Please note that Bernard Haitink is suffering from a stomach virus and regrettably has had to withdraw from performances this week. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra welcomes James Conlon, who has graciously agreed to conduct these performances.

PROGRAM

ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-SIXTH SEASON
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Riccardo Muti Zell Music Director
Yo-Yo Ma Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

Thursday, March 30, 2017, at 8:00
Friday, March 31, 2017, at 8:00
Saturday, April 1, 2017, at 8:00

James Conlon Conductor
Sarah Connolly Mezzo-soprano
Stephen Gould Tenor

Schubert
Symphony No. 8 in B Minor, D. 759 (Unfinished)
Allegro moderato
Andante con moto

INTERMISSION

Mahler
Das Lied von der Erde
Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde
Der Einsame im Herbst
Von der Jugend
Von der Schönheit
Der Trunkene im Frühling
Der Abschied
SARAH CONNOLLY
STEPHEN GOULD

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This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.
Franz Schubert
Born January 31, 1797; Himmelpfortgrund, northwest of Vienna, Austria
Died November 19, 1828; Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 8 in B Minor, D. 759 (Unfinished)

We don’t know why Schubert never finished his B minor symphony. This has been one of music’s great unanswered questions for more than a hundred years, and, despite some intelligent speculation, we still come up empty-handed today. At least we know that he didn’t finish it. For many years, music lovers persisted in believing that the missing movements sat, forgotten, in some Viennese attic. On the other hand, scholars no longer suggest that Schubert intended to write a two-movement symphony, giving the composer credit for a bold stroke that, for all his daring, is not his.

The facts are scarce and mysterious, which has only heightened the intrigue over the years. There was no mention of this symphony made during the composer’s lifetime. It lay buried, like hidden treasure, in Anselm Hüttenbrenner’s cluttered study until the 1860s—more than thirty years after Schubert’s death—when it was dusted off to take its place as no. 8 among the known Schubert symphonies.

The full score, clearly written in Schubert’s own hand, is dated 30 October 1822, Vienna, and signed, with his characteristic flourish, Franz Schubert. The manuscript, headed “Symphony in B minor,” includes two movements: a wonderful, singing Allegro moderato and a heartbreaking Andante con moto—both so sublime that the Unfinished nickname is all the more frustrating. On the back of the final page of the Andante are nine measures of a scherzo, fully scored, followed by four blank pages. In the 1960s, Christa Landon discovered a missing leaf that ought to have come before the empty pages, containing measures ten through twenty and then stopping abruptly, as if Schubert had been interrupted mid-thought. (A piano sketch of the symphony shows that Schubert had planned the entire scherzo and the beginning of a trio.)

We don’t know what interrupted Schubert, but a number of theories have been proposed. This was, after all, a time of many unfinished instrumental works: from February 1818 to November 1822, he started and set aside three—possibly four—different symphonies. Late in 1822, Schubert contracted syphilis and began to suffer from depression and failing health. He also was nearly paralyzed by a growing awareness

Above: Drawing of Schubert by Josef Kupelwieser, who, along with his brother Leopold, belonged to the composer’s circle of friends. Dated July 10, 1821
of Beethoven’s extraordinary symphonic work—music that blazed new paths in an area in which Schubert felt the least assured. (Schubert often struggled with the compositional process, even though it’s true that a song once came so easily to him that he jotted it down, fully formed, on the back of a menu.)

Perhaps Schubert was trying to face down the giant using the language they both understood best. He was always too shy to contact Beethoven, even though they lived in the same city for years. (When Beethoven was so deaf that he provided books for visitors to write down what they wanted to say, his nephew Karl mentioned, in August 1823: “They greatly praise Schubert, but it is said that he hides himself.”)

The two men met only once, when Schubert went to visit Beethoven on his deathbed with Josef and Anselm Hüttenbrenner, the brothers who already had Schubert’s unfinished symphony in their possession.

When Schubert abandoned work on the B minor symphony, he gave it to Josef Hüttenbrenner, probably in 1823, after ripping out the unfinished scherzo. (The first nine measures remained simply because they were written on the back of the Andante.) At some point, Josef gave the manuscript to his brother Anselm, who shoved it in the back of a drawer. (A score by Schubert that remained in Josef’s possession—music for Goethe’s Claudine von Villa Bella—was used by his servants as kindling sometime in 1848.) On March 8, 1860, in a letter to Johann Herbeck, an influential Viennese musician, Josef casually mentioned that Anselm “possesses a treasure in Schubert’s B minor symphony, which we rank with his Great C major symphony, his instrumental swan song, and with all the symphonies of Beethoven—only it is unfinished.” Herbeck would never forget the morning some five years later when he actually held the manuscript in his hands.

The attempts to round off Schubert’s score—as if two polished, magnificent movements were somehow unsatisfactory—began with the very first performance on December 17, 1865, when the finale of Schubert’s Third Symphony was tacked on to ensure a rousing finish. Over the years, other endings have been proposed. (In 1928, the Columbia Gramophone Company even considered hosting a competition for the best completion of the Unfinished Symphony.) There have always been those who claimed that Schubert actually finished the symphony, and, as recently as 1942, it was suggested that Anselm Hüttenbrenner had lost the manuscript of the last two movements. Today, convinced by the evidence that Schubert’s Unfinished Symphony was, in fact, never finished, we are more willing to accept the brilliance of what we have rather than long for what we do not.

Imagine the joy of uncovering one of music’s true masterworks. Even Eduard Hanslick, as demanding (and sometimes as nasty) as any critic in the nineteenth century, quickly turned to butter when he reviewed the first performance in 1865:

> When, after the few introductory measures, clarinets and oboes in unison begin to sound their sweet song above the peaceful murmur of the violins, then each and every child recognizes the composer, and a half-suppressed outcry “Schubert” buzzes through the hall. He has hardly entered, but it is as if one knows him by his step, by his manner of lifting the latch.

We now know Schubert perhaps best of all by that sweet song, and there are generations of schoolchildren who may never forget those unfortunate words—“This is the symphony that Schubert wrote and never finished”—that eager music teachers have added to the lovely cello melody that follows. The pathos and beauty of this entire stretch of music is extraordinary, but even more remarkable is the way Schubert sustains the spell throughout the movement and on into the second. Schubert’s
sketches show that he originally wanted to end his first movement in B major—which would have broken the mood—but he thought better of it, leaving us instead in the dark recesses of B minor.

The slow movement—and it is only relatively slow, for Schubert specifies Andante con moto (with motion)—is in the unexpected key of E major, where he would again uncover great riches in the Adagio of the C major string quintet. In this lovely movement, a few especially eloquent details stand out: the high-flying clarinet solo that gently sails over shifting chords, and a wonderful moment of total stillness, disturbed only by the octave call of the horn, just before Schubert leads us back to the opening.

And it is here, with this perfect Andante, that we must stop. Schubert’s plans for the third-movement scherzo look promising—it begins with a strong theme, first played in octaves by the full orchestra. There is no telling what might have emerged had he polished this raw material into something as fine as the two movements we know so well.

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**Gustav Mahler**

Born July 7, 1860; Kalischt, Bohemia
Died May 18, 1911; Vienna, Austria

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**Das Lied von der Erde**

Mahler did not live to hear *Das Lied von der Erde* performed. It was the first music, in fact, that he wrote knowing that his own days were numbered. And although, by choosing not to count this score as his ninth symphony, he tried to cheat the same gods who had summoned Beethoven, Schubert, and Bruckner after nine symphonies, he could not fool his failing heart. *Das Lied von der Erde* is the work with which he faced his own mortality; it was the first symphony he did not introduce to the public, the first of his works which he could not adjust and refine after the experience of having it performed under his own baton. After Mahler’s death in 1911, *Das Lied von der Erde* still sat in a desk drawer in Vienna, along with the Ninth Symphony and the beginnings of a tenth. And despite the singular, encouraging success of his Eighth Symphony at its premiere in 1910—his only triumph as a composer during his lifetime—Mahler cannot have expected that his last works would ever be performed, or that *Das Lied von der Erde* would be understood as one of the greatest works of his century.

It is popular to read much of Mahler’s own dramatic life into his music. Yet even Mahler admitted that *Das Lied von der Erde* was his most personal creation. If his earlier works had reflected his experience on this earth, *Das Lied* is, on a much deeper level, Mahler’s way of working through recent events. Oddly, for a musician of such exceptional complexity, simple song became the vehicle with which Mahler ultimately probed most deeply into the human condition. Song had always been central to Mahler’s art; one can chart throughout his career the ways that his symphonies absorb and give new life to his songs, the ways that the songs and the song cycles become more symphonic. In *Das Lied von der Erde*, song and symphony merge into something that traditional labels cannot encompass. For Mahler, who was the first to struggle with an appropriate title, this music is finally no more and no less than what he ultimately wrote atop his score: *The Song of the Earth*.

Though Mahler’s music was seldom played and regularly scorned during his lifetime, he

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*Above: Photograph of Mahler by Aimé Dupont, New York City, 1909. Prints & Photographs Division, Library of Congress*
had made for himself a fine, enviable life, with a glamorous wife, Alma; two adored daughters; and a conducting career that placed him in prestigious jobs in important musical capitals and allowed him summers off to write the music the world did not yet want to hear. But the year 1907 dealt hard blows—blows that are said to be prophesied in the great hammer strokes of his Sixth Symphony—and left Mahler enfeebled in life and work. First, he gave up his job as director of the Vienna Court Opera. Mahler handed in his resignation on March 17, following a vitriolic press campaign prompted by increased costs, a dwindling box office, and the rise of anti-Semitism. (In fact, an aspiring eighteen-year-old artist named Adolf Hitler arrived in Vienna only weeks before Mahler’s farewell concert in November of that year.)

Near the end of June, Mahler took his family to Maiernigg for their summer holiday of play for Alma and the children, and composing for Mahler. By the third day, the elder daughter, Maria—or “Putzi”—fell ill with scarlet fever and diphtheria; she died on July 5, just four years old. Mahler was devastated. Before he could begin to recover, he learned of his own severe, potentially fatal heart condition, and he was warned to give up, at once, his great pastimes: walking, swimming, and cycling.

In a summer so unfairly full of life’s surprises, Mahler could not bear to write music.

To escape the torture of introspection, Mahler began to read Die chinesische Flöte (The Chinese flute), a newly published anthology of Chinese poems collected and translated by Hans Bethge that had been given to him by a friend. Alma would later remember that he began to set some of the poems as songs at the summer’s end; in any case, the seed was planted for the most personal work of his career. The autumn brought the usual distraction of conducting other people’s music, and also, for that one year, the relief of returning to the practicalities and mundane headaches of the music business. In October, Mahler concluded his career at the Vienna Opera House with a

**Photo of Alma Mahler with daughters Maria Anna (Putzi) and Anna (Gucki), ca. 1905–06**

**COMPOSED**
1907–08

**FIRST PERFORMANCE**
November 20, 1911; Munich, Germany

**INSTRUMENTATION**
solo contralto (or mezzo-soprano) and tenor voices, three flutes and two piccolos, three oboes and english horn, four clarinets, E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet, three bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, two harps, timpani, celesta, mandolin, glockenspiel, triangle, cymbals, tam-tam, tambourine, bass drum, strings

**APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME**
65 minutes

**FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES**
January 10, 12, and 13, 1939, Orchestra Hall. Enid Szantho and Charles Kullman as soloists, Frederick Stock conducting

July 20 and 23, 1944, Ravinia Festival. Kerstin Thorborg and John Garris as soloists, George Szell conducting

**MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES**
July 10, 2009, Ravinia Festival. Michelle DeYoung and Stuart Skelton as soloists, James Conlon conducting

March 1, 2, and 3, 2012, Orchestra Hall. Michelle DeYoung and Stuart Skelton as soloists, Jonathan Nott conducting

**CSO RECORDINGS**
1959. Maureen Forrester and Richard Lewis as soloists, Fritz Reiner conducting. RCA


1991. Waltraud Meier and Siegfried Jerusalem as soloists, Daniel Barenboim conducting. Erato
sparsely attended production of Beethoven’s *Fidelio*, and then went to Saint Petersburg and Helsinki, where he met Jean Sibelius, with whom he shared so little aside from his famous words: “The symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything.” He bid farewell to Vienna in a special performance of his own Second Symphony. On December 9, Mahler, Alma, and Anna left for New York, where Mahler was to conduct *Tristan and Isolde* at the Metropolitan Opera on New Year’s Day as the first assignment in a new contract. Arnold Schoenberg and Bruno Walter went to the station to see him off.

Mahler returned to Europe the following spring, but he could not bear to return to Maiernigg, and so Alma found them a new summer house in the Dolomites, near the town of Toblach. Alma called this the saddest summer of their life together:

We were afraid of everything. He was always stopping on a walk to feel his pulse and he often asked me to listen to his heart and see whether the beat was clear or rapid or calm. . . . His steps and pulse-beats were numbered and his life a torment. Every excursion, every attempt at a distraction was a failure.

And so Mahler turned, with increasing urgency, to his music, and to the solace he found in a book of Chinese poems. Although an interest in orientalism was then the rage—Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly* and Busoni’s incidental music for *Turandot* both date from 1904—Mahler’s identity with this poetry went far deeper than mere fashion. Here he read of those things most on his mind: mortality and transience; the exhilaration of life mocked by the bitter fact of personal death; and the endless renewal of the earth: night becoming day, spring growing freshly from winter time, and time again.

By June, he had settled on seven poems—two would be linked to form the finale—and for the first time in nearly two years, music began to flow. At first, the new score was a receptacle for Mahler’s pain and sadness—an early title was *Das Lied vom Jammer der Erde* (The song of earth’s sorrow)—but it soon grew to encompass more of life and death—to embrace the world, as he said to Sibelius. The essential work was done in July and August. After he finished the short score on September 1, he wrote to Bruno Walter:

I have been hard at work . . . I myself do not know what the whole thing could be called. I have been granted a time that was good, and I believe this is the most personal thing I have done.

Walter was among the first to see the score. “When I brought it back to him, almost unable to utter a word,” Walter later recalled, “he turned to the *Abschied* [Finale] and said: ‘What do you think? Is this to be endured at all? Will not people make away with themselves after hearing it?’ ” Walter did not know how to reply. The next year, Mahler wrote again to Walter:

Without trying to explain or describe something for which there probably are no words, I simply say that at a single fell stroke I have lost any calm and peace of mind I ever achieved. I stand *vis-a-vis de rien* [face to face with nothing], and now, at the end of my life, I have to begin to learn to walk and stand.

*Das Lied von der Erde* was the first, most difficult step. In the two working summers left to Mahler, he wrote a ninth symphony and began to sketch a tenth. All three works would be performed only after his death. It was Bruno Walter who first led *Das Lied*, scarcely six months after Mahler died, and continued to champion the score until it was recognized as perhaps the greatest of all Mahler’s works. The essence of this
music, as Mahler suggested, is “something for which there probably are no words.” The most reliable guide is provided by the poems themselves, for Mahler’s setting is uncannily attuned to mood and nuance, filled with telling detail, as music and word meet.

There are six movements, scored alternately for tenor and low female voice. The first, through its sheer power, and the last, because of its remarkable spaciousness, ground the work at either end. The first movement presents the argument; the finale pursues and resolves it. The middle movements explore different sides of the human condition.

The first movement, the Drinking Song of Earth’s Sorrow, is the only movement that actually mentions “Death” by name—three times comes the refrain: “Dark is life, and so is death”—although the word seems to hang in the air throughout the music that follows. The drinking song is weighty, heroic music—a true symphonic first movement.

The middle four movements are simpler, less complex in character. As Donald Mitchell aptly suggests in his pioneering Mahler study, each freezes a moment or experience in time and holds it perfectly preserved. The Lonely One in Autumn is both a landscape of great delicacy and a glimpse deep into human emotion. With Youth, the music relaxes; like youth itself, this movement is relatively uncomplicated and brief.

Beauty, too, delights in itself, though two noisy, brilliant orchestral marches break the spell. The Drunkard in Spring is another robust drinking song, tinged with melancholy and touched by the sounds of nature.

For his final movement—music that moves toward acceptance and resignation—Mahler needed time and space. Der Abschied, or the Farewell, is not just longer and more leisurely than the preceding movements, but from the opening stroke of the tam-tam—heard for the first time in Das Lied—it enters a sound world new even to Mahler. The oboe utters a simple, unforgettable piercing cry. The voice begins with the simplicity of speech. The music moves freely forward, as if released from the obligations of bar lines and regular meter. Time stands still. The sounds are spare and eloquent; each instrument has a role to play. The music’s progress is rhapsodic, almost improvisatory. Donald Mitchell points to the great recitatives from the Bach Passions that Mahler admired as the only comparable passages in music.

Der Abschied is filled with haunting sonorities and wondrous images, like the fantastic birdcalls and the sounds of the night as “the world is falling asleep.” There are several important, decisive moments. A great death march rises up as the central event, separating and linking the two poems. At the final moment of ecstasy—“Die liebe Erde” (The dear earth)—the music takes off, weightless and soaring. With the word “ewig” (forever)—the last word of all—the celesta enters, precisely timed to open still new vistas and carry us into eternity.

Phillip Huscher has been the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 1987.
Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde
Schon winkt der Wein im gold’nen Pokale,
Doch trinkt noch nicht, erst sing’ ich euch ein Lied!
Das Lied vom Kummer
Soll auflachend in die Seele euch klingen.
Wenn der Kummer naht, liegen wüst die Gärten der Seele,
Welkt hin und stirbt die Freude, der Gesang.
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod.

Herr dieses Hauses!
Dein Keller birgt die Fülle des goldenen Weins!
Hier, diese Laute nenn’ ich mein!
Die Laute schlagen und die Gläser leeren,
Das sind die Dinge, die zusammen passen.
Ein voller Becher Weins zur rechten Zeit
Ist mehr wert, als alle Reiche
dieser Erde!
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod.

Das Firmament blaut ewig, und die Erde
Wird lange fest steh’n und aufblüh’n im Lenz.
Du aber, Mensch, wie lang lebst denn du?
Nicht hundert Jahre darfst du dich ergötzen
An all dem morschen Tande dieser Erde!

Seht dort hinab! Im Mondschein auf den Gräbern
Hockt eine wild-gespenstische Gestalt.
Ein Aff’ist’s! Hört ihr, wie sein Heulen
Hinausgellt in den süßen Duft des Lebens!

Jetzt nehmt den Wein!
Jetzt ist es Zeit, Genossen!
Leert eure gold’nen Becher zu Grund!
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod!

The Drinking Song of Earth’s Sorrow
Now beckons the wine in the golden goblet,
But drink not yet,
first I’ll sing you a song!
The song of sorrow
Shall resound in gusts of laughter through your soul.
When sorrow draws near,
The gardens of the soul lie wasted,
Joy and song wither and die.
Dark is life, and so is death.

Master of this house!
Your cellar holds its fill of golden wine!
Here, this lute I name my own!
To strike the lute and to drain the glasses,
These are the things that go well together.
A full goblet of wine at the right time
Is worth more than all the kingdoms of this earth!
Dark is life, and so is death.

The firmament is blue eternally, and the earth
Will long stand fast and blossom in spring.
But you, O man, for how long do you live?
Not for a hundred years can you delight
In all the rotten trash of this earth!

Look down there! In the moonlight, on the graves
Squats a mad spectral figure.
It is an ape! Hear how his howling Screams its way through the sweet fragrance of life!

Now take the wine!
Now it is time, companions!
Drain your golden goblets to the dregs!
Dark is life, and so is death!
Der Einsame im Herbst
Herbstnebel wallen bläulich überm See,
Vom Reif bezogen stehen alle Gräser;
Man meint, ein Künstler habe Staub von Jade
Über die feinen Blüten ausgestreut.

Der süße Duft der Blumen ist verflogen;
Ein kalter Wind beugt ihre Stengel nieder.
Bald werden die verwelkten, gold’nen Blätter
Der Lotosblüten auf dem Wasser zieh’n.

Mein Herz ist müde. Meine kleine Lampe
Erlöscht mit Knistern, es gemahnt mich
an den Schlaf.
Ich komm’ zu dir, traute Ruhestätte!
Ja, gib mir Ruh’, ich hab’ Erquickung not!

Ich weine viel in meinen Einsamkeiten.
Der Herbst in meinem Herzen währ’t zu lange.
Sonne der Liebe, willst du nie mehr scheinen,
Um meine bittern Tränen mild aufzutrocknen?

Von der Jugend
Mitten in dem kleinen Teiche
Steht ein Pavillon aus grünem
Und aus weißem Porzellan.

Wie der Rücken eines Tigers
Wölbt die Brücke sich aus Jade
Zu dem Pavillon hinüber.

In dem Häuschen sitzen Freunde,
Schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern.
Manche schreiben Verse nieder.

Ihre seidnen Ärmel gleiten rückwärts,
Ihre seidnen Mützen
Hocken lustig tief im Nacken.

Auf des kleinen Teiches stiller
Wasserfläche zeigt sich alles
Wunderlich im Spiegelbilde.

Alles auf dem Kopfe stehend
In dem Pavillon aus grünem
Und aus weißem Porzellan;

Wie ein Halbmond steht die Brücke,
Umgekehrt der Bogen. Freunde,
Schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern.

The Lonely One in Autumn
Autumn mists drift blue over the lake,
Covered with rime stands every blade of grass;
It is as though an artist had strewn dust of jade
Over the delicate blossoms.

The sweet fragrance of the flowers has faded;
A cold wind blows down their stems.
Soon the withered golden petals
Of the lotus-flowers will be floating on the water.

My heart is weary. My little lamp
Has burnt out with a sputter; it puts me
in mind to sleep.
I come to you, beloved resting-place!
Yes, give me peace. I have need of consolation.

I weep much in my loneliness.
The autumn in my heart persists too long.
Sun of love, will you never shine again
And dry up, tenderly, my bitter tears?

Youth
In the middle of the little pool
Stands a pavilion of green
And white porcelain.

Like a tiger’s back
Arches the bridge of jade
Over to the pavilion.

In the little house friends are sitting,
Beautifully dressed, drinking, chatting;
Several are writing verses.

Their silken sleeves slip backwards,
Their silken caps
Perch gaily on the back of their necks.

On the little pool’s still
Surface everything appears
Fantastically in a mirror-image.

Everything is standing on its head
In the pavilion of green
And white porcelain;

The bridge seems like a half-moon,
Its arch upside-down. Friends,
Beautifully dressed, are drinking, chatting.
Von der Schönheit
Junge Mädchen pflücken Blumen,
Pfücken Lotosblumen an dem Uferrande.
Zwischen Büschen und Blättern sitzen sie,
Sammeln Blüten in den Schoß und rufen
Sich einander Neckereien zu.

Gold’ne Sonne webt um die Gestalten,
Spiegt sie im blanken Wasser wider.
Sonne spiegelt ihre schlanken Glieder,
Ihre süßen Augen wider,
Und der Zephir hebt mit Schmeichelkosen
Das Gewebe ihrer Ärmel auf,
Führt den Zauber
Ihrer Wohlgerüche durch die Luft.

O sieh, was tummeln sich für schöne Knaben
Dort an dem Uferrand auf mut’gen Rossen,
Weithin glänzend wie die Sonnenstrahlen;
Schon zwischen dem Geäst der grünen Weiden
Trabt das jungfrische Volk einher!

Das Roß des einen wiehert fröhlich auf
Und scheut, und saust dahin,
Über Blumen, Gräser wanken
hin die Hufe,
Sie zerstampfen jäh im Sturm
die hingesunk’nen Blüten.
Hei! Wie flattern im Taumel seine Mähnen,
Dampfen heiß die Nüstern!

Gold’ne Sonne webt um die Gestalten,
Spieglert sie im blanken Wasser wider.
Und die schönste von den Jungfrau’n sendet
Lange Blicke ihm der Sehnsucht nach.
Ihre stolze Haltung is nur Verstellung.
In dem Funkeln ihrer großen Augen,
In dem Dunkel ihres heißen Blicks,
Schwingt klagend noch die Erregung
ihres Herzens nach.

Beauty
Young maidens are plucking flowers,
Plucking lotus-flowers by the river’s edge.
Amid the bushes and leaves they sit,
Gathering flowers in their laps, and calling
To one another teasingly.

Golden sunlight weaves around their forms,
Mirrors them in the shining water.
Sunlight mirrors their slender limbs
And their sweet eyes,
And the breeze lifts with wheedling caresses
The fabric of their sleeves,
Bears the magic
Of their pleasing fragrance through the air.

O look, racing along, what handsome lads,
There on the river bank, on spirited horses,
Afar-off shining like the sun's rays;
Now between the branches of the green willows
They canter along, lads in the flush of youth!

The horse of one of them whinnies joyfully,
And shies and tears away,
Over the flowers and the grass his hooves
are scudding,
Trampling in sudden onslaught
the fallen flowers.
Hey! Look at its mane flapping frenziedly,
Its nostrils steaming hotly.

Golden sunlight weaves around their forms,
Mirrors them in the shining water.
And the loveliest of the maidens sends
Long glances of yearning after him.
Her proud bearing is only pretense.
In the flashing of her large eyes,
In the darkness of her passionate glance,
The tumult of her heart still
surges painfully toward him.
Der Trunkene im Frühling
Wenn nur ein Traum das Leben ist,
Warum denn Müh’ und Plag’?
Ich trinke, bis ich nicht mehr kann,
Den ganzen lieben Tag!

Und wenn ich nicht mehr trinken kann,
Weil Kehl’ und Seele voll,
So taum’ ich bis zu meiner Tür
Und schlafe wundervoll!

Was hör’ ich beim Erwachen? Horch!
Ein Vogel singt im Baum.
Ich frag’ ihn ob schon Frühling sei,
Mir ist als wie im Traum.

Der Vogel zwitschert: Ja!
Der Lenz ist da, sei kommen über Nacht!
Aus tiefstem Schauen lausch’ ich auf,
Der Vogel singt und lacht!

Ich fülle mir den Becher neu
Und leer’ ihn bis zum Grund
Und singe, bis der Mond erglänzt
Am schwarzen Firmament!

Und wenn ich nicht mehr singen kann,
So schlaf’ ich wieder ein.
Was geht mich denn der Frühling an?
Laßt mich betrunken sein!

Der Abschied
Die Sonne scheidet hinter dem Gebirge.
In alle Täler steigt der Abend nieder
Mit seinen Schatten, die voll Kühlung sind.
O sieh! Wie eine Silberbarke schwebt
Der Mond am blauen Himmelssee herauf.
Ich spüre eines feinen Windes Weh’n
Hinter den dunklen Fichten!

Der Bach singt voller Wohllaut
durch das Dunkel.
Die Blumen blassen im Dämmerschein.
Die Erde atmet voll von Ruh’ und Schlaf;
Alle Sehnsucht will nun träumen.

The Drunkard in Spring
If life is but a dream,
Why then toil and fret?
I drink till I can drink no longer,
The whole livelong day!

And when I can drink no longer,
Since gullet and soul are full,
Then I stagger to my door
And sleep stupendously!

What do I hear when I awake? Listen!
A bird sings in the tree.
I ask him if the spring is here;
I feel as if I were dreaming.

The bird twitters “Yes!
Spring is here—came overnight!”
In deepest wonder I listen,
The bird sings and laughs!

I fill my glass again,
And drain it to the dregs,
And sing, until the moon shines bright
In the black firmament.

And when I can sing no longer,
Then I go back to sleep;
For what does spring matter to me?
Let me be drunk!

The Farewell
The sun is going down behind the mountains.
In every valley evening is descending,
Bringing its shadows, which are full of coolness.
O look! like a silver bark
The moon floats up through the blue lake of heaven.
I sense a delicate breeze shivering
Behind the dark fir trees.

The brook sings melodiously
through the darkness.
The flowers grow pale in the twilight.
The earth is breathing, full of rest and sleep;
All desire now turns to dreaming.
Die müden Menschen geh’n heimwärts,
Um im Schlaf vergess’nes Glück
Und Jugend neu zu lernen.
Die Vögel hocken still in ihren Zweigen.
Die Welt schläft ein!

Es wehet kühl im Schatten meiner Fichten.
Ich stehe hier und harre meines Freundes;
Ich sehe mich, O Freund, an deiner Seite
Die Schönheit dieses Abends zu genießen.
Wo bleibst du? Du läßt mich lang allein!
Ich wandle auf und nieder mit meiner Laute
Auf Wegen, die vom weichem Grase schwellen.
O Schönheit! O ewigen Liebens-
Lebens-trunk’ne Welt!

Er stieg vom Pferd und reichte ihm
den Trunk des Abschieds dar.
Er fragte ihn, wohin er führe
Und auch warum es müßte sein.
Er sprach, seine Stimme war umflort:
Du, mein Freund,
Mir war auf dieser Welt das Glück nicht hold!
Wohin ich geh’? Ich geh’, ich wand’re
in die Berge.
Ich suche Ruhe für mein einsam Herz!
Ich wandle nach der Heimat, meiner Stätte!
Ich werde niemals in die Ferne schweifen.
Still ist mein Herz und harret seiner Stunde!

Die liebe Erde allüberall
Blühlt auf im Lenz und grünt aufs neu!
Allüberall und ewig blauen licht
die Fernen!
Ewig . . . Ewig . . .

Weary mortals wend homewards,
So that, in sleep, they may learn anew
Forgotten joy and youth.
The birds huddle silent on their branches.
The world is falling asleep!

A cool breeze blows in the shadow of my fir trees.
I stand here and wait for my friend.
I wait for him to take a last farewell.
I long, O my friend, to be by your side,
To enjoy the beauty of this evening.
Where are you? You leave me long alone!
I wander to and fro with my lute
On pathways which billow with soft grass.
O beauty! O eternal-love-
and-life-intoxicated world!

He alighted from his horse and handed him
the drink of farewell.
He asked him where he was going,
And also why it had to be
He spoke; his voice was veiled:
“Ah! my friend—
Fortune was not kind to me in this world!
Where am I going? I am going to wander
in the mountains.
I seek rest for my lonely heart!
I journey to the homeland, to my resting place!
I shall never again go seeking the far distance.
My heart is still and awaits its hour!”

The dear earth everywhere
Blossoms in spring and grows green again!
Everywhere and forever the distance shines
bright and blue!
Forever . . . forever . . .

Texts for nos. 1, 3, 4, and 5 after Li-Tai-Po;
Text for no. 2 after Ts chang-Tsi;
Text for no. 6 after Mong-Kao-Jen and Wang-Wei

—Translation by Derek Cooke
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