



# *Timeless Mélodie*

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Richard Jeric, piano



A DMA Voice Recital  
Saturday, November 12th 3pm

Goodson Chapel

Shenandoah Conservatory



## Notes

Claude Debussy wrote “the clarity of expression, precision and concentration of form are qualities peculiar of the French genius.” These aspects are fundamental to the art form of the *mélodie*, a term which Hector Berlioz created to denote a French art song for solo voice and piano. In juxtaposition, German lied can be characterized as more philosophical and intellectual. Pierre Bernac describes the *mélodie* as possessing, “beauty of sonority, rare and subtle harmony, supple modulation, and the resulting interplay of colors, while at the same time seeking the beauty and charm of the melodic line.” This beautiful art form is a culmination of the unique French culture.

In compiling a recital from such a rich array of songs, I chose to center around a theme of time. An hour, a day, a season, a life, all are exemplified here on this program. The fusion of music and poetry crystalize our awareness to time itself. As the years pass in our lives, we appreciate the time we have more and more. Our existence is finite, but time will continue on after we are gone.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to genuinely thank all the people who made this challenging recital come to fruition. Firstly, I credit my committee members, Dr. Kathryn Green and Dr. Byron Jones for their great guidance and advice on this recital and my journey toward my degree. Also, I am grateful to Arlene Shrut for wonderful coachings and incredible skill at the piano. There is no person more integral to the artistic quality of this performance than Richard Jeric. He is a great collaborator and uniquely talented. I must recognize Dr. David Meyer, an incredibly intelligent teacher and mentor, whose unwavering support has been crucial to my present and future professional success. Finally, and most importantly, my wife, Natalie, there are not enough superlatives in the world to assign to her. I am married to the most caring, loving, compassionate, talented woman. I love you.

Translations by Christopher Goldsack  
[www.melodietreasury.com](http://www.melodietreasury.com)

Transpositions by Dr. Jonathan Edward Mann  
[www.ArtSongTranspositions.com](http://www.ArtSongTranspositions.com)  
Any Song in Any Key

# Timeless Mélodie

These three poems encompass a single day for a young and impetuous lover. The poems portray three phases of love; an auspicious encounter, followed by an unwelcome rejection, then a numb and bitter acceptance. Fauré depicts the yearning of the antagonist with long meandering melodic lines. The mood is clearly set in the piano of each *mélodie*: hopeful, agitated, and resigned.

## Poème d'un Jour Rencontre

J'étais triste et pensif quand je t'ai rencontrée;  
Je sens moins aujourd'hui mon obstiné tourment.  
O dis mois, serais-tu la femme inespérée,  
Et le rêve idéal poursuivi vainement?  
O, passante aux doux yeux, serais-tu donc l'amie  
Qui rendrait le bonheur au poète isolé?  
Et vas-tu rayonner sur mon âme affermie,  
Comme le ciel natal sur un cœur d'exilé?

Ta tristesse sauvage, à la mienne pareille,  
Aime à voir le soleil décliner sur la mer.  
Devant l'immensité ton extase s'éveille  
Et le charme des soirs à ta belle âme est cher  
Une mystérieuse et douce sympathie  
Déjà m'enchaîne à toi comme un vivant lien,  
Et mon âme frémit, par l'amour envahie,  
Et mon cœur te chérit sans te connaître bien!

## Toujours

Vous me demandez de me taire,  
De fuir loin de vous pour jamais,  
Et de m'en aller solitaire,  
Sans me rappeler qui j'aimais!

Demandez plutôt aux étoiles  
De tombez dans l'immensité,  
A la nuit de perdre ses voiles,  
Au jour de perdre sa clarté!

Demandez à la mer immense  
De dessécher ses vastes flots,  
Et, quand les vents sont en démente,  
D'apaiser ses sombres sanglots!

Mais n'espérez pas que mon âme  
S'arrache à ses âpres douleurs,  
Et se dépouille de sa flamme  
Comme le printemps de ses fleurs.

## Poem of a single day Meeting

I was sad and thoughtful when I met you;  
today I feel less my persistent torment.  
Oh tell me, would you be the un hoped-for woman,  
and the ideal dream pursued in vain?  
Oh, passing lady with gentle eyes, would you be that friend  
who will bring back happiness to the lonely poet?  
And will you shine on my strengthened soul,  
like the sky from home on the heart of one in exile?

Your wild sadness, alike to mine,  
likes to see the sun setting on the sea.  
Facing the vastness your ecstasy awakens  
and the charm of the evenings is dear to your beautiful soul.  
A mysterious and gentle understanding  
already binds me to you like a living bond,  
and my soul trembles, by love overwhelmed,  
and my heart cherishes you without knowing you well!

## For ever

You ask me to be silent,  
to flee far from you for ever,  
and to go away, alone,  
without remembering the one I loved!

Rather, ask the stars  
to fall into the vast emptiness,  
the night to lose its veils,  
the day to lose its brightness!

Ask the immense sea  
to dry its vast billows,  
and, when the winds are maddened,  
to pacify its gloomy sobs!

But do not hope that my soul  
would tear itself away from its harsh sorrow,  
and shed its fire  
as spring does its flowers.

### Adieu

Comme tout meurt vite, la rose  
Décloze,  
Et les frais manteaux diaprés  
Des prés;  
Les longs soupirs, les bien-aimées,  
Fumées!

On voit dans ce monde léger  
Changer  
Plus vite que les flots des grèves,  
Nos rêves!  
Plus vite que le givre en fleurs,  
Nos cœurs!

A vous l'on se croyait fidèle,  
Cruelle,  
Mais hélas! Les plus longs amours  
Sont courts!  
Et je dis en quittant vos charmes,  
Sans larmes,  
Presqu'au moment de mon aveu,  
Adieu!

*Charles Grandmougin*

### Farewell

How quickly everything dies, the rose  
unfurled,  
and the fresh many-coloured mantles  
of the meadows;  
the long sighs, the truly loved,  
smoke!

One sees, in this frivolous world,  
change;  
faster than the waves on the shore,  
our dreams!  
Faster than the blossoming of the hoar-frost,  
our hearts!

To you one imagined oneself faithful,  
cruel one,  
But alas! The most enduring loves  
are short!  
And I say, on parting with your charms,  
without tears,  
almost at the moment of my confession,  
farewell!

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Nature can easily be a metaphor for time: the infinite ocean, the setting of the sun, and the vitality of the earth. Paul Verlaine's poetry was set to music by countless composers, most likely due to his profound imagery and symbolism. These three *mélodies* of Debussy enhance the picturesque landscapes described in the poetry so elegantly. The waves of ocean sweep through the piano in the opening setting. The slow descending lines of a long drawn out sunset are depicted in *Le son du cor s'afflige*. In the final *L'échelonnement des haies*, a world of life is bursting forth, effervescent and alive.

### Trois Mélodies

#### La mer est plus belle

La mer est plus belle  
Que les cathédrales  
Nourrice fidèle,  
Berceuse de râles,  
La mer sur qui prie  
La Vierge Marie!

Elle a tous les dons  
Terribles et doux.  
J'entends ses pardons  
Gronder ses courroux...  
Cette immensité  
N'a rien d'entêté.

O! si patiente,  
Même quand méchante!  
Un souffle ami hante  
La vague, et nous chante:  
"Vous sans espérance,  
Mourez sans souffrance!"

### Three songs

#### The sea is more beautiful

The sea is more beautiful  
than the cathedrals,  
faithful nurse,  
cradler of deaths,  
the sea over which  
the Virgin Mary prays!

It has all the gifts  
both terrible and kind.  
I hear all its forgiveness  
scolding its wrath...  
In this vastness  
there is nothing stubborn.

Oh! So patient,  
even when cruel!  
A friendly breath haunts  
the wave, and sings to us:  
"You, without hope,  
die without suffering!"

Et puis sous les cieus  
Qui s'y rient plus clairs,  
Elle a des airs bleus,  
Roses, gris et verts...  
Plus belles que tous,  
Meilleure que nous!

### **Le son du cor s'afflige**

Le son du cor s'afflige vers les bois  
D'une douleur on veut croire orpheline  
Qui vient mourir au bas de la colline,  
Parmi la brise errant en courts abois.

L'âme du loup pleure dans cette voix  
Qui monte avec le soleil qui décline  
D'une agonie on veut croire câline,  
Et qui ravit et qui navre à la fois.

Pour faire mieux cette plainte assoupie,  
La neige tombe à long traits de charpie  
A travers le couchant sanguinolent,

Et l'air a l'air d'être un soupir d'automne,  
Tant il fait doux par ce soir monotone  
Où se dorlote un paysage lent.

### **L'échelonnement des haies**

L'échelonnement des haies  
Moutonne à l'infini, mer  
Claire dans le brouillard clair  
Qui sent bon les jeunes baies.

Des arbres et des moulins  
Sont légers sur le vert tendre  
Où vient s'ébattre et s'étendre  
L'agilité des poulains.

Dans ce vague d'un Dimanche,  
Voici se jouer aussi  
De grandes brebis aussi  
Douce que leur laine blanche.

Tout à l'heure déferlait  
L'onde, roulée en volutes,  
De cloches comme des flutes  
Dans le ciel comme le lait.

*Paul Verlaine*

And then, beneath the skies  
which laugh at it more clearly,  
it takes on blue,  
pink, grey and green hues...  
More beautiful than everything,  
better than us!

### **The sound of the horn grieves**

The sound of the horn grieves  
with a suffering one would think orphaned  
which comes to die at the foot of the hill,  
amidst the breeze blowing in short gusts.

The soul of the wolf weeps in this voice  
which rises with the sun, which sinks  
with an agony one would think tender,  
and which delights and distresses all at once.

To do this numbed lament better  
the snow falls in long threads of ribbon  
through the blood-drenched sunset,

and the air appears to be an autumn sigh,  
so mild is this monotonous evening  
in which a slow landscape indulges itself.

### **The arrayment of the hedges**

The arrayment of the hedges  
rambles endlessly like a fleece, clear  
sea in the bright mist  
rich with the fragrance of fresh berries.

Trees and windmills  
are alive on the soft green  
where the agility of the colts  
comes to frolic and spread.

In this wave of a Sunday,  
here too romp  
great ewes, as  
soft as their white wool.

A short while ago was breaking  
the wave, rolled in curls,  
of bells like flutes  
in the milk-like sky.

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*Chansons grises* is a cycle of Paul Verlaine settings. This composition established Hahn in the Parisian salons where he would sing and accompany himself. Many of these beautiful songs communicate seasons of the year and times of the day. The vocal lines are silky and charming while the piano varying from simplistic, rippling, syncopated to soothing arpeggios. Perhaps his most celebrated masterpiece, *L'heure exquise* is a profoundly sensitive setting of the glimmering moon of a serene pond. The cycle concludes with a vastly contrasting

declamatory proclamation of love.

**Chansons grises  
Chanson d'automne**

Les sanglots longs  
Des violons  
De l'automne  
Blessent mon cœur  
D'une langueur  
Monotone.

Tout suffocant  
Et blême, quand  
Sonne l'heure,  
Je me souviens  
Des jours anciens.  
Et je pleure;

Et je m'en vais  
Au vent mauvais  
Qui m'emporte  
Deçà, delà.  
Pareil à la  
Feuille morte.

**Tous deux**

Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été:  
Le grand soleil, complice de ma joie,  
Fera, parmi le satin et la soie,  
Plus belle encor votre chère beauté;

Le ciel tout bleu, comme une haute tente,  
Frissonnera somptueux à longs plis  
Sur nos deux fronts heureux qu'auront pâlis  
L'émotion du bonheur et l'attente;

Et quand le soir viendra, l'air sera doux  
Qui se jouera, caressant dans vos voiles,  
Et les regards paisibles des étoiles  
Bien veillamment souriront aux époux.

**L'allée est sans fin**

L'allée est sans fin,  
Sous le ciel, divin  
D'être pâle ainsi.  
Sais-tu qu'on serait  
Bien sous le secret  
De ces arbres-ci?

Le château, tout blanc  
Avec, à son flanc,  
Le soleil couché,  
Les champs à l'entour:

**Grey Songs  
Autumn song**

The long sobs  
of the violins  
of autumn  
wound my heart  
with a monotonous  
languor.

All suffocating  
and pale, when  
the hour strikes,  
I remember  
the old days.  
And I weep;

And I go away  
to the evil wind  
which carries me  
here and there.  
Just like  
the dead leaf.

**Both together**

So, it will be on a bright summer's day:  
the great sun, accomplice to my joy,  
will make, amid the satin and the silk,  
your dear beauty even lovelier;

The sky, all blue like a high canopy,  
will shiver, sumptuous, in long folds,  
above our two happy brows that the emotion  
of well-being and the expectation will have paled;

and when the evening has come, the air will be gentle  
which teases, stroking through your veils,  
and the peaceful gaze of the stars  
will smile protectively on at the married couple.

**The route is endless**

The route is endless,  
beneath the sky, divine  
to be pale like this!  
Are you aware that we would be  
snug in the secrecy  
of these trees here?

The castle, all white  
with, at its side,  
the setting sun,  
the fields around about:

Oh! que notre amour  
N'est-il là niché!

### En sourdine

Calmes dans le demi jour  
Que les branches hautes font,  
Pénétrons bien notre amour  
De ce silence profond.

Fondons nos âmes, nos cœurs  
Et nos sens extasiés,  
Parmi les vagues langueurs  
Des pins et des arbousiers.

Ferme tes yeux à demi,  
Croise tes bras sur ton sein,  
Et de ton cœur endormi  
Chasse à jamais tout dessein.

Laissons-nous persuader  
Au souffle berceur et doux  
Qui vient à tes pieds rider  
Les ondes de gazon roux.

Et quand, solennel, le soir  
Des chênes noirs tombera,  
Voix de notre désespoir,  
Le rossignol chantera.

### L'heure exquise

La lune blanche  
Luit dans les bois;  
De chaque branche  
Part une voix  
Sous la ramée...

O bien aimée.

L'étang reflète,  
Profond miroir,  
La silhouette  
Du saule noir  
Où le vent pleure.

Rêvons, c'est l'heure.

Un vaste et tendre  
Apaisement  
Semble descendre  
Du firmament  
Que l'astre irise...

C'est l'heure exquise.

Oh! Why is it not our love  
nestled there!

### Muted

Peaceful in the half-light  
that the high branches cast,  
let us imbue our love  
with this deep silence.

Let us fuse our souls, our hearts  
and our enraptured senses,  
amidst the vague languor  
of the pines and the arbutus.

Half close your eyes,  
fold your arms on your breast,  
and from your sleeping heart  
banish all purpose for ever.

Let us be enticed  
by the gentle rocking breath  
which comes to your feet, to ripple  
the waves of russet grass.

And when, solemn, the evening  
falls from the black oaks,  
voice of our despair,  
the nightingale will sing.

### The exquisite hour

The white moon  
shines in the woods;  
from each branch  
comes a voice  
beneath the boughs...

O well-beloved.

The pond reflects,  
deep mirror,  
the silhouette  
of the black willow  
where the wind weeps.

Let us dream, it is the hour.

A vast and tender  
quietening  
seems to settle  
from the sky  
that the moon makes iridescent...

It is the exquisite hour.

### **Paysage triste**

L'ombre des arbres dans la rivière embrumée  
Meurt comme de la fumée,  
Tandis qu'en l'air, parmi les ramures réelles,  
Se plaignent les tourterelles.  
Combien, ô voyageur, ce paysage blême  
Te mira, blême toi-même...  
Et que tristes pleuraient dans les hautes feuillées  
Tes espérances noyées!

### **La bonne chanson**

La dure épreuve va finir:  
Mon cœur, souris à l'avenir.

Ils sont finis les jours d'alarmes,  
Où j'étais triste jusqu'aux larmes.

J'ai lu les paroles amères,  
et banni les sombres chimères.

Mes yeux, exilés de la voir,  
De par un douloureux devoir,

Mon oreille, avide d'entendre  
Les notes d'or de sa voix tendre,

Tout mon être et tout mon amour  
Acclament le bienheureux jour

Où, seul rêve et seule pensée,  
Me reviendra la fiancée!

*Paul Verlaine*

### **Sad landscape**

The shadow of the trees, in the mist-covered river,  
dies like smoke,  
whereas in the air, among the real branches,  
the doves lament.  
How much, o traveler, this pale landscape  
reflected you, pale yourself...  
And how sadly, in the high branches,  
your drowned hopes wept!

### **The good song**

The severe test is about to end:  
my heart, smile to the future.

They are over, the days of alarms,  
when I was sad to the point of tears.

I have read the bitter words,  
and banished the gloomy illusions.

My eyes, exiled from seeing her,  
by a painful duty,

my ear, eager to hear  
the golden notes of her tender voice,

all my being and all my love  
acclaim the very happy day

when, my only dream and only thought,  
will come back my fiancée!

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Saint-Saëns had a great affinity for the poet Victor Hugo. In response to Hugo's poetry, Saint-Saëns once stated, "Could singing not emerge from poetry as a kind of blossoming? The rhythms, the sonorities of the verses, do they not ask for singing to emphasize them, singing being the only a superior form of declamation?" This set depicts an awakening in *Le Matin*, an anxious anticipation of the return of a lover in *L'attente*, and the tolling of a church bell at the end of a day to a lamenting soul in *La Cloche*.

### **Le Matin**

L'aurore s'allume;  
L'ombre épaisse fuit;  
Le rêve et la brume  
Vont où va la nuit;  
Paupières et roses  
S'ouvrent demi-closes;  
Du réveil des choses  
On entend le bruit.

Tout chante et murmure,

### **The Morning**

Aurora catches fire,  
the dense shadows vanish;  
the dream and the fumes  
go where the night goes;  
Eyelids and roses  
Open just a bit;  
You awaken to things,  
You notice sounds.

All is singing and murmur,



Tout parle à la fois,  
Fumée et verdure,  
Les nids et les toits;  
Le vent parle aux chênes,  
L'eau parle aux fontaines;  
Toutes les haleines  
Deviennent des voix!

Tout reprend son âme,  
L'enfant son hoche,  
Le foyer sa flamme,  
Le luth son archet;  
Folie ou démente,  
Dans le monde immense,  
Chacun recommence  
Ce qu'il ébauchait.

Qu'on pense ou qu'on aime,  
Sans cesse agité,  
Vers un but suprême,  
Tout vole emporté;  
L'esquif cherche un môle,  
L'abeille un vieux saule,  
La boussole un pôle,  
Moi la vérité.

*Victor Hugo*

#### **L'attente**

Monte, écureuil, monte au grand chêne,  
Sur la branche des cieux prochaine,  
Qui plie et tremble comme un jonc.  
Cigogne, aux vieilles tours fidèle,  
Oh! vole et monte à tire-d'aile  
De l'église à la citadelle,  
Du haut clocher au grand donjon.

Vieil aigle, monte de ton aire  
A la montagne centenaire  
Que blanchit l'hiver éternel.  
Et toi qu'en ta couche inquiète  
Jamais l'aube ne vit muette,  
Monte, monte, vive alouette,  
Vive alouette, monte au ciel!

Et maintenant du haut de l'arbre,  
Des flèches de la tour de marbre,  
Du grand mont, du ciel enflammé,  
A l'horizon, parmi la brume,  
Voyez-vous flotter une plume  
Et courir un cheval qui fume,  
Et revenir mon bien-aimé?

*Victor Hugo*

All are simultaneously talking,  
Smoke and foliage,  
Nests and rooftops;  
The wind whispers to the oaks,  
The water to the fountains;  
Gasps for breath  
Become voices!

All pluck up some courage,  
The baby its rattle,  
The hearth its flame,  
The lute its bow;  
Folly or madness,  
In the whole world  
Everybody starts with whatever  
he wants to give a try.

Whether you think or love,  
Always on the run,  
Toward a higher goal,  
high priority projects only;  
the boat looks for a jetty,  
the bee an old willow  
the compass needle its pole,  
I the truth.

*translated by Emily Ezust*

#### **The wait**

Climb, squirrel, climb into the great oak,  
upon the branch close to the heavens  
which bends and trembles like a reed.  
Stork, faithful to the ancient towers,  
oh, fly off and swiftly soar  
from the church to the citadel  
from the high belfry to the great keep.

Old eagle, climb from your eyrie  
to the centenarian mountain  
which the eternal winter cloaks in white.  
And you who, in your troubled sleeping place,  
never saw a dawn in silence,  
climb, climb, lively lark,  
lively lark, climb to the sky!

And now from the top of the tree,  
from the spires of the marble towers,  
from the great mountain, from the blazing sky,  
on the horizon, through the mist,  
do you see a feather floating  
and a steaming horse galloping,  
and my beloved returning?

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### La cloche

Seule en ta sombre tour, aux faîtes dentelés,  
D'où ton souffle descend sur les toits ébranlés,  
O cloche suspendue au milieu des nuées  
Par ton vaste roulis si souvent remuées,  
Tu dors en ce moment dans l'ombre, et rien ne luit  
Sous ta voûte profonde où sommeille le bruit.

Oh! tandis qu'un esprit qui jusqu'à toi s'élançe,  
Silencieux aussi, contemple ton silence,  
Sens-tu par cet instinct vague et plein de douceur  
Qui révèle toujours une sœur à la sœur,  
Qu'à cette heure où s'endort la soirée expirante,  
Une âme est près de toi, non moins que toi vibrante,  
Qui bien souvent aussi jette un bruit solennel,  
Et se plaint dans l'amour comme toi dans le ciel!

*Victor Hugo*

### The bell

Alone in your dark tower, with its crenulated pinnacles  
from which your breath descends upon the shaken roofs,  
o bell, hung amid the clouds,  
so often disturbed by your vast rolling,  
just now you are asleep in the shadow, and nothing shines  
beneath your deep vault in which the sound sleeps.

Oh! whilst a spirit which leaps up to you  
gazes on your silence, likewise silent,  
do you by that instinct, vague and full of kindness  
which reveals one sister to another, feel  
that, at this hour when the dying evening falls asleep,  
a soul is close to you, no less vibrant than you,  
who very often also utters a solemn sound  
and laments in love like yourself in the sky!

© translated by Christopher Goldsack

Henri Duparc only composed fourteen songs, yet he created a lasting legacy. He wrote all of his music between the ages of twenty and thirty-seven, then did not compose any further--due to his own unattainable standards--for the final forty-eight years of life. A life is what is illustrated in this final set. *L'invitation au voyage* is an invitation to a sexual awakening or the beginning of a new found awareness. *La vague et la cloche* portrays a descent into madness and finally death. The resurrection into the afterlife is found in *La vie antérieure*. Our poet finds himself at the great porticoes of heaven with all his desires and pleasures fulfilled, but he cannot find peace and languishes.

### L'invitation au voyage

Mon enfant, ma sœur,  
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 traitres yeux,  
Brillant à travers leurs larmes.

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,  
Luxe, calme et volupté.

Vois sur ces canaux  
Dormir ces vaisseaux  
Dont l'humeur est vagabonde;  
C'est pour assouvir  
Ton moindre désir  
Qu'ils viennent du bout du monde.

### The invitation to travel

My child, my sister,  
dream of the gentleness  
of going over there to live together!  
To love at leisure,  
to love and to die  
in the country which resembles you!  
The watery suns  
of those misty skies,  
for my mind, have the charms,  
so mysterious,  
of your betraying eyes,  
shining through their tears.

There, all is but order and beauty,  
luxury, calm and voluptuousness.

See, on these canals,  
those vessels sleeping  
whose disposition is to roam;  
it is to fulfil  
your slightest desire  
that they come from the end of the earth.

Les soleils couchants  
Revêtent les champs,  
Les canaux, la ville entière,  
D'hyacinthe et d'or;  
Le monde s'endort  
Dans une chaude lumière.

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,  
Luxe, calme et volupté.

*Charles Baudelaire*

### **La vague et la cloche**

Une fois, terrassé par un puissant breuvage,  
J'ai rêvé que parmi les vagues et le bruit  
De la mer je voguais sans fanal dans la nuit,  
Morne rameur, n'ayant plus l'espoir du rivage.

L'océan me crachait ses baves sur le front  
Et le vent me glaçait d'horreur jusqu'aux entrailles.  
Les vagues s'écroutaient ainsi que des murailles,  
Avec ce rythme lent qu'un silence interrompt.

Puis tout changea. La mer et sa noire mêlée  
Sombrèrent. Sous mes pieds s'effondra le plancher  
De la barque... Et j'étais seul dans un vieux clocher,  
Chevauchant avec rage une cloche ébranlée.

J'étreignais la criarde opiniâtrement,  
Convulsif, et fermant dans l'effort mes paupières;  
Le grondement faisait trembler les vieilles pierres,  
Tant j'activais sans fin le lourd balancement.

Pourquoi n'as-tu pas dit, ô rêve! où Dieu nous mène?  
Pourquoi n'as-tu pas dit s'ils ne finiraient pas,  
L'inutile travail et l'éternel fracas  
Dont est faite la vie, hélas! la vie humaine?

*François Coppée*

### **La vie antérieure**

J'ai longtemps habité sous de vastes portiques  
Que les soleils marins teignaient de mille feux,  
Et que leurs grands piliers, droits et majestueux,  
Rendaient pareils, le soir, aux grottes basaltiques.

Les houles, en roulant les images des cieux,  
Mêlaient d'une façon solennelle et mystique  
Les tout-puissants accords de leur riche musique  
Aux couleurs du couchant reflété par mes yeux.

C'est là que j'ai vécu dans les voluptés calmes,  
Au milieu de l'azur, des vagues, des splendeurs  
Et des esclaves nus, tout imprégnés d'odeurs,

Qui me rafraîchissaient le front avec des palmes,  
Et dont l'unique soin était d'approfondir

The setting suns  
re clothe the fields,  
the canals, the whole town,  
in hyacinth and in gold;  
the world falls asleep  
in a warm light.

There, all is but order and beauty,  
luxury, calm and voluptuousness.

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### **The wave and the bell**

Once, when struck down by a powerful beverage,  
I dreamed that, among the waves and the noise  
of the sea, I was rowing without beacon in the night,  
dismal oarsman, with no hope of the coast left.

The ocean spat its foam on my brow  
and the wind froze me to the gut with dread.  
The waves crumpled like walls,  
with this slow rhythm that a silence interrupted.

Then all changed. The sea and its black brawl  
sank. Beneath my feet the bottom of the boat  
caved in... And I was alone in an old belfry,  
sitting with fury astride a ringing bell.

Obstinately I was gripping the screaming thing,  
convulsive, and closing my eyelids with the effort;  
the rumbling set the old stones trembling,  
so ceaselessly was I actuating the heavy swing.

Why did you not say, o dream, where God is leading us?  
Why did you not say if they would not end,  
the useless toil and the eternal tumult  
of which life, alas, human life is made?

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### **The former life**

Long did I live beneath vast porticoes  
which the marine suns tinted with a thousand fires  
and which their great, tall and majestic pillars  
made them, at evening, resemble the basaltic caves.

The waves, while rolling the reflections of the skies,  
mixed, in a solemn and mysterious way,  
the all-powerful harmonies of their rich music  
into the colours of the sunset reflected by my eyes.

It is there that I lived among the peaceful pleasures,  
in the middle of the azure, the waves, the splendours  
and the naked slaves, saturated in scents,

who cooled my brow with palm leaves,  
and whose only care was to deepen

Le secret douloureux qui me faisait languir.  
*Charles Baudelaire*

the painful secret which was making me languish.  
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