

Majority

Charles Ives

The Masses! The Masses! The Masses have
toiled,
Behold the works of the World!
The Masses are thinking,
Whence comes the thought of the World!
The Masses are singing,
Whence comes the Art of the World!
The Masses are yearning,
Whence comes the hope of the World.
The Masses are dreaming,
Whence comes the visions of God!
God's in His Heaven,
All will be well with the World!

Chinaman, Laundryman (2 Ricercari)

Ruth Crawford Seeger; text: H.T. Tsiang

"Chinaman!"
"Laundryman!"
Don't call me "man!"
I am worse than a slave.

Wash! Wash!
Why can I wash away
The dirt of others' clothes
But not the hatred of my heart?
My skin is yellow,
Does my yellow skin color the clothes?
Why do you pay me less
For the same work?
Clever boss!
You know
How to scatter the seeds of hatred
Among your ignorant slaves.

Iron! Iron!
Why can I smooth away
The wrinkle
Of others' dresses
But not the miseries of my heart?
Why should I come to Arnerica
To wash clothes?
Do you think "Chinamen" in China
Wear no dresses?

I came to America
Three days after my marriage.
When can I see her again?
Only the almighty "Dollar" knows!

Dry! Dry!
Why do clothes dry,
But not my tears?
I work
Twelve hours a day,
He pays
Fifteen dollars a week.
My boss says,
"Chinaman,
Go back to China,
If you don't feel satisfied!
There,
Unlimited hours of toil:
Two silver dollars a week,
If
You can find a job."
Thank you, Boss,
For you remind me.
I know
Bosses are robbers everywhere!
Chinese boss says:
"You Chinaman,
Me Chinaman,
Come work for me --
Work for your fellow countryman!
By the way,
You 'Wong', me 'Wong' --
Do we not belong to same family?
Ha! ha!
We are cousins!
O yes!
You 'Hai Shan', me 'Hai Shan',
Do we not come from same district?
O come work for me;
I will treat you better!"
GET away from here!
What is the difference,
When you comea to exploit me?
"Chinaman!"
"Laundryman!"
Don't call me "Chinaman!"
Yes, I am a "Laundryman!"

The workingman!
Don't call me "Chinaman!"
I am the Worldman!

"Chinaman!"
"Laundryman!"
All you workimgmen!
Here is the brush
Made of study
Here is the soap
Made of action.
Let us all
wash with the brush!
Let us all
Press with the iron!
Wash!
Brush!
Dry!
Iron!
Then we shall have
A clean world!

Big Sister Say, 1967 (Love After 1950)
Libby Larsen; text: Kathryn Daniel

Beauty hurts, big sister says,
Beauty hurts.
Yanking a hank of my lanky hair
Around black wire-mesh rollers
Whose inside bristles prick my scalp
Like so many pins.

Beauty hurts, big sister says,
Beauty hurts.

She says I better sleep with them in.
She plucks, tweezes,
Glides razor blades over tender armpit skin,
Slathers downy legs with stinking
Depilatory cream, presses straight lashes
Bolt upright with a medieval-looking
Padded clamp.
Looking good hurts. Ow! It hurts.

Looking good hurts, Beryl warns.
It's hard work.
She plucks, tweezes,

Glides razor blades over tender armpit skin,
She plucks, tweezes, presses straight lashes
bolt upright.

Beauty hurts. Looking good hurts.
Rollers, tweezers, razor blades.
Oh! Beauty hurts.

The Factory Window Song (Here and Gone)
Jake Heggie; text: Vachel Lindsay

Factory windows are always broken.
Somebody's always throwing bricks,
Somebody's always heaving cinders,
Playing ugly Yahoo tricks.

Factory windows are always broken.
Other windows are let alone.
No one throws through the chapel-window
The bitter, snarling, derisive stone.

Factory windows are always broken.
Something or other is going wrong.
Something is rotten -- I think, in Denmark.
End of the factory-window song.

Two Marines (Soldier Songs)
David T. Little; texts from interviews with veterans

Two marines came to my house
To tell me that my son...
A letter from the President,
"Regretfully," my son...

I did not answer the door
I knew the speech, heard it before,
"Bravely fought, in combat fell,
For Liberty," my son...

I took my grief out to the yard
And while they knocked,
I doused their car with gasoline.
I lit a match, set it ablaze,
My grief to see, set it ablaze,
To see my grief as burning flames.

Take this to the President,
And tell him that his letters can't,
Not even signed by human hand,
Not even written by a person.

This letter won't, nor uniforms,
Not folded flags, nor victories won,
Your practice words, from scripts well-learned
Cannot bring back my son.

Bring me back my son.

The Astronomers

*Richard Hundley; text from an inscription
found at a gravesite in Allegheny, PA*

Susan Campbell 1863-1910

Brian Campbell 1862-1909

Astronomers

We have loved the stars too deeply
To be afraid of the night.

I Never Saw Another Butterfly

Lori Laitman; text: various (noted below)

I. The Butterfly

Pavel Friedmann

The last, the very last
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing
against a white stone...

Such, such a yellow
Is carried lightly 'way up high.
It went away I'm sure because it wished to
kiss the world good-bye.

For seven weeks I've live in here,
Penned up inside this ghetto.
But I have found what I love here.
The dandelions call to me
And the white chestnut branches in the court.
Only I never saw another butterfly.

That butterfly was the last one.

Butterflies don't live in here,
in the ghetto.

II. Yes, that's the way things are

Koleba (M. Kosek, H. Lowy, Bachner)

In Terezin in the so-called park
A queer old granddad sits
Somewhere there in the so-called park.
He wears a beard down to his lap
And on his head, a little cap.

Hard crusts he crumbles in his gums,
He's only got one single tooth.
My poor old man with working gums,
Instead of soft rolls, lentil soup.
My poor old graybeard!

III. Birdsong

Anonymous

He doesn't know the world at all
Who stays in his nest and doesn't go out.
He doesn't know what birds know best
Nor what I want to sing about,
That the world is full of loveliness.

When dewdrops sparkle in the grass
And earth's aflood with morning light,
A blackbird sings upon a bush
To greet the dawning after night.
Then I know how fine it is to live.

Hey, try to open up your heart
To beauty; go to the woods someday
And weave a wreath of memory there.
Then if the tears obscure your way
You'll know how wonderful it is
To be alive.

IV. The Garden

Franta Bass

A little garden
Fragrant and full of roses.
The path is narrow
And a little boy walks along it.

A little boy, a sweet boy,
Like that growing blossom.
When the blossom comes to bloom,
The little boy will be no more.

V. Man Proposes, God Disposes

Koleba (M. Kosek, H. Lowy, Bachner)

Who was helpless back in Prague,
And who was rich before,
He's a poor soul here in Terezin,
His body's bruised and sore.

Who was toughened up before,
He'll survive these days.
But who was used to servants
Will sink into his grave.

VI. The Old House

Franta Bass

Deserted here, the old house
stands in silence, asleep.
The old house used to be so nice,
before, standing there,
it was so nice.
Now it is deserted,
rotting in silence –
What a waste of houses,
a waste of hours.

The Half-Moon Westers Low

Jake Heggie; text: AE Housman

The half-moon westers low, my love,
And the wind brings up the rain;
And wide apart lie we, my love,
And seas between the twain.

I know not if it rains, my love,
In the land where you do lie;
And oh, so sound you sleep, my love,
You know no more than I.

Cowboy Songs

Libby Larsen

I. Bronco

Text: Belle Starr

My love is a rider, my love is a rider ...
My true love is a rider wild broncos he breaks,
though he promised to quit for my sake.
It's one foot in the stirrup and the saddle put
on
with a swing and a jump he is mounted and
gone.
The first time I met him it was early one spring
a riding a bronco a high headed thing.
The next time I saw him 'twas late in the fall
a swinging the girls at Tomlinson's ball.
He gave me some presents among them a ring
the return that I gave him was a far better
thing;
A young maiden's heart, I'd have you all know,
that he won it by riding his bucking bronco.
Now all young maidens, where're you reside,
beware of the cowboy who swings rawhide,
He'll court you and pet you and leave you to
go
in the spring up the trail on his bucking
bronco.

II. Lift Me Into Heaven Slowly

Text: Robert Creeley

Lift me into heaven slowly,
cause my back's sore
and my mind's thoughtful
and I'm not even sure
I want to go.

III. Billy the Kid

Text: Anonymous

Billy was a bad man
carried a big gun,
He was always after good folks
And he kept them on the run.

He shot one every morning
To make his morning meal.
And let a man sass him,
He was sure to feel his steel.

He kept folks in hot water,

Stole from every stage,
When he was full of liquor
He was always in a rage.

He kept things boilin' over,
he stayed out in the brush,
when he was full of dead eye,
other folks'd better hush.

Billy was a bad man, but
one day he met a man
a whole lot badder
and now he's dead
and we ain't none the sadder.

In Praise of Songs that Die
Jake Heggie; text: Vachel Lindsay

Ah, they are passing, passing by,
Wonderful songs, but born to die!
Cries from the infinite human seas,
Waves thrice-winged with harmonies.
Here I stand on a pier in the foam
Seeing the songs to the beach go home,
Dying in sand while the tide flows back,
As it flowed of old in its fated track.
Oh, hurrying tide that will not hear
Your own foam children dying near
Is there no refuge-house of song,
No home, no haven where songs belong?
Oh, precious hymns that come and go!
You perish, and I love you so!

Harlem Night Song
Ricky Ian Gordon; text: Langston Hughes

Come,
Let us roam the night together
Singing.

I love you.

Across
The Harlem roof-tops
Moon is shining.
Night sky is blue.
Stars are great drops
Of Golden dew.

Down the street
A band is playing.

I love you.

Come,,
Let us roam the night together
Singing.

I've heard an organ talk sometimes
Aaron Copland; text: Emily Dickinson

I've heard an Organ talk, sometimes
In a Cathedral Aisle,
And understood no word it said
Yet held my breath, the while

And risen up and gone away,
A more Berdardine Girl
Yet know not what was done to me
In that old Hallowed Aisle.

Souvenir
Ricky Ian Gordon; text: Edna St Vincent Millay

Just a rainy day or two
In a windy tower,
That was all I had of you-
Saving half an hour.

Marred by greeting passing groups
In a cinder walk,
Near some naked blackberry hoops
Dim with purple chalk.
I remember three or four
Things you said in spite,
And an ugly coat you wore,
Plaided black and white.

Just a rainy day or two
And a bitter word.
Why do I remember you
As a singing bird?

Memories
Charles Ives

A. Very Pleasant
We're sitting in the opera house;
We're waiting for the curtain to arise
With wonders for our eyes;
We're feeling pretty gay,
And well we may,
"O, Jimmy, look!" I say,
"The band is tuning up
And soon will start to play."
We whistle and we hum,
Beat time with the drum.

We're sitting in the opera house;
We're waiting for the curtain to arise
With wonders for our eyes,
A feeling of expectancy,
A certain kind of ecstasy,
Expectancy and ecstasy... Sh's's's. "Curtain!"

B. Rather Sad

From the street a strain on my ear doth fall,
A tune as threadbare as that "old red shawl,"
It is tattered, it is torn,
It shows signs of being worn,
It's the tune my Uncle hummed from early
morn,
'Twas a common little thing and kind 'a sweet,
But 'twas sad and seemed to slow up both his
feet;
I can see him shuffling down
To the barn or to the town,
A humming.

The Lordly Hudson
Ned Rorem; text: Paul Goodman

"Driver, what stream is it?"

I asked, well knowing
it was our lordly Hudson
hardly flowing.

"It is our lordly Hudson
hardly flowing," he said,
"under the green-grown cliffs."

Be still, heart!
No one needs
your passionate suffrage
to select this glory--
this is our lordly Hudson
hardly flowing
under the green-grown cliffs.

"Driver has this a peer
in Europe or the East?"

"No, no!" He said.
Home! Home!
Be quiet, heart!
This is our lordly Hudson
and has no peer
in Europe or the East;
this is our lordly Hudson
hardly flowing
under the green-grown cliffs
and has no peer
in Europe or the East;
be quiet, heart!
Home! Home!

I Make My Magic
Libby Larsen; text: Muriel Rukeyser

I make my magic of forgotten things:
Night and nightmare
And the midnight wings
Of childhood butterflies
And the darkness,
The straining dark underwater
And under sleep.

I make my magic,
Night and a heartbreak
Try to keep myself
Until before my eyes

The morning sunlight pours
And I am clear of all chains
The magic now that rains down around me
Is sunlight magic.

I come to a sunlight magic,
Yours.

A Horse With Wings
Ricky Ian Gordon

I wanna cry.
I wanna feel the world around me whirling by.
I wanna cry for those that live,
and those that die.
You sing a lullaby.
I wanna cry.
I wanna pray,
that all my wishes could come true after
today,
and should I put a word for you in,
should I say
an extra Kyrie?
I wanna pray.
I wanna lie.
I wanna think that things are better
than they are.
I wanna think we've gotten further,
and that far
is just an inch away.
I wanna lie.
A horse with wings,
I wanna think of things like that
and other things.
I want two brothers, one who laughs,
and one who sings.
I hope the future brings
a horse with wings.
I wanna know
the things they told me way back then
were really so.
I wanna make a little mark before I go,
not barely just get by,
I wanna fly!

Stars
Jake Heggie; text: AE Housman

Stars, I have seen them fall,
But when they drop and die
No star is lost at all
From all the star-sown sky.
The toil of all that be
Helps not the primal fault;
It rains into the sea,
And still the sea is salt.

Why do they shut me out of Heaven?
Aaron Copland; text: Emily Dickinson

Why do they shut Me out of Heaven?
Did I sing too loud?
But I can say a little "Minor"
Timid as a Bird!

Wouldn't the Angels try me
Just once more
Just see if I troubled them
But don't shut the door!

Oh, if I were the Gentleman
In the "White Robe"
And they were the little Hand that knocked
Would I forbid?

[Why do they shut Me out of Heaven?
Did I sing too loud?]

Down East
Charles Ives

Songs! Visions of my homeland,
com with strains of childhood,
Come with tunes we sang in school days
And with songs from mother's heart;
Way down east in a village by the sea,
stands an old, red farm house
that watches o'er the lea;

All that is best in me,
lying deep in memory,
draws my heart where I would be,
nearer to thee.
Ev'ry Sunday morning,
when the chores were almost done,
from that little parlor
sounds the old melodeon,
"Nearer my God to Thee, nearer to Thee,"
With those strains a stronger hope
comes nearer to me.

A Prayer to St. Catherine
Virgil Thomson; text: Kenneth Koch

If I am to be preserved from heartache and
shyness
By Saint Catherine of Sienna,
I am praying to her that she will hear my
prayer
And treat me in every way with kindness.
I went to Sienna to Saint Catherine's own
church
(It is impossible to deny this)
To pray to her to cure me of my heartache and
shyness.
Which she can do, because she is a great saint.
Other saints would regard my prayer as
foolish.
Saint Nicolas, for example, he would chuckle,
"God helps those who help themselves,
Rouse yourself! Get out there and do
something about it!"
Or Saint Joanna. She would say, "It is not
shyness,
That bothers you. It is sin. Pray to Catherine of
Sienna."
But that is what I have done. And that is why I
have come here
to cure my heartache.
Saint Catherine of Sienna, If this song pleases
you,
then be good enough to answer the prayer it
contains.
Make the person that sings this song less shy
than that person is,
And give that person some joy in that person's
heart.

Litany
John Musto; text: Langston Hughes

Gather up
In the arms of your pity
The sick, the deprived,
The desperate, the tired,
All the scum
Of our weary city.

Gather up
In the arms of your pity.
Gather up
In the arms of your love--
Those who expect
No love from above.