The Wanderer and His Shadow

Songs for Voice and Cello from Nietzsche’s *The Gay Science*

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Translated/adapted/condensed from Book IV: Sanctus Januarius

Book One

1. *For the New Year.* Today we allow ourselves to express our dearest wish and thought, so I will, too: will tell the first thought to cross my heart this year. I want more and more to learn to see the beauty of necessity; then I will be one of those who make things beautiful. (§ 276)

2. We should not count ourselves too wise when at times we are so surprised by the wonderful harmony played on our instrument—a harmony too good for us to take the credit. Yes, now and then someone plays with us: chance guides our hand, and the wisest providence could not imagine a more beautiful music. (§277)

3. Living amid this jumble of small lanes, needs, and voices gives me a melancholy happiness. It is like the last moments before a ship departs: people have more to say than ever, the hour is late, and the sea and its desolate silence impatiently wait behind all the noise. (§278)

4. *Delight in Blindness.* “My thoughts,” said the wanderer to his shadow, “should show me where I am, not where I’m going. I love not knowing the future; I don’t want to die of impatience or taste promised things before their time.” (§287)

5. History affords no examples. One day this might happen; not even the dice throws of the luckiest chance could fix the conditions for its birth today. What has thus far entered our souls only now and again, the exception at which we shudder, one day may be the custom of future souls: perpetual motion between the high and low, the feeling of height and depth, a constant ascent as on a flight of stairs yet a sense of reposing on clouds. (§288)

6. We wish we could rise up on airy dust motes like beams of light, not away from the sun but towards it. But this we cannot do. So instead let us do the only thing we can: to bring the light to earth, to be “the light of the earth.” For this we have our wings and our speed and our discipline; for this we are even terrible like fire. (§293)

7. *Sigh.* I caught this insight in passing and quickly seized the poor words close at hand to pin it down and keep it from flying off. And now it flutters and flaps in these stale words and I scarcely know how catching this bird could have made me happy. (§298)

8. How can we make things beautiful, delightful, and desirable for ourselves when they are not? And I fear that in themselves they never are. (§299)
9. Did Prometheus first have to fantasize he had stolen the light and then pay the price—before he could learn he himself had created the light by wanting it for his own? The men, the god—mere clay in his hands, images of the maker: no less so than the fantasy, the theft, the Caucasus, the vulture--the entire tragic Promethiad of all seekers after knowledge? (§300)

10. We alone, only we, have created the world that concerns humankind. But we lack the knowledge of precisely this, and when at times we catch it for an instant, only an instant, in that instant we forget it again. (§301)

11. How much there is that says to me, tarry awhile! Armida’s gardens beckon me everywhere; everywhere I must tear my heart away and find new bitterness. I must always lift my feet, however sore; and because I must go on I look back furious at the beauties that could not hold me, because they could not hold me. (§309)

12. How greedily this wave comes in, as if it were looking for something! And now again, slower but white with excitement still. Is it disappointed? Has it found what it was looking for? --But another wave is already moving in, more greedy and more savage still, with seeming secrets in its soul and the lust for treasure. So live the waves, and so live we who will—more I will not say. (§310)

13. Intermezzo (for cello alone)

Book Two

14. Are you angry with me, waves? Afraid I’ll betray your secret? Well, go ahead, be angry; arch your green dangerous bodies as high as you can, blot out the sun with green twilight and green lightning! Go ahead: dive and pour your emeralds into the depths and cover them with your infinite mane of white foam. Everything suits me just as it suits you. I’m so fond of you for everything—how could I ever betray you? Are we not one, you and I? Your secret and mine, are they not one secret? (§310)

15. Looking Back. Today a few musical chords reminded me of a winter and a house and a life of great solitude—and the feelings too. I thought I would go on living that way forever. (§317)

16. The evil hour. Every philosopher has surely had an evil hour in which he thought: What do I matter if they don’t accept my bad arguments, too? And then flew by some little bird all full of Schadenfreude and twittered: “What do you matter? What do you matter?” (§332)

17. Our good will, our patience, our openness and gentleness find their reward at last in what is strange: in something strange that little by little sheds its veil and turns out to be a new and indescribable beauty. This is its thanks for our hospitality. (§334)
18. Could one burden oneself with all the past, the oldest and newest, the losses and hopes, and endure all this, and contain it and compress it all into a single feeling—from this would surely come a happiness never yet known: the happiness of a god full of power and love, of tears and laughter, a happiness that, like the sun at evening, constantly bequeaths its inexhaustible riches, pouring them into the sea and feeling richest of all, like the sun, only when even the poorest of fisherman rows with golden oars. (§337)

19. *The greatest weight.* What if some day or night a demon crept into your solitude and said: This life you live and have lived you will have to live once more and countless times more; and it will bring nothing new, but every pain and every joy and every thought will return to you in the same order, even I myself and this spider and the moonlight in the trees.” Would you cast your self down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once known a moment in which you would answer, “You are a god and I have never heard anything more beautiful”? (§341)

20. Postlude in Verse (for voice alone): “Mein Glück” (My Happy Lot) from “Appendix: From the Songs of Prince Vogelfrei.” The text appears below after that of the Epilogue.

21. Epilogue (from the text named at the end): What is done out of love is always done beyond good and evil. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse.*

Postlude Text:

Once more I see the pigeons of San Marco.
The square is still; the morning lingers there.
In the soft coolness I send flocks of songs
Like swarms of pigeons in the blue aloft—
   And lure them back,
Yet one more rhyme to dangle from their wings—
   My happy lot, my happy lot.

You still and blue-lit silken roof of sky,
Afloat, a canopy for the tinted building
That I—what am I saying?—love, fear, envy—
Whose soul I’d truly drink up if I could!
   --And give it back?
Hush, no more of that, you glimpse of wonder—
   My happy lot, my happy lot.

You jutting tower, with what a lion’s force
You mount on high here, glorious, free of care!
You send your deep knell clear across the square—
[In French would you become *l’accent aigue*?—]
   If I stayed back
Like you, I’d know by what silken snare—
My happy lot, my happy lot.

Music, hold off! First let the shadows darken
And grow into a brown and tender night!
It’s too soon for your tones; the ornaments
Of gold don’t glimmer yet in splendid hues of rose.
    Much day remains,
Much day for shaping, slinking, murmuring
    --My happy lot, my happy lot.

Program Note

Composed between 2006 and 2008, this song cycle explores the possibilities of dialogue between a singing voice and an instrumental counterpart that sometimes assents, sometimes dissents, sometimes mocks, sometimes comments, sometimes reinterprets, and so on, what its alter ego expresses. The standard combination of voice and piano appeals to me greatly, and I’ve composed for it often, but for present purposes the piano is almost too versatile and multidimensional. What I wanted was a voice of great range and expressivity but with limited abilities to provide its own harmony and counterpoint. Given that desire, the choice of the cello seemed inevitable. Gyorgy Kurtag’s Kafka Fragments for voice and violin provided a model; at the same time, the differences in style and feeling between that cycle and this one are obvious, and the philosophical difference—Kafka’s infinite irony versus Nietzsche’s affirmation of finitude—is just as strong.

The text is a critical hybrid. In choosing what to set, I found that most of the passages excerpted had to be condensed to be musically effective. Tampering with Nietzsche’s German was obviously out of the question. In making the English versions, I would certainly interpolate a layer of interpretation between the original and the music, but the simple fact of excerpting and arranging would have done that in any case, even had I been literal and even had I set the texts in German.

The result, like the dramatic result of all song cycles, is a fiction. It is fiction that, like all fiction, aims by invention to find a certain truth. The cycle is not a rounded portrait of Nietzsche as he presents himself in The Gay Science any more than Kafka Fragments is an authentic portrait of Kafka. Instead The Wanderer and His Shadow is the expression of a Nietzschean persona devised partly as an interpretation of Nietzsche and partly as an adaptation of his voice. The chosen extracts show little of the arrogance and posturing that a more faithful portrait would have revealed, but they still, I believe, have plenty of bite. The persona they fashion is that of anyone who accepts the Nietzschean challenge of creating the values by which one lives and judges oneself. This is the task that Nietzsche famously called the transvaluation of all values and that he always insisted was profoundly difficult. The persona of these songs—the twinned persona of the wanderer and his shadow—is, like the creatures of Nietzsche’s Prometheus (song 9), including Prometheus himself, an “image of the maker.”
The songs of *The Wanderer and his Shadow* are loosely linked by melodic and scalar patterns, with occasional quotation and cross reference from one number to another. Family resemblances abound, fragments of recurrence attuned to Nietzsche’s conception of eternal recurrence—a conception eventually realized (but incompletely) in song 19. Like the individual songs, the large design of the cycle is dialogical. There are twenty-one numbers. Just after midpoint, one of the texts is broken up and set by two separate but closely related songs (12 and 14) separated by an intermezzo for cello alone. Near the close, just after song 19 arrives at the destination of eternal recurrence, another solo number, this time for voice alone, arises to answer the first. The voice and cello reunite for the final song, a postlude.

The ideal performance of these songs is of course that of an unabridged traversal of the cycle. But abridged performances are possible if certain conditions are observed: any selection should begin with no. 1 and end with no. 21. No. 12 may be included by itself, but if both nos. 12 and 14 are included, they should be separated by no. 13, the cello intermezzo, and no. 20 for unaccompanied voice should also be included. The order of the songs, which corresponds with that of Nietzsche’s text, should be strictly observed. A compact version of the whole, which preserves the essentials of its design, can be performed on programs without enough room for more. This abridgment, under the title “Song Suite from *The Wanderer and his Shadow*,” consists of numbers 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, and 21.
1. For the New Year

To-day we al-low our-selves_____ to ex-press our dearest wish and

thought,

so I will too:
will tell the first thought to cross my heart this year.

I want more and more to learn to see the beauty of necessity; then I will be one of those who make things beautiful.
2. "We Should Not Count Ourselves"

Transil $= 66$

PP

Voice

We should not count ourselves too wise when at times

Con sord.

Cello

we are so surprised by the wonderful harmony played on our

Instrument

-- a harmony too good--

for us to take the credit.

Yes, now and then someone--

Mute off
"We Should Not Count Ourselves"

plays with us; chance guides our hand.

and the wisest providence could not imagine a

more beautiful music.
3. "Living Amid This Jumble"

Voice

\[ \text{\( \frac{4}{4} \) \( \text{p} \)} \]

\[ \text{Liv - - ing a - mid - this} \]

Cello

\[ \text{\( \frac{4}{4} \) \( \text{p} \)} \]

\[ \text{sul pont.} \]

\[ \text{jum - - - ble of small lanes, needs} \]

\[ \text{ordin.} \]

\[ \text{voi - - - ces} \]

\[ \text{gives me a mel - an-} \]

\[ \text{sul pont.} \]

\[ \text{cho - ly hap - - - pi - ness.} \]

\[ \text{It is like the last} \]

\[ \text{ordin.} \]

\[ \text{slide to sul pont.} \]
"Living Amid This Jumble"

moment, the last moment before a ship de-

parts. People have more to say than ever;

the hour is late, the hour is late and the

sea and its de-

silence, de-

silence,
78
a tempo

wait behind all the noise.

78
a tempo

ordin.
sul pont.

85
Ritardando

85
Ritardando
4. "My Thoughts . . ."

"My thoughts," said the wane de-rer to his sha-dow, should show me where I am, not sul tasto

where I'm go-ing.
love not knowing the future.

don't want to die of imagination.

patience or taste promised things

before their time.
5. "History Affords No Examples"

One day this may happen: not even the dice throws of the luckiest chance could fix the conditions for its
"History Affords No Examples"

What has thus far entered our souls only now and again,

now and again,

the exception,

the exception at which we shudder,

ppp
"History Affords No Examples"

33 pp

the exception at which we shudder may one day be the custom

37 mp

of future souls: perpetual motion becomes

42 mp

tween the high and low, express.

46

the feeling of height and depth

a
"History Affords No Examples"

50
"History Affords No Examples"

50

53

56

pos - - - - ing on clouds.

pos - - - - ing on clouds.
6. "We wish we could rise up . . ."

Voice

Cello

pizz. arco

We wish we could rise up on airy

pizz. arco

Dust motes like beams of light,

mp

not away from the sun

punta d'arco
but towards it, towards it,
col legno battuto pizz.
cresc. cresc.

But this, this we can not do.

So in recitative strum
stead let us do the only thing we can:

bring the light to earth,

be "the light of the earth."

this we have our wings and our speed and our dis - ci -

Allarg.
7. "I Caught This Insight . . ."

I caught this insight in

passing and quickly seized the poor words close at

hand to pin it down and keep it from flying off.

And
"I Caught This Insight"

now, and now it flutters, it flutters and flaps,

flutters and flaps, and now, and now it flutters, it flutters and flaps,

flaps, flaps, flaps, flaps, flaps, and I scarcely

know how catching this bird

could have made me happy.

rit.

rit.
8. "How Can We Make . . ."

Voice:

\[ \text{pp} \rightarrow p \]

Cello:

\[ \text{pp} \rightarrow p \]

\[ \text{How can we make things beau-} \]

\[ \text{ful, de-light-ful,} \]

\[ \text{and de-si-nar-able} \]

\[ \text{for our selves} \]
"How Can We Make"

(spoken) when they are not?

And I fear

that in themselves they never are.
9. "Did Prometheus first have to fantasize . . ."

secco (= finger without bowing)

X notehead = spoken, pitch approximate
"Did Prometheus ...?"

less so than the fantasy, the theft, the Caucasus,

the vulture, the entire

tire tragic Prometheus

ad of all seekers

after knowledge?
We alone, only we have created the world that concerns human kind. But we,
"We Alone"

we lack, the knowledge of precisely that, sul tasto

and when at times we snap

arco, ordin. non cresc.
"We Alone"

catch it for an instant, on

arco

ly an instant, in that instant

con sord.

we, we forget it,

we forget it again, forget it again.

sul pont.

We Alone

How much there is that says to me, "Tarry a while,"  "Tarry a while."

Armi-da's gardens beck on,  beck-on

Everywhere I must bear my heart a-way
and taste new bitterness.

I must always lift my feet,

however sore,

and because I must go on I look back

furious at the beauties that could not hold me:

because they could not hold me.
12. "How Greedily This Wave Comes In"

How greedily this wave comes in, as if it were looking for something. And now again, slower,

but white with excitement still.

Is it disappointed? Has it found...
what it was looking for? But another wave is already moving in, more greedy and more savage still, with seeming secrets in its soul.

and the lust for treasure. So live the waves, and so live.

we who will. More I will not say.
13. Intermezzo

Cantabile $\mathbf{= 72}$

Cello

\begin{musicnotation}
\begin{musicexample}
\begin{musicfigure}
\begin{musicnotation}
\begin{musicnotation}
\end{musicnotation}
\end{musicfigure}
\end{musicexample}
\end{musicnotation}
14. "Are You Angry With Me, Waves?"

Voice

Cello

$\text{Voice}$

$\text{Cello}$
"Are You Angry With Me, Waves?"

Go ahead, dive and pour your emeralds

into the depths, and cover

with green twilight and green light shading.

Bodies as high as you can, blot out the sun.

Bodies, as high as you can, blot out the sun.

Go ahead, dive and pour your emeralds

bodies as high as you can, blot out the sun.

bodies as high as you can, blot out the sun.
"Are You Angry With Me, Waves?"

51

them with your infinite mane of white foam.

pizz.

secco (finger without bowing)

57

pizz. arco

Every thing suits me just as it suits you; I'm so fond of you for every thing.

65

mf

how could I ever betray you? Are we not one,

71

p

rit.

f = 76
"Are You Angry With Me, Waves?"

you and I. Your se-cret and

mine, are they not one.

se-cret?
15. Looking Back

Voice

Cello

To-day,

Today, a few musical chords reminded me

of a winter and a house and a life

a life of great solitude,
Looking Back

and the feelings too.

I thought I would go on living that way forever.

sul tasto
16. The Evil Hour

Voice

Ev-ery phi-lo-so-pher has sure-ly had an e-vil hour in

Cello

x notehead = play behind bridge on indicated string

which he thought, he thought: "What do I mat-ter, what do I mat-ter

if _______ they do not ac-cept my bad ar-gu-ments too?"

And then flew by some lit-tle bird all full of

mf
17. Our Good Will . . .

Our good will, our patience, our openness...

and gentleness find their reward at last in what is strange:

in something strange that little by little

sheds its veil and turns out to
Our Good Will...

be a new and in-de-scri-

sul tasto ordin.

flautando ordin.

This is its thanks for our hos-pi-ta-li-ty.

rit.

a tempo

rit.

a tempo

Could one burden oneself with all the past, the old-est, the new-est, the losses and hopes, and endure all this, and contain it and compress it all into a single feeling, from this would surely come a hap-

Voice

Cello

\[ \sum \dot{q} \]

\[ \dot{p} \]

\[ \sum \dot{q} \]

\[ \dot{p} \]

\[ \sum \dot{q} \]

\[ \dot{p} \]
"Could One Burden Oneself . . ."

-- pi-ness ne-ver yet

the hap-pi-ness of a god full of pow-er and love,

of tears and laugh-ter, a hap-pi-ness that like the sun at

even-ning con-stant-ly be-queaths its

in-ex-hau-st - - - - - - i-ble rich-es,
"Could One Burden Oneself..."

37
pour -

ing them in

37
into the

3
sea

40
and feel -

ing rich -

est of all,

like the

40
sun,

44
sun,

44
like the sun,

48
on -

ly, on -

ly when the poor -

est of fish -

er -

men

48
rows

48
with gold -

en oars.
What if some day or night a pizz.
mute on arco

de mon crept in to your solitude and said:

This life you live and have lived you will have to live once

more and count-less times more;

and it will bring

19. The Heaviest Weight.
The Heaviest Weight.

no-thing new, but ev-ery pain and ev-ery joy and ev-ery
mute off.

thought will re-turn to you in the same

or-der, even I my-self and this spi-der and the
moon light in the trees."

Would you cast your self down and gnash your teeth and curse the de mon who spoke thus? Or have you once known a
moment in which you would answer,

"You are a god"

and I, I have never heard anything

definitely more beautiful.

The Heaviest Weight.
I see once more the pigeons of San Mar-co.  The square is still, the morning lingers there. In the soft coolness
I send flocks of songs like swarms of pigeons in the blue a-loft—and lure them back, yet one more rhyme to dangle from their wings:

my happy lot.  You still and blue-lit silk-en roof of sky, a-float, a ca-no-py for the tint-ed build-ing that I—

what am I say-ing?  love, fear, en-vy, whose soul I'd tru-ly drink up if I could!  And give it back?

Hush, no more of that, you glimpse of won-der:
- my happy lot, my happy lot, You jutting tower, 
- with what a lion's force you mount on high here, splendid, 
free of care! You send your deep knell clear across the square.

If I stayed back, like you, I'd know by what silken snare: my happy lot, my happy lot. Music, hold off!

First let the shadows darken and grow into a brown and tender night. It's too soon for your tones; the ornaments of gold don't glimmer yet in splendid hues of rose. Much day remains, much day for making, slinking, murmuring: my happy lot, my happy lot, my happy lot.

Voice

Cello

\begin{align*}
\text{What is done} \quad \text{out of love is always done beyond good and evil.}
\end{align*}
"What is Done"

"Jen-seits von Gut und Böse"

gliss.