

Text and Translations

Hai già vinta la causa... Vedro mentr'io sospiro

Hai già vinta la causa!
cosa sento?
In qual laccio cadea?
Perfidi!
io voglio di tal modo punirvi!
a piacer mio la sentenza sarà

Ma s'ei pagasse
La vecchia pretendente?
Pagarla!
in qual maniera?
... e poi v'è Antonio
Che a un incognito Figaro ricusa
Di dare una nipote in matrimonio.
Coltivando l'orgoglio
Di questo mentecatto ...
Tutto giova a un raggio ...
Il colpo è fatto.

Vedrò mentr'io sospiro,
Felice un servo mio?
E un ben, che invan desio,
Ei posseder dovrà?
Vedrò per man d'amore
Unita a un vil oggetto
Chi in me destò un affetto
Che per me poi non ha?

Vedro?

Ah no! lasciarti in pace
Non vo' questo contento,
Tu non nascesti, audace,
Per dare a me tormento,
E forse ancor per ridere
Di mia infelicità.

Già la speranza sola
Delle vendette mie
Quest'anima consola
E giubilar mi fa.

- Lorenzo Da Ponte

We have won the case... Shall I, while sighing

We have won the case!
Is that what I hear?
Have I fallen into a trap?
Scoundrels!
I'll punish you!
Sentencing you shall be my pleasure.

But wait...
What if he pays off the old plaintiff?
Pay her?
With what money?
And then there's Antonio
Who would never give his daughter's hand in marriage
to a fool like Figaro.
I shall nurture that imbecile's pride...
It is all part of my plot...
The die is cast!

Shall I, while sighing,
See one of my servants happy?
And the thing which I in vain desire,
Shall he have it?
Shall I see the woman who lit in me
A flame that she doesn't have also?
United to a beastly object
By the hand of love?

Shall I?

Ah no! I will not leave this be
This happiness in peace,
You were not born vile person,
To torture me,
And perhaps even laugh,
At my misfortune.

Now I hold hope
For my revenge
Which will console my soul
And make me rejoice.

Die Schöne Müllerin

Text by Wilhelm Müller/trans. Richard Wigmore

Das Wandern

Das Wandern ist des Müllers Lust,
Das Wandern!
Das muss ein schlechter Müller sein,
Dem niemals fiel das Wandern ein,
Das Wandern.

Vom Wasser haben wir's gelernt,
Vom Wasser!
Das hat nicht Rast bei Tag und Nacht,
Ist stets auf Wanderschaft bedacht,
Das Wasser.

Das sehn wir auch den Rädern ab,
Den Rädern!
Die gar nicht gerne stille stehn,
Die sich mein Tag nicht müde gehn,
Die Räder.

Die Steine selbst, so schwer sie sind,
Die Steine!
Sie tanzen mit den muntern Reihn
Und wollen gar noch schneller sein,
Die Steine.

O Wandern, Wandern, meine Lust,
O Wandern!
Herr Meister und Frau Meisterin,
Lasst mich in Frieden weiter ziehn
Und wandern.

To Wander

To wander is the miller's delight;
to wander!
A poor miller he must be
who never thought of wandering,
of wandering.

We have learnt it from the water,
from the water!
It never rests, by day or night,
but is always intent on wandering,
the water.

We can see it in the wheels too,
the wheels!
They never care to stand still
but turn tirelessly the whole day long,
the wheels.

The stones themselves, heavy as they are,
the stones!
They join in the merry dance
and seek to move still faster,
the stones.

O wandering, my delight,
O wandering!
Master and mistress,
let me go my way in peace,
and wander.

Wohin?

Ich hört' ein Bächlein rauschen
Wohl aus dem Felsenquell,
Hinab zum Tale rauschen
So frisch und wunderhell.

Ich weiss nicht, wie mir wurde,
Nicht, wer den Rat mir gab,
Ich musste auch hinunter
Mit meinem Wanderstab.

Hinunter und immer weiter
Und immer dem Bache nach,
Und immer frischer rauschte,
Und immer heller der Bach.

Ist das denn meine Strasse?
O Bächlein, sprich, wohin?
Du hast mit deinem Rauschen
Mir ganz berauscht den Sinn.

Was sag' ich denn vom Rauschen?
Das kann kein Rauschen sein:
Es singen wohl die Nixen
Tief unten ihren Reihn.

Lass singen, Gesell, lass rauschen,
Und wandre fröhlich nach!
Es gehn ja Mühlenräder
In jedem klaren Bach.

Halt!

Eine Mühle seh' ich blinken
Aus den Erlen heraus,
Durch Rauschen und Singen
Bricht Rädergebraus.

Ei willkommen, ei willkommen,
Süsser Mühlengesang!
Und das Haus, wie so traulich!
Und die Fenster, wie blank!

Und die Sonne, wie helle
Vom Himmel sie scheint!
Ei, Bächlein, liebes Bächlein,
War es also gemeint?

Where to?

I heard a little brook babbling
from its rocky source,
babbling down to the valley,
so bright, so wondrously clear.

I know not what came over me,
nor who prompted me,
but I too had to go down
with my wanderer's staff.

Down and ever onwards,
always following the brook
as it babbled ever brighter
and ever clearer.

Is this, then, my path?
O brook, say where it leads.
With your babbling
you have quite befuddled my mind.

Why do I speak of babbling?
That is no babbling.
It is the water nymphs singing
as they dance their round far below.

Let them sing, my friend; let the brook babble
and follow it cheerfully.
For mill-wheels turn
in every clear brook.

Stop!

I see a mill gleaming
amid the alders;
the roar of mill-wheels
cuts through the babbling and singing.

Welcome, welcome,
sweet song of the mill!
How inviting the house looks,
how sparkling its windows!

And how brightly the sun
shines from the sky.
Now, dear little brook,
is this what you meant?

Danksagung an den Bach

War es also gemeint,
Mein rauschender Freund,
Dein Singen, dein Klingen,
War es also gemeint?

“Zur Müllerin hin!“
So lautet der Sinn.
Gelt, hab’ ich’s verstanden?
“Zur Müllerin hin!”

Hat sie dich geschickt?
Oder hast mich berückt?
Das möcht’ ich noch wissen,
Ob sie dich geschickt.

Nun wie’s auch mag sein,
Ich gebe mich drein:
Was ich such’, hab’ ich funden,
Wie’s immer mag sein.

Nach Arbeit ich frug,
Nun hab’ ich genug,
Für die Hände, für’s Herze
Vollauf genug!

Am Feierabend

Hätt’ ich tausend
Arme zu rühren!
Könnt’ ich brausend
Die Räder führen!
Könnt’ ich wehen
Durch alle Haine!
Könnt’ ich drehen
Alle Steine!
Dass die schöne Müllerin
Merkte meinen treuen Sinn!

Ach, wie ist mein Arm so schwach!
Was ich hebe, was ich trage,
Was ich schneide, was ich schlage,
Jeder Knappe tut mir’s nach.
Und da sitz’ ich in der grossen Runde,
In der stillen kühlen Feierstunde,
Und der Meister sagt zu Allen:
„Euer Werk hat mir gefallen;“
Und das liebe Mädchen sagt
Allen eine gute Nacht.

Giving Thanks to the Brook

Is this what you meant,
my babbling friend?
Your singing, your murmuring –
is this what you meant?

‘To the maid of the mill!’
This is your meaning;
have I understood you?
‘To the maid of the mill!’

Did she send you,
or have you entranced me?
I should like to know this, too:
did she send you?

However it may be,
I yield to my fate:
what I sought I have found,
however it may be.

I asked for work;
now I have enough
for hands and heart;
enough, and more besides.

After Work

If only I had a thousand
arms to wield!
If only I could drive
the rushing wheels!
If only I could blow like the wind
through every wood,
and turn
every millstone,
so that the fair maid of the mill
would see my true love.

Ah, how weak my arm is!
What I lift and carry,
what I cut and hammer –
any apprentice could do the same.
And there I sit with them, in a circle,
in the quiet, cool hour after work,
and the master says to us all:
‘I am pleased with your work.’
And the sweet maid
bids us all goodnight.

Der Neugierige

Ich frage keine Blume,
Ich frage keinen Stern,
Sie können mir alle nicht sagen,
Was ich erfür' so gern.

Ich bin ja auch kein Gärtner,
Die Sterne stehn zu hoch;
Mein Bächlein will ich fragen,
Ob mich mein Herz belog.

O Bächlein meiner Liebe,
Wie bist du heut' so stumm!
Will ja nur Eines wissen,
Ein Wörtchen um und um.

Ja, heisst das eine Wörtchen,
Das andre heisset Nein,
Die beiden Wörtchen schliessen
Die ganze Welt mir ein.

O Bächlein meiner Liebe,
Was bist du wunderlich!
Will's ja nicht weiter sagen,
Sag', Bächlein, liebt sie mich?

Les Berceaux

Le long du quai les grands vaisseaux,
Que la houle incline en silence,
Ne prennent pas garde aux berceaux
Que la main des femmes balance.

Mais viendra le jour des adieux,
Car il faut que les femmes pleurent,
Et que les hommes curieux
Tentent les horizons qui leurrent.

Et ce jour-là les grands vaisseaux,
Fuyant le port qui diminue,
Sentent leur masse retenue
Par l'âme des lointains berceaux.

- Sully Prudhomme

The Curious One

I ask no flower,
I ask no star;
none of them can tell me
what I would so dearly like to hear.

For I am no gardener,
and the stars are too high;
I will ask my little brook
if my heart has lied to me.

O brook of my love,
how silent you are today!
I wish to know just one thing,
one small word, over and over again.

One word is 'yes',
the other is 'no';
these two words contain for me
the whole world.

O brook of my love,
how strange you are.
I will tell no one else:
say, brook, does she love me?

The Cradles

Along the quay the great ships,
Listing silently with the surge,
Pay no heed to the cradles
Rocked by women's hands.

But the day of parting will come,
For it is decreed that women shall weep,
And that men with questing spirits
Shall seek enticing horizons.

And on that day the great ships,
Leaving the dwindling harbour behind,
Shall feel their hulls held back
By the soul of the distant cradles.

- trans. Richard Stokes

N'est-ce pas?

N'est-ce pas que la vie est triste
Et que les destins sont méchants?
Et, qu'hormis la douceur des chants,
Hormis nos beaux rêves d'artiste,
Ici-bas rien de bon n'existe?

N'est-ce pas que tout n'est que leurre
Aux espoirs qui nous ont charmés,
Seuils d'or des paradis fermés,
Amours furtifs qu'emporte l'heure
Et qu'éternellement on pleure?

Si la douceur nous est donnée
De suivre le même chemin
Ensemble, la main dans la main,
Et l'âme à l'âme abandonnée,
N'accusons pas la destinée!

- Armand Silvestre

L'énamourée

Ils se disent, ma colombe,
Que tu rêves, morte encore,
Sous la pierre d'une tombe:
Mais pour l'âme qui t'adore,
Tu t'éveilles, ranimée.
Ô pensive bien-aimée!

Par les blanches nuits d'étoiles.
Dans la brise qui murmure.
Je caresse tes longs voiles,
Ta mouvante chevelure,
Et tes ailes demi-closes
Qui voltigent sur les roses!

Ô délices, je respire
Tes divines tresses blondes!
Ta voix pure, cette lyre,
Suit la vague sur les ondes,
Et, suave, les effleure,
Comme un cygne qui se pleure!

- Théodore Faullin de Banville

Isn't it so?

Isn't life sad
And aren't fates wicked?
And, apart from the sweetness of the songs,
Apart from our artist's beautiful dreams,
Does nothing good exist here below?

Isn't it all just a lure
To the hopes that charmed us,
Golden thresholds of closed paradises,
Stealthy loves that sweep away the hour
And that we cry forever?

If sweetness is given to us
Let's follow the same path
Together, hand in hand,
The soul with the abandoned soul,
Let's not blame destiny!

The Enamored

They said to each other, my dove,
that you dream, still dead,
beneath a tombstone:
but for the heart that adores you.
you waken, restored to life.
O pensive beloved.

During the nights white with stars,
in the murmuring breeze,
I caress your long veils,
your floating hair,
and your half-folded wings
which flutter over the roses!

Oh delight, I breathe
your divine blonde tresses!
your pure voice, this lyre,
follows the surge of the waves
and gently brushes them,
like a weeping swan!

- trans. James Day

Look! Through the port comes the moonshine astray.

Look! Through the port comes the moonshine astray.
It tips the guard's cutlass and silvers this nook,
But 'twill die in the dawning of Billy's last day.
Ay, ay, all is up; and I must up too,
Early in the morning, aloft from below.
On an empty stomach now never it would do.
They'll give me a nibble bit of biscuit ere I go.
Sure, a messmate will reach me the last parting cup.

But, turning heads away from the hoist and the belay,
Heaven knows who will have the running of me up!
No pipe to those halyards!
But ain't it all sham?
A blur's in my eyes; it is dreaming that I am.
But Donald he has promised to stand by the plank;
So I'll shake a friendly hand ere I sink.

But no! It is dead then I'll be, come to think.
they'll lash in hammock, drop me deep.
Fathoms down, fathoms how I'll dream fast asleep.
I feel it stealing now.
Roll me over fair!
I am sleepy, and the oozy weeds about me twist.

- E.M. Forster/Eric Crozier