Arnold Schoenberg
Das Buch der hängenden Gärten, Op. 15

Seóirse Bodley
A Girl

Aylish Kerrigan, mezzo-soprano
Dearbhla Collins, piano
## Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

### Das Buch der hängenden Gärten, Op. 15

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Text Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I. Unterm schutz von dichten blättergründen</td>
<td>2:17</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>II. Hain in diesen paradiesen</td>
<td>1:26</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>III. Als neuling trat ich ein in dein gehege</td>
<td>1:48</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>IV. Da meine lippen reglos sind und brennen</td>
<td>1:26</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>V. Saget mir, auf welchem pfade</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>VI. Jedem werke bin ich fürder tot</td>
<td>1:13</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>VII. Angst und hoffen wechselnd mich beklemmen</td>
<td>1:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>VIII. Wenn ich heut nicht deinen leib berühre</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>IX. Streng ist uns das glück und spröde</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>X. Das schöne beet betracht ich mir im harren</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>XI. Als wir hinter dem beblümten tore</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>XII. Wenn sich bei heilger ruh in tiefen matten</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>XIII. Du lehnest wider eine silberweide</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>XIV. Sprich nicht immer</td>
<td>0:53</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>XV. Wir bevölkerten die abenddüstern</td>
<td>5:12</td>
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### Total Duration: 27:43

## Seóirse Bodley (b.1933)

### A Girl

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<td>16</td>
<td>I. November Cloud</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>II. The Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>III. Familiar Things</td>
<td>2:34</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>IV. Lies</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>VI. Evil</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>VIII. Are women the only beings who feel?</td>
<td>1:49</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>IX. The moment I found I was nothing</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>X. The Puzzle</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>XI. The Dogs of Darkness</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>XII. Summer</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>XIII. Darkness</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>XIV. Sweetest Postures of the Heart</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>XV. All things move towards peace</td>
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<td>XVI. Solitude</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>XVIII. The Slaughterer</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>XIX. Killers</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>XX. Strength</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>XXI. Emptiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>XXII. I am going out ...</td>
<td>3:53</td>
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### Total Duration: 39:04
Schoenberg: Das Buch der hängenden Gärten
Arnold Schoenberg composed Das Buch der hängenden Gärten, Opus 15, in the turbulent personal and artistic years 1908-1909. During this period he had taken dissonance to its limits. Whether the move to atonality was a natural progression or a reaction to the chaos in both Schoenberg’s outer and inner world at the turn of the century is a point constantly debated by scholars. The slow brewing social and political turbulence at the beginning of the century eventually erupted into World War I.

In 1907 Schoenberg lost Mahler, the only famous composer and musician in Vienna who believed in Schoenberg’s genius, when his friend accepted a post as conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. In the summer of 1908 Schoenberg’s wife Mathilde left him and their two small children to live with Gerstl, the immensely talented Expressionistic painter who had become a family friend and given painting lessons to both Schoenberg and his wife. She was convinced by Webern to return to Schoenberg in October of 1908. Shortly after, Gerstl committed suicide, destroying most of his paintings.

The poems tell of a love story taking place in the exotic backdrop of an oriental garden. There is a vague foreboding, sensual imagery, repressed longings and intense passions alternating with hopeless resignation. For both Stefan George (the poet) and Schoenberg, the imagery in the poetry evokes emotions, not naturalistic pictures. This is the world of the subconscious transformed into words by George and dematerialized, fragmented and transferred into another dimension by Schoenberg. The songs are short, intense lyrical moments of a compressed inner world. Freud’s Vienna was also Schoenberg’s.

Das Buch der hängenden Gärten ranks with the great song cycles of the Lieder repertoire and may be compared in beauty, complexity and importance to Die Winterreise from Schubert or Der Liederkreis from Schumann. It is rarely performed, no doubt due to difficulties of pitching and interpretation for the singer and the technical problems of the piano accompaniment. Despite its demanding nature, it is one of the most satisfying works in Western vocal literature, offering both musicians opportunities for perceptive musical insights and subtle, intelligent interpretation. The musicianship displayed by both singer and pianist must reflect a deep understanding of the complex connections between the music and text, seldom if ever surpassed in vocal music.

Aylish Kerrigan

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) was one of the most influential figures in the history of music. His eventual break with tonality ended a 400-year tradition and influenced generations of composers who followed. Born in Vienna to a lower middle-class Jewish family with roots in Bratislava and Prague, he was largely self-taught. His only formal instruction came from his close friend, the composer Alexander Zemlinsky, who tutored him in counterpoint. Schoenberg was an ardent admirer of Wagner and explored the techniques of motivic augmentation and inversion and the role of chromaticism in creating dense contrapuntal structure, taking tonality and chromaticism to its limits in such works as Verklärte Nacht, Gurrelieder and Pelleas und Melisande.
Schoenberg was regarded as a superb theoretical and compositional teacher attracting Alban Berg and Anton Webern, who together with Schoenberg established the Second Viennese School. He participated both as a composer and a visual artist in the Expressionistic movement, garnering the attention of Kandinsky and the painters in the 'Blaue Reiter', with whom he exhibited in 1912.

The political and cultural influences surrounding Schoenberg’s early compositional years reveal a world in transition – on the brink of explosive change. Concepts of human identity, government, philosophy, nationalism, subconscious influences on human behaviour and man’s understanding of the physical world were shattered and reconstructed within a 46-year period. The so-called ‘Golden Age of Security’ reached after nearly one thousand years of the Hapsburg monarchy was challenged by poets, intellectuals and a small number of composers. In 1859, Darwin revealed his theory of evolution. In 1867 Karl Marx wrote Das Kapital. In 1883 Friedrich Nietzsche wrote Also Sprach Zarathustra. In 1896 Theodore Herzl published his book entitled The Jewish State and with it, the Zionist Movement was born, later leading to the establishment of Israel.

In 1900 Sigmund Freud published The Interpretation of Dreams. The study of quantum physics was initiated the same year by Max Planck. In 1905 Albert Einstein proclaimed his theory of Relativity. The old world had fragmented. In the wake of these developments, Schoenberg composed Opus 15. It may be seen as the culmination of the late 19th century Lied, and as a harbinger for future developments in vocal writing, foreshadowing his own Pierrot Lunaire and the expansion of vocal technique, atonality and musico-dramatic expression during the 20th century.

In the 1920’s, Schoenberg developed the 12-tone system of composition, known as dodecaphonic serialism. He continued to teach in the Berlin Academy of Art, conducted orchestras throughout Europe and supported performances of new music for musicians and music-lovers, to the exclusion of music critics. In 1934, he fled Germany and settled in Los Angeles, where he became a music professor at UCLA. His health declined, forcing him to resign and resort to private teaching. He died in 1951, never receiving the financial support or world recognition his genius deserved.

Aylish Kerrigan
Bodley: A Girl
This cycle of twenty-two songs on poems specially written by Brendan Kennelly was commissioned by Radio Telefís Eireann. It was first performed in the National Gallery, Dublin in 1978.

The underlying story is one not that uncommon in Ireland up to relatively recent times. The girl of the title is pregnant. Unable to take the humiliation to which as an unmarried mother she is subjected, she finally drowns herself. The songs trace her emotions and thoughts as she moves towards the only logical solution she can see. The poet has described the work as “a drama involving hardship and indignity as well as moments of happiness and beauty, vividly apprehended”. These elements are of equal importance to the musical content.

Musically the songs concentrate on a highly-charged emotional expression of the girl’s feelings, and on an underlying sense of human sympathy. The music calls for a special style of singing based to a considerable extent on traditional Irish song. A number of the songs use speech-rhythm and built-in elements of recitative – emphasising the personal and dramatic aspects of the girl’s self-exploration. There are some musical cross-references between songs – mainly in the later sections of the work where reference is made to earlier elements. In the slow music at the end of No. 18 (“The Slaughterer”) when the girl sings “The water laps in my head deeper than ever” the music harks back to the “familiar things” of song No. 3. The dramatic implications of equating the “familiar” with the thoughts of the river in which she will eventually drown emphasise the continuity of the girl’s emotional logic. Likewise the section of the last song “Surely to God/This moment is my friend” as the girl drowns, refers back to “Cut free, O my love that is not my love” in No. 17 – again the music serves to underline a dramatic-musical purpose.

The songs are highly varied in mood, producing climaxes of different emotions at various points throughout the cycle. Various types of emotional statement are represented: lyric recitation; dramatic statement; dramatic questioning; dramatic monologue; expressive monologue etc. The cycle also deals with mixed emotions: positive/negative elegiac moods; joy and horror combined; peace and rhapsodic joy; emptiness and ecstasy.

At times the music makes use of the simplest possible statement, as in No. 12 (“Summer”) which is accompanied by a single chord in the piano repeated crescendo/diminuendo in a steady rhythm, while the singer has a free-flowing rhapsodic melody entirely independent of the piano part.

No. 21 (“Emptiness”) likewise has for accompaniment a single major chord placed in various special piano sonorities in between the singer’s recitative. No. 5 uses an Irish polka tune written by the composer, but broken up so that its sections do not appear in the normal order, and incorporating extra beats in some bars. No. 20 (“Strength”) is a brief free treatment of Irish slow air style. All the various types of song and of emotional expression point or hint in some way at the dissolution of the girl’s being in the last song. The final bars refer back to the opening of the first song, matching the last poem’s reference to the “November cloud” of the opening of the cycle.
In all of the songs the singer adopts the persona of the girl and uses the first person singular. The result is thus different from the more loose type of song cycle. This work is in a sense a dramatic cantata for solo voice and piano.

Seóirse Bodley

Seóirse Bodley, D. Mus., was born in Dublin in 1933. Studies in Ireland and Germany (Academy of Music, Stuttgart) were followed by an appointment in the Music Department of University College Dublin, of which he is now Professor Emeritus. He is a founder-member and a Saoi of Aosdána, Ireland's academy of creative artists.

Since his early twenties, Seóirse Bodley’s music has been broadcast and performed in Ireland, across European countries, North America, Australia, China and Japan. Influences on his compositions include a range of musical styles from the European avant-garde to Irish traditional music, and a series of works arising from the philosophy of the Austrian-born philosopher, Karl Popper.

During the period from 1950 to the end of the millennium he composed a wide range of works, many of which continue to be performed. Throughout his life, he has performed his works with such established performers as Bernadette Greevy and the renowned English tenor Ian Partridge (2002) and more recently with Sylvia O’Brien (soprano) as in the 75th birthday concert of his song-cycles arranged for him by the Hugh Lane Gallery (April 2008). He has recorded and performed internationally with Aylish Kerrigan, who has given first performances of many of his works.

Seóirse Bodley’s works include:

5 symphonies (full orchestra) and 2 chamber symphonies
Numerous orchestral, choral & vocal works (including song-cycles), piano literature & chamber music.
Major commissions include:
Third Symphony, for the opening of the National Concert Hall in Dublin.
Fourth Symphony, for the Arturo Toscanini Symphony Orchestra of Parma, Italy.
Awards include:
Sage of Aosdána (2008)
President of the Association of Irish Composers (2007)
Marten Toonder Award (1982).
Macaulay Fellowship in Music Composition (1962).
Travelling Studentship of the National University of Ireland (1962).
Arts Council Prize for Composition (1956).
Aylish Kerrigan

Prof. Dr. Aylish E. Kerrigan, mezzo-soprano, was born in San Francisco of Irish parents and studied with the renowned vocal pedagogue, Professor John de Merchant, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Music and a Master's Degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Oregon. She continued studies at the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Stuttgart, receiving a soloist diploma in Opera and German Lieder. She is recognized as one of the foremost interpreters of Irish vocal music, documented in her first performances, recordings and extensive collection of Irish traditional songs, arranged for her by acclaimed Irish composers.

Her work together with the noted Brecht specialists Gisela May and Peter Palitzsch established her as an interpreter of German Theatre Music. Her one-woman Broadway shows have won her acclaim in Paris, Dublin, New York and Berlin.

Since 1994, Ms Kerrigan has been a guest professor at the Wuhan Conservatory of Music in China, where she gives master classes regularly in the performance of German Lieder. In 2007, with the aid of the Irish Foreign Affairs Department and the help of the Contemporary Music Center and the Irish Traditional Music Archive, she established the first library of Irish music in China at the Wuhan Conservatory of Music. In May 2011 she was made a ‘Chu Tian Scholar’, the highest academic award given to foreign professors by the Chinese government.

She was awarded a PhD in November 2009 from Dundalk Institute of Technology for her research project on the vocal music of Arnold Schoenberg. Since 2011 she has directed and performed in the concert series ‘GRENZTÖNE’, which presents contemporary music and is sponsored by the cultural department of the city of Stuttgart, Germany, the Robert Bosch Foundation and Culture Ireland. In 2016 she directed and performed at the Irish Cultural Festival in Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany, commemorating the 1916 Easter Uprising in Dublin and featuring first performances of new Irish compositions. She has performed with Dearbha Collins in Ireland, Germany and China since 2007 and recently recorded contemporary Irish vocal works with Ms Collins for the Métier label.
Dearbhla Collins

Dearbhla Collins, pianist, was born in Dublin and completed piano studies at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin and the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna, continuing private studies with Boris Pertushansky in Bologna. She is one of Ireland's finest and most versatile musicians. In addition to her accomplished career as a soloist, the prize-winning pianist is a regular chamber music partner to internationally renowned singers and Ireland’s leading artists and performs regularly with her pianist brother, Finghin Collins, in concerts for piano duo.

Ms Collins is an acclaimed vocal coach for art song and opera at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and performs in Ireland, the USA, China, Germany, Tunisia, France and Great Britain. She has appeared in the Wigmore Hall, London and the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing and given Master Classes in France, Beijing, Shanghai and Wuhan, China. She is recognized as a superb interpreter in accompanying German Lieder, contemporary vocal repertoire and international theatre music.

Currently, she is Artistic Administrator of the prestigious triennial Veronica Dunne International Singing Competition in Dublin and a Patron of the Irish Freemasons Young Musician of the Year Competition. Ms Collins was artistic director of the Dublin Hugo Wolf Festival and opera consultant for the performances of the 'Irish Ring' at the Royal Dublin Society. She is a member of the Board of the National Concert Hall, Dublin and served two terms as a Director of Culture Ireland, the national agency for promoting Irish arts abroad. She has performed with Aylish Kerrigan in Ireland, Germany and China since 2007 and is currently collaborating with her on a series of recordings of Irish and German contemporary works for the Métier label.
Das Buch der hängenden Gärten

I.
Unterm schutz von dichten blättergründen
Wo von sternen feine flocken schneien,
Sachte stimmen ihre leiden künden,
Fabeltiere aus den braunen schlünden
Strahlen in die marmorbecken speien,
Draus die kleinen bäche klagend eilen:
Kamen kerzen das gesträuch entzünden,
Weisse formen das gewässer teilen.

II.
Hain in diesen paradiesen
Wechselt ab mit blütenwiesen
Hallen, buntbemalten fliesen.
Schlanker störche schnäbel kräuseln
Teiche, die von fischen schillern,
Vögeln reihen matten scheines
Auf den schiefen firsten trillern
Und die goldnen binsen säuseln –
Doch mein traum verfolgt nur eines.

III.
Als neuling trat ich ein in dein gehege
Kein staunen war vorher in meinen mienen,
Kein wunsch in mir, eh ich dich blickte rege.
Der jungen hände faltung sieh mit huld,
Erwähle mich zu denen die dir dienen
Und schöne mit erbarmender geduld
Den der noch strauchelt auf so fremdem stege.

IV.
Da meine lippen reglos sind und brennen
Beacht ich erst wohin mein fuss geriet:
In andrer herren prächtiges gebiet.
Noch war vielleicht mir möglich, mich zu trennen,
Da schien es dass durch hohe gitterstäbe
Der blick vor dem ich ohne lass gekniet
Mich fragend suchte oder zeichen gäbe.

I.
Under the shelter of dense foliage
where fine flakes snow from stars,
soft voices speak of pain,
magical animals from their deep brown throats
spew jets of water in the marble basin
out of which small streams hurry mourning,
candles came to light the bushes,
white shapes divide the waters.

II.
Groves in these paradises
alternate with flowery meadows,
halls, colourfully painted tiles,
slender storks' beaks ripple
ponds, glimmering with fish,
rows of birds with dull glow
warble from the crooked roof tops
and the gold rushes whisper –
but my dream pursues only one thing.

III.
As a newcomer, I entered your preserve;
no astonishment showed in my face before,
no wish moved inside me, before I saw you.
See with kindness the young hands folded in prayer;
choose me with those who serve you
and spare with merciful patience
the one who still stumbles on such a foreign path.

IV.
Since my lips are motionless and burning,
I began to comprehend where my foot has stepped:
into other masters' magnificent sphere.
It was still perhaps possible for me to depart,
then it appeared, as if through high bars,
the gaze before which I incessantly knelt
searched me questioningly or gave me signs.
V.
Saget mir, auf welchem pfade
Heute sie vortüberschreite –
Dass ich aus der reichsten lade
Zarte seidenweben hole,
Rose pflücke und viole,
Dass ich meine wange breite,
Schemel unter ihrer sohle.

VI.
Jedem werke bin ich fürder tot.
Dich mir nahzurufen mit den sinnen,
Neue reden mit dir auszuspinnen,
Dienst und lohn gewährung und verbot,
Von allen dingen ist nur dieses not
Und weinen dass die bilder immer fliehen
Die in schöner finsternis gediehen –
Wann der kalte klare morgen droht.

VII.
Angst und hoffen wechselnd mich beklemmen,
Meine worte sich in seufzer dehnen,
Mich bedrängt so ungesäütes sehnen
Dass ich mich an rast und schlaf nicht kehre
Dass mein lager tränen schwemmen
Dass ich jede freude von mir wehre
Dass ich keines freundes trost begehre.

VIII.
Wenn ich heut nicht deinen leib ühre
Wird der faden meiner seele reissen
Wie zu sehr gespannte sehne.
Liebe zeichen seien trauerflöre
Mir der leidet seit ich dir gehöre.
Richte, ob mir solche qual gebühre,
Kühlung sprengen mir dem fieberheissen
Der ich wanken draussen lehne.

V.
Tell me on which path
she might pass by today,
so that I can take out of the richest chest
finest silk cloth,
pick roses and violets,
so that I can spread my cheek,
a footstool under her feet.

VI.
Henceforth I am dead to all creations.
To call you near to me with the senses,
to weave new conversations with you,
service and reward, permission and prohibition,
of all things only this one is necessary,
and crying, that the images keep vanishing
that flourish in beautiful darkness
when the cold, clear morning threatens.

VII.
Fear and hope frighten me in turn,
my words expand into sighs,
a wild longing presses me,
so that I cannot turn to rest and sleep,
so that my tears flood my bed,
so that I reject each joy,
so that I do not desire any friends' consolation.

VIII.
If I cannot touch your body today
the thread of my soul will rip
Like an over-taut bow string.
Be signs of love mourning bands
for me who suffers since the time I belong to you.
Judge if I deserve such torture,
spray coolness on me who is hot with fever,
who leans faltering outside.
IX.
Happiness is harsh and brittle for us,
what does a short kiss accomplish?
A splash of a raindrop
in a burned, pale wasteland
which swallows it without pleasure
and cannot have new refreshment
and cracks with new heat.

X.
I watch the beautiful flower bed while I wait,
it is fenced by purple-black thorns,
inside stand sepals with spotted spores
and bending ferns with silken feathers
and flaked bushes, green like water and round,
and in the middle, bells, white and mild –
of one breath is her moist mouth
like sweet fruit from Elysian fields.

XI.
As we behind the blooming gate
finally felt only our own breath,
did we receive fantasised bliss?
I remember, that like weak reeds
both silent, we began to tremble
when we softly touched each other
and that our eyes ran –
thus you remained a long time at my side.

XII.
When in holy quietness in deep meadows
our hands touch our temples,
adoration soothes our burning limbs:
so do not think of the misshapen shadows,
which sway up and down on the wall,
nor of the guards, who can separate us quickly
and not that the white sand outside the city
is ready to swallow our warm blood.
XIII.
Du lehnest wider eine silberweide
Am ufer, mit des fächers starren spitzen
Umschirmest du das haupt dir wie mit blitzen
Und rollst als ob du spiest dein geschmeide.
Ich bin im boot das laubgewölbe wahren,
In das ich dich vergeblich lud zu steigen ...
Die weiden seh ich die sich tiefer neigen
Und blumen die verstreut im wasser fahren.

XIV.
Sprich nicht immer
Von dem laub,
Windes raub,
Vom zerschellen
Reifer quitten,
Von den tritten
Der vernichter
Spät im jahr.
Von dem zittern
Der libellen
In gewittern
Und der lichter
Deren flimmer
Wandelbar.

XV.
Wir bevölkerten die abend-düstern
Lauben, lichten tempel, pfad und beet
Freudig – sie mit lächeln ich mit flüstern –
Nun ist wahr dass sie für immer geht.
Hohe blumen blassen oder brechen,
Es erblasst und bricht der weihers glas
Und ich trete fehl im morschen gras,
Palmen mit den spitzen fingern stechen.
Mürber blätter zischendes gewühl
Jagen ruckweis unsichtbare hände
Draussen um des edens fahe wände.
Die nacht ist überwölkt und schwül.

texts: Stefan George
translations: Aylish E. Kerrigan
A Girl

1. November Cloud
November cloud is the colour of my mind.
My body is music.
I listen lovingly whenever I can.
I have wondered long at how blind
And ignorant I am.
I am beautiful too.
From the bits and pieces composing my body and mind
I choose what I think is true.

2. The Room
My room is surrounded by other rooms.
It is small and dark.
On one of the walls is a picture
Of the Sacred Heart.
If my own heart is sacred
How can I tell?
Sometimes I think it is poised
Between heaven and hell,

Poised like a gull on the wind
Down by the shore
Where all the cries of my life
Mingle together
As though the world itself were a room
Where humans lie
Listening to their sacred and unsacred hearts
Beat til they die.

3. Familiar Things
Strange how the most familiar things
– on my head the cold loved rain –
Say for me
What I cannot say of my pain.

I must not speak for myself.
Things speak for me.
Raindrops on a twig in February light
Are fragile and free.

1. Novemberwolke
Novemberwolke ist die Farbe meines Geistes.
Mein Körper ist Musik.
Ich lausche mit Liebe so oft ich kann.
Lange habe ich mich gewundert, wie blind
Und unwissend ich bin.
Ich bin auch schön.
Aus den Bruchstücken meines Körpers und Geistes
Wähle ich, was mir als wahr erscheint.

2. Der Raum
Mein Raum ist umgeben von anderen Räumen.
Er ist klein und dunkel.
An einer Wand hängt ein Bild
Des seligen Herz Jesu.

Wenn mein eigenes Herz selig ist,
Wie kann ich es wissen?
Manchmal denke ich, es schwebt
Zwischen Himmel und Hölle,

Schwebt wie eine Möwe im Wind,
Am Meeresstrand,
Wo alle Schreie meines Lebens
Zusammenlaufen,
Als wäre die Welt selbst ein Raum,
Wo Menschen liegen
Und dem Schlag ihrer seligen und unseligen
Herzen lauschen bis sie sterben.

3. Vertraute Dinge
Seltsam, wie die vertraustesten Dinge
– auf meinem Kopf der kalte geliebte Regen –
Für mich sagen,
Was ich von meinem Leid nicht sagen kann.

Ich darf nicht für mich sprechen.
Dinge sprechen für mich.
Regentropfen auf einem Zweig im Licht des Februars
Sind zerbrechlich und frei.
There is no freedom that is not fragile.
O world beyond my skin
Shall I choose how to grow out of myself
Shall I choose how to let you in?

Speak to me, then, familiar things
– on my head the cold loved rain –
Your voices constitute my voice,
Your freedom measures my pain.

4. Lies
I will not lie to myself
By saying that I betrayed another.
One can only betray oneself.
Do you hear me, sister?
Do you hear me, brother?

It is this that is hard to bear –
I scarcely live, I rather
Endure the days like the dreams they are.
Do you hear me, mother?
Do you hear me, father?

When I cut the lies out of my life
I still must live as best I can.
I was a brief lover, I'll not be a wife.
Do you hear me, boy?
Do you hear me, man?

5. Polka
There is a road between great oak trees
I have walked since I was a child,
I danced when I heard the oak leaves singing
‘That girl is wild’.

I followed the hoof-tracks of the working horses
Through winter into spring,
Whenever I stopped in my own silence
I heard the oak leaves sing.

Nightly, now, the huge-hooved horses
Pound where my body sleeps,
Along the road between the oak trees
A deepening silence creeps.

Es gibt keine Freiheit die nicht zerbrechlich ist.
O Welt jenseits meiner Haut
Soll ich versuchen, aus mir herauszugehen
Soll ich versuchen, dich herein zu lassen?

So sprecht zu mir vertraute Dinge
– auf meinem Kopf der kalte Regen –
Eure Stimmen werden zu meiner Stimme
Eure Freiheit misst mein Leid.

4. Lügen
Ich werde mich nicht selbst belügen
Und sagen ich betrog andere.
Man kann nur sich selbst betrügen.
Hörst du mich, Schwester?
Hörst du mich, Bruder?

Dies ist schwer zu ertragen –
Ich lebe kaum, ich nehme
Die Tage lieber für die Träume die sie sind.
Hörst du mich, Mutter?
Hörst du mich, Vater?

Nehme ich die Lügen aus meinem Leben
Muss ich dennoch leben so gut ich kann.
Ich war eine flüchtige Geliebte, niemals ein Weib.
Hörst du mich, Junge?
Hörst du mich, Mann?

5. Polka
Auf einer Straße zwischen stolzen Eichen
Ging ich seit ich ein Kind war.
Ich tanzte wenn das Eichenlaub sang
„Dieses Mädchen ist wild“.

Ich folgte den Huftpuren der Arbeitspferde
Durch den Winter in den Frühling.
Immer wenn ich in meiner Stille innehielt
Hörte ich das Eichenlaub singen.

Jede Nacht trampeln jetzt die Pferdehufe
Dort wo mein Körper ruht
Entlang der Straße zwischen den Eichen
Schleicht eine tiefe Stille.
6. Evil
If I have no evil in myself
How shall I any evil understand?
Innocence, you are my enemy,
You split my heart and my mind.

Evil taught me whatever I know
And if it asks a price
Why should I not pay in full?
What if it asks my life?

Is my life worth more or less
Than the seaweed on the shore,
Than the midnight bark of a fettered dog
Or the wind's knock on the door?

Is my life worth more or less
Than the blackbird's body on the grass,
Than the old newspaper pitched in a drain
Or the despair of the half-heard rain?

7. Birds' Wings
There are times when I think my body
Is made of birds' wings –
Thrushes and larks and blood-breasted robins
And packed starlings.

I think I could fly
Out of myself into the air
Over the thin reeds of the swamp
Across the river

Into another country more peaceful than this
To find
The sort of peace that can exist
Only in my mind

When my body is made of birds' wings
That somehow refuse to fly;
Blackbirds, swallows, yellowhammers
Clamouring to die.

6. Das Böse
Wenn ich nichts Böses in mir habe
Wie sollte ich es verstehen?
Unschuld, du bist mein Feind,
du spaltest mein Herz und meinen Geist.

Das Böse lehrte mich alles was ich weiß
Und wenn es seinen Preis verlangt,
Warum sollte ich nicht voll bezahlen?
Und was, wenn es mein Leben von mir fordert?

Ist mein Leben mehr oder weniger wert
Als der Seetang am Strand,
Als das Bellen eines Kettenhundes um Mitternacht
Oder das Rütteln des Windes an der Tür?

Ist mein Leben mehr oder weniger wert
Als eine tote Amsel im Gras,
Als eine weggeworfene Zeitung im Rinnstein
Oder die Verzweiflung des Nieselregens?

7. Vogelflügel
Manchmal denke ich, mein Körper
Besteht aus Vogelflügeln –
Drosseln, Lerchen und blutbrüstige Rotkehlchen
Und aufgereihte Staren.

Ich denke ich könnte fliegen
Aus mir heraus in die Luft.
Über das dünne Schilf der Sümpfe.
Über den Fluss hinweg

In ein anderes Land, friedlicher als dieses
Den Frieden zu finden.
Der nur in meinem Geist
Bestehen kann.

Wenn mein Körper aus Vogelflügeln besteht.
Die den Flug verweigern;
Amseln, Schwalben, Goldhämmer,
Die nach dem Tod rufen.
8. Are women the only beings who feel?
Are women the only beings who feel?
I turn to the sound of rain falling
From a hedge into a drain.
If I walk here in three months' time
I shall find this hedge in bloom
Fresh blackberries will stain my fingers,
I'll pluck them, take them home
To my own family.
What do the blackberries feel
When I rip them off with my fingers?
I want to sing of how I feel
In my private cage of time,
How I am a groping creature,
How love is still a crime.

9. The moment I found I was nothing
The moment I found
I was nothing
Was the moment
I started to sing.
The moment I started to sing
I was something.
I was created
By a song
That came out of nothing
As, when a child,
I was told of this world
called from a void
I am nothing, I am a world
In my own sphere,
All the nothings move about me
Whirling together.

10. The Puzzle
My mind is a ray of sunlight
Making an angle on a kitchen wall.
The clarity of that moment
Stresses the puzzle.
Human filth is everywhere
And cannot be undone
By a vain human mind
Likening itself to the sun.

11. The Dogs of Darkness
The dogs of darkness howl
Across the fields
Their smells lacerate my room,
Their fangs flash over half-sleep.
At the first light they quieten
But their fury has entered my blood.
Today's work will not appease
This angry god.

12. Summer
When summer came I threw off my shoes
As though to trust
Some promised goodness in the weather.
I grew to love the dust.
I felt each summer slowly yield
To autumn's sensual rust
And thrilled to find my heart at one
With summer dust.

13. Darkness
Oh the darkness of that room
Like the darkness of my womb,
Darkness here, darkness there,
What will the darkness bear?
Deeper darkness of the water,
Child-darkness moulding son and daughter,
Darkness of God's living air,
What will the darkness bear?
Darkness of my father's house,
Love so sweet and perilous,
Suffering no-one dares to share,
What will the darkness bear?
Darkness of the world I know,
Darkness into which I go,
Darkness at whose face I stare,
What will the darkness bear?

Menschlicher Schmutz ist überall
Und wird nicht ungeschehen gemacht
Durch einen eitlen Menschengeist,
Der sich mit der Sonne vergleicht.

11. Die Hunde der Dunkelheit
Die Hunde der Dunkelheit
Heulen über die Felder.
Ihr Geruch verätzt mein Zimmer,
Ihre Fänge blitzen über dem Halbschlafl.
Beim ersten Licht verstummen sie,
Doch ihre Wut hat mein Blut erfasst.
Das Werk des heutigen Tages wird diesen
Zornigen Gott nicht beruhigen.

12. Sommer
Als der Sommer kam, warf ich meine Schuhe beiseite,
Als traute ich
Dem versprochenen guten Wetter.
Allmählich lernte ich den Staub zu lieben.
Ich fühlte jeden Sommer langsam übergehen
In den sinnlichen Rost des Herbstes
Und war glücklich, mein Herz
Vereint zu finden mit Sommerstaub.

13. Dunkelheit
O Dunkelheit dieses Zimmers
Wie die Dunkelheit meiner Gebärmutter,
Dunkelheit hier, Dunkelheit dort,
Was trägt die Dunkelheit aus?
Tiefere Dunkelheit des Wassers,
Kindesdunkelheit, die Sohn und Tochter formt,
Dunkelheit Gottes lebendiger Luft,
Was trägt die Dunkelheit aus?
Dunkelheit meines Vaters Hauses,
Liebe so süß und gefährlich,
Leid das niemand zu teilen wagt,
Was trägt die Dunkelheit aus?
Dunkelheit der Welt die ich kenne,
Dunkelheit in die ich gehe,
Dunkelheit in deren Gesicht ich starre,
Was trägt die Dunkelheit aus?
14. Sweetest Postures of the Heart
In my life’s ignored places
Noiseless, apart,
I have sensed
How I might stumble
On the sweetest postures of the heart.
I understand
But little.
I am usually mistaken
About what I try to grasp
But I would hope to be unshaken
By this sense of being wrong
And suffering wrong.
If I should stumble
On the sweetest postures
Suffering would become a human song.

15. All things move towards peace
All things move towards peace,
The way is pain.
A trouble between two secrets
Of which nothing is known.
I live in nothing, I die towards nothing.
I am nothing. Then why
Do I read in the book
Of the earth and the sky
That all this nothing is a joy,
A miracle that grows
In its immensity
The less one knows?
This ignorance is the holiest thing
Its influence lingers
In my heart when I let water flow
Between my fingers.

16. Solitude
The morning star is a solitary order.
The river at the back of my father’s house
Makes its solitary journey
To the sea.
I love the solitariness of things.
I listen there
And hear the heartbeat of creation.
I see a God happy to bless
All that he has made.
Here, now, I thank Him for that blessing.
I love the cold centre of His fire.
He loves my gratitude.

17. Possession
Obscenities fall like rain –
My father, my daughter, my son;
The ultimate obscenity
Is possession.
Cut free, o my love that is not my love
Walk where your shadow
Follows you in a street
Or across a fresh-cut meadow
Saying
‘You do not possess even me.’
Embrace the blessing.
Exult in having nothing

18. The Slaughterer
My mind tonight is the squealing of pigs
Waiting for slaughter
All the days and nights of my life
Are a dream of water.
The slaughterer smiles through his knife
In the next room.
My hands encounter the seasons,
Hover about my womb,
Climb to my head to find
Screams nailed to my skull
And a child's bones before they grow
Pliable
As innocence itself.
Each pig squeals for its life.
The slaughterer turns to my room
Lifting his knife.

Ich liebe die Einsamkeit der Dinge
Ich höre hin
Und höre den Herzschlag der Schöpfung.
Ich sehe Gott, der glücklich alles segnet,
Was er geschaffen hat.
Hier, jetzt, danke ich Ihm für diesen Segen.
Ich liebe das kalte Innere seines Feuers.
Er liebt meine Dankbarkeit.

17. Eigentum
Es regnet Obszönitäten –
Mein Vater, meine Tochter, mein Sohn;
Die größte Obszönität
Ist Eigentum.
Befreie dich, o meine Liebe die nicht meine Liebe ist,
Gehe wo dir dein Schatten
Folgt auf einer Straße
Oder über eine frisch gemähte Wiese
Und sagt
„Du besitzt nicht einmal mich,
Umarme den Segen.
Sei glücklich nichts zu haben“.

18. Der Schlächter
Heute Nacht ist mein Geist das Quieken der Schweine,
Die auf das Schlachten warten.
Die Tage und Nächte meines Lebens
Sind ein Traum von Wasser.
Der Schlächter grinst durch sein Messer
Im Raum nebenan.
Meine Hände begegnen den Jahreszeiten,
Lauern über meiner Gebärmutter,
Klettern hinauf zu meinem Kopf und finden
An meinen Schädel genagelte Schreie
Und Knochen eines Kindes bevor sie wachsen
Biegsam
Wie die Unschuld selbst.
Jedes Schwein schreit um sein Leben.
Der Schlächter kommt in mein Zimmer
Und erhebt sein Messer.
The water laps in my head
deeper than ever.
Moonlight glints like a million blades
In my favourite river.

19. Killers
So many killers of women
Are lovable men.
Men do their daily good,
Work, consider, help, save
Money for further good,
Dig many a grave,
Including their own.
As did many a father and mother.
We know so little of what we kill
Though we kill each other.

20. Strength
They gather together to pool their weaknesses,
Persuade themselves that they are strong.
There is no strength like the strength of one
Who will not belong.

21. Emptiness
Let me be emptied of everything
Like a cup
Once brimming with milk or water.
Now there’s not a drop.
The cup contains nothing.
Place it in the sun
It fills with sunlight
And is empty as a graveyard bone.
This emptiness is the presence I seek.
The sun wants to enter me.
Fill me with itself.
All this is accomplished lovingly.

22. I am going out ...
I am going out, not down.
Out of my flesh
I pour like water.
Do I kick and thrash?

Das Wasser plätschert in meinem Kopf
tiefer denn je.
Mondlicht glitzert wie Millionen Klingen
In meinem Lieblingsfluss.

19. Mörder
So viele Frauenmörder
Sind liebenswerte Männer.
Männer tun täglich Gutes,
Arbeiten, denken, helfen, sparen
Geld für mehr Gutes,
Graben viele Gräber,
Auch ihr eigenes.
Wie es viele Väter und Mütter taten.
Wir kennen so wenig von dem was wir töten
Obwohl wir einander morden.

20. Stärke
Sie nehmen all ihre Schwachheit zusammen
Und reden sich ein sie seien stark.
Es gibt keine Stärke wie die Stärke dessen
Der nicht dazu gehören will.

21. Leere
Lass mich leer von allem werden
Wie ein Krug
Einst voll von Milch oder Wasser.
Jetzt ist kein Tropfen mehr darin.
Der Krug enthält nichts.
Stell’ ihn in die Sonne
Er füllt sich mit Sonnenlicht
Und ist leer wie Grabgebein.
Diese Leere ist das Dasein das ich suche.
Die Sonne will in mich hinein.
Mich mit ihr füllen.
All das wird mit Liebe vollbracht.

22. Ich gehe hinaus ...
Ich gehe hinaus, nicht hinab.
Hinaus aus meinem Fleisch
Ich fließe wie Wasser.
Strample und schlage ich um mich?
I am water
The colour of November cloud.
Mother, let me return
To the meaning of one word you said.

I am water
Cold above mud
Cold, cold, cold
As man and God.

Smell of cruelty to the end
Hitting my heart,
Is the water sneering like men
Impressed with their own tricks,
Their callous clowning?
Surely to God
This moment is my friend

Mild air
Greenest grass
Twist in the river
November
Brother
Sister
Cloud
Water
Father
Mother
Working
Loving
Losing
Hoping
Drowning
The water a long shroud
My livingness drifting forever
Into a November cloud.

texts: Brendan Kennelly
translations: Günter Eyb
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