



*cincinnati*  
**SONG INITIATIVE**

**AN AFTERNOON WITH WILL LIVERMAN & MYRA HUANG**  
Texts & Translations

***The Long Year* (Michael Ippolito)**  
**Poetry by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950)**

**Winter Night**

Pile high the hickory and the light  
Log of chestnut struck by the blight.  
Welcome-in the winter night.

The day has gone in hewing and felling,  
Sawing and drawing wood to the dwelling  
For the night of talk and story-telling.

These are the hours that give the edge  
To the blunted axe and the bent wedge,  
Straighten the saw and lighten the sledge.

Here are question and reply,  
And the fire reflected in the thinking eye.  
So peace, and let the bob-cat cry.

**Spring Song**

I know why the yellow forsythia  
Holds its breath and will not bloom,  
And the robin thrusts his beak in his wing.

Want me to tell you? Think you can bear it?  
Cover your eyes with your hand and hear it.  
You know how cold the days are still?  
And everybody saying how late the Spring is?  
Well—cover your eyes with your hand—the thing is,  
There isn't going to be any Spring.

***No parking here! No parking here!***  
***They said to Spring: No parking here!***

Spring came on as she always does,  
Laid her hand on the yellow forsythia, —  
Little boys turned in their sleep and smiled,  
Dreaming of marbles, dreaming of agates;  
Little girls leapt from their beds to see  
Spring come by with her painted wagons,  
Coloured wagons creaking with wonder—

Laid her hand on the robin's throat;  
When up comes you-know-who, my dear,  
You-know-who in a fine blue coat,  
And says to Spring: No parking here!

***No parking here! No parking here!***  
***Move on! Move on! No parking here!***

Come walk with me in the city gardens.  
(Better keep an eye out for you-know-who)  
Did ever you see such a sickly showing? —  
Middle of June, and nothing growing;  
The gardeners peer and scratch their heads  
And drop their sweat on the tulip-beds,  
But not a blade thrusts through.

***Come, move on! Don't you know how to walk?***  
***No parking here! And no back-talk!***

Oh, well,—hell, it's all for the best.  
She certainly made a lot of clutter,  
Dropping petals under the trees,  
Taking your mind off your bread and butter.

Anyhow, it's nothing to me.  
I can remember, and so can you.  
(Though we'd better watch out for you-know-who,  
When we sit around remembering Spring).  
We shall hardly notice in a year or two.  
You can get accustomed to anything.

### **The Fawn**

There it was I saw what I shall never forget  
And never retrieve.  
Monstrous and beautiful to human eyes, hard to believe,  
He lay, yet there he lay,  
Asleep on the moss, his head on his polished cleft small  
ebony hooves,  
The child of the doe, the dappled child of the deer.

Surely his mother had never said, "Lie here  
Till I return," so spotty and plain to see  
On the green moss lay he.  
His eyes had opened; he considered me.

I would have given more than I care to say  
To thrifty ears, might I have had him for my friend  
One moment only of that forest day:

Might I have had the acceptance, not the love  
Of those clear eyes;  
Might I have been for him in the bough above  
Or the root beneath his forest bed,  
A part of the forest, seen without surprise.

Was it alarm, or was it the wind of my fear lest he depart  
That jerked him to his jointy knees,  
And sent him crashing off, leaping and stumbling  
On his new legs, between the stems of the white trees?

### **Mariposa**

Butterflies are white and blue  
In this field we wander through.  
Suffer me to take your hand.  
Death comes in a day or two.

All the things we ever knew  
Will be ashes in that hour:  
Mark the transient butterfly,  
How he hangs upon the flower.

Suffer me to take your hand.  
Suffer me to cherish you  
Till the dawn is in the sky.  
Whether I be false or true,  
Death comes in a day or two.

### **If Still Your Orchards Bear**

Brother, that breathe the August air  
Ten thousand years from now,  
And smell – If still your orchards bear  
Tart apples on the bough –

The early windfall under the tree,  
And see the red fruit shine,  
I cannot think your thoughts will be  
Much different from mine.

Should at that moment the full moon  
Step forth upon the hill,  
And memories hard to bear at noon,  
By moonlight harder still,

Form in the shadows of the trees, –  
Things that you could not spare  
And live, or so you thought, yet these  
Are gone, and you still there,

A man no longer what he was,  
Nor yet the thing he'd planned,  
The chilly apple from the grass  
Warmed by your living hand –

I think you will have need of tears;  
I think they will not flow;  
Supposing in ten thousand years  
Men ache, as they do now.

### **The Oak Leaves**

Yet in the end, defeated too, worn out and ready to fall,  
Hangs from the drowsy tree with cramped and desperate stem above the ditch the last leaf of all.  
There is something to be learned, I guess, from looking at the dead leaves under the living tree;  
Something to be set to a lusty tune and learned and sung, it well might be;  
Something to be learned – though I was ever a ten-o'clock scholar at this school –  
Even perhaps by me.

But my heart goes out to the oak-leaves that are the last to sigh “Enough,” and lose their hold;  
They have boasted to the nudging frost and to the two-and-thirty winds that they would never die,  
Never even grow old.

(These are those russet leaves that cling

All winter, even into the spring,

To the dormant bough, in the wood knee-deep in snow the only coloured thing.

### **The Buck in the Snow**

White sky, over the hemlocks bowed with snow,  
Saw you not at the beginning of evening the antlered buck and his doe  
Standing in the apple-orchard? I saw them. I saw them suddenly go,  
Tails up, with long leaps lovely and slow,  
Over the stone-wall into the wood of hemlocks bowed with snow.

Now lies he here, his wild blood scalding the snow.

How strange a thing is death, bringing to his knees, bringing to his antlers  
The buck in the snow.

How strange a thing, — a mile away by now, it may be,  
Under the heavy hemlocks that as the moments pass  
Shift their loads a little, letting fall a feather of snow —  
Life, looking out attentive from the eyes of the doe.

### **Grief (William Grant Still)**

#### **Poetry by LeRoy V. Brant (1890-1969)**

Weeping angel with pinions trailing  
And head bowed low in your hands.  
Mourning angel with heart-strings wailing,  
For one who in death’s hall stands.

Mourning angel silence your wailing,  
And raise your head from your hands.  
Weeping angel on your pinions trailing  
The white dove, promise, stands!

### **Songs of Travel (Ralph Vaughan Williams)**

#### **Poetry by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)**

#### **The vagabond**

Give to me the life I love,  
Let the love go by me,  
Give the jolly heaven above,  
And the byway nigh me.  
Bed in the bush with stars to see,  
Bread I dip in the river—  
There’s the life for a man like me,  
There’s the life for ever.

Or let autumn fall on me  
Where afield I linger,  
Silencing the bird on tree,  
Biting the blue finger.  
White as meal the frosty field—  
Warm the fireside haven—  
Not to autumn will I yield,  
Not to winter even!

Let the blow fall soon or late,  
Let what will be o’er me;  
Give the face of earth around,  
And the road before me.  
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,  
Nor a friend to know me;  
All I seek, the heaven above,  
And the road below me.

**Let Beauty awake** in the morn from beautiful dreams,  
Beauty awake from rest!  
Let Beauty awake  
For Beauty's sake  
In the hour when the birds awake in the brake  
And the stars are bright in the west!

### **The roadside fire**

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight  
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night,  
I will make a palace fit for you and me  
Of green days in forests, and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,  
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom;  
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white  
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

### **Youth and Love**

To the heart of youth the world is a highwyside.  
Passing for ever, he fares; and on either hand,  
Deep in the gardens golden pavilions hide,  
Nestle in orchard bloom, and far on the level land  
Call him with lighted lamp in the eventide.

**In dreams** unhappy, I behold you stand  
As heretofore:  
The unremember'd tokens in your hand  
Avail no more.

No more the morning glow, no more the grace,  
Enshrines, endears.  
Cold beats the light of time upon your face  
And shows your tears.

### **The infinite shining heavens**

Rose, and I saw in the night  
Uncountable angel stars  
Showering sorrow and light.

I saw them distant as heaven,  
Dumb and shining and dead,  
And the idle stars of the night  
Were dearer to me than bread.

Let Beauty awake in the eve from the slumber of day,  
Awake in the crimson eve!  
In the day's dusk end  
When the shades ascend,  
Let her wake to the kiss of a tender friend,  
To render again and receive!

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,  
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!  
That only I remember, that only you admire,  
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

Thick as stars at night when the moon is down,  
Pleasures assail him. He to his nobler fate  
Fares; and but waves a hand as he passes on,  
Cries but a wayside word to her at the garden gate,  
Sings but a boyish stave and his face is gone.

He came and went. Perchance you wept awhile  
And then forgot.  
Ah me! but he that left you with a smile  
Forgets you not.

Night after night in my sorrow  
The stars looked over the sea,  
Till lo! I looked in the dusk  
And a star had come down to me.

### **Whither must I wander?**

Home no more home to me, whither must I wander?  
Hunger my driver, I go where I must.  
Cold blows the winter wind over hill and heather:  
Thick drives the rain and my roof is in the dust.  
Loved of wise men was the shade of my roof-tree,  
The true word of welcome was spoken in the door—  
Dear days of old with the faces in the firelight,  
Kind folks of old, you come again no more.

Spring shall come, come again, calling up the moorfowl,  
Spring shall bring the sun and rain, bring the bees and flowers;  
Red shall the heather bloom over hill and valley,  
Soft flow the stream through the even-flowing hours.  
Fair the day shine as it shone on my childhood—  
Fair shine the day on the house with open door;  
Birds come and cry there and twitter in the chimney—  
But I go for ever and come again no more.

Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces,  
Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child.  
Fire and the windows bright glittered on the moorland;  
Song, tuneful song, built a palace in the wild.  
Now when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,  
Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is cold.  
Lone let it stand, now the friends are all departed,  
The kind hearts, the true hearts, that loved the place of old.

### **Bright is the ring of words**

When the right man rings them,  
Fair the fall of songs  
When the singer sings them,  
Still they are carolled and said—  
On wings they are carried—  
After the singer is dead  
And the maker buried.

Low as the singer lies  
In the field of heather,  
Songs of his fashion bring  
The swains together.  
And when the west is red  
With the sunset embers,  
The lover lingers and sings  
And the maid remembers.

### **I have trod the upward and the downward slope;**

I have endured and done in days before;  
I have longed for all, and bid farewell to hope;  
And I have lived and loved, and closed the door.

## **Selected Spirituals**

### **Ain't got time to die**

Lord I keep so busy praisin' my Jesus  
Keep so busy praisin' my Jesus  
Keep so busy praisin' my Jesus  
Ain't got time to die

'Cause when I'm helpin' the sick (I'm praisin' my Jesus)  
When I'm helpin' the sick (I'm praisin' my Jesus)  
When I'm helpin' the sick (I'm praisin' my Jesus)  
Ain't got time to die

'Cause it takes all of my time (It takes all of my time, it takes  
it all)  
All of my time (to praise Him)  
If I don't praise Him the rocks are gonna cry out  
Glory and honor, glory and honor  
Ain't got time to die

Lord I keep so busy workin' for the kingdom (workin' and  
I'm workin')  
Keep so busy workin' for the kingdom (workin' and I'm  
workin')  
Keep so busy workin' for the kingdom (workin' and I'm  
workin')  
Ain't got time to die

'Cause when I'm feedin' the poor (I'm workin' for the  
kingdom)  
When I'm feedin' the poor (I'm workin' for the kingdom)  
When I'm feedin' the poor (I'm workin' for the kingdom)  
Ain't got time to die

**There is a balm in Gilead (arr. Damien Sneed)**

There is a balm in Gilead,  
To make the wounded whole;  
There is a balm in Gilead,  
To heal the sin-sick soul.

**Deep river**, my home is over Jordan.  
Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into campground.  
Oh, don't you want to go to that gospel feast?  
That promised land, where all is peace?

**Steal away**, steal away, steal away to Jesus  
Steal away, steal away home  
I ain't got long to stay here

My Lord, He calls me  
He calls me by the thunder  
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul  
I ain't got long to stay here

Green trees are bending  
Po' sinner stand a-trembling  
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul  
I ain't got long to stay here

**Shall we gather at the river (arr. Shawn E. Okpebholo)**

Shall we gather at the river?  
Where bright angel feet have trod  
With its crystal tide forever  
Flowing from the throne of God

Yes, we will gather at the river  
The beautiful, the beautiful river  
Gather with the saints at the river  
That flows from the throne of God

At the smiling of the river,  
Mirror of the Savior's face,  
Saints, whom death will never sever,  
Lift their songs of saving grace

Yes, we will gather at the river  
The beautiful, the beautiful river  
Gather with the saints at the river  
That flows from the throne of God

Soon we'll reach the shining river  
Soon our pilgrimage will cease  
Soon our happy hearts will quiver  
With the melody of peace

Yes, we will gather at the river  
The beautiful, the beautiful river  
Gather with the saints at the river  
That flows from the throne of God

## Selected Schubert Songs

### An der Leier

Poetry by Franz von Bruchman (1798-1867)

Ich will von Atreus' Söhnen,  
Von Kadmus will ich singen!  
Doch meine Saiten tönen  
Nur Liebe im Erklingen.

Ich tauschte um die Saiten,  
Die Leier möcht ich tauschen!  
Alcidens Siegesschreiten  
Sollt ihrer Macht entrauschen!

Doch auch die Saiten tönen  
Nur Liebe im Erklingen!  
So lebt denn wohl, Heroen!  
Denn meine Saiten tönen  
Statt Heldensang zu drohen,  
Nur Liebe im Erklingen.

### Im Abendrot

Poetry by Karl Lappe (1773-1843)

O wie schön ist deine Welt,  
Vater, wenn sie golden strahlet!  
Wenn dein Glanz herniederfällt,  
Und den Staub mit Schimmer malet;  
Wenn das Rot, das in der Wolke blinkt,  
In mein stilles Fenster sinkt!

Könnt' ich klagen, könnt' ich zagen?  
Irre sein an dir und mir?  
Nein, ich will im Busen tragen  
Deinen Himmel schon allhier.  
Und dies Herz, eh' es zusammenbricht,  
Trinkt noch Glut und schlürft noch Licht.

### An die Musik

Poetry by Franz von Schober (1796-1882)

Du holde Kunst, in wieviel grauen Stunden,  
Wo mich des Lebens wilder Kreis umstrickt,  
Hast du mein Herz zu warmer Lieb entzunden,  
Hast mich in eine bessre Welt entrückt!

Oft hat ein Seufzer, deiner Harf entflossen,  
Ein süsßer, heiliger Akkord von dir  
Den Himmel bessrer Zeiten mir erschlossen,  
Du holde Kunst, ich danke dir dafür!

### To my lyre

English Translation by Richard Wigmore

I would sing of Atreus' sons,  
of Cadmus,  
but my strings bring forth  
only sounds of love.

I have changed the strings,  
I should like to change the lyre!  
Alcides' victorious march  
should ring out from its might!

But these strings, too,  
bring forth only sounds of love!  
Farewell, then, heroes!  
For my strings,  
instead of threatening with heroic songs,  
bring forth only sounds of love.

### In the glow of the evening

English Translation by Richard Wigmore

How lovely is your world,  
Father, in its golden radiance  
when your glory descends  
and paints the dust with glitter;  
when the red light that shines from the clouds  
falls silently upon my window.

Could I complain? Could I be apprehensive?  
Could I lose faith in you and in myself?  
No, I already bear your heaven  
here within my heart.  
And this heart, before it breaks,  
still drinks in the fire and savours the light.

### To Music

English Translation by Richard Wigmore

Beloved art, in how many a bleak hour,  
when I am enmeshed in life's tumultuous round,  
have you kindled my heart to the warmth of love,  
and borne me away to a better world!

Often a sigh, escaping from your harp,  
a sweet, celestial chord  
has revealed to me a heaven of happier times.  
Beloved art, for this I thank you!