

## Dichterliebe - Poet's Love

Poems of Heinrich Heine (translation by Carl Banner)

1. In the lovely month of May  
When all buds burst open,  
Love sprouted in my heart.

In the lovely month of May  
When all birds sing  
I confessed my longing and desire.

2. Bouquets of flowers spring from my tears  
My sighs are a choir of nightingales.  
If you care about me, little one, all the flowers are yours,  
And under your window you will hear the nightingales.

3. The rose, the lily, the sun, the dove,  
I loved them once in joyous love.  
But I love no more; I love alone the fine, the divine, the most refined.  
She herself, the font of love, is rose, and lily, and sun, and dove.

4. When I look into your eyes,  
Pain and sorrow melt away;  
And when I kiss your lips,  
I am whole again.  
When I lie on your breast,  
I am overcome with joy;  
But when you say, "I love you!"  
I weep bitterly.

5. I will dip my soul in the bell of the lily;  
The lily will ring and breathe out my beloved's song.  
The song will vibrate and tremble just like the kiss from her lips,  
That she gave me once, in a wonderfully sweet hour.

6. Reflected in the waters of holy Rhein,  
Its great cathedral and the city of Köln.  
In the church there is a holy icon on golden leather, which has been a star of comfort in the wilderness of my life.  
Flowers and angels hover around the image of our Lady:  
Her eyes, her lips, her cheeks: they are yours exactly!

7. I bear no resentment  
Even though my heart breaks,  
My lost forever love,  
I bear no grudge.  
Even though you sparkle like a diamond,  
No light enters the night of your soul.  
I realize this at last.

I bear no resentment  
Even though my heart breaks.  
I saw you in a dream  
And saw the night around your heart  
And saw the snake that consumes it  
I saw, my love, how miserable you are.  
So I bear no grudge.

8. If the little flowers knew  
How deeply my heart is wounded,  
They would weep with me to heal my pain.  
And if the nightingale only knew  
How sad and sick I am,  
She would sing to comfort me.  
If the twinkling stars knew my distress,  
They would speak kindly to me.  
They couldn't possibly know...  
There is only one who knows my pain;  
And she herself, even she, she has torn my heart in two.

9. There is fluting and fiddling  
Trumpets blaring  
She's dancing her wedding dance  
My former beloved.

There is ringing and booming  
Drumming and blowing  
In between, if you listen, you can hear  
The sobbing and moaning  
Of little angels.

10. When I hear the song that once she sang,  
My heart jumps from my chest with wild pain.  
Dark passion drives me into the mountains  
Where my terrible grief melts into tears.

11. A youth loves a girl  
who loves another boy;  
but he loves another, and marries.  
Out of spite, the poor girl picks up with the first guy who comes along.  
And the boy, of course he feels just awful.  
Yes, it's an old story, but it always stays fresh.  
And if it happens to you, watch out!  
It will surely break your heart.

12. As I walked out in the mystic garden, on a hot summer day, hot summer lawn  
The flowers were whispering and talking, but I alone was dumb.  
The flowers whispered together, and looked at me tenderly:

"Don't be too angry with our sister, thou pale, sad human man."

13. I wept in my dream,  
You were in your grave.  
I woke up, tears streaming down my cheeks.  
I wept in my dream,  
I dreamed that you had left me.  
I woke up weeping.  
I wept in a dream,  
I dreamed that you were good to me.  
I woke up in a flood of tears.

14. All night in dreams I see you;  
You smile and greet me.  
I cry loudly, throwing myself at your lovely feet.  
But you are melancholy and shake your blonde hair.  
From your eyes drop tears like pearls.  
You whisper a secret word, and you give me a wreath of cypress.  
I awake: but the wreath is gone, and I have forgotten the word.

15. From ancient fairy tales  
we are beckoned with white hand,  
with tinkling songs about the land  
where precious flowers bloom  
against golden sunsets, scenting the evening with bridal countenance.  
Full green trees sing ancient melodies,  
The breezes are blowing secrets  
Among the bird songs twittering;  
Cloudy images rise from the earth  
To dance an airy dance  
With that amazing chorus;  
Blue flames sparkle on each leaf and twig,  
And red lights dash about in wild, crazy circles.  
Rushing springs break out of marble cliffs,  
Which make dazzling reflections in the brooks.  
Ah, if only I could go there,  
Refresh my heart from pain,  
Be free and blissful in that land of joy!  
I see it oft in dreams,  
But with the morning sun,  
It vanishes like a bubble.

16. Those old rancid songs,  
Those spoiled and angry dreams,  
Let's finally bury them once and for all!  
Get me a HUGE coffin -  
(It will have to hold a lot!  
But I won't say what, just yet).  
Big - like the great keg of Heidelberg!

And then get a catafalque with thick wooden planks,  
As heavy as the bridge at Mainz.  
And get me twelve strong giants,  
Like Christopher in the Köln cathedral.  
Those giants will bear the coffin away  
And sink it in the sea;  
(For such a coffin needs a vast grave).  
Do you want to know why the coffin must be so large?  
Because it will have to hold all my grief and love.