Chamber Music

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CHAMBER MUSIC

I  **Strings in the earth and air**  Make music sweet;  Strings by the river where  The willows meet.

There's music along the river  For Love wanders there,  Pale flowers on his mantle,  Dark leaves on his hair.

All softly playing,  With head to the music bent,  And fingers straying Upon an instrument.
II The twilight turns from amethyst To deep and deeper blue, The lamp fills with a pale green glow The trees of the avenue.

The old piano plays an air, Sedate and slow and gay; She bends upon the yellow keys, Her head inclines this way.

Shy thought and grave wide eyes and hands That wander as they list— The twilight turns to darker blue With lights of amethyst.
III  At that hour when all things have reposed, O lonely watcher of the skies, Do you hear the night wind and the sighs Of harps playing unto Love to unclose The pale gates of sunrise?

When all things repose, do you alone Awake to hear the sweet harps play To Love before him on his way, And the night wind answering in antiphon Till night is overgone?

Play on, invisible harps, unto Love, Whose way in heaven is aglow At that hour when soft lights come and go, Soft sweet music in the air above And in the earth below.
IV  When the shy star goes forth in heaven  All maidenly, disconsolate,
Hear you amid the drowsy even  One who is singing by your gate.  His song
is softer than the dew  And he is come to visit you.

O bend no more in revery  When he at eventide is calling.  Nor muse:
Who may this singer be  Whose song about my heart is falling?  Know you
by this, the lover’s chant,  'Tis I that am your visitant.
V Lean out of the window, Goldenhair, I hear you singing A merry air.

My book was closed, I read no more, Watching the fire dance On the floor.

I have left my book, I have left my room, For I heard you singing Through the gloom.

Singing and singing A merry air, Lean out of the window, Goldenhair.
VI

I would in that sweet bosom be   (O sweet it is and fair it is!)  Where
no rude wind might visit me.  Because of sad austerities  I would in that
sweet bosom be.

I would be ever in that heart   (O soft I knock and soft entreat her!)  Where
only peace might be my part.  Austerities were all the sweeter  So I
were ever in that heart.
VII My love is in a light attire Among the apple-trees, Where the gay winds do most desire To run in companies.

There, where the gay winds stay to woo The young leaves as they pass, My love goes slowly, bending to Her shadow on the grass;

And where the sky's a pale blue cup Over the laughing land, My love goes lightly, holding up Her dress with dainty hand.
VIII   **Who goes amid the green wood**   With springtide all adorning her?  
Who goes amid the merry green wood   To make it merrier?  

   Who passes in the sunlight   By ways that know the light footfall?   Who  
passes in the sweet sunlight   With mien so virginal?  

   The ways of all the woodland   Gleam with a soft and golden fire—   For  
whom does all the sunny woodland   Carry so brave attire?  

   O, it is for my true love   The woods their rich apparel wear—   O, it is for  
my own true love,   That is so young and fair.
IX  Winds of May, that dance on the sea,  Dancing a ring-around in glee
From furrow to furrow, while overhead  The foam flies up to be garlanded,
In silvery arches spanning the air,  Saw you my true love anywhere?
Welladay! Welladay!  For the winds of May!  Love is unhappy when love is
away!
X Bright cap and streamers, He sings in the hollow: Come follow, come follow, All you that love. Leave dreams to the dreamers That will not after, That song and laughter Do nothing move.

With ribbons streaming He sings the bolder; In troop at his shoulder The wild bees hum. And the time of dreaming Dreams is over— As lover to lover, Sweetheart, I come.
XI  Bid adieu, adieu, adieu,  Bid adieu to girlish days,  Happy Love is come to woo  Thee and woo thy girlish ways—  The zone that doth become thee fair,  The snood upon thy yellow hair,

When thou hast heard his name upon  The bugles of the cherubim  Begin thou softly to unzone  Thy girlish bosom unto him  And softly to undo the snood  That is the sign of maidenhood.
XII    What counsel has the hooded moon    Put in thy heart, my shyly sweet,    Of Love in ancient plenilune,    Glory and stars beneath his feet—    A sage that is but kith and kin    With the comedian Capuchin?

    Believe me rather that am wise    In disregard of the divine,    A glory kindles in those eyes    Trembles to starlight. Mine, O Mine!    No more be tears in moon or mist    For thee, sweet sentimentalist.
XIII  Go seek her out all courteously,  And say I come,  Wind of spices whose song is ever  Epithalamium.  O, hurry over the dark lands  And run upon the sea  For seas and lands shall not divide us  My love and me.

      Now, wind, of your good courtesy  I pray you go,  And come into her little garden  And sing at her window;  Singing: The bridal wind is blowing  For Love is at his noon;  And soon will your true love be with you,  Soon, O soon.
XIV  My dove, my beautiful one,  Arise, arise!  The night-dew lies
Upon my lips and eyes.

      The odorous winds are weaving  A music of sighs:  Arise, arise,  My
dove, my beautiful one!

      I wait by the cedar tree,  My sister, my love,  White breast of the dove,
My breast shall be your bed.

      The pale dew lies  Like a veil on my head.  My fair one, my fair dove,
Arise, arise!
XV From dewy dreams, my soul, arise, From love’s deep slumber and from death, For lo! the trees are full of sighs Whose leaves the morn admonisheth.

Eastward the gradual dawn prevails Where softly-burning fires appear, Making to tremble all those veils Of grey and golden gossamer.

While sweetly, gently, secretly, The flowery bells of morn are stirred And the wise choirs of faery Begin (innumerable!) to be heard.
XVI  O cool is the valley now  And there, love, will we go  For many a choir is singing now  Where Love did sometime go.  And hear you not the thrushes calling,  Calling us away?  O cool and pleasant is the valley  And there, love, will we stay.
XVII  Because your voice was at my side  I gave him pain,  Because
within my hand I held  Your hand again.

There is no word nor any sign  Can make amend—  He is a stranger to
me now  Who was my friend.
XVIII  O Sweetheart, hear you  Your lover's tale;  A man shall have sorrow  When friends him fail.

For he shall know then  Friends be untrue  And a little ashes  Their words come to.

But one unto him  Will softly move  And softly woo him  In ways of love.

His hand is under  Her smooth round breast;  So he who has sorrow Shall have rest.
IX Be not sad because all men Prefer a lying clamour before you:
Sweetheart, be at peace again— Can they dishonour you?

They are sadder than all tears; Their lives ascend as a continual sigh.
Proudly answer to their tears: As they deny, deny.
XX  In the dark pine-wood  I would we lay,  In deep cool shadow  At noon of day.

   How sweet to lie there,  Sweet to kiss,  Where the great pine-forest Enaisled is!

   Thy kiss descending  Sweeter were  With a soft tumult  Of thy hair.

   O unto the pine-wood  At noon of day  Come with me now,  Sweet love, away.
XXI       He who hath glory lost, nor hath Found any soul to fellow his, Among his foes in scorn and wrath Holding to ancient nobleness, That high unconsortable one— His love is his companion.
XXII    Of that so sweet imprisonment  My soul, dearest, is fain—  Soft arms that woo me to relent  And woo me to detain.  Ah, could they ever hold me there  Gladly were I a prisoner!

    Dearest, through interwoven arms  By love made tremulous,  That night allures me where alarms  Nowise may trouble us;  But sleep to dreamier sleep be wed  Where soul with soul lies prisoned.
XXIII This heart that flutters near my heart  My hope and all my riches
is,  Unhappy when we draw apart  And happy between kiss and kiss:  My
hope and all my riches—yes!—  And all my happiness.

For there, as in some mossy nest  The wrens will divers treasures keep,  I
laid those treasures I possessed  Ere that mine eyes had learned to weep.
Shall we not be as wise as they  Though love live but a day?
XXIV  Silently she's combing,  Combing her long hair  Silently and graciously,  With many a pretty air.

The sun is in the willow leaves  And on the dappled grass,  And still she's combing her long hair  Before the looking-glass.

I pray you, cease to comb out,  Comb out your long hair,  For I have heard of witchery  Under a pretty air,

That makes as one thing to the lover  Staying and going hence,  All fair, with many a pretty air  And many a negligence.
XXV \hspace{1em} **Lightly come or lightly go:** Though thy heart presage thee woe, 
Vales and many a wasted sun, \hspace{1em} Oread let thy laughter run, \hspace{1em} Till the 
irreverent mountain air \hspace{1em} Ripple all thy flying hair.

Lightly, lightly—ever so: Clouds that wrap the vales below \hspace{1em} At the hour of 
evenstar \hspace{1em} Lowliest attendants are; \hspace{1em} Love and laughter song-confessed 
When the heart is heaviest.
XXVI  Thou leanest to the shell of night,  Dear lady, a divining ear.  In that soft choiring of delight  What sound hath made thy heart to fear? Seemed it of rivers rushing forth  From the grey deserts of the north?

That mood of thine  Is his, if thou but scan it well,  Who a mad tale bequeaths to us  At ghosting hour conjurable—  And all for some strange name he read  In Purchas or in Holinshed.
XXVII Though I thy Mithridates were, Framed to defy the poison-dart,
Yet must thou fold me unaware To know the rapture of thy heart,
And I but render and confess The malice of thy tenderness.

For elegant and antique phrase, Dearest, my lips wax all too wise;
Nor have I known a love whose praise Our piping poets solemnize,
Neither a love where may not be Ever so little falsity.
XXVIII  **Gentle lady, do not sing**  Sad songs about the end of love;  Lay aside sadness and sing  How love that passes is enough.

Sing about the long deep sleep  Of lovers that are dead, and how  In the grave all love shall sleep:  Love is aweary now.


XXIX  Dear heart, why will you use me so?  Dear eyes that gently me upbraid, Still are you beautiful—but O, How is your beauty raimented!

Through the clear mirror of your eyes, Through the soft sigh of kiss to kiss, Desolate winds assail with cries The shadowy garden where love is.

And soon shall love dissolved be When over us the wild winds blow— But you, dear love, too dear to me, Alas! why will you use me so?
XXX       Love came to us in time gone by When one at twilight shyly played
And one in fear was standing nigh—    For Love at first is all afraid.

We were grave lovers. Love is past    That had his sweet hours many a one;
Welcome to us now at the last     The ways that we shall go upon.
XXXI  O, it was out by Donnycarney  When the bat flew from tree to tree  
My love and I did walk together;  And sweet were the words she said to me.

   Along with us the summer wind  Went murmuring—O, happily!—  But  
softer than the breath of summer  Was the kiss she gave to me.
XXXII  

Rain has fallen all the day.  
O come among the laden trees:  
The leaves lie thick upon the way  
Of memories.

Staying a little by the way  
Of memories shall we depart.  
Come, my beloved, where I may  
Speak to your heart.
XXXIII  Now, O now, in this brown land
make  We two shall wander, hand in hand,
sake,  Nor grieve because our love was gay
Where Love did so sweet music
Forbearing for old friendship'
Which now is ended in this way.

A rogue in red and yellow dress  Is knocking, knocking at the tree;  And
all around our loneliness  The wind is whistling merrily.  The leaves—they
do not sigh at all  When the year takes them in the fall.

Now, O now, we hear no more  The vilanelle and roundelay!  Yet will we
kiss, sweetheart, before  We take sad leave at close of day.  Grieve not,
sweetheart, for anything—  The year, the year is gathering.
XXXIV  

Sleep now, O sleep now,  O you unquiet heart!  A voice crying
"Sleep now"  Is heard in my heart.

The voice of the winter  Is heard at the door.  O sleep, for the winter  Is
crying "Sleep no more."

My kiss will give peace now  And quiet to your heart—  Sleep on in peace
now,  O you unquiet heart!
XXXV       All day I hear the noise of waters       Making moan,       Sad as the
sea-bird is when, going       Forth alone,       He hears the winds cry to the water's
Monotone.       The grey winds, the cold winds are blowing       Where I go.       I
hear the noise of many waters       Far below.       All day, all night, I hear them
flowing       To and fro.
XXXVI  I hear an army charging upon the land,  And the thunder of horses plunging, foam about their knees:  Arrogant, in black armour, behind them stand,  Disdaining the reins, with fluttering ships, the charioteers.  They cry unto the night their battle-name:  I moan in sleep when I hear afar their whirling laughter.  They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame, Clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil.  They come shaking in triumph their long, green hair:  They come out of the sea and run shouting by the shore.  My heart, have you no wisdom thus to despair?  My love, my love, why have you left me alone?