

(1) Since first I saw him
I think myself blind;
wherever I look
I see only him.
As in a waking dream
his image floats before me;
in blackest darkness
it stands out the more brightly.

All else around me
is without colour and light;
I take no more pleasure
in my sisters' games;
I would rather weep quietly
in my little room;
since first I saw him
I think myself blind.

(2) He, the most wonderful of men,
how tender he is, how kind!
Gentle lips, bright eyes,
a clear mind and firm courage.

As that star shines brightly and
gloriously in the deep blue,
so he shines in my heaven,
bright and glorious, exalted and remote.

Follow your course --
I will only gaze on your brightness,
look at it humbly
and be happy and sad!

Do not hear the silent prayer
I offer up for your happiness;
you must not know this lowly handmaid,
my glorious, distant star!

Only the worthiest
may be made happy by your choice,
and I will bless her
many thousand times.

Then I will rejoice and weep,
then I am happy, happy;
Even if my heart should break --
break, heart -- what does it matter!

(3) I cannot grasp it, I cannot believe it;
a dream must be deceiving me.
How, out of all the others
could he have honoured and blessed me?

I thought I heard him say:
'I am yours for ever.'
I thought -- but I must be still dreaming,
for surely it could not be.

O let me die in this dream;
cradled against his heart
let me drink in most delicious death
with tears of unending joy.

(4) Ring on my finger,
little golden ring --
devoutly I press you to my lips
and to my heart.

The peaceful, blissful dream of
childhood has ended,
and I found myself alone, lost
in a dreary, limitless waste.

Ring on my finger,
you taught me;
you opened my eyes to the limitless,
inexhaustible value of life.

I will serve him, live for him,
belong wholly to him;
I will give myself to him and find myself
transfigured by his brightness.

Ring on my finger,
little golden ring --
devoutly I press you to my lips
and to my heart.

(5) Sisters, be kind, help to adorn me,
serve me today in my happiness.
Busily twine about my brow
the blossoming myrtle.

When, up till now, I lay, satisfied
and with joy in my heart
in the arms of my love,
he still wished, impatiently
and with longing in his heart,
for this day.

Help me, sisters,
to banish a foolish fear,
that I may receive him
with an unclouded eye --
him, the source of my joy.

My beloved, Have you appeared to me?
Sun, do you shine on me?
In devotion and humility
I bow to my lord.

Sisters, strew flowers before him,
offer him rose buds.
But you, sisters, I bid a sad farewell
as I joyfully leave you.

(6) Sweet friend, you look at me in wonder,
and cannot understand why I weep.
Let the unaccustomed pearly drops
tremble, joyously bright, in my eye.

How anxious my heart is,
how full of bliss!
If I only knew how to say it in words;
come, hide your face here on my breast,
that I may whisper in your ear
what gives me joy.

Frauenliebe und Leben (*continued*)

Do you know now why I weep?
Should you not see my tears,
my beloved?
Rest against my heart,
feel how it beats,
that I may press you against me
closer and closer.

Here by my bed
there is room for a cradle,
which may silently hide
my blissful dream.
The day will come
when the dream comes true
and your image smiles up at me.

- (7) At my heart, at my breast --
you my joy, my delight!
Happiness is love, love happiness --
I have said it and say so still.
I thought myself boundlessly happy,
but now I am happier still.
Only a mother who nurses
and loves the child she feeds,
only a mother can know
what it means to love and be happy.

How sorry I am for men
who cannot feel a mother's bliss!
Sweet angel, you look at me and smile!
At my heart, at my breast --
you my joy, my delight!

- (8) Now, for the first time, you have hurt me,
but this hurt is cruel.
Hard, pitiless man, you are sleeping
the sleep of death.

Left all alone, I gaze before me;
the world is empty.
I have loved, I have lived,
and now I have no more life.

Softly I draw back into myself;
the veil falls.
There I am with you and my lost happiness --
you, my whole world!

--trans. S. S. Praver

La Fraîcheur et le feu Francis Poulenc

(sung without interruption)

Rayon des yeux: Rays of eyes and of suns, of boughs and fountains, earthly and heavenly lights, lights of man and of man's oblivion. A cloud covers earth and sky. Suddenly the light forsakes me and death alone remains whole. I am a shadow and see no more the yellow sun, the red sun, the white sun, the changing sky. I know no more where happiness may live, beside the shadow without earth or sky.

Le Matin les branches attisent: In the morning the branches agitate the hubbub of the birds. In the evening the trees are still and quivering day finds rest.

Tout disparut: Everything vanished, even the roofs, even the sky, even the shadow cast by the branches on the tender cymes of the moss, even words and looks in harmony. The stars shone around my window, reflecting my tears and my eyes, folding their wings for the night, lived in a boundless universe.

Dans les ténèbres du jardin: In the shadows of the garden appear invisible maidens more delicate than a midday shower. In my sleep they befriend me, intoxicating me in secret with their blind compliance.

Unis la fraîcheur et le feu: Unite the freshness and the fire. Your lips and your eyes, in your folly, await wisdom and create the image of man and woman.

Homme au sourire tendre: Man with tender smile, woman with gentle eyes...nothing stops you, my masters, from trying me.

La Grande rivière qui va: The great river which runs wide in the sun and narrow in the moon, by every course to adventure, will not need me to point with my finger. I know the fate of light enough to control its bursting, so that nothing shall exist without my willing it.