

Arias

Texts by various poets; names given when known
Translations © 2017 by Ruth B. Libbey; except
“D’amor per te languisco” (Wq 213) translation © 2017 by Laura Buch

Edle Freiheit, Götterglück (Wq 211/1)

Edle Freiheit, Götterglück,
ohne dich ist Glanz und Würde
nur ein schimmernd Missgeschick,
eine Sklavenbürde.

Für den Lieblich ihrer Brust
hat die Gottheit sich erkoren
und der Mann, der dich verloren
lechzt umsonst nach anderer Lust.

Himmelstochter, Ruh der Seelen (Wq 211/2)

Himmelstochter, Ruh der Seelen,
ewig wirst du Fürsten fehlen,
denn dich schreckt des Purpurs Glanz.

Ungeschminkt, mit leisem Schritte,
eilst du zu des Schäfers Hütte,
windest mit an seinem Veilchenkranz.

Seine Tage fließen heiter
wie ein Frühlingsbach dahin;
stille Tugend, sein Begleiter,
lässt auf seinem Pfade Rosen blühn.

Reiche bis zum Wolkensitze (Wq 211/3)

Reiche bis zum Wolkensitze,
noch ist Demut deine Pflicht,
dich beschirmt vor nahem Blitze
Ruhe und Gold und Hoheit nicht.

Gestern Herr von sieben Reichen,
heut ist kaum ein Hügel dein.
Flüchtiger als Weste weichen,
kann dein Glück entwichen sein.

Noble Freedom, Bliss of the Gods

Noble freedom, bliss of the gods,
without you brilliance and rank
are but a gleaming misfortune,
a slave's burden.

Divinity has chosen
the darling of its heart,
and the man who has lost you
craves other pleasure in vain.

Daughter of Heaven, Ease of Souls

Daughter of heaven, ease of souls,
you will ever be absent from princes,
for the brilliance of purple frightens you away.

Unadorned, with soft footsteps,
you hasten to the shepherd's hut,
and help him plait his garland of violets.

His days flow by as cheerfully
as a spring brook;
quiet virtue, his companion,
lets roses bloom along his path.

Should Your Empires Stretch unto the Heavens

Should your empires stretch unto the heavens,
yet is modesty your duty;
from nearby lightning strikes
quiet and wealth and rank do not shield you.

Yesterday lord of seven empires,
today scarcely a mound of earth is yours.
Quicker than zephyrs escape
your fortune can have slipped away.

D'amor per te languisco (Wq 213)

D'amor per te languisco
che lacera il mio sen,
ma io dirti non ardisco
ch'ardo per te mio ben.
In vederti l'ammiro
e cesso di soffrir
in amarti sospiro
e risento un gran martir.

Di notte né di giorno,
calma non so goder,
quel vago viso adorno
mi ha fatto prigionier.
Tu guidi i miei pensieri,
tu regni nel mio cuor,
sarà invan ch'io spero
da te un eguale ardor?

Lungi da te la vita
dolce per me non è,
è lieta e gradita
se son vicino a te.
Finisci i miei tormenti,
conforta un fido cuor,
dimmi che amor tu senti,
altro non chiedo allor.

Fürsten sind am Lebensziele (Wq 214)

Fürsten sind am Lebensziele
jedem Erdensohne gleich,
wenn nicht Tugend sie beselet,
Huld und Wohltun sie den Geistern
bessrer Welten zugesellt.
Fürsten sind am Lebensziele
jedem Erdensohne gleich.
Seht den Staub der Weltgebieter,
seht des ärmsten Bettlers Staub!
Sieht man dort noch Pracht und Größe,
sieht man hier des Armen Not?
Fürsten sind am Lebensziele
jedem Erdensohne gleich.

—Elise von der Recke

I Languish for You, from Love

I languish for you, from love
that tears at my heart,
but I dare not tell you,
my beloved, that I burn for you.
In seeing you, I marvel
and I cease to suffer;
but in loving you I sigh,
and feel once more a great torment.

Neither by night nor by day
do I know how to enjoy peace;
that sweet and graceful face
has taken me prisoner.
You guide my thoughts,
you rule within my heart,
will it be in vain that I hope
for the same fire from you?

Far from you, life
holds no sweetness for me—
it is joyous and pleasing
if I am near you.
End my torments,
comfort a faithful heart,
tell me that you feel love:
then I ask nothing else.

Princes at Life's End

Princes at life's end are
like every son of earth
if virtue does not animate them,
and if grace and good deeds do not place them
among the spirits of better worlds.
Princes at life's end are
like every son of earth.
See the dust of the emperors of the world,
see the dust of the poorest beggar!
Does one see there anything of splendor and greatness,
does one see here the affliction of the poor?
Princes at life's end are
like every son of earth.