

Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847)
There be none of Beauty's daughters (1836)

There be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmèd ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lull'd winds seem dreaming:

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep;
Whose breast is gently heaving
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

George Gordon, Lord Byron (1816)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
Suleika (1832)

Ach, um deine feuchten Schwingen,
West, wie sehr ich dich beneide:
Denn du kannst ihm Kunde bringen
Was ich in der Trennung leide!

Die Bewegung deiner Flügel
Weckt im Busen stilles Sehnen;
Blumen, Auen, Wald und Hügel
Stehn bei deinem Hauch in Tränen.

Doch dein mildes sanftes Wehen
Kühlt die wunden Augenlider;
Ach, für Leid müßt' ich vergehen,
Hofft' ich nicht zu sehn ihn wieder.

Eile denn zu meinem Lieben,
Spreche sanft zu seinem Herzen;
Doch vermeid' ihn zu betrüben
Und verbirg ihm meine Schmerzen.

Sag ihm, aber sag's bescheiden:
Seine Liebe sei mein Leben,
Freudiges Gefühl von beiden
Wird mir seine Nähe geben.

*Marianne von Willemer. Provided by Oxford
International Song Festival (www.oxfordsong.org)*

*Ah, West Wind, how I envy you
Your moist pinions:
For you can bring him word
Of what I suffer away from him!*

*The movement of your wings
Wakes silent longing in my heart;
Flowers, meadows, woods and hills,
Dissolve in tears where you blow.*

*Yet your mild, gentle breeze
Cools my sore eyelids;
Ah, I'd surely die of grief,
Did I not hope to see him again.*

*Hurry, then, to my beloved,
Whisper softly to his heart;
Take care, though, not to sadden him,
And hide from him my anguish.*

*Tell him, but tell him humbly:
That his love is my life,
His presence here will fill me
With happiness in both.*

*Translation © Richard Wigmore, author of 'Schubert: the
Complete Song Texts' (Schirmer Books), provided by Oxford
International Song Festival (www.oxfordsong.org)*

Libby Larsen (b1950)
Jane Seymour (2000)

Right trusty and Well Beloved, we greet you well, for as much as be the inestimable goodness of Almighty God,
we be delivered of a prince

I love the rose both red and white
To hear of them is my delight!
Joyed may we be
Our prince to see
And roses three!

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)
Infant Joy (pub.1924)

“I have no name:
I am but two days old.”
What shall I call thee?
“I happy am
Joy is my name.”
Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty Joy!
Sweet Joy, but two days old
Sweet Joy I call thee:
Thou dost smile
I sing the while
Sweet joy befall thee!

William Blake (Songs of Innocence (1789))

Amy Beach (1867-1944)
In the Twilight (1922)

The twilight is sad and cloudy,
The wind blows wild and free,
And like the wings of sea-gulls
Flash the white caps of the sea.

But in the fisherman's cottage
There shines a ruddier light,
And a little face at the window
Peers out into the night.

Close, close it is pressed to the window,
As if those childish eyes
Were looking into the darkness,
To see some form arise.

And a woman's waving shadow
Is passing to and fro,
Now rising to the ceiling,
Now bowing and bending low.

What tale do the roaring ocean,
And the night wind bleak and wild,
As they beat at the crazy casement,
Tell, to that little child?

And why do the roaring ocean
And the night wind, wild and bleak,—
As they beat at the heart of the mother,
Drive the colour from her cheek?

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1849)

Kaija Saariaho (1952-2023) ***Sua katselen (2004)***

Sua katselen silmin ma huikaistuin
kuni kaunista sateenkaarta,
sua silmäni sulkien muistelen kuin
meren laskija lehtosaarta.

Sua katson ma hiljaa henkien
kuin kuvaa äitini armaan
ja uskon, ett' enkelit lapsuuden
nyt lähellä liikkuvat varmaan.

*I watch you with dazzled eyes
like I would a beautiful rainbow,
I close my eyes to remember you like
the sea wanderer the luxuriant island.*

*I look at you with quiet breath
like I would at an image of my mother dear,
and I believe the angels of childhood
must be floating somewhere near.*

Eino Leino (1897) Translation by Aleksis Barrière

Judith Weir (1954) ***Breasts!! Song of the Innocent Wild-Child (2000)***

I have been waiting,
and I have been waiting,
and all over the world,
are millions, just like me...
We are all waiting -
just waiting and waiting,
for the most important thing...
Breasts!!

[Oh, Breasts!!]
Oh when shall I receive my breasts?
Will they be like
the tiny hearts of birds beating?
Or, sonorous,
even ponderous,
like majestic bells
swaying and
ringing across the land?

Oh, Breasts!!

They will be so beautiful...

Do you suppose,

even though mine do not yet show,

that they are all ready,

and just waiting,

deep inside of me?

And if I squeeze my waist, like this,

or if I tense my wrists together,

will they

- just -

- pop -

- out??!! -

visible at last?

Oh, Breasts!!

you are what I dream about - yet, wait...

Does a beloved ocean have breasts...?

Does an ocean even need them?

No, an ocean has its crests, and every current needed for dreaming.

Does a butterfly have breasts?

No, but still everyone thrills

to the sunlight through her wings.

Oh, Breasts!!

If I had breasts I would wear them

ever so smartly,

I would use them to proudly point with,

or flash them in disdain, or lift them up in joy -

but I would never flaunt them,

nor stuff them,

and especially, never fluff them...

except on special ceremonial occasions...

when I would wear ruffles [cut]

"down to here",

every chance I got!

Oh, Breasts!!

the testers of my patience

Everyone has them, but me...

Chinese, Zulus and Haitians

Hawaiians, Aleuts and Transylvanians,

Balinese, Russians and Romanians...

Everyone, but me...

Oh, Breasts!!

In fairytales, they say

giantesses have breasts so long

they can throw them over their shoulders.

Will mine be like that?

Will they be like two young candles glowing

in every dark and gloaming?

or like sweet and tasty [dark] cherries swelling from the branches,

or maybe they'll be cone-shaped like shy little tulips,

or maybe they'll be mellow like ripe and dusky melons,

or maybe they'll be "this big" and take up all the room -
in any room I'm in.
Will having breasts change my voice?
Will breasts make me taller?
When will I receive them?
for with breasts, I am certain that,
- I will rule the world! -

Come! O Lady of my body,
for I am blessed amongst women -
untie the ribbons of my body,
so it can swell in the way it is meant to...
Oh, Moulder of Breasts,
Untier of Ribbons,
Singer to Flowers Unfolding,
please, please, come to me soon?
Breasts!
Tempestuous,
Breasts!!
Holy Mothers of every living creature,
holy with desire,
holy and on fire!
[Holy breasts!]
Breasts-to-be!
Be alive!
Now!!
MMM-mmm-mmm.

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Diana Burrell (b1948)
Love Song (with Yoga) (2008)

I sing. I launch a clarion filament into the air.
I sing. I fling the ribbons of my voice into the air.
I sing to seek and breathe with hope that the airborne twine of my love song will settle lightly across your palm, will
puff softly across your cheek, will spin in joy around you a spiral, a string and that you will take up my thread and you
will follow this chord back here to the spinner, the fisherman, the singer.
I sing.
I do not know who you are.

Adey Grummet

Libby Larsen

Marriage...Divorce (from Me [Brenda Ueland]) (1987)

You have to love something outside and greater than yourself, or you are a goner.
The sky, a great man, an abstraction like courage, honour, goodness, or what some people call God.
You have to love something outside and greater than yourself. But it must be above your own pleasure and success.
I felt it was not love unless there was something clear and truthful about it...
You should walk about freely in each other's souls and see everything.
It was not love unless there was something clear and truthful about it.
You should walk about freely in each other's souls and see everything, everything, everything.
And try to understand it and then to help each other...
Even if it is to become free of each other.

Brenda Ueland 'Me' (1939)

Libby Larsen

When I am an Old Woman (1990)

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for butter.
I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells
And run my stick along the public railings
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick flowers in other people's gardens
And learn to spit.

You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go
Or only bread and pickle for a week
And hoard pens and pencils and beermats and things in boxes.

But now we must have clothes that keep us dry
And pay our rent and not swear in the street
And set a good example for the children.
We must have friends to dinner and read the papers.

But maybe I ought to practise a little now?
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised
When suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple.

Jenny Joseph (1961)

INTERVAL

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
Er, der Herrlichste von allen (1840)

Er, der Herrlichste von allen,
Wie so milde, wie so gut!
Holde Lippen, klares Auge,
Heller Sinn und fester Muth.

*He, the most wonderful of all,
How gentle and loving he is!
Sweet lips, bright eyes,
A clear mind and firm resolve.*

So wie dort in blauer Tiefe,
Hell und herrlich, jener Stern,
Also er an meinem Himmel,
Hell und herrlich, hoch und fern.

*Just as there in the deep-blue distance
That star gleams bright and brilliant,
So does he shine in my sky,
Bright and brilliant, distant and sublime.*

Wandle, wandle deine Bahnen;
Nur betrachten deinen Schein,
Nur in Demuth ihn betrachten,
Selig nur und traurig sein!

*Wander, wander on your way,
Just to gaze on your radiance,
Just to gaze on in humility,
To be but blissful and sad!*

Höre nicht mein stilles Beten,
Deinem Glücke nur geweiht;
Darfst mich niedre Magd nicht kennen,
Hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!

*Do not heed my silent prayer,
Uttered for your happiness alone,
You shall never know me, lowly as I am,
You noble star of splendour!*

Nur die Würdigste von allen
Soll beglücken deine Wahl,
Und ich will die Hohe segnen,
Segnen viele tausend Mal.

*Only the worthiest woman of all
May your choice elate,
And I shall bless that exalted one
Many thousands of times.*

Will mich freuen dann und weinen,
Selig, selig bin ich dann,
Sollte mir das Herz auch brechen,
Brich, o Herz, was liegt daran.

*Then shall I rejoice and weep,
Blissful, blissful shall I be,
Even if my heart should break,
Break, O heart, what does it matter?*

*Adelbert von Chamisso. Provided by Oxford International
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*Translation © Richard Stokes, author of: The Book of
Lieder (Faber); the Complete Songs of Hugo Wolf (Faber),
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Clara Schumann (1819-1896)
Die Lotosblume (pub. 1844)

Die stille Lotosblume
Steigt aus dem blauen See,
Die Blätter flimmern und blitzen,
Der Kelch ist weiß wie Schnee.

*The silent lotus flower
Rises out of the blue lake,
Its leaves glitter and glow,
Its cup is as white as snow.*

Da gießt der Mond vom Himmel
All seinen gold'nen Schein,
Gießt alle seine Strahlen
In ihren Schoß hinein.

*The moon then pours from heaven
All its golden light,
Pours all its rays
Into the lotus flower's bosom.*

Im Wasser um die Blume
Kreiset ein weißer Schwan,
Er singt so süß, so leise
Und schaut die Blume an.

*In the water, round the flower,
A white swan circles,
It sings so sweetly, so quietly,
And gazes on the flower.*

Er singt so süß, so leise
Und will im Singen vergehn.
O Blume, weiße Blume,
Kannst du das Lied verstehen?

*It sings so sweetly, so quietly,
And wishes to die as it sings.
O flower, white flower,
Can you fathom the song?*

*Emanuel Geibel. Provided by Oxford International
Song Festival (www.oxfordsong.org)*

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Judith Weir

The Mothership: When a Good Mother Sails From This World (2000)

STAVE 1
Sanctu, Sanctu, Sanctu.

Down at the shores,
the long lines are forming,
the old ones patiently waiting
for the journey over water
back to their "truest home".

My mother is my heart.
My mantra for years has been,
"Don't die, don't die, my Dearie,
my good mother."
But now I must bow to your angels,
and say to you,
"Lean on me."

Lean
on
me.

I will row us past the ripping tides,
I am strong and younger than you.
I will take you to that far horizon line,
beyond which,
I cannot go.

Ohhhh... Ohhhh

Lean
on
me.
Lean
on
me -

till the last
moment,
my love.
“Don’t cry,
don’t cry”,
says someone,
not myself.
“Do not be afraid.
Am I not here
beside you?
Do not fear;
you are under my protection.”
Whose voice is this?
Whose voice is speaking?
Is it myself? or my mother?
or our dearest Madre Maria,
La Virgin de Guadalupe?
She Who Holds Me, holds my mother,
holds me as I hold you,
my smaller, and smaller mother...
you take on more and more the shades of water,
your soul sparkling against the night sky.

Come, let me hold you
and birth you
through this storm.
You, who brought me through the door of your body.
Now, I am bringing you through the door of my spirit,
and I will -
see you -
through...
I will see you through...
to the new morning, I say -
to my beloved Big Momma, [I say -]
to mi madre pequeña, [I say -]
to the mother of my bones, [I say -]
to the mother’s magic touch
making all colors jump, [I say -]
to the Ma of nightlight rooms, I say -
I will see you through,
I will see you through,
to the new morning, I say -

to the mother of the lightning sky, [I say -]
to the mother of the serpent strike, [I say -]
to the mother of remedios,
mi verba buena mother, [I say -]
to the mother who speaks with the spirits, I say -
I will see you through
to the new morning, [I say -]

to the omah of the blood red roses, [I say -]
to mother midnight nurse, [I say -]
to the mother of the body’s pleasure, [I say -]

to the most beloved chocolate-grand-ma'am, I say -
I will see you through
[to the new morning, I say -]

to the frugal mother, turning her socks over
so the mended holes will not show, [I say -]
to the mother, the lover,
who made thunder under the sheets, [I say -]
to the Madonna of the grottos
of the ever-full sink and stove, I say -
[I will see you through
to the new morning, I say -]

to the kitchen-table terrorists, [I say -]
to the mothers of las velas santas, the candles lit
for the hopes of loved ones, [I say -]
[to the mother] who loved, in spite of so much, I say -
I will see you through...

[to the dragon-keeper of the family photographs, I say -]
to the mother of harsh lessons, [I say -]
to the sacred heart ringed with thorns, [I say -]
to my mother's heart broken open forever, [I say -]

I will see you through
[to the new morning, I say -]

to the little mouse mother
whose ears hear every secret thing, [I say -]
to the
most infinitely
tender
little old face,
with the eyes of a child, I say -

I will see you through...
and I will see you
in the new morning, [I say -]
...just...
...one...
...tiny...
...bedazzle...
...from now...

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Emma-Ruth Richards (b1985)
Still I Think Alive (2026)

See separate handout

Rebecca Clarke

One that is ever kind (1911?)

One that is ever kind said yesterday:
'Your well beloved's hair has threads of grey
And little shadows come about her eyes;
Time can but make it easier to be wise
Though now it's hard, till trouble is at an end;
And so be patient, be wise and patient friend.'
But heart, there is no comfort, not a grain
Time can but make her beauty over again
Because of that great nobleness of hers;
The fire that stirs about her, when she stirs
Burns but more clearly; O she had not these ways
When all the wild summer was in her gaze.
O heart O heart if she'd but turn her head,
You'd know the folly of being comforted.

WB Yeats 'The Folly of being Comforted' (1903)