

And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of heart of light,
And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.
Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty.
Go, said the bird, for the leaves were full of children,
Hidden excitedly, containing laughter.
Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.
Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.

W. H. Auden: The Composer

All the others translate: the painter sketches
A visible world to love or reject;
Rummaging into his living, the poet fetches
The images out that hurt and connect.

From Life to Art by painstaking adaption
Relying on us to cover the rift;
Only your notes are pure contraption,
Only your song is an absolute gift.

Pour out your presence, O delight, cascading
The falls of the knee and the weirs of the spine,
Our climate of silence and doubt invading;

You, alone, alone, O imaginary song,
Are unable to say an existence is wrong,
And pour out your forgiveness like a wine.

Charles Baudelaire: *L'invitation au voyage*

*Mon enfant, ma soeur,
Songe à la douceur
D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble!
Aimer à loisir,
Aimer et mourir
Au pays qui te ressemble!
Les soleils mouillés
De ces ciels brouillés
Pour mon esprit ont les charmes
Si mystérieux
De tes traîtres yeux,
Brillant à travers leurs larmes.
Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme et volupté.*

My child, my sister,
Think of the rapture
Of living together there!
Of loving at will,
Of loving till death,
In the land that is like you!
The misty sunlight
Of those cloudy skies
Has for my spirit the charms,
So mysterious,
Of your treacherous eyes,
Shining brightly through their tears.
There all is order and beauty,
Luxury, peace, and pleasure.

tr. William Aggeler

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: *The Erlking*

Who rides there so late through the night dark and drear?
The father it is, with his infant so dear;
He holdeth the boy tightly clasp'd in his arm,
He holdeth him safely, he keepeth him warm.

My son, wherefore seek'st thou thy face thus to hide?
Look, father, the Erl-King is close by our side!
Dost see not the Erl-King, with crown and with train?
My son, 'tis the mist rising over the plain.

"Oh, come, thou dear infant! oh come thou with me!
For many a game, I will play there with thee;
On my strand, lovely flowers their blossoms unfold,
My mother shall grace thee with garments of gold."

My father, my father, and dost thou not hear
The words that the Erl-King now breathes in mine ear?
Be calm, dearest child, 'tis thy fancy deceives;
'Tis the sad wind that sighs through the withering leaves.

"Wilt go, then, dear infant, wilt go with me there?
My daughters shall tend thee with sisterly care;
My daughters by night their glad festival keep,
They'll dance thee, and rock thee, and sing thee to sleep."

My father, my father, and dost thou not see,
How the Erl-King his daughters has brought here for me?
My darling, my darling, I see it aright,
'Tis the aged grey willows deceiving thy sight.

"I love thee, I'm charm'd by thy beauty, dear boy!
And if thou'rt unwilling, then force I'll employ."
My father, my father, he seizes me fast,
For sorely, the Erl-King has hurt me at last.

The father now gallops, with terror half wild,
He grasps in his arms the poor shuddering child;
He reaches his courtyard with toil and with dread,
The child in his arms finds he motionless, dead.

tr. Edgar Alfred Bowring

Traditional: Sumer is Icumen In

Sing, cuccu, nu. Sing, cuccu.
Sing, cuccu. Sing, cuccu, nu.

Sumer is i-cumin in—
Lhude sing, cuccu!
Groweth sed and bloweth med
And springth the wude nu.
Sing, cuccu!

Awe bleteth after lomb,
Lhouth after calve cu,
Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth—
Murie sing, cuccu!

Cuccu, cuccu,
Wel singses thu, cuccu.
Ne swik thu naver nu!

William Blake: The Sick Rose

O Rose thou art sick.
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm:

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

Mary Stewart Hammond: *Seeing Mozart's Piano Quartet
in E-Flat Major in the Old Whaling Church, Edgartown*

They wait, five women in black,
before a wall painted such a flat, soft gray
it reads as silence, or sky.

The pianist's hands curve over the keyboard.
The page turner leans toward the pianist's score.

The violinist, the violist, the cellist
bring their bows near the strings. Fluted pilasters
rise into an arch ceiling high, framing them.

The church, classic Greek Revival
straight from the style books, and *retarditaire* at that,
is 57 years younger than the music you are about
not to hear, but with its pillars, its two
center aisles dividing the nave into three parts,
in its classicism and its purity, it is useful
for showing the architecture of this sonata.
The thing about music, it takes place in time,
and can't be seen. Nor can it be heard in a poem.

A colorless, unfinished, 8 o'clock sky pauses
in triple hung windows flanking the pilasters.

Scrub oak darken the lower panes.

The pianist nods. We know by the musicians'
movements that Mozart's allegro begins its lift
up off the pages on the music stands, but on this page

there are only the visuals. The music is silent
as a black and white picture show
before the arrival of sound. The pianist misses
some notes. The violist looks at the violinist,
her hair a stubble three months after chemo.

Strings shine on the black necks of the instruments.
The musicians' fingers climb up and down like spiders,
thumbs hugging the backsides of the necks.
They glide their bows, or make them tiptoe,
forearms rigid, across the strings.

The second theme's leading motif, almost lost
under the angelic, repeats and repeats
like supplications. It is one of Mozart's miracles,
this longing under joy, the flirtations with death

balancing lyricism, but you have only my word for it.
The ensemble coaxes the allegretto
and transubstantiation from wooden boxes. In a year
the violist will be dead. The music breathes
in the musicians' bodies. You can see it
in their shoulders, their spines, their wrists, their fingers,
and the white grid of the windows' muntins cages the black sky.
Even where the bottom sashes open to the summer air,
the night is held back until the musicians stop,
hold their poses, wait, five seconds, twelve,
for the last notes to find home and fling up their arms
pumped with arrival. They rise, bowing
before the sky of the soft gray wall,
leaving us in our humanness under the electric lights.

Grace Schulman: *Blue in Green*

Blue in green: baywater seen through grasses
that quiver over it, stirring the air,
slanted against the water's one-em dashes.
Each blade is a brushstroke on thin rice paper,

unrehearsed, undrafted, no revision,
right on the first take. In "Blue in Green,"
on tenor sax, John Coltrane fills the blues
with mournful chords on scales older than Jubal's,

ending in air. He'd not played it before
that recording, with that piano and bass
rising alone and, birds in flight, together.
Right on the first take. Improvisation,

he called it, but it must have been foreseen,
like the painter's brushstroke. A wrong line
could blot the composition, snag the paper.
It had to be unstudied, like tern's cry,

and natural, like a rope's clink on a mast
with winds as bass player, huge and invisible.
If only I could remember the past
without regret for the windrose petal's fall,

for words unspoken, and without remorse
for loves withheld. Rough-draft mistakes.
If only my heart could teach my hands
to play, and get it right on the first take.

Edith Sitwell: Tango—Pasodoble

When
Don
Pasquito arrived at the seaside
Where the donkey's hide tide
brayed, he
Saw the bandito Jo in a black cape
Whose slack shape waved like the sea—
Thetis wrote a treatise noting wheat
is silver like the sea;
the lovely cheat is sweet as foam;
Erotis notices that she
Will
Steal
The
Wheat-kings luggage, like Babel
Before the League of Nations grew—
So Jo put the luggage and the label
In the pocket of Flo the Kangaroo.
Through trees like rich hotels that bode
Of dreamless ease fled she,
Carrying the load and goading the road
Through the marine scene to the sea.
"Don Pasquito, the road is eloping
With your luggage
though heavy and large;
You must follow and leave your moping
Bride to my guidance and charge!"

When
Don
Pasquito returned
from the road's end,
Where vanilla-coloured ladies ride
From Sevilla, his mantilla'd bride

and young friend
Were forgetting
their mentor and guide.
For the lady and her friend
from Le Touquet
In the very shady trees on the sand
Were plucking a white satin bouquet
Of foam, while the sand's brassy band
Blared in the wind.
Don Pasquito
Hid where the leaves drip with sweet...
But a word stung him like a mosquito...
For what they hear, they repeat!