Sonnets

Daniel Norman | Christopher Gould
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## Sonnets

### BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913-1976)
**Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo, Op.22** *(Michelangelo Buonarroti)*

|   |   |    |  
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | i | Sonetto XVI | 2’19 |
| 2 | ii | Sonetto XXXI | 1’29 |
| 3 | iii | Sonetto XXX | 4’02 |
| 4 | iv | Sonetto LV | 1’57 |
| 5 | v | Sonetto XXXVIII | 1’57 |
| 6 | vi | Sonetto XXXII | 1’29 |
| 7 | vii | Sonetto XXIV | 5’11 |

### FRANZ LISZT (1811-1886)
**Tre Sonetti di Petrarca** *(Francesco Petrarca)*

|   |   |    |  
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | i | Pace non trovo | 6’19 |
| 9 | ii | Benedetto sia ’l giorno | 5’58 |
| 10 | iii | I’ vidi in terra | 5’55 |

### JOHN DANKWORTH (1927-2010)

|   |    |    |  
|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day? (William Shakespeare) | 3’14 |

### DUKE ELLINGTON (1889-1974)

|   |    |    |  
|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | My love is as a fever (William Shakespeare) | 3’35 |
BENJAMIN BRITTEN
The Holy Sonnets of John Donne, Op.35 *(John Donne)*

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<td>i</td>
<td>Oh my blacke Soule!</td>
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<td>ii</td>
<td>Batter my heart</td>
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<td>iii</td>
<td>O might those sighes and teares</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>What if this present</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>vi</td>
<td>Since she whom I lov’d</td>
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<td>vii</td>
<td>At the round earth’s imagin’d corners</td>
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<td>Thou hast made me</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>ix</td>
<td>Death be not proud</td>
<td>4’42</td>
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FRANZ LISZT
BONUS Oh! quand je dors *(Victor Hugo)*

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**75’15**

DANIEL NORMAN  *tenor*
CHRISTOPHER GOULD  *piano*
Petrarch and Laura, Michelangelo Buonarroti and Tommaso di Cavalieri, John Dankworth and Cleo Laine, Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears. These are the relationships without which the songs on this disc would not exist. Indeed, without the first of these couples, perhaps the sonnet itself would not have emerged as the premium structure for poetic expressions of love’s extremes.

On 6th April 1327, the future of the sonnet was secured when in the church of St Clare, Avignon, Francesco Petrarch first saw and fell in love with his mysterious Laura. For it was in his sonnets that Petrarch explored the pain and ecstasy of his experience of love. He wrote about this torment to Giacomo Colonna, who had suggested that Laura may have been imaginary:

> my love, only too real, holds me in constant suffering and, try as I might, I cannot escape from it

Dante had written sonnets before him, but it is as Petrarchan Sonnets that we know this Italian form of the poem – largely due to the number and quality of the sonnets that were inspired by Laura.

Two centuries later, the 57-year-old Michelangelo first met the young nobleman Tommaso di Cavalieri. And his love, it seems, was as fierce and all-consuming as Petrarch’s for Laura. A letter to their mutual friend, the painter Sebastiano del Piombo, gives us a taste of that passion:

> If you see him, I beg you commend me to him a thousand times, and when you write to me tell me something about him to put me in mind of him, because if he were to fade from my memory I think I should instantly fall dead.

His sonnets written for Cavalieri, perhaps as many as 41, betray a broad spectrum of emotions and an intensity of devotion. Petrarch’s love for Laura was unrequited, and he continued to write of her in his poetry long after she died, and for the rest of his life. By contrast, Michelangelo was intimate with Cavalieri for the remaining 32 years of his life, and indeed died in his company.

Michelangelo’s intensity of feeling is succinctly and eloquently expressed in his Cavalieri sonnets. But perhaps he is not recognised as the poetic genius that he was because the sonnets were not published in their original form until three centuries after his death. Up to that point they were only known in the versions produced by his great nephew, Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger, in 1623. In these renditions, any hints of perceived moral weakness were expunged, removing any implication of homosexuality and replacing with puny lines the muscular contours of Michelangelo’s poetry. Unlike his art and architectural work, the poetry was not intended for public consumption, being sent with private letters to a handful of correspondents. So it was not until Cesare Guasti transcribed the original texts – safely preserved in the Vatican – for publication in 1863 that the world was able to hear Michelangelo’s true voice.

Britten started setting what became Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo before his relationship with Pears began, so perhaps the poetry first spoke to him in the context of his relationship with Wulff Scherchen. Or it could have been the details of Michelangelo’s struggle with homosexuality that appealed to him –
arguably a strong reason for his earlier choice of Rimbaud’s *Illuminations* (which itself has songs dedicated to both Scherchen and Pears). Whatever the reason, the cycle as completed in 1940 was wholeheartedly dedicated to Pears and became the piece most representative of their relationship, both private and public – they performed it together over 100 times (twice as many as any other cycle). Pears once said that the lines of Sonnet XXX defined their relationship (Guasti’s numbering as used by Britten seems apt here – it was superseded in academic circles by Girardi’s reordering in 1961).

The texts that Britten chose speak of a confused, at times tortured, love. These choices, and the ardour of their realisation, reveal so much more about Britten and his feelings than can be discerned from the touching, but succinct, expressions of love in his letters to Pears from this period:

> Never never have I or could I love anyone as I love my darling (Nov or Dec 1942)

> I live for Friday, & you. My man – my beloved man (Dec 1942)

Indeed, it is Pears who is the overt romantic in his writing, and more poetic:

> My most beautiful of all little blue-grey, mouse-catching, pearly-bottomed, creamy-thighed, soft-waisted, mewing rat-pursuers!....when I am not with you, I am like a pelican in the wilderness (always thirsty) or an owl (without its pussy-cat) in the desert....you darling, you little white pearl
> you – I kiss you on both bottoms, & in front – I put my head between your legs & I look at you & look at you & kiss you – I kiss your navel & your tummy & your groin & you – your lips your heart & you
> – My boy, my Ben – I love you, darling – P. (18 Jan 1941)

It is an indication of the lack of progress made in the three centuries between Buonarroti the Younger’s sanitised versions of the sonnets and the publication of Britten’s songs, that although Britten used as reference J. A. Symonds’s honest and elegant poetic translations of the original texts, it was deemed safest to perform and publish the songs with a translation prepared by Pears and Elizabeth Mayer (adopted mother to Britten and Pears in Long Island, who it seems was unaware of the nature of their relationship). This translation, like its seventeenth-century predecessor, robs the reader of the homosexual honesty of Michelangelo. It is perhaps surprising that Britten did not choose to set *Veggio nel tuo bel viso*, in which “the vulgar, vain, malignant horde attribute what their grosser wills obey” – a fine representation of the reception Britten and his work had recently received from his critics and contemporaries in England, precipitating his departure for the US in 1939. The Symonds translation of the poetry is given in this booklet.

*The Holy Sonnets of John Donne* was composed five years later, when he had just returned from a trip to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Only three months after it had been liberated, he gave nine concerts with Yehudi Menuhin, staying there for three nights and visiting the hospital. He never spoke of what he saw other than to say that it had been a terrifying experience. Pears later said that Britten had told him that the experience had coloured everything he had written subsequently.

In a time of exuberant love, Britten had chosen the profane sonnets of Michelangelo. At this time of horror, the sacred sonnets of John Donne could not have been more appropriate. If he could not express in
words the effect of what he had seen, these texts made the perfect vessel from which he could pour his despair and anger, finding a new voice in music that was composed during a high fever caused by the typhoid vaccination he had been given for the tour. The cycle was completed in just two weeks.

Like Donne, Michelangelo and Petrarch, Franz Liszt trod a fine line between the sensual and the moralistic, and much of the life he led would not suggest the young man who considered the priesthood in preference to music, or the old man who, in retirement, took holy orders in Rome. In 1833, at the age of 21 he was taken as a lover by Comtesse Marie d'Agoult. Their affair lasted for ten years and produced three children. In his letters to Marie, Liszt quoted Petrarch, and as they travelled through Europe perhaps their happiest times were spent together in Petrarch's Italy where two of their children were born. Liszt could relate to Petrarch who, like him, was a well-travelled celebrity, albeit 500 years earlier. So whilst most of Liszt's song settings were of texts by his contemporaries, largely in French and German (like Britten, he wrote songs in five languages), it is understandable that exception might be made for the sonnets of Petrarch. In fact, in the last line of Liszt's setting of Victor Hugo's Oh! quand je dors, the music tells us how readily he was able to embody the spirit of Petrarch.

Marie, writing under a pseudonym, once described herself as six inches of snow covering twenty feet of lava. No surprise, then, that Liszt sets the text in which Petrarch says

\[\text{ed ardo e son un ghiaccio} - \text{I burn and am ice}\]

The songs heard here are the first versions, composed between 1838 and 1842, towards the end of his relationship with Marie. Much later in life Liszt rewrote many of his songs, in many cases making improvements to the word setting and prioritising the text, taming the flamboyance of his earlier work. In the case of the Petrarch sonnets, which were radically altered, the second versions lack a good deal of the passion and intensity that burst out of the young man's composition.

That Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn were great admirers of Shakespeare is evident in the excellent album Such Sweet Thunder. All twelve movements are based on Shakespeare plays and are at times inventively illustrative – three trombones for Macbeth's witches in The Telecasters, and the four lovers from A Midsummer Night’s Dream together with Titania and Bottom are three pairs of duetting instruments in Up and down, up and down – and the instrumental sonnets are all written, as Shakespeare’s, with iambic pentameter melodies set in three quatrains and a couplet. It is one of these, Sonnet for Caesar, that John Dankworth set to the words of Shakespeare’s sonnet number 147: My love is as a fever when he was putting together an album with his wife, Cleo Laine: Shakespeare and all that jazz. Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day is Dankworth’s own composition for that same album.

Petrarch established the sonnet as the perfect form in which to explore the many faces of love, both erotic and godly, and to this day the poetic world follows his lead. The restrictions imposed by the sonnet form – be it Italian or English, Petrarchan or Shakespearean – produce an ideal framework on which to display, expose, examine and wonder at the violent extremes of the human condition. Small wonder, then, that these sonnets draw out such remarkable music from the composers who are inspired to set them.
1 i Sonetto XVI
Sì come nella penna e nell’inchiostro
È l’alto e ’l basso e ’l mediocre stile,
E ne’ marmi l’immagin ricca e vile,
Secondo che ’l sa trar l’ingegno nostro;
Così, signor mie car, nel petto vostro,
Quante l’orgoglio, è forse
ogni atto umile:
Ma io so quel c’a me proprio è e simile
Ne trago, come fuor nel viso mostro.
Chi semina sospiri, lacrime e doglie,
(L’umor dal ciel terreste, schietto
e solo,
A vari semi vario si converte),
Però pianto e dolor ne mette e coglie;
Chi mira alta beltà con sì gran duolo,
Dubbie speranze, e pene acerbe e certe.

Sonnet 16
As pen and ink alike serve him who sings
In high or low or intermediate style;
As the same stone hath shapes both rich and vile
To match the fancies that each master brings;
So, my loved lord, within thy bosom springs
Pride mixed with meekness and kind thoughts
that smile:
Whence I draw nought, my sad self to beguile,
But what my face shows – dark imaginings.
He who for seed sows sorrow, tears, and sighs,
(The dews that fall from heaven, though pure
and clear,
From different germs take divers qualities)
Must needs reap grief and garner weeping eyes;
And he who looks on beauty with sad cheer,
Gains doubtful hope and certain miseries.

2 ii Sonetto XXXI
A che più debb’io mai l’intensa voglia
Sfogar con piani o con parole meste,
Se di tal sorte ’l ciel, che l’alma veste,
Tard’ o per tempo, alcun mai non ne spoglia?
A che ’l cor lass’ a più morir m’invoglia,
S’altrì pur dee morir? Dunque per queste
Luci l’ore del fin fiant men moleste;
Ch’ogn’ altro ben val men ch’ogni mia doglia.
Però se ’l colpo, ch’io ne rub’ e ’nvolo,
Schiarar non poss’; almen, s’è destinato,
Ch entrerà ’nfra la dolcezza e ’l duolo?
Se vint’ e pres’ i’ debb’esser beato,
Maraviglia non è se nud’ e solo,
Resto prigion d’un Cavalier armato.

Sonnet 31
Why should I seek to ease intense desire
With still more tears and windy words of grief,
When heaven, or late or soon, sends no relief
To souls whom love hath robed around with fire?
Why need my aching heart to death aspire,
When all must die? Nay, death beyond belief
Unto these eyes would be both sweet and brief,
Since in my sum of woes all joys expire!
Therefore because I cannot shun the blow
I rather seek, say who must rule my breast,
Gliding between her gladness and her woe?
If only chains and bands can make me blest,
No marvel if alone and bare I go
An armèd Knight’s captive and slave confessed.
3  iii  Sonetto XXX
Veggio co' bei vostr' occhi un dolce lume
Che co' miei ciechi già veder non posso;
Porto co' vostri piedi un pondo addosso,
Che de' mie zoppi non è già costume.
Volo con le vostr' ale senza piume;
Col vostro ingegno al ciel sempre son mosso;
Dal vostro arbitrio son pallido e rosso,
Freddo al sol, caldo alle più fredde brume.
Nel voler vostro è sol la voglia mia,
I miei pensier nel vostro cor si fanno,
Nel vostro fiato son le mie parole.
Come luna da sé sol par ch'io sia,
Ché gli occhi nostri in ciel veder non sanno
Se non quel tanto che n'accende il sole.

4  iv  Sonetto LV
Tu sa, ch'io so, signor mie, che tu sai
Ch'i veni per goderti più da presso;
E sai ch'ì so, che tu sa' ch'ì son desso:
A che più indugio a salutarci omai?
Se vera è la speranza che mi dai,
Se vero è 'l buon desio che m'è concesso,
Rompasi il mur fra l'uno e l'altro
messo;
Chè doppia forza hann' i celati guai.
S'i' amo sol di te, signor mie caro,
Quel che di te più ami, non ti sdegni;
Che l'un dell'altro spirto s'innamorà,
Quel che nel tuo bel volto bramo e 'mparo,
E mal compres' è degli umani ingegni,
Chi 'l vuol veder, convien che prima mora.

Sonnet 30
With your fair eyes a charming light I see,
For which my own blind eyes would peer in vain;
Stayed by your feet the burden I sustain
Which my lame feet find all too strong for me;
Wingless upon your pinions forth I fly;
Heavenward your spirit stirreth me to strain;
E'en as you will, I blush and blanch again,
Freeze in the sun, burn 'neath a frosty sky.
Your will includes and is the lord of mine;
Life to my thoughts within your heart is given;
My words begin to breathe upon your heart:
Like to the moon am I, that cannot shine
Alone; for lo! our eyes see nought in heaven
Save what the living sun illumineth.

Sonnet 55
Thou knowest, love, I know that thou dost know
That I am here more near to thee to be,
And knowest that I know thou knowest me:
What means it then that we are sundered so?
If they are true, these hopes that from thee flow,
If it is real, this sweet expectancy,
Break down the wall that stands 'twixt me and
thee;
For pain in prison pent hath double woe.
Because in thee I love, O my loved lord,
What thou best lovrest, be not therefore stern:
Souls burn for souls, spirits to spirits cry!
I seek the splendour in thy fair face stored;
Yet living man that beauty scarce can learn,
And he who fain would find it, first must die.
Sonetto XXXVIII
Rendete agli occhi miei, o fonte o fiume,
L’onde della non vostra e salda vena.
Che più v’innalza, e cresce, e con più lena
Che non è ’l vostro natural costume.
E tu, folt’air, che ’l celeste lume
Tempri a’ tristi occhi, de’ sospir miei piena,
Rendigli al cor mio lasso e rasserena
Tua scura faccia al mio visivo acume.
Renda la terra i passi alle mie piante,
Ch’ancor l’erba germogli che gli è tolta;
E ’l suono Ecco, già sorda a’ miei lamenti;
Gli sguardi agli occhi mie, tue luci sante,
Ch’io possa altra bellezza un’altra volta
Amar, po’ che di me non ti contenti.

Sonnet 38
Give back unto mine eyes ye fount and rill,
Those streams, not yours, that are so full and strong,
That swell your springs, and roll your waves along
With force unwonted in your native hill!
And thou, dense air, weighed with my sighs so chill,
That hidest heaven’s own light thick mists among,
Give back those sighs to my sad heart, nor wrong
My visual ray with thy dark face of ill!
Let earth give back the footprints that I wore,
That the bare grass I spoiled may sprout again;
And Echo, now grown deaf, my cries return!
Loved eyes, unto mine eyes those looks restore,
And let me woo another not in vain,
Since how to please thee I shall never learn!

Sonetto XXXII
S’un casto amor, s’una pietà superna,
S’una fortuna infra dua amanti equale,
S’un’aspra sorte all’un dell’altro cale,
S’un spirto, s’un voler duo cor governa;
S’un’anima in duo corpi è fatta etterna,
Ambo levando al cielo e con pari ale;
S’amor d’un colpo e d’un dorato strale
Le viscer di duo petti arda e discerna;
S’amar l’un l’altro, e nessun se medesmo,
D’un gusto e d’un dilettto, a tal mercede,
C’a un fin voglia l’uno e l’altro porre;
Se mille e mille non sarien centesmo
A tal nodo d’amore, a tanta fede;
E sol l’isdegno il può rompere e sciorre.

Sonnet 32
If love be chaste, if virtue conquer ill,
If fortune bind both lovers in one bond,
If either at the other’s grief despond,
If both be governed by one life, one will;
If in two bodies one soul triumph still,
Raising the twain from earth to heaven beyond,
If Love with one blow and one golden wand
Have power both smitten breasts to pierce and thrill;
If each the other love, himself forgoing,
With such delight, such savour, and so well,
That both to one sole end their wills combine;
If thousands of these thoughts, all thought outgoing,
Fail the least part of their firm love to tell:
Say, can mere angry spite this knot untwine?
Sonetto XXIV
Spirto ben nato, in cui si specchia e vede
Nelle tuo belle membra oneste e care
Quante natura e 'l ciel tra no' puo' fare,
Quand'a null'altra suo bell'opra cede;
Spirto leggiadro, in cui si spera e crede
Dentro, come di fuor nel viso appare,
Amor, pietà, mercè, cose sì rare
Che mà furn'in beltà con tanta fede;
L'amor mi prende, e la beltà mi lega;
La pietà, la mercè con dolci sguardi
Ferma speranz'al cor par che ne doni.
Qual uso o qual governo al mondo niega,
Qual crudeltà per tempo, o qual più tardi,
C'a si bel viso morte non perdoni?

Sonnet 24
Choice soul, in whom, as in a glass, we see,
Mirrored in thy pure form and delicate,
What beauties heaven and nature can create,
The paragon of all their works to be!
Fair soul, in whom love, pity, piety,
Have found a home, as from thy outward state
We clearly read, and are so rare and great
That they adorn none other like to thee!
Love takes me captive; beauty binds my soul;
Pity and mercy with their gentle eyes
Wake in my heart a hope that cannot cheat.
What law, what destiny, what fell control,
What cruelty, or late or soon, denies
That death should spare perfection so complete?
FRANZ LISZT
Tre Sonetti di Petrarca
Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374)

8

i

Pace non trovo
Pace non trovo, e non ho da far guerra,
E temo, e spero, ed ardo, e son un ghiaccio:
E volo sopra 'l cielo, e giaccio in terra;
E nulla stringo, e tutto 'l mondo abbraccio.
Tal m'ha in prigion, che non m'apre, né serra,
Né per suo mi ritien, né scioglie il laccio,
E non m'ancide Amor, e non
mi sferra;
Né mi vuol vivo, né mi trahe d'impaccio.
Veggio senz'occhi; e non ho lingua e grido;
E bramo di perir, e cheggio aita;
Ed ho in odio me stesso, ed amo altrui:
Pascomi di dolor; piangendo rido;
Egualmente mi spiace morte e vita.
In questo stato son, Donna, per Voi.

9

ii

Benedetto sia 'l giorno
Benedetto sia 'l giorno, e 'l mese, e l’anno,
E la stagione, e 'l tempo, e l’ora, e '
 l’ punto
E 'l bel paese e 'l loco, ov’io
fui giunto
Da’duo begli occhi che legato m’anno;
E benedetto il primo dolce affanno
Ch’i’ ebbi ad esser con Amor congiunto,
E l’arco e la saette ond’ i’
fui punto,
E le piaghe, ch’infino al cor mi vanno.
Benedette le voci tante, ch’io
Chiamando il nome di Laura ho sparte,
E i sospiri e le lagrime e 'l desio.
E benedette sian tutte le carte
Ov’io fama le acquisto, e il pensier mio,
Ch’è sol di lei, si ch’altra non v’ha parte.

Three Petrarch Sonnets

I find no peace
I find no peace, and yet I make no war:
And fear, and hope: and burn, and I am ice:
And fly above the sky, and fall to earth,
And clutch at nothing, and embrace the world.
One imprisons me, who neither frees nor jails me,
Nor keeps me to herself nor slips the noose:
And Love does not destroy me, and does not
loose me,
Wishes me not to live, but does not remove my bar.
I see without eyes, and have no tongue, but cry:
And long to perish, yet I beg for aid:
And hold myself in hate, and love another.
I feed on sadness, laughing weep:
Death and life displease me equally:
And I am in this state, lady, because of you.

Blessed be the day
Blessed be the day, and the month, and the year,
And the season, and the time, and the hour, and
the moment,
And the beautiful country, and the place where I
was joined
To the two beautiful eyes that have bound me:
And blessed be the first sweet suffering
That I felt in being conjoined with Love,
And the bow, and the shafts with which I was
pierced,
And the wounds that run to the depths of my heart.
Blessed be all those verses I scattered
Calling out the name of my lady,
And the sighs, and the tears, and the passion:
And blessed be all the sheets
Where I acquire fame, and my thoughts,
That are only of her, that no one else has part of.
I saw angelic virtue on earth
I saw angelic virtue on earth
And heavenly beauty on terrestrial soil,
So I am sad and joyful at the memory,
And what I see seems dream, shadows, smoke:
And I saw two lovely eyes that wept,
That made the sun a thousand times jealous:
And I heard words emerge among sighs
That made the mountains move, and halted rivers.
Love, Judgement, Pity, Worth and Grief,
Made a sweeter chorus of weeping
Than any other heard beneath the moon:
And heaven so intent upon the harmony
No leaf was seen to move on the boughs,
So filled with sweetness were the wind and air.
JOHN DANKWORTH

11  Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?
    William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

    Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?
    Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
    Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
    And summer’s lease hath all too short a date:
    Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
    And often is his gold complexion dimm’d;
    And every fair from fair sometime declines,
    By chance or nature’s changing course
    untrimm’d;
    But thy eternal summer shall not fade
    Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow’st;
    Nor shall Death brag thou wander’st in his
    shade,
    When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
    So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
    So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

DUKE ELLINGTON

12  My love is as a fever
    William Shakespeare

    My love is as a fever, longing still
    For that which longer nurseth the disease,
    Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
    The uncertain sickly appetite to please.
    My reason, the physician to my love,
    Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,
    Hath left me, and I desperate now approve
    Desire is death, which physic did except.
    Past cure I am, now Reason is past care,
    And frantic-mad with evermore unrest;
    My thoughts and my discourse as madmen’s
    are,
    At random from the truth vainly express’d;
    For I have sworn thee fair and thought thee
    bright,
    Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.
BENJAMIN BRITTEN
The Holy Sonnets of John Donne, Op.35
*John Donne (1572-1631)*

13 i  **Oh my blacke Soule!**
Oh my blacke Soule! now thou art summoned
By sickness, death’s herald, and champion;
Thou art like a pilgrim, which abroad hath done
Treason, and durst not turne to whence hee is fled,
Or like a thiefe, which till death’s doome be read,
Wisheth himselfe deliver’d from prison;
But dam’d and hal’d to execution,
Wisheth that still he might be imprisoned.
Yet grace, if thou repent, thou canst not lacke;
But who shall give thee that grace to beginne?
Oh make thyselfe with holy mourning blacke,
And red with blushing, as thou are with sinne;
Or wash thee in Christ’s blood, which hath this might
That being red, it dyes red soules to white.

14 ii  **Batter my heart**
Batter my heart, three person’d God; for you
As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend;
That I may rise, and stand, o’erthrow me, and bend
Your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new.
I, like an usurpt towne, to another due,
Labour to admit you, but Oh, to no end,
Reason your viceroy in mee, mee should defend
But is captiv’d, and proves weake or untrue.
Yet dearely I love you, and would be loved faine,
But am betroth’d unto your enemie:
Divorce mee, untie, or breake that knot againe,
Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I Except you enthrall mee, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee.

15 iii  **O might those sighes and teares**
O might those sighes and teares return againe
Into my breast and eyes, which I have spent,
That I might in this holy discontent
Mourne with some fruit, as I have mourn’d in vaine;
In mine Idolatry what show’rs of rain
Mine eyes did waste? What griefs my heart did rent?
That sufferance was my sinne; now I repent
’Cause I did suffer, I must suffer paine.
Th’hydroptique drunkard, and night scouting thief,
The itchy lecher and self-tickling proud
Have the remembrance of past joyes, for relief
Of coming ills. To poore me is allow’d
No ease; for long, yet vehement griefe hath been
Th’effect and cause, the punishment and sinne.

16 iv  **Oh, to vex me**
Oh, to vex me, contraries meet in one:
Inconstancy unnaturally hath begot
A constant habit; that when I would not
I change in vowes, and in devotione.
As humorous is my contrition
As my profane Love and as soone forgott:
As ridlingly distemper’d, cold and hott,
As praying, as mute; as infinite, as none.
I durst not view Heav’n yesterday; and today
In prayers, and flatt’ring speeches I court God:
Tomorrow I quake with true feare of his rod.
So my devout fitts come and go away,
Like a fantastique Ague: save that here
Those are my best dayes, when I shake with feare.
17  v  What if this present
What if this present were the world’s last
night?
Marke in my heart, O Soule, where thou dost
dwell,
The picture of Christ crucified, and tell
Whether that countenance can thee affright
Teares in his eyes quench the amazing light
Blood fills his frownes, which from his pierc’d
head fell.
And can that tongue adjudge thee into hell,
Which pray’d forgivenesse for his foes fierce
spight?
No, no; but as in my Idolatrie
I said to all my profane mistresses,
Beauty, of pity, foulenesse onely is
A sign of rigour: so I say to thee,
To wicked spirits are horrid shapes assign’d,
This beauteous forme assures a piteous
minde.

18  vi  Since she whom I lov’d
Since she whom I lov’d hath pay’d her last debt
To Nature, and to hers, and my good is dead,
And her Soule early into Heaven ravished,
Wholly on heavenly things my mind is sett.
Here the admiring her my mind did whett
To seeke thee God; so streams do shew their
head;
But though I have found thee and thou my
thirst hast fed,
A holy thirsty dropsy melts mee yett,
But why should I begg more love, when as thou
Dost wooe my soul for hers: off’ring all thine:
And dost not only feare least I allow
My love to Saints and Angels, things divine,
But in thy tender jealousy dost doubt
Least the world, Fleshe, yea, Devill putt thee
out.

19  vii  At the round earth’s imagin’d corners
At the round earth’s imagin’d corners, blow
Your trumpets, angels, and arise
From death, you numberless infinities
Of souls, and to your scatter’d bodies goe,
All whom the flood did, and fire shall o’erthrow
All whom warre, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,
Despaire, law, chance hath slain; and you
whose eyes
Shall behold God and never taste death’s woe,
But let them sleepe, Lord, and me mourne
aspace,
For, if above all these my sinnes abound,
’Tis late to ask abundance of Thy grace,
When we are there. Here on this lowly ground,
Teach me how to repent, for that’s as good
As if Thou hadst seal’d my pardon with Thy
blood.

20  viii  Thou hast made me
Thou hast made me, and shall thy work decay?
Repaire me now, for now mine end doth haste,
I runne to death, and death meets me as fast,
And all my pleasures are like yesterday;
I dare not move my dim eyes anyway,
Despaire behind, and death before doth cast
Such terror, and my feeble flesh doth waste
By sinne in it, which it t’wards Hell doth weigh;
Onely thou art above, and when t’wards thee
By thy leave I can looke, I rise againe;
But our old subtle foe so tempteth me,
That not one houre myselfe I can sustaine;
Thy Grace may wing me to prevent his art,
And thou like Adamant draw mine iron heart.
Oh! when I sleep

Oh! when I sleep, come to my bed,
As Laura appeared to Petrarch,
So that, in passing, your breath touches me...
Suddenly my lips
Will part!

On my sad brow where perhaps ends
A dark dream that lasted too long,
May your gaze rise like a star...
And suddenly my dream
Will shine!

Then on my lips where flutters a flame
Illuminated with love that God himself refined,
Place a kiss, and change from angel to woman...
Suddenly my soul
Will awaken!

Oh! quand je dors

Oh! quand je dors, viens auprès de ma couche,
Comme à Pétrarque apparaissait Laura,
Et qu’en passant ton haleine me touche...
Soudain ma bouche
S’entr’ouvrira!

Sur mon front morne où peut-être s’achève
Un songe noir qui trop longtemps dura,
Que ton regard comme un astre se lève...
Et soudain mon rêve
Rayonnera!

Puis sur ma lèvre où voltige une flamme
Éclair d’amour que Dieu même épura,
Pose un baiser, et d’ange deviens femme...
Soudain mon âme
S’éveillera!

ix  Death be not proud

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadfull, for thou art not soe,
For those whom thou think’st thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill mee.
From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do goe,
Rest of their bones, and souls deliverie.
Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings and desperate men,
And dost with poysion, warre, and sickness dwell,
And poppie, or charmes can make us sleepe as well
And better than thy stroake; why swell’st thou then?
One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.
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