Wie Melodien zieht es - Brahms
Mir leise durch den Sinn,
Wie Frühlingsblumen blüht es,
Und schwebt wie Duft dahin.

It stretches like a melody
Gently through my mind,
It blooms like spring flowers
And floats down like a fragrance.

Doch kommt das Wort und faßt es
Und führt es vor das Aug',
Wie Nebelgrau erblaßt es
Und schwindet wie ein Hauch.

But putting it into words captures it
and sets it in front of my eyes,
And like a gray mist it pales
And vanishes like a breath.

Und dennoch ruht im Reime
Verborgen wohl ein Duft,
Den mild aus stillem Keime
Ein feuchtes Auge ruft.

And yet there remains a fragrance
well hidden in the rhymes,
That gently from a silent blossom
My damp eyes call forth.

Poem by Klaus Groth

Lied der Suleika – Schumann
Wie mit innigstem Behagen,
Lied, empfin'd ich deinen Sinn,
Liebevoll du scheinest zu sagen,
Daß ich ihm zur Seite bin;

With inmost contentment
Song, I sense your meaning,
Full of love you seem to say
That I am by his side;

Daß er ewig mein gedenket,
Seiner Liebe Seligkeit,
Immerdar der Fernen schenket,
Die ein Leben ihm geweiht.

That he always thinks of me,
that he gives the blessedness of his love
forevermore to the distant one
Who consecrates her life to him.

Ja, mein Herz es ist der Spiegel,
Freund, worin du dich erblickt,
Diese Brust, wo deine Siegel
Kuß auf Kuß hereingedrückt.

Yes, my heart is the mirror,
Friend, in which you gaze at yourself,
This breast, where your seal
Pressed itself in kiss after kiss.

Süßes Dichten, lautre Wahrheit,
Fesselt mich in Sympathie,
Rein verkörpert Liebesklarheit
Im Gewand der Poesie!

Sweet poems and forthright truth
Bind me up with affection,
Purely embodied clarity of love
In the robes of poetry!

Poem by Goethe

Anakreons Grab – Wolf
Wo die Rose hier blüht,
wo Reben um Lorbeer sich schlingen,
wo das Turtelchen lockt,
wo sich das Grillchen ergötzt,
welch ein Grab ist hier,
das alle Götter mit Leben
schön bepflanzt und geziert?
Es ist Anakreons Ruh.
Frühling, Sommer und Herbst

Anakreon’s Grave
Where the roses here bloom,
where vines entwine the laurel,
where the turtledove coos,
where the cricket disports,
what a grave is here,
that all the Gods have with life
beautifully planted and adorned?
It is Anakreon’s grave.
Spring, summer, and autumn
Genoß der glückliche Dichter; were savored by the happy poet;
Vor dem Winter hat ihn endlich from winter now, finally,
der Hügel geschützt. this mound has protected him.

Goethe’s poem is a meditation on the relationship of art and immortality. The Greek lyric poet Anakreon rests in the beautifully adorned “grave” of his poetry, which has protected him from the “winter” of an anonymous death.

Suleika I - Schubert
Was bedeutet die Bewegung? What does this stirring mean?
Bringt der Ost mir frohe Kunde? Brings the east wind happy news?
Seiner Schwingen frische Regung The cool beating of its wings
küht des Herzens tiefe Wunde. soothes the deep wounds of the heart.

Kosend spielt er mit dem Staube, It plays, caressing, with the dust
jagt ihn auf in leichten Wölkchen, driving it up in light clouds,
treibt zur sichern Rebenlaube carries to safe leafy havens
der Insekten frohes Völkchen. the happy folk of insects.

Lindert sanft der Sonne Glühen, It protects gently against the heat of the sun,
kühlt auch mich die heissen Wangen, and also cools my burning cheeks,
küsst die Reben noch in Fliehen, it kisses the vines as well in its flight,
die auf Feld und Hügel prangen. that adorn the field and hill.

Und mir bringt sein leises Flüstern And its gentle whispering brings me
von dem Freunde tausend Grüsse, from my friend a thousand greetings,
eh’ noch diese Hügel düstern, before these hills grow dark,
Grüssten mich wohl tausend Küsse. I will be greeted with a thousand kisses.

Und so kannst du weiter ziehen! So then, you can move on!
Diene Freunden und Betrübten. Serve friends and the aggrieved,
Dort, dort, wo hohe Mauern glühen, There, there, where high walls gleam,
dort find ich bald den Vielgeliebten. there I will soon find my well-beloved.

Ach, die wahre Herzenskunde, Oh, the true knowledge of the heart,
Liebeshauch, erfrischtes Leben, breath of love, freshening of life,
wird mir nur aus seinem Munde, comes to me only from your mouth,
kann mir nur sein Athem geben. can only be given to me by your breath.

This poem was composed not by Goethe (although they were published under his name in the *West-Oestliche Divan*) but by his muse Marianne von Willemer. Similar in some ways to Goethe’s character Mignon, Marianne grew up on the stage in Frankfurt, where she was “rescued” by a cultured man from a merchant family. She married him at age 14, and went on to captivate a series of poets including Brentano. Goethe visited when she was 29, and returned the following year for four months. After that visit, they never saw each other again, but remained in poetic correspondence. Marianne is the author of three of the Suleika poems in the *West-Oestliche Divan.*
FIANCAILLES POUR RIRE
Francis Poulenc / Louise de Vilmorin

I. La Dame d’André
André ne connait pas la femme
Qu’il prend aujourd’hui par la main.
A-t-elle un cœur à lendemains
Et pour le soir a-t-elle une âme?

Au retour d’un bal campagnard
S’en allait-elle en robe vague
Chercher dans les meules la bague
Des fiançailles du hasard?

A-t’elle eu peur, la nuit venue,
Guettée par les ombres d’hier,
Dans son jardin lorsque l’hiver
Entrait par la grande avenue?

Il l’a aimée pour sa couleur
Pour sa bonne humeur de Dimanche.
Pâlira-t-elle aux feuilles blanches
De son album des temps meilleurs?

II. Dans l’herbe
Je ne peux plus rien dire
Ni rien faire pour lui
Il est mort de sa belle
Il est mort de sa mort belle
Dehors
Sous l’arbre de la Loi
En plein silence
En plein paysage
Dans l’herbe.
Il est mort inaperçu
En criant son passage
En appelant, en m’appelant
Mais comme j’étais loin de lui
Et que sa voix ne portait plus
Il est mort seul dans le bois
Sous son arbre d’enfance
Et je ne peux plus rien dire
Ni rien faire pour lui.

III. Il vole
En allant se coucher le soleil
Se reflète au vernis de ma table:
C’est le fromage rond de la fable
Au bec de mes ciseaux de vermeil.
Mais où est le corbeau? Il vole.

Je voudrais coudre mais un aimant
Attire à lui toute mes aiguilles.

WHIMSICAL ENGAGEMENTS

I. Andre’s lady
Andre did not know the woman
who he took by the hand today.
Does she have a heart for the tomorrows
And a soul for the evening?

Returning from a country dance
Did she go in her pretty dress
to search in the haystacks for the ring
Of chance engagements?

Was she afraid as night came,
Watched by the shadows of yesterday,
In her garden as winter
Entered by the great avenue?

He loved her for her color,
for her good Sunday humor.
Will she pale on the white pages
of his album of better days?

II. In the grass
I cannot say anything more
nor do anything more for him.
He is dead of his beautiful one
He is dead of a natural death
Outside
Under the tree of the Law
In total silence
In total countryside
In the grass.
He died unnoticed
Crying out his passage
He called out, he called out to me
But since I was far from him
And since his voice no longer carried
He died alone in the woods
Under his tree of childhood
And I cannot say anything more
Nor do anything for him.

III. He flies/He thieves
As the sun was going to sleep
It reflected in the varnish of my table:
This is the round cheese of the fable
At the beak of my silver scissors.
But where is the crow? It flies.

I would like to sew but a magnet
Attracts to itself all my needles.
Sur la place le joueurs de quilles
De belle en belle passent le temps.
Mais où est mon amant? Il vole.
C’est un voleur que j’ai pour amant.
Le corbeau vole et mon amant vole.
Voleur de cœur manque à sa parole
Et voleur de fromage est absent.
Mais où est le bonheur? Il vole.

Je pleure sous le saule pleureur.
Je mêle mes larmes à ses feuilles.
Je pleure car je veux qu’on me veuille
Et je ne plais pas a mon voleur.
Mais où donc est l’amour? Il vole.

Trouvez la rime à ma deraison
Et par les route du paysage
Ramenez-moi mon amant volage
Qui prend les coeurs et perd ma raison.
Je veux que mon voleur me vole.

IV. Mon cadavre est doux comme un gant
Mon cadavre est doux comme un gant
Doux comme un gant de peau glacée
Et mes prunelles effacées
Font de mes yeux des cailloux blancs.
Deux cailloux blancs dans mon visage
Dans le silence deux muets
Ombreées encore d’un secret
Et lourds du poids mort des images.
Mes doigts tant de fois égares
Sont joints en attitude sainte
Appuyés au creux de mes plaintes
Au noeud de mon coeur arrêté.
Et mes deux pieds sont les montagnes,
Le deux derniers monts que j’ai vus
A la minute où j’ai perdu
La course que les années gagnent.
Mon souvenir est ressemblant,
Enfants emportex-le bien vite,
Allez, allez, ma vie est dite,
Mon cadavre est doux comme un gant.

V. Violon
Couple amoureux, aux accents méconnus,
Le violon et son joueur me plaisent.
Ah! j’aime ces gémissements tendus
Sur la corde des malaises.

On the plaza, the skittle players
Between one beauty and another pass the time.
But where is my love? He flies.
It is a thief that I have for a lover,
The crow flies and my lover steals.
The thief of the heart goes back on his word
And the thief of the cheese is gone.
But where is happiness? It flies.
I weep below the weeping willow
I mix my tears with its leaves
I weep because I want to be wanted
And I am not pleasing to my thief.
But where then is love? It flies.
Find the rhyme of my unreason
And on the paths of the countryside
Bring me back my thievi
ng lover
Who takes hearts and loses my reason
I want my thief to steal me!
My corpse is soft like a glove
My corpse is soft like a glove
Soft as a glove of glacé kid
And my erased pupils
Make of my eyes two white pebbles.
Two white pebbles in my face
In the silence two mutes
Still shadowed by a secret
And heavy with the dead weight of memories
My fingers, so many times straying,
Are joined in a saintly pose
Fixed at the hollow of my plaints
At the knot of my still heart.
And my two feet are mountains,
The two last mountains that I saw
At the moment when I lost
The race which the years win.
My memory is still lifelike,
Children, take it away quickly,
Go, go, my life is spoken,
My corpse is soft as a glove.
Amorous couple, in a misunderstood style,
The violin and his player please me.
Ah! I love these drawn-out wailings
On the string of uneasiness.
Aux accords sur les cordes des pendus
A l’heure où les Lois se taient
le coeur en forme de fraise
S’offre à l’amour comme un fruit inconnu.

To the chords on the ropes of the hanged
At the hour when the Laws are silent
the heart, in the form of a strawberry,
Offers itself to love like an unknown fruit.

VI. Fleurs
Fleurs promises, fleurs tenues dans tes bras,
Fleurs sorties des parenthèses d’un pas,
Qui t’apportais ces fleurs l’hiver
Saupoudrées du sable des mers?
Sable de tes baisers, fleurs des amours fanées
Les beaux yeux sont de cendre et dans la cheminée
Un coeur enrubanné des plaintes
Brûle avec ses images saintes.
Fleurs promises, fleurs tenues dans tes bras,
Fleurs sorties des parenthèses d’un pas,
Qui t’apportais ces fleurs l’hiver
Saupoudrées du sable des mers.

VI. Flowers
Promised flowers, flowers held in your arms,
Flowers sprouted from the parenthesis of a footprint
Who brought you these flowers in winter
Sprinkled with the sand of the seas?
Sand of your kisses, flowers of wilted loves
The beautiful eyes are cinders, and in the fireplace
A heart beribboned with laments
Burns with its holy images.
Promised flowers, flowers held in your arms,
Flowers sprouted from the parenthesis of a footprint
Who brought you these flowers in winter
Sprinkled with the sand of the seas?

These poems contain some of the most complicated and convoluted feelings I have found in any song literature. Nothing is straightforward in the poetry of Louise de Vilmorin; but for this reason it speaks perhaps most directly to the experiences of modern women. Louise de Vilmorin was a femme fatale in mid-century Paris, racking up such conquests as Antoine de Saint-Expery and Orson Wells while serving as muse to Alaia and Lacroix.
Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson
Aaron Copland

Note: At the time that Copland wrote these songs, the only edition of Emily Dickinson available had been edited, changing the punctuation and even some of the words of her poems. I have printed the original poems here, but please don’t be distracted by the fact that they are different from what you hear in the songs. I have included the original texts as in some places the meaning is clearer in the original text.

1.
Nature — the Gentlest Mother is,
   Impatient of no Child —
The feeblest — or the waywardest —
   Her Admonition mild —

    In Forest — and the Hill —
    By Traveller — be heard —
    Restraining Rampant Squirrel —
Or too impetuous Bird —

How fair Her Conversation —
A Summer Afternoon —
Her Household — Her Assembly —
And when the Sun go down —

    Her Voice among the Aisles
    Incite the timid prayer
    Of the minutest Cricket —
    The most unworthy Flower —

When all the Children sleep —
She turns as long away
As will suffice to light Her lamps —
Then bending from the Sky —

With infinite Affection —
And infiniter Care —
Her Golden finger on Her lip —
Wills Silence — Everywhere —

2.
There came a Wind like a Bugle —
It quivered through the Grass
And a Green Chill upon the Heat
So ominous did pass
We barred the Windows and the Doors
As from an Emerald Ghost —
The Doom’s electric Moccasin
That very instant passed —
On a strange Mob of panting Trees
And Fences fled away
And Rivers where the Houses ran
Those looked that lived — that Day —
The Bell within the steeple wild
The flying tidings told —
How much can come
And much can go,
And yet abide the World!

3.
Why — do they shut Me out of Heaven?
Did I sing — too loud?
But — I can say a little "Minor"
Timid as a Bird!

Wouldn't the Angels try me —
Just — once — more —
Just — see — if I troubled them —
But don't — shut the door!

Oh, if I — were the Gentleman
In the "White Robe" —
And they — were the little Hand — that knocked —
Could — I — forbid?

4.
The World — feels Dusty
When We stop to Die —
We want the Dew — then —
Honors — taste dry —

Flags — vex a Dying face —
But the least Fan
Stirred by a friend's Hand —
Cools — like the Rain —

Mine be the Ministry
When thy Thirst comes —
And Hybla Balms —
Dews of Thessaly, to fetch —

5.
Heart! We will forget him!
You and I — tonight!
You may forget the warmth he gave —
I will forget the light!

When you have done, pray tell me
That I may straight begin!
Haste! lest while you're lagging
I remember him!

6.
Dear March — Come in —
How glad I am —
I hoped for you before —
Put down your Hat —
You must have walked —
How out of Breath you are —
Dear March, Come right up the stairs with me —
I have so much to tell —

I got your Letter, and the Birds —
The Maples never knew that you were coming — till I called
I declare — how Red their Faces grew —
But March, forgive me — and
All those Hills you left for me to Hue —
There was no Purple suitable —
You took it all with you —

Who knocks? That April.
Lock the Door —
I will not be pursued —
He stayed away a Year to call
When I am occupied —
But trifles look so trivial
As soon as you have come

That Blame is just as dear as Praise
And Praise as mere as Blame —

7.  
Sleep is supposed to be,
By souls of sanity,
The shutting of the eye.

Sleep is the station grand
Down which on either hand
The hosts of witness stand !

Morn is supposed to be,
By people of degree,
The breaking of the day.

Morning has not occurred !
That shall aurora be
East of eternity ;

One with the banner gay,
One in the red array, —
That is the break of day.

8. 
When they come back — if Blossoms do —
I always feel a doubt
If Blossoms can be born again
When once the Art is out —

When they begin, if Robins may,
I always had a fear
I did not tell, it was their last Experiment
Last Year,

When it is May, if May return,
Had nobody a pang
Lest in a Face so beautiful
He might not look again?

If I am there — One does not know
What Party — One may be
Tomorrow, but if I am there
I take back all I say —

9.
I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,
And Mourners to and fro
Kept treading - treading - till it seemed
That Sense was breaking through -

And when they all were seated,
A Service, like a Drum -
Kept beating - beating - till I thought
My mind was going numb -

And then I heard them lift a Box
And creak across my Soul
With those same Boots of Lead, again,
Then Space - began to toll,

As all the Heavens were a Bell,
And Being, but an Ear,
And I, and Silence, some strange Race,
Wrecked, solitary, here -

[And then a Plank in Reason, broke,
And I dropped down, and down -
And hit a World, at every plunge,
And Finished knowing - then -]

10.
I've heard an Organ talk, sometimes
In a Cathedral Aisle,
And understood no word it said —
Yet held my breath, the while —

And risen up — and gone away,
A more Berdardine Girl —
Yet — know not what was done to me
In that old Chapel Aisle.

11.
Going to Heaven!  
I don't know when —  
Pray do not ask me how!  
Indeed I'm too astonished  
To think of answering you!  
Going to Heaven!  
How dim it sounds!  
And yet it will be done  
As sure as flocks go home at night  
Unto the Shepherd's arm!  

Perhaps you're going too!  
Who knows?  
If you should get there first  
Save just a little space for me  
Close to the two I lost —  
The smallest "Robe" will fit me  
And just a bit of "Crown" —  
For you know we do not mind our dress  
When we are going home —  

I'm glad I don't believe it  
For it would stop my breath —  
And I'd like to look a little more  
At such a curious Earth!  
I'm glad they did believe it  
Whom I have never found  
Since the mighty Autumn afternoon  
I left them in the ground.  

12. The Chariot  
Because I could not stop for Death —  
He kindly stopped for me —  
The Carriage held but just Ourselves —  
And Immortality.  

We slowly drove — He knew no haste  
And I had put away  
My labor and my leisure too,  
For His Civility —  

We passed the School, where Children strove  
At Recess — in the Ring —  
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain —  
We passed the Setting Sun —  

[Or rather — He passed Us —  
The Dews drew quivering and Chill —  
For only Gossamer, my Gown —  
My Tippet — only Tulle —]

We paused before a House that seemed  
A Swelling of the Ground —
The Roof was scarcely visible –
The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – ‘tis Centuries – and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses’ Heads
Were toward Eternity –

Three songs from Rachmaninoff Op. 38

Margaritki / Daisies – Poem by Igor-Severianin
Oh, look! how many are the daisies
     Here, and over there...
They’re in flower; so many; an abundance;
     And all in flower.
Their three-edged petals are like wings,
     Like white silk.
They have the power of summer,
     the joy of abundance,
     They’re a shining army.
Earth, fix the flowers a drink of dew,
     Give the stems juice...
Oh, girls, oh, starry daisies,
     I love you!

K nei / To her – Poem by Andrei Bely
The grasses are adorned
     In pearls.
Somewhere greetings
     Sorrowful
I hear, — greetings
Dear...

Dear one, where are you, —
Dear one!...
Lights of the evening are
     Visible, —
Lights of the evening are
     Beautiful...
Arms uplifted:
     I wait for you...

Dear one, where are you, —
Dear one?

Arms uplifted:
     I wait for you
In streams of Lethe
     You are washed away
By Lethe’s pale Streams...

Dear one, where are you, —
Dear one?
Son / Sleep – Poem by Feodor Sologub

Nothing in the world
Is more wished for than sleep,—
He has powers to charm,
He has stillness.
On his lips there is
Neither sorrow nor laughter,
And in his fathomless eyes
Are many secret pleasures.
He has wide,
Two wide wings,
And they’re light, as light
As midnight darkness.
How you’re borne is unknown,
And whence, and on what,—
He won’t flap his wing,
And he won’t move his shoulder.

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