling and all emotional
One day, I felt on me your hands burning.
Paths of my love, I search for you still,
Lost paths you are no longer and your echos are mute.
Paths of despair, paths of memory, paths of the first day
Divine paths of love.