

ДА ЗДРАВСТВУЕТ
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ДА ЗДРАВСТВУЕТ ЛЕНИНИЗМ!



Shostakovich

Vocal Cycles for Bass

Volume 2

Fyodor Kuznetsov, bass
Yuri Serov, piano

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Vocal Cycles for Bass, Volume 2

Fyodor Kuznetsov, bass Yuri Serov, piano

1. A Foreword to my Complete Works and a Brief Contemplation in Respect of this Foreword. Op. 123 (1966). Words by D. Shostakovich2.52
2. Anti-Formalistic Raree Show ("Anti-Formalistic Rayok"). Words by D. Shostakovich. For bass, mixed choir and piano (1948-1968). 19.52
3. Spring, Spring...Words by A. Pushkin. Op. 128 (1967). 2.15

Suite to Words by Michael Angelo Buonarroti. Op. 145 (1974)

Russian version by A. Efros

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Total Time: 63.08

Fyodor Kuznetsov, bass

Yuri Serov, piano

St. Petersburg Youth Chamber Choir,

Artistic Director & Conductor: Yulia Khutoretskaya (2)

Recorded: St. Catherine Lutheran Church, St. Petersburg, February 2002 (2), February 2003

Sound recording & supervision: Victor Dinov, text: Yuri Serov, english translation: Sergey Suslov,

design: Anastasia Evmenova & Oleg Fakhrutdinov

A Foreword to my Complete Works and a Brief Contemplation in Respect of this Foreword was composed by Shostakovich specially for his author's concert dedicated to his 60th anniversary. Slightly tampering with Pushkin's epigram The Story of a Versemonger to put it in the first person, the composer then enumerates his many titles generously awarded to him by the Soviet Power in the last years of his life. There is some surprising, almost painful irony sounding in each word, in each phrase of music, strikingly different from satire and humour frequent and familiar with Shostakovich. Eight years after, the composer will say after Michael Angelo, "...I see no threat from luxury's encumbrance, / I've long hed nothing here for me to do; / I fear rich apparels like Moor fears Medusa..." This small Contemplation probably is just an attempt to "shuffle off the rich apparel", to quit the "encumbrance" of the official recognition, which was a drag on Shostakovich no less than the official persecution of the Thirties and the Forties.

In its final edition the **Anti-Formalistic Raree Show** (Anti-Formalistic Rayok) may probably be defined as a single-act satiric opera or cantata. The genre of the opus is traceable, without doubt, to a similar opus of Modest Mussorgsky (Rayok), and from that piece, to the folk raree show, or the 'pic theatre'. In the early Twenties in St. Petersburg young Shostakovich could still see and hear the last live raree showmen. On holidays they showed in the street their farces, where colorful, often caricature moving pictures (pics or rarees) were displayed with comical vocal comments.

The work on the Raree Show started in May 1948 as a direct response to the events of the early months of that year. These events were the Resolu-

tions of the Communist Party Central Committee of the 10th February, and numerous meetings (some of them lasting for weeks), rallies, and press publications denouncing those belonging to the "anti-national, formalistic line in music."

It is hard to over-emphasize the pain of the blow caused to Shostakovich by the events. The author of the Seventh "Leningrad" Symphony, which had told the whole world of the horrors of war and of heroic Russian people, and which was performed with enormous success in dozens of countries by the most prominent conductors and orchestras, was ruthlessly and pointlessly criticized in public not only by Party bosses, but also by fellow composers, musicologists, and performers. He was called a composer with "an underdeveloped sense of melody", a maker of "disgusting" music, "cacophony", and "brain-twisters".

Shostakovich was dismissed from the faculty of the conservatory of Leningrad "as personnel reduction"; the Soviet Union's largest orchestras and performers ceased to play his music (to be on the safe side). Shostakovich offered excuses, extended "thanks for the criticism", promised to reform, and assured that he "will try to compose music" that is clear and close to people." He issued an oratorio titled "Song of the Woods", a number of patriotic mass songs, and music to war movies. And – in the meantime, he was secretly working on the Raree Show, in which he sneered at his degraded critics and colleagues, letting loose his biting irony and sparkling wit.

The Raree Show is the only large work written by Shostakovich to his own words. The plot of the Raree Show is a meeting of 'music figures and figures' dedicated to "Realism and Formalism in Music". The Host successively gives the floor to

three speakers. The delighted house acclaims the “experts” speeches. The literary base of the text are the actual declarations of Party leaders of the time (Firstman clearly resembles Stalin, Secondman resembles Zhdanov who was the mastermind of the events of 1948, and Thirdman sounds like Shepilov), their typical speech habits, even wrong accents in words. The role of various citations in the Raree Show music is important. For example, during the speeches of Firstman and Secondman we hear a continuous flourish traditional for such kind of meetings; the speech of Firstman is mainly based on the melody of Georgian folk song Suliko so much loved by ethnic Georgian Stalin; the final episode of Secondman’s speech features popular Caucasian dance Lezginika; the address of Thirdman starts with the tune of Russian folk song Kamarinskaya, followed successively by intonations of Tikhon Khrennikov’s song from popular movie “True Friends”, Russian folk song Kalinka, and finally, in the scene with chorus, the famous chanson couplets from Planquette’s comical opera The Bells of Corneville (Les cloches de Corneville).

The first version of the Raree Show was ready by the summer of 1948. Shostakovich showed it, in secrecy, to just a few of his closest friends. The socio-political changes of the “Khrushchev Thaw” in the late Fifties – early Sixties justified hopes for a public performance and publication of the opus, so the composer completed the second, refined version, with an enhanced role of the choir, and with a number of remarks and notes directly related to the behaviour of the performers. With the ban on performance of the Thirteenth Symphony of Shostakovich in 1962, and a line of loud political trials in the Soviet Union, the hopes for a pub-

lic performance of the Raree Show were dumped, but all this urged the composer to issue the third, and last, version of the opus, in which the Thirdman speech scene was extended and amended. According to the composer’s close friends, the Anti-Formalistic Raree Show in its final version was completed in 1968.

Today, fifty years after, the appalling phrases of the Show’s “characters”, and their caricature images are not so up-to-date, and, apart from their historical and political context, cannot be fully understood by the audience, be it in other countries or in Russia itself. We may be primarily attracted today by picturesque musical images of the opus – fireworks of the composer’s ideas, citations, and witty switchovers. The Anti-Formalistic Raree Show reveals covert aspects of the Shostakovich music, and invites us to (better understand his inner world and creative motivation. But first and foremost, it is a striking document of that bygone era, an evidence of a great witness.

Spring, Spring... to words by Pushkin is the only finished song of the conceived new Pushkinian string. The bright atmosphere, and even some radiance of the composition (especially when accompanied by piano) is largely consonant to the composer’s disposition in the spring and summer of 1967: Moscow was awaiting the premiere of the Second Violin Concerto and the Blockian cycle, the illness had retreated for a while, and he was in a very good shape.

Suite to Words by Michael Angelo Buonarroti was written by the composer in 1974, one year before his death. On the wave of interest on the

sculptor’s heritage aroused by his 52 th anniversary), Shostakovich addressed sonnets of Michael Angelo, finding in his poetry motifs surprisingly consonant with himself. Moreover, in this opus the approach to selection of poems seems so utterly personal nowhere else. It looks like nothing has changed in the world in the last five hundred years. Just as before, “heaven is indifferent to earthly merits”, and as before, “the fierce populace don’t need works of mine Art”; just as before, “’Tis sweet to sleep, e’en sweeter to be a stone, / When ’round me there is shame and crime alone. / There’s some relief in it when you can’t feel, nor see...”

Another feature of the Suite is the sincerity of love expressions, which is generally not typical for reserved and shy Shostakovich. It was only in his early composition Six Poems by Japanese Poets that the composer permitted himself to be so sensuous. The exclamation ending the second part, “O how much (is here for my hands to do”, or the passionate plea in Love, “Dare I, my treasure, / Exist without you, in lasting tortures, / If you are deaf to pleas to mollify the separation? / I do not keep in my sad heart any jore / Outcries, nor sighs, nor sobs. / What can I show you, Madonna? Yoke of suffering? / Or my death which is now so nigh?” All these are echoes of a great inner trepidation in which poetry of the great sufferer of the Renaissance fused with music of another sufferer of another time in a delightful emotion of love, which is so representative for any epoch or system of government.

The scenario of the cycle presents a quite clear and orderly plan. Truth as introduction, followed by the three parts Morning, Love and Separation as meditations on private happiness in all its most elevated manifestations. After them, Wrath,

Dante, and To the Exiled, three episodes addressing the personality of an artist, about a creator “forever revenged by meanness”. Thoughts on the essence of creativity in Artistry and Night. Finally, Death and Eternity as the epilogue. Having passed all that was predestined, the circle of life closes, which is also verified by a common musical theme pattern firmly joining the Suite into a fresco of a symphony scale.

In the final part, Eternity, some new, never-explored worlds appear. Transcendental trumpets that blew with a grave cold in the preceding piece give way to a childish-naive song. The Macrocosm sounding in the tiny bells of the piano’s higher octaves opens towards the future generations. Just as he himself in the Finale of his Fifteenth Symphony, or Beethoven in his last quartets, the composer parts with all that is earthly. It seems that the creator knows something that cannot be perceived by those now living. Having told his version of the eternal story of life, creation, love, and death, Shostakovich probably had never been so close to eternity, to his own Immortality, as in this amazing composition:

I seem to be dead, but, to soothe the world,
I live as a thousand souls in the hearts
Of all those who (love) therefore, (I am no dust,
And am not subject to deathly decay.

Yuri Serov

ФЁДОР КУЗНЕЦОВ, бас

Окончил физико-технический факультет Политехнического института в Нижнем-Новгороде (г. Горький) в 1983 году и Консерваторию им. М. И. Глинки в 1989 (класс профессора Е. Г. Крестинского). Стал лауреатом первой премии на Всероссийском конкурсе певцов в Перми в 1987. С 1987 по 1997 г. солист театра оперы и балета им. М. П. Мусоргского в Санкт-Петербурге, а с 1996 – солист Мариинского театра. На этих сценах Фёдор Кузнецов исполнил многие ведущие басовые партии мирового репертуара, среди них: Борис Годунов/Пимен/Варлаам ("Борис Годунов"), Царь Салтан ("Царь Салтан"), Рене ("Иоланта"), Досифей ("Хованщина"), Кончак ("Князь Игорь"), Гремин ("Евгений Онегин"), Фарлаф ("Руслан и Людмила"), Иван Грозный ("Псковитянка"), Князь Юрий/ Бурундай ("Сказание о невидимом граде Китеже), Мендоза ("Обручение в монастыре"), Ткаченко ("Семен Котко"), Инквизитор ("Огненный ангел"),

Старый каторжник ("Леди Макбет Мценского уезда"), Филипп/Инквизитор ("Дон Карлос"), Царь Египта ("Аида"), Командор ("Дон Жуан"), Клингзор ("Парсифаль"), Вотан ("Золото Рейна"), Хунлинг ("Валькирия"), Дон Базилио ("Севильский цирюльник").

Фёдор Кузнецов выступал на многих самых знаменитых оперных сценах мира, включая Метрополитен-опера, Ла Скала и Ковент-Гарден, гастролировал в десятках стран на всех пяти континентах. В активе певца участие в ораториальных концертах с исполнением сочинений Генделя, Моцарта, Бетховена, Россини, Брукнера, Малера, Шостаковича. Камерный репертуар артиста включает в себя сотни наименований русской музыки и современных сочинений западных композиторов. Искусство певца можно услышать на компакт-дисках, выпущенных фирмой Philips (Голландия), Rene Gailly (Бельгия), Delos (США), Northern Flowers (Россия).

FYODOR KUZNETSOV, bass

A native of Sverdlovsk, graduated from the Glinka Music Conservatory in Nizhny-Novgorod (Gorky) in 1989 (Prof. E. Krestinsky). He has won the first prize of the All-Russian Vocal Competition in 1987. Fyodor Kuznetsov was the leading soloist of the St. Petersburg's Mussorgsky Opera from 1987 till 1997. He is a principal singer of the Mariinsky Theatre / Kirov Opera since 1996.

Parts performed by the singer include Boris/Pimen/Varlaam (Boris Godunov), Dosifei (Khovanshchina), King Rene (Iolanta), Gremin (Eugene Onegin), Philip/Grand Inquisitor (Don Carlo), Colline (La Boheme), as well as the title parts of Rimsky-Korsakov's The Tale of Tsar Saltan and Petrov's Peter the Great. (The bass won the 1994 St. Petersburg Laureate Prize for his performance in the latter.) as well as Farlaf (Ruslan and Lyudmila), Ivan Grozny (Pskovitianka), The King (Aida), Don Basilio (Il Barbiere di Siviglia), Klingsor (Parsifal), Hunding (Die Walkiire), and Mendoza (Betrothal in a Monastery).

Fyodor Kuznetsov has sung on the most important opera stages of Germany, Italy, France, Holland, Spain, England, Argentina, Chile, Japan, Greece and the United States (Metropolitan Opera), among others. The Russian artist's concert repertoire includes Mozart's Requiem, Bruckner's Missa Solemnis, Rossini's Stabat Mater, Mahler's Eighth Symphony, Beethoven's Ninth and Shostakovich's Fourteenth. Kuznetsov can be heard on recordings of Betrothal in a Monastery and Boris Godunov for Philips as well as on several CDs for Rene Gailly (Belgium), Delos (USA) and Northern Flowers (Russia).

ЮРИЙ СЕРОВ, фортепиано

Окончил Петербургскую Консерваторию им. Н. А. Римского-Корсакова в 1991 году и аспирантуру в 1993 (проф. Р. Лебедев, фортепиано, проф. Т. Фидлер, камерный ансамбль, проф. Г. Серова, аккомпанемент). Стажировался в Зальцбурге и Веймаре у Нартмута Хёля.

В качестве солиста, участника фортепианного дуэта, ансамблиста и аккомпаниатора гастролировал во многих городах России, Латвии, Финляндии, Норвегии, Дании, Бельгии, Франции, Голландии, Австрии, Германии, Швейцарии, Бразилии и США, выступал с симфоническими оркестрами Петербурга, Саратова, Самары, Одесе (Дания).

Юрий Серов записал несколько крупных программ на Радио и ТВ России, Норвегии, Бразилии и Бельгии, более 30 компакт-дисков для различных фирм России, Бельгии, Японии и США. Юрий Серов автор многочисленных статей и эссе о музыке, преподаёт в Петербургской Кон-

серватории, является художественным руководителем международного фестиваля камерной музыки «Пять вечеров»

YURI SEROV, piano

Graduated from The St. Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory in 1991 and completed his post-graduate studies in 1993 (with Prof. R. Lebedev, piano, Prof. T. Fidler, chamber ensemble, Prof. H. Serova, piano accompaniment). He has studied with Hartmut Hoell in Salzburg and Weimar.

As a soloist, member of a piano duo and piano accompanist, Yuri Serov has toured many cities of Russia, Latvia, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Belgium, Holland, France, Austria, Switzerland, Brazil and the USA. He has performed with Philharmonic Orchestras of St. Petersburg, Saratov, Samara (Russia), Odense (Denmark) and several others. He has recorded several large programs for TV and Radio in Russia, Denmark, Brazil, Norway and Belgium. Yuri Serov has recorded over 30 CDs for a number of labels of Russia, Belgium, Japan and the USA, he is the author of many articles and essays on music. At present, he teaches chamber music at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He is Artistic Director of the International chamber music Festival Five Evenings in St. Petersburg.

A Foreword to my Complete Works and a Brief Contemplation in Respect of this Foreword

I scribble on paper in a spurt;
Then I hear catcalls, and my ear's not hurt;
Then I torment the ears of all the world;
Then have it printed, and forever unrecalled.
This is a Foreword which might be written not only for my Complete Works, but also to complete works of many, and very very many, composers, both Soviet and foreign.
And here is the signature: Dmitry Shostakovich
People's Artist of the You Ess Ess Are.
Followed by many other titles of honour:
First Secretary, Union of Composers of the Are Ess Eff Ess Are
(Simply a) Secretary, Union of Composers of the You Ess Ess Are
As well as very many other quite important responsibilities and positions.

Anti-Formalistic Raree Show, for bass, mixed choir, and piano.

Words by D. Shostakovich

Host
Well now, comrades, how 'bout beginning, shall we? The audience are not so many today, though. Indeed, underestimation of the cultural maximum of the lecturing propaganda still prevails here. But since, according to the plan of our House of Culture, we are having a number of addresses today on "Realism and Formalism in Music", we'll get it through, this here subject-matter I mean, well, these here addresses I mean I mean we'll get it all through.
(Music figures are silent.)
Right?
Adopted.
The introduction on this subject-matter will be delivered by Musicologist No. 1, our supreme consultant and musical critic, Comrade Firstman. Comrades, we are greeting our dear and beloved Great Comrade Firstman!
(Roaring lasting applause growing into ovation. Everyone rises.)

Music Figures and Figureses (already thrilled)

Hail! Long live Great Firstman! Hail!
Hail! Long live Great Firstman! Hail! (Everyone sits down)
Firstman (reads looking at a piece of paper)
Comrades! Realistic music is written by people's composers, while formalistic music is written by anti-people's composers. May I ask why realistic music is written by people's composers, and formalistic music is written by anti-people's composers? Realistic music, comrades, is written by people's composers just because (they, being realists by their nature, cannot, nay,

cannot help writing realistic music. While anti-people's composers, being formalists by their nature, cannot, nay, cannot help writing formalistic music. Therefore, the solution is for people's composers to develop realistic music, and for anti-people's composers to stop their more than doubtful experimenting in the domain of formalistic music.

Host
Right! Exactly! Comrades! Let's thank our Father, our beloved Great Firstman for his historic speech, for his presentation, addressing and coverage of important matters of the music trade.
(Roaring lasting applause growing into ovation. Everyone rises.)

Music Figures and Figureses
Thank you, thank you for the historic speech! Thank you, thank you for fatherly care! (Everyone sits down.)

Host
According to the plan that follows, \$floor shall be taken by Musicologist No. 2, who can and is capable of vocalizing into the same bargain. Comrade Secondman has the floor.

Secondman
Comrades! In my speech, I do not mean to cause any dis-soiance.

Music Figures and Figureses (laugh)
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Secondman (keeps on 'being funny)
Or atonality.
Music Figures and Figureses (laugh)
Ha, (ha, ha, ha, ha.

Secondman
In respect of the ideas we have heard here. What we demand from music, comrades, is beauty and elegance. Does this sound strange to you? Is it so? Well, of course, this seems strange to you. Strange seems this to you, strange seems this to you... Yes indeed, well, you find it strange, strange you find it, strange you find it, as if something is wrong in it. However, it is even so. This is no slip of my tongue. We support beautiful, elegant music. Music not melodious, music not aesthetic, music not harmonious, it's a... it's a... dental drill machine! Or, or a musical gas chamber. (Everyone roars with laughter, Secondman laughs too.)
O let us love all that's beautiful, charming, and elegant, let us love all that's aesthetic, harmonious, melodious, authorized,

polyphonic, popular, and classical! Moreover, comrades, I have to tell you that operas set in the Caucasus must contain the genuine lezginka dance, must contain the genuine lezginka. The lezginka in Caucasus operas must be simple, and known too, brave, traditional, popular, and Caucasian by all means. It must be real must always be real, and only, yea, only real, yes, yes, yes, yes, real.
(Music figures and figureses exclaim bravely, Caucasian-style, thus showing their full solidarity with the inspiring directions of Comrade A. A. Secondman.)

Music Figures and Figureses
Ahs-sah!

Secondman
The lezginka in Caucasus operas must be simple, and known too, brave, traditional, popular, and Caucasian by all means. It's got to be real, always got to be real, and only, yea, only real, yes, yes, yes, yes, real.
The lezginka in Caucasus operas must be simple, and known too, brave, traditional, popular, and Caucasian by all means. It's got to be real, always got to be real, and only, yea, only real, yes, yes, yes, yes, real.

Host
Here is a truly scientific speech! What an analysis! What a depth! Comrade Thirdman has the floor.

Thirdman (collecting his thoughts) Comrades, we must be like classics. We must have everything the classics had. Yes! Glinka, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, you are musical and elegant. Glinka, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, you are melodious, elegant, and sonorous. Glinka, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, you touch several strings. How right it is, how true it is! Our man is a very complicated organism. Our man is a very complicated organism. Our man is a very complicated organism. A very complicated organism. Therefore comrades, we need symphonies, poems, quartets, sonatas, suites, quintets... Suites, suites, my little lovely sonatas. Merry-o little quartets, my little lovely cantatas. Hey Glinka, blink it, wink it, poem, suite, symphony, seem so funny! Hey Glinka, Zerjinka, Tishinka, stink it, poem or suite, stinking cute... But we must always (remember: alertness, alertness everywhere and everywhere. Alertness, alertness always and in all cases. Be on the alert every moment! Never tell nobody!

Music Figures and Figureses
Alertness, alertness everywhere and everywhere. Alertness, alertness always and in all cases. We'll be on the alert every moment! We'll never tell nobody!

Thirdman

The Great Chief taught us all, repeating incessantly, "Look here, look there, let all enemies tremble. Look here, look there and stamp out enemies."

Music Figures and Figureses
Look here, look there, let enemies tremble in their homes. Look here, look there and stamp out enemies.

Thirdman

Alertness, alertness always and everywhere. Alertness, alertness always and in everything. Cut short any attempt to bring bourgeois ideology to our youth. This way you'll save our ideas, in all truth. Well and if anyone takes on bourgeois ideas, we'll lock them up for very long. To labor camps, and I treat them really strong. Lock up, lock up!

Music Figures and Figureses
Yea, yea, yea, yea, lock up, lock up, and sent them all to labor camps.

Thirdman

The Great Chief taught us all, repeating incessantly, Look here, look there, let all enemies tremble. Look here, look there and stamp out enemies."

Music Figures and Figureses
Look here, look there, let enemies tremble in their homes. Look here, look there and stamp out enemies.

Dance (to the tune of "Look here", the dancers look here. To the tune of "Look there" the dancers look there. The expression of the dancers' faces must be such that our ideology enemies should fall down scared to death.)

Spring, Spring...

Words by A. Pushkin
Spring, o spring, the season of love,
How annoying is your advent for me,
With some flaccid commotion
In my soul, in my blood...
My heart is so far from any enjoyment.
All that rejoices and gleams,
Brings me melancholy and languor.
Give me back snowstorms and blizzards
And the long dark of winter's nights.

Suite to Words by Michael Angelo Buonarroti

1. Truth
There are truths in sayings of old days,
Like this: he who can never wants to,
Lord, Thou hast perceived Lie's babbling,
And hast given the babblers what they deserve.

As for me, I am Thy servant; my labour's Thine,
Like beams are the sun's though Thy wrath foretells
All that my ardour longs to achieve,
And all my efforts are therefore needless.

Methought Thy greatness would have me
Not as an echo for chambers,
But as a cutting edge of justice and weight of wrath.

But Heaven is indifferent to earthly merits
And it is as fruitless to expect its award,
As to expect fruit from a barren tree.

2. Morning

There is nothing so joyful as the merry pastime
For flowers to touch that lovely head,
The gold of her plaits,
And kiss every spot of her without exception!

It's such a delight for her dress
To hug her torso and extend down in a wave;
It's such a pleasure for the golden net
To embrace her visage!

Even more tenderly, the weaving of that fancy band,
Gleaming with its embroidered pattern,
Closes around the young breasts.

And the clean sash, gently meandering,
Seems to be whispering, "I'll never part with her..."
O how much is here for my hands to do.

3. Love

Say, Love, is it true that my eyes
Really see the desired beauty,
Or it is just my creative daydream
That has chosen some chance looks as its support?

You should know! It was you who, in a plot with those looks,
Has deprived me of my sleep. Let it be!
My lips cherish each sigh,
And my soul is overflowed with irresistible fire.

"You do see real beauty,
But its shine is burning, growing and growing,
When it is ascending to your soul through your sight,

There to acquire divine purity,
And likeness of its Eternal Creator
This is why your eyesight is enchanted.

4. Separation

Dare I, my treasure,
Exist without you, in lasting tortures,
If you are deaf to pleas to mollify the separation?
I do not keep in my sad heart any more
Outcries, nor sighs, nor sobs.
What can I show you, Madonna? Yoke of suffering?
Or my death which is now so nigh?
But, to prevent Fate from expelling later
My loyal vassalage out of your memory *
I am leaving you my heart as a pledge.

5. Wrath

Here they make swords and helmets out of chalices,
They sell Christ's blood by ounce;
Thorn used for shields, and Holy Cross, for lances;
Still the lips of Christ are sealed with patient silence.

Let Him descend to our Bethlehems,
Or spill His blood again so that it would reach heaven;
Because those butchers see Rome as a wild forest,
And we keep Mercy behind a locked door.

I see no threat from luxury's encumbrance,
I've long had nothing here for me to do,
I fear rich apparels like Moor fears Medusa;

But if God has dressed poverty in glory,
What is that bondage that awaits us
By other lot, and under other colours?

6. Dante

Descending from heaven, in human flesh, he saw
Hell, that place of redemption,
And appeared alive to be contemplated by God,
And disclosed to us all the wisdom he had gained.

The beaming star, whose radiation lights
The land I was destined to be born in *
He is not to expect a reward from the world,
But from Thou who created the whole universe.

I am speaking of Dante now;
The fierce populace don't need works of his Art,
For they hold small even a superior genius.

If I were like him! Oh, if I were destined
For his deeds and the sorrow of his exile,
I would never wished a better lot!

7. To the Exiled

He seems to be honoured, but small honour it is.
His greatness has blinded our sight.
Should we blame commoners for their low gauge,
When our praise is trivial too!

For our sake he descended to the den of evil,
And God's kingdom was displayed to him;
But, while heaven opened him its door,
Homeland viciously locked the door on him.

The ungrateful one! For thine own ruin
Thou lasted tortures of thy son;
Thus perfection is forever revenged by meanness.

'Tis one example out of a legion!
Never has an exile been more villainous,
Never has the world seen a better man.

8. Artistry

When my hard hammer transforms a rock
Into images of human beings,
It would never do the work
If not for the master who aims the hit.

But God's hammer has produced an impact
That conveys grace to the world;
That hammer is the forerunner of all hammers,
And is a live model for them all.

I will stay idle like a primeval boulder,
Until Lord's hammersmith and he alone!
Assists me with an ample masterstroke.

9. Night

This night here, that is sleeping so peacefully
Before you, is a creation of an angel.
And though she's made of stone, she can breathe
And will speak as soon as she's awakened.

'Tis sweet to sleep, e'en sweeter to be a stone,
When 'round me there is shame and crime alone.

So pray be silent, friend, you may awaken me,
The reason be silent if when you can't see,

10. Death

I see my life's spending in its waste and time,
And still, my body aches for fleshly joy,
While the soul of mine prefers death to vice.

The world is blind, and eyes perceive no message,
A shameful one, from the evil's rule;
There is no hope, and darkness covers all,
And Lie prevails, Truth casting down its look.

Now when, O Lord, will it at last come forth *
What is longed for by those loyal? In delays
Faith withers up, and the soul's oppressed;

Why should we need the light of Thy salvation,
When our hearts are filled with darkness and love,
When our hearts are filled with darkness and love,

11. Eternity

So Fate has granted me untimely sleep,
But I'm not dead, though buried in a grave;
I'm still alive in thee, whose laments I can hear,
Because true friends reflect each other's image.

I seem to be dead, but, to soothe the world,
I live as a thousand souls in the hearts
Of all those who love; therefore, I am no dust,
And am not subject to deathly decay.

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