



Songs of Life and Loss

Casey Morris, *soprano* & Sira Jittapirom, *piano*

Master of Music Degree Recital

April 6, 2024 ~ 3:00pm

Puglisi Orchestra Hall

Baby Book (2017)

Lauren Spavelko

Poet: Chloe Yelena Miller

- I. Objects
- II. Children's Pool Game
- III. Quickening
- IV. Great Aunt Dora
- V. Looking Out
- VI. Searching

INTERMISSION

Vier Letzte Lieder – *Four Last Songs* (1948)

Richard Strauss

Poets: Hermann Hesse, Joseph von Eichendorff

- I. Frühling (*Spring*)
- II. September
- III. Beim Schlafengehn (*Upon Going to Sleep*)
- IV. Im Abendrot (*In the Sunset*)

from Amhráin Chaointe – *Keening Songs* (2019)

Anna Pidgorna

Caoine Magaidh (*A Joking Lament*)

Text: The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing

Baby Book

Lauren Spavelko

Poet: Chloe Yelena Miller

Objects

To mourn a woman,
carry her picture, wear her lapel pin.
There's nothing to wear, carry
after a miscarriage.

In Japan, mothers mourn
lost "water children."
Gardens of small statues
in red knitted hats, bibs.

Hands in my pockets,
I stand at the edge of the Tidal Basin,
wilted cherry blossoms above and below.

Quickening

Week 22

Quickening of the morning light.
Quickening of my heartbeat on the stairs.

and your quickening.
Flutters of joints – or whole body.

All while I reach for something.
While I stretch out on my left side.

The smallest of miracles,
these human movements.

Children's Pool Game

Even with closed eyes, we can find each other again.

I'll shout Marco!

You'll shout Polo!

Ok?

Marco!

–

Great Aunt Dora To You (Before You)

Week 30

She'd been waiting for you.
She'd sit in the blue chair, under the window,
elbows out as if cradling you.
Swing her arms back and forth.
Talk about how she'd hold you,
teach you to walk between our knees.
Ask me when you'll come; urged,
"hurry up!"

I promise to tell you all about her.
How she prepared meatballs,
two spoons to turn them.
How she knew you'd be smart,
handsome and
ever so kind.

Oh, how she loved beginnings.

Looking Out*eleven weeks old*

Strips of early day
 across the floor. Blinds half open
 like your eyes
 as you extend –
 swaddled arms break free.

We face each other
 as I carry you for our walk.
 We stop under the hilltop tree,
 sky peaks through the green layers.
 In a few years, we'll sit at those picnic tables,
 I tell you, and eat mozzarella sandwiches.

You close your eyes,
 lean towards me.
 Our hearts face the other.

Searching*eight weeks old*

For years, I looked
 for you around corners, between
 small hours of morning.
 And now, here you are in my arms,
 limbs heavy
 and sodden with sleep.

You weigh less awake,
 head bobbing, as you push your legs
 against my lap, hands against my chest,
 to look behind me,
 out the window –
 towards the sunshine.

The original formatting by the poet is preserved above.

Vier Letzte Lieder (Four Last Songs)

Richard Strauss

Poet: Hermann Hesse

I. Frühling

In dämmrigen Grüften
 Träumte ich lang
 Von deinen Bäumen und blauen Lüften
 Von deinem Duft und Vogelsang.

Nun liegst du erschlossen
 In Gleiß und Zier,
 Von Licht übergossen
 Wie ein Wunder vor mir.

Du kennst mich wieder,
 Du lockest mich zart,
 Es zittert durch all meine Glieder
 Deine selige Gegenwart.

I. Spring

In twilight tombs
 I long dreamed
 of your trees and blue sky
 of your scent and birdsong.

Now you lie revealed
 glistening and flowering,
 with light over pouring
 as a wonder for me.

You know me again,
 you lure me tenderly,
 it shakes through all my limbs
 your blessed presence.

II. September

Der Garten trauert,
Kühl sinkt in die Blumen der Regen.
Der Sommer schauert
Still seinem Ende entgegen.

Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt
Nieder vom hohen Akazienbaum.
Sommer lächelt erstaunt und matt
In den sterbenden Gartentraum

Lange noch bei den Rosen
Bleibt er stehen, sehnt sich nach Ruh.
Langsam tut er die
Müdgewordnen Augen zu.

III. Beim Schlafengehn

Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht,
Soll mein sehnliches Verlangen
Freundlich die gestirnte Nacht
wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.

Hände, laßt von allem Tun,
Stirn vergiß du alles Denken,
Alle meine Sinne nun
Wollen sich in Schlummer senken.

Und die Seele unbewacht
Will in freien Flügen schweben,
Um im Zauberkreis der Nacht
Tief und tausendfach zu leben.

II. September

The garden mourns,
the rain coolly sinks on the flowers.
Summer shivers
quietly as it meets its end.

Golden drops leaf by leaf
down from the high acacia tree.
Summer smiles astonished and frosted
in the dying garden dream.

For a long time still by the roses
it remains standing, longing for rest.
Slowly it too
closes its tired eyes.

III. Upon Going to Sleep

Now the day has made me tired,
my longing demands
I receive the starry night in friendship
like a sleepy child.

Hands, rest from all doing,
Brow, forget all your thinking,
all my senses now
want to sink into slumber.

and my unguarded soul
will in freest flight hover,
in the magic circles of night
living a thousandfold more deeply.

Poet: Joseph von Eichendorff

IV. Im Abendrot

Wir sind durch Not und Freude
Gegangen Hand in Hand,
Vom Wandern ruhen wir
Nun überm stillen Land.

Rings sich die Täler neigen,
Es dunkelt schon die Luft,
Zwei Lerchen nur noch steigen
Nachträumend in den Duft.

Tritt her, und laß sie schwirren,
Bald ist es Schlafenszeit,
Dass wir uns nicht verirren
In dieser Einsamkeit.

O weiter, stiller Friede!
So tief im Abendrot
Wie sind wir wandermüde –
Ist dies etwa der Tod?

IV. In the Sunset

We have gone through distress and joy
together, hand in hand;
from wandering we rest now
above the still land.

All around us the valleys slope down,
already the sky is getting dark,
Two larks alone climb
dreaming in the night's scent.

Come here and let them swirl
soon it is sleeping time,
we must not get lost
in this loneliness.

O vast, silent peace!
So deep in the sunset.
How we are tired of wandering–
Is this perhaps death?

**Translations by Casey Morris*

From Amhráin Chaointe (Keening Songs)

Anna Pidgorna

Text: "Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society (1922)", *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, Im. / Vol. IV, Cork University Press, 2002.

**Caoine Magaidh
(Sliocht)**

Ó moladh mór le Muire,
mar tá cliathán mo thíse cluthar,
Agus cruach mhóna im' chistin,
Is m'fhear tí ag dul don relig.
A Sheáin óig, a rún!

A Sheáin, trí lár mo chroí anonn!
Do chosa fada buí
Sinte síos le taobh do thí,
A Sheá-á-á-áin
trí lár mo chroí a...nonn!
Gol a gol ó, gol ó, gol ó;
Gol ó, gol ó, gol ó, gol;
Gol a gol ó, gol ó, gol ó;
A Sheáin, trí lár mo chroí a...nonn!

Mo ghrá thú is mo thaisce!
Do thugthá dhom an taobh ba chrua den leaba,
An chuid ba chaoile den bheatha,
Is an ceann ba raimhre den bhata,
A Sheáin óig a rún!

Mo chreach mór is mo lot!
Nuair a gheobhair-se uaim amach
Is braitlín bán id' ghlaic,
Is tairne síos id' chab
Do chuallacht suas let' ais,
Is mise rompu amach,
Mo rámhainn agam is mo shluasaid
Chun clúdaithe anuas ort,
A Sheáin óig a rún!

Cuirfead leac le cúl do chinn,
Is leac eile le trácht do bhoinn,
Dhá leac déag nó trí
Anuas ar aghaidh do chroí,
Ná ligfidh duit éirí aníos,
A Sheáin óig a rún!

**A Joke Lament
(Excerpt)**

Oh praise be to Mary,
My little house is cozy,
a stack of turf in the kitchen,
and my man on his way to the graveyard,
Oh young Johnny, my secret!

Oh, John, straight through my heart!
Your long yellow legs
Stretched out at the side of your house,
Dear Johnny o-o-o-oh
Straight through my hea-a-art!
Cry, a-cry o! Cry, o!, Cry, o!
Cry, o! Cry, o!, Cry, o! Cry!
Cry, a-cry o! Cry, o!, Cry, o!
Oh, John, straight through my hea-a-art!

My love and my treasure!
You gave me the hard side of the bed,
The thin side of the food,
The thick end of the stick,
Dear Johnny oh!

My great grief and sorrow!
When you go before me
In a white sheet, with clasped hands,
Your toothless mouth nailed shut,
Your relatives up beside you,
I will walk in front,
With my shovel and my spade,
To cover you with earth,
Dear Johnny oh!

I'll put a stone above your head
And another at your feet,
Twelve more or thirteen
I'll lay across your heart,
So you won't get up again,
Dear Johnny oh!

**Translation by Angela Bourke*