

IN CONCERT WITH NATURE Poems, Lyrics

Durch Einsamkeiten (Toward Peace) – text by Anton Wildgans

Durch Einsamkeiten, Through solitudes,
Durch waldwild Geheg, Through enclosures of wild forests,
Über nebelnde Weiten Over fog-shrouded expanses
Wandert mein Weg -- -- Wohin? My path takes me - Whither?

Fern über dem Berge Far over the mountain
An ruhsamer Flut At peaceful waters
Harrt meiner ein Ferge, A ferryman awaits me,
Der rudert mich gut -- -- Wohin? He shall row me well - Whither?

An ein stilles Geländ, To a silent country,
Ewig gemieden Eternally avoided
Und ewig ersehnt -- -- And eternally desired -
 Zum Frieden . To peace . . .

Landysh (Lilly of the Valley) - abridged poem by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Oh, Lilly of the Valley, why do you please thy glances?
There are other flowers, more beautiful and flamboyant.
Their colours are brighter, their ornaments are more joyous,
But they lack your mysterious beauty.

What is the secret of your spell? What is your message to my soul?
What is in you so magnetic and exhilarating to my heart?
Do you recall the ghosts of the former happiness?
Or do you promise the bliss in the future?

I know not, but your wonderful aroma,
Calls me tenderly like a stream of wine.
Like music it holds my breath,
And like love it fills my cheeks with heat.

Violons dans le soir – (Violins in the Evening) text by Anna de Noailles

Quand le soir est venu, que tout est calme enfin When evening has fallen and all's at last quiet
Dans la chaude nature, In warm nature,
Voici que naît sous l'arbre et sous le ciel divin There stirs beneath tree and heavenly sky
La plus vive torture. The most painful agony.

Sur les graviers d'argent, dans les bois apaisés, On silver gravel, in hushed woods,
Des violons s'exaltent. Frenetic violins are heard:
Ce sont des jets de cris, de sanglots, de baisers, A stream of cries, of sobs and kisses,
Sans contrainte et sans halte. Unrestrained and unremitting.

Il semble que l'archet se cabre, qu'il se tord The violin bow seems to rear and writhe
Sur les luisantes cordes, Across the shining strings -
Tant ce sont des appels de plaisir et de mort For these are true cries of pleasure, death
Et de miséricorde. And mercy.

Et le brûlant archet enroulé de langueur And the burning bow in its affliction,
Gémit, souffre, caresse, Groans, suffers and caresses -
Poignard voluptueux qui pénètre le coeur A voluptuous dagger that pierces the heart
D'une épuisante ivresse. With exhausted ecstasy.

Archets, soyez maudits pour vos brûlants accords, May you bows be cursed for your scalding chords,
Pour votre âme explosive, For your explosive soul:
Fers rouges qui dans l'ombre arrachez à nos corps Molten swords that at night rip from our bodies
Des lambeaux de chair vive! Shreds of living flesh!

IN CONCERT WITH NATURE Poems, Lyrics - *continued*

Up the Ocklawaha: An Impression by Maud Powell

Poem by Maud Powell (violinist to whom this work is dedicated)

A stream of bark-stained waters,
A swift and turgid river.
A restless, twisting, tortuous river,
Bankless, through a cypress swamp,

Escaping to the sea.
Through Florida's mighty inland swamp,
Rank, dark, malarious, fearsome,
(Hell's Half Acre hidden within)
Where noble trees of giant estate

Stand knee-deep in the noisome ooze.
A dying forest, sapless and sear,
Lifts lean arms to leaden skies.
Gaunt limbs shrouded in Spanish moss,
A parasite's rags, swathing, loathsome.

The deadly tillandsia, vegetable vermin,
Merciless air-weed wrecking a wood,
Sapping the soul of the primitive wood.
The daylight dies—
Leaden skies are changed to black.

Up the Ocklawaha
The Hiawatha plows her way.
Silent-footed, the dusky crew
Build pine-knot fires to pierce the night.
The arrowed flames trick and cheat the eye:

Wanton shapes infest the trees,
(Hanks of poisonous moss in the air)
Things fantastic, gruesome, grim,
That quiver and start and quicken to life.
Grinning gargoyles, nodding their masks.

Menacing imps, tiptilting aloft.
Against the night's abysmal black.
Swinging, swaying, a phantom throng,
'Meshed in a somber death-dance,
Dancing a demon death-dance.

(Masses of moss, mid-air.)
The gaunt trees tremble and groan,
Buried alive in the terrible swamp,
Choked in the clutch of a vampire weed,
Strangled in tangles of hideous moss.

The pine-knot fires, in lurid relief,
Double the curse in the ink-black waters.
Imaged clear in the mocking stream,
The forest of doom, in two-fold gloom,
Stands helpless.

There is no solace in the mirrored depths
Of the Ocklawaha.
Softly speeds the Hiawatha,
Searching her way through the haunted swamp.
The pilot-wheel turns with a gentle lilt,

(Trusting darkies guiding the boat
With stealthy instinct, true, unerring)
Paddle-blades dip with a rhythmic splash.
Branches brush by with a broadside swish.
A wild bird calls across the swamp,

A new breeze blows from the far-off gulf,
A message of dawn is in the air.
Crystal clear from the distant lake
The virgin head waters rush,
Washing the sin of the night away.

The erstwhile spell of the forest lifts,
The vision's fevered force is spent.
The soul escapes the hated thrall,
Tortured thoughts are laid to rest,
The nightmare is no more.

Peace at last
Up the Ocklawaha.

Gestillte Sehnsucht - text by Friedrich Rückert,

(dedicated to the wife of Brahms' dear friend and great violinist, Joseph Joachim)

In gold'nen Abendschein getauchet,
Wie feierlich die Wälder stehn!
In leise Stimmen der Vöglein hauchet
Des Abendwindes leises Weh'n.
Was lispeln die Winde, die Vögelein?
Sie lispeln die Welt in Schlummer ein.

Ihr Wünsche, die ihr stets euch reget
Im Herzen sonder Rast und Ruh!
Du Sehnen, das die Brust bewegt,
Wann ruhest du, wann schlummerst du?
Beim Lispeln der Winde, der Vögelein,
Ihr sehnenen Wünsche, wann schlaft ihr ein?

Was kommt gezogen auf Traumesflügeln?
Was weht mich an so bang, so hold?
Es kommt gezogen von fernen Hügeln,
Es kommt auf bebendem Sonnengold.
Wohl lispeln die Winde, die Vögelein,
Das Sehnen, das Sehnen, es schläft nicht ein.

Ach, wenn nicht mehr in gold'ne Fernen
Mein Geist auf Traumgefieder eilt,
Nicht mehr an ewig fernen Sternen
Mit sehnenem Blick mein Auge weilt;
Dann lispeln die Winde, die Vögelein
Mit meinem Sehnen mein Leben ein.

Steeped in a golden evening glow,
how solemnly the forests stand!
In gentle voices the little birds breathe
into the soft fluttering of evening breezes.
What does the wind whisper, and the little birds?
They whisper the world into slumber.

You, my desires, that stir
in my heart without rest or peace!
You longings that move my heart,
When will you rest, when will you sleep?
By the whispering of the wind, and of the little birds?
You yearning desires, when will you fall asleep?

What will come of these dreamy flights?
What stirs me so anxiously, so sweetly?
It comes pulling me from far-off hills,
It comes from the trembling gold of the sun.
The wind whispers loudly, as do the little birds;
The longing, the longing - it will not fall asleep.

Alas, when no longer into the golden distance
does my spirit hurry on dream-wings,
when no more on the eternally distant stars
does my longing gaze rest;
Then the wind and the little birds
will whisper away my longing, along with my life.