



Recital I

The Four Classical Elements

A musical exploration of fire, air, earth and water

Nicole Percifield, mezzo-soprano
Peter Tiefenbach, piano

December 7, 2023 at 4:00pm
Walter Hall

PROGRAMME

Die Sonne scheint nicht mehr	Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Als Luise die Briefe ihres ungetreuen Liebhabers verbrannte	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Das verlassene Mägdlein	Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)
Liebe mir im Busen zündet' einen Brand	Hugo Wolf
Salamander	Johannes Brahms
Ich atmet' einen linden Duft	Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)
Sehnsucht, D.879	Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
Der Nussbaum	Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
Unbewegte laue Luft	Johannes Brahms
In der Fremde, I	Robert Schumann
Feldeinsamkeit	Johannes Brahms
Denn es gehet dem Menschen	Johannes Brahms
Himmel und Erde	Robert Schumann

INTERMISSION

Sea Pictures, op. 37

Sea Slumber Song

In Haven

Sabbath Morning at Sea

Where Corals Lie

The Swimmer

Edward Elgar
(1857-1934)

Lorelei

George Gershwin
(1898-1937)

O Waly, Waly

Traditional (arr. Benjamin Britten)
(1913-1976)

This recital is in partial fulfilment of the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance.

Nicole Percifield is a student of Wendy Nielsen.

Mezzo-soprano **Nicole Percifield** has featured in concert performances with New Haven Symphony (*Messiah*), Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (D. Scarlatti's *Salve Regina* and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*), and the Minnesota Orchestra. This past season she performed Beethoven's *Mass in C* with the UTSO under conductors Uri Mayer and Jamie Hillman. A graduate of Yale Opera, Percifield has worked with Minnesota Opera (*Salome*, *Faust*), Santa Fe Opera (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Central City Opera (*Werther*, *Cendrillon*), the Banff Centre, and Opera Theatre of St. Louis (*Ghosts of Versailles*), and was a finalist at the Metropolitan Opera New England Regionals. She recently featured on CBC's *Tapestry*, presenting Gavin Fraser's work, *Shared Isolation*. Percifield is currently pursuing her doctorate at the University of Toronto, where she is a recipient of the Joseph-Armand CGS Doctoral Scholarship. She can be heard singing the roles of Cathleen (*Riders to the Sea*), and Hostess (*At the Boar's Head*), recorded live at the Beethoven Festival in Warsaw. The International Classical Music Awards nominated the recording for Best Opera Album, 2017.

Pianist **Peter Tiefenbach** joined the faculty of the Glenn Gould School in 1997, following several years as a popular classical music broadcaster with CBC Radio. Trained as a solo pianist, he has made his career primarily as a collaborative artist, vocal coach, conductor and composer. He's also worked as an organist, singer, actor, and writer. This season he'll record his song cycle *The Long Walk Home (Die Tindereise)* with baritone Nathan Keoughan, for a video produced by the Canadian Art Song Project. In the spring, he returns to Calgary Opera for a ten-day residency coaching the McPhee Artists, and this summer his new English libretto for Ravel's opera *L'Heure Espagnole* (co-written with J. Patrick Raftery) will receive its first production. A Juno Award nominee for Best Classical Composition, his major commissions include works for the Elora Festival Singers, Canadian Brass, Debut Atlantic, Guelph Spring Festival, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, and the Saskatoon Children's Choir.

Program Notes

...at one time it grew to be one only from many, and at another again it divided to be many from one – fire and water and earth and measureless height of air, with pernicious strife apart from these, matched (to them) in every direction, and love among them, their equal in length and breadth. *Empedocles 8(17)ⁱ*

Dating to Antiquity, the four classical elements, fire, air, earth and water, were considered the building blocks of reality.ⁱⁱ An attempt to understand how the physical world worked, they were also rooted in concepts of the divine and the power of love and strife.ⁱⁱⁱ An interest in how this may translate to music led to their use as the building blocks of this recital, providing a unifying concept to guide the selections of Romantic Lieder and Elgar's *Sea Pictures*.

Fire

The process of transformation has long been associated with fire: as the flames take hold, fire alters that which it burns, leaving something new behind. One can be purified or destroyed by the flames, and many throughout history have seen the correlation between the transformative effects of fire and the transformative effects of passion. Brahms' *Die Sonne scheint nicht mehr* sets out this parallel between love and fire, stating "fire burns so brightly, love burns even more." The sudden flourish of the flames is clear in Brahms' setting of the folk song, published in his 1894 collection, with the abrupt shift to a "lebhaft" triple meter and arpeggiation in the vocal line. Once love has burned, it cannot be forgotten, a narrative also seen in Mozart's *Als Luise die Briefe ihres ungetreuen Liebhabers verbrannte*. Composed in 1787, while Mozart was working on *Don Giovanni*, the song sets the poetry of a young Gabriele von Baumberg (1768-1839). As Luisa decisively returns her lover's letters to the flames, and we hear the quickly rising thirty-second notes of the fire, she is abruptly halted by the realization that love will continue to burn in her heart. *Das verlassene Mägdlein*, published in Eduard Mörike's (1804-1875) *Maler Nolten: Novelle in zwei Theilen* (1832) and set by Wolf in 1888, begins in the stillness of the early morning, as a servant girl quietly lights a fire in the hearth. The warmth of the beautiful flames, as Wolf briefly shifts to a major tonality, spark the painful memory that last night she dreamed of her faithless love. She wishes the mundanity of the day were over, perhaps to dream again. So, how may one avoid the ongoing flames of passion, left burning long after a relationship has ended? In Wolf's *Liebe mir im Busen zündet' einen Brand* (1890), the answer is a desperate cry for "Wasser, liebe Mutter" in Paul Heyse's (1830-1914) translation of the anonymous Spanish poem. Wolf clashes the repeated note of the vocal line over dissonant harmonies, throwing us into her dismay. Or perhaps the answer is to enjoy the flame, and the "heiße Liebe," as in Brahms' setting of Karl Lemcke's (1831-1913) poem "**Salamander**" (1888).

Air

Air, of all the elements, is the most ephemeral, associated with breath, movement, and transition. Often air carries things from one place to another, such as a whisper or a scent, as in Mahler's *Ich atmet' einen linden Duft* (1901). The gentle scent of lime is carried through the air in Rückert's (1788-1866) poem, drifting from a branch plucked by a loving hand. Mahler captures the gentle essence of the poem in a flowing compound meter, the constant movement of eighth notes in the piano supporting the long lyrical line of the voice. In fact, the triplet in the piano occurs in each piece of this set, suggesting air's constant motion. In Schubert's *Sehnsucht* (1828) this forward rushing feeling of momentum suggests a storm brewing both outside and in, as Johann Gabriel Seidl's (1804-1875) protagonist struggles with writer's block and loneliness. Then gradually, at the thought of the freely murmuring west wind, a song emerges. Robert Schumann prolifically composed roughly 140 songs in 1840, the year he and Clara Wieck were finally free to marry. His *Myrthen* were composed as a wedding gift to Clara, and include *Der Nussbaum*. A

setting of Julius Mosen's (1803-1867) poem, the wind caresses the fragrant blossoms of the nut tree, heard in the rise and fall of the piano's continuous arpeggios, whispering gently to a maiden who dreams of love. Despite the heavy, balmy air of Brahms' *Unbewegte laue Luft* (1871), a slow sense of motion is captured through Brahms' use of triple meter. The sensual poetry of Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800-1875) depicts a quiet garden on a warm night. Listening to the splashing of the fountain, the narrator awakens to their own passionate longing, feeling life surge through their veins, and calling on their lover to share in heavenly satisfaction, as the music ecstatically plunges forward.

Earth

Earth is deeply connected to the experience of life and death and their cyclical nature. Xenophanes of Colophon (c.570-c.478 BC) is credited with saying "Everything is born of earth and everything returns to earth."^{iv} Returning to the earth takes on the form of longing in Schumann's *In der Fremde* (1840), with poetry by Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857). Separated from their homeland, the narrator longs for a return to the earth, where they will rest beneath rustling trees, forgotten by all. Schumann repeated certain lines of Eichendorff's poem, after first setting it without alteration, to better suit his musical ideas and give further emphasis to the text.^v The repeated phrase "da ruhe ich auch," captures the longing and melancholy of the piece. A feeling of peace is associated with death in Brahms' *Feldeinsamkeit*. Gazing at the clouds while resting in a field, surrounded by tall grass and chirping crickets, the narrator of Hermann Allers (1821-1902) poem feels as though they have been long dead. Brahms' marks this line, "ich längst gestorben bin," with descending thirds, a motive used in his other works, such as *O Tod, wie bitter bist du*, to signify death.^{vi} *Denn es gehet dem Menschen* (1896) is the first piece in Brahms' *Vier ernste Gesänge*, written shortly before Clara Schumann's death in 1896, and the composer's death in 1897. Setting Martin Luther's translation (1483-1546) of Ecclesiastes 3:19-22, we hear a reiteration of Xenophanes idea, "all are of dust, and all turn to dust again." In Schumann's *Himmel und Erde* (1850), a setting of Wilfred von der Neun's (1826-1916) poem, the wonders of mother earth: trees, mountains and flowers, all reach for heaven, and find joy in the release of their earthly fetters.

Water

Elgar composed *Sea Pictures* in 1899 for alto Clara Butt, a commission he received from the Norwich Festival following his successful premiere of *Enigma Variations*. The cycle sets five poems, each by a different author, unified by the sea: Roden Noel (1834-1894), Caroline Alice Elgar (1848-1920), Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861), Richard Garnett (1835-1906) and Adam Lindsay Gordon (1833-1870). In each, the element of water connects the narrator to an aspect of themselves, be it imagination, faith or abiding love. "**Sea Slumber Song**" introduces musical themes that Elgar reiterates in the third and fifth pieces, creating a gently rocking impression of waves, as "the Mother mild" calms her child. "**In Haven**" is a revision of an earlier setting of Alice Elgar's poem; the setting captures the joy of skimming over the water under a light breeze, while the poem affirms love's steadfastness. "**Sabbath Morning at Sea**" sets the narrator on a journey alone across the sea, alluding to oncoming death, where she finds comfort in God's spirit. The syncopation of "**Where Corals Lie**" creates a light, forward flowing texture, as the narrator is lured away by the dancing waves. "**The Swimmer**," in contrast, deals with a tempest, as they carve their way through "flying rollers with frothy feet." The crashing of the waves is heard in Elgar's chromatic scales, while themes from earlier in the cycle are revisited as love is remembered, culminating in an oath to abiding love. *Lorelei*, with lyrics by Ira Gershwin pokes fun at Brentano's 1801 ballad *Zu Bacharach am Rheine* and Heine's 1824 poem *Die Lorelei*. Water connects, but it may also divide, as in *O Waly, Waly*, a folk song of Scottish origin, set by Britten in 1947. In it, water is impassable, and serves as an analogy for the narrators conflicted feelings on love.

Notes:

ⁱ M.R. Wright, ed., "Physics," in *Empedocles: The Extant Fragments*, (London: Hart Publishing, 1981), 155–263.

ⁱⁱ Phillip Ball, "The Classical Elements," in *The Elements: A Visual History of Their Discovery*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021), 14.

ⁱⁱⁱ Paul Cheshire, "Classical Elements: Darwin, Gilbert, Blake, and Coleridge," *The Wordsworth Circle* 50, no. 2 (Spring, 2019): 147.

^{iv} Ball, 24.

^v Jürgen Thym, "Schumann: reconfiguring the Lied" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. James Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 127.

^{vi} Heather Platt, "The Lieder of Brahms" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. James Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 200.

Texts and Translations

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Fire

Die Sonne scheint nicht mehr

Anon

Die Sonne scheint nicht mehr
So schön, als wie vorher,
Der Tag ist nicht so heiter,
So liebevoll gar nicht mehr.

Das Feuer kann man löschen,
Die Liebe nicht vergessen,
Das Feuer brennt so sehr,
Die Liebe noch viel mehr.

Mein Herz ist nicht mehr mein,
O könnt ich bei dir sein,
So wäre mir geholfen
Von aller meiner Pein.

Das Feuer kann man löschen ...

Als Luise die Briefe ihres ungetreuen Liebhabers verbrannte

Gabriele von Baumberg

Erzeugt von heißer Phantasie,
In einer schwärmerischen Stunde
Zur Welt gebrachte! – geht zu Grunde!
Ihr Kinder der Melancholie!

Ihr danket Flammen euer Sein:
Ich geb' euch nun den Flammen wieder,
Und all' die schwärmerischen Lieder;
Denn ach! er sang nicht mir allein.

Ihr brennet nun, und bald, ihr Lieben,
Ist keine Spur von euch mehr hier:
Doch ach! der Mann, der euch geschrieben,
Brennt lange noch vielleicht in mir.

The sun no longer shines

Translation by Richard Stokes

The sun no longer shines
As beautifully as it did,
The day's no longer as serene
Or as loving as it was.

Fire can be extinguished
But love not forgotten,
Fire burns so brightly,
Love burns even more.

My heart's no longer mine,
If only I could be with you,
There'd be some comfort
For all my pain.

Fire can be extinguished...

When Louisa burnt her unfaithful lover's letters

Translation by Richard Stokes

Begotten by ardent fantasy,
Born in a rapturous hour
An emotional moment! Perish,
Ye children of melancholy!

You owe your existence to flames,
To flames I now return you
And all those passionate songs;
For ah! he did not sing for me alone.

Now you are burning, and soon, my dears,
Not a trace of you will remain:
But ah! the man who wrote you
May smoulder long yet in my heart.

Das verlassene Mägdlein

Eduard Mörike

Früh, wann die Hähne krähn,
Eh die Sternlein schwinden,
Muss ich am Herde stehn,
Muss Feuer zünden.

Schön ist der Flammen Schein,
Es springen die Funken;
Ich schaue so darein,
In Leid versunken.

Plötzlich, da kommt es mir,
Treuloser Knabe,
Dass ich die Nacht von dir
Geträumet habe.

Träne auf Träne dann
Stürzt hernieder;
So kommt der Tag heran –
O ging er wieder!

Liebe mir im Busen zündet' einen Brand

Paul Heyse

Liebe mir im Busen
Zündet einen Brand.
Wasser, liebe Mutter,
Eh das Herz verbrannt!

Nicht das blinde Kind
Straft für meine Fehle;
Hat zuerst die Seele
Mir gekühlt so lind.
Dann entflammt's geschwind
Ach, mein Unverstand;
Wasser, liebe Mutter,
Eh das Herz verbrannt!

Ach! wo ist die Flut,
Die dem Feuer wehre?
Für so grosse Glut
Sind zu arm die Meere.
Weil es wohl mir tut
Wein' ich unverwandt;
Wasser, liebe Mutter,
Eh das Herz verbrannt!

The forsaken servant-girl

Translation by Richard Stokes

Early, when the cocks crow,
Before the tiny stars recede,
I must be at the hearth,
I must light the fire.

The flames are beautiful,
The sparks fly;
I gaze at them,
Sunk in sorrow.

Suddenly I realize,
Faithless boy,
That in the night
I dreamt of you.

Tear after tear
Then tumbles down;
So the day dawns –
O would it were gone again!

Love in my breast has kindled a fire

Translation by Richard Stokes

Love in my breast
Has kindled a fire.
Water, dear mother,
Before my heart's consumed!

Do not blame blind Cupid
For my faults;
He cooled my soul
So gently at first.
Then, alas, he swiftly
Inflamed my folly.
Water, dear mother,
Before my heart's consumed!

Ah, where is the flood
That might quench this fire?
For so great a flame
The seas are too small.
Since it does me good,
I weep without restraint;
Water, dear mother,
Before my heart's consumed!

Salamander

Karl Lemcke

Es saß ein Salamander
Auf einem kühlen Stein,
Da warf ein böses Mädchen
In's Feuer ihn hinein.

Sie meint', er soll verbrennen,
Ihm war erst wohl zu Mut,
Wohl wie mir kühlem Teufel
Die heiße Liebe tut.

Air

Ich atmet' einen linden Duft

Friedrich Rückert

Ich atmet' einen linden Duft!
Im Zimmer stand
Ein Zweig der Linde,
Ein Angebinde
Von lieber Hand.
Wie lieblich war der Lindenduft!
Wie lieblich ist der Lindenduft!
Das Lindenreis
Brachst du gelinde;
Ich atme leis
Im Duft der Linde
Der Liebe linden Duft

Sehnsucht

Johann Gabriel Seidl

Die Scheibe friert, der Wind ist rauh,
Der nächt'ge Himmel rein und blau.
Ich sitz' in meinem Kämmerlein
Und schau' ins reine Blau hinein!

Mir fehlt etwas, das fühl' ich gut,
Mir fehlt mein Lieb, das treue Blut;
Und will ich in die Sterne seh'n,
Muss stets das Aug' mir übergeh'n!

Mein Lieb, wo weilst du nur so fern,
Mein schöner Stern, mein Augenstern?
Du weisst, dich lieb' und brauch' ich ja,
Die Träne tritt mir wieder nah.

Da quält' ich mich so manchen Tag,
Weil mir kein Lied gelingen mag,
Weil's nimmer sich erzwingen lässt
Und frei hinsäuselt, wie der West!

Salamander

Translation by Richard Stokes

A salamander was sitting
On a cool stone,
When suddenly a bad girl
Threw it into the fire.

She thought it would burn up,
But it felt even more at ease,
Just as hot love
Suits a cool devil like me.

I breathed a gentle fragrance!

Translation by Richard Stokes

I breathed a gentle fragrance!
In the room stood
A spray of lime,
A gift
From a dear hand.
How lovely the fragrance of lime was!
How lovely the fragrance of lime is!
The spray of lime
Was gently plucked by you;
Softly I breathe
In the fragrance of lime
The gentle fragrance of love.

Longing

Translation by Richard Wigmore

The window pane freezes, the wind is harsh,
the night sky clear and blue.
I sit in my little room
gazing out into the clear blueness.

Something is missing, I feel only too well;
my love is missing, my true love.
And when I look at the stars
my eyes constantly fill with tears.

My love, where are you, so far away,
my fair star, my darling?
You know that I love you and need you;
again tears well up within me.

For many a day I have suffered
because no song of mine has turned out well,
because none can be forced
to murmur freely, like the west wind.

Wie mild mich's wieder grad' durchglüht!
Sieh' nur, das ist ja schon ein Lied!
Wenn mich mein Los vom Liebchen warf,
Dann fühl' ich, dass ich singen darf.

Der Nussbaum

Julius Mosen

Es grünet ein Nussbaum, vor dem Haus,
Duftig,
Luftig
Breitet er blättrig die Blätter aus.

Viel liebliche Blüten stehen d'ran,
Linde
Winde
Kommen, sie herzlich zu umfahn.

Es flüstern je zwei zu zwei gepaart,
Neigend,
Beugend
Zierlich zum Kusse die Häuptchen zart.

Sie flüstern von einem Mägdlein, das
Dächte
Die Nächte
Und Tagelang, wüsste ach! selber nicht was.

Sie flüstern—wer mag verstehen so gar
Leise
Weis'?
Flüstern von Bräut'gam und nächstem Jahr.

Das Mägdli horchet, es rauscht im Baum;
Sehnend,
Wähnend
Sinkt es lächelnd in Schlaf und Traum.

Unbewegte laue Luft

Georg Friedrich Daumer

Unbewegte laue Luft,
Tiefe Ruhe der Natur;
Durch die stille Gartennacht
Plätschert die Fontäne nur;
Aber im Gemüte schwillt
Heißere Begierde mir;
Aber in der Ader quillt
Leben und verlangt nach Leben.
Sollten nicht auch deine Brust
Sehnlichere Wünsche heben?
Sollte meiner Seele Ruf

How gentle the glow that again warms me!
Behold – a song!
Though my fate has cast me far from my beloved,
yet I feel that I can still sing.

The Walnut Tree

Translation by Richard Stokes

A nut tree blossoms outside the house,
Fragrantly,
Airily,
It spreads its leafy boughs.

Many lovely blossoms it bears,
Gentle
Winds
Come to caress them tenderly.

Paired together, they whisper,
Inclining,
Bending
Gracefully their delicate heads to kiss.

They whisper of a maiden who
Dreamed
For nights
And days of, alas, she knew not what.

They whisper—who can understand
So soft
A song?
Whisper of a bridegroom and next year.

The maiden listens, the tree rustles;
Yearning,
Musing
She drifts smiling into sleep and dreams.

Motionless mild air

Translation by Richard Stokes

Motionless mild air,
Nature deep at rest;
Through the still garden night
Only the fountain plashes;
But my soul swells
With a more ardent desire;
Life surges in my veins
And yearns for life.
Should not your breast too
Heave with more passionate longing?
Should not the cry of my soul

Nicht die deine tief durchbeben?
Leise mit dem Ätherfuß
Säume nicht, daher zu schweben!
Komm, o komm, damit wir uns
Himmlische Genüge geben!

Quiver deeply through your own?
Softly on ethereal feet
Glide to me, do not delay!
Come, ah! come, that we might
Give each other heavenly satisfaction!

Earth

In der Fremde, I

Joseph von Eichendorff

Aus der Heimat hinter den Blitzen rot
Da kommen die Wolken her,
Aber Vater und Mutter sind lange tot,
Es kennt mich dort keiner mehr.

Wie bald, ach wie bald kommt die stille Zeit,
Da ruhe ich auch, und über mir
Rauscht die schöne Waldeinsamkeit,
Und keiner kennt mich mehr hier.

Feldeinsamkeit

Hermann Allmers

Ich ruhe still im hohen grünen Gras
Und sende lange meinen Blick nach oben,
Von Grillen rings umschwirrt ohn' Unterlaß,
Von Himmelsbläue wundersam umwoben.

Die schönen weißen Wolken ziehn dahin
Durchs tiefe Blau, wie schöne stille Träume; -
Mir ist, als ob ich längst gestorben bin,
Und ziehe selig mit durch ew'ge Räume.

Denn es gehet dem Menschen

Martin Luther

Denn es gehet dem Menschen wie dem Vieh;
wie dies stirbt, so stirbt er auch;
und haben alle einerlei Odem;
und der Mensch hat nichts mehr denn das Vieh:
denn es ist alles eitel.

Es fährt alles an einen Ort;
es ist alles von Staub gemacht,
und wird wieder zu Staub.
Wer weiß, ob der Geist des Menschen aufwärts fahre,
und der Odem des Viehes unterwärts
unter die Erde fahre?

In a Foreign Land

Translation by Richard Stokes

From my homeland, beyond the red lightning,
The clouds come drifting in,
But father and mother have long been dead,
Now no one knows me there.

How soon, ah! how soon till that quiet time
When I too shall rest
Beneath the sweet murmur of lonely woods,
Forgotten here as well.

Alone in Fields

Translation by Richard Stokes

I rest at peace in tall green grass
And gaze steadily aloft,
Surrounded by unceasing crickets,
Wondrously interwoven with blue sky.

The lovely white clouds go drifting by
Through the deep blue, like lovely silent dreams;
I feel as if I have long been dead,
Drifting happily with them through eternal space.

For that which befalleth the sons of men

Translation by Richard Stokes

For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts;
as the one dieth, so dieth the other;
yea, they have all one breath;
so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast;
for all is vanity.

All go unto one place;
all are of dust,
and all turn to dust again.
Who knoweth the spirit of man [...] goeth upward
and the spirit of the beast that goeth
downward to the earth?

Darum sahe ich, daß nichts bessers ist,
denn daß der Mensch fröhlich sei in seiner Arbeit,
denn das ist sein Teil.
Denn wer will ihn dahin bringen, daß er sehe,
was nach ihm geschehen wird?

Himmel und Erde

Wilfried von der Neun

Wie der Bäume kühne Wipfel
Zu des Lichtes Höhen streben!
Wie der Berge greise Gipfel
In des Himmels Wolken schweben!

Wie im Mai der Wiesen Blüten
Mit des Äthers Blau verschwimmt!
Wie der Wälder herbstlich Glühen
In des Frührots Licht verglimmet!

O so seid ihr denn Verwandte,
Himmel du und Mutter Erde!
Freudig trag ich irdsche Bande,
Da ich dein, O Himmel, werde!

Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better,
than that a man should rejoice in his own works,
for that is his portion.
For who shall bring him to see
what shall happen after him?

Heaven and earth

Translation by Richard Stokes

How boldly the treetops
Reach up to the light of heaven!
How the grey mountain peaks
Soar up to heaven's clouds!

How in May the meadow flowers
Mingle with the sky's blue!
How the autumn glow of the woods
Fades into the light of the dawn!

So are you then both related,
O heaven and mother earth!
My earthly fetters I bear with joy,
Since, heaven, I shall be yours!

Water

Sea Pictures, op. 37

Sea Slumber Song

Roden Noel

Sea birds are asleep,
The world forgets to weep,
Sea murmurs her soft slumber-song
On the shadowy sand
Of this elfin land;
'I, the Mother mild,
Hush thee, oh my child,
Forget the voices wild!

Isles in elfin light
Dream, the rocks and caves,
Lulled by whispering waves,
Veil their marbles bright.
Foam glimmers faintly white
Upon the shelly sand
Of this elfin land;

Sea-sound, like violins,
To slumber woos and wins,
I murmur my soft slumber-song,
Leave woes, and wails, and sins.

Ocean's shadowy might
Breathes good night,
Good night ...'

In Haven

Caroline Alice Elgar

Closely let me hold thy hand,
Storms are sweeping sea and land;
Love alone will stand.

Closely cling, for waves beat fast,
Foam-flakes cloud the hurrying blast;
Love alone will last.

Kiss my lips, and softly say:
'Joy, sea-swept, may fade to-day;
Love alone will stay.'

Sabbath Morning at Sea

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The ship went on with solemn face;
To meet the darkness on the deep,
The solemn ship went onward.
I bowed down weary in the place;
For parting tears and present sleep
Had weighed mine eyelids downward.

The new sight, the new wondrous sight!
The waters around me, turbulent,
The skies, impassive o'er me,
Calm in a moonless, sunless light,
As glorified by even the intent
Of holding the day glory!

Love me, sweet friends, this sabbath day.
The sea sings round me while ye roll
Afar the hymn, unaltered,
And kneel, where once I knelt to pray,
And bless me deeper in your soul
Because your voice has faltered.

And though this sabbath comes to me
Without the stoled minister,
And chanting congregation,
God's Spirit shall give comfort.
He who brooded soft on waters drear,
Creator on creation.

He shall assist me to look higher,
Where keep the saints, with harp and song,

An endless sabbath morning,
And, on that sea commixed with fire.
Oft drop their eyelids raised too long
To the full Godhead's burning.

Where Corals Lie

Richard Garnett

The deeps have music soft and low
When winds awake the airy spry,
It lures me, lures me on to go
And see the land where corals lie.
The land, the land, where corals lie.

By mount and mead, by lawn and rill,
When night is deep, and moon is high,
That music seeks and finds me still,
And tells me where the corals lie.
And tells me where the corals lie.

Yes, press my eyelids close, 'tis well,
Yes, press my eyelids close, 'tis well,
But far the rapid fancies fly
To rolling worlds of wave and shell,
And all the land where corals lie.

Thy lips are like a sunset glow,
Thy smile is like a morning sky,
Yet leave me, leave me, let me go
And see the land where corals lie.
The land, the land, where corals lie.

The Swimmer

Adam Lindsay Gordon

With short, sharp, violent lights made vivid,
To southward far as the sight can roam,
Only the swirl of the surges livid,
The seas that climb and the surfs that comb.
Only the crag and the cliff to nor'ward,
And the rocks receding, and reefs flung forward,
Waifs wreck'd seaward and wasted shoreward,
On shallows sheeted with flaming foam.

A grim, grey coast and a seaboard ghastly,
And shores trod seldom by feet of men—
Where the batter'd hull and the broken mast lie,
They have lain embedded these long years ten.
Love! when we wandered here together,
Hand in hand through the sparkling weather,
From the heights and hollows of fern and heather.
God surely loved us a little then.

The skies were fairer and shores were firmer—
The blue sea over the bright sand roll'd;
Babble and prattle, and ripple and murmur,
Sheen of silver and glamour of gold.

So, girt with tempest and wing'd with thunder
And clad with lightning and shod with sleet,
And strong winds treading the swift waves under
The flying rollers with frothy feet
One gleam like a bloodshot sword-blade swims on
The sky line, staining the green gulf crimson,
A death-stroke fiercely dealt by a dim sun
That strikes through his stormy winding sheet.

O brave white horses! you gather and gallop,
The storm sprite loosens the gusty reins;
Now the stoutest ship were the frailest shallop
In your hollow backs, on your high-arched manes.
I would ride as never a man has ridden
In your sleepy, swirling surges hidden;
To gulfs foreshadow'd through strifes forbidden,
Where no light wearies and no love wanes.

Lorelei

Ira Gershwin

Back in the days of knights in armor
There once lived a lovely charmer;
Swimming in the Rhine,
Her figure was divine.
She had a yen for all the sailors,
Fishermen and gobs and whalers;
She had a most immoral eye
They called her Lorelei;
She created quite a stir
And I want to be like her.

I want to be like that gal on the river,
Who sang her song to the ships passing by;
She had the goods and how she could deliver
The Lorelei!

She used to love in a strange kind of fashion,
With lots of hey! ho-de-ho! hi-de-hi!
And I can guarantee I'm full of passion
Like the Lorelei.

I'm treacherous, ja, ja
Oh, I just can't hold myself in check
I'm lecherous, ja, ja
I want to bite my initials on a sailor's neck

Each affair had a kick and a wallop,
For what they crave, I can always supply
I want to be just like that other trollop
The Lorelei!

O Waly, Waly

Traditional

The water is wide, I cannot get o'er,
And neither have I wings to fly.
Give me a boat that will carry two,
And both shall row, my love and I.

O, down in the meadows the other day,
A-gath'ring flowers both fine and gay,
A-gath'ring flowers both red and blue,
I little thought what love can do.

I leaned my back up against some oak,
Thinking that he was a trusty tree;
But first he bended and then he broke,
And so did my false love to me.

A ship there is, and she sails the sea,
She's loaded deep as deep can be,
But not so deep as the love I'm in:
I know not if I sink or swim.

O, love is handsome and love is fine,
And love's a jewel while it is new,
But when it is old, it groweth cold,
And fades away like morning dew.

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