

Metamorphosis - Texts and Translations

Laurie's Song

Once I thought I'd never grow tall as this fence.
Time dragged heavy and slow.
But April came and August went
Before I knew just what they meant,
And little by little I grew.
And as I grew, I came to know
How fast the time could go.
Once I thought I'd never go outside this fence.
This space was plenty for me.
But I walked down the road one day,
And just happened I can't say.
But little by little it came to be
That line between the earth and sky
Came beckoning to me.
Now the time has grown short;
The world has grown so wide.
I'll be graduated soon.
Why am I strange inside?
What makes me think I'd like to try
To go down all those roads beyond that line
Above the earth and 'neath the sky?
Tomorrow when I sit upon
The graduation platform stand,
I know my hand will shake
When I reach out to take that paper
With the ribboned band.
Now that all the learning's done,
Oh who knows what will now begin?
Oh it's so strange,
I'm strange inside.
The time has grown so short;
The world so wide.

Kommt ein schlanker Bursch gegangen

Kommt ein schlanker Bursch gegangen,
Blond von Locken oder braun,
Hell von Aug' und rot von Wangen,
Ei, nach dem kann man wohl schauen.
Zwar schlägt man das Aug' aufs Mieder
Nach verschämter Mädchen Art;
Doch verstohlen hebt man's wieder,
Wenn's das Bürschchen nicht gewahrt.
Sollten ja sich Blicke finden,
Nun, was hat das auch für Not?
Man wird drum nicht gleich erblinden,

If a slim young man comes along,

If a slim young man comes along,
With fair hair or dark hair,
Bright-eyed and with red cheeks –
Oh! It's worth looking at him!
Of course you lower your eyes demurely
After the fashion of bashful girls;
But secretly you look up again,
When the young man is not looking.
If you do exchange glances,
Well, what harm is there in that?
No one's going to be struck blind on the spot,

Wird man auch ein wenig rot.
Blickchen hin und Blick herüber,
Bis der Mund sich auch was traut!
Er seufzt: Schönste!
Sie spricht: Lieber!
Bald heißt's Bräutigam und Braut.
Immer näher, liebe Leutchen!
Wollt ihr mich im Kranze sehn?
Gelt, das ist ein nettes Bräutchen,
Und der Bursch nicht minder schön?

Silver (Walter de la Mare)

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon;
This way, and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees;
One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws and a silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

I could have danced all night (Alan Jay Lerner)

Bed! bed! I couldn't go to bed!
My head's too light to try to set it down!
Sleep! sleep! I couldn't sleep tonight!
Not for all the jewels in the crown!
I could have danced all night!
And still have begged for more.
I could have spread my wings and done a thousand things
I've never done before.
I'll never know what made it so exciting;
Why all at once my heart took flight.
I only know when he began to dance with me,
I could have danced all night!

Je te veux

J'ai compris ta détresse,
Cher amoureux,
Et je cède à tes vœux:
Fais de moi ta maîtresse.
Loin de nous la sagesse,
Plus de tristesse,

Even if someone turns red with embarrassment.
A glance here, a glance there,
Until the lips too are loosened!
He sighs: 'Fairest!'
She says: 'Dearest!'
Soon they'll be bride and groom
Come up closer, dear people!
Do you want to see me with a bridal wreath?
Isn't that a pretty bride,
And the young man's no less handsome!

I want you

I've understood your distress,
Dear lover,
And yield to your desires:
Make of me your mistress.
Let's throw discretion
And sadness to the winds.

J'aspire à l'instant précieux
Où nous serons heureux:
Je te veux.
Je n'ai pas de regrets,
Et je n'ai qu'une envie:
Près de toi, là, tout près,
Vivre toute ma vie.
Que mon cœur soit le tien
Et ta lèvre la mienne,
Que ton corps soit le mien,
Et que toute ma chair soit tienne.
Oui, je vois dans tes yeux
La divine promesse
Que ton cœur amoureux
Vient chercher ma caresse.
Enlacés pour toujours,
Brûlés des mêmes flammes,
Dans des rêves d'amours,
Nous échangerons nos deux âmes.

Depuis le jour

Depuis le jour où je me suis donnée,
toute fleurie semble ma destinée.
Je crois rêver sous un ciel de féerie,
l'âme encore grisée de ton premier baiser!
Quelle belle vie!
Mon rêve n'était pas un rêve!
Ah! je suis heureuse!
L'amour étend sur moi ses ailes!
Au jardin de mon cœur
chante une joie nouvelle!
Tout vibre,
tout se réjouit de mon triomphe!
Autour de moi tout est sourire,
lumière et joie!
Et je tremble délicieusement
Au souvenir charmant
Du premier jour d'amour!

Du Liebst mich nicht (Friedrich Rückert)

Mein Herz ist zerrissen, du liebst mich nicht!
Du ließest mich's wissen, du liebst mich nicht!
Wiewohl ich dir flehend und werbend erschien,
Und liebebeflissen, du liebst mich nicht!
Du hast es gesprochen, mit Worten gesagt,
Mit allzugewissen, du liebst mich nicht!
So soll ich die Sterne, so soll ich den Mond,
Die Sonne vermissen? du liebst mich nicht!

I long for the precious moment
When we shall be happy:
I want you.
I've no regrets
And only one desire:
Close, very close by you
To live my whole life long.
Let my heart be yours
And your lips mine,
Let your body be mine
And all my flesh yours.
Yes, I see in your eyes
The exquisite promise
That your loving heart
Is seeking my caress.
Entwined for ever,
Consumed by the same desire,
In dreams of love
We'll exchange our souls.

Since the day

Since the day I gave myself
my destiny seems all flower-strewn
I think I'm dreaming under a fairy sky
my soul still intoxicated by your first kiss!
What a beautiful life!
My dream wasn't a dream!
Oh! I'm so happy!
Love is spreading its wings over me!
In the garden of my heart
sings a new joy!
Everything is vibrant,
everything rejoices at my triumph!
All around me everything is smiling,
light and joy!
And I'm trembling delightfully
from the charming memory
of the first day of love!

You do not love me

My heart is broken, you do not love me!
You let me know you do not love me!
Though I wooed you and beseeched you
With devotion, you do not love me!
You told me so, you said it in words,
All too clearly, you do not love me!
So must I forgo the stars, forgo the moon
And the sun? You do not love me!

Was blüht mir die Rose, was blüht der Jasmin,
Was blühen die Narzissen? du liebst mich nicht!

Ah! Non credea mirarti

Ah, non credea mirarti
si presto estinto, o fiore!
Passasti al par d'amore,
che un giorno sol durò.
Potria novel vigore
il pianto mio recarti
ma ravvivar l'amore
il pianto mio, ah no, non può!

Without you (Alan Jay Lerner)

What a fool I was! what a dominated fool!
To think that you were the Earth and the sky.
What a fool I was! what an addlebrained fool!
What a mutton-headed dolt was I!
No, my reverberating friend,
You are not the beginning and the end!
There'll be spring every year without you.
England still will be here without you.
There'll be fruit on the tree;
And a shore by the sea;
There'll be crumpets and tea without you.
Art and music will thrive without you.
Somehow Keats will survive without you.
And there still will be rain on that plane down in Spain,
Even that will remain without you.
I can do without you.
You, dear friend, who talk so well,
You can go to Hertford, Heresford and Hampshire.
They can still rule with land without you.
Windsor Castle will stand without you.
And without much ado we can all muddle through without you.
Without your pulling it, the tide comes in;
Without your twirling it, the Earth can spin.
Without your pushing them, the clouds roll by...
If they can do without you, ducky, so can I!
I shall not feel alone without you.
I can stand on my own without you.
So go back in your shell;
I can do bloody well
Without you!

Les chemins de l'amour

Les chemins qui vont à la mer
Ont gardé de notre passage

Why does the rose bloom? Why the jasmine?
Why the narcissus? You do not love me!

Ah, I didn't believe I'd see you

Ah, I didn't believe I'd see you
Wither so quickly, oh blossom!
You have faded away just like love,
Which only lasted a day.
Maybe my tears could
Lend you new life,
But to revive love
My tears oh no, they cannot do so!

The Paths of Love

The paths that lead to the sea
Have retained from our passing

Des fleurs effeuillées
Et l'écho sous leurs arbres
De nos deux rires clairs.
Hélas! des jours de bonheur,
Radiieuses 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 toute chose,
Je veux dans mon coeur qu'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 brûler tes mains.

The red dress

I always saw, I always said
If I were grown and free,
I'd have a gown of reddest red
As fine as you could see,
To wear out walking, sleek and slow,
Upon a Summer day,
And there'd be one to see me so
And flip the world away.
And he would be a gallant one,
With stars behind his eyes,
And hair like metal in the sun,
And lips too warm for lies.
I always saw us, gay and good,
High honored in the town.
Now I am grown to womanhood....
I have the silly gown.

The flowers that shed their petals
And the echo beneath their trees
Of our clear laughter.
Alas! no trace of those happy days,
Those radiant joys now flown,
Can I find again
In my heart.
Paths of my love,
I search for you ceaselessly,
Lost paths, you are no more
And your echoes are muted.
Paths of despair,
Paths of memory,
Paths of our first day,
Divine paths of love.
If one day I must forget,
Since life obliterates everything,
I wish for my heart to remember one thing,
More vivid than the other love,
To remember the path
Where trembling and quite distracted,
I one day felt on me your passionate hands.