

OF WAR AND PEACE, REMEMBRANCE DAY, 2019; TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Time and the bell (T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, Number 1: *Burnt Norton*, IV)

Time and the bell have buried the day,
The black cloud carries the sun away.
Will the sunflower turn to us, will the clematis
Stray down, bend to us; tendril and spray Clutch and cling?
Chill
Fingers of yew be curled
Down on us? After the kingfisher's wing
Has answered light to light, and is silent, the light is still
At the still point of the turning world.

Oh Fair to See (Christina Rossetti)

Oh, fair to see
Fruit-laden cherry tree,
With balls of shining red
Decking a leafy head,
Oh, fair to see!

Oh, fair to see
Bloom-laden cherry tree,
Arrayed in sunny white:
An April day's delight,
Oh, fair to see!

Süsse Stille, sanfte Quelle ruhiger Gelassenheit (Barthold Heinrich Brockes; translation, Monica Whicher)

*Süße Stille, sanfte Quelle
Ruhiger Gelassenheit.
Selbst die Seele wird erfreut,
Wenn ich mir nach dieser Zeit
Arbeitsamer Eitelkeit
Jene Ruh vor Augen stelle,
Die uns ewig ist bereit.*

Sweet stillness, gentle source
of restful calm!
My soul will be made joyful,
When, after this time of
working vanity,
I have before my eyes that peace
which is prepared for us in eternity.

Furie terribili (Giacomo Rossi, *Rinaldo*, Act 1, Scene 5 translation, Monica Whicher)

*Furie terribili
Circondatemi!
Seguidatemi
Con faci orribili!*

Terrible furies
Encircle me!
Follow me
With fearsome flames!

The Poison Tree (William Blake, *Songs of Experience*)

I was angry with my friend;
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And it grew both day and night.
Till it bore an apple bright.
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine.

And I watered it in fears,
Night & morning with my tears:
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And into my garden stole,
When the night had veild the pole;
In the morning glad I see;
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

The Lads in their Hundreds (A.E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad*, XXIII)

The lads in their hundreds to Ludlow come in for the fair,
There's men from the barn and the forge and the mill and the fold,
The lads for the girls and the lads for the liquor are there,
And there with the rest are the lads that will never be old.

I wish one could know them, I wish there were tokens to tell
The fortunate fellows that now you can never discern;
And then one could talk with them friendly and wish them farewell
And watch them depart on the way that they will not return.

There's chaps from the town and the field and the till and the cart,
And many to count are the stalwart, and many the brave,
And many the handsome of face and the handsome of heart,
And few that will carry their looks or their truth to the grave.

But now you may stare as you like and there's nothing to scan;
And brushing your elbow unguessed-at and not to be told
They carry back bright to the coiner the mintage of man,
The lads that will die in their glory and never be old.

Der Soldat /The Soldier (Hans Christian Andersen, translated by Adelbert von Chamisso; English translation, Monica Whicher)

*Es geht bei gedämpfter Trommel Klang;
Wie weit noch die Stätte! der Weg wie lang!
O wär er zur Ruh und alles vorbei!
Ich glaub', es bricht mir das Herz entzwei.*

*Ich hab' in der Welt nur ihn geliebt,
Nur ihn, dem jetzt man den Tod doch gibt.
Bei klingendem Spiele wird paradiert,
Dazu bin auch ich kommandiert*

*Nun schaut er auf zum letztenmal
In Gottes Sonne freudigen Strahl,—
Nun binden sie ihm die Augen zu,—
Dir schenke Gott die ewige Ruh!*

*Es haben die Neun wohl angelegt,
Acht Kugeln haben vorbeigefegt;
Sie zitterten alle vor Jammer und Schmerz—
Ich aber, ich traf ihn mitten in das Herz.*

He walks to the sound of the deadened drum;
The site is still so far away! the way so long!
Oh, were he at rest and all of this over!
My heart, I think, is breaking in two.

I have in the world loved only him,
Him, who they are now putting to death.
The firing squad parades noisily,
I too am ordered to join them.

Now he looks for the last time
At the joyous ray of God's sun —
Now they are blindfolding him —
God grant you eternal peace!

The nine of us aimed well,
Eight bullets flew past;
All were trembling with misery and pain—
But I, I shot him right through the heart.

With Rue my Heart is Laden (A.E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad*, LIV)

With rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
The lightfoot boys are laid;
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade.

Priez pour paix/Pray for Peace (Charles d'Orléans; translation, Monica Whicher)

*Priez pour paix, douce Vierge Marie,
Reine des cieux et du monde maitresse,
Faites prier, par votre courtoisie,
Saints et saintes, et prenez votre adresse
Vers votre fils, requérant sa hauteesse
Qu'il lui plaise à son peuple regarder
Que de son sang a voulu racheter,
En déboutant guerre qui tout dévoie;
De prières ne vous veuillez lasser:
Priez pour paix, priez pour paix, le vrai trésor de joie*

Pray for peace, gentle Virgin Mary,
Queen of the skies and mistress of the world,
Incline to prayer, by your courtesy,
All the saints, and take your address
Unto your Son, beseeching his Highness
That it may please him to look upon his people,
Those who, with his blood, he wished to redeem,
Rejecting war which destroys all;
Grow not weary of prayers:
Pray for peace, pray for peace, the true treasure of joy.

Noël des enfants qui n'ont plus de maisons/Christmas Carol for Homeless Children (Claude Debussy; translation, Monica Whicher)

*Nous n'avons plus de maisons!
Les ennemis ont tout pris, tout pris, tout pris,
Jusqu'à notre petit lits!
Ils ont brûlé l'école et notre maître aussi,
Ils ont brûlé l'église et monsieur Jésus-Christ,
Et le vieux pauvre qui n'a pas pu s'en aller!*

*Nous n'avons plus de maisons!
Les ennemis ont tout pris, tout pris, tout pris,
Jusqu'à notre petit lits!
Bien sûr! Papa est à la guerre,
Pauvre maman est morte
Avant d'avoir vu tout ça.
Qu'est-ce que l'on va faire?
Noël, petit Noël, n'allez pas chez eux,
n'allez plus jamais chez eux,
Punissez-les!*

*Vengez les enfants de France !
Les petits Belges, les petits Serbes,
et les petits Polonais aussi !
Si nous en oublions, pardonnez-nous.
Noël ! Noël ! surtout, pas de joujoux,
Tâchez de nous redonner le pain quotidien.*

*Nous n'avons plus de maisons!
Les ennemis ont tout pris, tout pris, tout pris.
Jusqu'à notre petit lits!
Ils ont brûlé l'école et notre maître aussi,
Ils ont brûlé l'église et monsieur Jésus-Christ,
et le vieux pauvre qui n'a pas pu s'en aller !
Noël! Écoutez-nous, nous n'avons plus de petits sabots!
Mais donnez la victoire aux enfants de France.*

We have no more houses!
The enemies have taken everything, everything, everything,
even our little beds!
They have burned the school and our teacher too.
They have burned the church and Mister Jesus Christ,
and the poor old man who could not get away!

We have no more houses!
The enemies have taken everything, everything, everything,
even our little beds!
Of course! Papa is at war,
Poor mama died
Before she saw everything.
What are we going to do?
Christmas, little Christmas! don't go to their house,
never ever go to their house,
Punish them!

Avenge the children of France!
The little Belgians, the little Serbs,
and the little Polish children, too!
If we have forgotten anyone, forgive us.
Christmas! Christmas! especially, no toys,
Try to give us back our daily bread.

We have no more houses!
The enemies have taken everything, everything, everything,
even our little beds!
They have burned the school and our teacher, too.
They have burned the church and Mister Jesus Christ
and the poor old man who could not get away!
Christmas! Hear us, we don't have our little clogs anymore!
But give victory to the children of France!

The Children (William Soutar; text adapted by James MacMillan)

Upon the street they lie
Beside the broken stone:
The blood of children stares through the broken stone.

Death came out of the sky
In the bright afternoon:
Darkness slanted over the bright afternoon.

Again the sky is clear
But upon the earth a stain:
The earth is darkened with a darkening stain.

A wound which everywhere
Corrupts the hearts of men:
The blood of children corrupts the hearts of men.

Silence is in the air:
The stars move to their places:
Silent and serene, the stars move to their places:

But from earth the children stare
With blind and fearful faces:
And our charity is in the children's faces

Velvet Shoes (Elinor Wylie; text adapted by Raymond Lustig)

Let us walk in the white snow
In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
At a tranquil pace,
Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,
And you in wool,
White as white cow's milk,
More beautiful
Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
Upon silver fleece,
Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:
Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
On white silence below.
We shall walk in the snow.

Sekhmet the Lion-headed Goddess of War

(Margaret Atwood, *Morning in the Burned House*)

He was the sort of man
Who wouldn't hurt a fly.
Many flies are now alive
While he is not.
He was not my patron.
He preferred full granaries, I battle.
My roar meant slaughter.
Yet here we are together
In the same museum.
That's not what I see, though, the fitful
Crowds of staring children
Learning the lesson of multi-
Cultural obliteration, sic transit
And so on.

I see the temple where I was born
Or built, where I held power.
I see the desert beyond,
Where the hot conical tombs, that look
From a distance, frankly, like dunces' hats,
Hide my jokes: the dried-out flesh
And bones, the wooden boats
In which the dead sail endlessly
In no direction.

What did you expect from gods
With animal heads?
Though come to think of it
The ones made later, who were fully human
Were not such good news either.
Favour me and give me riches,
Destroy my enemies.
That seems to be the gist.
Oh yes: And save me from death.
In return we're given blood
And bread, flowers and prayer,
And lip service.

Maybe there's something in all of this
I missed. But if it's selfless
Love you're looking for,
You've got the wrong goddess.

I just sit where I'm put, composed
Of stone and wishful thinking:
That the deity who kills for pleasure
Will also heal,
That in the midst of your nightmare,
The final one, a kind lion
Will come with bandages in her mouth
And the soft body of a woman,
And lick you clean of fever,
And pick your soul up gently by the nape of the neck
And caress you into darkness and paradise.

Bessie Bobtail

(James Stephens)

As down the road she wambled slow,
She had not got a place to go:
She had not got a place to fall
And rest herself – no place at all!
She stumped along, and wagged her pate;
And said a thing was desperate.

Her face was screwed and wrinkled tight
Just like a nut and left and right,
On either side, she wagged her head
And said a thing; and what she said
Was desperate as any word
That ever yet a person heard

I walked behind her for awhile,
And watched the people nudge and smile:
But ever, as she went, she said,
As left and right she swung her head,
"O God He knows: And, God He knows!
And, surely God Almighty knows!"

La Bandera/The Flag (Pablo Neruda, *Los versos del Capitán*; translation by Donald D. Walsh)

Levántate conmigo.

Stand up with me.

*Nadie quisiera
como yo quedarse
sobre la almohada en que tus párpados
quieren cerrar el mundo para mí.
Allí también quisiera
dejar dormir mi sangre
rodeando tu dulzura.*

No one would like
more than I to stay
on the pillow where your eyelids
try to shut out the world for me.
There too I would like
to let my blood sleep
surrounding your sweetness.

*Pero levántate,
tú, levántate,
pero conmigo levántate
y salgamos reunidos
a luchar cuerpo a cuerpo
contra las telarañas del malvado,
contra el sistema que reparte el hambre,
contra la organización de la miseria.*

But stand up,
you, stand up,
but stand up with me
and let us go off together
to fight face to face
against the devil's webs,
against the system that distributes hunger,
against organized misery.

*Vamos,
y tú, mi estrella, junto a mí,
recién nacida de mi propia arcilla,
ya habrás hallado el manantial que ocultas
y en medio del fuego estarás junto a mí,
con tus ojos bravíos, alzando mi bandera.*

Let's go,
and you, my star, next to me,
newborn from my own clay,
you will have found the hidden spring
and in the midst of the fire you will be next to me,
with your wild eyes, raising my flag.

A Clear Midnight (Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass, From Noon to Starry Night*)

This is thy hour O Soul, thy free flight into the wordless,
Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the lesson done,
Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the themes
thou lovest best.
Night, sleep, death and the stars.

Walt Whitman in 1989 (Perry Brass)

Walt Whitman has come down today
to the hospital room;
He rocks back and forth in the crisis;

He says it's good we haven't lost
our closeness, and cries
when each one is taken

He has written many lines
about these years: the disfigurement
of young men and the wars

of hard tongues and closed minds.
The body in pain will bear such nobility,
But words have the edge

of poison when spoken bitterly.
Now he takes a dying man
In his arms and tells him

how deeply flows the River
that takes the old man and his friends
this evening. It is the River

of dusk and lamentation.
"Flow." Walt says. "dear River,
I will carry this young man

to your banks. I'll put him myself
on one of your strong, flat boats
and we'll sail together all the way
through evening."

Blowin' in the Wind (Bob Dylan)

How many roads must a man walk down
Before they can call him a man?
How many seas must a white dove sail
Before she sleeps in the sand?
How many times must the cannon balls fly
Before they're forever banned?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind.

How many years can a mountain exist
Before it is washed to the sea?
How many years can some people exist
Before they're allowed to be free?
How many times can a man turn his head
And pretend that he just doesn't see?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind.

How many times must a man look up
Before he can see the sky?
How many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry?
How many deaths will it take 'til he knows
That too many people have died?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind.

Fragile (Gordon Sumner)

If blood will flow when flesh and steel are one
Drying in the color of the evening sun
Tomorrow's rain will wash the stains away
But something in our minds will always stay

Perhaps this final act was meant
To clinch a lifetime's argument
That nothing comes from violence and nothing ever could

For all those born beneath an angry star
Lest we forget how fragile we are

On and on the rain will fall
Like tears from a star
Like tears from a star
On and on the rain will say
How fragile we are
How fragile we are

How Can I Keep from Singing (Robert Lowry; adapted, with additional text by Pete Seeger and Doris Plenn)

My life flows on in endless song;
Above earth's lamentations,
I hear the real, tho' far-off hymn
That hails a new creation;
Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear its music ringing;
It sounds an echo in my soul—
How can I keep from singing?

Although the tempest loudly roars,
I hear the truth, it liveth.
But though the darkness 'round me close,
Songs in the night it giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that rock I'm clinging;
Since love is lord of heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble, sick with fear,
And hear their death-knell ringing,
When friends rejoice both far and near,
How can I keep from singing?
In prison cell and dungeon vile,
Our thoughts to them are winging;
When friends by shame are undefiled,
How can I keep from singing?