

# Leontyne Price, soprano & Samuel Barber, piano

in concert at the Coolidge Auditorium, Library of Congress

October 30, 1953 (53:58)

## Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

### Quatre Poèmes de Paul Eluard (7:53)

- 1 I Tu vois le feu du soir (You See the Evening Fire)  
Miroirs brûlants I, S. 98 [1938] (3:46)
- 2 II Main dominée par le cœur (Hand Ruled by the Heart)  
S. 135 [1946] (1:06)
- 3 III Ce doux petit visage (That Gentle Little Face) S. 99 [1939] (1:42)
- 4 IV Je nommerai ton front (I Will Name Your Effrontery),  
Miroirs brûlants II, S. 98 [1939] (1:19)

## Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

- 5 Sleep now, Op. 10, No. 2 [1936] (2:20)
- 6 The Daisies, Op. 2, No. 1 [1927] (:49)
- 7 Nocturne, Op. 13, No. 4 [1940] (3:11)
- 8 Nuvoletta, Op. 25 [1947] (4:04)

## Samuel Barber

### Hermit Songs, Op. 29 [1953] (16:34)

- 9 I At Saint Patrick's Purgatory (13<sup>th</sup> century—Sean O'Faolain) (1:30)
- 10 II Church Bell at Night (12<sup>th</sup> century—Howard Mumford Jones) (:51)

- 11 III Saint Ita's Vision (8<sup>th</sup> century—Chester Kallman) (2:59)
- 12 IV The Heavenly Banquet (10<sup>th</sup> century—Sean O'Faolain) (1:18)
- 13 V The Crucifixion (12<sup>th</sup> century—Howard Mumford Jones) (1:58)
- 14 VI Sea-Snatch (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century) (:43)
- 15 VII Promiscuity (9<sup>th</sup> century) (:48)
- 16 VII The Monk and His Cat (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century—W. H. Auden) (2:11)
- 17 IX The Praises of God (11<sup>th</sup> century—W. H. Auden) (:56)
- 18 X The Desire for Hermitage (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century—Sean O'Faolain) (3:20)

*premiere performance*

*commissioned by the Coolidge Foundation in the Library of Congress*

## Henri Sauguet (1901-1989)

### La Voyante (The Fortune-Teller) [1932] (14:26)

- 19 I Cartomancie (Card-Reading) (4:03)
- 20 II Astrologie (Astrology) (2:48)
- 21 III Présages tirés des étoiles (Omens indicated by the stars) (1:46)
- 22 IV Pour le temps à venir (For predicting the weather) (1:32)
- 23 V Chiromancie (Palmistry) (4:17)

## Francis Poulenc

- 24 C'est ainsi que tu es (The Way You Are) [1943] (2:21)

## Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

- 25 Au bord de l'eau (At the Water's Edge), Op. 8, No. 1 [1875] (2:00)

## Samuel Barber, baritone

accompanying himself at the piano

Broadcast from the Curtis Institute of Music

December 26, 1938 (25:45)

### Six Folk Songs (12:40)

- 26 O waly, waly (England) (2:51)
- 27 The Deaf Woman's Courtship (Kentucky) (1:28)
- 28 Brother Greene (Kentucky) (3:47)
- 29 Zu dir (Tyrol) (2:12)
- 30 Batti, batti (Tuscany) (1:13)
- 31 Chi ti ci fa venir (Tuscany) (1:09)

### Six Lieder (13:05)

- 32 In der Fremde (2:22) Robert Schumann  
(1810-1856)
- 33 Ist es wahr? (1:10) Felix Mendelssohn  
(1809-1847)
- 34 Nonnelied (2:55) Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach  
(1714-1788)
- 35 Der Gang zum Liebchen (1:24) Johannes Brahms
- 36 Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht (3:21) (1833-1897)
- 37 Der Jüngling an der Quelle (1:53) Franz Schubert  
(1797-1828)

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October 2005 will mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the distinguished concert series founded at the Library of Congress by a visionary benefactor, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. In 1925, already recognized internationally as an eminent music patron, Mrs. Coolidge allied herself with the nation's oldest federal cultural institution to create an endowment that would enable the Library to commission many luminaries of the European tradition, among them Ravel, Stravinsky, Bartók, Schoenberg, and Hindemith—and a remarkable roster of homegrown ones, more than one hundred American composers to date. The intimate, acoustically superb Coolidge Auditorium saw the premiere of Aaron Copland's iconic ballet *Appalachian Spring*, probably the best-known Coolidge commission, in 1944.

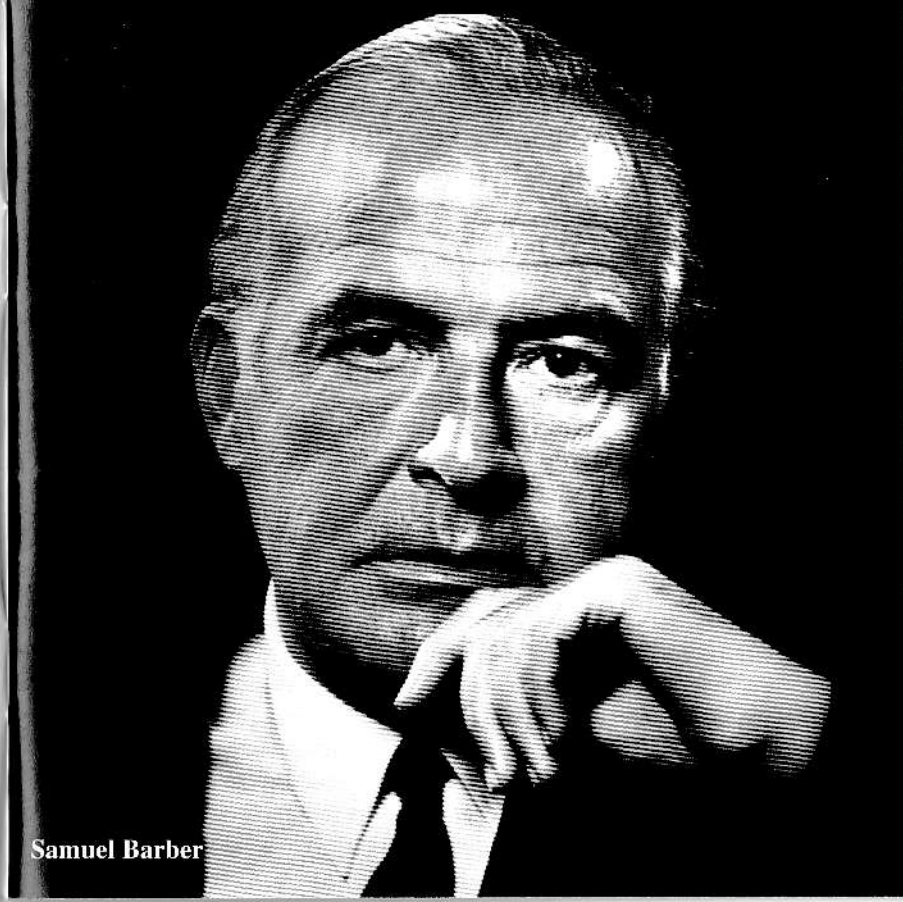
Nine years later, another landmark Coolidge commission was premiered at a birthday concert in Mrs. Coolidge's honor: Samuel Barber's *Hermit Songs*. This disc, whose centerpiece is the *Hermit Songs*, includes the first complete release of the memorable recital by Leontyne Price and Samuel Barber, presented at the Library on Founder's Day, October 30, 1953. Its companion is another notable musical artefact, a live broadcast recording of Barber performing at the Curtis Institute in 1938. Released here for the first time, this is a treasure known only to a few aficionados, seldom heard since the original broadcast. These historic recordings capture both now-legendary figures as young singers—Barber at 28, Price at 26. Barber's beautiful, self-accompanied performances are revelatory, imbued with the profound lyric sense that is a defining element in his compositions. What one hears in his collaboration with the ingenue Price is the tremendous ease of a natural partnership between major artists, with singing a shared mastery. Together they communicate clearly in this luminous concert what Price has described as “the joy of my life...the joy of singing itself.”

Price was received by the jubilant audience as a diva; the term “goddess”

would be applied to her within the year, at another appearance with Barber, her New York recital debut. Her own description of her voice was "a juicy lyric"; her fresh, silvery tone, effortless vocal production, and tremendous sense of assurance were noted by reviewers. The *Hermit Songs*, now a milestone in American song literature, [was] received as a masterwork. Alice Eversman wrote for the Washington Star, "With these songs Barber has...demonstrated his right to first rank as an American Composer of art songs, as he is of instrumental music."

A researcher with a little time can trace the story of Barber's emergence as a major composer in the rich documentary resources of the Library of Congress, the largest repository of Barber holograph manuscripts. Works from his childhood, with charming cover drawings, are archived here alongside boxes of meticulous notes, sketches, and scores for the mature works. A look through the correspondence held by the Library affords an interesting and sometimes amusing perspective on the business of music—introductions, publishers, performances, commissions—and gives an idea of the role played by the Library of Congress, and the chiefs of its Music Division in fostering the creativity of generations of composers.

A letter from the 23-year-old Barber introduces himself to Mrs. Coolidge: "Perhaps the fact that I am an American composer is sufficient introduction in itself ...for you who have done so much for our music [...]...merely to write to one who understands the importance of a composer, and who has encouraged so many, is a privilege." It would be twenty-four years before his approach led to a commission, but in 1934 Mrs. Coolidge's friend and advisor Carl Engel—chief of the Library's Music Division and president of G. Schirmer—agreed to publish his *Three Songs*, the *Cello Sonata* and *Dover Beach*. Engel also arranged an hour-long, nationwide broadcast of Barber's works in 1935. His successor, Oliver Strunk, put forward Barber's Op. 11 *String Quartet* to the program committee of the Library's Friends of Music,



Samuel Barber

insuring its first American performance by the Gordon String Quartet in April 1937; by 1943, when the Library's resident quartet, the Budapest, performed a revised version, it was already becoming his best known work, somewhat to his dismay.

In 1947 Barber was offered a commission for a string quartet for the Coolidge Foundation by Harold Spivacke, Music Division chief from 1937 to 1972, and, like his predecessors, *de facto* impresario of the Library's concert series. The outcome—six years later—would be the *Hermit Songs*, whose evolution is documented in the exchanges of an increasingly cordial relationship, with the elegant black script of Barber's early letters supplanted by neatly typed missives on gray notepaper. The letters are filled with flashes of humor, even moments of silliness. A June 1953 letter confirms, "Yes, the *Hermit Songs* are for the Coolidge commission and doggone you old bureaucrats I was expecting to use that dough in Paris, whither I fly tomorrow." A month later, he wrote, "I am a little embarrassed about the non-official tone of my recent letter...although the outburst from the depths of my pocketbook was sincere...I have never really had a definite letter about the Coolidge commission for this was discussed by telephone...Shouldn't one engage someone for the Coolidge birthday concert," he wonders. "As you know singers' schedules are made long in advance whereas composers, like the poor, are always with you."

Barber was surprised to receive Spivacke's August 21<sup>st</sup> letter indicating that the terms of the original 1947 quartet commission still held: "It had never occurred to me, the nature of the commission and even the fee having changed, that certain conditions outlined in a letter of 1947 would still be relevant. Substituting a song-cycle for a string quartet is a psychical shock for any composer, as indeed the increased fee is. I thought that string quartet was a dead duck and considered your letter (and mine?) as anachronistic as the original honorarium. To assume that this old letter is still valid and pertaining to the present song-cycle would be as difficult as

kissing an ex-wife. Now I certainly could have dedicated a quartet to Mrs. Coolidge, but if you can possibly continue to suggest that I dedicate a song such as no. VII, entitled 'Promiscuity,' to a lady of Mrs. Coolidge's distinction, eminence and years, you are less of a gentleman than I thought! Seriously though, do you think I could dedicate the first song—which opens the cycle and is the most substantial—to her? I do hope you get Price: please let me know."

Barber's excitement about Price as a partner is tangible: "Leontyne Price sang the *Hermit Songs* for me very well indeed [underlined emphatically in black ink]; she would be my choice. She is eager to do them, the only complication is that she is still under some sort of option for *Porgy and Bess*, as long as it runs, and there is some difficulty about her outside engagements." "I have been having quite a circus with this matter of Leontyne Price," Spivacke responded on September 11—six weeks before the premiere—but eventually worked out a one-day dispensation for Price to appear at the Library. Barber wrote back, "Leontyne Price seems so confident that all will work out for the concert and I am enjoying so much working with her that I am simply assuming October 30<sup>th</sup> will materialize. With the program prepared, even though your concert does not come through, we can always appear for the Salvation Army!" Finally on September 23, the score appears: "I am sending you the MS of *Hermit Songs* for the Library's collection with my compliments; there is no ink score, my copyist works from this. I may have to ask you to lend it to me when it is duly registered, inoculated, Schick-tested et al and I promise to return it."

Spivacke urged Barber to consider another commission from the Library, suggesting a work for voice and chamber ensemble in 1963. Barber declined with good humor: "...I do treasure my sabbatical! Best greetings to you all down there, and be assured that I am still trying to appreciate the late masterpieces of Elliott C. Beethoven. Yours sincerely, Ludwig Sp. Barber." ~ Notes by Anne McLean

For the Founder's Day recital at the Library of Congress, Samuel Barber chose songs by two composers who shared his love of the voice, interest in literature and gift for effective prosody--Francis Poulenc and Henri Sauguet.

From 1929, three quarters of Poulenc's compositions featured the voice--with piano, chamber ensemble, or orchestra--including *Le bal masqué*, *Chansons gaillardes*, and *Quatre poèmes de Guillaume Apollinaire*. He found an ideal partner in Pierre Bernac, beginning a career on the concert platform with him in 1934; Poulenc eventually wrote more than ninety *mélodies* specifically for their joint recitals. Two of the four Poulenc songs Barber and Price performed are from the projected song cycle *Miroirs brûlants* (Burning Mirrors), set to the surrealist poetry of Paul Eluard. "Tu vois le feu du soir" (You See the Evening Light), was dedicated to Bernac; "no one will ever sing this *mélodie* like Pierre Bernac," Poulenc commented. "I wonder at the silly game of 'desert island recordings' if this might be the song of mine I would choose to take." This song and its companion, "Je nommerai ton front" ("I Will Name Your Effrontery), date from August 1938 and January 1939. Asked to suggest an appropriate title for the pair, the poet offered *Miroirs brûlants*, taking the title from the allusions of fire, mirrors, and reflections in the two poems. The songs are in contrasting styles: a diaphanous air, *Tu vois le feu du soir* is a lesson in humility, wherein a spurned lover describes to his aloof paramour a world much the same without her devotion. By contrast, "Je nommerai ton front" is unabashedly spiteful, with the object of unrequited love demonstrating her displeasure at being rejected. "Main dominée par le coeur" was often an encore in the Bernac-Poulenc recitals. "Ce doux petit visage," also from 1939, is dedicated to the memory of Poulenc's childhood friend Raymonde Linossier (also the dedicatée of the ballet *Les Biches*), who had died in 1930. The composer was especially fond of the diminutive "Ce doux petit visage," a ravishing, valedictory homage.

Barber's own songs on this recording reveal a rich literary cohesiveness; with one exception, their texts are based on poems by Irish writers. His affinity for Irish prose and poetry began in childhood; at ten, he set an opera, *The Rose Tree*, to a libretto by the family's Irish cook Annie Noble, who was well-versed in Irish culture. A lifelong appreciation for Celtic literature evolved through the mentoring of his aunt, the contralto Louise Homer, and uncle, Sidney Homer, a noteworthy composer whose songs often employed Irish texts. Among these were the poems of James Stephens, whose *Collected Poems* appeared first in America in 1926; Barber probably gleaned the poem *The Daisies* (later published in *Three Songs*, Op. 2) from it, setting it in July 1927 at age seventeen.

*Sleep Now*, Op. 10, no. 2, is one of four songs Barber composed in 1936 while studying at the American Academy in Rome; all were set to texts from James Joyce's *Chamber Music*. *Nocturne*, Op. 13, no. 4, from February 1940, is based on a 1938 poem by Frederic Prokosch, "The Carnival." Barber revisited the works of James Joyce in October 1947 when he composed *Nivoletta*, Op. 25. Setting excerpts from *Finnegans Wake*, Barber created a witty, miniature *scena* with dramatic shifts in mood, well suited to Price's operatic gifts. Barber's biographer Barbara Heyman calls the song "a kaleidoscope of musical imagery and puns," including plainsong quotations and a Tristan chord.

The *Hermit Songs*, Op. 29, is a major work in Barber's *oeuvre* and in the history of American art song. Barber had begun composing the songs twelve months earlier, writing to Sidney Homer in November 1952:

I have come across some poems of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, translated into modern English by various people and am making a song cycle of them, to be called, perhaps "Hermit Songs." These were extraordinary men, monks or hermits or what not, and they wrote these little poems on the corners of MSS they were illuminating or just copying. I find them very direct, unspoiled and often curiously contemporaneous in feeling.

The ten *Hermit Songs* illustrate Barber's continuing enchantment with Irish literature and culture, refreshed by a sojourn to Ireland during the summer of 1952. Visiting Donegal and Dublin, he was disappointed to find no markers on the homes of Yeats or Joyce, his heroes. On his return, he put together a group of Irish texts for the cycle, discovering a number in sources at the New York Public Library. Texts for "The Crucifixion" and "Church Bell At Night" were drawn from Howard Mumford Jones's translation of the twelfth-century tome *The Speckled Book*. Barber chose the eighth- and ninth-century poetry of Kenneth Jackson's anthology *A Celtic Miscellany* for "Sea Snatch" and "Promiscuity;" he extracted poems for the remaining six songs from Sean O'Faolain's 1938 anthology *The Silver Branch: A Collection of the Best Old Irish Lyrics, Variousy Translated*, but used only three of O'Faolain's translations, "The Heavenly Banquet," "At Saint Patrick's Purgatory," and "The Desire for Hermitage." He drafted W.H. Auden to provide texts for "The Monk and His Cat" and "The Praises of God," and Chester Kallman for "Saint Ita's Vision."

Musically, the cycle reflects the diverse subjects of the texts, from the dulcet "St. Ita's Vision" to the indignity of "Sea Snatch." As is evident in the many sketches preserved at the Library of Congress, Barber took great care in setting the text, often typing a poem onto a small sheet of music paper and working out the melodic line in pencil. Barber's practice of omitting metric indications allows a tremendous freedom of expression, noted in a brief instruction for the printer: "Dear Mr. Weissleder—Please note that there are purposely no time-signatures."

The composer did not design the song cycle with a specific singer in mind. He considered the eminent sopranos Irmgard Seefried and Eleanor Steber in addition to Leontyne Price, a recent graduate of the Juilliard School, then garnering kudos on Broadway as Bess in George Gershwin's opera *Porgy and Bess*.

Price was granted permission by the producers of *Porgy and Bess* to appear with Barber at the Library of Congress—literally released for one day. The October 30, 1953 performance, broadcast live from the Library's Coolidge Auditorium, was an auspicious beginning for a professional and personal relationship that would last for more than a quarter of a century.

Barber continued to write for Price, who premiered his *Prayers of Kierkegaard*, Op. 30, the following year. The opera *Antony and Cleopatra*, Op. 40, followed in 1966, composed for the opening of the new Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center. Barber's last work for the soprano came two years later, the song cycle *Despite and Still*, Op. 41. "For a singer Barber's music is always a challenge," Price has said, "but the end product is so rewarding and so terribly vocal, you can't wait to pick up another piece of his. It also falls intellectually to the mind and beautifully on the ear, which is a rare combination."

Mentored by Darius Milhaud, tutored by Charles Koechlin, and influenced by Eric Satie, Henri Sauguet shared with Barber and Poulenc a gift for the lyric melodic line. Known for his works for ballet and the theater, he was also admired as a song composer. His *La Voyante* (The Fortune Teller) was written in 1932, based on the writings of the celebrated psychics Nostradamus (1503-1566) and Madame Marie Anne Adélaïde Lenormand (1772-1843), an adept who read cards for Napoléon, his wife Joséphine de Beauharnais, Robespierre, and Louis the XVIII. Conceived for the famous Spanish mezzo soprano Conchita Supervia, the cycle was a commission from the Viscount and Viscountess of Noailles, patrons who solicited works from Poulenc and Auric, among others. Price, interested in repertoire out of the operatic norm (she had appeared in Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts* a year before her collaboration with Barber) had performed the chamber version

of *La Voyante* in New York City, under Jean Morel. This disc marks the first commercial release of Price and Barber's Library of Congress performance.

*La Voyante* examines three aspects of the fortune-teller's art: cards, astrology, and palm-reading. A charming, seductive affair, "Cartomancie" (Card-reading) makes a stark contrast to "Astrologie," an austere, celestial survey. Although this initial section focuses on specific astrological matters, "Présages tirés des étoiles" (Omens indicated by the stars) and "Pour le temps à venir" (For predicting the weather) address actual meteorological indicators. Ms. Price presents her forecasts by cascading exuberantly through the melismas of "Présages tirés des étoiles" and slyly rendering the understated lines of "Pour le temps à venir," designated *con malinconia* (with melancholy.) Chiromancie combines the lightness of popular music, with a more philosophical summation.

Price and Barber performed four encores, repeating *The Daisies* and *The Monk and His Cat* during the body of the program (not included here), and offering Poulenc's *C'est ainsi que tu es* (The Way You Are); and Fauré's *Au bord de l'eau* (At the Water's Edge) at the end.

~ Notes by Norman A. Middleton, Jr.

## Samuel Barber: The December 26, 1938 recordings

At 14, Samuel Barber entered the newly opened Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he studied piano, composition and singing. Barber's voice teacher was the Spanish born Emilio de Gorgorza, a baritone known for his recordings and concert performances. De Gorgorza was considered the equal of leading non-operatic artists of the day, including John McCormack, Roland Hayes and Reinhold Werrenrath. In his recordings we hear a voice of strong Italianate resonance, with a clarity of diction and elegance of phrasing that led W. J. Henderson to write, "Mr. de Gorgorza is the supreme artist of them all." Though little known today, he exemplifies the vocal aesthetic of that age.

We hear many of these traits in the singing of the young Samuel Barber. Possessing the same quick vibrato (now very much out of fashion), his timbre is consistent throughout the range, evidence of Italian-based training. Barber makes extensive use of the *portamento*, a carrying of the voice from one pitch to another; less than a slide, this was a standard part of the essential legato technique and was in evidence in string playing as well as singing. Careful attention to text is perhaps the most important lesson Barber learned from de Gorgorza, and this served him well in his later song composition.

Among Barber's other vocal influences must be mentioned his aunt and uncle, Louise and Sidney Homer. Louise Homer was a star of the Metropolitan Opera and a true contralto. In 1909, she created a sensation in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. After her death the New York Times praised her famous "classic touch" and her extant recordings recall the magnificent sound as well as the dignity she brought to all her work. Her husband, Sidney, was a successful composer of songs and was Barber's mentor for much of his life. Together they represented for Barber an honorable musical conservatism and strong artistic integrity.

In 1934, Barber went to Vienna to work on his conducting independently and to continue his singing studies with John Braun. There he became interested in early German song as well as the full range of Italian Baroque music that was then being discovered and published. He wrote to his former composition teacher, Scalero:

I am hoping to support myself with my voice, for there is a field for small concerts in America...playing accompaniments on a spinet which I am taking back to America with me.

He further explained that he was studying the works of Caccini and Falconieri, among other early composers.

Barber returned to the United States and began giving concerts in Maine and in his home town of West Chester, Pennsylvania. In both February and March of 1935 he sang on the NBC Music Guild series. He stopped singing by the end of the decade, however, and thereafter devoted himself to his career as a composer.

Barber's singing style is of his time: warm tone, elegant diction, uniformity of vowel structure, faultless legato, rhythmic freedom, extensive and expressive use of portamento and strong contrasts in articulation and dynamics. Other baritones of the period such as Lawrence Tibbett, John Charles Thomas and Nelson Eddy, while possessing bigger, more impressive voices, all relied on these elements to reach their audiences.

For this recital, broadcast from the Curtis Institute on December 26, 1938, Barber chose his songs carefully in order to suit his abilities as well as please his listeners. *O waly, waly*, is a perfect opener and reveals Barber's beautiful sense of line and his respect for the simplicity and sincerity of the song. *The Deaf Woman's Courtship*, is delivered with great humor and with the requisite vocal coloring to distinguish the characters, especially the 'old woman', who holds our attention even though we see through her feigned infirmity. *Brother Greene* might have gotten an indulgent performance from a less tasteful artist, but Barber is noble in his portrayal of death coming to the young man. He allows the audience space to identify with the soldier without crowding them with 'interpretation' or emoting.

The lovely sentimentality of *Zu dir*, with its difficult arpeggiation, contrasts with the two Tuscan folk songs. Barber first heard *Batti, batti*, in a field in Tuscany and not only made it a regular part of his recitals but also sang it at parties where he frequently entertained at the piano. In this and *Chi ti ci fa venir*, we hear his real Italian style: the love of the vocal sound (and high notes!) and a saucy and confident playfulness with the language.

The deep feeling of "In der Fremde," from *Liederkreis*, Op. 39, makes one regret that Barber didn't record all twelve songs in the cycle, so suited is his voice and sensi-

bility to Schumann's setting of Eichendorff's melancholy verse. Barber gives Mendelssohn's gentle and innocent *Ist es wahr?* all the attention that a better song deserves and shows it to be a very good song indeed, a composer's insight. In *Nonnelied*, by the neglected C. P. E. Bach, Barber has found a vehicle for the full range of his interpretive abilities. In an admittedly romantic interpretation (and, one imagines, an even more romantic re-writing) of this song about regret and loss, Barber uses wide dynamic contrasts and tempo modifications to reveal the heartbreak of the young woman.

The first of the Brahms songs, "Der Gang zum Liebchen," is a setting of a Bohemian folk tune and is sung straightforwardly and simply. "Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht," is one of the greatest of Brahms's lieder and Barber performs it with immense passion and vocal skill. In spite of a few flaws in his German, at no point does one get the sense that one is listening to an amateur, for Barber is not only technically able to present this difficult song but he is completely committed to bringing it to the listener in the most effective way, the mark of an accomplished recitalist.

The Schubert song, *Der Jüngling an der Quelle*, is really an encore and its sweet sentiment draws from Barber an equally sweet tone. The dying away of the last repetitions of the name 'Louise' shows the best of his lovely voice.

Few classical singers hazard accompanying themselves, even in the simplest repertoire. Barber must surely have made his own piano arrangements of the folksongs and they are both direct and effective, often doubling the vocal line as is common in such settings. His ability here as a pianist is almost singular for he never sounds as if he is just indulging his vocal phrasing. Indeed, it is the overarching structure of each song that is most evident in these performances. In "Brother Greene" Barber's voice often lags slightly behind the piano, as if he was being accompanied by someone else. His performance of "Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht," is one of the slowest on record but it holds together as only a composer could make it do. It is this careful attention to the composition, to the balance of the phrase length and the weight of melodic contour, which impresses one.

Granted, with the exception of several of the German *Lieder*, these are not highly complex songs. They do, however, permit Barber to exhibit a deep musicality and lovely voice.



They also show a young composer discovering the magic of songwriting in the best possible way. One is reminded of Franz Schubert who premiered many of his songs himself, with apparently much less vocal ability than Samuel Barber, who, as Victor Gomez wrote, "combines a beautiful voice with a remarkable sense of ease..."

Barber went on to become arguably the most important American song composer of the twentieth century between Ives and Rorem. He is certainly the one most beloved of singers who continue to value the beauty of his vocal writing and the attention to expressive detail that perhaps only a performer could bring to his craft.

~Notes by Patrick C. Mason, May 2004

## 1 Tu vois le feu du soir

(You See the Evening Fire)

(Quatre Poèmes de Paul Eluard)

You see the evening light as it leaves its shell  
And you see the forest buried in coolness

You see the bare plan nestling in a struggling sky  
Snow as high as the sea  
And the sea high up in the blue

Perfect stones and sweet woods veiled relief  
You see cities tinged with melancholy  
Gilded with pavements full of excuses  
A square where solitude has it smiling status  
And love a house alone

You see the animals  
Sly doubles of each other, to each other sacrificed –  
Immaculate brothers whose shadows merge  
In a desert of blood

You see a fine little boy when he plays when he laughs  
He is much smaller  
Than the smallest bird on the branches' tip

You see a landscape scented with oil and water  
From which rock has been excluded where earth abandons  
Her greenery to summer who covers it with fruits.

Women stepping down out of their ancient mirror  
Bring you their youth and their faith in your own  
And one her limpidity the sail that draw you on  
Secretly lets you see the world without yourself.

## 2 Main dominée par le cœur

(Hand Ruled by the Heart)

Hand ruled by heart  
Heart ruled by lion  
Lion ruled by bird  
Bird that a cloud effaces  
Lion that the wastes make dizzy  
Heart that death inhabits  
Hand closed again in vain  
No help, it all is going.  
I see what was disappearing  
I understand that I have nothing left  
And I can just see myself  
An absence between walls  
And then exile among the shadows  
Eyes pure head still.

## 3 Ce doux petit visage

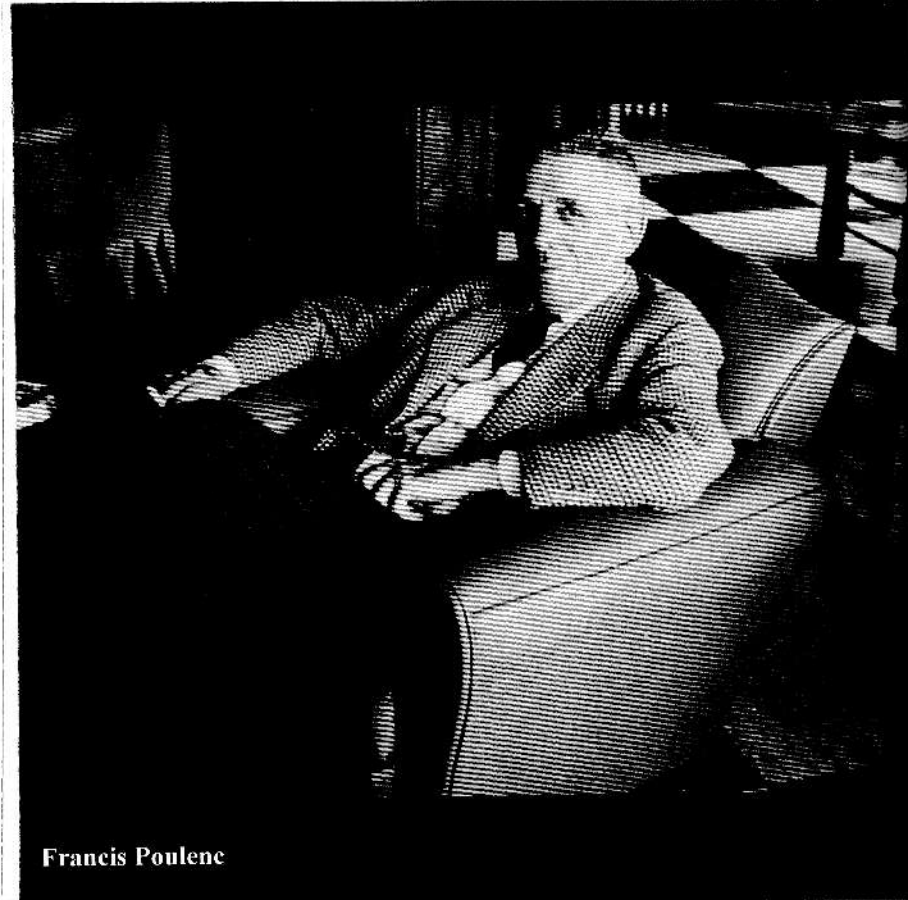
(That Gentle Little Face)

Nothing but that gentle little face,  
Nothing but that gentle little bird  
On the faraway pier where the children get fainter  
At winter's exit  
When the clouds begin to burn  
Like always.  
When the fresh air takes color...  
Nothing but that youth which flees ahead of life.

## 4 Je nommerai ton front

(I Will Name Your Effrontery)

I will give a name to your effrontery  
I will make a flaming pyre of it on top of your sobs  
I will call the pain that cuts through you  
Like a sword in a silk curtain



Francis Poulenc

I will demolish your secret garden  
Full of poppies and precious water  
I'll bind you hand and foot with my whip

There was never anything in your heart but subterranean glimmers  
There will be nothing in the pupils of your eyes from now on but blood

I will give a name to your mouth and your hands last of all  
Your mouth a spoiled echo your hands counterfeit pennies  
I will break in pieces the rusty keys they control

If I should some day become profoundly calm again  
If I should forget that I did not know how to conquer  
At least you will have known the greatness of my hate.

### 5 Sleep now (James Joyce)

Sleep now, O sleep now,  
O you unquiet heart!  
A voice crying "Sleep now"  
Is heard in my heart.

The voice of the winter  
Is heard at the door.  
O sleep, for the winter  
Is crying "Sleep no more."

My kiss will give peace now  
And quiet to your heart—  
Sleep on in peace now  
O you unquiet heart!

### 6 The Daisies (James Stephens)

In the scented bud of the morning O,  
When the windy grass went rippling far!  
I saw my dear one walking slow  
In the field where the daisies are.

We did not laugh, and we did not speak,  
As we wandered happ'ly, to and fro,  
I kissed my dear on either cheek,  
In the bud of the morning O!

A lark sang up, from the breezy land;  
A lark sang down, from a cloud afar;  
As she and I went, hand in hand,  
In the field were the daisies are.

### 7 Nocturne (Frederic Prokosch)

Close, my darling, both your eyes,  
Let your arms lie still at last.  
Calm the lake of falsehood lies  
And the wind of lust has passed.

Waves across these hopeless sands  
Fill my heart and end my day,  
Underneath your moving hands  
All my aching flows away.

Even the human pyramids  
Blaze with such a longing now;  
Close, my love, your trembling lids,  
Let the midnight heal your brow.

Northward flames Orion's horn,  
Westward th' Egyptian light.  
None to watch us, none to warn  
But the blind eternal night.

## 8 Nuvoletta (James Joyce)

Nuvoletta in her light dress, spunn of sixteen shimmers, was looking down on them, leaning over the bannistars and listening all she childishly could....She was alone. All her nubied companions were asleeping with the squir'ls....She tried all the win-some wonsome ways her four winds had taught her. She tossed her sfumastelliacinous hair like *la princesse de la Petite Bretagne* and she rounded her mignons arms like Missis Cornwallis-West and she smiled over herself like the image of the pose of the daughter of the Emperour of Irelande and she sighed after herself as were she born to bride with Tristis Tistior Tristissimus. But, sweet madonine, she might fair as well have carried her daisy's worth to Florida....

Oh, how it was duusk. From Vallee Maraia to Grasyaplaina, dormimust echo! Ah dew! Ah dew! It was so duusk that the tears of night began to fall, first by ones and twos, then by threes and fours, at last by fives and sixes of sevens, for the tired ones were wecking; as we weep now with them. O! O! O!  
*Par la pluie...*

Nuvoletta reflected for the last time in her little long life and she made up all her myriads of drifting minds in one. She cancelled all her engauzements. She climbed over the bannistars; she gave a childy cloudy cry: Nuee! Nuee! A light dress fluttered. She was gone.

## Hermit Songs

### 9 At Saint Patrick's Purgatory

Pity me on my pilgrimage to Loch Derg!  
O King of the churches and the bells  
bemoaning your sores and your wounds,  
But not a tear can I squeeze from my eyes!  
Not moisten an eye after so much sin!

Pity me, O King! What shall I do  
with a heart that seeks only its own ease?  
O only begotten Son  
by whom all men were made,  
who shunned not the death by three wounds,  
pity me on my pilgrimage to Loch Derg -  
and I with a heart not softer than a stone.

*Translated by Sean O'Faolain*

### 10 Church Bell at Night

Sweet little bell,  
Struck on a windy night  
I would liefer keep tryst with thee  
than be with a light and foolish woman.

*Translated by Howard Mumford Jones*

### 11 Saint Ita's Vision

"I will take nothing from my Lord," said she,  
"unless He gives me His Son from Heaven  
In the form of a Baby that I may nurse Him."  
So that Christ came down to her in the form  
of a Baby - and then she said:

"Infant Jesus at my breast  
Nothing in this world is true  
Save O tiny nursling, You.  
Infant Jesus at my breast  
By my heart ev'ry night  
You I nurse are not  
A churl but were begot  
On Mary the Jewess by Heaven's Light.  
Infant Jesus at my breast  
what King is there but You who could  
Give everlasting Good?  
wherefor I give my food.  
Sing to Him, maidens, Sing your best  
There is none that has such right  
to your song as Heaven's King  
who ev'ry night  
Is Infant Jesus at my breast."

*Translated by Chester Kallman*

## 12 The Heavenly Banquet

I would like to have the men of Heaven in my own house,  
with vats of good cheer laid out for them.  
I would like to have the three Marys, their fame is so great.  
I would like people from ev'ry corner of Heaven.  
I would like them to be cheerful in their drinking.  
I would like to have Jesus sitting here among them.  
I would like a great lake of beer for the King of Kings.  
I would like to be watching Heaven's family  
Drinking it through all eternity.

*Translated by Sean O'Faolain*

## 13 The Crucifixion

At the cry of the first bird  
They began to crucify Thee, O Swan!  
Never shall lament cease because of that.  
It was like the parting of day from night.  
Ah, sore was the suffering borne.  
By the body of Mary's Son  
But sorer still to Him was the grief  
which for His sake  
Came upon His Mother.

*Translated by Howard Mumford Jones*

## 14 Sea-Snatch

It has broken us,  
It has crushed us,  
It has drowned us,  
O King of the starbright Kingdom of Heaven;  
The wind has consumed us,  
swallowed us,  
as timber is devoured  
by crimson fire from Heaven.

## 15 Promiscuity

I do not know with whom Edan will sleep  
But I do know that fair Edan will not  
sleep alone.

## 16 The Monk and His Cat

Pangur, white Pangur,  
How happy we are -  
Alone together,  
Scholar and cat.  
Each has his own work to do daily,  
For you it is hunting, for me study.  
Your shining eye watches the wall;  
my feeble eye is fixed on a book.  
You rejoice when your claws  
Entrap a mouse;  
I rejoice when my mind  
Fathoms a problem.  
Pleased with his own art,  
Neither hinders the other;  
Thus we live ever  
without tedium and envy.  
Pangur, white Pangur,  
How happy we are  
Alone together,  
Scholar and cat.

*Translated by W. H. Auden*



## 17 The Praises of God

How foolish the man  
Who does not raise  
His voice and praise  
With joyful words,  
As he alone can,  
Heaven's High King  
to Whom the light birds  
with no soul but air,  
All day, ev'rywhere,  
Laudation sing.

*Translated by W. H. Auden*

## 18 The Desire for Hermitage

Ah! To be all alone in a little cell  
with nobody near me;  
beloved that pilgrimage  
before the last pilgrimage to Death.  
Singing the passing hours to cloudy Heaven,  
feeding from dry bread  
and water from the cold spring.  
That will be an end to evil  
when I am alone  
in a lovely little corner among tombs,  
far from the houses of the great.  
Ah! To be all alone in a little cell,  
to be alone, all alone,  
alone I came into the world,  
alone I shall go from it.

*Translated by Sean O'Faolain*

## 19 Cartomancie.

(Card-reading)

Ace of diamonds, ace of clubs... these indicate a letter containing money being delivered to your home by the postman. Ah! ah! What a joy!

Jack of hearts, symbol of love, who fills the beautiful eyes of women young and old with languor. For men in love, the queen of hearts represents conjugal happiness, and lasting shared affection. A pleasant trip is predicted by the ten of diamonds; the ten of clubs signifies money. Sorrow and tears are indicated by the spade cards: the ten denotes fatality, sadness in love, bereavement, misfortunes in life. The king of spades represents a married man, a widower, or a loyal friend; for a woman it suggests marriage with the man whom she loves. For one who is not married, this card can represent an honest but happy rival; for a soldier, it indicates great courage and unusual fortune in combat.

Here is the jack of diamonds, an agitated, unruly, and ambitious but grovelling character; beware of him and of his jealous wife. Unlucky is he who falls into their hands! The king and queen of spades are the most malevolent of all: they are false friends and fearsome rivals, nourishing in their hearts a mortal hatred for those who would cross them. Veiled by the infinite itself, the voice of the oracle reveals itself to those who wish to hear it.

Hearts, clubs, spades, diamonds: the cards never lie.



Henri Sauguet

## 20 Astrologie. [Astrology.]

When we are born onto this earth, all the stars in the sky foresee our future. Whoever knows how to read them has nothing to fear from the capricious assaults of Fate.

Sagittarius or Aquarius, Venus or Capricorn, Saturn, Gemini... Whether one has light or dark hair, blue or brown eyes, whether one was born in daytime or at night, the effects of the stars or of the moon act differently upon each person. But each instant of our lives on this earth, so touched by Fate, may be guided by the stars and the signs that they offer us. The stars, guides of life.

## 21 Présages tirés des étoiles. [Omens indicated by the stars.]

When the stars appear larger than usual, it is a sign of rain; if they appear more nebulous and obscured in a cloudless sky, it is a sign, in winter, of snow, and in summer, of rain. If the stars are surrounded by clouds or mists, it is a sign of an approaching cold wind. When the stars are clear and sparkling, there will be impending cold when in winter, and mild weather in summer.

## 22 Pour le temps à venir. [For predicting the weather.]

The pale moon means rain and storms; the silver moon, clear weather; the russet moon, wind. Rain on Sunday morning often signals a tedious week to follow. Fridays are always more beautiful or more ugly than the days of the preceding week.

## 23 Chiromancie. [Palmistry]

The lines of the hand. Come closer, and give me your left hand, which depicts your fate. The lines of the hand allow the seer to know your life.

I see that your hand, Sir, is under the sign of Apollo. Apollo is the god of Art; he directs your life. Successes and glory await you one day: your destiny is an enviable one. But beware of your sensual and tender heart: it reveals itself too often! Love is sometimes a dangerous god, especially for Artists. Riches do not await you; thus, never strive to attain them. Your Art lies claim to your entire being.

What? You're smiling, Madam; show me your hand. Ah! Ah! You're no longer smiling. Your doubt may be forgiven, however; I shall whisper to you my prediction: great joys await you. Do not doubt yourself.

And you, Sir, it is your turn. Oh! What an interesting hand! It is the hand of a kind-hearted man, a wise and prudent man, a good husband, a good father, and a good son, with an even-tempered character. You will know true happiness both in Heaven and on Earth!

A human being proceeds through life, prepared to endure hardship if he is good, and to inflict harm if he is evil. God placed these signs in the hands of man so that all might come to know the workings of Fate. The signs of the hand.

*Translated by Kevin LaVine.*

**24 C'est ainsi que tu es**  
(The Way You Are)

Your skin is ablaze with your soul.  
Your hair fans out and is sticking to your skin.  
Your legs sway gently on the wave of time,  
Your shadow stretches out  
and whispers at my cheek.  
That is it, that -- is how I picture you.  
The way you really are!  
And, I really want to write this down for you,  
so that when darkness approaches,  
you can seek comfort in the certainty  
that I have known you well.

**25 Au bord de l'eau**  
(At the Water's Edge)

To sit together beside the passing stream  
and watch it pass;  
if a cloud glides by in the sky,  
together to watch it glide;

if a thatched house sends up smoke on the horizon,  
to watch it smoke;  
if a flower spreads fragrance nearby,  
to take on its fragrance;

under the willow where the water murmurs,  
to listen to it murmuring;  
for the time that this dream endures,  
not to feel its duration;

but, having no deep passion  
except adoration for one another,  
without concern for the world's quarrels,  
to ignore them;

and alone together, in the face of all wearying things,  
unwearyingly,  
to feel love (unlike all things that pass away)  
not passing away!



Gabriel Fauré

**26 O waly, waly**

The river is wide I cannot get o'er,  
And neither have I wings to fly.  
O go and bring me a little boat  
To carry o'er my true love and I.

O, down the meadow the other day,  
A-gathering flowers both fine and gay,  
A-gathering flowers both red and blue,  
I little thought what love could do.

A ship is sailing on the sea,  
She's loaded deep as deep can be,  
But not so deep as in love I am  
I care not if I sink or swim.

O! love is handsome when love is fine,  
And love is charming when it is true:  
As it grows older it groweth colder,  
And fades away like morning dew.

**27 The Deaf Woman's Courtship**

Old woman, old woman, will you go a-shearing?  
Speak a little louder sir, I'm rather thick of hearing.  
Old woman, old woman, are you fond of spinning?  
Just speak a little louder sir, I only see you grinning.

Old woman, old woman, will you go a-walking?  
Speak a little louder sir, I scarcely hear you talking.  
Old woman, old woman, are you good at weaving?  
Pray speak a wee bit louder sir, my hearing is deceiving.

Old woman, old woman, will you do my knitting?  
Hearing's getting better now, come nearer where I'm sitting.  
Old woman, old woman, will you come and kiss me?  
I thank you very kindly sir, I hear you now quite clearly.

**28 Brother Greene**

O brother Greene, O come to me  
For I am shot and bleeding  
Now I must die, no more to see,  
My wife and my dear children

The southern foe has layed me low  
On this cold ground, to suffer  
Stay brother, stay, and lay me away  
And write my wife a letter

Tell her, that I am prepared to die  
And want to meet her in heaven  
Since I believe in Jesus Christ  
My sins are all forgiven

O Brother I am dying now  
Oh I do die so easy  
Surely death hath lost its sting  
Because I love my Jesus

**29 Zu Dir**

Zu dir zieht's mi hin,  
Wo i geh' und wo i bin;  
Hab' kei Raft und hab' kei Ruh,  
Bin a trauriger Bua.  
Wenn i d'Wölkerl au bitt:  
Nehmts mi auf, nehmts mi mit!  
Fliegens fort mit 'em Wind,  
Und laßen traurig mi dahint'.

Bin gar weit umme g'rennt  
In der Welt ohne End';  
Ha di g'sucht her und hin,  
Find' kei Dienderl meh, wie di;  
Jedem Baum han i's g'sagt,  
Jeden Bach han i g'fragt:  
Wie's der geht und wie's der is,  
Und ob du denkst no an mi g'wiß.

**30 Batti Batti**

O knock, knock on the door  
that my beautiful one may open it for me;  
and With her hand, open the door,  
and with her mouth, give me a kiss on the hand.

### 31 Chi ti ci fa venir?

Who sent you there, who called you there,  
beneath my windows to flirt?  
I've been without a lover for  
so many days and nights  
Who sent you there,  
who called you there?

Ah, beautiful coquette, I'm dying of thirst.  
If you give me a little kiss, I'll return twenty-three.

### 32 In der Fremde

From the direction of home,  
behind the red flashes of lightning  
There come clouds, But Father and Mother  
are long dead;  
No one there knows me anymore.

How soon, ah, how soon will that quiet time come,  
When I too shall rest, and over me  
the beautiful forest's loneliness shall rustle,  
And no one here shall know me anymore.

### 33 Ist es wahr (Is it true?)

Is it true? Is it true  
that over there in the leafy walkway,  
you always wait for me by the vine-draped wall?  
And that with the moonlight and the little stars  
you consult about me also?  
Is it true? Speak!  
What I feel, only she grasps--she who feels with me  
and stays forever faithful to me, eternally faithful.

### 34 Nonnelied

There is no more miserable life than to enter the convent.  
One must stay within its walls, and give up all sweethearts.  
O love, O love, what have I done?  
O love, what have I done?

When I go to bed, my little bed stands empty. I lie there --  
Lord have mercy -- and think of the sweetheart I'll never have.  
O love, O love, what have I done?  
O love, what have I done?

When I awaken at night, I reach out to right and left.  
Though I grasp where I may, wherever I reach, all is still.  
O love, O love, what have I done?  
What, O love, what have I done?

*Translation by Dr. Kandace Einbeck*

### 35 Der Gang zum Liebchen (The way to his sweetheart)

The moon gleams down,  
I should yet again  
Go to my sweetheart,  
How does she fare?

Alas, she is despondent  
And laments and laments,  
That I will never see her  
Again in her life!

The moon sinks,  
I hurry off quickly  
Hurrying so that nobody  
Shall steal my love away.

### 36 Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht (Death is the cool Night)

Death is the cool night.  
Life is the sultry day.  
It now grows dark; I am drowsy,  
The day has wearied me.

Above my bed rises a tree,  
The young nightingale sings there, it seems;  
She sings only of love  
I hear it even in my dreams.

### 37 Der Jüngling an der Quelle (The youth by the Spring)

Softly, trickling spring!  
Your churning, rustling poplars!  
The sounds of slumber you make  
Will only awaken my love.

Balm I sought from you  
And to forget her indifference.  
Ah, the brook and each tree  
Sigh for my loved one, for thee.

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