

**GEORGE
MACDONALD**

RAMPOLLI

George MacDonald
Rampolli

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Rampolli:

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George MacDonald Rampolli

PREFACE TO THE TRANSLATIONS

I think every man who can should help his people to inherit the earth by bringing into his own of the wealth of other tongues. In the flower-pots of translation I offer these few exotics, with no little labour taught to exist, I hope to breathe, in English air. Such labour is to me no less serious than delightful, for to do a man's work, in the process of carrying over, more injury than must be, is a serious wrong.

I have endeavoured, first of all, to give the spirit of the poetry.

Next, I have sought to retain each individual meaning that goes to form the matter of a poem.

Third, I have aimed at preserving the peculiar mode, the aroma of the poet's style, so far as I could do it without offence to the translating English.

Fourth, both rhythm and rime being essential elements of every poem in which they are used, I have sought to respect them rigorously.

Fifth, spirit, matter, and form truly represented, the more

literal the translation the more satisfactory will be the result.

After all, translation is but a continuous effort after the impossible. There is in it a general difficulty whose root has a thousand ramifications, the whole affair being but an accommodation of difficulties, and a perfect translation from one language into another is a thing that cannot be effected. One is tempted even to say that in the whole range of speech there is no such thing as a synonym.

Much difficulty arises from the comparative paucity in English of double, or feminine rimes. But I can remember only one case in which, yielding to impossibility, I have sacrificed the feminine rime: where one thing or another must go, the less valuable must be the victim.

But sometimes a whole passage has had to suffer that a specially poetic line might retain its character.

With regard to the *Hymns to the Night* and the *Spiritual Songs* of Friedrich von Hardenberg, commonly called Novalis, it is desirable to mention that they were written when the shadow of the death of his betrothed had begun to thin before the approaching dawn of his own new life. He died in 1801, at the age of twenty-nine. His parents belonged to the sect called Moravians, but he had become a Roman Catholic.

Perhaps some of Luther's Songs might as well have been omitted, but they are all translated that the Songbook might be a whole. Some, I cannot tell how many or which, are from the Latin. His work is rugged, and where an occasional fault in rime

occurs I have reproduced it.

In the few poems from the Italian, I have found the representation of the feminine rimes, so frequent in that language, an impossibility.

FROM NOVALIS. HYMNS TO THE NIGHT

I

Before all the wondrous shows of the widespread space around him, what living, sentient thing loves not the all-joyous light, with its colours, its rays and undulations, its gentle omnipresence in the form of the wakening Day? The giant world of the unresting constellations inhales it as the innermost soul of life, and floats dancing in its azure flood; the sparkling, ever-tranquil stone, the thoughtful, imbibing plant, and the wild, burning, multiform beast-world inhales it; but more than all, the lordly stranger with the meaning eyes, the swaying walk, and the sweetly closed, melodious lips. Like a king over earthly nature, it rouses every force to countless transformations, binds and unbinds innumerable alliances, hangs its heavenly form around every earthly substance. Its presence alone reveals the marvellous splendour of the kingdoms of the world.

Aside I turn to the holy, unspeakable, mysterious Night. Afar lies the world, sunk in a deep grave; waste and lonely is its place. In the chords of the bosom blows a deep sadness. I am ready to sink away in drops of dew, and mingle with the ashes.—

The distances of memory, the wishes of youth, the dreams of childhood, the brief joys and vain hopes of a whole long life, arise in gray garments, like an evening vapour after the sunset. In other regions the light has pitched its joyous tents: what if it should never return to its children, who wait for it with the faith of innocence?

What springs up all at once so sweetly boding in my heart, and stills the soft air of sadness? Dost thou also take a pleasure in us, dusky Night? What holdest thou under thy mantle, that with hidden power affects my soul? Precious balm drips from thy hand out of its bundle of poppies. Thou upliftest the heavy-laden pinions of the soul. Darkly and inexpressibly are we moved: joy-startled, I see a grave countenance that, tender and worshipful, inclines toward me, and, amid manifold entangled locks, reveals the youthful loveliness of the Mother. How poor and childish a thing seems to me now the light! how joyous and welcome the departure of the day!—Didst thou not only therefore, because the Night turns away from thee thy servants, strew in the gulfs of space those flashing globes, to proclaim, in seasons of thy absence, thy omnipotence, and thy return?

More heavenly than those glittering stars we hold the eternal eyes which the Night hath opened within us. Farther they see than the palest of those countless hosts. Needing no aid from the light, they penetrate the depths of a loving soul that fills a loftier region with bliss ineffable. Glory to the queen of the world, to the great prophetess of holier worlds, to the foster-mother of blissful

love! she sends thee to me, thou tenderly beloved, the gracious sun of the Night. Now am I awake, for now am I thine and mine. Thou hast made me know the Night, and brought her to me to be my life; thou hast made of me a man. Consume my body with the ardour of my soul, that I, turned to finer air, may mingle more closely with thee, and then our bridal night endure for ever.

II

Must the morning always return? Will the despotism of the earthly never cease? Unholy activity consumes the angel-visit of the Night. Will the time never come when Love's hidden sacrifice shall burn eternally? To the Light a season was set; but everlasting and boundless is the dominion of the Night. Endless is the duration of sleep. Holy Sleep, gladden not too seldom in this earthly day-labour, the devoted servant of the Night. Fools alone mistake thee, knowing nought of sleep but the shadow which, in the gloaming of the real night, thou pitifully castest over us. They feel thee not in the golden flood of the grapes, in the magic oil of the almond tree, and the brown juice of the poppy. They know not that it is thou who hauntest the bosom of the tender maiden, and makest a heaven of her lap; never suspect it is thou, the portress of heaven, that steppest to meet them out of ancient stories, bearing the key to the dwellings of the blessed, silent messenger of secrets infinite.

III

Once when I was shedding bitter tears, when, dissolved in pain, my hope was melting away, and I stood alone by the barren hillock which in its narrow dark bosom hid the vanished form of my Life, lonely as never yet was lonely man, driven by anguish unspeakable, powerless, and no longer aught but a conscious misery;—as there I looked about me for help, unable to go on or to turn back, and clung to the fleeting, extinguished life with an endless longing: then, out of the blue distances, from the hills of my ancient bliss, came a shiver of twilight, and at once snapped the bond of birth, the fetter of the Light. Away fled the glory of the world, and with it my mourning; the sadness flowed together into a new, unfathomable world. Thou, soul of the Night, heavenly Slumber, didst come upon me; the region gently upheaved itself, and over it hovered my unbound, new-born spirit. The hillock became a cloud of dust, and through the cloud I saw the glorified face of my beloved. In her eyes eternity reposed. I laid hold of her hands, and the tears became a sparkling chain that could not be broken. Into the distance swept by, like a tempest, thousands of years. On her neck I welcomed the new life with ecstatic tears. Never was such another dream; then first and ever since I hold fast an eternal, unchangeable faith in the heaven of the Night, and its sun, the Beloved.

IV

Now I know when will come the last morning: when the light no more scares away the Night and Love, when sleep shall be without waking, and but one continuous dream. I feel in me a celestial exhaustion. Long and weariful was my pilgrimage to the holy grave, and crushing was the cross. The crystal wave, which, imperceptible to the ordinary sense, springs in the dark bosom of the hillock against whose foot breaks the flood of the world, he who has tasted it, he who has stood on the mountain frontier of the world, and looked across into the new land, into the abode of the Night, verily he turns not again into the tumult of the world, into the land where dwells the Light in ceaseless unrest.

On those heights he builds for himself tabernacles—tabernacles of peace; there longs and loves and gazes across, until the welcomest of all hours draws him down into the waters of the spring. Afloat above remains what is earthly, and is swept back in storms; but what became holy by the touch of Love, runs free through hidden ways to the region beyond, where, like odours, it mingles with love asleep. Still wakest thou, cheerful Light, the weary man to his labour, and into me pourest gladsome life; but thou wilest me not away from Memory's mossgrown monument. Gladly will I bestir the deedy hands, everywhere behold where thou hast need of me; bepraise the rich pomp of thy splendour; pursue unwearied the lovely harmonies of thy skilled handicraft;

gladly contemplate the thoughtful pace of thy mighty, radiant clock; explore the balance of the forces and the laws of the wondrous play of countless worlds and their seasons; but true to the Night remains my secret heart, and to creative Love, her daughter. Canst *thou* show me a heart eternally true? Has thy sun friendly eyes that know me? Do thy stars lay hold of my longing hand? Do they return me the tender pressure and the caressing word? Was it thou didst bedeck them with colours and a flickering outline? Or was it *she* who gave to thy jewels a higher, a dearer significance? What delight, what pleasure offers *thy* life, to outweigh the transports of Death? Wears not everything that inspirits us the livery of the Night? Thy mother, it is she who brings thee forth, and to her thou owest all thy glory. Thou wouldst vanish into thyself, thou wouldst dissipate in boundless space, if she did not hold thee fast, if she swaddled thee not, so that thou grewest warm, and, flaming, gavest birth to the universe. Verily I was before thou wast; the mother sent me with my sisters to inhabit thy world, to sanctify it with love that it might be an ever present memorial, to plant it with flowers unfading. As yet they have not ripened, these thoughts divine; as yet is there small trace of our coming apocalypse. One day thy clock will point to the end of Time, and then thou shalt be as one of us, and shalt, full of ardent longing, be extinguished and die. I feel in me the close of thy activity, I taste heavenly freedom, and happy restoration. With wild pangs I recognize thy distance from our home, thy feud with the ancient lordly Heaven. Thy rage and

thy raving are in vain. Inconsumable stands the cross, victory-
flag of our race.

Over I pilgrim
Where every pain
Zest only of pleasure
Shall one day remain.
Yet a few moments
Then free am I,
And intoxicated
In Love's lap lie.
Life everlasting
Lifts, wave-like, at me:
I gaze from its summit
Down after thee.
Oh Sun, thou must vanish
Yon hillock beneath;
A shadow will bring thee
Thy cooling wreath.
Oh draw at my heart, love,
Draw till I'm gone;
That, fallen asleep, I
Still may love on!
I feel the flow of
Death's youth-giving flood;
To balsam and aether, it
Changes my blood!
I live all the daytime
In faith and in might:

In holy rapture
I die every night.

V

In ancient times an iron Fate lorded it, with dumb force, over the widespread families of men. A gloomy oppression swathed their anxious souls: the Earth was boundless, the abode of the gods and their home. From eternal ages stood its mysterious structure. Beyond the red hills of the morning, in the sacred bosom of the sea, dwelt the sun, the all-enkindling, live luminary. An aged giant upbore the happy world. Prisoned beneath mountains lay the first-born sons of mother Earth, helpless in their destroying fury against the new, glorious race of gods, and their kindred, glad-hearted men. Ocean's dusky, green abyss was the lap of a goddess. In the crystal grottoes revelled a wanton folk. Rivers, trees, flowers, and beasts had human wits. Sweeter tasted the wine, poured out by youth impersonated; a god was in the grape-clusters; a loving, motherly goddess upgrew in the full golden sheaves; love's sacred carousal was a sweet worship of the fairest of the goddesses. Life revelled through the centuries like one spring-time, an ever-variegated festival of the children of heaven and the dwellers on the earth. All races childlike adored the ethereal, thousandfold flame, as the one sublimest thing in the world.

It was but a fancy, a horrible dream-shape—

That fearsome to the merry tables strode,

And wrapt the spirit in wild consternation.
The gods themselves here counsel knew nor showed
To fill the stifling heart with consolation.
Mysterious was the monster's pathless road,
Whose rage would heed no prayer and no oblation;
Twas Death who broke the banquet up with fears,
With anguish, with dire pain, and bitter tears.

Eternally from all things here departed
That sway the heart with pleasure's joyous flow,
Divided from the loved, whom, broken-hearted,
Vain longing tosses and unceasing woe—
In a dull dream to struggle, faint and thwarted,
Smeemed all was granted to the dead below!
Broke lay the merry wave of human glory
On Death's inevitable promontory.

With daring flight, aloft Thought's pinions sweep;
The horrid thing with beauty's robe men cover:
A gentle youth puts out his torch, to sleep;
Sweet comes the end, like moaning lute of lover.
Cool shadow-floods o'er melting memory creep:
So sang the song, for Misery was the mover.
Still undeciphered lay the endless Night—
The solemn symbol of a far-off Might.

The old world began to decline. The pleasure-garden of the young race withered away; up into opener regions and desolate, forsaking his childhood, struggled the growing man. The gods

vanished with their retinue. Nature stood alone and lifeless. Dry Number and rigid Measure bound her with iron chains. As into dust and air the priceless blossoms of life fell away in words obscure. Gone was wonder-working Faith, and the all-transforming, all-uniting angel-comrade, the Imagination. A cold north wind blew unkindly over the torpid plain, and the wonderland first froze, then evaporated into aether. The far depths of heaven filled with flashing worlds. Into the deeper sanctuary, into the more exalted region of the mind, the soul of the world retired with all her powers, there to rule until the dawn should break of the glory universal. No longer was the Light the abode of the gods, and the heavenly token of their presence: they cast over them the veil of the Night. The Night became the mighty womb of revelations; into it the gods went back, and fell asleep, to go abroad in new and more glorious shapes over the transfigured world. Among the people which, untimely ripe, was become of all the most scornful and insolently hostile to the blessed innocence of youth, appeared the New World, in guise never seen before, in the song-favouring hut of poverty, a son of the first maid and mother, the eternal fruit of mysterious embrace. The foreseeing, rich-blossoming wisdom of the East at once recognized the beginning of the new age; a star showed it the way to the lowly cradle of the king. In the name of the far-reaching future, they did him homage with lustre and odour, the highest wonders of Nature. In solitude the heavenly heart unfolded itself to a flower-chalice of almighty love, upturned to

the supreme face of the father, and resting on the bliss-boding bosom of the sweetly solemn mother. With deifying fervour the prophetic eye of the blooming child beheld the years to come, foresaw, untroubled over the earthly lot of his own days, the beloved offspring of his divine stem. Ere long the most childlike souls, by true love marvellously possessed, gathered about him. Like flowers sprang up a new strange life in his presence. Words inexhaustible and tidings the most joyful fell like sparks of a divine spirit from his friendly lips. From a far shore came a singer, born under the clear sky of Hellas, to Palestine, and gave up his whole heart to the marvellous child:—

The youth art thou who ages long hast stood
Upon our graves, lost in a maze of weening;
Sign in the darkness of God's tidings good,
Whence hints of growth humanity is gleaning;
For that we long, on that we sweetly brood
Which erst in woe had lost all life and meaning;
In everlasting life death found its goal,
For thou art Death, and thou first mak'st us whole.

Filled with joy, the singer went on to Indostan, his heart intoxicated with sweetest love, and poured it out in fiery songs under that tender sky, so that a thousand hearts bowed to him, and the good news sprang up with a thousand branches. Soon after the singer's departure, his precious life was made a sacrifice for the deep fall of man. He died in his youth, torn away from his

loved world, from his weeping mother, and his trembling friends. His lovely mouth emptied the dark cup of unspeakable wrongs. In horrible anguish the birth of the new world drew near. Hard he wrestled with the terrors of old Death; heavy lay the weight of the old world upon him. Yet once more he looked kindly at his mother; then came the releasing hand of the Love eternal, and he fell asleep. Only a few days hung a deep veil over the roaring sea, over the quaking land; countless tears wept his loved ones; the mystery was unsealed: heavenly spirits heaved the ancient stone from the gloomy grave. Angels sat by the sleeper, sweetly outbodied from his dreams; awaked in new Godlike glory, he clomb the apex of the new-born world, buried with his own hand the old corpse in the forsaken cavity, and with hand almighty laid upon it the stone which no power shall again upheave.

Yet weep thy loved ones over thy grave tears of joy, tears of emotion, tears of endless thanksgiving; ever afresh, with joyous start, see thee rise again, and themselves with thee; behold thee weep with soft fervour on the blessed bosom of thy mother, walk in thoughtful communion with thy friends, uttering words plucked as from the tree of life; see thee hasten, full of longing, into thy father's arms, bearing with thee youthful Humanity, and the inexhaustible cup of the golden Future. Soon the mother hastened after thee in heavenly triumph; she was the first with thee in the new home. Since then, long ages have flowed past, and in splendour ever increasing hath bestirred itself thy new creation, and thousands have, out of pangs and tortures, followed

thee, filled with faith and longing and truth, and are walking about with thee and the heavenly virgin in the kingdom of Love, minister in the temple of heavenly Death, and are for ever thine.

Uplifted is the stone,
And all mankind is risen;
We all remain thine own,
And vanished is our prison.
All troubles flee away
Before thy golden cup;
For Earth nor Life can stay
When with our Lord we sup.

To the marriage Death doth call;
No virgin holdeth back;
The lamps burn lustrous all;
Of oil there is no lack.
Would thy far feet were waking
The echoes of our street!
And that the stars were making
Signal with voices sweet!

To thee, O mother maiden,
Ten thousand hearts aspire;
In this life, sorrow-laden,
Thee only they desire;
In thee they hope for healing;
In thee expect true rest,
When thou, their safety sealing,

Shalt clasp them to thy breast.

With disappointment burning
Who made in hell their bed,
At last from this world turning
To thee have looked and fled:
Helpful thou hast appeared
To us in many a pain:
Now to thy home we're neared,
Not to go out again!

Now at no grave are weeping
Such as do love and pray;
The gift that Love is keeping
From none is taken away.
To soothe and quiet our longing
Night comes, and stills the smart;
Heaven's children round us thronging
Now watch and ward our heart.

Courage! for life is striding
To endless life along;
The Sense, in love abiding,
Grows clearer and more strong.
One day the stars, down dripping,
Shall flow in golden wine:
We, of that nectar sipping,
As living stars shall shine!

Free, from the tomb emerges
Love, to die never more;
Fulfilled, life heaves and surges
A sea without a shore!
All night! all blissful leisure!
One jubilating ode!
And the sun of all our pleasure
The countenance of God!

VI. LONGING AFTER DEATH

Into the bosom of the earth!
Out of the Light's dominions!
Death's pains are but the bursting forth
Of glad Departure's pinions!
Swift in the narrow little boat,
Swift to the heavenly shore we float!

Blest be the everlasting Night,
And blest the endless Slumber!
We are heated with the day too bright,
And withered up with cumber!
We're weary of that life abroad:
Come, we will now go home to God!

Why longer in this world abide?
Why love and truth here cherish?
That which is old is set aside—For
us the new may perish!
Alone he stands and sore downcast
Who loves with pious warmth the Past.

The Past where yet the human spirit
In lofty flames did rise;

Where men the Father did inherit,
His countenance recognize;
And, in simplicity made ripe,
Many grew like their archetype.

The Past wherin, still rich in bloom,
Old stems did burgeon glorious;
And children, for the world to come,
Sought pain and death victorious;
And, though both life and pleasure spake,
Yet many a heart for love did break.

The Past, where to the glow of youth
God yet himself declared;
And early death, in loving truth
The young beheld, and dared—
Anguish and torture patient bore
To prove they loved him as of yore.

With anxious yearning now we see
That Past in darkness drenched;
With this world's water never we
Shall find our hot thirst quenched:
To our old home we have to go
That blessed time again to know.

What yet doth hinder our return?
Long since repose our precious!
Their grave is of our life the bourn;

We shrink from times ungracious!
By not a hope are we decoyed:
The heart is full; the world is void!

Infinite and mysterious,
Thrills through me a sweet trembling,
As if from far there echoed thus
A sigh, our grief resembling:
The dear ones long as well as I,
And send to me their waiting sigh.

Down to the sweet bride, and away
To the beloved Jesus!
Courage! the evening shades grow gray,
Of all our griefs to ease us!
A dream will dash our chains apart,
And lay us on the Father's heart.
SPIRITUAL SONGS.

I

Without thee, what were life or being!
Without thee, what had I not grown!
From fear and anguish vainly fleeing,
I in the world had stood alone;
For all I loved could trust no shelter;
The future a dim gulf had lain;
And when my heart in tears did welter,
To whom had I poured out my pain?

Consumed in love and longing lonely
Each day had worn the night's dull face
With hot tears I had followed only
Afar life's wildly rushing race.
No rest for me, tumultuous driven!
A hopeless sorrow by the hearth!—
Who, that had not a friend in heaven,
Could to the end hold out on earth?

But if his heart once Jesus bareth,
And I of him right sure can be,
How soon a living glory scareth
The bottomless obscurity!
Manhood in him first man attaineth;
His fate in Him transfigured glows;
On freezing Iceland India gaineth,

And round the loved one blooms and blows.

Life grows a twilight softly stealing;
The world speaks all of love and glee;
For every wound grows herb of healing,
And every heart beats full and free.
I, his ten thousand gifts receiving,
Humble like him, his knees embrace;
Sure that we share his presence living
When two are gathered in one place.

Forth, forth to all highways and hedges!
Compel the wanderers to come in;
Stretch out the hand that good will pledges,
And gladly call them to their kin.
See heaven high over earth up-dawning!
In faith we see it rise and spread:
To all with us one spirit owning—
To them with us 'tis opened.

An ancient, heavy guilt-illusion
Haunted our hearts, a changeless doom;
Blindly we strayed in night's confusion;
Gladness and grief alike consume.
Whate'er we did, some law was broken!
Mankind appeared God's enemy;
And if we thought the heavens had spoken,
They spoke but death and misery.

The heart, of life the fountain swelling—
An evil creature lay therein;
If more light shone into our dwelling,
More unrest only did we win.
Down to the earth an iron fetter
Fast held us, trembling captive crew;
Fear of Law's sword, grim Death the whetter,
Did swallow up hope's residue.

Then came a saviour to deliver—
A Son of Man, in love and might!
A holy fire, of life all-giver,
He in our hearts has fanned alight.
Then first heaven opened—and, no fable,
Our own old fatherland we trod!
To hope and trust we straight were able,
And knew ourselves akin to God.

Then vanished Sin's old spectre dismal;
Our every step grew glad and brave.
Best natal gift, in rite baptismal,
Their own faith men their children gave.
Holy in him, Life since hath floated,
A happy dream, through every heart;
We, to his love and joy devoted,
Scarce know the moment we depart.

Still standeth, in his wondrous glory,
The holy loved one with his own;

His crown of thorns, his faithful story
Still move our hearts, still make us groan.
Whoso from deadly sleep will waken,
And grasp his hand of sacrifice,
Into his heart with us is taken,
To ripen a fruit of Paradise.

II

Dawn, far eastward, on the mountain!
Gray old times are growing young:
From the flashing colour-fountain
I will quaff it deep and long!—
Granted boon to Longing's long privation!
Sweet love in divine transfiguration!

Comes at last, our old Earth's native,
All-Heaven's one child, simple, kind!
Blows again, in song creative,
Round the earth a living wind;
Blows to clear new flames that rush together
Sparks extinguished long by earthly weather.

Everywhere, from graves upspringing,
Rises new-born life, new blood!
Endless peace up to us bringing,
Dives he underneath life's flood;
Stands in midst, with full hands, eyes caressing—
Hardly waits the prayer to grant the blessing.

Let his mild looks of invading
Deep into thy spirit go;
By his blessedness unfading
Thou thy heart possessed shalt know.

Hearts of all men, spirits all, and senses
Mingle, and a new glad dance commences.

Grasp his hands with boldness yearning;
Stamp his face thy heart upon;
Turning toward him, ever turning,
Thou, the flower, must face thy sun.
Who to him his heart's last fold unfoldeth,
True as wife's his heart for ever holdeth.

Ours is now that Godhead's splendour
At whose name we used to quake!
South and north, its breathings tender
Heavenly germs at once awake!
Let us then in God's full garden labour,
And to every bud and bloom be neighbour!

III

Who in his chamber sitteth lonely,
And weepeth heavy, bitter tears;
To whom in doleful colours, only
Of want and woe, the world appears;

Who of the Past, gulf-like receding,
Would search with questing eyes the core,
Down into which a sweet woe, pleading,
Wiles him from all sides evermore—

As if a treasure past believing
Lay there below, for him high-piled,
After whose lock, with bosom heaving,
He breathless grasps in longing wild:

He sees the Future, waste and arid,
In hideous length before him stretch;
About he roams, alone and harried,
And seeks himself, poor restless wretch!—

I fall upon his bosom, tearful:
I once, like thee, with woe was wan;
But I grew well, am strong and cheerful,
And know the eternal rest of man.

Thou too must find the one consoler
Who inly loved, endured, and died—
Even for them that wrought his dolour
With thousand-fold rejoicing died.

He died—and yet, fresh each to-morrow,
His love and him thy heart doth hold;
Thou mayst, consoled for every sorrow,
Him in thy arms with ardour fold.

New blood shall from his heart be driven
Through thy dead bones like living wine;
And once thy heart to him is given,
Then is his heart for ever thine.

What thou didst lose, he keeps it for thee;
With him thy lost love thou shalt find;
And what his hand doth once restore thee,
That hand to thee will changeless bind.

IV

Of the thousand hours me meeting,
And with gladsome promise greeting,
One alone hath kept its faith—
One wherein—ah, sorely grieved!—
In my heart I first perceived
Who for us did die the death.

All to dust my world was beaten;
As a worm had through them eaten
Withered in me bud and flower;
All my life had sought or cherished
In the grave had sunk and perished;
Pain sat in my ruined bower.

While I thus, in silence sighing,
Ever wept, on Death still crying,
Still to sad delusions tied,
All at once the night was cloven,
From my grave the stone was hoven,
And my inner doors thrown wide.

Whom I saw, and who the other,
Ask me not, or friend or brother!—
Sight seen once, and evermore!
Lone in all life's eyes and morrows,

This hour only, like my sorrows,
Ever shines my eyes before.

V

If I him but have,¹
If he be but mine,
If my heart, hence to the grave,
Ne'er forgets his love divine—
Know I nought of sadness,
Feel I nought but worship, love, and gladness.

If I him but have,
Pleased from all I part;
Follow, on my pilgrim staff,
None but him, with honest heart;
Leave the rest, nought saying,
On broad, bright, and crowded highways straying.

If I him but have,
Glad to sleep I sink;
From his heart the flood he gave
Shall to mine be food and drink;
And, with sweet compelling,
Mine shall soften, deep throughout it welling.

¹ Here I found the double or feminine rhyme impossible without the loss of the far more precious simplicity of the original, which could be retained only by a literal translation.

If I him but have,
 Mine the world I hail;
Happy, like a cherub grave
 Holding back the Virgin's veil:
I, deep sunk in gazing,
Hear no more the Earth or its poor praising.

Where I have but him
 Is my fatherland;
Every gift a precious gem
 Come to me from his own hand!
Brothers long deplored,
Lo, in his disciples, all restored!

VI

My faith to thee I break not,
If all should faithless be,
That gratitude forsake not
The world eternally.
For my sake Death did sting thee
With anguish keen and sore;
Therefore with joy I bring thee
This heart for evermore.

Oft weep I like a river
That thou art dead, and yet
So many of thine thee, Giver
Of life, life-long forget!
By love alone possessed,
Such great things thou hast done!
But thou art dead, O Blessed,
And no one thinks thereon!

Thou stand'st with love unshaken
Ever by every man;
And if by all forsaken,
Art still the faithful one.
Such love must win the wrestle;
At last thy love they'll see,
Weep bitterly, and nestle

Like children to thy knee.

Thou with thy love hast found me!

O do not let me go!

Keep me where thou hast bound me

Till one with thee I grow.

My brothers yet will waken,

One look to heaven will dart—

Then sink down, love-o'ertaken,

And fall upon thy heart.

VII. HYMN

Few understand
The mystery of Love,
Know insatiableness,
And thirst eternal.
Of the Last Supper
The divine meaning
Is to the earthly senses a riddle;
But he that ever
From warm, beloved lips,
Drew breath of life;
In whom the holy glow
Ever melted the heart in trembling waves;
Whose eye ever opened so
As to fathom
The bottomless deeps of heaven—
Will eat of his body
And drink of his blood
Everlastingly.
Who of the earthly body
Has divined the lofty sense?
Who can say
That he understands the blood?
One day all is body,

One body:
In heavenly blood
Swims the blissful two.

Oh that the ocean
Were even now flushing!
And in odorous flesh
The rock were upswelling!
Never endeth the sweet repast;
Never doth Love satisfy itself;
Never close enough, never enough its own,
Can it *have* the beloved!
By ever tenderer lips
Transformed, the Partaken
Goes deeper, grows nearer.
Pleasure more ardent
Thrills through the soul;
Thirstier and hungrier
Becomes the heart;
And so endureth Love's delight
From everlasting to everlasting.
Had the refraining
Tasted but once,
All had they left
To set themselves down with us
To the table of longing
Which will never be bare;
Then had they known Love's
Infinite fullness,

And commended the sustenance
Of body and blood.

VIII

Weep I must—my heart runs over:
Would he once himself discover—
 If but once, from far away!
Holy sorrow! still prevailing
Is my weeping, is my wailing:
 Would that I were turned to clay!

Evermore I hear him crying
To his Father, see him dying:
 Will this heart for ever beat!
Will my eyes in death close never?
Weeping all into a river
 Were a bliss for me too sweet!

Hear I none but me bewailing?
Dies his name an echo failing?
 Is the world at once struck dead?
Shall I from his eyes, ah! never
More drink love and life for ever?
 Is he now for always dead?

Dead? What means that sound of dolour?
Tell me, tell me thou, a scholar,
 What it means, that word so grim.
He is silent; all turn from me!

No one on the earth will show me
Where my heart may look for him!

Earth no more, whate'er befall me,
Can to any gladness call me!
She is but one dream of woe!
I too am with him departed:
Would I lay with him, still-hearted,
In the region down below!

Hear, me, hear, his and my father!
My dead bones, I pray thee, gather
Unto his—and soon, I pray!
Grass his hillock soon will cover,
Soon the wind will wander over,
Soon his form will fade away.

If his love they once perceived,
Soon, soon all men had believed,
Letting all things else go by!
Lord of love him only owning,
All would weep with me bemoaning,
And in bitter woe would die!

IX

He lives! he's risen from the dead!
To every man I shout;
His presence over us is spread,
Goes with us in and out.

To each I say it; each apace
His comrades telleth too—
That straight will dawn in every place
The heavenly kingdom new.

Now, to the new mind, first appears
The world a fatherland;
A new life men receive, with tears
Of rapture, from his hand.

Down into deepest gulfs of sea
Grim Death hath sunk away;
And now each man with holy glee,
Can face his coming day.

The darksome road that he hath gone
Leads out on heaven's floor:
Who heeds the counsel of the Son
Enters the Father's door.

Down here weeps no one any more
For friend that shuts his eyes;
For, soon or late, the parting sore
Will change to glad surprise.

And now to every friendly deed
Each heart will warmer glow;
For many a fold the fresh-sown seed
In lovelier fields will blow.

He lives—will sit beside our hearths,
The greatest with the least;
Therefore this day shall be our Earth's
Glad Renovation-feast.

X

The times are all so wretched!
The heart so full of cares!
The future, far outstretched,
A spectral horror wears.

Wild terrors creep and hover
With foot so ghastly soft!
Our souls black midnights cover
With mountains piled aloft.

Firm props like reeds are waving;
For trust is left no stay;
Our thoughts, like whirlpool raving,
No more the will obey!

Frenzy, with eye resistless,
Decoys from Truth's defence;
Life's pulse is flagging listless,
And dull is every sense.

Who hath the cross upheaved
To shelter every soul?
Who lives, on high received,
To make the wounded whole?

Go to the tree of wonder;
Give silent longing room;
Issuing flames asunder
Thy bad dream will consume.

Draws thee an angel tender
In safety to the strand:
Lo, at thy feet in splendour
Lies spread the Promised Land!

XI

I know not what were left to draw me,
Had I but him who is my bliss;
If still his eye with pleasure saw me,
And, dwelling with me, me would miss.

So many search, round all ways going,
With face distorted, anxious eye,
Who call themselves the wise and knowing,
Yet ever pass this treasure by!

One man believes that he has found it,
And what he has is nought but gold;
One takes the world by sailing round it:
The deed recorded, all is told!

One man runs well to gain the laurel;
Another, in Victory's fane a niche:
By different Shows in bright apparel
All are befooled, not one made rich!

Hath He not then to you appeared?
Have ye forgot Him turning wan
Whose side for love of us was speared—
The scorned, rejected Son of Man?

Of Him have you not read the story—
Heard one poor word upon the wind?
What heavenly goodness was his glory,
Or what a gift he left behind?

How he descended from the Father,
Of loveliest mother infant grand?
What Word the nations from him gather?
How many bless his healing hand?

How, thereto urged by mere love, wholly
He gave himself to us away,
And down in earth, foundation lowly,
First stone of God's new city, lay?

Can such news fail to touch us mortals?
Is not to know the man pure bliss?
Will you not open all your portals
To him who closed for you the abyss?

Will you not let the world go faring?
For Him your dearest wish deny?
To him alone your heart keep baring,
Who you has shown such favour high?

Hero of love, oh, take me, take me!
Thou art my life! my world! my gold!
Should every earthly thing forsake me,
I know who will me scatheless hold!

I see Thee my lost loves restoring!
True evermore to me thou art!
Low at thy feet heaven sinks adoring,
And yet thou dwellest in my heart!

XII

Earth's Consolation, why so slow?
Thy inn is ready long ago;
Each lifts to thee his hungering eyes,
And open to thy blessing lies.

O Father, pour him forth with might;
Out of thine arms, oh yield him quite!
Shyness alone, sweet shame, I know,
Kept him from coming long ago!

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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