

## Text and Translations

### *Se nel ben, sempre inconstante*

Se nel ben, se nel ben,  
Sempre inconstante fortuna vagante,  
Di far si stabile uso non ha,  
Anco mutabile nel mal sarà.

If times are good,  
Fortune wanders, always changing,  
It's not accustomed to remaining stable  
Yet bad times are changeable too.

### *Sonntag*

So hab' ich doch die ganze Woche  
Mein feines Liebchen nicht geseh'n,  
Ich sah es an einem Sonntag  
Wohl vor der Türe steh'n:  
Das tausendschöne Jungfräulein,  
Das tausendschöne Herzelein,  
Wollte Gott, wollte Gott, ich wär' heute bei ihr!

For a whole week now  
I haven't seen my love  
I saw her on a Sunday  
Standing at my door  
My loveliest girl  
My loveliest sweet  
Would to God I were with her today!

So will mir doch die ganze Woche  
Das Lachen nicht vergeh'n,  
Ich sah es an einem Sonntag  
Wohl in die Kirche geh'n:  
Das tausendschöne Jungfräulein,  
Das tausendschöne Herzelein,  
Wollte Gott, wollte Gott, ich wär' heute bei ihr!

Yet I'll still be able  
to laugh all week  
I saw her on Sunday  
as she went to church  
My loveliest girl  
My loveliest sweet  
Would to God I were with her today!

### *Sommerabend*

Dämmernd liegt der Sommerabend  
Über Wald und grünen Wiesen;  
Goldner Mond, im blauen Himmel  
Strahlt herunter, duftig labend.

Summer evening twilight lies  
Over forest and green meadows  
A golden moon in a blue sky  
Shines down in a soothing haze

An dem Bache zirpt die Grille,  
Und es regt sich in dem Wasser,  
Und der Wanderer hört ein Plätschern  
Und ein Athmen in der Stille.

By the brook a cricket chirps  
And the waters stir,  
And the traveler hears a splashing  
And a breathing in the stillness

Dorten, an dem Bach alleine,  
Badet sich die schöne Elfe;  
Arm und Nacken, weiß und lieblich,  
Schimmern in dem Mondenscheine.

Over there, by the brook, alone  
A lovely water-nymph is bathing  
Arms and neck, white and comely  
Shimmer in the moonlight

### *Maienkätzchen*

Maienkätzchen, erster Gruß,  
Ich breche euch und stecke euch  
An meinen alten Hut.  
Maienkätzchen, erster Gruß,  
Einst brach ich euch und steckte euch  
Der Liebsten an den Hut.

May catkins, first greeting  
I pick you and pin you,  
On my old hat  
May catkins, first greeting  
Once I've picked you and pinned you  
On my sweetheart's hat.

## *Fiançailles pour rire*

### *La Dame d'Andre*

André ne connaît pas la dame  
Qu'il prend aujourd'hui par la main.  
A-t-elle un couer à lendemains,  
Et pour le soir a-t-elle une âme?

Au retour d'un bal campagnard  
S'en allait-elle en robe vague  
Chercher dans le meules la bague  
Des fiancailles du hazard?

A-t-elle eu peur, la nuit venue,  
Guettée par les ombres d'hier,  
Dans son jardin, lorsque l'hiver  
Entrait par la grande avenue?

Il l'a aimée pour sa couleur,  
Pour sa bonne humeur de Dimanche.  
Pâlira-t-elle aux feuilles blanches  
De son album des temps meilleurs?

### *Violon*

Couple amoureux aus accents méconnus  
Le violon et son joueur me plaisent.  
Ah! j'aime ces gémissements tendus  
Sur la corde des malaises.  
Aux accords sur les cordes des pendus  
À l'heure où les Lois se taisent  
Le coeur en forme de fraise  
S'offre à l'amour comme un fruit inconnu.

### *Fleurs*

Fleurs promises, fleurs tenues dans tes bras,  
Fleurs sorties des parenthèses d'un pas,  
Qui t'apportait ces fleurs l'hiver  
Saupoudrés du sable des mers?  
Sable de tes baisers, fleurs des amours fanées  
Les beaux yeux sont de cendre et dans la cheminée  
Un coeur enrubanné de plaints  
Brûle avec ses images saintes.

Andre does not know the lady  
Whose hand he takes today in marriage.  
Does she have a heart for tomorrows  
And in the evening does she have a soul?

Coming back from a country dance  
did she go off in a light dress  
to look in the grinding stones for the ring  
Of a chance engagement?

Was she afraid once the night came,  
threatened by the shadows of yesterday,  
in her garden, when the winter  
Entered through the grand avenue?

He had loved her for her complexion,  
For her good Sunday humor.  
Will she pale at the white leaves  
Of her album of better times?

Loving couple of misapprehended sounds  
Violin and player please me.  
Ah! I love these long wailings  
Stretched on the string of disquiet.  
To the sound of strung-up chords  
At the hour when Justice is silent  
The heart shaped like a strawberry  
Gives itself to love like an unknown fruit.

Promised flowers, flowers held in your arms,  
Flowers from a step's parentheses,  
Who brought you these flowers in winter  
Sprinkled with the sea's sand?  
Sand of your kisses, flowers of faded loves  
Your lovely eyes are ashes and in the hearth  
A moan-beribboned heart  
Burns with its sacred images.

*Three Songs, op. 45*

*Now Have I Fed and Eaten Up the Rose*

Now have I fed and eaten up the rose  
Which then she laid within my stiff cold hand.  
That I should ever feed upon a rose  
I never had believed in live man's land.  
Only I wonder was it white or red  
The flower that in the darkness my food has been.  
Give us, and if Thou give, thy daily bread,  
Deliver us from evil, Lord, Amen.

*A Green Lowland of Pianos*

In the evening as far as the eye can see herds of black pianos  
up to their knees in the mire they listen to the frogs  
they gurgle in water with chords of rapture  
they are entranced by froggish, moonish spontaneity  
after the vacation they cause scandals in a concert hall during the artistic milking  
suddenly they lie down like cows  
looking with indifference at the white flowers of the audience  
at the gesticulating of the ushers

*O Boundless, Boundless Evening*

O boundless, boundless evening.  
Soon the glow of long hills on the skyline will be gone,  
Like clear dream country now, rich-hued by sun.  
O boundless evening where the cornfields throw  
The scattered daylight back in an aureole.  
Swallows high up are singing, very small.  
On every meadow glitters their swift flight,  
In woods of rushes and where tall masts stand in brilliant bays.  
Yet in ravines beyond  
Between the hills already nests the night.