

Text and Translations

WILL LIVERMAN

Morning, from *Four Songs by Paul Laurence Dunbar*

The mist has left the greening plain,
The dew-drops shine like fairy rain,
The coquette rose awakes again
Her lovely self adorning.

The Wind is hiding in the trees,
A sighing, soothing, laughing tease,
Until the rose says "kiss me, please"
'Tis morning, 'tis morning.

With staff in hand and careless-free,
The wanderer fares right jauntily,
For towns and houses are, thinks he,
For scorning, for scorning,

My soul is swift upon the wing,
And in its deeps a song I bring;
come, Love, and we together sing,
" 'Tis morning, 'tis morning.

CARL LOEWE

from 3 *Balladen*, Op. 1

Erlkönig (The Elfking)

Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und Wind?
Es ist der Vater mit seinem Kind;
Er hat den Knaben wohl in dem Arm,
Er faßt ihn sicher, er hält ihn warm.

“Mein Sohn, was birgst du so bang dein Gesicht?”
“Siehst, Vater, du den Erlkönig nicht?
Den Erlenkönig mit Kron’ und Schweif?”
“Mein Sohn, es ist ein Nebelstreif.”

“Du liebes Kind, komm, geh mit mir!
Gar schöne Spiele spiel’ ich mit dir;
Manch’ bunte Blumen sind an dem Strand;
Meine Mutter hat manch gülden Gewand.”

“Mein Vater, mein Vater, und hörest du nicht,
Was Erlenkönig mir leise verspricht?”
“Sei ruhig, bleibe ruhig, mein Kind;
In dürren Blättern säuselt der Wind.”

“Willst, feiner Knabe, du mit mir gehn?
Meine Töchter sollen dich warten schön;
Meine Töchter führen den nächtlichen Reihn,
Und wiegen und tanzen und singen dich ein.”

“Mein Vater, mein Vater, und siehst du nicht
dort Erlkönigs Töchter am düstern Ort?”
“Mein Sohn, mein Sohn, ich seh’ es genau;
Es scheinen die alten Weiden so grau.”

“Ich liebe dich, mich reizt deine schöne Gestalt;
Und bist du nicht willig, so brauch’ ich Gewalt.”
“Mein Vater, mein Vater, jetzt faßt er mich an!
Erlkönig hat mir ein [Leids] gethan!”

Dem Vater grauset's, er reitet geschwind,
Er hält [in Armen] das ächzende Kind,
Erreicht den Hof mit [Mühe] und Noth;
In seinen Armen das Kind war todt.

Who rides, so late, through night and wind?
It is the father with his child.
He has the boy well in his arm,
He holds him safely, he keeps him warm.

“My son, why do you hide your face in fear?”
“Father, do you not see the Elf-king?
The Elf-king with crown and cape?”
“My son, it’s a streak of fog.”

“You dear child, come, go with me!
(Very) beautiful games I play with you;
many a colorful flower is on the beach,
My mother has many a golden robe.”

“My father, my father, and hearest you not,
What the Elf-king quietly promises me?”
“Be calm, stay calm, my child;
Through scrawny leaves the wind is sighing.”

“Do you, fine boy, want to go with me?
My daughters shall wait on you finely;
My daughters lead the nightly dance,
And rock and dance and sing to bring you in.”

“My father, my father, and don’t you see there
The Elf-king’s daughters in the gloomy place?”
“My son, my son, I see it clearly:
There shimmer the old willows so grey.”

“I love you, your beautiful form entices me;
And if you’re not willing, then I will use force.”
“My father, my father, he’s touching me now!
The Elf-king has done me harm!”

It horrifies the father; he swiftly rides on,
He holds the moaning child in his arms,
Reaches the farm with great difficulty;
In his arms, the child was dead.

CARL LOEWE
Edward

Dein Schwerdt, wie ists von Blut so . . .

Dein Schwerdt, wie ists [von] Blut so roth?
[Edward, Edward]!
Dein Schwerdt, wie ists [von] Blut so roth
Und gehst so traurig da! - O!
Ich hab geschlagen meinen Geyer todt
Mutter, Mutter!
Ich hab geschlagen meinen Geyer todt,
Und das, das geht mir nah! - O!

[Dein's] Geyers Blut ist nicht so roth!
Edward, Edward!
[Dein's] Geyers Blut ist nicht so roth,
Mein Sohn, bekenn mir frey! - O!
Ich hab geschlagen mein Rothroß todt!
Mutter, Mutter!
Ich hab geschlagen mein Rotroß todt!
[Und's] war so stolz und treu! O!

Dein Roß war alt und hasts nicht noth!
Edward, Edward,
Dein Roß war alt und hasts nicht noth,
Dich drückt ein [ander]5 Schmerz. O!
Ich hab geschlagen meinen Vater todt,
Mutter, Mutter!
Ich hab geschlagen meinen Vater todt,
Und das, das quält mein Herz! O!

Und was wirst du nun an dir thun?
Edward, Edward!
Und was wirst du nun an dir thun?
Mein Sohn, [bekenn mir mehr]6! O!
Auf Erden soll mein Fuß nicht ruhn!
Mutter, Mutter!
Auf Erden soll mein Fuß nicht ruhn!
Will wandern [über] Meer! O!

Und was soll werden dein Hof und Hall,
Edward, Edward,
Und was soll werden dein Hof und Hall,
So herrlich [sonst und] schön! O!
Ach! immer stehs und sink' und fall,
Mutter, Mutter!
Ach immer stehs und sink' und fall,
[Ich werd es nimmer] sehn! O!

Und was soll werden [dein] Weib und Kind,
Edward, Edward?
Und was soll werden [dein] Weib und Kind,
[Wann] du gehst [über] Meer - O!
Die Welt ist groß! laß sie betteln drinn,
Mutter, Mutter!
Die Welt ist groß! laß sie betteln drinn,
Ich seh sie nimmermehr! - O!

Why does your sword drip with such blood . . .

"Why does your sword drip with such blood,
Edward, Edward?
Why does your sword drip with such blood
And why do you go so sadly there, O?"
"O, I have killed my hawk so good,
Mother, Mother;
O, I have killed my hawk so good,
And I had no more but he, O!"

"Your hawk's blood was never so red,
Edward, Edward!
Your hawk's blood was never so red,
My dear son, I tell you, O!"
"O, I have killed my red-roan steed,
Mother, Mother;
O, I have killed my red-roan steed,
That was once so fair and free, O!"

"Your steed was old, and you have got more,
Edward, Edward!
Your steed was old, and you have got more,
Some other thing troubles you, O!"
"O, I have slain my father dear,
Mother, Mother;
O, I have slain my father dear,
Alas and woe is me, O!"

"And what penance will you do for that,
Edward, Edward?
And what penance will you do for that,
My dear son, now tell me, O!"
"I'll set my feet in yonder boat,
Mother, Mother;
I'll set my feet in yonder boat,
And I'll go over the sea, O."

"And what will you do with your towers and your house,
Edward, Edward?
And what will you do with your towers and your house
That were so fair to see, O?"
"I'll let them stand till they fall down,
Mother, Mother;
I'll let them stand till they fall down,
For here never more may I be, O."

"And what will you leave to your children and wife,
Edward, Edward?
And what will you leave to your children and wife,
When you go over the sea, O?"
"The world has room, let them beg through life,
Mother, Mother;
The world has room, let them beg through life,
For them never more will I see, O!"

Und was soll deine Mutter thun?
Edward, Edward!
Und was soll deine Mutter thun?
Mein Sohn, das sage mir! O!
Der Fluch der Hölle soll auf Euch ruhn,
Mutter, Mutter!
Der Fluch der Hölle soll auf Euch ruhn,
Denn ihr, ihr [riethets] mir! O.

"And what will you leave to your mother dear,
Edward, Edward?
And what will you leave to your mother dear,
My dear son, now tell me, O!"
"The curse of hell from me shall ye bear,
Mother, Mother;
The curse of hell from me shall ye bear,
For the counsel ye gave to me, O!"

CARL LOEWE Odins-Meeresritt

Meister Oluf, der Schmied auf Helgoland,
Verlässt den Amboss um Mitternacht.
Es heulet der Wind am Meeresstrand,
Da pocht es an seiner Türe mit Macht:

Master Oluf, the smith of Helgoland,
leaves his anvil in the middle of the night.
The wind is howling at the seashore,
and there is a powerful knocking at his door:

"Heraus, heraus, beschlag' mir mein Ross,
Ich muss noch weit, und der Tag ist nah!"
Meister Oluf öffnet der Türe Schloss,
Und ein stattlicher Reiter steht vor ihm da.

"Come out, come out, shoe my steed,
I have far to go and day is near!"
Master Oluf unlocks the door
and an impressive rider stands before him.

Schwarz ist sein Panzer, sein Helm und Schild;
An der Hüfte hängt ihm ein breites Schwert.
Sein Rappe schüttelt die Mähne gar wild
Und stampft mit Ungeduld die Erd'!

Black is his armor, helmet and shield;
and at his hip hangs a broadsword.
His black steed tosses its mane wildly
and stamps the earth with impatience!

"Woher so spät? Wohin so schnell?"
"In Norderney kehrt' ich gestern ein.
Mein Pferd ist rasch, die Nacht is hell,
Vor der Sonne muss ich in Norwegen sein!"

"Where do you go so late? Why so fast?"
"In Norderney I stayed yesterday.
My horse is swift, the night is bright,
and I must be in Norway before the sun!"

"Hättet Ihr Flügel, so glaubt' ich's gern!"
"Mein Rappe, der läuft wohl mit dem Wind.
Doch bleichet schon da und dort ein Stern,
Drum her mit dem Eisen und mach' geschwind!"

"If you had wings, then I'd gladly believe it!"
"My black steed runs like the wind.
But the stars are growing pale,
so come with the shoe and make it quick!"

Meister Oluf nimmt das Eisen zur Hand,
Es ist zu klein, da dehnt es sich aus.
Und wie es wächst um des Hufes Rand,
Da ergreifen den Meister Bang' und Graus.

Master Oluf takes the shoe in his hand,
and it is too small, but it begins to grow.
And as it grows into the hoof,
he is seized by fear and dread.

Der Reiter sitzt auf, es klirrt sein Schwert:
"Nun, Meister Oluf, gute Nacht!
Wohl hast du beschlagen Odin's Pferd';
Ich eile hinüber zur blutigen Schlacht."

The rider mounts and his sword clanks:
"Now, Master Oluf, good night!
Well have you shoed Odin's steed;
I hurry now to bloody battle."

Der Rappe schiesst fort über Land und Meer,
Um Odin's Haupt erglänzet ein Licht.
Zwölf Adler fliegen hinter ihm her;
Sie fliegen schnell, und erreichen ihn nicht.

The black steed darts forth over land and sea,
and around Odin's head light glows.
Twelve eagles fly behind him,
and they fly swiftly, but do not reach him.

HERBERT HOWELLS
King David

King David was a sorrowful man:
No cause for his sorrow had he;
And he called for the music of a hundred harps,
To ease his melancholy.
They played till they all fell silent:
Played and play sweet did they;
But the sorrow that haunted the heart of King David
They could not charm away.
He rose; and in his garden
Walked by the moon alone,
A nightingale hidden in a cypress tree,
Jargoned on and on.
King David lifted his sad eyes
Into the dark-boughed tree --
"Tell me, thou little bird that singest,
Who taught my grief to thee?"
But the bird in no-wise heeded;
And the king in the cool of the moon
Harkened to the nightingale's sorrowfulness,
Till all his own was gone.

FRANCIS POULENC
Quatre poèmes de Guillaume Apollinaire
translated by Christopher Goldsack

L'anguille

Jeanne Houhou la très gentille
Est morte entre des draps très blancs
Pas seule Bébert dit l'Anguille
Narcisse et Hubert le merlan
Près d'elle faisaient leur manille

Et la crâneuse de Clichy
Aux rouges yeux de dégueulade
Répète Mon eau de Vichy
Va dans le panier à salade
Haha sans faire de chichi

Les yeux dansants comme des anges
Elle riait elle riait
Les yeux très bleus les dents très blanches
Si vous saviez si vous saviez
Tout ce que nous ferons dimanche

The eel

Jeanne Houhou the very kind one
is dead between very white sheets
not alone Bébert called the Eel
Narcisse and Hubert the whiting
close by her were playing their manille

and the posing woman of Clichy
with the spewy red eyes
repeats My Vichy water
go in the prison van
haha without making a fuss

with eyes dancing like angels
she laughed she laughed
with eyes very blue with teeth very white
if you knew if you knew
all that we shall do on Sunday

Carte postale

L'ombre de la très douce est évoquée ici,
Indolente, et jouant un air dolent aussi:
Nocturne ou lied mineur qui fait pâmer
son âme
Dans l'ombre où ses longs doigts font mourir
une gamme
Au piano qui geint comme une pauvre femme.

Avant le cinéma

Avant le cinéma
Et puis ce soir on s'en ira
Au cinema

Les Artistes que sont-ce donc
Ce ne sont plus ceux qui cultivent
les Beaux-Arts
Ce ne sont pas ceux qui s'occupent de l'Art
Art poétique ou bien musique
Les Artistes ce sont les acteurs et les actrices

Si nous étions des Artistes
Nous ne dirions pas le cinéma
Nous dirions le ciné

Mais si nous étions de vieux professeurs
de province
Nous ne dirions ni ciné ni cinéma
Mais cinématographe

Aussi mon Dieu faut-il avoir du gout

1904

A Strasbourg en 1904
J'arrivai pour le lundi gras
A l'hôtel m'assis devant l'âtre
Près d'un chanteur de l'Opéra
Qui ne parlait que de théâtre

La Kellnerine rousse avait
Mis sur sa tête un chapeau rose
Comme Hébé qui les dieux servait
N'en eut jamais ô belles choses
Carnaval chapeau rose Ave!

A Rome à Nice et à Cologne
Dans les fleurs et les confetti
Carnaval j'ai revu ta trogne
O roi plus riche et plus gentil
Que Crésus Rothschild et Trologne

Je soupai d'un peu de foie gras
De chevreuil tendre à la compote
De tartes flans etc.
Un peu de kirsch me ravigote
Que ne t'avais-je entre mes bras

Postcard

The shadow of the very sweet one is evoked here
indolent, and playing a doleful tune too:
nocturne or Lied in a minor key which makes her soul
swoon
in the shadow where her long fingers send a scale
to its death
on the piano which groans like a poor woman.

Before the Cinema

Before the cinema
And then this evening we shall go
to the cinema

the Artists what then are they for
they are no longer those who cultivate
the Fine Arts
they are not those who go in for Art
poetic art or music
the Artists are the actors and the actresses

if we were Artists
we would not say the cinema
we would say the ciné

but if we were old provincial
teachers
we would say neither ciné nor cinema
but cinematograph instead

besides my God must one have good taste

1904

In Strasbourg in nineteen hundred and four
I arrived on the Monday before Lent
at the hotel I sat down before the hearth
close to a singer from the Opéra
who spoke of nothing but theatre

the red-haired waitress had
put a pink hat on her head
such as Hebe who served the gods
had never had o beautiful things
Carnival pink hat Ave!

In Rome in Nice and in Cologne
among the flowers and the confetti
carnival I have seen your bloated face again
o king richer and kinder
than Croesus Rothschild and Torlonia

I supped on a little foi gras
on tender venison with compote
on custard tartlets etc.
a little kirsch cheered me up
why did I not have you between my arms

WILLIAM BOLCOM

Black Max

He was always dressed in black,
long black jacket, broad black hat,
sometimes a cape,
and as thin as rubber tape: Black Max.
He would raise that big black hat
to the big-shots of the town
who raised their hats right back,
never knew they were bowing to Black Max.
I'm talking about night in Rotterdam
when the right night people of all the town
would find what they could
in the night neighborhood of Black Max.
There were women in the windows
with bodies for sale
dressed in curls like little girls
in little dollhouse jails.
When the women walked the street
with the beds upon their backs,
who was lifting up his brim to them?
Black Max!
And there were looks for sale,
the art of the smile —
(only certain people walked that mystery mile;
artists, charlatans, vaudevillians,

men of mathematics, acrobatics, and civilians).
There was knitting-needle music
from a lady organ-grinder
with all her sons behind her,
Marco, Vito, Benno
(Was he strong! though he walked like a woman)
and Carlo, who was five.
He must be still alive!
Ah, poor Marco had the syph, and if
you didn't take the terrible cure those days
you went crazy and died and he did.
And at the coffin before they closed the lid,
who raised his lid? Black Max.
I was climbing on the train
one day going far away
to the good old U.S.A.
when I heard some music
underneath the tracks.
Standing there beneath the bridge,
long black jacket, broad black hat,
playing the harmonica, one hand free
to lift that hat to me:
Black Max, Black Max, Black Max.

FREDERICK KEEL

Three Salt Water Ballads

1. Port of Many Ships

It's a sunny pleasant anchorage, is Kingdom Come,
Where crews is always layin' aft for double-tots o' rum,
'N' there's dancing 'n' fiddling of ev'ry kind o' sort,
It's a fine place for sailor-men is that there port.
 'N' I wish –
 I wish as I was there.

The winds is never nothin' more than jest light airs,
N' no one gets belayin' pinn'd, n' no one never swears,
Yer free to loaf 'n' laze around, yer pipe atween yer lips,
Lollin' on the fo'c'sle, sonny, lookin' at the ships.
 'N' I wish –
 I wish as I was there.

For ridin' in the anchorage the ships of all the world,
Have got one anchor down 'n' all sails furl'd.
All the sunken hookers 'n' the crews as took 'n' died
They lays there merry, sonny, swingin' to the tide
 'N' I wish –
 I wish as I was there.

Drown'd old wooden hookers green wi' drippin' wrack,
Ships as never fetch'd to port, as never came back,

Swingin' to the blushin' tide, dippin' to the swell,
N' the crews all singin', sonny, beatin' on the bell
 'N' I wish –
 I wish as I was there.

2. *Trade Winds*

In the harbour, in the island, in the Spanish seas,
Are the tiny white houses and the orange trees,
And day-long, night-long, the cool and pleasant breeze
 Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

There is the red wine, the nutty Spanish ale,
The shuffle of the dancers, and the old salt's tale,
The squeaking fiddle, and the souging in the sail
 Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

and o'nights there's the fire-flies and the yellow moon,
And in the ghostly palm trees the sleepy tune
Of the quiet voice calling me, the long low croon
 Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

3. *Mother Carey*

Mother Carey? She's the mother o' the witches
 'N' all them sort o' rips;
She's a fine gell to look at, but the hitch is,
 She's a sight too fond of ships;
She lives upon an iceberg to the norred,
 'N' her man he's Davy Jones,
'N' she combs the weeds upon her forred
 With pore [drowned]¹ sailors' bones.

She's the mother o' the wrecks, 'n' the mother
 Of all big winds as blows;
She's up to some deviltry or other
 When it storms, or sleets, or snows;
The noise of the wind's her screamin',
 'I'm arter a plump, young, fine,
[Brass-buttoned, beefy-ribbed]² young seam'n
 So as me 'n' my mate kin dine.
She's a hungry old rip 'n' a cruel
 For sailor-men like we,
She's give a many mariners the gruel
 'N' a long sleep under sea;
She's the blood o' many a crew upon her
 'N' the bones of many a wreck,
'N' she's barnacles a-growin' on her
 'N' shark's teeth round her neck.

I ain't never had no schoolin'
 Nor read no books like you,
But I knows ['t]³ ain't healthy to be foolin'
 With that there gristly two;
You're young, you thinks, 'n' you're lairy,
 But if you're to make old bones,
Steer clear, I says, o' Mother Carey,
 'N' that there Davy Jones.

LIBBY LARSEN

Machine Head

by Ted Burke

The hippest
machines
of our day
does not think
about dealing
with the likes of us
once someone invents
batteries that
never run down,

free from plugs
and the walls
of
homes that keep them
predictable and safe
for the family to view,
the hippest machines of the day
will never define time
as something
you had to do “something” with,
something you had to
“kill”
or “spend”
or
“while away”
until the affliction of waiting is done with
and time is
“filled” again, as if it were
a can or a box hungry for
stuff that machines manufacture
or make obsolete.

Machines of gratuitous good looks
just sit wherever they
happen to be
and look pretty as they
purr, utility and logic of design
disguised by gleam
that addresses
a flesh and blood need

for a pretty
face
that means nothing
and stands for less.

All my machines are plugged in, of course,
and they reek of English Leather,
or they contemplate major leaps in technology,
invention before need arises,
genius in
bathroom stalls,
machine that go on and on
and do everything
under the sun
that never that never seemed to break down before
until someone built a machine, a goddamned
machine.

The hippest machines
on my block
solicit my opinions
from no-good-reason-to-know
because of a yearning
in their programming
to have some
bytes removed and munched on,
chewed over, mulled and gnawed
like a doubt . . .

All the bad wiring in the world circles around my
heart
when I realize you’re still not here, that I’m
talking to
answering machines that tell me everything
except where you are and why we aren’t in love
like we used to be.

My machines know all my sounds,
the rhythm of bad habits
they are powerless to match.

H. LESLIE ADAMS
From *Night Songs*

Prayer

by Langston Hughes

I ask you this:
Which way to go?
I ask you this:
Which sin to bear?
Which crown to put
Upon my hair?
I do not know,
Lord God,
I do not know.

The Heart of a Woman

by Georgia Douglas Johnson

The heart of a woman goes forth with the dawn,
As a lone bird, soft winging, so restlessly on,
Afar o'er life's turrets and vales does it roam
In the wake of those echoes the heart calls home.

The heart of a woman falls back with the night,
And enters some alien cage in its plight,
And tries to forget it has dreamed of the stars
While it breaks, breaks, breaks on the sheltering bars.

Sence You Went Away

by James Weldon Johnson

Seems lak to me de stars don't shine so bright,
Seems lak to me de sun done loss his light,
Seems lak to me der's nothin' goin' right,
Sence you went away.

Seems lak to me de sky ain't half so blue,
Seems lak to me dat ev'rything wants you,
Seems lak to me I don't know what to do,
Sence you went away.

Oh ev'rything is wrong,
De day's jes twice as long,
De bird's forgot his song
Sence you went away.

Seems lak to me I jes can't he'p but sigh,
Seems lak to me ma th'ot keeps gittin dry,
Seems lak to me a tear stays in my eye
Sence you went away.

DAMIEN SNEED
Down By the Riverside

I'm gonna lay down my burden
Down by the riverside...
I'm gonna lay down my burden
Down by the riverside
Study war no more
I ain't gonna study war no more
Study war no more...
I ain't gonna study war no more,
Study war no more...
Laid down my sword and shield
Down by the riverside...
I gonna lay down my sword and shield
Down by the riverside,
Study war no more,
I ain't gonna study war no more,
Study war no more,
Study war no more, no more

I ain't gonna study war no more,
Study war no more,
Study war no more
I'm gonna lay down my burden
In the hand of Jesus! ...
I'm gonna lay down my burden
In the hand of Jesus!
Then I won't stress no more!
I ain't gonna study war no more,
Study war no more...
I'm gonna put on my long white robe
Down by the riverside...
I'm gonna put on my long white robe
Down by the riverside
Study war no more
I ain't gonna study war no more,
Study war no more...