

Part I: Prologue In Heaven

(God, the Heavenly Hosts, and then Mephistopheles.)

(The Three Archangels step forward.)

Raphael

The Sun sings out, in ancient mode,
His note among his brother-spheres,
And ends his pre-determined road, 245
With peals of thunder for our ears.
The sight of him gives Angels power,
Though none can understand the way:
The inconceivable work is ours,
As bright as on the primal day. 250

Gabriel

And swift, and swift, beyond conceiving,
The splendour of the Earth turns round,
A Paradisial light is interleaving,
With night's awesome profound.
The ocean breaks with shining foam, 255
Against the rocky cliffs deep base,
And rock and ocean whirl and go,
In the spheres' swift eternal race.

Michael

And storms are roaring in *their* race
From sea to land, and land to sea, 260
Their raging forms a fierce embrace,
All round, of deepest energy.
The lightning's devastations blaze
Along the thunder-crashes' way:
Yet, Lord, your messengers, shall praise 265
The gentle passage of your day.

All Three

The sight of it gives Angels power
Though none can understand the way,
And all your noble work is ours,
As bright as on the primal day. 270

Mephistopheles

Since, O Lord, you near me once again,
To ask how all below is doing now,
And usually receive me without pain,
You see me too among the vile crowd.
Forgive me: I can't speak in noble style, 275
And since I'm still reviled by this whole crew,
My pathos would be sure to make you smile,
If you had not renounced all laughter too.
You'll get no word of suns and worlds from me.
How men torment themselves is all I see. 280
The little god of Earth sticks to the same old way,
And is as strange as on that very first day.
He might appreciate life a little more: he might,
If you hadn't lent him a gleam of Heavenly light:
He calls it Reason, but only uses it 285
To be more a beast than any beast as yet.
He seems to me, saving Your Grace,
Like a long-legged grasshopper: through space
He's always flying: he flies and then he springs,
And in the grass the same old song he sings. 290
If he'd just lie there in the grass it wouldn't hurt!
But he buries his nose in every piece of dirt.

God

Have you nothing else to name?
Do you always come here to complain?
Does nothing ever go right on the Earth? 295

Mephistopheles

No, Lord! I find, as always, it couldn't be worse.
I'm so involved with Man's wretched ways,
I've even stopped plaguing them, myself, these days.

God

Do you know, Faust?

Mephistopheles

The Doctor?

God

My servant, first!

Mephistopheles

In truth! He serves you in a peculiar manner. 300
There's no earthly food or drink at that fool's dinner.
He drives his spirit outwards, far,
Half-conscious of its maddened dart:
From Heaven demands the brightest star,
And from the Earth, Joy's highest art, 305
And all the near and all the far,
Fails to release his throbbing heart.

God

Though he's still confused at how to serve me,
I'll soon lead him to a clearer dawning,
In the green sapling, can't the gardener see 310
The flowers and fruit the coming years will bring.

Mephistopheles

What do you wager? I might win him yet!
If you give me your permission first,
I'll lead him gently on the road I set.

God

As long as he's alive on Earth, 315
So long as that I won't forbid it,
For while man strives he errs.

Mephistopheles

My thanks: I've never willingly seen fit
To spend my time amongst the dead,
I much prefer fresh cheeks instead. 320
To corpses, I close up my house:
Or it's too like a cat with a mouse.

God

Well and good, you've said what's needed!
Divert this spirit from his source,
You know how to trap him, lead him,
On your downward course, 325
And when you must, then stand, amazed:
A good man, in his darkest yearning,
Is still aware of virtue's ways.

Mephistopheles

That's fine! There's hardly any waiting. 330
My wager's more than safe I'm thinking.
When I achieve my goal, in winning,
You'll let me triumph with a swelling heart.
He'll eat the dust, and with an art,
Like the snake my mother, known for sinning. 335

God

You can appear freely too:
Those like you I've never hated.
Of all the spirits who deny, it's you,
The jester, who's most lightly weighted.
Man's energies all too soon seek the level, 340
He quickly desires unbroken slumber,
So I gave him you to join the number,
To move, and work, and play the devil.
But you the genuine sons of light,
Enjoy the living beauty bright! 345
Becoming, that works and lives forever,
Embrace you in love's limits dear,
And all that may as Appearance waver,
Fix firmly with everlasting Idea!

(Heaven closes, and the Archangels separate.)

Mephistopheles *(alone)*

I like to hear the Old Man's words, from time to time, 350
And take care, when I'm with him, not to spew.
It's very nice when such a great Gentleman,
Chats with the devil, in ways so human, too!

Part I Scene I: Night

(In a high-vaulted Gothic chamber, Faust, in a chair at his desk, restless.)

Ah! Now I've *done* Philosophy,
I've finished Law and Medicine, 355
And sadly even Theology:
Taken fierce pains, from end to end.
Now here I am, a fool for sure!
No wiser than I was before:
Master, Doctor's what they call me, 360
And I've been ten years, already,
Crosswise, arcing, to and fro,
Leading my students by the nose,
And see that we can know - nothing!
It almost sets my heart burning. 365
I'm cleverer than all these teachers,
Doctors, Masters, scribes, preachers:
I'm not plagued by doubt or scruple,
Scared by neither Hell nor Devil –
Instead all Joy is snatched away, 370
What's worth knowing, I can't say,
I can't say what I should teach
To make men better or convert each.
And then I've neither goods nor gold,
No worldly honour, or splendour hold: 375
Not even a dog would play this part!
So I've given myself to Magic art,
To see if, through Spirit powers and lips,
I might have all secrets at my fingertips.
And no longer, with rancid sweat, so, 380
Still have to speak what I cannot know:
That I may understand whatever
Binds the world's innermost core together,
See all its workings, and its seeds,
Deal no more in words' empty reeds. 385
O, may you look, full moon that shines,
On my pain for this last time:
So many midnights from my desk,
I have seen you, keeping watch:

When over my books and paper,	390
Saddest friend, you appear!	
Ah! If on the mountain height	
I might stand in your sweet light,	
Float with spirits in mountain caves,	
Swim the meadows in twilight' waves,	395
Free from the smoke of knowledge too,	
Bathe in your health-giving dew!	
Alas! In this prison must I stick?	
This hollow darkened hole of brick,	
Where even the lovely heavenly light	400
Shines through stained glass, dull not bright.	
Hemmed in, by heaps of books,	
Piled to the highest vault, and higher,	
Worm eaten, decked with dust,	
Surrounded by smoke-blackened paper,	405
Glass vials, boxes round me, hurled,	
Stuffed with Instruments thrown together,	
Packed with ancestral lumber –	
This is my world! And what a world!	
And need you ask why my heart	410
Makes such tremors in my breast?	
Why all my life-energies are	
Choked by some unknown distress?	
Smoke and mildew hem me in,	
Instead of living Nature, then,	415
Where God once created Men,	
Bones of creatures, and dead limbs!	
Fly! Upwards! Into Space, flung wide!	
Isn't this book, with secrets crammed,	
From Nostradamus' very hand,	420
Enough to be my guide?	
When I know the starry road,	
And Nature, you instruct me,	
My soul's power, you shall flow,	
As spirits can with spirits be.	425
Useless, this dusty pondering here	
To read the sacred characters:	
Soar round me, Spirits, and be near:	
If you hear me, then answer!	

(He opens the Book, and sees the Symbol of the Macrocosm)

Ah! In a moment, what bliss flows 430
Through my senses from this Sign!
I feel life's youthful, holy joy: it glows,
Fresh in every nerve and vein of mine.
This symbol now that calms my inward raging,
Perhaps a god deigned to write, 435
Filling my poor heart with delight,
And with its mysterious urging
Revealing, round me, Nature's might?
Am I a god? All seems so clear to me!
It seems the deepest works of Nature 440
Lie open to my soul, with purest feature.
Now I understand what wise men see:
"The world of spirits is not closed:
Your senses are: your heart is dead!
Rise, unwearied, disciple: bathe instead 445
Your earthly breast in the morning's glow!"

(He gazes at the Symbol.)

How each to the Whole its selfhood gives,
One in another works and lives!
How Heavenly forces fall and rise,
Golden vessels pass each other by! 450
Blessings from their wings disperse:
They penetrate from Heaven to Earth,
Sounding a harmony through the Universe!
Such a picture! Ah, alas! Merely a picture!
How then can I grasp you endless Nature? 455
Where are your breasts that pour out Life entire,
To which the Earth and Heavens cling so,
Where withered hearts would drink? You flow
You nourish, yet I languish so, in vain desire.

(He strikes the book indignantly, and catches sight of the Symbol of the Earth-Spirit.)

How differently it works on me, this Sign! 460
 You, the Spirit of Earth, are nearer:
 Already, I feel my power is greater,
 Already, I glow, as with fresh wine.
 I feel the courage to engage the world,
 Into the pain and joy of Earth be hurled, 465
 And though the storm wind is unfurled,
 Fearless, in the shipwreck's teeth, be whirled.
 There's cloud above me –
 The Moon hides its light –
 The lamp flickers!
 Now it dies! Crimson rays dart 470
 Round my head – Horror
 Flickers from the vault above,
 And grips me tight!
 I feel you float around me, 475
 Spirit, I summon to appear, speak to me!
 Ah! What tears now at the core of me!
 All my senses reeling
 With fresh feeling!
 I feel you draw my whole heart towards you! 480
 You must! You must! Though my Life's lost, too!

(He grips the book and speaks the mysterious name of the Spirit. A crimson flame flashes, the Spirit appears in the flame.)

Spirit

Who calls me?

Faust (*Looking away*)

Terrible to gaze at!

Spirit

Mightily you have drawn me to you,
 Long, from my sphere, snatched your food,
 And now –

Faust

Ah! Endure you, I cannot! 485

Spirit

You beg me to show myself, you implore,
You wish to hear my voice, and see my face:
The mighty prayer of your soul weighs
With me, I am here! – What wretched terror
Grips you, the Superhuman! Where is your soul's calling? 490
Where is the heart that made a world inside, enthralling:
Carried it, nourished it, swollen with joy, so tremulous,
That you too might be a Spirit, one of us?
Where are you, Faust, whose ringing voice
Drew towards me with all your force? 495
Are you he, who, breathing my breath,
Trembles in all your life's depths,
A fearful, writhing worm?

Faust

Shall I fear you: you form of fire?
I am, I am Faust: I am your peer! 500

Spirit

In Life's wave, in action's storm,
I float, up and down,
I blow, to and fro!
Birth and the tomb,
An eternal flow, 505
A woven changing,
A glow of Being.
Over Time's quivering loom intent,
Working the Godhead's living garment.

Faust

You who wander the world, on every hand, 510

Active Spirit, how close to you I feel!

Spirit

You're like the Spirit that you understand
Not me!

(It vanishes.)

Faust *(Overwhelmed)*

Not you?
Who then? 515
I, the image of the Godhead!
Not even like you?

(A knock.)

Oh, fate! I know that sound – it's my attendant –
My greatest fortune's ruined!
In all the fullness of my doing, 520
He must intrude, that arid pedant!

(Wagner enters, in gown and nightcap, lamp in hand. Faust turns to him impatiently.)

Wagner

Forgive me! But I heard you declaim:
Reading, I'm sure, from some Greek tragedy?
To profit from that art is my aim,
Nowadays it goes down splendidly. 525
I've often heard it claimed, you see
A priest could learn from the Old Comedy.

Faust

Yes, when the priest's a comedian already:
Which might well seem to be the case.

Wagner

Ah! When a man's so penned in his study, 530
And scarcely sees the world on holidays,
And barely through the glass, and far off then,
How can he lead men, through persuading them?

Faust

You can't, if you can't feel it, if it never
Rises from the soul, and sways 535
The heart of every single hearer,
With deepest power, in simple ways.
You'll sit forever, gluing things together,
Cooking up a stew from other's scraps,
Blowing on a miserable fire, 540
Made from your heap of dying ash.
Let apes and children praise your art,
If their admiration's to your taste,
But you'll never speak from heart to heart,
Unless it rises up from your heart's space. 545

Wagner

Still, lecturing brings orators success:
I feel that I am far behind the rest.

Faust

Seek to profit honestly!
Don't be an empty tinkling fool!
Understanding, and true clarity, 550
Express themselves without art's rule!
And if you mean what you say,
Why hunt for words, anyway?
Yes, your speech, that glitters so,
Where you gather scraps for Man, 555
Is dead as the mist-filled winds that blow
Through the dried-up leaves of autumn!

Wagner

Oh, God! Art is long
And life is short.
Often the studies that I'm working on 560
Make me anxious, in my head and heart.
How hard it is to command the means
By which a man attains the very source!
Before a man has travelled half his course,
The wretched devil has to die it seems. 565

Faust

Parchment then, is that your holy well,
From which drink always slakes your thirst?
You'll never truly be refreshed until
It pours itself from your own soul, first.

Wagner

Pardon me, but it's a great delight 570
When, moved by the spirit of the ages, we have sight
Of how a wiser man has thought, and how
Widely at last we've spread his word about.

Faust

Oh yes, as widely as the constellations!
My friend, all of the ages that are gone 575
Now make up a book with seven seals.
The spirit of the ages, that you find,
In the end, is the spirit of Humankind:
A mirror where all the ages are revealed.
And so often it's all a mere misery 580
Something we run away from at first sight.
A pile of sweepings, a lumber room, maybe
At best, a puppet show, that's bright
With maxims, excellent, pragmatic,
Suitable when dolls' mouths wax dramatic! 585

Wagner

But, the world! Men's hearts and minds!
Something of those, at least, I'd like to know.

Faust

Yes, what men choose to understand!
Who dares to name the child's real name, though?
The few who knew what might be learned, 590
Foolish enough to put their whole heart on show,
And reveal their feelings to the crowd below,
Mankind has always crucified and burned.
I beg you, friend, it's now the dead of night,
We must break up this conversation. 595

Wagner

I would have watched with you, if I might
Speak with you still, so learned in oration.
But tomorrow, on Easter's first holy day,
I'll ask my several questions, if I may.
I've pursued my work, zealously studying: 600
There's much I know: yet I'd know everything.
(*He leaves.*)

Faust (*Alone.*)

That mind alone never loses hope,
That keeps to the shallows eternally,
Grabs, with eager hand, the wealth it sees,
And rejoices at the worms for which it gropes! 605
Dare such a human voice echo, too,
Where this depth of Spirit surrounds me?
Ah yet! For just this once, my thanks to you,
You sorriest of all earth's progeny!
You've torn me away from that despair, 610
That would have soon overwhelmed my senses.
Ah! The apparition was so hugely there,
It might have truly dwarfed my defences.
I, image of the Godhead, already one,
Who thought the spirit of eternal truth so near, 615
Enjoying the light, both heavenly and clear,
Setting to one side the earthbound man:
I, more than Angel, a free force,
Ready to flow through Nature's veins,
And, in creating, enjoy the life divine, 620
Pulsing with ideas: must atone again!
A word like thunder swept me away.
I dare not measure myself against you.
I possessed the power to summon you,
But not the power to make you stay. 625
In that blissful moment, then
I felt myself so small, so great:
Cruelly you hurled me back again,
Into Man's uncertain state.

What shall I learn from? Or leave? 630
 Shall I obey that yearning?
 Ah! Our actions, and not just our grief,
 Impede us on life's journey.
 Some more and more alien substance presses
 On the splendour that the Mind conceives: 635
 And when we gain what this world possesses,
 We say the better world's dream deceives.
 The splendid feelings that give us life,
 Fade among the crowd's earthly strife.
 If imagination flew with courage, once, 640
 And, full of hope, stretched out to eternity,
 Now a little room is quite enough,
 When joy on joy has gone, in time's whirling sea.
 Care has nested in the heart's depths,
 Restless, she rocks there, spoiling joy and rest, 645
 There she works her secret pain,
 And wears new masks, ever and again,
 Appears as wife and child, fields and houses,
 As water, fire, or knife or poison:
 Still we tremble for what never strikes us, 650
 And must still cry for what has not yet gone.
 I am no god: I feel it all too deeply.
 I am the worm that writhes in dust: see,
 As in the dust it lives, and seeks to eat,
 It's crushed and buried by the passing feet. 655
 Is this not dust, what these vaults hold,
 These hundred shelves that cramp me:
 This junk, and all the thousand-fold
 Shapes, of a moth-ridden world, around me?
 Will I find here what I'm lacking else, 660
 Shall I read, perhaps, as a thousand books insist,
 That Mankind everywhere torments itself,
 So, here and there, some happy man exists?
 What do you say to me, bare grinning skull?
 Except that once your brain whirled like mine, 665
 Sought the clear day, and in the twilight dull,
 With a breath of truth, went wretchedly awry.
 For sure, you instruments mock at me,
 With cylinders and arms, wheels and cogs:

I stand at the door: and you should be the key: 670
 You're deftly cut, but you undo no locks.
 Mysterious, even in broad daylight,
 Nature won't let her veil be raised:
 What your spirit can't bring to sight,
 Won't by screws and levers be displayed. 675
 You, ancient tools, I've never used
 You're here because my father used you,
 Ancient scroll, you've darkened too,
 From smoking candles burned above you.
 Better the little I had was squandered, 680
 Than sweat here under its puny weight!
 What from your father you've inherited,
 You must earn again, to own it straight.
 What's never used, leaves us overburdened,
 But we *can* use what the Moment may create! 685
 Yet why does that place so draw my sight,
 Is that flask a magnet for my gaze?
 Why is there suddenly so sweet a light,
 As moonlight in a midnight woodland plays?
 I salute you, phial of rare potion, 690
 I lift you down, with devotion!
 In you I worship man's art and mind,
 Embodiment of sweet sleeping draughts:
 Extract, with deadly power, refined,
 Show your master all his craft! 695
 I see you, and my pain diminishes,
 I grasp you, and my struggles grow less,
 My spirit's flood tide ebbs, more and more,
 I seem to be where ocean waters meet,
 A glassy flood gleams around my feet, 700
 New day invites me to a newer shore.
 A fiery chariot sweeps nearer
 On light wings! I feel ready, free
 To cut a new path through the ether
 And reach new spheres of pure activity. 705
 This greater life, this godlike bliss!
 You, but a worm, have you earned this?
 Choosing to turn your back, ah yes,
 On all Earth's lovely Sun might promise!

Let me dare to throw those gates open, 710
 That other men go creeping by!
 Now's the time, to prove through action
 Man's dignity may rise divinely high,
 Never trembling at that void where,
 Imagination damns itself to pain, 715
 Striving towards the passage there,
 Round whose mouth all Hell's fires flame:
 Choose to take that step, happy to go
 Where danger lies, where Nothingness may flow.
 Come here to me, cup of crystal, clear! 720
 Free of your ancient cover now appear,
 You whom I've never, for many a year,
 Considered! You shone at ancestral feasts,
 Cheering the over-serious guests:
 One man passing you to another here. 725
 It was the drinker's duty to explain in rhyme
 The splendour of your many carved designs
 Or drain it at a draught, and breathe, in time:
 You remind me of those youthful nights of mine.
 Now I will never pass you to a friend, 730
 Or test my wits on your art again.
 Here's a juice will stun any man born:
 It fills your hollow with a browner liquid.
 I prepared it, now I choose the fluid,
 At last I drink, and with my soul I bid 735
 A high and festive greeting to the Dawn!

(He puts the cup to his mouth.)

(Bells chime and a choir sings.)

Choir of Angels

Christ has arisen!
 Joy to the One, of us,
 Who the pernicious,
 Ancestral, insidious, 740
 Fault has unwoven.

Faust

What deep humming, what shining sound
Strikes the glass from my hand with power?
Already, do the hollow bells resound,
Proclaiming Easter's festive course? Our 745
Choirs, do you already sing the hymn of consolation,
Which once rang out, in deathly night, in Angels' oration,
That certainty of a new testament's hour?

Chorus of Women

With pure spices
We embalmed him, 750
We his faithful
We entombed him:
Linen and bindings,
We unwound there,
Ah! Now we find 755
Christ is not here.

Choir of Angels

Christ has arisen!
Blissful Beloved,
Out of what grieved,
Tested, and healed: 760
His trial is won.

Faust

You heavenly sounds, powerful and mild,
Why, in the dust, here, do you seek me?
Ring out where tender hearts are reconciled.
I hear your message, but faith fails me: 765
The marvellous is faith's dearest child.
I don't attempt to rise to that sphere,
From which the message rings:
Yet I know from childhood what it sings,
And I'm recalled to life once more. 770

In other times a Heavenly kiss would fall
On me, in the deep Sabbath silence:
The bell notes filled with presentiments,
And a prayer was pleasure's call:
A sweet yearning, beyond my understanding, 775
Set me wandering through woods and fields,
And while a thousand tears were burning
I felt a world around me come to be.
Love called out the lively games of youth,
The joy of spring's idle holiday: 780
Memory's childish feelings, in truth,
Hold me back from the last sombre way.
O, sing on you sweet songs of Heaven!
My tears flow, Earth claims me again!

Chorus of Disciples

Has the buried one 785
Already, living,
Raised himself, alone,
Splendidly soaring:
Is he, in teeming air,
Near to creative bliss: 790
Ah! In sorrow, we're
Here on Earth's breast.
Lacking Him, we
Languish, and sigh.
Ah! Master we 795
Cry for your joy!

Choir of Angels

Christ has arisen
Out of corruption's sea.
Tear off your bindings
Joyfully free! 800
Actively praising him,
Lovingly claiming him,
Fraternally aiding him,
Prayerfully journeying,

Joyfully promising,
So is the Master near,
So is he here!

805

Part I Scene II: In Front Of The City-Gate

(Passers-by of all kinds appear.)

Several Apprentices

So, then, where are you away to?

Others

We're away to the Hunting Lodge.

The Former

We're off to saunter by the Mill.

810

An Apprentice

Off to the Riverside Inn, *I'd* guess.

A Second Apprentice

The way there's not of the best.

The Others

What about you?

A Third

I'm with the others, still.

A Fourth

Come to the Castle, you'll find there
The prettiest girls, the finest beer,
And the best place for a fight.

815

A Fifth

You quarrelsome fool, are you looking
For a third good hiding?
Not for me, that place, I hate its very sight.

A Maidservant

No, No! I'm going back to town. 820

Another

We'll find him by those poplar trees for sure.

The First

Well that's no joy for me, now:
He'll walk by your side, of course,
He'll dance with you on the green.
Where's the fun in that for me, then! 825

The Other

I'm sure he's not alone, he said
He'd bring along that Curly-head.

A Student

My how they strut those bold women!
Brother, come on! We'll follow them.
Fierce tobacco, strong beer, 830
And a girl in her finery, I prefer.

A Citizen's Daughter

They are handsome boys there, I see!
But it's truly a disgrace:
They could have the best of company,
And run after a painted face! 835

Second Student (*to the first*)

Not so fast! Those two behind,
They walk about so sweetly,
One must be that neighbour of mine:
I could fall for her completely.
They pass by with demure paces, 840
But in the end they'll go with us.

The First

Brother, no! I shouldn't bother, anyway.
Quick! Before our quarry gets away.
The hand that wields a broom on Saturday,
Gives the best caress, on Sunday too, I say. 845

Citizen

No, the new mayor doesn't suit me!
Now he's there he's getting cocky.
And what's he done to help the town?
Isn't it getting worse each day?
As always it's us who must obey, 850
And pay more money down.

A Beggar (*sings*)

Fine gentlemen, and lovely ladies,
Rosy-cheeked and finely dressed,
You could help me, for your aid is
Needed: see, ease my distress! 855
Don't let me throw my song away,

Only he who gives is happy.
A day when all men celebrate,
Will be a harvest day for me!

Another Citizen

On holidays there's nothing I like better 860
Than talking about war and war's display,
When in Turkey far away,
People one another batter.
You sit by the window: have a glass:
See the bright boats glide down the river, 865
Then you walk back home and bless
Its peacefulness, and peace, forever.

Third Citizen

Neighbour, yes! I like that too:
Let them go and break their heads,
Make the mess they often do: 870
So long as we're safe in our beds.

An Old Woman (*to the citizen's daughter*)

Ah! So pretty! Sweet young blood!
Who wouldn't gaze at you?
Don't be so proud! I'm very good!
And what you want, I'll bring you. 875

The Citizen's Daughter

Agatha, come away! I must go carefully:
No walking freely with such a witch as her:
For on Saint Andrew's Night she really
Showed me who'll be my future Lover.

The Other

She showed me mine in a crystal ball, 880
A soldier, with lots of other brave men:
I look around: among them all,
Yet I can never find him.

The Soldiers

Castles with towering
Ramparts and wall, 885
Proud girls showing
Disdain for us all,
We want them to fall!
The action is brave,
And splendid the pay! 890
So let the trumpet,
Do our recruiting,
Calling to joy
Calling to ruin.
It's a storm, blowing! 895
But it's the life too!
Girls and castles
We must win you.
The action is brave,
Splendid the pay! 900
And the soldiers
Go marching away.

(Faust and Wagner)

Faust

Rivers and streams are freed from ice
By Spring's sweet enlivening glance.
Valleys, green with Hope's happiness, dance: 905
Old Winter, in his weakness, sighs,
Withdrawing to the harsh mountains.
From there, retreating, he sends down

Impotent showers of hail that show
 In stripes across the quickening ground. 910
 But the sun allows nothing white below,
 Change and growth are everywhere,
 He enlivens all with his colours there,
 And lacking flowers of the fields outspread,
 He takes these gaudy people instead. 915
 Turn round, and from this mountain height,
 Look down, where the town's in sight.
 That cavernous, dark gate,
 The colourful crowd penetrate,
 All will take the sun today, 920
 The Risen Lord they'll celebrate,
 And feel they are resurrected,
 From low houses, dully made,
 From work, where they're constricted,
 From the roofs' and gables' weight, 925
 From the crush of narrow streets,
 From the churches' solemn night
 They're all brought to the light.
 Look now: see! The crowds, their feet
 Crushing the gardens and meadows, 930
 While on the river a cheerful fleet
 Of little boats, everywhere it flows.
 And over-laden, ready to sink,
 The last barge takes to the stream.
 From far off on the mountain's brink,
 All the bright clothing gleams.
 I hear the noise from the village risen,
 Here is the people's true Heaven,
 High and low shout happily:
 Here I am Man: here, dare to be! 940

Wagner

Doctor, to take a walk with you,
Is an honour and a prize:
Alone I'd have no business here, true,
Since everything that's coarse I despise.
Shrieking, fiddlers, skittles flying, 945
To me it's all a hateful noise:
They rush about possessed, crying,
And call it singing: and call it joy.

(Farm-workers under the lime tree. Dance and Song.)

The shepherd for the dance, had on
His gaudy jacket, wreath, and ribbon, 950
Making a fine show,
Under the linden-tree, already,
Everyone was dancing madly.
Hey! Hey!
Hurrah! Hurray! 955
So goes the fiddle-bow.

In his haste, in a whirl,
He stumbled against a girl,
With his elbow flailing:
Lively, she turned, and said: 960
Mind out, you wooden-head!
Hey! Hey!
Hurrah! Hurray!
Just watch where you're sailing!

Fast around the circle bright, 965
They danced to left and right,
Skirts and jackets flying.
They grew red: they grew warm,
They rested, panting, arm on arm
Hey! Hey! 970
Hurrah! Hurray!
And hip, and elbow, lying.

Don't be so familiar then!
That's how many a lying man,
Cheated his wife so! 975
But he soon tempted her aside,
And from the linden echoed wide:
Hey! Hey!
Hurrah! Hurray!
So goes the fiddle-bow. 980

An Old Farmer

Doctor, it's good of you today
Not to shun the crowd,
So that among the folk, at play,
The learned man walks about.
Then have some from the finest jug 985
That we've filled with fresh ale first,
I offer it now and wish it would,
Not only quench your thirst:
But the count of drops it holds
May it exceed your hours, all told. 990

Faust

I'll take some of your foaming drink,
And offer you all, health and thanks.

(The people gather round him in a circle.)

The Old Farmer

Truly, it's a thing well done:
You're here on our day of happiness,
Since in evil times now gone,
You've eased our distress!
Many a man stands here alive,
Whom your father, at the last,
Snatched from the fever's rage,
While the plague went past. 1000

And you, only a young man, went,
Into every house of sickness, then,
Though many a corpse was carried forth,
You walked safely out again.
Many a hard trial you withstood,
A Helper helped by the Helper above.

1005

All

Health to the man who's proven true,
Long may he help me and you!

Faust

To Him above bow down instead,
Who teaches help, and sends his aid.

1010

(He walks off, with Wagner.)

Wagner

How it must feel, O man of genius,
To be respected by the crowd!
O happy he whose gifts endow
Him with such advantages!
The father shows you to his son, now
Each one asks and pushes near,
The fiddle halts, and the dancers there:
You pass: in ranks they stop to see,
And throw their caps high in the air:
A little more and they'd bend the knee,
As if what they worshipped was holy.

1015

1020

Faust

Climb these few steps to that stone,
Here we'll rest from our wandering.
Here I've sat often, thoughtful and alone,
Tormenting myself with prayer and fasting.
Rich in hope, and firm of faith,

1025

Wringing my hands, with sighs even,
 Tears, to force the end of plague
 From the very God of Heaven.
 The crowd's approval now's like scorn. 1030
 O if you could read within me
 How little the father and the son
 Deserve a fraction of their glory.
 My father was a gloomy, honourable man,
 Who pondered Nature and the heavenly spheres, 1035
 Honestly, in his own fashion,
 With eccentric studies it appears:
 He, in his adepts' company,
 Locked in his dark workshop, forever
 Tried with endless recipes, 1040
 To make things opposite flow together.
 The fiery Lion, a daring suitor,
 Wed the Lily, in a lukewarm bath, there
 In a fiery flame, both of them were
 Strained from one bride-bed into another, 1045
 Until the young Queen was descried,
 In a mix of colours, in the glass:
 There was the medicine: the patient died.
 And who recovered? No one asked.
 So we roamed, with our hellish pills, 1050
 Among the valleys and the hills,
 Worse than the pestilence itself we were.
 I've poisoned a thousand: that's quite clear:
 And now from the withered old must hear
 How men praise a shameless murderer. 1055

Wagner

How can you grieve at that!
 Isn't it enough for an honest man
 To exercise the skill he has,
 Carefully, precisely, as given?
 Honour your father as a youth, 1060
 And receive his teaching in your soul,
 As a man, then, add to scientific truth,
 So your son can achieve a higher goal.

Faust

O happy the man who still can hope
Though drowned in a sea of error! 1065
Man needs the things he doesn't know,
What he knows is useless, forever.
But don't let such despondency
Spoil the deep goodness of the hour!
In the evening glow, we see 1070
The houses gleaming, green-embowered.
Mild it retreats, the day that's left,
It slips away to claim new being.
Ah, that no wing from earth can lift
Me, closer and closer to it, striving! 1075
I'd see, in eternal evening's light,
The silent Earth beneath my feet, forever,
The heights on fire, each valley quiet
While silver streams flow to a golden river.
The wild peaks with their deep clefts, 1080
Would cease to bar my godlike way,
Already the sea with its warm depths,
Opens to my astonished gaze.
At last the weary god sinks down to night:
But in me a newer yearning wakes, 1085
I hasten on, drinking his endless light:
The dark behind me: and ahead the day.
Heaven above me: and the waves below,
A lovely dream, although it vanishes.
Ah! Wings of the mind, so weightless 1090
No bodily wings could ever be so.
Yet it's natural in every spirit, too,
That feeling drives us, up and on,
When over us, lost in the vault of blue,
The lark sings his piercing song, 1095
When over the steep pine-filled peaks,
The eagle widely soars,
And across the plains and seas,
The cranes seek their home shores.

Wagner

I've often had strange moments, I know, 1100
But I've never felt yearnings quite like those:
The joys of woods and fields soon fade
I wouldn't ask the birds for wings: indeed,
How differently the mind's raptures lead
Us on, from book to book, and page to page! 1105
Then winter nights are beautiful, and sweet,
A blissful warmth steals through your limbs, too
When you've unrolled some noble text, complete,
Oh, how heaven's light descends on you!

Faust

You only feel the one yearning at best, 1110
Oh, never seek to know the other!
Two souls, alas, exist in my breast,
One separated from another:
One, with its crude love of life, just
Clings to the world, tenaciously, grips tight, 1115
The other soars powerfully above the dust,
Into the far ancestral height.
Oh, let the spirits of the air,
Between the heavens and Earth, weaving,
Descend through the golden atmosphere, 1120
And lead me on to new and varied being!
Yes, if a magic cloak were mine, that
Would carry me off to foreign lands,
Not for the costliest garment in my hands,
For the mantle of a king, would I resign it! 1125

Wagner

Don't call to that familiar crowd,
Streaming in misty circles, spreading,
Preparing a thousand dangers now,
On every side, for human beings.
The North winds' sharp teeth penetrate, 1130

Down here, and spit you with their fangs:
Then the East's drying winds are at the gate,
To feed themselves on your lungs.
If, from the South, the desert sends them,
And fire on fire burns on your brow, 1135
The West brings a swarm to quench them,
And you and field and meadow drown.
They hear us, while they're harming us,
Hear us, while they are betraying:
They make out they're from heaven above, 1140
And lisp like angels when they're lying.
Let's go on! The world has darkened,
The air is cool: the mists descend!
Man values his own house at night.
What is it occupies your sight? 1145
What troubles you so, in the evening?

Faust

Through corn and stubble, see that black dog running?

Wagner

I saw him long ago: he seems a wretched thing.

Faust

Look at him closely! What do you make of him?

Wagner

A dog that, in the way they do, 1150
Sniffs around to find his master.

Faust

See how he winds in wide spirals too,
Round us here, yet always coming nearer?
And if I'm right, I see a swirl of fire
Twisting about, behind his track. 1155

Wagner

Perhaps your eyesight proves a liar,
I only see a dog, that's black.

Faust

It seems to me that with a subtle magic,
He winds a fatal knot around our feet.

Wagner

I see his timid and uncertain antics,
It's strangers, not his master, whom he meets.

1160

Faust

The circle narrows: now he's here!

Wagner

You see a dog, there's no spectre near!
He barks uncertainly, lies down and crawls,
Wags his tail. Dogs' habits, after all.

1165

Faust

Come on! Here, now! Here, to me!

Wagner

He's a dogged hound, I agree.
Stand still and he holds his ground:
Talk to him, he dances round:
What you've lost, he'll bring to you:
Retrieve a stick from the water, too.

1170

Faust

You're right: and I see nothing
Like a Spirit there, it's only training.

Wagner

A wise man finds agreeable,
A dog that's learnt its lesson well.
Yes, he deserves all your favour,
Among the students, the true scholar!

1175

(They enter the City gate.)

Part I Scene III: The Study

(Faust enters, with the dog.)

Faust

Fields and meadows now I've left
Clothed in deepest night,
Full of presentiments, a holy dread 1180
Wakes the better soul in me to light.
Wild desires no longer stir
At every restless act of mine:
Love for Humanity is here,
And here is Love Divine. 1185

Quiet, dog! Stop running to and fro!
Why are you snuffling at the door?
Lie down now, behind the stove,
There's my best cushion on the floor.
Since you amused us running, leaping, 1190
Out on the mountainside, with zest,
Now I take you into my keeping,
A welcome, and a silent guest.

Ah, when in our narrow room,
The friendly lamp glows on the shelf, 1195
Brightness burns in our inner gloom,
In the Heart, that knows itself.
Reason speaks with insistence,
And Hope once more appears,
We see the River of Existence, 1200
Ah, the founts of Life, are near.

Don't growl, dog! With this holy sound
Which I, with all my soul, embrace,
Your bestial noise seems out of place.
Men usually scorn the things, I've found, 1205
That, by them, can't be understood,
Grumbling at beauty, and the good,
That to them seems wearisome:
Can't a dog, then, snarl like them?

Oh, yet now I can feel no contentment 1210
Flow through me, despite my best intent.
Why must the stream fail so quickly,
And once again leave us thirsty?
I've long experience of it, yet I think
I could supply what's missing, easily: 1215
We learn to value what's beyond the earthly,
We yearn to reach revelation's brink,
That's nowhere nobler or more excellent
Than where it burns in the New Testament.
I yearn to render the first version, 1220
With true feeling, once and for all,
Translate the sacred original
Into my beloved German.

(He opens the volume, and begins.)

It's written here: 'In the Beginning was the Word!'
Here I stick already! Who can help me? It's absurd, 1225
Impossible, for me to rate the word so highly
I must try to say it differently
If I'm truly inspired by the Spirit. I find
I've written here: 'In the Beginning was the Mind'.
Let me consider that first sentence, 1230
So my pen won't run on in advance!
Is it Mind that works and creates what's ours?
It should say: 'In the beginning was the Power!'
Yet even while I write the words down,
I'm warned: I'm no closer with these I've found. 1235
The Spirit helps me! I have it now, intact.
And firmly write: 'In the Beginning was the Act!'

If I'm to share my room with you,
Dog, you can stop howling too:
Stop your yapping! 1240
A fellow who's always snapping,
I can't allow too near me.
One of us you see,
Must leave the other free.
I've no more hospitality to show, 1245
The door's open, you can go.
But what's this I see!
Can this happen naturally?
Is it a phantom or is it real?
The dog's growing big and tall. 1250
He rises powerfully,
It's no doglike shape I see!
What a spectre I brought home!
Like a hippo in the room,
With fiery eyes, and fearful jaws. 1255
Oh! Now, what you are, I'm sure!
The Key of Solomon is good
For conjuring *your* half-hellish brood.

Spirits (*In the corridor.*)

Something's trapped inside!
Don't follow it: stay outside! 1260
Like a fox in a snare
An old lynx from hell trembles there.
Be careful what you're about!
Float here: float there,
Under and over, 1265
And he'll work his way out.
If you know how to help him,
Don't let yourself fail him!
Since it's all done for sure,
Just for your pleasure. 1270

Faust

First speak the Words of the Four
To encounter the creature.
Salamander, be glowing,
Undine, flow near,
Sylph, disappear, 1275
Gnome, be delving.

Who does not know
The Elements so,
Their power sees,
And properties, 1280
Cannot lord it
Over the Spirits.

Vanish in flame,
Salamander!
Rush together in foam, 1285
Undine!
Shine with meteor-gleam,
Sylph!
Bring help to the home,
Incubus! Incubus! 1290
Go before and end it thus!

None of the Four
 Show in the creature.
 He lies there quietly grinning at me:
 I've not stirred him enough it seems. 1295
 But you'll hear how
 I'll press him hard now.
 My good fellow, are you
 Exiled from Hell's crew?
 Witness the Symbol 1300
 Before which they bow,
 The dark crowd there!
 Now it swells, with its bristling hair.
 Depraved being!
 Can you know what you're seeing? 1305
 The uncreated One
 With name unexpressed,
 Poured through Heaven,
 Pierced without redress?

 Spellbound, behind the stove, 1310
 An elephant grows.
 It fills the room, completely,
 It will vanish like mist, I can see.
 Don't rise to the ceiling!
 Lie down at your master's feet! 1315
 You see I don't threaten you lightly.
 I'll sting you with fire that's holy!
 Don't wait for the bright
 Triple glowing Light!
 Don't wait for 1320
 My highest art!

(As the mist clears, Mephistopheles steps from behind the stove, dressed as a wandering Scholar.)

Mephistopheles

Why such alarms? What command would my lord impart?

Faust

This was the dog's core!
A wandering scholar? The fact makes me smile.

Mephistopheles

I bow to the learned lord! 1325
You certainly made me sweat, in style.

Faust

How are you named?

Mephistopheles

A slight question
For one who so disdains the Word,
Is so distant from appearance: one
Whom only the vital depths have stirred. 1330

Faust

We usually gather from your names
The nature of you gentlemen: it's plain
What you are, we all too clearly recognise
One who's called Liar, Ruin, Lord of the Flies.
Well, what are you then? 1335

Mephistopheles

Part of the Power that would
Always wish Evil, and always works the Good.

Faust

What meaning to these riddling words applies?

Mephistopheles

I am the spirit, ever, that denies!
And rightly so: since everything created,
In turn deserves to be annihilated: 1340
Better if nothing came to be.
So all that you call Sin, you see,
Destruction, in short, what you've meant
By Evil is my true element.

Faust

You call yourself a part, yet seem complete to me?

Mephistopheles

I'm speaking the truth to you, and modestly.
Even if Man's accustomed to take
His small world for the Whole, that's his mistake:
I'm part of the part, that once was - everything,
Part of the darkness, from which Light, issuing, 1350
Proud Light, emergent, disputed the highest place
With its mother Night, the bounds of Space,
And yet won nothing, however hard it tried,
Still stuck to Bodily Things, and so denied.
It flows from bodies, which it beautifies, 1355
And bodies block its way:
I hope the day's not far away
When it, along with all these bodies, dies.

Faust

Now I see the plan you follow!
You can't destroy it all, and so 1360
You're working on a smaller scale.

Mephistopheles

And frankly it's a sorry tale.

What's set against the Nothingness,
The Something, World's clumsiness,
Despite everything I've tried, 1365
Won't become a nothing: though I'd
Storms, quakes, and fires on every hand,
It deigned to stay as sea and land!
And those Men and creatures, all the damned,
It's no use my owning any of that crew: 1370
How many I've already done with too!
Yet new fresh blood is always going round.
So it goes on, men make me furious!
With water, earth and air, of course,
A thousand buds unfurl 1375
In wet and dry, warm and cold!
And if I hadn't kept back fire of old,
I'd have nothing left at all.

Faust

So you set the Devil's fist
That vainly clenches itself, 1380
Against the eternally active,
Wholesome, creative force!
Strange son of Chaos, start
On something else instead!

Mephistopheles

Truly I'll think about it: more 1385
Next time, on that head!
Might I be allowed to go?

Faust

I see no reason for you to ask it.
Since I've learnt to know you now,
When you wish: then make a visit. 1390
There's the door, here's the window,
And, of course, there's the chimney.

Mephistopheles

I must confess, I'm prevented though
By a little thing that hinders me,
The Druid's-foot on your doorsill – 1395

Faust

The Pentagram gives you pain?
Then tell me, you Son of Hell,
If that's the case, how did you gain
Entry? Are spirits like you cheated?

Mephistopheles

Look carefully! It's not completed: 1400
One angle, if you inspect it closely
Has, as you see, been left a little open.

Faust

Just by chance as it happens!
And left you prisoner to me?
Success created by approximation! 1405

Mephistopheles

The dog saw nothing, in his animation,
Now the affair seems inside out,
The Devil can't get *out* of the house.

Faust

Why not try the window then?

Mephistopheles

To devils and ghosts the same laws appertain: 1410
The same way they enter in, they must go out.
In the first we're free, in the second slaves to the act.

Faust

So you still have laws in Hell, in fact?
That's good, since it allows a pact,
And one with you gentlemen truly binds? 1415

Mephistopheles

What's promised you'll enjoy, and find,
There's nothing mean that we enact.
But it can't be done so fast,
First we'll have to talk it through,
Yet, urgently, I beg of you 1420
Let me go my way at last.

Faust

Wait a moment now,
Tell me some good news first.

Mephistopheles

I'll soon be back, just let me go:
Then you can ask me what you wish. 1425

Faust

I didn't place you here, tonight.
You trapped yourself in the lime.
Who snares the devil, holds him tight!
He won't be caught like that a second time.

Mephistopheles

I'm willing, if you so wish, 1430
To stay here, in your company:
So long as we pass the time, and I insist,
On arts of mine, exclusively.

Faust

Gladly, you're free to present
Them, as long as they're all pleasant. 1435

Mephistopheles

My friend you'll win more
For your senses, in an hour,
Than in a whole year's monotony.
What the tender spirits sing,
The lovely pictures that they bring, 1440
Are no empty wizardry.
First your sense of smell's invited,
Then your palate is delighted,
And then your touch, you see.
Now, I need no preparation, 1445
We're all here, so let's begin!

Spirits

Vanish, you shadowy
Vaults above!
Cheerfully show,
The friendliest blue 1450
Of aether, down here.
Would that shadowy
Clouds had gone!
Starlight sparkling
Milder sun 1455
Shining clear.
Heavenly children
In lovely confusion,
Swaying and bending,
Drifting past. 1460
Affectionate yearning,
Following fast:
Their garments flowing
With fluttering ribbons,
Cover the gardens, 1465

Cover the leaves, Where with each other In deep conversation Lover meets lover.	
Leaves on leaves!	1470
Tendrils' elation!	
Grapes beneath Crushed in a stream, Pressed to extreme,	
Crushed to fountain,	1475
Of foaming wine, Trickling, fine,	
Through rocks divine, Leaving the heights,	
Spreading beneath,	1480
Broad as the seas, Valleys it fills	
Round the green hills. And the wings still,	
Blissfully drunk,	1485
Fly to the sun, Fly to the brightness,	
Towards the islands, Out of the waves	
Magically raised:	1490
Now we can hear The choir of joy near,	
Over the meadow, See how they dance now,	
All in the air	1495
Dispersing there. Some of them climbing	
Over the mountains, Others are swimming	
Over the ocean,	1500
Others take flight:	
All towards Life, All towards distant,	
Love of the stars, and	
Approval's bliss.	1505

Mephistopheles

He's asleep! Enough, you delicate children of air!
You've sung to him faithfully, I declare!
I'm in your debt for all this.
He's not yet the man to hold devils fast!
Spellbind him with dream-forms, cast 1510
Him deep into illusions' sea:
Now, for the magic sill I must pass,
I could use rat's teeth: no need for me
To conjure up a lengthier spell,
One's rustling here that will do well. 1515

The Lord of Rats and Mice,
Of Flies, Frogs, Bugs and Lice,
Summons you to venture here,
And gnaw the threshold where
He stains it with a little oil - 1520
You've hopped, already, to your toil!
Now set to work! The fatal point,
Is at the edge, it's on the front.
One more bite, then it's complete –
Now Faust, dream deeply, till we meet. 1525

Faust (*Waking.*)

Am I cheated then, once again?
Does the Spirit-Realm's deep yearning fade:
So a mere dream has conjured up the devil,
And only a dog, it was, that ran away?

Part I Scene IV: The Study

(Faust, Mephistopheles)

Faust

A knock? Enter! Who's plaguing me again?

1530

Mephistopheles

I am

Faust

Enter!

Mephistopheles

Three times you must say it, then.

Faust

So! Enter!

Mephistopheles

Ah, now, you please me.
I hope we'll get along together:
To drive away the gloomy weather,
I'm dressed like young nobility,
In a scarlet gold-trimmed coat,
In a little silk-lined cloak,
A cockerel feather in my hat,
With a long, pointed sword,
And I advise you, at that,
To do as I do, in a word:
So that, footloose, fancy free,
You can experience Life, with me.

1535

1540

Faust

This life of earth, its narrowness,
Pains me, however I'm turned out, 1545
I'm too old to play about,
Too young, still, to be passionless.
What can the world bring me again?
Abstain! You shall! You must! Abstain!
That's the eternal song 1550
That in our ears, forever, rings
The one, that, our whole life long,
Every hour, hoarsely, sings.
I wake in terror with the dawn,
I cry, the bitterest tears, to see 1555
Day grant no wish of mine, not one
As it passes by on its journey.
Even presentiments of joy
Ebb, in wilful depreciation:
A thousand grimaces life employs 1560
To hinder me in creation.
Then when night descends I must
Stretch out, worried, on my bed:
What comes to me is never rest,
But some wild dream instead. 1565
The God that lives inside my heart,
Can rouse my innermost seeing:
The one enthroned beyond my art,
Can't stir external being:
And so existence is a burden: sated, 1570
Death's desired, and Life is hated.

Mephistopheles

Yet Death's a guest who's visit's never wholly celebrated.

Faust

Happy the man whom victory enhances,
Whose brow the bloodstained laurel warms,
Who, after the swift whirling dances, 1575

Finds himself in some girl's arms!
If only, in my joy, then, I'd sunk down
Before that enrapturing Spirit power!

Mephistopheles

Yet someone, from a certain brown
Liquid, drank not a drop, at midnight hour. 1580

Faust

It seems that you delight in spying.

Mephistopheles

I know a lot: and yet I'm not all-knowing.

Faust

When sweet familiar tones drew me,
Away from the tormenting crowd,
Then my other childhood feelings 1585
Better times echoed, and allowed.

So I curse whatever snares the soul,
In its magical, enticing arms,
Banishes it to this mournful hole,
With dazzling, seductive charms! 1590

Cursed be those high Opinions first,
With which the mind entraps itself!
Then glittering Appearance curse,
In which the senses lose themselves! 1595

Curse what deceives us in our dreaming,
With thoughts of everlasting fame!
Curse the flattery of 'possessing'
Wife and child, lands and name!

Curse Mammon, when he drives us
To bold acts to win our treasure: 1600
Or straightens out our pillows
For us to idle at our leisure!

Curse the sweet juice of the grape!

Curse the highest favours Love lets fall!
Cursed be Hope! Cursed be Faith, 1605
And cursed be Patience most of all!

Choir of Spirits (*Unseen*)

Sorrow! Sorrow!
You've destroyed it,
The beautiful world,
With a powerful fist: 1610
It tumbles, it's hurled
To ruin! A demigod crushed it!
We carry
Fragments into the void,
And sadly 1615
Lament the Beauty that's gone.
Stronger
For all of Earth's sons,
Brighter,
Build it again, 1620
Build, in your heart!
Life's new start,
Begin again,
With senses washed clean,
And sound, then, 1625
A newer art!

Mephistopheles

They're little, but fine,
These attendants of mine.
Precocious advice they give, listen,
Regarding both action, and passion! 1630
Into the World outside,
From Solitude, that's dried
Your sap and senses,
They tempt us.
Stop playing with grief, 1635
That feeds, a vulture, on your breast,
The worst society, you'll find, will prompt belief,

That you're a Man among the rest.
Not that I mean
To shove you into the mass. 1640
Among 'the greats', I'm second-class:
But if you, in my company,
Your path through life would wend,
I'll willingly condescend
To serve you, as we go. 1645
I'm your man, and so,
If it suits you of course,
I'm your slave: I'm yours!

Faust

And what must I do in exchange?

Mephistopheles

There's lots of time: you've got the gist. 1650

Faust

No, no! The Devil is an egotist,
Does nothing lightly, or in God's name,
To help another, so I insist,
Speak your demands out loud,
Such servants are risks, in a house. 1655

Mephistopheles

I'll be your servant here, and I'll
Not stop or rest, at your decree:
When we're together, on the other side,
You'll do the same for me.

Faust

The 'other side' concerns me less: 1660
Shatter this world, in pieces,
The other one can take its place,
The root of my joy's on this Earth,
And this Sun lights my sorrow:
If I must part from them tomorrow, 1665
What can or will be, that I'll face.
I'll hear no more of it, of whether
In that future, men both hate and love,
Or whether in those spheres, forever,
We're given a below and an above. 1670

Mephistopheles

In that case, you can venture all.
Commit yourself: today, you shall
View my arts with joy: I mean
To show you what no man has seen.

Faust

Poor devil what *can* you give? When has ever 1675
A human spirit, in its highest endeavour,
Been understood by such a one as you?
You have a never-satiating food,
You have your restless gold, a slew
Of quicksilver, melting in the hand, 1680
Games whose prize no man can land,
A girl, who while she's on my arm,
Snares a neighbour, with her eyes:
And Honour's fine and godlike charm,
That, like a meteor, dies? 1685
Show me fruits then that rot, before they're ready.
And trees grown green again, each day, too!

Mephistopheles

Such commands don't frighten me:
With such treasures I can truly serve *you*.
Still, my good friend, a time may come,
When one prefers to eat what's good in peace.

1690

Faust

When I lie quiet in bed, at ease.
Then let my time be done!
If you fool me, with flatteries,
Till my own self's a joy to me,
If you snare me with luxury –
Let that be the last day I see!
That bet I'll make!

1695

Mephistopheles

Done!

Faust

And quickly!
When, to the Moment then, I say:
'Ah, stay a while! You are so lovely!'
Then you can grasp me: then you may,
Then, to my ruin, I'll go gladly!
Then they can ring the passing bell,
Then from your service you are free,
The clocks may halt, the hands be still,
And time be past and done, for me!

1700

1705

Mephistopheles

Consider well, we'll not forget.

Faust

You have your rights, complete:
I never over-estimate my powers.
I'll be a slave, in defeat: 1710
Why ask whose slave or yours?

Mephistopheles

Today, likewise, at the Doctors' Feast
I'll do my duty as your servant.
One thing, though! – Re: life and death, I want
A few lines from you, at the least. 1715

Faust

You pedant, you demand it now in writing?
You still won't take Man's word for anything?
It's not enough that the things I say,
Will always accord with my future?
The world never ceases to wear away, 1720
And shall a promise bind me, then, forever?
Yet that's the illusion in our minds,
And who then would be free of it?
Happy the man, who pure truth finds,
And who'll never deign to sacrifice it! 1725
Still a document, written and signed,
That's a ghost makes all men fear it.
The word is already dying in the pen,
And wax and leather hold the power then.
What do you want from me base spirit? 1730
Will iron: marble: parchment: paper do it?
Shall I write with stylus, pen or chisel?
I'll leave the whole decision up to you.

Mephistopheles

Why launch into oratory too?
Hot-tempered: you exaggerate as well. 1735
Any bit of paper's just as good.
And you can sign it with a drop of blood.

Faust

If it will satisfy you, and it should,
Then let's complete the farce in full.

Mephistopheles

Blood is a quite special fluid. 1740

Faust

Have no fear I'll break this pact!
The extreme I can promise you: it is
All the power my efforts can extract.
I've puffed myself up so highly
I belong in your ranks now. 1745
The mighty Spirit scorns me
And Nature shuts me out.
The thread of thought has turned to dust,
Knowledge fills me with disgust.
Let the depths of sensuality 1750
Satisfy my burning passion!
And, its impenetrable mask on,
Let every marvel be prepared for me!
Let's plunge into time's torrent,
Into the whirlpools of event! 1755
Then let joy, and distress,
Frustration, and success,
Follow each other, as well they can:
Restless activity proves the man!

Mephistopheles

No goal or measure's set for you. 1760
Do as you wish, nibble at everything,
Catch at fragments while you're flying,
Enjoy it all, whatever you find to do.
Now grab at it, and don't be stupid!

Faust

It's not joy we're about: you heard it. 1765
I'll take the frenzy, pain-filled elation,
Loving hatred, enlivening frustration.
Cured of its urge to know, my mind
In future, will not hide from any pain,
And what is shared by all mankind, 1770
In my innermost self, I'll contain:
My soul will grasp the high and low,
My heart accumulate its bliss and woe,
So this self will embrace all theirs,
That, in the end, their fate it shares. 1775

Mephistopheles

Believe me, many a thousand year
They've chewed hard food, and yet
From the cradle to the bier,
Not one has ever digested it!
Trust one of us, this Whole thing 1780
Was only made for a god's delight!
In eternal splendour he is dwelling,
He placed us in the darkness quite,
And only gave you day and night.

Faust

But, *I* will! 1785

Mephistopheles

That's good to hear!
Yet I've a fear, just the one:
Time is short, and art is long.
I think you need instruction.
Join forces with a poet: use poetry,
Let *him* roam in imagination, 1790
You'll gain every noble quality
From your *honorary* occupation,
The lion's brave attitude
The wild stag's swiftness,
The Italian's fiery blood, 1795
The North's persistence.
Let *him* find the mysterious
Meeting of generous and devious,
While *you*, with passions young and hot,
Fall in love, according to the plot. 1800
I'd like to see such a gentleman, among us,
And I'd call him Mister Microcosmus.

Faust

What am I then, if it's a flight too far,
For me to gain that human crown
I yearn towards with every sense I own? 1805

Mephistopheles

In the end, you are – what you are.
Set your hair in a thousand curlicues
Place your feet in yard-high shoes,
You'll remain forever, what you are.

Faust

All the treasures of the human spirit 1810
I feel that I've expended, uselessly.
And wherever, at the last, I sit,
No new power flows, in me.

I'm not a hair's breadth taller, as you see,
And I'm no nearer to Infinity. 1815

Mephistopheles

My dear sir, you see the thing
Exactly as all men see it: why,
We must re-order everything,
Before the joys of life slip by.
Hang it! Hands and feet, belong to you, 1820
Certainly, a head, and a backside,
Yet everything I use as new
Why is my ownership of it denied?
When I can count on six stallions,
Isn't their horsepower mine to use? 1825
I drive behind, and am a proper man,
As though I'd twenty-four legs, too.
Look lively! Leave the senses be,
And plunge into the world with me!
I say to you that scholarly fellows 1830
Are like the cattle on an arid heath:
Some evil spirit leads them round in circles,
While sweet green meadows lie beneath.

Faust

How shall we begin then?

Mephistopheles

From here, we'll first win free.
What kind of a martyrs' hole *can* this be? 1835
What kind of a teacher of life is he,
Who fills young minds with ennui?
Let your neighbours do it, and go!
Do you want to thresh straw forever?
The best things you can ever know, 1840
You dare not tell the youngsters, ever.
I hear one of them arriving, too!

Faust

I've no desire to see him, though.

Mephistopheles

The poor lad's waited hours for you.
He mustn't go away un-consolated. 1845
Come: give me your cap and gown.
The mask should look delicious. So!

(He disguises himself.)

Now I've lost what wit's my own!
I want fifteen minutes with him, only:
Meanwhile get ready for our journey! 1850

(Faust exits.)

Mephistopheles *(In Faust's long gown.)*

Reason and Science you despise,
Man's highest powers: now the lies
Of the deceiving spirit must bind you
With those magic arts that blind you,
And I'll have you, totally – 1855

Fate gave him such a spirit
It urges him ever onwards, wildly,
And, in his hasty striving, he has leapt
Beyond all earth's ecstasies.

I'll drag him through raw life, 1860
Through the meaningless and shallow,

I'll freeze him: stick to him: keep him ripe,
Frustrate his insatiable greed, allow
Food and drink to drift before his eyes:
In vain he'll beg for consummation, 1865
And if he weren't the devil's, why
He'd still go to his ruination!

(A student enters.)

Student

I'm only here momentarily,
I've come, filled with humility,
To speak to, and to stand before,
One who's spoken of with awe.

1870

Mephistopheles

Your courtesy delights me greatly!
A man like other men you see.
Have you studied then, elsewhere?

Student

I beg you, please enrol me, here!
I come to you strong of courage,
Lined in pocket, healthy for my age:
My mother didn't want to lose me: though,
I'd like to learn what it's right for me to know.

1875

Mephistopheles

Then you've come to the right place, exactly.

1880

Student

To be honest, I'd like to go already:
There's little pleasure for me at all,
In these walls, and all these halls.
It's such a narrow space I find,
You see no trees, no leaves of any kind,
And in the lectures, on the benches,
All thought deserts me, and my senses.

1885

Mephistopheles

It will only come to you with habit.
So the child takes its mother's breast
Quite unwillingly at first, and yet it
Soon sucks away at her with zest.
So will you at Wisdom's breast, here,
Feel every day a little zestier.

1890

Student

I'll cling to her neck with pleasure:
But only tell me how to find her.

1895

Mephistopheles

Explain, before you travel on
What faculty you've settled on.

Student

I want to be a true scholar,
I want to grasp, by the collar,
What's on earth, in heaven above,
In Science, and in Nature too.

1900

Mephistopheles

Then here's the very path for you,
But don't allow yourself to wander off.

Student

I'll be present heart and soul:
Of course I'll want to play,
Have some fun and freedom, though,
On each sweet summer holiday.

1905

Mephistopheles

Use your time well: it slips away so fast, yet
Discipline will teach you how to win it.
My dear friend, I'd advise, in sum, 1910
First, the *Collegium Logicum*.
There your mind will be trained,
As if in Spanish boots, constrained,
So that painfully, as it ought,
It creeps along the way of thought, 1915
Not flitting about all over,
Wandering here and there.
So you'll learn, in many days,
What you used to do, untaught, as in a haze,
Like eating now, and drinking, you'll see 1920
The *necessity* of One! Two! Three!
Truly the intricacy of logic
Is like a master-weaver's fabric,
Where the loom holds a thousand threads,
Here and there the shuttles go 1925
And the threads, invisibly, flow,
One pass serves for a thousand instead.
Then the philosopher steps in: he'll show
That it certainly *had* to be so:
The first was - so, the second - so, 1930
And so, the third and fourth were - so:
If first and second had never been,
Third and fourth would not be seen.
All praise the scholars, beyond believing,
But few of *them* ever turn to weaving. 1935
To know and note the living, you'll find it
Best to first dispense with the spirit:
Then with the pieces in your hand,
Ah! You've only lost the spiritual bond.
'Natural treatment', Chemistry calls it 1940
Mocks at herself, and doesn't know it.

Student

I'm not sure that I quite understand.

Mephistopheles

You'll soon know it all, as planned,
When you've learnt the science of reduction,
And everything's proper classification.

1945

Student

After all that, I feel as stupid
As if I'd a mill wheel in my head.

Mephistopheles

Next, before all else, you'll fix
Your mind on Metaphysics!
See that you're profoundly trained
In what *never* stirs in a human brain:
You'll learn a splendid word
For what's occurred or not occurred.
But for the present take six months
To get yourself in order: start at once.
Five hours every day, lock
Yourself in, with a ticking clock!
Make sure you're well prepared,
Study each paragraph with care,
So afterwards you'll be certain
Only what's in the book, was written:
Then be as diligent when you pen it,
As if the Holy Ghost had said it!

1950

1955

1960

Student

You won't need to tell me twice!
I think, myself, it's very helpful, too
That one can take back home, and use,
What someone's penned in black and white.

1965

Mephistopheles

But choose a faculty, any one!

Student

I wouldn't be comfortable with Law.

Mephistopheles

I couldn't name you anything more
Vile, I know how dogmatic it's become.
Laws and rights are handed down
It's an eternal disgrace:
They're moved round from town to town
Dragged around from place to place.
Reason is nonsense, kindness a disease,
If you're a grandchild it's a curse!
The rights we are born with,
To those, alas, no one refers!

1970

1975

Student

That just strengthens my disgust.
Happy the student that you instruct!
I've nearly settled on Theology.

1980

Mephistopheles

I wouldn't wish to guide you erroneously.
In what that branch of knowledge concerns
It's so difficult to avoid a fallacious route, 1985
There's so much poison hidden in what you learn,
And it's barely distinguishable from the antidote.
The best thing here's to make a single choice,
Then simply swear by your master's voice.
On the whole, to words stick fast! 1990
Through the safest gate you'll pass
To the Temple of Certainty.

Student

Yet surely words must have a sense.

Mephistopheles

Why, yes! But don't torment yourself with worry,
Where sense fails it's only necessary 1995
To supply a word, and change the tense.
With words fine arguments can be weighted,
With words whole Systems can be created,
With words, the mind does its conceiving,
No word suffers a jot from thieving. 2000

Student

Forgive me, I delay you with my questions,
But I must trouble you again,
On the subject of Medicine,
Have you no helpful word to say?
Three years, so little time applied, 2005
And, God, the field is rather wide!
If only you had some kind of pointer,
You would feel so much further on.

Mephistopheles (*Aside.*)

I'm tired of this desiccated banter
I really must play the devil, at once. 2010

(*Aloud.*)

To grasp the spirit of Medicine's easily done:
You study the great and little world, until,
In the end you let it carry on
Just as God wills. 2015

Useless to roam round, scientifically:
Everyone learns only what he can:
The one who grasps the Moment fully,
He's the proper man. 2020

You're quite a well-made fellow,
You're not short of courage too,
And when you're easy with yourself,
Others will be easy with you. 2025

Study, especially, female behaviour:
Their eternal aches and woes,
All of the thousand-fold,
Rise from one point, and have one cure. 2030

And if you're half honourable about it
You shall have them in your pocket.
A title first: to give them comfort you
Have skills that far exceed the others, 2035

Then you're free to touch the goods, and view
What someone else has prowled around for years.
Take the pulse firmly, you understand,
And then, with sidelong fiery glance,
Grasp the slender hips, in haste,
To find out whether she's tight-laced. 2040

Student

That sounds much better! The Where and How, I see.

Mephistopheles

Grey, dear friend, is all theory,
And green the golden tree of life.

Student

I swear it's like a dream to me: may I
Trouble you, at some further time,
To expound your wisdom, so sublime?

2040

Mephistopheles

As much as I can, I'll gladly explain.

Student

I can't tear myself away,
I must just pass you my album, sir,
Grant me the favour of your signature!

2045

Mephistopheles

Very well.

(He writes and gives the book back.)

Student *(Reading Mephistopheles' Latin inscription which means: 'You'll be like God, acquainted with good and evil'.)*

Eritis sicut Deus, scientes bonum et malum.

(He makes his bows, and takes his leave.)

Mephistopheles

Just follow the ancient text, and my mother the snake, too:
And then your likeness to God will surely frighten you!

2050

(Faust enters.)

Faust

Where will we go, then?

Mephistopheles

Where you please.
The little world, and then the great, we'll see.
With what profit and delight,
This term, you'll be a parasite!

Faust

Yet with my long beard, I'll
Lack life's superficial style. 2055
My attempt will come to nothing:
I know, in this world, I don't fit in.
I feel so small next to other men,
It only means embarrassment. 2060

Mephistopheles

My friend, just give yourself completely to it:
When you find yourself, you'll soon know how to live it.

Faust

How shall we depart from here, then?
I see not one servant, coach, or horse.

Mephistopheles

We'll just spread this cloak wide open, 2065
Then through the air we'll take our course.
For a daring trip like this we're on,
Better not take much baggage along.
A little hot air I'll ready, first,

To lift us nimbly above the Earth,
And as we're light we'll soon get clear:
Congratulations on your new career!

2070

Part I Scene V: Auerbach's Cellar in Leipzig

(Friends happily drinking.)

Frosch

Will none of you laugh? Nobody drink?
I'll have to *teach* you to smile, I think!
You're all of you like wet straw today,
And usually you're well away.

2075

Brander

That's up to you, you bring us nothing.
Nothing dumb, or dirty, nothing.

Frosch *(Pouring a glass of wine over Brander's head.)*

You can have both!

Brander

Rotten swine!

Frosch

You wanted them both, so you got mine!

2080

Siebel

Out the door, whoever fights! Get out!
Let's sing a heart-felt chorus, drink and shout!
Up! Hurray! Ha!

Altmayer

Ah! I'm in agony!
Earplugs, here! This fellow's deafened me.

Siebel

It's only when it echoes in the tower, 2085
You hear a bass voice's real power.

Frosch

Right, out with him who takes offence!
Ah! Do, re, me!

Altmayer

Ah! Do, re, me!

Fosch

Our throats are tuned: commence.

(He sings.)

'Dear Holy Roman Empire, 2090
How do you hold together?'

Brander

A lousy song! Bah! A political song -
A tiresome song! Thank God, every morning,
It isn't you who must sit there worrying
About the Empire! At least I'm better for 2095
Not being a King or a Chancellor.
But *we* should have a leader, so
We'll choose a Pope of our own.
You know the qualities that can
Swing the vote, and elevate the man. 2100

Frosch *(Sings.)*

'Sing away, sweet Nightingale,
Greet my girl, and never fail.'

Siebel

Don't greet *my* girl! I'll not allow it!

Frosch

Greet *and* kiss her! You'll not stop it!

(*He sings.*)

'Slip the bolt in deepest night! 2105
Slip it! Wake, the lover bright.
Slip it to! At break of dawn.'

Siebel

Yes, sing in praise of her, and boast: sing on!
I'll laugh later when it suits:
She leads me a dance, she'll lead you too. 2110
She should have a dwarf for a lover!
At the crossroads, let him woo her:
An old goat from Blocksberg, galloping over,
Can bleat goodnight, as it passes by her.
An honest man, of flesh and blood, 2115
For a girl like that's far too good.
I'm not bothered even to say hello
Except perhaps to break her window.

Brander (*Pounding on the table.*)

Quiet! Quiet! Or you won't hear!
I know about life, you lot, confess. 2120
Besotted persons sit among us,
As fits their status, then, I must
Give them, tonight, of my very best.
Listen! A song in the newest strain!
And you can shout out the refrain! 2125

(*He sings.*)

‘Once there was a cellar rat,
Who lived on grease, and butter:
He had a belly, round and fat,
Just like Doctor Luther.
The cook set poison round about:
It brought on such a violent bout,
As if he’d love inside him.’

2130

Chorus (*Shouting.*)

‘As if he’d love inside him!’

Brander

‘He ran here, and he ran there,
And drank from all the puddles,
Gnawing, scratching, everywhere,
But nothing cured his shudders.
In torment, he leapt to the roof,
Poor beast, soon he’d had enough,
As if he’d love inside him.’

2135

2140

Chorus

‘As if he’d love inside him!’

Brander

‘Fear drove him to the light of day,
Into the kitchen then he ran,
Fell on the hearth and twitched away,
Pitifully weak, and wan.
Then the murderess laughed with glee:
He’s on his last legs, I see,
As if he’d love inside him.’

2145

Chorus

‘As if he’d love inside him.’

Siebel

How pleased they are, the tiresome fools! 2150
Spreading poison for wretched rats,
To me, that's the right thing to do!

Brander

You're in sympathy with them, perhaps?

Altmayer

That fat belly with a balding head!
Bad luck makes him meek and mild: 2155
From a swollen rat, he sees, with dread,
His own natural likeness is compiled.

(Faust and Mephistopheles appear.)

First of all, I had to bring you here,
Where cheerful friends sup together,
To see how happily life slips away. 2160
For these folk every day's a holiday.
With lots of leisure, and little sense,
They revolve in their round-dance,
Chasing their tails as kittens prance,
If the hangovers aren't too intense, 2165
If the landlord gives them credit,
They're cheerful, and unworried by it.

Brander

They're fresh from their travelling days,
You can tell by their foreign ways:
They've not been back an hour: you see. 2170

Frosch

True, you're right! My Leipzig's dear to me!
It's a little Paris, and educates its people.

Siebel

Who do you think the strangers are?

Frosch

Let me find out! I'll draw the truth,
From those two, with a brimming glass,
As easily as you'd pull a child's tooth.
It seems to me they're of some noble house,
They look so discontented and so proud.

2175

Brander

They're surely strolling players, I'd guess!

Altmayer

Perhaps.

Frosch

Watch me screw it out of them, then!

2180

Mephistopheles (*To Faust.*)

These folk wouldn't feel the devil, even
If he'd got them dangling by the neck.

Faust

Greetings, sirs!

Siebel

Thank you, and greetings.

(He mutters away, inspecting Mephistopheles side-on.)

What's wrong with his foot: why's he limping?

Mephistopheles

Allow us to sit with you, if you please. 2185
Instead of fine ale that can't be had,
We can still have good company.

Altmayer

You seem a choosy sort of lad.

Frosch

Was it late when you started out from Rippach?
Perhaps you dined with Hans there, first? 2190

Mephistopheles

We passed straight by, today, without a rest!
We spoke to him last some time back,
When he talked a lot about his cousins,
And he sent to each his kind greetings.

(He bows to Frosch.)

Altmayer *(Aside.)*

He did you, there! He's smart!

Siebel

A shrewd customer! 2195

Frosch

Wait, I'll have him soon, I'm sure!

Mephistopheles

If I'm not wrong, we heard
A tuneful choir singing?
I'm sure, with this vault, the words
Must really set it ringing!

2200

Frosch

Are you by any chance a virtuoso?

Mephistopheles

No! Though my desire is great, my skill is only so-so.

Altmayer

Give us a song!

Mephistopheles

If you wish it, a few.

Siebel

So long as it's a brand-new one!

Mephistopheles

Well, it's from Spain that we've just come,
The lovely land of wine, and singing too.

2205

(He sings.)

'There was once a king, who
Had a giant flea' –

Frosch

Listen! Did you get that? A flea.
A flea's an honest guest to me. 2210

Mephistopheles (*Sings.*)

'There was once a king, who
Had a giant flea,
He loved him very much, oh,
He was like a son, you see.
The king called for his tailor, 2215
He came right away:
Now, measure up the lad for
A suit of clothes, I say!'

Brander

Make sure the tailor's sharp,
And cuts them out precisely, 2220
And, since his son's dear to his heart,
Make sure there's never a crease to see.

Mephistopheles

'All in silk and velvet,
He was smartly dressed,
With ribbons on his coat, 2225
A cross upon his chest.
He was the First Minister,
And so he wore a star:
His brothers and his sisters,
He made noblest by far. 2230

The lords and the ladies,
They were badly smitten,
The Queen and her maids,
They were stung and bitten.
They didn't dare to crush them,
Or scratch away, all night.
We smother them, and crush them,
The moment that they bite.'

2235

Chorus (*Shouted.*)

'We smother them, and crush them,
The moment that they bite.'

2240

Frosch

Bravo! Bravo! That went sweetly!

Siebel

So shall it be with every flea!

Brander

Sharpen your nails, and crush them fine!

Altmayer

Long live freedom, and long live wine!

Mephistopheles

I'd love to drink a glass, in freedom's honour,
If only the wine were a little better.

2245

Siebel

Not again, we don't want to hear!

Mephistopheles

I fear the landlord might complain
Or I'd give these worthy guests,
One of my cellar's very best.

2250

Siebel

Just bring it on! He'll accept it: I'll explain.

Frosch

Make it a good glass and we'll praise it.
But don't make it so small we can't taste it.
Because if I'm truly going to decide,
I need a really big mouthful inside.

2255

Altmayer (*Aside.*)

They're from the Rhine, as I guessed.

Mephistopheles

Bring me a corkscrew!

Brander

What for?
Is it outside already, this cask?

Altmayer

There's one in the landlord's toolbox, for sure.

Mephistopheles (*Takes the corkscrew. To Frosch.*)

Now, what would you like to try?

2260

Frosch

What? Is there a selection, too?

Mephistopheles

There's a choice for every one of you.

Altmayer (*To Frosch.*)

Ah! You soon catch on: your lips are dry?

Frosch

Good! When I've a choice, I drink Rhenish.
The Fatherland grants those best gifts to us.

2265

Mephistopheles (*Boring a hole in the table-edge where Frosch is sitting.*)

Bring me a little wax, to make the seals, as well!

Altmayer

Ah, that's for the conjuring trick, I can tell.

Mephistopheles (*To Brander.*)

And yours?

Brander

Champagne for me is fine:
Make it a truly sparkling wine!

*(Mephistopheles bores the holes: one of the others makes the wax stoppers
and stops the holes with them.)*

We can't always shun what's foreign, 2270
Things from far away are often fine.
Real Germans can't abide a Frenchman,
And yet they gladly drink his wine.

Siebel (*As Mephistopheles approaches his seat.*)

I must confess I do dislike the dry,
Give me a glass of the very sweetest! 2275

Mephistopheles (*Boring a hole.*)

I'll pour an instant Tokay for you, yes?

Altmayer

Now, gentlemen, look me in the eye!
I see you've had the better of us there.

Mephistopheles

Now! Now! With guests so rare,
That would be far too much for me to dare. 2280
Quick! Time for you to declare!
Which wine can I serve you with?

Altmayer

Any at all! Don't make us ask forever.

(*Now all the holes have been stopped and sealed.*)

Mephistopheles (*With a strange gesture.*)

Grapes, they are the vine's load!
Horns, they are the he-goat's: 2285
Wine is juice: wood makes vines,
The wooden board shall give us wine.
Look deeper into Nature!
Have faith, and here's a wonder!
Now draw the stoppers, and drink up! 2290

All (*Draw the stoppers, and the wine they chose flows into each glass.*)

O lovely fount, that flows for us!

Mephistopheles

But careful, don't lose a drop!

(*They drink repeatedly.*)

All (*Singing.*)

'We're all of us cannibals now,
We're like five hundred sows.'

Mephistopheles

The folk are free, and we can go, you see! 2295

Faust

I'd like to leave here now.

Mephistopheles

Watch first: their bestiality
Will make a splendid show.

Siebel

(He drinks carelessly, wine pours on the ground and bursts into flame.)

Help! Fire! Hell burns bright!

Mephistopheles *(Charming away the flame.)*

Friendly element, be quiet!

2300

(To the drinkers.)

For this time, just a drop of Purgatory.

Siebel

What's that? You wait! You'll pay dearly!
It seems you don't quite see us right.

Frosch

Try playing that trick a second time, on us!

Altmayer

I think we should quietly send him packing.

2305

Siebel

What, sir? You think you're daring,
Tricking us with your hocus-pocus?

Mephistopheles

Be quiet, old wine-barrel!

Siebel

You broomstick! You'll show us you're ill bred?

Brander

Deep in this green arbour, here,
See, the vines! What grapes appear!

(He grasps Siebel by the nose: the others do the same reciprocally, and raise their knives.)

Mephistopheles

From their eyes, Error, take the iron band, 2320
And let them see how the Devil plays a joke.

(He vanishes with Faust: the revellers separate.)

Siebel

What's happening?

Altmayer

And how?

Frosch

Was that your nose?

Brander *(To Siebel.)*

And I've still got your nose in my hand!

Altmayer

It was a tremor, that passed through every limb!
Pass me a stool: I'm sinking in! 2325

Frosch

Tell me: what happened there, my friend?

Siebel

Where is he? When I catch that fellow,
He won't leave *here* alive again!

Altmayer

I saw him myself fly out of the cellar
Riding on a barrel – and then –
I feel there's lead still in my feet.

2330

(He turns towards the table.)

Ah! Does the wine still flow as sweet?

Siebel

It was deception, cheating, lying.

Frosch

Still, it seemed that I drank wine.

Brander

And what about all those grapes that hung there?

2335

Altmayer

Tell me, *now*, we shouldn't believe in wonders!

Part I Scene VI: The Witches' Kitchen

(A giant cauldron stands on a low hearth, with a fire under it. Various shapes appear in the fumes from the cauldron. A She-Ape sits next to it, skimming it, watching to see it doesn't boil over. The He-Ape, with young ones, sits nearby warming himself. The ceiling and walls are covered with the Witches' grotesque instruments.)

Faust

These magical wild beasts repel me, too!
Are you telling me I can be renewed,
Wandering around in this mad maze,
Demanding help from some old hag: 2340
That her foul cookery will spirit away
Thirty years from my age, just like that?
It's sad, if you know of nothing better!
The star of hope has quickly set.
Hasn't some noble mind, or Nature, 2345
Found some wondrous potion yet?

Mephistopheles

My friend, what you say, again, is intelligent!
There's a natural means to make you younger:
But it's written, in a book quite different,
And in an odd chapter. 2350

Faust

I'll know it, then.

Mephistopheles

Fine! You've a method here that needs
No gold, no doctor, no magician:
Take yourself off to the nearest field,
To scratch around, and hoe, and dig in,
Maintain yourself, and constrain 2355

Your senses in a narrow sphere:
Feed yourself on the purest fare,
Be a beast among beasts: think it no robbery,
To manure the fields you harvest, there:
Since that's the best of ways, believe me, 2360
To keep your youth for eighty years!

Faust

I'm not used to it, can't condescend,
To take a spade in hand, and bend:
That narrow life wouldn't suit me at all.

Mephistopheles

So you must call the witch then, after all. 2365

Faust

Why is that old witch necessary!
Why can't you, yourself, make the brew?

Mephistopheles

What a lovely occupation for me!
And build a thousand bridges, meanwhile, too.
It's not just art and science that tell, 2370
Patience is needed in the work as well.
A calm mind's busy years in its creation,
Only time strengthens the fermentation.
And everything about it
Is quite a peculiar show! 2375
It's true the Devil taught it:
The Devil can't make it though.

(Seeing the creatures.)

See what a dainty race I hail!
This is the female: this is the male!

(To the creatures.)

The mistress isn't home, I say?

2380

The Creatures

Feasting away,
Gone today,
The Chimney way!

Mephistopheles

How long will she be swarming?

The Creatures

As long as our paws are warming.

2385

Mephistopheles *(To Faust.)*

What do you think of these tender creatures?

Faust

As rude as any I ever saw!

Mephistopheles

Ah, but to me this kind of discourse
Shows the most delightful features!

(To the creatures.)

Accursed puppets, tell me true,
What are you stirring in that brew?

2390

The Creatures

We're cooking up thick beggars' soup.

Mephistopheles

Then there'll be thousands in the queue.

The He-Ape (*Approaches and fawns on Mephistopheles.*)

O, throw the dice quick,
And let me be rich! 2395
I'll be the winner!
It's all arranged badly,
And if I had money,
I'd be a thinker.

Mephistopheles

Why does the ape think he'd be lucky, 2400
If he'd only a chance to try the lottery!

(Meanwhile the young apes have been playing with a large ball, and they roll it forward.)

The He-Ape

The world's a ball
It lifts to fall,
Rolls without rest:
Rings like glass, 2405
And breaks as fast!
It's hollow at best.
It's shining here,
Here, what's more:
'I am living!' 2410
A place dear son,
To keep far from!
You must die!
Its clay will soon
In pieces, lie. 2415

Mephistopheles

Why the sieve?

The He-Ape (*Lifting it down.*)

If you were a thief
I'd know you this minute.

(He runs to the She-Ape, and lets her look through the sieve.)

Look through the sieve!
Can you see the thief,
But daren't name him?

2420

Mephistopheles (*Approaching the fire.*)

And this pot?

The He-Ape and She-Ape

What a silly lot!
Not to know a pot,
Not to know a kettle!

2425

Mephistopheles

Rude creature!

The He-Ape

Take this brush here,
And sit on the settle.

(He invites Mephistopheles to sit down.)

Faust (*Who all this time has been standing in front of a mirror, alternately approaching it and distancing himself from it.*)

What do I see? What heavenly form
Is this that the magic mirror brings! 2430
Love, lend me your swiftest wings,
Then bear me to fields she adorns!
Ah, if I do not stand still here,
If I dare to venture nearer,
I see as if through a mist, no clearer – 2435
The loveliest form of Woman, there!
Is it possible: can Woman be so lovely?
Must I, in her outspread body, declare
The incarnation of all that's heavenly?
Can any such this earth deliver? 2440

Mephistopheles

Naturally, if a God torments himself six days,
And says to himself, *Bravo*, at last, in praise,
He must have made *something* clever.
See, this time, what will satisfy you, forever:
I'll know how to fish that treasure out for you, 2445
Happy, the one who finds good fortune in her,
And carries her home again, as his bride, too.

(*Faust gazes endlessly in the mirror. Mephistopheles stretches himself on the settle, plays with the brush, and continues to speak.*)

Here I sit like a king on his throne,
The sceptre's here, but where's the crown?

The Creatures (*Who up till now have been making all kinds of grotesque movements together, bring Mephistopheles a crown, with great outcry.*)

Oh, with sweat and with blood, 2450
If you'll be so good,
Glue on this crown, sublime!

(They are awkward with the crown, and snap it in two pieces, with which they leap about.)

Now that's out of the way!
We see, and we say,
We hear, and we rhyme -

2455

Faust *(In front of the mirror.)*

Ah! I'll go completely mad.

Mephistopheles *(Pointing to the creatures.)*

Now *my* head's almost spinning.

The Creatures

If our luck's not bad,
If there's sense to be had,
We must be thinking!

2460

Faust *(As before.)*

My heart pains me with its burning! Quick,
Let's leave this place, forego it!

Mephistopheles *(Still in the same position.)*

Well, at least one must admit
That they're *honest* poets.

(The cauldron that the She-Ape has forgotten to keep a watch on, now boils over: a great flame flares from the chimney. The Witch comes careering down through the flames, with horrendous cries.)

Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow!
Damned creature! Accursed sow!
You left the kettle: you've singed me now!
Accursed creature!

2465

(Seeing Faust and Mephistopheles.)

What have we here?
Who are you, here? 2470
What do you want?
Who creeps unknown?
The fire's pain own
In all your bone!

(She plunges the skimming-ladle into the cauldron, and scatters flame towards Faust, Mephistopheles and the Creatures. The Creatures whimper.)

Mephistopheles *(Reversing the brush he holds in his hand, and striking among the jars and glasses.)*

One, two! One, two!
There lies the brew!
There lies the glass!
A joke at last,
In time, she-ass,
To your melody, too. 2480

(As the Witch starts back in Anger and Horror.)

Do you know me? Skeleton! Scarecrow!
Do you know your lord and master?
What stops me from striking you, so,
Crushing you, and your ape-creatures?
Have you no respect for a scarlet coat? 2485
Don't you understand a cockerel's feather?
Have I hidden my face, you old she-goat?
Have I to name myself, as ever?

The Witch

Oh sir, forgive the rude welcome!
I don't see a single foot cloven. 2490
And your two ravens - are where?

Mephistopheles

This once, you get away with it:
It's truly a good while, isn't it,
Since we've been seen together.
And Civilisation makes men level, 2495
It even sticks to the Devil:
That Northern demon is no more:
Who sees horns now, or tail or claw?
As for the feet, which I can't spare,
That would harm me with the people. 2500
So like many a youth, now, I wear,
False calves and false in-steps, as well.

The Witch (*Dancing.*)

Sense and reason flee my brain,
I see young Satan here again!

Mephistopheles

Woman, I forbid that name! 2505

The Witch

Why? What harm is caused so?

Mephistopheles

It's written in story books, always:
Men are no better for it, though:
The Evil One's gone: the evil stays.
Call me the Baron: that sounds good: 2510
I'm a gentleman, like the other gentlemen.
Perhaps you doubt my noble blood:
See, here's the crest I carry, then!

(He makes an indecent gesture.)

The Witch (*Laughing immoderately.*)

Ha! Ha! That's your way, as ever.
You're the same rogue forever!

2515

Mephistopheles (*To Faust.*)

My friend, take note: learn that this is
The proper way to handle witches.

The Witch

Now, gentlemen, say how I can be of use.

Mephistopheles

A good glass of your well-known juice!
But I must insist on the oldest:
The years double what it can do.

2520

The Witch

Gladly! Here's a flask, on the shelf:
I sometimes drink from it myself,
And it doesn't really stink at all:
I'll gladly give him a glass or so.

2525

(*Whispering.*)

If he drinks it unprepared, recall,
He won't live a single hour, though.

Mephistopheles

He's my good friend: it'll go down well:
Don't begrudge the best of your kitchen.
Draw the circle: speak the speech, then
Offer him a glass full!

2530

(The Witch draws a circle with fantastic gestures, and places mysterious articles inside it: meanwhile the glasses start to ring, and the cauldron to echo, and make music. Finally she brings a large book, sits the Apes in a ring, who serve as a reading desk and hold torches. She beckons Faust to approach.)

Faust *(To Mephistopheles.)*

Tell me, now, what's happening?
These wild gestures, crazy things,
All of this tasteless trickery,
Is known, and hateful enough to me. 2535

Mephistopheles

A farce! You should be laughing:
Don't be such a serious fellow!
This hocus-pocus she, the doctor's, making,
So you'll be aided by the juice to follow.

(He persuades Faust to enter the circle.)

The Witch *(Begins to declaim from the book, with much emphasis.)*

You shall see, then! 2540
From one make ten!
Let two go again,
Make three even,
You're rich again.
Take away four! 2545
From five and six,
So says the Witch,
Make seven and eight,
So it's full weight:
And nine is one, 2550
And ten is none.
This is the Witch's one-times-one!

Faust

I'm in the dark, the hag babbles with fever.

Mephistopheles

There's still more she's not gone over,
I know it well, the whole book's like this: 2555
I've wasted time on it before, though,
A perfect contradiction in terms is
Ever a mystery to the wise: fools more so.
My friend, the art's both old and new,
It's like this in every age, with two 2560
And one, and one and two,
Scattering error instead of truth.
Men prattle, and teach it undisturbed:
Who wants to be counted with the fools?
Men always believe, when they hear words, 2565
There must be thought behind them, too.

The Witch (*Continuing.*)

The highest skill,
The science, still
Is hidden from the rabble!
One who never thought, 2570
To him it's brought,
He owns it without trouble.

Faust

Why talk this nonsense to us?
My head's near split in two.
It seems I hear the chorus, 2575
Of a hundred thousand fools.

Mephistopheles

Enough, enough, O excellent Sibyl!
Bring the drink along: and fill
The cup, quick, to the very brim:
The drink will bring my friend no harm: 2580
He's a man of many parts, and him
Many a noble draught has charmed.

(The Witch, ceremoniously, pours the drink into a cup: as Faust puts it to his lips, a gentle flame rises.)

Down it quickly! Every time! It'll
Likewise, warm your heart, entire.
You're hand in hand with the Devil: 2585
Will you shrink before the fire?

(The Witch breaks the circle. Faust steps out.)

Now, quick, away! You may not rest.

The Witch

Much good may that potion do you!

Mephistopheles *(To the Witch.)*

On Walpurgis Night you can tell me best,
What favour I can return to you. 2590

The Witch

Here's a song! Sing it sometimes, and you,
Will feel a peculiar effect: don't ask me how.

Mephistopheles *(To Faust.)*

Come on, quickly, run about now:
You need to sweat, that will allow
The power to penetrate, through and through. 2595

Later, I'll teach you to value leisure,
And soon you'll find with deepest pleasure,
How Cupid stirs, and, now and then, leaps, too.

Faust

Let me look quickly in the glass, once more!
How lovely that woman's form, I descried!

2600

Mephistopheles

No! No! The paragon of *all* women, you're
About to see before you, personified.

(*Aside.*)

With that drink in your body, well then,
All women will look to you like Helen.

Part I Scene VII: A Street

(Faust. Margaret, passing by.)

Faust

Lovely lady, may I offer you 2605
My arm, and my protection, too?

Margaret

Not lovely, nor the lady you detected,
I can go home, unprotected.

(She releases herself and exits.)

Faust

By Heavens, the child is lovely!
I've never seen anything more so. 2610
She's virtuous, yet innocently
Pert, and quick-tongued though.
Her rosy lips, her clear cheeks,
I'll not forget them in many a week!
The way she cast down her eyes, 2615
Deep in my heart, imprinted, lies:
How curt in her speech she was,
Well that was quite charming, of course!

(Mephistopheles enters.)

Listen, you must get that girl for me!

Mephistopheles

Which one?

Faust

The girl who just went by.

2620

Mephistopheles

That one, there? She's come from the priest,
Absolved of all her sins, while I
Crept into a stall nearby:
She is such an innocent thing,
She's no need to sit confessing:
I've no power with such as those, I mean!

2625

Faust

Yet, she's older than fourteen.

Mephistopheles

Now you're speaking like some Don Juan
Who wants every flower for himself alone,
Conceited enough to think there's no honour,
To be plucked except by him, nor favour:
But that's never the case, you know.

2630

Faust

Master Moraliser is that so?
With me, best leave morality alone!
I'm telling you, short and sweet,
If that young heart doesn't beat
Within my arms, tonight - so be it,
At midnight, then our pact is done.

2635

Mephistopheles

Think, what a to and fro it will take!
I need at least fourteen days, to make
Some kind of opportunity to meet her.

2640

Faust

If I'd seven hours at my call,
I'd not need the Devil at all,
To seduce such a creature.

Mephistopheles

You're almost talking like a Frenchman: 2645
But don't let yourself get all annoyed:
What's the use if she's only part enjoyed?
Your happiness won't be as prolonged,
As if you were to knead and fashion
That little doll, with every passion, 2650
Up and down, as yearning preaches,
And many a cunning rascal teaches.

Faust

I've enough appetite without all that.

Mephistopheles

Now, without complaint or jesting, what
I'm telling you is, with this lovely child, 2655
Once and for all, you mustn't be wild.
She won't be taken by storm, I said:
We'll need to use cunning instead.

Faust

Get me a part of the angels' treasure!
Lead me to where she lies at leisure! 2660
Get me a scarf from her neck: aspire
To a garter, that's my heart's desire.

Mephistopheles

So you can see how I will strain
To help you, and ease your pain,
We'll not let an instant slip away,
I'll lead you to her room today.

2665

Faust

And shall I see her? And have her?

Mephistopheles

No! She has to visit a neighbour.
Meanwhile, you can be alone there,
With every hope of future pleasure,
Enjoy her breathing space, at leisure.

2670

Faust

Can we go?

Mephistopheles

Her room's not yet free.

Faust

Look for a gift for her, from me!

(He exits.)

Mephistopheles

A present? Good! He's sure to work it!
I know many a lovely place, up here,
And many an ancient buried treasure:
I must have a look around for a bit.

2675

(He exits.)

**Part I Scene VIII: Evening,
A small well-kept room.**

(Margaret, plaiting and fastening the braids of her hair.)

Margaret

I'd give anything if I could say
Who that gentleman was, today!
He's brave for certain, I could see,
And from some noble family:
That his face readily told –
Or he wouldn't have been so bold.

2680

(She exits.) (Mephistopheles and Faust appear.)

Mephistopheles

Come in: but quietly, I mean!

Faust *(After a moment's silence.)*

I'd ask you, now, to leave me be!

2685

Mephistopheles *(Poking about.)*

Not every girl keeps thing so clean.

(Mephistopheles exits.)

Faust

Welcome, sweet twilight glow,
That weaves throughout this shrine!
Sweet love-pangs grip my heart so,
That on hope's dew must live, and pine!
How a breath of peace breathes around,
Its order, and contentment!
In this poverty, what wealth is found!
In this prison, what enchantment!

2690

(He throws himself into a leather armchair near the bed.)

Accept me now, you, who with open arms 2695
Gathered joy and pain, in past days, where,
How often, ah, with all their childish charms
The little flock hung round their father's chair!
There my beloved, perhaps, cheeks full, stands,
Grateful for all the gifts of Christmas fare, 2700
Kissing her grandfather's withered hands.
Sweet girl, I feel your spirit, softly stray,
Through the wealth of order, all around me,
That with motherliness instructs, each day,
The tablecloth to lie smooth, at your say, 2705
And even the wrinkled sand beneath your feet.
O beloved hand, so goddess-like!
This house because of you is Heaven's like.
And here!

(He lifts one of the bed curtains.)

What grips me with its bliss!
Here I could stand, slowly lingering. 2710
Here, Nature, in its gentlest dreaming,
Formed an earthly angel within this.
Here the child lay! Life, warm,
Filled her delicate breast,
And here, in pure and holy form, 2715
A heavenly image was expressed!
And I! What leads me here?
Why do I feel so deeply stirred?
What do I seek? Why such a heavy heart?
Poor Faust! I no longer know who you are. 2720
Is there a magic fragrance round me?
I urged myself on, to the deepest delight,
And feel myself melt in Love's dreaming flight!
Are we the sport of every lightest breeze?
And if she appeared at this instant, 2725
How to atone for being so indiscreet?
The great man, alas, of little moment!

Would lie here, melting, at her feet.

Mephistopheles (*Appearing.*)

Quick! I see her coming, there.

Faust

Away! Away! I'll not return again.

2730

Mephistopheles

Here's a casket fairly loaded, then,
I've taken it from elsewhere.
Put it just here on the chest,
I swear it'll dazzle her, when she sees:
I've put in some trinkets, and the rest,
For you to win another, if you please.
Truly, a child's a child, and play is play.

2735

Faust

I don't know, shall I?

Mephistopheles

Are you asking, pray?
Perhaps you'd like to keep the treasure, too?
Then I'd advise your Lustfulness,
To spare the sweet hours of brightness,
And spare me a heap of trouble over you.
I hope that you're not full of meanness!
I scratch my head: I rub my hands –

2740

(He places the casket in the chest, and shuts it again.)

Now off we go, and go quickly!
Through this you'll bend the child, you see,
To your wish and will: as any fool understands:
Yet now you seem to me

2745

As if you were heading for the lecture hall, and see
Standing there grey-faced, in front of you, 2750
Physics, and Metaphysics too!
Now, away!

(They exit.)

(Margaret with a lamp.)

Margaret

It's so close and sultry, here,

(She opens the window.)

And yet it's not warm outside.
It troubles me so, I don't know why – 2755
I wish that Mother were near.
A shudder ran through my whole body –
I'm such a foolish girl, so timid!

(She begins to sing, while undressing.)

'There was a king in Thule, he
Was faithful, to the grave, 2760
To whom his dying lady
A golden goblet gave.

He valued nothing greater:
At every feast it shone:
His tears were brimming over, 2765
When he drank there-from.

When he himself was dying
No towns did he with-hold,
No wealth his heir denying,
Except the cup of gold. 2770

He gave a royal banquet,
His knights around him, all,
In his sea-girt turret,
In his ancestral hall.

There the old king stood, yet, 2775
Drinking life's last glow:
Then threw the golden goblet
Into the waves below.

He saw it falling, drowning,
Sinking in the sea, 2780
Then, his eyelids closing,
Never again drank he.'

(She opens the chest in order to arrange her clothes, and sees the casket.)

How can this lovely casket be here? I'm sure
I locked the chest when I was here before.
It's quite miraculous! What can it hold in store? 2785
Perhaps someone brought it as security,
And my mother's granted a loan on it?
There's a ribbon hanging from it, there's a key,
I'm quite determined to open it.
What's here? Heavens! What a show, 2790
More than I've ever seen in all my days!
A jewel box! A noble lady might glow
With all of these on high holidays!
How would this chain look? This display
Of splendour: who owns it, it's so fine? 2795

(She puts the jewellery on and stands in front of the mirror.)

If only the earrings were mine!
At once one looks so different.
What makes us beautiful, young blood?
All that's fine and good,
But it's discounted, in the end, 2800
They praise us half in pity.

To gold they tend,
On gold depend,
All things! Oh, poverty!

Part I Scene IX: Promenade

(Faust walking about pensively. Mephistopheles appears.)

Mephistopheles

Scorned by all love! And by hellfire! What's worse? 2805
I wish I knew: I could use it in a curse!

Faust

What's wrong? What's pinching you so badly?
I never, in all my life, saw such a face!

Mephistopheles

I'd pack myself off to the Devil, in disgrace,
If I weren't a Devil myself already! 2810

Faust

Is something troubling your brain?
It's fitting that you've a raging pain.

Mephistopheles

To think, the priest should get his hands on
Jewellery that was meant for Gretchen!
Her mother snatched it up, to see, 2815
And was gripped by secret anxiety.

That woman's a marvellous sense of smell,
From nosing round in her prayer-book too well,
And sniffs things, ever and again,
To see if they're holy or profane: 2820

And about the jewels, she felt, that's clear,
There's not much of a blessing here.
'My child,' she said, 'ill-gotten goods
Snare the soul, and dissipate the blood.

We'll dedicate it to the Virgin, 2825
She'll repay us with manna from Heaven!

Margaret, grimacing wryly, was quite put out:
Thinking: 'Don't look a gift horse in the mouth,
He's not a godless man, nor one to fear,
He who left these fine things here.' 2830
Her mother let the parson in:
He'd scarcely let the game begin
Before his eyes filled with enjoyment.
He said: 'So we see aright, we sinners,
Who overcome themselves are winners. 2835
The Church has a healthy stomach, when,
It gobbles up lands, and don't forget,
It's never over-eaten yet.
The Church alone, dear lady, could
Always digest ill-gotten goods.' 2840

Faust

That's a universal custom, too, my friend,
With all those who rule, and those who lend.

Mephistopheles

Then he took the bangles, chains and rings,
As if they were merely trifling things,
Thanked her too, no less nor more 2845
Than if it were a sack of nuts one wore.
Promised them their reward when they died,
And left them suitably edified.

Faust

And Gretchen?

Mephistopheles

Sits there, restlessly, still
Not knowing what she should do, or will, 2850
Thinks of the jewels night and day,
But more of him who placed them in her way.

Faust

The dear girl's sadness brings me pain.
Find some jewels for her, again!
Those first were not so fine, I'd say.

2855

Mephistopheles

Oh yes, to gentlemen it's child's play!

Faust

Fix it: arrange it, as I want you to,
Attach yourself to her neighbour, too!
Don't be a devil made of clay,
Get her fresh jewels straight away!

2860

Mephistopheles

Yes, gracious sir, gladly, with all my heart.

(Faust exits.)

Such a lovesick fool would blow up the Sun,
High up in the air, with the Moon and Stars,
To provide his sweetheart with some diversion.

(He exits.)

Part I Scene X: The Neighbour's House

Martha (*Alone.*)

God forgive that man I love so well, 2865
He hasn't done right by me at all!
Off into the world he's gone,
And left me here, in the dust, alone.
Truly I did nothing to grieve him,
I gave him, God knows, fine loving. 2870

(*She weeps.*)

Perhaps, he's even dead! – Yet, oh!
If I'd only his death certificate to show!

(*Margaret enters.*)

Margaret

Martha!

Martha

My little Gretchen, what's happened?

Margaret

My legs are giving way beneath me!
I've found another box of jewellery 2875
In the chest: it's of ebony, fashioned,
Full of quite splendid things,
And richer than the first, I think.

Martha

You'd better not tell your mother:
She'll give it to the Church, like the other. 2880

Margaret

Ah, See now! See what a show!

Martha (*Dressing her with jewels.*)

O you're a lucky creature, though!

Margaret

I can't wear them in the street, alas,
Nor be seen like this, at Mass.

Martha

Come often then, to me, as before: 2885

You can put them on, here, secretly:

Stand, for an hour, in front of the mirror,

We'll take delight in them privately.

Then give us a holiday, an occasion,

When people can see a fraction of them. 2890

A chain first, then a pearl in the ear: your

Mother won't know, say you'd them before.

Margaret

Who could have left the second casket?

There's something not proper about it!

(*A knock.*)

Good God! Is it my mother, then? 2895

Martha (*Looking through the shutter.*)

It's a stranger, a gentleman – Come in!

(Mephistopheles enters.)

Mephistopheles

In introducing myself so freely,
I ask you ladies to excuse me.

(He steps back reverently on seeing Margaret.)

It's Martha Schwerdtlein I seek!

Martha

I'm she, what do you wish with me? 2900

Mephistopheles *(Aside to her.)*

I know you now: that's enough for me:
You've a distinguished visitor there, I see.
Pardon the liberty I've taken, pray,
I'll return this afternoon, if I may.

Martha *(Aloud.)*

To think, child: of all things: just fancy! 2905
The gentleman takes you for a lady.

Margaret

I'm a poor young thing he'll find:
Heavens! The gentleman's far too kind:
The jewels and trinkets aren't mine.

Mephistopheles

Ah, it's not just the jewellery, mind: 2910
The look: the manner: she has a way!
I'm pleased that I'm allowed to stay.

Martha

What brings you here? I wish that you –

Mephistopheles

I wish I brought you happier news! –
This news I hope you'll forgive me repeating:
Your husband's dead, but sends a greeting.

2915

Martha

He's dead? That true heart! Oh!
My man is dead! I'll die, also!

Margaret

Ah! Dear lady, don't despair!

Mephistopheles

Hear the mournful tale I bear!

2920

Margaret

That's why I'll never love while I've breath,
Such a loss would grieve *me* to death.

Mephistopheles

Joy must have sorrows: sorrow its joys, too.

Martha

Tell me of his last hours: ah tell me!

Mephistopheles

He's buried in Padua, close to 2925
The blessed Saint Anthony,
In a consecrated space,
A cool eternal resting place.

Martha

Have you brought nothing else, from him?

Mephistopheles

Yes a request, it's large and heavy: 2930
For you to sing a hundred masses for him!
Otherwise, no, my pocket's empty.

Martha

What? No piece of show? No jewellery?
What every workman has in his purse,
And keeps with him as his reserve, 2935
Rather than having to starve or beg!

Mephistopheles

Madam, it's a heavy grief to me:
But truly his money wasn't wasted.
And then, he felt his errors greatly,
Yes, and bemoaned his bad luck lately. 2940

Margaret

Ah! How unlucky all men are! I'll
Be sure to offer many a prayer for him.

Mephistopheles

You're worthy of soon marrying:
You're such a kindly child.

Margaret

Oh, no! That wouldn't do as yet.

2945

Mephistopheles

If not a husband, a lover, while you wait.
It's heaven's greatest charm,
To have a dear one on one's arm.

Margaret

That's not the custom of the country.

Mephistopheles

Custom or not! It seems to be.

2950

Martha

Go on with your tale!

Mephistopheles

I stood beside his death-bed,
Hardly better than a rubbish-tip, poor man,
Of half-rotten straw: yet he died a Christian,
And found that he was even further in debt.
'Alas,' he cried, 'I hate myself, with good reason,
For leaving, as I did, my wife and my occupation!
Ah the memory of that is killing me,
Would in this life I might be forgiven, though!'

2955

Martha (*Weeping.*)

The dear man! I forgave him long ago.

Mephistopheles

‘Although, God knows, she was more to blame than me.’ 2960

Martha

The liar! What! At death’s door, lies he was telling!

Mephistopheles

In his last wanderings, he was rambling,
If I’m any judge myself of the thing.
‘I had,’ he said, ‘no time to gaze in play:
First children, then bread for them each day, 2965
And I mean bread in the wider sense:
And couldn’t even eat my share in silence.’

Martha

Did he forget the love, the loyalty,
My drudgery, night and day!

Mephistopheles

Not at all, he thought of it deeply, in his way. 2970
He said: ‘As I was leaving Malta
I prayed hard for my wife and children:
And favour came to me from heaven,
Since our ship took a Turkish cutter,
Carrying the great Sultan’s treasure. 2975
There was a reward for bravery,
And I received, in due measure,
The generous share that fell to me.’

Martha

What? And where? Has he buried it by chance?

Mephistopheles

Who can tell: the four winds know the circumstance. 2980
A lovely girl there took him on,
As he, a stranger, roamed round Naples:
She gave him loyalty, and loved the man,
And he felt it so, till his last hour fell.

Martha

He stole from his children, and his wife! 2985
The rogue! All the pain and misery he met,
Couldn't keep him from that shameful life!

Mephistopheles

Ah, but: now he's died of it!
If I were truly in your place,
I'd mourn him quietly for a year, 2990
And look, meanwhile, for a dear new face.

Martha

Ah, sweet God! I'll not easily find another,
In all the world, such as my first one was!
There never was a dearer fool than mine.
Only he loved roaming too much, at last, 2995
And foreign women, and foreign wine,
And the rolling of those cursed dice.

Mephistopheles

Well, that would have still been fine,
If, with you, he'd followed that line,
And noticed nothing, on your side. 3000
I swear that, with that same condition,
I'd swap rings with you, no question!

Martha

O, the gentleman's pleased to jest!

Mephistopheles (*To himself.*)

I must fly from here, swift as a bird!
She might hold the Devil to his word.

3005

(*To Gretchen.*)

How does your heart feel? At rest?

Margaret

What does the gentleman mean?

Mephistopheles (*To himself.*)

Sweet, innocent child!

(*Aloud.*)

Farewell, ladies!

Margaret

Farewell!

Martha

Oh, speak to me yet, a while!
I'd like a witness, as to where, how, and when
My darling man died and was buried: then,
As I've always been a friend of tradition,
Put his death in the paper, the weekly edition.

3010

Mephistopheles

Yes, dear lady, two witnesses you need
To verify the truth, or so all agree:
I've a rather fine companion,
He can be your second man.
I'll bring him here.

3015

Martha

Oh yes, please do!

Mephistopheles

That young lady will be here, too?
He's a brave youth! Travelled, yes,
And with ladies he's all politeness.

3020

Margaret

I'd be shamed before the gentleman.

Mephistopheles

Not before any king on earth, madam.

Martha

Behind the house, then, in my garden,
Tonight: we'll expect you gentlemen.

Part I Scene XI: The Street

(Faust. Mephistopheles.)

Faust

How goes it? Will it be? Will it soon be done? 3025

Mephistopheles

Ah, bravo! Do I find you all on fire?
In double-quick time you'll have your desire.
You'll meet tonight, at her neighbour Martha's home:
There's a woman, who's the thing,
For procuring and for gipsying! 3030

Faust

All right!

Mephistopheles

But, she needs something from us, too.

Faust

One good turn deserves another, true.

Mephistopheles

We only have to bear a valid witness,
That her husband's outstretched members bless
A consecrated place in Padua. 3035

Faust

Brilliant! We must first make the journey there!

Mephistopheles

Sacred Simplicity! There's no need to do that.
Just testify, without saying too much to her.

Faust

If you can't do better than that, your pact I'll tear.

Mephistopheles

O holy man! Now I see you there! 3040
Is it the first time in your life, come swear,
That you've ever born false witness?
Haven't you shown skill in definition
Of God, the World, what's in it, Men,
What moves them, in mind and breast? 3045
With impudent brow, and swollen chest?
And if you look at it more deeply, oh yes,
Did you know as much now - confess,
As you do about Herr Schwerdtlein's death?

Faust

You are, and you'll remain, a Liar and a Sophist. 3050

Mephistopheles

Yes when no one's the wiser for it.
This coming morn, in all honour though,
Won't you beguile poor Gretchen so:
And swear you love her with all your soul?

Faust

From my heart.

Mephistopheles

Well, and good! 3055
And will your eternal Truth and Love,
Your one all-powerful Force, above –
Flow from your heart, too, as it should?

Faust

Stop! Stop! It will! If I but feel,
For that emotion, for that throng, 3060
Seek the name, that none reveal,
Roam, with senses, through the world.
Seize on every highest word,
And call the fire, that I'm tasting,
Endless, eternal, everlasting – 3065
Does that to some devil's game of lies belong?

Mephistopheles

Yet, I'm still right!

Faust

Hear one thing more,
I beg you, and spare my breath – the one
Who wants to hold fast, and has a tongue,
He'll hold for sure. 3070
Come, chattering fills me with disgust,
And then you're right, especially since I must.

Part I Scene XII: The Garden

(Margaret on Faust's arm, Martha and Mephistopheles walking up and down.)

I know the gentleman flatters me,
Lowers himself, and shames me, too.
A traveller is used to being 3075
Content, out of courtesy, with any food.
I know too well, so learned a man,
Can't feed himself on my poor bran.

Faust

A glance, a word from you, feeds me more,
Than all the world's wisest lore. 3080

(He kisses her hand.)

Margaret

Don't trouble yourself! How could you kiss it?
It's such a nasty, rough thing!
What work haven't I done with it!
My mother's *so* exacting.

(They move on.)

Martha

And you, sir, you're always travelling? 3085

Mephistopheles

Ah, work and duty are such a bother!
There's many a place one's sad at leaving,
And daren't stay a moment longer!

Martha

In youth it's fine, up and down,
Flitting about, the whole world over: 3090
Then harsher days come round,
And lonely bachelors small joy discover,
In sliding towards their hole in the ground.

Mephistopheles

I view the prospect with horror.

Martha

Then take advice in time, dear sir. 3095

(They move on.)

Margaret

Yes, out of sight is out of mind!
Politeness comes naturally to you:
But you'll meet friends, often, who,
Are more sensible than me, you'll find.

Faust

Dearest, believe me, what men call sense, 3100
Is often just vanity and short-sightedness.

Margaret

How so?

Faust

Ah, that simplicity and innocence never know
Themselves, or their heavenly worth!
That humble meekness, the highest grace
That Nature bestows so lovingly – 3105

Margaret

It's only for a moment that you think of me,
I've plenty of time to dream about your face.

Faust

You're often alone, then?

Margaret

Yes, our household's a little one,
Yet it has to be cared for by someone. 3110
We have no servant: I sweep, knit, sew,
And cook, I'm working early and late:
And in everything my mother is so
Strict, and straight.
Not that she has to be quite so economical: 3115
We could be more generous than others:
My father left a little fortune for us:
A house and garden by the town-wall.
But now my days are spent quietly:
My brother is a soldier: I'd 3120
A younger sister who died.
The trouble I had with that child:
Yet I'd take it on again, the worry,
She was so dear to me.

Faust

An angel, if like you.

Margaret

I raised her, and she loved me too. 3125
After my father died, she was born,
We gave mother up for lost, so worn
And wretchedly she lay there then,
And slowly, day by day, grew well again.
She couldn't think of feeding 3130
It herself: that poor little thing,

And so I nursed it all alone,
On milk and water, as if it were my own,
In my arms, in my lap,
It charmed me, tumbling, and grew fat. 3135

Faust

You found your greatest happiness there, for sure.

Margaret

But also truly many a weary hour.
The baby's cradle stood at night
Beside my bed: and if it hardly stirred
I woke outright: 3140
Now I nursed it, now laid it beside me: heard
When it cried, and left my bed, and often
Danced it back and forth, in the room: and then,
At break of dawn stood at the washtub, again:
Then the market and the kitchen, oh, 3145
And every day just like tomorrow.
One sometimes lacks the courage, sir, and yet
One appreciates one's food and rest.

(They move on.)

Martha

Women have the worst of it: it's true:
A bachelor is hard to change, you see. 3150

Mephistopheles

That just depends on the likes of you,
The right teacher might improve me.

Martha

Say, have you never found anyone, dear sir?
Has your heart never been captured, anywhere?

Mephistopheles

The proverb says: A hearth of your own, 3155
And a good wife, are worth pearls and gold.

Martha

I mean: have you never felt desire, even lightly?

Mephistopheles

I've everywhere been treated most politely.

Martha

I meant to say: were you never *seriously* smitten?

Mephistopheles

With ladies, one should never dare be flippant. 3160

Martha

Ah, you *won't* understand me!

Mephistopheles

I am sorry! Yet you'll find
I understand – that you are very kind.

(They move on.)

Faust

And, Angel, did you recognise me again,
As soon as I appeared in the garden?

Margaret

Didn't you see my gaze drop then? 3165

Faust

And you forgive the liberty I've taken,
The impertinence of it all,
Just as you were leaving the Cathedral?

Margaret

I was flustered, such a thing's never happened to me:
'Ah', I thought, 'has he seen, in your behaviour, 3170
Something that's impertinent or improper?
No one could ever say anything bad about me.
He seems to be walking suddenly, with you,
As though he dealt with a girl of easy virtue'.
I confess, I didn't know what it was, though, 3175
That I began to feel, and to your advantage too,
But certainly I was angry with myself, oh,
That I could not be angrier with you.

Faust

Sweet darling!

Margaret

Wait a moment!

(She picks a Marguerite and pulls the petals off one by one.)

Faust

What's that for, a bouquet?

Margaret

No, it's a game.

Faust

What?

Margaret

No, you'll laugh if I say!

3180

(She pulls off the petals, murmuring to herself.)

Faust

What are you whispering?

Margaret *(Half aloud.)*

He loves me – he loves me not.

Faust

You sweet face that Heaven forgot!

Margaret *(Continuing.)*

Loves me – Not – Loves me – Not

(She plucks the last petal with delight.)

He loves me!

Faust

Yes, my child! Let this flower-speech
Be heaven's speech to you. He loves you!
Do you know what that means? He loves you!

3185

(He grasps her hands.)

Margaret

I'm trembling!

Faust

Don't tremble, let this look,
Let this clasping of hands tell you

What's inexpressible: 3190
To give oneself wholly, and feel
A joy that must be eternal!
Eternal! – Its end would bring despair.
No, no end! No end!

(Margaret presses his hand, frees herself, and runs away. He stands a moment in thought: then follows her.)

Martha (*Coming forward.*)

Night is falling.

Mephistopheles

Yes, and we must away. 3195

Martha

I'd ask you to remain here longer,
But this is quite a wicked place.
It's as if they had nothing to do yonder,
And no work they should be doing
But watching their neighbours' to-ing and fro-ing, 3200
And whatever one does, insults are hurled.
And our couple, now?

Mephistopheles

Flown up the passage, there.
Wilful little birds!

Martha

He seems keen on her.

Mephistopheles

And she on him. It's the way of the world.

Part I Scene XIII: An Arbour in the Garden

(Margaret comes in, hides behind the door of the garden-house, holds her fingers to her lips, and peeps through the gaps.)

Margaret

He's coming.

Faust *(Appearing.)*

Ah, rascal, you tease me so! I've got you!

3205

(He kisses her.)

Margaret *(Clasping him, and returning the kiss.)*

Dearest man! With all my heart I love you!

(Mephistopheles knocks.)

Faust *(Stamping his foot in frustration.)*

Who's there?

Mephistopheles

A dear friend!

Faust

A creature!

Mephistopheles

It's time to go.

Martha (*Appearing.*)

Yes, sir, it's late!

Faust

May I keep company with you, though?

Margaret

My mother would tell me, – Farewell!

Faust

Must I go, then?

Farewell!

Martha

Goodbye, now!

Margaret

And soon to meet again!

3210

(Faust and Mephistopheles exit.)

Margaret

Dear God! That one man, by thinking,
Can know everything, oh, everything!
I stand in front of him, ashamed
And just say yes to all he says.
I'm such a poor, ignorant child, and he -
I can't understand what he sees in me.

3215

Part I Scene XIV: Forest and Cavern

(Faust, alone.)

Sublime spirit, you gave me all, all,
I asked for. Not in vain have you
Revealed your face to me in flame.
You gave me Nature's realm of splendour, 3220
With the power to feel it, and enjoy.
Not merely as a cold, awed stranger,
But allowing me to look deep inside,
Like seeing into the heart of a friend.
You lead the ranks of living creatures 3225
Before me, showing me my brothers
In the silent woods, the air, the water.
And when the storm roars in the forest,
When giant firs fell their neighbours,
Crushing nearby branches in their fall, 3230
Filling the hills with hollow thunder,
You lead me to the safety of a cave,
Show me my own self, and reveal
Your deep, secret wonders in my heart.
And when the pure Moon, to my eyes, 3235
Rises, calming me, the silvery visions
Of former times, drift all around me,
From high cliffs, and moist thickets,
Tempering thought's austere delight.
Oh, I know now that nothing can be 3240
Perfect for Mankind. You gave me,
With this joy, that brings me nearer,
Nearer to the gods, a companion,
Whom I can no longer do without,
Though he is impudent, and chilling,
Degrades me in my own eyes, and with 3245
A word, a breath, makes your gifts nothing.
He fans a wild fire in my heart,
Always alive to that lovely form.
So I rush from desire to enjoyment,
And in enjoyment pine to feel desire. 3250

(Mephistopheles enters.)

Mephistopheles

Haven't you had enough of this life yet?
How can you be happy all this time?
It's fine for a man to try it for a bit,
But then you need a newer clime!

Faust

I wish you'd something else to do, 3255
Than plague me on a good day.

Mephistopheles

Now, now! I'd gladly ignore you,
You don't really mean it anyway.
You'd be little loss to me, 3260
A rude, mad, sour companion.
One's hands are full all day, and see,
What pleases you, or what to let be,
No one can tell from your expression.

Faust

So that's the tone he takes!
I'm to thank him, for boring me. 3265

Mephistopheles

Poor Son of Earth, how could you make
Your way through life without me?
I've cured you for a while at least
Of your twitches of imagination, 3270
If I weren't here, you'd certainly
Have walked right off this earthly station.
In rocky hollows, in a hole,
Why sit around here, like an owl?

From soaking moss and dripping stone,
Sucking your nourishment, like a toad? 3275
Spend your time sweeter, better!
Your body's still stuck there with the Doctor.

Faust

Do you understand the new power of being
That a walk in the wilderness can bring?
But then, if you were able to guess, 3280
You're devil enough to begrudge my happiness.

Mephistopheles

An other-worldly pleasure.
Night and day, mountains for leisure.
Clasping heaven and earth, blissfully,
Inflating yourself, becoming a deity. 3285
With expectant urge burrowing through earth's core,
Feeling all that six days' work, in yours,
To taste who knows what, in power's pride,
Overflowing, almost, with the joy of life,
Vanishing, the Earthly Son, 3290
And into some deep Intuition –

(With a gesture.)

I can't say how – passing inside.

Faust

Fie, on you!

Mephistopheles

Ah, you don't like it from me!
You've the right, to say 'fie' to me, politely.
Before chaste ears men daren't speak aloud, 3295
That which chaste hearts can't do without:
Short and sweet, I begrudge the pleasure you get

From occasionally lying to yourself, about it.
But you won't hold out for long, I'm sure.
You're already over-driven, 3300
Sooner or later you'll be given
To madness, or to fear and horror.
Enough! Your lover sits inside,
All is dull, oppressive to her,
She can't get you out of her mind, 3305
Her deep love overwhelms her.
First your love's flood round her flowed,
As a stream pours from melted snow:
You've so filled her heart, and now,
Your stream again is shallow. 3310
Instead of enthroning yourself in the wood,
Let the great gentleman do some good,
To that poor little ape of flesh and blood,
And reward her, I think, for her love.
Her days seem pitifully long: 3315
She sits at the window, cloud drifting
Over the old City wall, sees it lifting.
'Would I were a little bird!' runs her song,
All day long, and all night long.
Sometimes lively, mostly not, 3320
Sometimes crying out, in tears,
Then quiet again, it appears,
And always in love.

Faust

You snake! You snake, you!

Mephistopheles

A touch! That caught you! 3325

Faust

Wretch! Be gone from my presence:
Don't name that lovely girl to me!
Don't bring desire for that sweet body
Before every half-maddened sense!

Mephistopheles

Well, what then? She thinks you've flown away, 3330
And, half and half, you already have, I'd say.

Faust

I'm near her, and were I still far,
I can't lose her or forget her,
I even envy the body of our Lord,
When her lips touch it at the altar. 3335

Mephistopheles

Quite so, my friend! My envy often closes
On that pair of twins that feed among the roses.

Faust

Away from me, procurer!

Mephistopheles

Fine, you curse and I must smile.
The god who made both man and woman,
He likewise knew the noblest profession, 3340
So made the opportunity as well.
Go on, it's a crying shame!
Since you're bound, all the same
For your lover's room, not death.

Faust

Where is the heavenly joy in her arms? 3345
Let me warm myself with her charms!
Do I not always feel her absent breath?
Am I not the fugitive? The homeless one?
The creature without aim or rest,
A torrent in the rocks, still thundering down, 3350
Foaming eagerly into the abyss?
And she beside it, with vague childlike mind,
In a hut there, on a little Alpine field,
So, her first homely life you'd find,
Hidden there in that little world. 3355
And I, the god-forsaken,
Was not great enough,
To grasp the cliffs, and take them,
And crush them into dust!
I still must undermine her peaceful life! 3360
You, Hell, must have your sacrifice.
Help, Devil, curtail the anxious moment brewing.
What must be, let it be, and swiftly!
Let her fate also fall on me,
And she *and* I rush to ruin! 3365

Mephistopheles

Again it glows: again it seethes!
Go in and comfort her, you fool!
When a brain, like yours, no exit sees,
It calls it the end of all things, too.
Praise him who keeps his courage fresh! 3370
Or you'll soon get quite be-devilled, there.
I find nothing in the world so tasteless,
As a Devil, in despair.

Part I Scene XV: Gretchen's Room

(Gretchen alone at the spinning wheel.)

'My peace is gone,
My heart is sore: 3375
I'll find it, never,
Oh, nevermore.

When he's not here,
My grave is near,
The world is all, 3380
A bitter gall.

My poor head
Feels crazed to me.
My poor brain
Seems dazed to me. 3385

My peace is gone,
My heart is sore:
I'll find it, never,
Oh, nevermore.

Only to see him 3390
I look out.
Only to meet him,
I leave the house.

His proud steps,
His noble figure, 3395
His smiling lips,
His eyes: their power.

And all his speech
Like magic is,
His fingers' touch, 3400
And, oh, his kiss!

My peace is gone,
My heart is sore:
I'll find it, never,
Oh, nevermore.

3405

My heart aches
To be with him,
Oh if I could
Cling to him,

And kiss him,
The way I wish,
So I might die,
At his kiss!

3410

Part I Scene XVI: Martha's Garden

(Margaret. Faust.)

Margaret

Promise me, Heinrich!

Faust

If I can!

Margaret

Say, as regards religion, how you feel.
I know that you are a dear, good man,
Yet, for you, it seems, it has no appeal.

3415

Faust

Leave that alone, child! You feel I'm kind to you:
For Love I'd give my blood, my life too.
I'll rob no man of his church and faith.

3420

Margaret

That's not right, we *must* have faith.

Faust

Must we?

Margaret

Ah, if in this I was only fluent!
You don't respect the Holy Sacrament.

Faust

I respect it.

Margaret

Without wanting it, though. You've passed
So many years without confession, or mass. 3425
Do you believe in God?

Faust

My darling, who dare say:
'I believe in God'?
Choose priest to ask, or sage,
The answer would seem a joke, would it not,
Played on whoever asks?

Margaret

So, you don't believe? 3430

Faust

Sweetest being, don't misunderstand me!
Who dares name the nameless?
Or who dares to confess:
'I believe in him'?
Yet who, in feeling, 3435
Self-revealing,
Says: 'I don't believe'?
The all-clasping,
The all-upholding,
Does it not clasp, uphold, 3440
You: me, itself?
Don't the heavens arch above us?
Doesn't earth lie here under our feet?
And don't the eternal stars, rising,
Look down on us in friendship? 3445
Are not my eyes reflected in yours?
And don't all things press
On your head and heart,
And weave, in eternal mystery,

Visibly: invisibly, around you? 3450

Fill your heart from it: it is so vast,
And when you are blessed by the deepest feeling,
Call it then what you wish,
Joy! Heart! Love! God!

I have no name 3455

For it! Feeling is all:
Names are sound and smoke,
Veiling Heaven's bright glow.

Margaret

That's all well and good, I know,
The priest says much the same, 3460
Only, in slightly different words.

Faust

It's what all hearts, say, everywhere
Under the heavenly day,
Each in its own speech:
And why not I in mine? 3465

Margaret

Listening to you, it almost seems quite fine,
Yet something still seems wrong, to me,
Since you don't possess Christianity.

Faust

Dear child!

Margaret

I've long been grieved
To see you in such company. 3470

Faust

Why, who?

Margaret

That man who hangs round you so,
I hate him in my innermost soul:
Nothing in all my life has ever
Given my heart such pain, no, never,
As his repulsive face has done.

3475

Faust

Don't be afraid of him, sweet one!

Margaret

His presence here, it chills my blood.
To every other man I wish good:
But much as I'm longing to see you
I've a secret horror of seeing him, too,
I've thought him a rogue, all along!
God forgive me, if I do him wrong!

3480

Faust

There have to be such odd fellows.

Margaret

I'd rather not live with such as those!
Once he's inside the door, again,
He looks around in a mocking way,
And half-severely:
You can see he's not at all in sympathy:
It's written on his forehead even,
That there's no spirit of love within.
I'm so happy in your arms,
Free, untroubled, and so warm,

3485

3490

Yet I'm stifled in his presence.

Faust

You angel, full of presentiments!

Margaret

It oppresses me, so deeply, too, 3495
That when he meets with us, wherever,
I feel that I no longer love you.
Ah I can't pray when he's there,
And that gnaws inside me: oh,
Heinrich, for you too, surely it's so. 3500

Faust

It's merely an antipathy!

Margaret

I must go now.

Faust

Ah, will there never be
An hour where I can clasp you to my heart,
And heart to heart, and soul, to soul impart?

Margaret

Ah, if I only slept alone! 3505
For you, I'd gladly draw the bolt tonight:
But my mother hears the slightest tone,
And if we were caught outright,
I'd die on the selfsame spot!

Faust

You angel: no need for that. 3510
Here is a little phial to keep!
Three drops of this, in her drink, she'll take,
And Nature will favour her with deepest sleep.

Margaret

What would I not do for your sake?
I hope that it won't harm her though! 3515

Faust

Would I advise it, Love, if it were so?

Margaret

Ah, I only have to see you, dearest man,
And something bends me to your will,
For you, so much, I have already done,
Little remains for me to do for you still. 3520

(She exits.)

(Mephistopheles enters.)

The little monkey! Has it gone?

Faust

Spying again, are you?

Mephistopheles

I've heard in infinite detail, how
The Doctor works his catechism through,
And I hope it does you good, now.
Girls are always so keen to review 3525
Whether one's virtuous, and sticks to the rules.

They think if a man can be led, he'll follow too.

Faust

Monster, you can't see
How this true loving soul,
Full of a belief, 3530
That is wholly
Her salvation, torments herself so,
In case her lover should be lost indeed.

Mephistopheles

You sensual wooer, beyond the sensual,
A Magdalen leads you by the nose, I see. 3535

Faust

Abortion, of the filth and fire of hell!

Mephistopheles

And how well she reads one's physiognomy:
In my presence, senses, without knowing how,
The hidden mind behind the mask: she feels
That I'm an evil genius, at least, and now 3540
Perhaps, that it's the Devil it conceals.
So, tonight? –

Faust

What's that to you?

Mephistopheles

I take my pleasure in it too!

Part I Scene XVII: At The Fountain

(Gretchen and Lisbeth.)

Lisbeth

Have you not heard from Barbara?

Gretchen

Not a word. I go out so seldom. 3545

Lisbeth

It's certain, Sibyl told me: well then,
She finally fell to that seducer.
There's a lady for you!

Gretchen

How so?

Lisbeth

It stinks!
She's feeding two when she eats and drinks.

Gretchen

Oh! 3550

Lisbeth

Serves her right then, finally.
She clung to that fellow, oh so tightly!
That was a fine to-ing and fro-ing,
Round the village, and dance-going,
Ahead of us all, they had to shine, 3555
Him treating her always to cakes and wine:
She the picture of loveliness, oh so fine,

So low after all, then, and so shameless,
And the gifts she took from him, nameless.
It was all kissing and carrying on:
But now the flower is gone!

3560

Gretchen

The poor thing!

Lisbeth

Why are you so pitying?
When each of us was at our spinning,
When mother never let us out,
She and her lover hung about:
On the bench, in a dark alley,
Forgetting the time, he and she.
She can't raise her head again,
In a sinner's shift now, penitent.

3565

Gretchen

Surely he'll take her for his wife.

3570

Lisbeth

He'd be a fool! A lively fellow
Can ply his trade elsewhere, and so -
He's gone.

Gretchen

Oh, that's not nice!

Lisbeth

If she gets him, she'll reap ill in a trice,
The lads will tear at her wreath, what's more
We'll scatter chaff in front of her door!

3575

(She exits.)

Gretchen *(Walking home.)*

How proudly I'd revile her, then,
Whenever some poor girl had fallen!
I couldn't find words enough, I mean,
To pour out scorn for another's sin! 3580
Black as it seemed, I made it blacker,
Not black enough for me: oh never.
It blessed its own being, that proud self,
Yet now I'm the image of sin, myself!
Yet all that drove me on to do it, 3585
God! Was so fine! Oh, so sweet!

Part I Scene XVIII: A Tower

(In a niche of its wall a shrine, and image of the Mater Dolorosa, with flowers in front of it. Gretchen sets out fresh flowers.)

Gretchen

Oh bow down,
Sorrowful one,
Your kind face, to my affliction!

A sword in your heart, 3590
Where a thousand pains start,
You look up, at your dead Son.

You look up to the Father,
You send Him your sighs, there,
For His, and for your, affliction. 3595

Who then can feel,
How like steel,
Is the pain inside my bones?
What my poor heart fears for,
What it quakes for, and longs for 3600
You know, and you alone!

Wherever I go now,
How sore, sore, sore now
How sore my heart must be!
Ah, when I'm alone here, 3605
I moan, moan, moan here:
My heart it breaks in me.

The pots before my window!
My tears bedewed them so,
In the early dawn, when 3610
I picked the flowers below.

The sun it shone so brightly,
And early, in my room,
Where I sat already,
On my bed, in deepest gloom.

3615

Help me! Oh, save me, from shame and destruction!
Oh, bow down,
Sorrowful one,
Your kind face, to my affliction!

Part I Scene XIX: Night

(The Street in front of Gretchen's door.)

Valentine *(A soldier, Gretchen's brother.)*

When I have sat, and heard the toasts, 3620
Where everyone makes good his boasts,
And comrades praised, to me, the flower
Of maidenhood, and loud the hour,
With brimming glass that blurred the praise,
And elbows sticking out all ways, 3625
I sat in my own peace secure,
Listening to the boastful roar,
And as I stroked my beard, I'd smile
And take a full glass in my hand,
Saying: 'Each to his own, but I'll 3630
Ask if there's any in this land,
Who, to my Gretel, can compare
Whose worth can ever equal hers?'
Hear! Hear! Clink! Clang! Went around:
Some cried out: 'He's quite correct, 3635
She's an ornament to all her sex.'
There sat the boasters, not a sound.
And now! – I could tear my hair out, bawl,
And dash my head against the wall! –
With jeers, they now turn up their noses: 3640
Every rogue can taunt me, he supposes!
Like a bankrupt debtor, when I'm sitting,
A casual word can start me sweating!
And though I thrash them all together,
I've still no right to call them liars. 3645

Who goes there? What's creeping by?
If I'm not wrong, there's two I spy.
If it's him, I'll have him by the skin,
Alive he'll not leave the place he's in!

(Faust. Mephistopheles)

Faust

How the glow of the eternal light 3650
Shines from the Sacristy window, there,
On either side grows fainter, fainter,
And all around draws in the night!
Now it seems as dark within my heart.

Mephistopheles

And I've a little of the tom-cat's art, 3655
That creeps around the fire escape,
Then slinks along the wall, a silent shape,
I'm quite virtuous in my way,
A little prone to thieve, and stray.
The splendour of Walpurgis Night, 3660
Already haunts all my members,
It's the day after tomorrow's light:
There, why one watches, one remembers.

Faust

Meanwhile you'll bring that wealth to view,
That I see there, glimmering, behind you? 3665

Mephistopheles

You'll soon experience the delight
Of holding this cauldron to the light.
I recently had a squint inside –
Where splendid silver dollars hide.

Faust

And not a jewel, or a ring, 3670
To adorn my darling girl?

Mephistopheles

Among the rest I saw a thing,
A sort of necklace, made of pearl.

Faust

That's good! It's painful to me,
To take no gift for her to see. 3675

Mephistopheles

You shouldn't find it so annoying,
To get something now, for nothing.
Now the sky glows, filled with stars,
You'll hear the work of a master:
I'll sing a few moralising bars, 3680
All the better to seduce her.

(Sings to the zither.)

'Why are you here,
Katrina dear,
In daylight clear,
At your lover's door? 3685
No, no! Not when,
It will let in,
A maid, and then,
Let out a maid no more!

Take care: for once 3690
It's over and done,
And it's all gone,
Goodnight to you, poor thing!
Keep love's belief,
And pleasure brief,
From every thief, 3695
Unless you've a wedding ring.'

Valentine (*Approaching.*)

Whom do you lure? By every element!
You evil-tongued rat-catcher!
To the devil, with your instrument!
To the devil, too, with the singer!

3700

Mephistopheles

The zither's broken! There's nothing left of it.

Valentine

There's a still a skull left I'll need to split!

Mephistopheles (*To Faust.*)

Look lively, Doctor! Don't give ground.
Stand by: I'll command this thing.
Out with your fly-whisk, now.
You lunge! I'm parrying.

3705

Valentine

Parry, then!

Mephistopheles

And why not, indeed?

Valentine

And that!

Mephistopheles

Ah, yes!

Valentine

The devil opposes me!
What's this? My hand's already maimed.

3710

Mephistopheles (*To Faust.*)

Thrust, home!

Valentine (*Falls.*)

Ah!

Mephistopheles

Now, the lout is tamed!
Away, we must go! Swiftly, of course,
Soon the cries of murder will begin,
With the police, now, I'm well in:
But not so much so with the courts.

3715

(*He exits with Faust.*)

Martha (*At the window.*)

Come here! Come here!

Gretchen (*At the window.*)

Here's a light!

Martha

Hear how they swear and struggle, yell and fight.

On-lookers

Here's one dead already!

Martha (*Leaving the house.*)

Where have the murderers gone?

Gretchen (*Leaving the house.*)

Who is it, lying there?

On-lookers

Your mother's son.

3720

Gretchen

Almighty God! What misery!

Valentine

I'm dying! That's soon spoken,
And, sooner still, it will be done.
Why stand there, crying, woman?
Come, hear me everyone!

3725

(*They gather round him.*)

You're still young, my Gretchen, see!
And still haven't sense enough, to be
Effective in your occupation.
I'll tell you confidentially:
Now that you're a whore indeed,
Be one, by proclamation!

3730

Gretchen

My brother! God! Why speak to me so?

Valentine

In this business, leave God alone!
Sadly, what is done is done,

And what will come: will come. 3735
 Begin with one, in secret, then,
 Soon you'll gather other men,
 And, when a dozen of them have had you,
 All the town can have you too.
 When Shame herself appears, 3740
 She's first brought secretly to light,
 Then they draw the veil of night
 Over both her eyes and ears:
 Men would gladly kill her, I say,
 But they let her walk about and prosper, 3745
 So she goes nakedly by day,
 Yet isn't any lovelier.
 She's the uglier to our sight,
 The more it is she seeks the light.
 Truly I can see the day 3750
 When all honest people
 Will turn aside from you, girl,
 As from a corpse with plague.
 Your heart's flesh will despair,
 When they look you in the face, 3755
 You'll have no golden chain to wear!
 At the altar, there, you'll have no place!
 You'll not be dancing joyfully
 In all your lovely finery!
 In some wretched gloomy corner, you 3760
 Will hide, with cripples and beggars too,
 And, though God may still forgive,
 Be damned on earth while you live!

Martha

Commend your soul to God's mercy!
 Will you end your life with blasphemy? 3765

Valentine

If I could destroy your withered body,
Shameless, bawd, I'd hope to see
A full measure of forgiveness
For me, and all my sinfulness.

Gretchen

My brother! These are the pains of hell!

3770

Valentine

I said, leave off weeping, girl!
When you and honour chose to part,
That was the sword-thrust in my heart.
I go, through a sleep within the grave,
To God, as a soldier, true and brave.

3775

(He dies.)

Part I Scene XX: The Cathedral

(A Mass, with organ and choir.)

(Gretchen among a large congregation: the Evil Spirit behind Gretchen.)

The Evil Spirit

How different it was, Gretchen,
When you, still innocent,
Came here to the altar,
And from that well-thumbed Book,
Babbled your prayers, 3780
Half, a childish game,
Half, God in your heart!
Gretchen!
What's in your mind?
In your heart, 3785
What crime?
Do you pray for your mother's soul, who
Through you, fell asleep to long, long torment?
Whose blood is on your doorstep?
And beneath your heart, 3790
Does not something stir and swell,
And trouble you, and itself,
A presence full of foreboding?

Gretchen

Oh! Oh!
Would I were free of the thoughts 3795
That rush here and there inside me,
Despite myself!

Choir *(Singing the Requiem Mass, the verses of Thomas of Celano, which commence: 'That day, the day of wrath, will dissolve the world to ash'.)*

*'Dies Irae, dies illa,
Solvat saeculum in favilla!'*

(The organ sounds.)

The Evil Spirit

Wrath grasps you! 3800
The trumpet sounds!
The grave trembles!
And your heart,
From ashen rest,
To fiery torment 3805
Brought again,
Shudders!

Gretchen

Would I were not here!
It seems to me as if the organ
Steals my breath, 3810
The Hymn dissolves
My heart in the abyss.

Choir

(Verse 6: 'So when the Judge takes the chair, whatever is hidden will appear, nothing is left unpunished there.')

*'Judex ergo cum sedebit,
Quidquid latet adparebit,
Nil unultum remanebit.'* 3815

Gretchen

I'm so stifled!
The pillars of the walls
Imprison me!
The arches
Crush me! – Air! 3820

The Evil Spirit

Hide yourself! Sin and shame
Cannot be hidden.
Light? Air?
Misery, to you!

Choir (*Verse 7: 'What shall I say in that misery, who shall I ask to speak for me, when the righteous will be saved, and barely?'*)

'Quid sum miser tunc dicturus, 3825
Quem patronum rogaturus,
Cum vix Justus sit securus?'

The Evil Spirit

The transfigured, turn
Their faces from you.
The pure, shudder 3830
To offer you their hand.
Misery!

Choir (*Repeats: 'What shall I say in that misery?'*)

'Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?'

Gretchen

Neighbour! Your restorative!

(She falls, fainting.)

Part I Scene XXI: Walpurgis Night

(The Hartz Mountains, in the region of Schierke and Elend.)

(Faust, Mephistopheles.)

Mephistopheles

Don't you just long for a broomstick? 3835
I wish I'd the sturdiest goat to ride.
Like this, the journey's not so quick.

Faust

So long as my legs can do the trick,
This knotted stick will do me fine.
Why do we need a shorter way! – 3840
To wander this labyrinth of valleys,
Climb all these cliffs and gullies,
From which the waters ever spray,
That's a delight enchants the day!
Spring stirs already in the birches, 3845
And even the fir tree knows it now:
Shouldn't our limbs feel it search us?

Mephistopheles

Truly, I don't feel a thing!
It's winter in my body, still,
On my path I want it frosty, snowing. 3850
How sadly the Moon's imperfect circle
With its red belated glow, is rising,
So dim its light that at every step
You scrape a rock, or else a tree!
Ah, there, a will o' the wisp leapt! 3855
It's burning fiercely, now, I see.
Hey! My friend! May I ask your aid?
Would you like to give us a blaze?
Be so good as to light us up the hill!

Will O' The Wisp

With respect, I hope I'll still be able, 3860
To keep my Natural light quite stable:
We usually zig-zag here, at will.

Mephistopheles

Ha, ha! He thinks to play the human game.
Go straight along now, in the Devil's name!
Or I'll blow out your flickering spark! 3865

Will O' The Wisp

You're master of the house, I'll remark,
And yes, I'll serve you willingly.
But think! The mount is magically mad today,
And if a will o' the wisp should lead the way,
You mustn't judge things too precisely. 3870

Faust, Mephistopheles, The Will O' The Wisp (*In alternating song.*)

We it seems, now find ourselves.
In the sphere of dreams and magic,
Do us honour, guide us well
So our journey will be quick,
Through the wide, deserted spaces! 3875
Tree on tree now shift their places,
See how fast they open to us
And the cliffs bow down before us,
And their long and rocky noses,
How they whistle and blow, for us! 3880
Through the stones, and through the grasses,
Stream and streamlet, downward, hurrying.
Is that rustling? Is that singing?
Do I hear sweet lovers' sighing,
Heavenly days, is that their babbling? 3885
What we hope for, what we love!
And the echoes, like the murmuring
Of those other days, are ringing.

'Too-wit! Too-woo!' sounding nearer,
 Owl there, and jay, and plover, 3890
 Are they all awake above?
 A salamander in the scrub, he's
 Long of leg, and fat of belly!
 And every root like a snake,
 Over sand and rock all bent, 3895
 Stretches with a strange intent,
 To scare us, of us prisoners make:
 From the gnarled and living mass,
 Stretching towards those who pass,
 Fibrous tentacles. And mice 3900
 Multi-coloured, lemming-wise,
 In the moss and in the heather!
 And all the fire-flies glowing,
 Crushed together, tightly crowding,
 In their tangled cohorts gather. 3905
 Tell me, are we standing still,
 Or are we climbing up the hill?
 All seems spinning like a mill,
 Rocks and trees, with angry faces
 Lights, now, wandering in spaces, 3910
 Massing: swelling at their will.

Mephistopheles

Grasp me bravely by the coat-tail!
 Here's a summit in the middle,
 Where, astonished you can see,
 Mammon glowing furiously. 3915

Faust

How strangely, through the hollow, glows
 A sort of dull red morning light!
 Into the deepest gorge it flows,
 Scenting abysses in their night.
 There vapour rises: here cloud sweeps, 3920
 Here the glow burns through the haze,
 Now like a fragile thread it creeps,

Now like a coloured fountain plays.
Here a vast length winds its way,
In a hundred veins, down the vales, 3925
And here in a corner, locked away,
All at once, now lonely, fails.
Nearby the sparks pour down,
Like showers of golden sand,
But see! On all the heights around, 3930
The cliffs, now incandescent, stand.

Mephistopheles

Has Mammon not lit his palace
Splendidly, for this festivity?
It's fortunate you're here to see,
I already sense the eager guests. 3935

Faust

How the wind roars through the air!
And whips around my head!

Mephistopheles

Grasp the ancient stony bed,
Lest you're thrown in the abyss, there.
Mist dims the night to deepest black. 3940
Hear the forest timbers crack!
The owls are flying off in terror.
Hear, how the columns shatter,
In the vast, evergreen halls.
Now the boughs groan and fall! 3945
All the tree-trunks are thrumming!
All their roots are creaking, gaping!
Sinking in a tangled horror,
Crashing down on each other,
And through the ruined gorges 3950
The wind howls and surges.
Hear the voices on the heights?
Far away, and then nearby?

Yes, a furious magic song
Sweeps the mountain, all along! 3955

Witches (*In chorus.*)

To Brocken's tip the witches stream,
The stubble's yellow, the seed is green.
There the crowd of us will meet.
Lord Urian has the highest seat.
So they go, over stone and sticks, 3960
The stinking goat, the farting witch.

A Voice

Old Baubo comes, alone, and how:
She's riding on a mother-sow.

Chorus

So honour then, where honour's due!
Baubo, goes first! Then, all the crew! 3965
A tough old sow, a mother proud,
Then follow, all the witches' crowd.

A voice

Which way did you come?

A voice

By the Ilsen Stone!
I gazed at the owl in her nest alone.
What a pair of Eyes she made! 3970

A Voice

O, all you who to Hell's gate go!
Why ride there so quickly though?

A Voice

She's driven me hard: oh, see,
The wounds, all over me!

Witches, Chorus

The way is broad: the way is long.
Where is this mad yearning from?
The fork will prick, the broom will scratch,
The child will smother: the mother crack.

Wizards, Half-Chorus

Like snails in their shells, we're crawlers,
All the women are there before us.
At the House of Evil, when we're callers, 3980
Woman's a thousand steps before us.

The Other Half

We don't measure with so much care,
In a thousand steps a Woman's there.
But make whatever speed she can,
A single leap, and there is Man. 3985

Voice (*From above.*)

Come now: come now from stony mere!

Voice (*From below.*)

We'd like to climb the heights from here.
We're as bright and clean as ever,
But we're unfruitful still, forever.

Both Choruses

The wind is quiet: a star shoots by, 3990
The shadowy Moon departs the sky.
The magic choir's a rush of sparks,
Thousands shower through the dark.

Voice (*From below.*)

Halt! Halt!

Voice (*From above.*)

Who calls there, from the stony vault? 3995

Voice (*From below.*)

Take me with you! Take me with you!
Climbing for three hundred years,
I haven't reached the summit yet,
I long to be where my peers are met.

Both Choruses

Here's the broom: and here's the stick, 4000
The ram is here, the fork to prick.
Tonight, whoever can't deliver
There's a man is lost forever.

Half-witches (*Below.*)

I've stumbled round so long, down here:
How far ahead the rest appear! 4005
I get no peace around the house,
And get none either hereabouts.

Chorus of Witches

An ointment makes the witches hale:
A rag will do them for a sail,
A trough's a goodly ship, and tight: 4010
He'll fly not who flies not tonight.

Both Choruses

And once we've soared around,
So, alight then, on the ground,
Cover the heather, far and wide,
With your swarming witches' tide. 4015

(They let themselves fall.)

Mephistopheles

They push and shove, they roar and clatter!
They whistle and whirl, jostle and chatter!
They glimmer and sparkle, stink and flare!
The genuine witch-element's there!
We'll soon be parted, so stay near! 4020
Where are you?

Faust *(In the distance.)*

Here!

Mephistopheles

What! Nearly out of sight?
Then I'll have to use a master's right.
Ground! Sir Voland comes. Sweet folk, give ground!
Here, Doctor, hold tight! In a single bound,
Far from the crowd, we'll soon be free: 4025
It's too much, even for the likes of me.
Something burned there with a special light,
In that thicket, as far then as I could see,
Come on! We can slip inside, all right.

Faust

You spirit of contradiction! Go on! I follow you. 4030
I think after all it's worked out quite cleverly:
We walk the Brocken on Walpurgis Night, yet we
Are as isolated now, as we ever could choose.

Mephistopheles

See now, what colours flare!
A lively mob club together there. 4035
In little groups one's not alone.

Faust

I'd still rather be higher, though!
I can see fire and whirling smoke.
There the crowd stream, to the Evil One:
There many a puzzle finds solution. 4040

Mephistopheles

But many a puzzle's knotted so.
Let the whole world have its riot,
Here we'll house ourselves in quiet.
It's a long and well-established tradition,
From the great one makes a smaller edition. 4045
I see young witches, naked, bare,
And old ones, veiled cunningly.
For my sake, be a little friendly.
The trouble's slight, the fun is rare.
I hear instruments being tuned, too! 4050
A cursed din, you'll soon get used to.
Come, with me! There's no way otherwise,
I'll step ahead, lead you to their eyes,
And earn your fresh gratitude, so.
What say you? There's lots of room, my friend. 4055
Look over there! You can't see its end.
A hundred fires burning, in a row,
They love, and drink, and dance, and chat,

Tell me where you'll find better than that?

Faust

Will you, as we make our bow, 4060
Play the devil, or wizard now?

Mephistopheles

To be sure I'm used to travelling incognito,
But on formal occasions rank's allowed to show.
I've no Knight's garter to mark me out,
But the cloven foot's honoured in this house. 4065
Do you see how that snail there crawls to me:
With those delicate feelers on its head,
It's already scented me, you see,
I can't deny myself, if I wished.
Come! We'll go from fire to fire, 4070
I'm the broker: you're the suitor.

(To some, sitting by dying embers.)

Old sirs, what do you sit at the edge for?
I'd praise you, in the middle, more,
Among the youthful buzz, and shout.
You're alone enough inside the house. 4075

The General

Who would trust the Nation!
One's toiled so long for it:
With the people, as with women,
Youth's always the best fit.

The Minister

From every rule they've gone astray, 4080
Me, I praise the good old days,
Then, truly, we were all the rage,
That was a *real* golden age.

The Nouveau Riche

We weren't so stupid, you'd have found,
And often did, what wasn't right: 4085
But now it all turns round and round,
Just as we'd like to grasp it tight.

Author

Who writes anything good these days,
Or reads with moderate intelligence!
And what the dear young folk all praise, 4090
I've never seen such stupid nonsense.

Mephistopheles (*Suddenly looking old.*)

I feel folk are ripe for Judgement Day,
Of Witches' Mount, I've made my last ascent.
And now my cask runs cloudy, anyway,
The world itself is all as good as spent. 4095

Witch-Marketeer

Gentlemen: don't pass me by!
Don't lose the opportunity!
Inspect my wares attentively,
I've a selection for your eye.
There's nothing on my stall, here, 4100
On Earth, it's equal you'll not find,
That hasn't caused some harm somewhere,
To the world itself, and then, mankind.
No knife that isn't dyed in gore,
No cup that, through some healthy body, 4105
Hot, gnawing venom hasn't poured,
No gems that haven't bought some kindly
Girl, no sword that's not cut ties that bind,
Or, perhaps, struck an enemy from behind.

Mephistopheles

Granny! You misunderstand the age. 4110
What's gone: is done! What's done: is gone!
Get novelties they're all the rage!
Now it's novelties that lead us on.

Faust

Don't let me lose myself in here!
Now, this is what I call a fair! 4115

Mephistopheles

This whole whirlpool's trying to climb above,
You think you're shoving, and you're being shoved!

Faust

Who is that, there?

Mephistopheles

 Note *that* madam!
That's Lilith.

Faust

 Who?

Mephistopheles

 First wife to Adam.
Pay attention to her lovely hair, 4120
The only adornment she need wear.
When she traps a young man in her snare,
She won't soon let him from her care.

Faust

Those two, the old and young one, sitting,
They've leapt about more than is fitting! 4125

Mephistopheles

No rest tonight for anyone.
Let's grasp them. There's a new dance, come!

Faust (*Dancing with the lovely young witch.*)

A lovely dream once came to me,
And there I saw an apple-tree,
Two lovely apples, there, did shine, 4130
Tempting me so, I had to climb.

The Young Witch

Apples you love a lot, I know,
That once in Paradise did grow.
I'm deeply moved with joy to feel,
That such my garden does reveal. 4135

Mephistopheles (*Dancing with the old witch.*)

A vile dream once came to me,
In it, I saw an old cleft tree,
A monstrous crack there met my eyes,
It pleased me, though, despite its size.

The Old Witch

I offer my best greetings to 4140
The knight of the cloven shoe!
He'll need to have a real stopper,
If he's not scared of that whopper.

A Rationalist (*Nicolai*)

Cursed Folk! How do you dare to?
Haven't we shown, for many a season, 4145
Spirits can't exist: it stands to reason?
Yet you dance around, just as we do!

The Lovely Witch (*Dancing.*)

Why's he here then, at our ball?

Faust (*Dancing.*)

Oh! He's everywhere, and into all.
While others dance, he must reflect. 4150
If he can't discuss every last step,
It's as good as if it didn't happen.
He's angriest at a forward pattern.
But if you turn around in circles,
As he does in his ancient mills, 4155
He'll call it excellent, least ways
If you greet with interest what he says.

The Rationalist

You're still there! Oh, it's quite unheard of.
We're enlightened now, so take yourselves off!
The Devil's crew's discounted by every rule: 4160
Yet though clever, still we're haunted, in Tegel, too.

The Young Witch

Well listen: here we're bored with it!

The Rationalist

I tell you, Spirit, to your face: 4165
For me, spirit-rule has no place:
Because *my* spirit can't exercise it.

(The dance continues.)

I see, tonight, I'll have no success:
But I get a bit from every trip,
And hope, before the final step,
I'll defeat the devils *and* the poets.

4170

Mephistopheles

Now he'll sit in some wet sump,
And console himself, like that, about you,
And if he sticks leeches on his rump,
He's cured of the Spirit, and Spirits, too.

4175

(To Faust, who has left the dance.)

Why have you deserted that lovely girl,
Who sang so sweetly in the dancing?

Faust

Ugh! Right in the middle of her singing
A red mouse sprang out of her mouth.

Mephistopheles

That's fine: don't brood on it, anyway:
Enough, that the mouse wasn't grey.
At harvest time who queries a mouse?

4180

Faust

Then I saw –

Mephistopheles

What?

Faust

Mephisto, can you see
That lovely child, far off, alone there, 4185
Travelling slowly, so painfully,
As if her feet were chained together.
I must admit, without question
She's the image of my sweet Gretchen.

Mephistopheles

Forget all that! It benefits no one.
It's a lifeless magic form, a phantom. 4190
Encountering it will do you no good:
Its fixed stare freezes human blood,
And then one's almost turned to stone:
Medusa's story is surely known.

Faust

Those are the eyes of the dead, truly, 4195
No loving hand has closed their void.
That's the breast Gretchen offered to me:
That's the sweet body I enjoyed.

Mephistopheles

It's magic, fool: you're an easy one to move!
She comes to all, as if she were their love. 4200

Faust

What delight! What pain!
I can't turn from her, again.
Strange, around her lovely throat,
A single scarlet cord adorns her,
Like a knife-cut, and no wider! 4205

Mephistopheles

That's right! I see it too: and note,
She can carry her head under her arm,
Since Perseus did her that fatal harm.
Always desire for that illusion!
Come on, climb this bit of mountain: 4210
It's as lively as the Vienna Prater,
And if no one's deceiving me,
I'm looking at a genuine theatre.
You're showing?

Servibilis

It'll be on again shortly.
A fresh performance: last of seven. 4215
That number, for us, is traditional.
An amateur's written it, and then
It's amateurs who perform it all.
Forgive me, sir, if I break off here,
Since I'm the amateur curtain-raiser. 4220

Mephistopheles

That I find you on the *Blocksberg*'s good,
Since I find you exactly where I should.

Part I Scene XXII: A Walpurgis Night's Dream

Or

Oberon and Titania's Golden Wedding.

An Interlude (Intermezzo)

Theatre Manager

You brave stagehands, of Weimar,
Take a rest, at least for today.
Ancient mountains, misty vales are, 4225
All the scenery for our play.

Herald

Fifty years we've passed by,
To make this wedding golden,
But let some argument arise:
There's gold in it, for me, then. 4230

Oberon

Spirits, where I am, be seen:
Appear, all, at this moment:
Fairy King, and Fairy Queen,
Renew their old intent.

Puck

Puck comes shooting through the air, 4235
And moves his feet, in time:
After him a hundred, there,
Share his joyful rhyme.

Ariel

Ariel conducts his singing
In pure and heavenly tones: 4240
Ugly faces greet its ringing,
But also lovely ones.

Oberon

Partners if you'd get along,
Learn then from the two of us!
If we in pairs would love for long, 4245
Someone needs to separate us.

Titania

The sulky man, the wilful wife,
So they might know each other,
I'd show him all the Northern ice,
And show her the Equator. 4250

The Whole Orchestra (*Tutti. Very loud.*)

From fly-snout and midge-nose,
And all of their relations,
Frog and cricket, too, there flow
These musical vibrations!

Solo

See, the bagpipes on their way! 4255
Made from a soap-bubble.
Hear the snail's-twaddle play
Through its stumpy nozzle.

Spirit (*Newly formed.*)

Spider's-feet and toad's-belly,
With useless winglets to 'em!
A little creature, it can't be
But it makes a little poem.

A Tiny Couple

Little steps and high leaps,
Through honeydew and fragrance here,
You still won't do enough it seems,
To climb into the atmosphere.

4265

A Curious Traveller

A masquerade of mockery?
Do I dare to trust my eyes?
Oberon, that fair divinity,
Do I see *him* here, tonight?

4270

The Orthodox

He's no tail, and not a claw!
And yet it's him, it's true:
Like the gods of Greece, I'm sure,
He must be a devil too.

Northern Artist

What I capture here today,
In truth is only sketchy:
Yet I prepare myself, someday
For my Italian journey.

4275

Purist

Ah! My bad luck brings me here:
Since I haven't been invited! 4280
Of all the witches to appear,
Only two are powdered.

Young Witch

Powder like a petticoat
On an old, grey witch you'll see,
While I sit naked on my goat, 4285
And show a fine young body.

Married Woman

We have too much experience,
To moan about you, here, then!
Yet, as young and tender you are, once,
So, I hope you will be, rotten. 4290

Orchestral Conductor

Fly-snout and midge-nose,
Don't swarm around the naked!
Frog and cricket, too, all know
Your time, and don't mistake it!

A Wind-Vane (*Swinging to one side.*)

Society, as one would like it done: 4295
True pure brides along the slope!
And young fellows, one for one,
People quite brimful of hope!

The Wind-Vane (*Swinging to the other side.*)

And if the ground doesn't split,
And swallow everyone, 4300
I'll be so amazed at it,
I'll leap into hell at once.

Xenies (*Barbed verses: Greek – gifts exchanged.*)

As insects we appear,
With little claws we're nipping,
To do Satan, our Papa, 4305
Due honour as is fitting.

Hennings (*August Von Hennings, a literary enemy.*)

See them, packed in a crowd,
Naïve, together, poking fun!
At last, they'll even say, aloud,
Their hearts were blameless ones. 4310

Musagete (*Controller of the Muses: Greek – epithet of Apollo*)

Among this witches' crew,
I'd gladly lose my way:
They're easier to manage, too
Than Muses, any day.

Former 'Genius of the Age'

One *was* someone, among *real* folk. 4315
Come on, then: I can hold my end up!
Like Germany's Parnassus, look,
The *Blocksberg's* summit's broad enough.

Curious Traveller (*Nicolai*)

Say, who's that haughty man?
He walks with such proud steps. 4320
He sniffs as only a sniffer-out can.
'He smells out Jesuits.'

A Crane (*Lavater*)

I like to fish among the clear
And the muddy levels:
So the pious man appears 4325
Mixing with the devils.

A Child of This World (*Goethe himself.*)

To the pious man, as I'm aware,
Every place is fitting,
So you build, on the Blocksberg here,
Many a house of meeting. 4330

A Dancer

Does some new choir succeed?
I hear a distant drum.
'No! It's the booming in the reeds,
Of bitterns, in unison.'

A Dancing Master

How they lift their legs, this lot! 4335
As best they can, they all take flight!
The cripples skip, the clumsy hop,
And don't care at all what they look like.

A Fiddle-Player

The ragged mob all hate so much,
They'd gladly crush the others. 4340
Here the bagpipe draws them, just
As Orpheus' lyre the creatures.

The Dogmatist

I won't declare it's madness, now,
Or show myself too critical.
The devil must exist somehow, 4345
Or how could we act the devil?

The Idealist

The fantasy in my mind,
For once, is too despotic.
Truly, if I am all, I find
Today I'm idiotic! 4350

The Realist

Here's real pain, at hand,
It annoys me so to see it:
For the first time, here I stand,
Unsteady, on my feet.

A Believer in the Supernatural

It's very pleasant to be here, 4355
And this crowd too has merit:
Since from the devil I infer
Some much more virtuous spirit.

A Sceptic

These little flames a-hunting go,
And think they're near the treasure: 4360
But Devil rhymes with doubtful: so
My being here's a pleasure.

Orchestral Conductor

Frog on leaf, and cricket, oh
You amateur editions!
Fly-snout and midge-nose, 4365
Remember you're musicians!

The Skilful

Carefree, is what they call
This band of happy creatures:
When we can't go on foot at all
Our head it is that features. 4370

The Maladroit

We picked up many a titbit once,
But now, God orders things so,
Our shoes are ragged from the dance,
And we travel on naked soles.

Will-O'-The-Wisps

From the swamps we've come, 4375
Where we first arose:
In the ranks here, we, at once,
As glittering gallants pose.

A Shooting Star

I shoot here from the sky
And star- and firelight meet. 4380
Now across the grass I lie -
Who'll help me to my feet?

The Heavy-Footed

Room, round about us, room!
We crush the grasses under.
Spirits come, and spirits too 4385
Have their bulky members.

Puck

Don't tread so heavily,
Like elephantine calves: let
Puck himself, the sturdy, be,
On this night, the stoutest. 4390

Ariel

Loving nature winged your backs,
You spirits, one supposes,
Follow, then, on my light track,
To the hill of roses!

Orchestra (*Quietly: pianissimo*)

Trailing cloud, and misted trees, 4395
Brighten with the day.
Breeze in leaves, and wind in reeds,
And all have flown away.

Part I Scene XXIII: Gloomy Day

(A Field. Faust, Mephistopheles.)

Faust

In misery! Despair! Wandering wretchedly on the face of the earth, for ages, and now imprisoned! That kind, unfortunate creature, locked up in prison as a criminal, and lost in torment! To this! This! – Treacherous, worthless spirit, you hid it from me! – Stand there, then! Roll the devil's eyes in your head, in anger! Stand there, and defy me with your unbearable presence! Imprisoned! In irredeemable misery! Delivered up to evil spirits, and the judgement of unfeeling men! And you've troubled me meanwhile with tasteless diversions, concealed her growing misery from me, and left her helpless in the face of ruin!

Mephistopheles

She is not the first.

Faust

Dog! Loathsome Monster! – Change him, infinite Spirit! Change the worm into his dog-form, in which he often liked to scamper in front of me, at night, rolling at the feet of the unsuspecting traveller, and clambering on his shoulders when he fell. Change him into his favourite likeness, so he can crawl on his belly in the sand in front of me, and I can trample him, depraved thing, under my feet! – 'Not the first!' – Misery! Misery! That no human spirit can grasp. That more than one being should sink into the depth of this wretchedness: that the first, writhing in its death-pangs, under the eyes of Eternal Forgiveness, did not expiate the guilt of all the others! It pierces to the marrow of my bones, the misery of this one being – and you smile calmly at the fate of thousands!

Mephistopheles

Now we're out of our wits again, already, at the point where men's brains are cracked. Why did you enter into partnership with us, if you can't go through with it? Would you take wing, and yet be free of dizziness? Did we thrust ourselves on you, or you on us?

Faust

Don't gnash your greedy jaws at me! It disgusts me! – Great and glorious Spirit, you who revealed yourself to me, nobly, who know my heart and soul, why shackle me to this disgraceful companion, who feeds on injury, and at the last on ruin?

Mephistopheles

Have you finished?

Faust

Save her, or woe to you! May the weightiest curse fall on you for a thousand ages!

Mephistopheles

I can't undo the bonds of the Avenger, nor loose his bolts. – 'Save her!' – Who was it dragged her to ruin? I or you?

(Faust looks around, wildly.)

Would you grasp the lightning? A good thing it has not been allowed you miserable mortals! To crush the innocent one who replies is the tyrant's way to free oneself of an embarrassment.

Faust

Take me to her! She shall be freed!

Mephistopheles

And the danger you expose yourself to? Be aware, the guilty blood from your hands lies on the town. Avenging spirits hover over the place of death, and lie in wait for the murderer's return.

Faust

And not from yours, too? Murder, and death in this world, be on you, monster! Take me there, I say, and free her.

Mephistopheles

I'll take you: listen to what I can do! Have I all the powers of heaven and earth? I'll confuse the jailor's mind: you take possession of the key, and bring her out, hand in human hand! I'll keep watch: magic horses are ready: I'll carry you away. That, I can do.

Faust

Away!

Part I Scene XXIV: Night

(An open field. Faust and Mephistopheles flying onwards on black horses.)

Faust

What do they weave, round the Ravenstone?

Mephistopheles

I don't know what they're cooking and brewing. 4400

Faust

Soaring up, diving down, bending and bowing.

Mephistopheles

A guild of witches.

Faust

They scatter, they consecrate.

Mephistopheles

Away! Away!

Part I Scene XXV: A Dungeon

(Faust, with a bunch of keys and a lamp, in front of an iron door.)

A long-forgotten shudder grips me, 4405
I'm gripped by all of Mankind's misery,
Here behind these damp walls, she
Lives: and all her guilt's illusory.
Do I tremble, then, to free her!
Do I dread, once more, to see her! 4410
On! Fear adds to death's proximity.

(He grips the lock. She sings within.)

My mother, the whore
She killed me!
My father, the rogue,
He gnawed me! 4415
Little sister alone
Laid out the bone
In the cool of the clay:
Then I was a sweet bird on the stone.
Fly away! Fly away! 4420

Faust *(Unlocking the door.)*

She doesn't know her lover's listening,
Hears the chains, the straw's rustling.

(He enters.)

Margaret *(Hiding herself in the bed of straw.)*

Woe! Woe! It comes. Bitterest Death!

Faust *(Whispering)*

Hush! Hush! It's I who come, to free you.

Margaret (*Throwing herself down in front of him.*)

Are you a man? Then pity my distress. 4425

Faust

Your cries will wake the jailors, too!

(*He grasps the chains, to loose them.*)

Margaret (*On her knees.*)

Who gives the executioner
Such power over me!
At midnight you're already here.
Let me live, have mercy on me! 4430
Won't it be soon enough when dawn should come?

(*She stands up.*)

I'm still so young, so young!
And yet I'll die!
I was lovely too, that was my
Ruin. My love was near, now he's gone: 4435
The garland's torn: the flowers are done.
Don't grip me, now, so violently!
What harm have I done you? Spare me!
Don't let me beg for mercy, in vain,
I've never seen you before today! 4440

Faust

How shall I endure this misery, say!

Margaret

I'm wholly in your power. Oh,
Let me feed my baby first.
I caressed it all night, though,
They told me I caused it hurt, 4445

And now they say I killed it, so,
And now I'll never be happy again.
They sing songs of me! It's wicked of folk!
There's an old story ends this way,
Who told them to tell it so?

4450

Faust (*Falling on his knees.*)

A lover lies at your feet,
Who'll end your painful slavery.

Margaret (*Throwing herself down next to him.*)

O let's kneel, the saints will bless!
See here! Under these steps,
Under this sill,
Seethes Hell!
The Evil One
With fierce anger,
Makes his groan!

4455

Faust (*Aloud*)

Gretchen! Gretchen!

4460

Margaret (*Listening closely.*)

The voice of my lover!

(*She leaps to her feet: the chains fall away.*)

Where? I heard him call me.
I'm free! No one holds me.
To his neck, I shall fly,
On his breast, I shall lie!
He called Gretchen! Stood at the sill.
Among the howls and cries of Hell,
Among the devil's, scornful groans,
I knew his sweet, dear tones.

4465

Faust

I'm here!

Margaret

Here! O, say it once again!

4470

(She embraces him.)

It's he! It's he! Where now is all the pain?
Where now the chains, the dungeon's misery?
You're here! You come to save me.
I am saved!

Already the street is there again,
Where I first saw you plain,
And the joyful garden,
Where Martha and I waited, then.

4475

Faust *(Struggling to move.)*

Come with me! Come!

Margaret *(Caressing him.)*

O stay,
I'll gladly stay, if you are with me.

4480

Faust

Away!
If you don't hurry,
We'll pay for this.

Margaret

What? You can no longer kiss?
My dear, so short a time to miss me,
And you've forgotten how to kiss me?
Why am I so anxious on your breast?

4485

When, once, at your words, your gaze,
With a whole heaven I was blessed,
And you kissed me, enough to suffocate. 4490
Kiss me!
I kiss you: see!

(She embraces him.)

Oh! How cold and silent,
Your lips.
Where has your passion 4495
Gone?
Who brought me this?

(She turns away from him.)

Faust

Come! Follow me! Darling, be bold!
I'll clasp you with a thousand-fold
Warmth: now follow me! I beg you! 4500

Margaret *(Turning to him.)*

And is it you? Is it really you?

Faust

It is! Come, with me!

Margaret

You'll loose the chains,
And take me to your breast, again.
How is it you don't shrink from me?
Do you know, friend, *whom* you free? 4505

Faust

Come! Come! The night will soon be over.

Margaret

I've killed my mother,
I've drowned my child.
Was it not given to you and I?
You too. - You here! I scarce believe. 4510
Give me your hand! This is no dream.
Your dear hand! – Ah, but it's damp!
Wipe it clean! Why do I think,
It has blood on.
Ah God! What have you done? 4515
Put your sword away,
I beg you, please!

Faust

Let past be past I say!
You're destroying me!

Margaret

No you must live on: must do. 4520
I'll describe our graves to you.
You must begin them
This very dawn:
The best one is for my mother,
Then, by her, my brother, 4525
Myself, a little further, lay,
But not too far away!
And the little one, at my right breast.
No one else by me will lie! –
Ah, to nestle at your side, 4530
That was a sweet, a darling bliss!
But no more will I achieve it:
It's as if I must force you to it,
As if you turn aside my kiss:

And yet it's you, so good, so sweet to see!

4535

Faust

You know it is, so come with me!

Margaret

Out there?

Faust

To Freedom.

Margaret

 If the grave is there,
Death waiting, then I come!
From here to everlasting rest,
And not a step further would
You go now? O Heinrich, if I could!

4540

Faust

You can! Just will it! The door is open!

Margaret

I dare not: there's no hope for me then.
What use is flight? They lie in wait for me.
To be forced to beg is a bitter existence,
And cursed too with an evil conscience!
To wander among strangers, bitter,
And even then I'd still be captured!

4545

Faust

I'll stay beside you.

4550

Margaret

Quickly! Quickly!
Save my poor baby!
Away! Down the ridge,
Now, by the brook,
Over the bridge, 4555
Into the wood,
Left, where the plank is,
There, in the pool.
Seize it now: you!
It's trying to rise, 4560
It's moving still!
Save it! Save it!

Faust

Be sensible!
Only one step, and then you're free!

Margaret

If we were on the mountain, only! 4565
There my mother sits, on a stone,
And oh, the cold, it grips me!
There my mother sits on a stone,
And wags her head, so heavy.
No sign, no nod, for me, I'm sure 4570
Her sleep's so long: she'll wake no more.
She slept, while we took our pleasure.
That was such a time to treasure!

Faust

Here all's useless, speech or prayer:
I'll take you from this place: I'll dare. 4575

Margaret

Let me alone! No, no force!

Don't grip me so murderously, oh,
I've done all else to please you so.

Faust

The day breaks! Dearest! Dearest!

Margaret

Day! Yes, it's dawn! The last I'll see: 4580
My wedding day, that was to be!
Tell no one you've been with Gretchen. Ah, bright glance!
It's done with: all in vain!
We two will meet again: 4585
But not in the dance.
The crowd gather, without speech.
The streets, the square,
Can't hold them, there.
The bell tolls, the wand breaks. 4590
Now, they seize and tie me!
I'm dragged already to the block.
The blade that quivers over me,
Has quivered before over every neck.
Silent the world, now, as the grave! 4595

Faust

Oh, would that I'd never seen the light!

Mephistopheles (*Appears outside.*)

Away! Or you'll be lost, tonight.
Useless staying and praying! Chattering!
The horses are shivering,
The dawn breaks, clear. 4600

Margaret

What rises in the doorway, here?
Him! Him! Send him away!
Why is he here in this holy place?
He wants me!

Faust

You will *live*!

Margaret

God of Judgement! To you, myself I give! 4605

Mephistopheles (To Faust)

Come! Now! Or I leave you *both* to stew.

Margaret

Father, save me! I belong to you!
Angels! In Holy Company,
Draw round me: guard me!
Heinrich! For you, I fear. 4610

Mephistopheles

She is judged!

A Voice (*From above.*)

She is saved!

Mephistopheles (To Faust.)

To me, here!

(*He vanishes, with Faust.*)

A Voice (*From within, dying away.*)

Heinrich! Heinrich!

Part II Act I Scene I: A Pleasant Landscape

(Faust is lying on flowery turf, tired and restless, trying to sleep. A circle of tiny, graceful spirits hovers round him.)

Ariel *(Chanting, accompanied by Aeolian Harps.)*

When the springtime blossoms, falling,
Shower down, and cover all things,
When the fields with greener blessing 4615
Dazzle all the world of earthlings,
Little elves, but great in spirit,
Haste to help, where help they can,
And, be he holy, be he wicked,
Pity they the luckless man. 4620

You, hovering in airy circles, round his head
Show yourselves in proud elf-form, instead,
Calm all the fierce resistance of his heart,
Remove the bitter barbs of sharp remorse,
Free him from past terrors, by your art. 4625
Four are the watches night makes in its course,
At once, now, mercifully, let the dark depart.
Let his head sink down on pillow's coolness,
Next sprinkle him with dew from Lethe's stream:
Then let his joints be free of cramps and stiffness, 4630
So that he's strong enough to greet day's gleam:
Elves exert your sweetest right,
Return him to the holy light!

Choir *(Singly, and two or more, alternately and together.)*

When the balmy breezes smother
All the green-encircled land, 4635
Sweetly fragrant and mist-covered,
Twilight gathers all around.
Sweet peace then whispers softly,
Rocks the heart on childhood's shores,
And on the eyelids, tired and weary,
Closes daylight's golden doors.

Here the night's already passing,
Sacred stars set, star by star,
Great lights, and the lesser glittering,
Sparkling near, and gleaming far: 4645
Sparkling, where the lake reflects her,
Gleaming bright in cloudless height,
Protecting the deep bliss of rest, there,
Moon, in splendour, rules the night.

The hours have vanished now, already 4650
Joy and pain have flown away,
You are whole! Recover, wholly:
Trust the sight of breaking day.
Greening valleys, swelling hills there,
Rise from out their shadowy sleep: 4655
And, drifting in its waves of silver,
On to harvest, flows the wheat.

Wish then, to achieve your wishes,
Gaze up, at the brightness there!
You are lightly tangled: this is 4660
Sleep, a shell, so now emerge!
Don't delay, walk bravely, tall,
When the crowd waits, hesitating:
The noblest man achieves his all,
By seeing, and then, swiftly, taking. 4665

Ariel

Listen! Hear the hour nearing!
Ringing out to spirit-hearing,
Now, the new day is appearing.
Doors of stone creak and chatter,
Phoebus' wheels roll and clatter, 4670
What a din the daylight's bringing!
Trombone- and trumpeting,
Eyes amazed, and ears ringing,
The Unheard drops out of hearing.

Slip into the flowers presence, 4675
Deeper, deeper, lie there silent,
In the pebbles, where the leaves bend:
If it strikes you, you'll be deafened.

Faust

Life's pulses beating now, with new existence,
Greet the mild ethereal half-light round me: 4680
You, Earth, stood firm tonight, as well: I sense
Your breath is quickening all the things about me,
Already, with that joy you give, beginning
To stir the strengthening resolution in me,
That strives, forever, towards highest Being. – 4685
Now the world unfolds, in half-light's gleam,
The wood's alive, its thousand harmonies singing,
While through the valleys, misted ribbons stream:
And heavenly light now penetrates the deep:
Twigs, branches shoot, with fresher life it seems, 4690
From fragrant gulfs, where they were sunk in sleep:
Colour on colour lifts now from the ground,
As leaf and flower with trembling dewdrops weep –
And a paradise reveals itself, all round.
Gaze upwards! – The vast mountain heights 4695
Already with the solemn hour resound:
They are the first to enjoy the eternal light
That later, for us, will work its way below.
Now, to the sloping Alpine meadows bright,
It gives a fresh clarity, a newer glow, 4700
And step by step it reaches us down here: –
It blazes out! – Ah, already blinded, though
I turn away, my eyesight wounded, pierced.
So it is, when to the thing we yearn for
The highest wish so intimately rehearsed, 4705
We find fulfilment opening wide the door:
And then, from eternal space, there breaks
A flood of flame, we stand amazed before:
We wished to set the torch of life ablaze,
A sea of fire consumes us, and such fire! 4710
Love, is it, then? Or hate? This fierce embrace,

The joy and pain of alternating pyres,
So that, gazing back to earth again,
We seek to veil ourselves in youth's desire.
Let the sun shine on, behind me, then! 4715
The waterfall that splits the cliffs' broad edge,
I gaze at with a growing pleasure, when
A thousand torrents plunge from ledge to ledge,
And still a thousand more pour down that stair,
Spraying the bright foam skywards from their beds. 4720
And in lone splendour, through the tumult there,
The rainbow's arch of colour, bending brightly,
Is clearly marked, and then dissolved in air,
Around it the cool showers, falling lightly.
There the efforts of mankind they mirror. 4725
Reflect on it, you'll understand precisely:
We live our life amongst refracted colour.

Part II Act I Scene II: The Emperor's Castle: The Throne Room

(A council of state waits for the Emperor. Trumpets.)

(Enter court attendants of all kinds, splendidly dressed. The Emperor approaches the throne: the Astrologer is to his right.)

The Emperor

I greet you all, the loved, and true,
Gathered here from far and wide: -
I see a wise man's at my side, 4730
But where on earth's the fool?

Attendant

Right behind your mantle there,
He suddenly tumbled on the stair,
They dragged away the pile of fat.
Dead: or drunk? No man knows that. 4735

A Second Attendant

At once, and at a wondrous pace,
Another came to take his place.
Quite extravagantly dressed,
Yet troubling, since he's so grotesque:
Guards closed the door in his face, 4740
Their halberds held crosswise too –
Yet here he comes, the daring fool!

Mephistopheles *(Kneeling in front of the throne.)*

What is cursed, and yet is welcomed?
What's desired, yet chased away?
What's always carefully defended? 4745
What's abused: condemned, I say?
What do you not dare appeal to?
What will all, happily, hear named?
What stands on the step before you?

What's banished from here, all the same? 4750

The Emperor

For once, at least, spare us your babble!
This is no time or place for riddles,
They're a matter for these gentlemen. –
Solve it! I'll gladly hear it all again.
I fear my old fool's wandered far in space: 4755
Come to my side, here, and take his place.

(Mephistopheles places himself on the Emperor's left.)

Murmurs From the Crowd

A newer fool – for newer cares –
Where's he from? – How'd he get there? –
The old one fell – He's all done in –
He was fat – Now this one's thin – 4760

The Emperor

So now, my faithful and beloved,
Welcome here from near and far!
We meet beneath a lucky star,
Since health and luck are written above.
But tell me, why in days like these, 4765
When we've conquered care,
And carnival masks are all our wear,
And delightful things are waiting,
We trouble ourselves with debating?
Yet since you say we have to do it, 4770
It's settled then, and we'll go to it.

The Chancellor

The highest virtue, like a sacred halo
Circles the Emperor's head: and so
He alone may validly exercise it:
Justice! – All men love and prize it, 4775
What all ask, yet wish they could do without,

The people look to him to hand it out.
 But ah! What help can human wit deliver,
 Or kindly heart, or willing hand, if fever
 Rages wildly through the state, and evil 4780
 Itself is broodingly preparing evil?
 Look about, from this height's extreme,
 Across the realm: it seems like some bad dream,
 Where one deformity acts on another,
 Where lawlessness by law is furthered, 4785
 And an age of crime is discovered.
 Here one steals cattle, there, a wife,
 Cross, cup and candlestick, from the altar,
 And boasts of it for many a year,
 His skin's intact, and so's his life. 4790
 Then they take their claims to court
 The judge, in pomp, on his high cushion,
 Meanwhile there grows a furious roar,
 From swelling tides of revolution.
 They insist it's crime and disgrace, 4795
 With their accomplices beside them,
 And 'Guilty!' is the verdict in a case,
 Only where Innocence is its own defence.
 So all the world will slash and chop,
 Destroying just what suits themselves: 4800
 How then can that true sense develop
 That shows the morally acceptable?
 At last the well-intentioned man
 Yields to the bribe, the flatterer:
 And the judge who can't convict, is hand 4805
 In hand with the criminal offender.
 I've painted in black, but I'd rather draw
 Its image in the deeper colour that I saw.

(Pause)

The conclusion's inescapable:
 If all men suffer when all cause trouble, 4810
 Then His Majesty himself is harmed.

The Commander in Chief

How riotous things are in this wild age!
They all lash out, and are lashed, these days,
And everyone is deaf to all command.
The citizen behind his wall, 4815
The knight in his cliff-top tower,
Have sworn to defy us all,
And hold fast to their power.
The impatient mercenaries
Impetuously demand their pay, 4820
And if we owed them less, already
They'd be off, and march away.
If one forbids what all desire,
He's disturbed a hornet's nest:
The kingdom, they should keep entire, 4825
Is plundered, and distressed.
They'd like to wreak a wild disorder,
Half the world has been dissolved:
There are still kings beyond our border,
But none of them think they're involved. 4830

The Treasurer

In allies, then, who'd put their trust!
The subsidies they promised us,
Like water pipes are all blocked up.
And, Sire, in all your wide estate,
Who's benefited from the take? 4835
Wherever you go, there's some new pup,
Who declares his independence.
We watch, while they carry on:
We've given away our rights, and hence,
No rights are left for us, not one. 4840
Our parties too, however called,
Can't be depended on today:
They like to praise, and blame: it's all
Impartial both their love and hate.
They're resting: they take cover,
The Ghibelline, and Guelph. 4845

Now, who'll help his neighbour?
Each man just helps himself.
The golden doors are fastened tight,
Men scrape and scratch and glean, all right, 4850
But our coffers still are empty.

The Steward

What evils, too, I must endure!
We try to save each day, I'm sure,
But every day sees greater need: 4855
So, daily, some new torment's mine.
The cooks, alas, have all they want:
Boar, pheasant, hare and venison,
Ducks and peacocks, chickens, geese,
Payment in kind, and guaranteed,
They keep coming all the time, 4860
But in the end we're short of wine.
Though cask on cask once filled the cellar,
The best of vintages, and names, there,
These noble lords can drink forever,
And haven't left a single drop. 4865
The council too must have their fill,
They grasp their tankards tight until,
Under the table, they have to stop.
Now I'll count the cost, you'll see,
The moneylenders won't spare me, 4870
The advances that they give gladly,
Will eat the future years, on top.
Pigs don't have time to fatten: instead
Men seize the pillows from your bed,
Even the bread from your table's gone. 4875

The Emperor (*After reflection, to Mephistopheles.*)

Fool, do you know anything else that's wrong?

Mephistopheles

Me? Nothing at all! I see splendour, as I must,
Around me, of you and yours! – Lack trust,
Where Majesty commands so, without question,
Where ready force scatters the enemy faction? 4880
Where strong wills, with wit to understand,
Active and various, are all at hand?
What, for some evil purpose, could combine,
For darkness, then, where such stars shine?

Murmurs

Here's a rogue – who understands – 4885
He'll tell lies – as long as he can –
I wonder too – what lies behind –
And what's in front? – A project of some kind –

Mephistopheles

In this world, what isn't lacking, somewhere, though?
Sometimes it's this, or that: here what's missing's gold. 4890
True you can't just rake it up from the floor,
But wisdom knows the mines where one gets more.
In mountain veins, foundation walls,
Coined and un-coined golden hoards,
And ask me, now, who'll bring it to the light: 4895
One gifted with Mind's power and Nature's might.

The Chancellor

Mind and Nature – don't speak to Christians so.
That's why men burn atheists, below,
Such speech is dangerous, all right,
Nature is sin, and Mind's the devil, 4900
It harbours within it, Doubt, that evil,
Their misshapen hermaphrodite.
Not so with us! – In the Emperor's land
Two kinds of men are still at hand
Worthy alone to defend the throne: 4905

The Saints are they, and the Knights:
They enter life's uncertain fights,
Rewards of Church and State they own:
Firm in their resistance, check
The confused aims of everyman. 4910
No, Nature and Mind are heretics!
Wizards! Ruining town and land.
And you, with brazen impudence still
Invoke them here in this high circle:
You're fostering the corrupted will, 4915
Fools are always hand in hand.

Mephistopheles

By this I recognise a most learned lord!
What you can't feel lies miles abroad,
What you can't grasp, you think, is done with too.
What you don't count on can't be true, 4920
What you can't weigh won't weigh, of old,
What you don't coin: that can't be gold.

The Emperor

You won't sort out our faults like that,
Will Lenten sermons make men fat?
I'm tired of the eternal 'if and when': 4925
We're short of gold, well fine, so fetch some then.

Mephistopheles

I'll fetch what you wish, and I'll fetch more:
Easy it's true, but then easy things weigh more:
It's there already, yet how we might achieve it,
That's the tricky thing, knowing how to seize it. 4930
Just think how, in those times of consternation,
When a human flood drowned land and nation,
People were so terrified, everywhere,
They hid their treasures, here and there.
So it was when mighty Rome held sway, 4935
And so it goes on, yesterday and today.

Still buried in the earth, why, there it is:
The earth is the Emperor's, so it's his.

The Treasurer

For a Fool his aim's not out of sight:
It's true, that's an old Imperial right. 4940

The Chancellor

Satan lays out his gilded nets, for you,
These things don't square with what's good and true.

The Steward

Only bring them to court: I'll welcome the sight,
And I'll gladly accept the thing as not quite right.

The Commander in Chief

The Fool's clever, to promise what each of us needs: 4945
A soldier will never ask from whence it all proceeds.

Mephistopheles

If you think I'm cheating you, maybe,
Why here's the man: ask Astrology!
He knows each circling hour and house:
So ask him: how are the Heavens now? 4950

Murmurs

Two rogues, there – already known –
Fool and Dreamer – so near the throne –
An idle song – an ancient rhyme –
The Fool plays – the Wise Man speaks, in time –

The Astrologer (*Speaks, with Mephistopheles prompting him.*)

The Sun, himself, he is of purest gold: 4955
Mercury, messenger, of riches told:
Venus has bewitched you all, and she
Looks on you, soon and late, quite lovingly:
The chaste Moon's mood holds fast:
Mars won't harm: his strength won't last: 4960
And Jupiter remains the loveliest sight:
While Saturn's great, but far away and slight.
His metal we don't greatly venerate,
Light of worth, though leaden in its weight.
Yes! When Sun and Moon are conjoined fine, 4965
Silver and gold will make the whole world shine:
The rest as well in turn are all achieved,
Palaces, gardens proud, and rosy cheeks:
All this he brings this highly knowledgeable man:
He can deliver, too, what nobody else here can. 4970

The Emperor

The words they say, I hear them twice,
And yet I'm not convinced they're right.

Murmurs

What's all that? - A joke gone flat -
Horoscopy - And Chemistry -
I've heard that vein - Hoped in vain - 4975
Come, quick - It's still a trick -

Mephistopheles

They stand around: they're all amazed,
They don't trust what can be found,
One babbles about deadly nightshade,
The other of some jet-black hound. 4980
What matter if one thinks I'm jesting,
Or another calls it sorcery,
If the soles of their feet are itching,

If their firm step totters towards me.
All can feel the secret working 4985
Of Nature's everlasting power,
And from its deepest lurking,
A living vein shall rise and flower.
When every member twitches,
When all looks strange to your eyes, 4990
Make up your minds, be delvers,
Here the players, there the prize!

Murmurs

It's like a lead-weight on my feet –
My arm's swollen – but then, it's gouty –
There's a tickle here in my big toe – 4995
All the way down my back it goes –
From these signs, I'd say we're near
A rich vein of treasure, here.

The Emperor

Quick then! Don't slope off there!
Let's test your froth of lies, 5000
Show us, all, this rarest prize.
I'll lay down the sword and sceptre,
With my own noble hands, as well,
If you don't lie, complete the work myself,
And, if you lie, then send you down to Hell! 5005

Mephistopheles

I'll find the way there anyway –
Yet I really can't exaggerate
What's lying round ownerless, everywhere.
The farmer, ploughing the furrows, lays bare
A crock of gold the clods unfold: 5010
Seeks saltpetre from damp limy walls,
And finds there golden rolls of gold,
In his poor hands: frightened by all.
What caverns exist to be blown open,

Through what shafts and cuttings then,	5015
Burrow those gold-divining men,	
Those neighbours of the Underworld!	
Secure in vast ancient cellars, find,	
Golden plates, bowls, cups for wine,	
In rows, and heaps where they were hurled:	5020
Goblets fashioned out of rubies,	
And if they wants to try their uses,	
Beside them there's the ancient fluid.	
Yet – I would trust the expert though –	
The wooden casks rotted long ago,	5025
The wine makes tartar, in the liquid.	
Not just gold, and jewels, fine	
But the essence then of noble wine	
Terror hides, and night, as stark.	
So quiz the wise untiringly:	5030
It's trivial, by day, to see:	
Mystery: houses in the dark.	

The Emperor

See to it then! What use is it out of sight?	
Whatever's valuable must see the light.	
Who knows a rogue for certain but by day?	5035
At night all cows are black, and cats are grey.	
The pots down there, full of golden weight –	
Drive your plough, and, ploughing, excavate.	

Mephistopheles

Take hoe and spade: and dig yourself,	
Labouring will make you great,	5040
A herd of golden calves, you'll help	
To rise from out their buried state.	
Then with delight, without delay,	
You can, yourself, your love array:	
Glittering colours, shining gems, will best	5045
Enhance your majesty, and her loveliness.	

The Emperor

Quick then, quick! How slow it always is!

The Astrologer (*Prompted by Mephistopheles.*)

Sire, restrain your urgent passion, please.
First let all your pleasant pastimes go:
Distracted natures won't achieve the goal. 5050
First we must atone for them in quiet,
Lower things are gained by the higher.
Who wants the good, must first be good:
Who wants delight, must calm the blood:
Who longs for wine, treads ripened grapes: 5055
Who hopes for miracles, strengthens then his faith.

The Emperor

So let the time be passed in merriment!
Ash Wednesday will achieve our grave intent.
And we can celebrate, wild Carnival,
More riotously, meanwhile, after all. 5060

(They exit to the sound of trumpets.)

Mephistopheles

How merit and luck are linked together
These fools can't see, no, not a one:
If they'd the Philosopher's Stone, as ever,
There'd lack a philosopher for the stone.

Part II Act I Scene III: A Spacious Hall with Adjoining Rooms

(Arranged and decorated for a Carnival Masque.)

Herald

In our German lands, fear no evil, 5065
Dance of Death or Fool, or Devil:
There's a cheerful feast, here: wait.
Our Sire, on his Roman travels,
Has, for his profit, and our revels,
Crossed the highest Alpine levels, 5070
And gained himself a happier State.
The Emperor kissed the holy slipper,
First, won sovereign rights, and as,
He was gifted with the crown, there,
Accepted a fool's cap, for us. 5075
We're all newly born, now:
Every sophisticated man,
Pulls it snug over ears and brow:
He seems a poor fool, but he'll vow
To wear it wisely as he can. 5080
I see they're gathering already,
Hesitant alone, or paired off intimately:
Chorus on chorus pushing through.
In, and out, quite undeterred:
And end up where they were before, too. 5085
With its hundred thousand scenes of the absurd,
The World itself is just one giant Fool.

Flower Girls (*Singing, accompanied by mandolins.*)

Dressed to win your praises,
We are here tonight,
Young Florentine ladies, 5090
At the German Court of light.

Many a bright flower we wear
To adorn our tawny hair:
Silken threads, silken gear,
They play their own part here. 5095

Then our position's well deserved, oh,
Worth your praise, without a doubt,
Our shining-flowers, by hand we sew,
So they bloom year in, year out.

All kinds of coloured snippets, 5100
Placed with perfect symmetry:
You might mock us bit by bit, yes,
But the whole attracts you see.

We are pretty things to look on,
Flower Girls, and very smart: 5105
Then, the temperament of Woman
Is so very close to Art.

Herald

Let's see those trays of flowers
That you carry on your heads,
That paint your arms with colours: 5110
What each likes, let her select.
Quick: in walks and branches
What a garden we will share!
They are fit to crowd around us,
Flower sellers and their wares. 5115

The Flower Girls

Haggle in this cheerful place,
But seek no market here!
At a quick and witty pace,
Let all know what you bear.

An Olive-Branch with Olives

I don't envy flowery ones, 5120
Every kind of strife I shun:
It's unnatural, to me:
So I am the sign of nations,
And I seal their obligations,
Mark of peace in any field. 5125
I hope I'm worth good luck today:
Some lovely head I might array.

A Garland of Wheat-Ears (*Golden*)

Ceres gift, for you to wear,
Charming, sweet, we were all sent:
The most desired of uses, here 5130
As your beautiful adornment.

A Fancy Garland

Like a mallow, bright with colour,
A marvellous flower grew from the moss!
Never known before to Nature,
Yet Fashion brought it us. 5135

A Fancy Bouquet

My name's for you to know,
Theophrastus couldn't tell you though:
Yet I hope, if not all do,
Many of us will still please you,
She, I'd like, most to possess us, 5140
Who might twine us in her tresses:
Or if she should so decide,
Set beside her heart, I'd ride.

Rosebuds

Many-coloured fancies may
Form the fashion of the day, 5145
Strange and curious of shape,
Such as Nature never made:
Stalks of green and bells of gold,
Show in tresses all untold! –
Yet we – remain here, covered up: 5150
Lucky those who first discover us.
When the summer is proclaimed,
Then the rosebuds are in flame,
Who would do without such pleasures?
Promises, and yielded treasures, 5155
That, in the flowery kingdom, rule,
Mind and heart and glances, too.

(The Flower Girls garland themselves, and show their wares, gracefully, in the green leafy arcades.)

The Gardeners (*Singing, accompanied by lutes.*)

See the flowers quietly growing,
On your brows, sweetly amuse you,
And their fruit will not seduce you, 5160
One may taste delight in knowing.

Sunburned faces offer up,
Peaches, plums, and cherries, yet.
Buy! Against the tongue and palate,
The eye is the worst way to judge. 5165

Come, of all this ripest fruit,
Eat with taste, and delight!
Poems on roses might still suit,
But on the apple man must bite.

So then let us join with their 5170
Flowering youth itself,
And we'll dress our riper wares
In our neighbour's wealth.

Dressed in cheerful garlands, there,
Along this jewelled leafy route, 5175
All things can be found together,
Buds and leaves, and flowers and fruit.

(Both choruses set out their goods on the flight of steps, with alternating song accompanied by the lutes and mandolins, and offer their wares to the spectators.)

A Mother (*With her daughter.*)

Child, when you came to light,
I dressed you in your little hat:
Your face was so sweet and bright, 5180
And your body was soft, at that.
I thought you'd soon be a bride,
To the wealthiest of men allied,
I thought you'd find a match.

Ah! Now already many a year 5185
Has flown by, uselessly,
The motley crowd of suitors here,
Pass you quickly by, I see:
With him you danced a lively dance,
Gave that other a knowing glance 5190
With your elbow, sharply.

I've thought about the many feasts
We went to, all in vain,
Forfeits, and Hide and Seek,
Couldn't help, that's plain: 5195
Today the fools are out the trap,
Darling, open then your lap,
There's someone you can gain.

(Other young and lovely girls join the Flower Girls, and they gossip together. Fishermen and bird-catchers with fishing rods, nests, limed twigs and other implements appear, and scatter themselves among the girls. Mutual attempts to win over, catch, escape and embrace, allow the most agreeable conversation.)

Wood-cutters (*Entering, loudly and boisterously.*)

Make way! Stand back!
We must be free, 5200
We fell the trees,
They crash, and smash:
And when we pass,
Expect a smack.

To give us praise 5205
Consider this:
If coarser ways,
Weren't in this land,
How'd the finest,
Have means to stand, 5210
Despite they're jesting?
So learn our meaning!
For you'd be freezing,
If we weren't sweating.

Pulcinelli

You're fools, a troop, 5215
That's born to stoop.
We're the wise,
We see through lies:
And then our bags
Our caps and rags, 5220
Are light to wear:
And free from care,
We're always idle,
Slipperd, we sidle,
Through market crowds, 5225
Slithering about,
Standing to gaze,
And croak, amazed:
And at that sound,
Through heaving mounds, 5230
Eel-like slipping,
Lightly skipping,
We romp together.
Praise us ever,
Or scold us so, 5235
We let both go.

The Parasitical (*Fawning, and lustful.*)

You brave woodsmen,
And your next of kin,

The charcoal-burners,	
You're the men for us.	5240
Since all the stooping,	
The ready nodding,	
The winding phrase,	
That plays both ways,	
That warms or chills,	5245
Just as one feels,	
What profit is it then?	
The mighty fire	
From heaven or higher,	5250
Might come in vain	
Without logs again,	
And coal heaps there,	
To light the oven	
And make it glare.	
It roasts and steams,	5255
It boils and teems.	
The finger-picker,	
The plate-licker,	
He sniffs the fry,	
Suspects the fish:	5260
Rules, by and by,	
The patron's dish.	

A Drunk (*Confused.*)

Nothing seems bad to me today!	
I feel so frank, and free:	
New joys, and happy songs, I say.	5265
I brought them both with me!	
So let's drink! Drink, and drink!	
Drink up, you! Clink, and clink!	
You behind me, come around!	
Drink it up, and send it down.	5270

My wife was so outraged, she screamed,
 When I turned up, dressed so funny,
 However much I boasted, she
 Kept calling me a tailor's dummy.

So I drink! Drink, and drink! 5275
Clink the tankards! Clink, and clink!
Tailor's dummy: swill it round!
When it's clinked, drink it down!

Don't you say, I've lost my way:
I'm here, where I've got it made. 5280
If host and hostess won't play,
I'll get credit from the maid.
Always drinking! Drink, and drink!
Lift, you others! Clink, and clink!
Each to each! So it goes round! 5285
Too soon, I know, it's all gone down.

However I please myself, may I
Have it happen at my command:
Let me lie here, where I lie,
If I can't, any longer, stand. 5290

Chorus

Every pal, now: drink and drink!
A toast again, a clink and clink!
Hold tight now to bench and ground!
Under the table, he'll be found.

(The Herald announces sundry poets – Poets of Nature, and Court, and Minstrels, Sentimentalists and Enthusiasts. In this competitive crowd no one allows anyone else to start reciting. One slips by with a few words.)

A Satirical Poet

As a poet, do you know 5295
What I'd most enjoy, here?
If I dared to sing, or bellow
What no one wants to hear.

(The Night and Church Poets excuse themselves having become engaged in a very interesting conversation with a newly-risen Vampire, from which a new school of poetry might derive. The Herald has to accept their excuses,

and meanwhile calls on characters from Greek Mythology, who even in modern masks lose neither their character nor power to charm.)

(The Three Graces appear.)

Aglaia

Grace it is we bring, to living:
So be graceful in your giving. 5300

Hegemone

Gracefully may you receive:
Lovely is the wish achieved.

Euphrosyne

And in quieter hours, and places,
Chiefly, in your thanks, be gracious.

(The Three Fates appear)

Atropos

I, the eldest, I, the spinning 5305
Am lumbered with this time: I've
Need of lots of pondering, thinking,
To yield the tender threads of life.

So you may be soft and supple,
I sift through the finest flax: 5310
Drawn through clever fingers, double
Fine, and even, smooth as wax.

If you wish all joy and dancing,
Excessive now, in what you take,
Think about those threads: their ending. 5315
Then, take care! The threads might break.

Clotho

Know that in these latter days,
I was trusted with the shears:
Since our eldest sister's ways,
Failed to help men, it appears. 5320

She dragged all her useless spinning,
Endlessly to air and light,
While the hopes of wondrous winnings,
Were clipped and buried out of sight.

I too made a host of errors: 5325
Myself, in my younger years,
But, to keep myself in check, there's
The case, in which I keep my shears.

And so, willingly restrained,
I look kindly on this place, 5330
In these hours, your freedom gained,
Run on and on, at your wild pace.

Lachesis

I, the only one with sense,
To twist the threads am left:
My ways brook no nonsense, 5335
I've never hurried yet.

Threads they come, threads I wind,
Guiding each one on its track,
Letting no thread wander blind,
Twining each one in the pack. 5340

If I, once, forgot myself, my fears
For the world would give me pause:
Counting hours, measuring years,
So the Weaver holds her course.

Herald

You wouldn't recognise the ones who come now, 5345
However much you know of ancient troubles,
To look at them, the cause of many evils,
You'd call them welcome guests, and bow.

They're the Furies: no one will believe me,
Pretty, shapely, friendly, young in years: 5350
But meet with them, you'll quickly learn I fear,
How serpent-like these doves are to hurt freely.

Though they're malicious, in modernity,
Where fools now boast about their sinful stories,
They too have ceased to want the Angels' glories: 5355
Confess themselves the plague of land and city.

(The Furies approach.)

Alecto

What does that matter? You still believe in us:
Then, we're pretty, young, and fawning kittens:
If one of you has a lover, with whom he's smitten,
We'll tickle his ears at length, sweetly fuss, 5360

Till it would be safe to tell him, eye to eye,
That she waves to him, and him, the same,
She's thick up top, a crooked back, and lame,
And married, she'd be no good, by and by.

We know how to pester the bride-to-be as well: 5365
Scarcely a week ago, her lover himself,
Said nasty things to her about *herself*! –
They're reconciled, but something rankles still.

Megaera

That's a joke! Let them be married, any way,
I'll take it up, and know, whatever may befall, 5370
Through wilfulness the sweetest joys will pall,
Man's changeable, and changeable the day.

And no one holds the desired one in his arms,
Without longing, foolishly, for the more-desired,
Leave's his good fortune, with which he was fired: 5375
Flies from the sun, and asks the frost for warmth.

I know how to give birth to those things: there,
Is Asmodi, who is my faithful servant,
To work true mischief at the proper moment,
And send to ruin all Mankind, in pairs. 5380

Tisiphone

Instead of malice: poison and the knife
I'm mixing, sharpening for that betrayer:
Love another, and sooner now or later,
Ruin itself will penetrate your life.

Gall and wormwood they must roam 5385
Through all those sweetest moments!
No bargaining here, no bartering, come –
The perpetrator must atone.

Let no one sing about forgiveness!
I cry my cause to the cliffs again, 5390
Echo! Hear! Reply: Avenge!
Let him who alters, cease existence.

The Herald

I'll ask you please, to move aside, 5395
Since what comes next, is otherwise.
You can see, here's a mountain coming,
Decked with princely coloured trappings,

A tusked head, snaking trunk, there too,
A mystery, but I'll reveal the key to you.
A delicate and dainty girl sits on its neck,
And with a thin wand keeps the beast in check: 5400
Another, up there, standing, wonderfully,
Surrounded with light, almost blinding me.
Beside it, two girls walk in chains, one fearful,
While the other girl seems quite cheerful:
One wishes to be, and one feels she is, free. 5405
Let each of them declare who they might be.

Fear

Smoking torches, flares and lights,
Are burning at the troubled feast:
Among all these deceptive sights,
Ah, I'm held fast by the feet. 5410

Away, you ridiculous smilers!
I suspect those grins so bright:
All my enemies, beguilers,
Press towards me through the night.

Here! A friend becomes a foe, 5415
Yet I know that mask, I'd say:
One that wants to kill me, though,
Now unmasked he creeps away.

Gladly, heedless of direction
I'd escape from out this world: 5420
But, beyond, there roars destruction:
In mists of terror I am furred.

Hope

I greet you, sisters! Though today,
And the whole of yesterday,
You enjoyed the masquerade, 5425
I know all will be displayed:
In the morning you'll unveil.

And if, in the torchlight, we
 Don't feel particular delight,
 Yet the days to come, so bright, 5430
 More wholly suited, we shall hail,
 Now as one, now solitary,
 Through fair fields, we'll roam loose,
 To act, or rest, as we choose,
 And in that carefree way of living, 5435
 Dispense with nothing, go on striving:
 Guests are welcome everywhere,
 Confidently, let's appear:
 Surely, the best anywhere,
 Must be somewhere, here. 5440

Intelligence

Two of Man's worst enemies,
 Fear and Hope, I bind for you,
 Now this country worries me.
 Make room! I'll rescue you.

I lead the living Colossus, 5445
 Turret-crowned, as you see,
 Step by step, he crosses,
 The highest passes, tirelessly.

But above me, on the summit,
 Is a goddess, there, who's bearing 5450
 Outspread wings, and turns about,
 Everywhere, to see who's winning.

Ringed by splendour, and by glory,
 Shining far, on every side:
 She calls herself – Victory, 5455
 Goddess of the active life.

Zoilo-Thersites (*An Ugly Dwarfish Warrior.*)

Ah, ha! I've come just in time,
 I hold you *all* guilty of crime!

Yet my goal I assume to be
Her up there: Queen Victory. 5460
With her pair of snowy wings,
She's an eagle, she must think:
And that whenever she's on hand,
To her belong the folk and land:
But when famous deeds are done, 5465
At once I'm here with armour on,
When low is high, and high is low,
Bent is straight, and straight not so,
That alone fills me with mirth,
I wish it so throughout the Earth. 5470

The Herald

So I'll lend you, dog from birth,
This good baton's masterstroke!
Twist and turn now: it's no joke! –
See how the twin dwarfish ape,
Rolls into a foul lumpish shape! 5475
A wonder – the lump's an egg, on cue,
It swells and then it cracks in two:
Now a pair of twins appear,
An adder and a bat roll clear.
One through the dust is swiftly winding, 5480
The black one's flitting round the ceiling.
They hurry outside, in company,
I wouldn't choose to be number three.

Murmurs

Lively now! There's dancing there –
No! I'd much rather be elsewhere – 5485
Can't you feel some ghostly race
Fly about us, through this place? –
Something just rushed through my hair –
Round my feet, it's flying, where? –
None of us are injured though – 5490
But we all are frightened so –
All the fun is spoilt completely –

As those creatures wished, you see.

The Herald

Since I play the herald's role,
As this masquerade unfolds, 5495
I watch sternly at the door,
In case some devious outlaw
To this happy place, comes creeping:
Never yielding, never wavering.
Through the window, though, I fear 5500
Airborne spectres enter here:
From magic and from devilry
Alas, I cannot set you free.
All this makes the dwarf suspicious,
Now! From behind, a new masque issues. 5505
And I must dutifully explain
The meaning of the forms, again.
But I can't easily announce
What cannot be understood:
Help me explain it, if you would! – 5510
See it wander through the crowd?
A splendid chariot, a four-in-hand,
Rolling through them, where they stand:
But it doesn't split the people,
I see no one's crushed at all. 5515
Colours glitter in the distance,
Sundry wandering stars for instance,
A magic-lantern-like performance.
It blows along, a storm's assault.
Make way, there! I shudder!

The Boy Charioteer

Halt! 5520
Dragons, your wings restrain,
Feel your accustomed rein,
Control yourselves, if I control you,
Sweep away when I inspire you –
Let us do honour to this place! 5525
Look round, a widening display

Of admirers, circle now on circle.
Herald, now, then! As you will,
Before we leave you all,
Describe us, and say our name: 5530
Since we're allegorical,
You should know us, plain.

Herald

No, indeed, I can't tell your name:
I'll try and describe you all the same.

The Boy Charioteer

So try!

The Herald

I must confess 5535
To young and handsome, before the rest.
You're a half-grown boy: yet a woman
Would prefer to see you fully grown.
You seem to me a wooer, in future,
Out of her house, a real seducer. 5540

The Boy Charioteer

Let's hear more! Go on: go on,
Find the riddle's bright solution.

The Herald

Dark eyes that shine: night-black hair
Which brightly jewelled bands enclose:
And what a dainty garment flows 5545
From shoulder down to ankle, there:
With purple hem its glittering shows!
One might take you for a girl:
Yet for good or ill, you'd be,
Prized already by any girl, 5550

She'd teach you your ABC.

The Boy Charioteer

And he, who like a splendid vision,
Sits on the chariot, enthroned there?

The Herald

He seems a king, a rich and kind one,
Blessed are they who gain his favour! 5555
He has no further need to strive,
His eyes observe whatever's lacking,
And to spread his pure delight,
Is more to him than joy and owning.

The Boy Charioteer

You daren't stop there: what you see, 5560
You must describe it precisely.

The Herald

I can't express all the dignity.
But the glowing moon face, I see,
The full mouth, the bright cheeks, then
That shine beneath the jewelled turban: 5565
Rich comfort in the clothes he's wearing!
What shall I say about his bearing?
As a ruler he seems known to me.

The Boy Charioteer

Plutus the God of Riches, this is he!
He's come himself in all his splendour, 5570
The Emperor wished greatly he were here.

The Herald

Explain your own *what* and *how* to me!

The Boy Charioteer

I am Extravagance: I am Poetry:
I am the Poet, who is self-perfected
When his special gift is squandered.
Yet I'm immeasurably wealthy,
Like Plutus, worth as much as he,
I adorn, enliven, dance and feast,
And whatever he lacks, I complete.

5575

Herald

Your boasting makes you handsomer,
But let's see all your skill appear.

5580

The Boy Charioteer

Just watch me snap my fingers, now,
The chariot will gleam and glow.
There a string of pearls appear!

(He continues to snap his fingers, in all directions.)

Golden jewels for neck and ear:
Flawless combs and diadems,
Set in a ring, rare precious gems:
I scatter flames too, here and there,
Waiting for their chance to flare.

5585

The Herald

How the dear crowd snatch, I see!
The giver's soon in difficulty.
He snaps out jewels, as in a dream,
And they all snatch them, in a stream.
But now a different trick, you see:

5590

What each has grasped so eagerly, 5595
Has gained him but a poor reward,
The gifts already fluttering skyward.
The pearls are loosened from their band,
And beetles crawl there in his hand,
The poor man shakes them off, instead 5600
They're humming now around his head.
Another, for some solid thing,
Catches at a butterfly's wing.
That's what the rascal's promise means:
He only lends them golden gleams! 5605

The Boy Charioteer

You know how to announce masks: it's true,
But it's not the herald's task to search below
The outer surface of existence:
That requires a keener sense.
Still I'm wary of all disputes. 5610
Lord, I'll direct my speech and questioning to you.

(Turning towards Plutus.)

Have you not trusted me with the task, to stand
And guide the tempest of your four-in-hand?
Don't I steer well, as you direct?
Am I not there, when you expect? 5615
And don't I know how to win
The palm, for you, on daring wing?
When I've fought for you in war, now,
I've been successful every time:
When laurel wreaths adorn your brow 5620
Have I not fashioned them with hand and mind?

Plutus

If I'm required to be a witness to it,
I'd say: You are the spirit of my spirit.
You always act according to my wishes,
And as I gain myself, you too are richer. 5625

To reward your services, I value now
The green branch higher than my crown.
One true word, then, for everyone:
I've found delight in you, dear Son.

The Boy Charioteer

The greatest gifts from my hand, 5630
See! I've scattered them around.
On every head there's the glow
Of some little flame I throw:
Leaping from one brow to another,
Halts on him, then leaves his brother, 5635
But rarely does the flame-let rise,
And briefly flower in bright skies:
For many, before they know, it's vanished,
Sadly, it's burnt out, and finished.

Women (*Chatting to each other.*)

Up there, on the four-in-hand, 5640
He's certainly a charlatan:
And there's a clown perched behind,
By hunger and thirst he's been refined,
Like nothing one's ever seen before:
Pinch, and he'll feel nothing at all. 5645

The Starveling

Disgusting women, leave me alone!
Not to come here again, I'll know.
When women kept to their hearths, then
Avaritia, Greed: was my name:
The houses were fine, all about, 5650
Lots came in, nothing went out!
I took care of cupboard and chest:
That was a burden, to top the rest.
But now in this younger age,
Wives don't know how to save, 5655
And like all those wicked students,

They have more desires than ‘talents’,
And their men have much to suffer,
Their debts are left about all over.
They spend whatever they can extract, 5660
On their lovers, and on their backs:
They eat of the best, and drink deeper,
With their wretched army of admirers:
Which adds to the value of gold, for me:
We’re manly fellows, the Miserly! 5665

Leader of the Women

Let dragon be miserly with dragon:
In the end it’s merely lies, illusion!
Men flock around, and turn the charm on,
But they’re soon annoyance and confusion.

The Crowd of Women

That Scarecrow! Give him a poke! 5670
What’s the Wooden Rake threaten?
We’ll all shun his ugly looks, then!
Dragons of wood and paper: a joke!
Look lively, now, and we’ll do him in!

The Herald

By my wand! Keep the peace! – 5675
Though there’s no need for my assistance:
Look at those grim monsters, how each
Clears round itself a proper distance,
Unfolding its quadruple wings, the beast.
The dragons shake themselves, indignant, 5680
With fiery throats, their tails rampant:
The place is cleared: the people flee.

(Plutus descends from the chariot.)

The Herald

He steps down, in a kingly manner!
He beckons, and the dragons stir:
From the chariot bearing Avarice, 5685
And gold, down comes the chest,
See, there at his feet, it's landed:
It's a wonder how it happened.

Plutus (*To the Boy Charioteer*)

Now you've left that troubling burden here,
You're free: so, fly now to your own sphere! 5690
Not this! Where, confused, motley, wild,
Distorted objects crowd around us, child.
No: where you see clear, with sweetest Clarity,
Self-possessed, trusting in your own self: flee,
Where Goodness and Beauty may be viewed, 5695
And there create *your* world – in Solitude!

The Boy Charioteer

So, I'll be your worthy envoy then,
So, I'll love you like my dearest kin.
Where you live, is Plenty: and where
I am, all feel they gain in splendour. 5700
And often hesitate in life's uncertainty:
Should they yield to you, or yield to me?
Certainly your followers will have rest:
Who follows me, with work's forever blessed.
My actions are never kept a secret, 5705
I only have to breathe and I'm apparent.
Farewell, then! You granted me my joy:
But whisper low, and you shall have your boy!

(He exits as he came.)

Plutus (*Faust in disguise.*)

And now it's time to reveal the treasure!
I strike the lock with the herald's wand. 5710
It's open! Look! Vessels of noblest measure,
Pour the golden blood through your hands,
First it swells, roars, writhes as if it's molten:
A jewelled hoard of crowns, rings, and chains.

Various Shouts from the Crowd.

Look here, oh, there! How rich it flows: 5715
The chest, right to the brim, it glows. –
Golden vessels, molten too,
Rolls of coins, turning too. –
Minted ducats leaping,
Oh, how my heart is beating – 5720
I see all, for which I'm yearning,
On the floor there, burning! –
It's offered you, don't be a fool,
Be rich, you only need to stoop. –
For, quick as lightning, all the rest, 5725
Will take possession of the chest.

The Herald

What's this, you Fools? Ah, yes,
It's no more than a maskers' jest.
Tonight, don't ask for any more:
Think you, we'd give you golden ore? 5730
In this game there are any amount
Of pennies: too many for you to count.
You clumsy idiots! A fine appearance,
Seems, to you, truth's naked essence.
What is your Truth? – Hollow illusion 5735
Grasps you, with its fool's cap on. –
Heroic Mask, Plutus that conceals,
Drive these folk, then, from the field.

Plutus

Your wand's best by a mile,
Lend it me for a little while. – 5740
I'll dip it, quick, in heat and glow. –
You Maskers, all take care then, now!
It gleams and bursts and throws off sparks!
The wand already shines in the dark.
And anyone who gets too near me, 5745
Will be scorched, as well, mercilessly. –
And now I'll sweep with my brand.

Shouts and Confusion

Ah! We're done for every man. –
Fly, now, whoever can! –
Back, back, the hindmost man! – 5750
It's shining brightly in my eyes. –
On me the wand's hot weight lies –
We're all lost, lost for good. –
Back, back, you masks in flood!
Back, back, you senseless mob! – 5755
If I'd wings, I'd soar aloft. –

Plutus

The circle backwards sinks,
Yet no one's scorched, I think.
The crowd will now give way,
They're only scared I'd say. – 5760
But to guarantee good order,
I'll mark out an unseen border.

The Herald

You've done a fine job all right,
Thanks to your cunning, and might.

Plutus

Noble friend, you'll still need patience: 5765
All kinds of turmoil still threaten us.

Avarice

Now, if it pleases you, you may
Cast your eye around with pleasure:
The women are to the fore as ever,
Where they can nibble things, or gaze. 5770
Still, I'm not completely rusty!
A lovely woman's always lovely:
And since, today, it costs me nothing,
With confidence, I too go wooing.
Still, here, in such a crowded space, 5775
Lest words fall in an idle place,
I'll try being clever, attempt success,
And in clear mime make my address.
Hands, feet, gesturing won't cut the ice,
So, I'll have to employ a comical device. 5780
I'll shape the gold like moistened clay,
Since the metal's malleable anyway.

The Herald

What's he up to that skinny Fool!
Is there a jest in the starveling too?
He kneads the gold just like dough, 5785
It's soft between his hands, although
However he squeezes and forms it all,
It still remains a shapeless ball.
He turns now towards the women,
They all scream, and start to run, 5790
Gesturing in complete disgust:
That rascal's up to no good.
I fear he'll be in ecstasy
If he can offend morality.
I shan't remain silent, anyway 5795
Give me the wand: I'll drive him away.

Plutus

He doesn't see what we threaten here:
Let him pursue his foolishness!
There'll be no room left for his excess:
The law is great, but necessity's greater. 5800

Tumult and Singing

The wild crowd come here, specially,
From mountain-top, and wooded valley,
Shouting forcefully, as they can:
They celebrate the great god Pan. 5805
They know what none can know,
And into the empty circle flow.

Plutus

'I know you well, and your great Pan!
Together these daring steps you plan.
I know all that no one knows,
And clear for you this narrow close.' 5810
May good fortune follow them too!
The strangest things may happen:
They don't know where they're going to:
Since they never look before them.

Wild Singing

You plaster people: you tinsel show! 5815
Rough and coarse is how *they* go,
Leaping: wild is their track ahead,
Solid and sturdy is their tread.

Fauns

The Faun flocks
In happy dance, 5820
Oaken garlands,
On curling locks,
Fine pointed ears
Through tangled hair,
Snub noses, faces broad and flat, 5825
The women can't fault any of that:
When the Fauns begin to prance,
The loveliest won't scorn the dance.

A Satyr

The Satyr's leaping here behind,
Goat's foot, and lean of thigh, 5830
Sinewy, skinny he'll go by,
And chamois-like, on mountain height,
He looks around, and takes delight.
He's alive in the free air,
Mocks at man, child, woman there, 5835
Who deep in the valley's damp flue,
Think, cosily, they're living too,
While, still pure and undisturbed,
To him alone is the upper world.

The Gnomes

The little crowd trips by there, 5840
They don't like to travel in pairs:
In mossy clothes with lanterns bright,
They pass together, quick and light,
Each one passing on his own,
Like glowing ants swarming home: 5845
And always busy, here and there,
Industrious, and everywhere.
Kin to the 'Little People', known
As surgeons to the rock and stone:
'We bleed the mountains high, 5850

We drain the deep veins dry:
 We hurl the metals round,
 With hearty greetings: Luck! Well found!
 And it's always kindly meant: again,
 We're the friends of all good men. 5855
 Yet we the gold to light deliver,
 So men may steal, and covet ever,
 So princely hand won't lack the steel
 That worldwide murder longs to deal.
 Who those three commandments breaks 5860
 Scant heed of the other seven takes.
 But of all that we're innocent:
 About it all, like us, be patient.'

The Giants

The wild men, we are named,
 Known in all the Hartz range: 5865
 Natural, plain, in all our antics,
 Appearing frightfully gigantic.
 A fir-tree trunk in each right hand,
 Round our body a thick band,
 A solid apron of branches, not 5870
 The bodyguard the Pope has got.

Nymphs in Chorus (*Surrounding Great Pan, who is the masked Emperor.*)

Here he'll stand! –
 The world's All,
 Is shown to all,
 In mighty Pan. 5875
 You the happiest, surround him,
 In magic dances soar around him:
 Here now, serious and good, he
 Wishes all men to be happy.
 Under the curving roof of blue 5880
 He seems endlessly wakeful, too,
 Yet the streams flow gently for him,
 And the breezes gently rock him,
 And, when he sleeps at noon, the leaf

Is motionless in the branches' wreath: 5885
The rich plants' fragrant balsams there
Fill all the still and silent air:
The Nymph no longer dares to leap,
And where she stands, falls fast asleep.
But when his powerful shout, 5890
Unexpectedly, rings out,
Like thunder crack, or wave's roar,
Who knows what's happening any more,
The army's witless in the fight,
The hero in battle's filled with fright. 5895
So honour him, where honour's due,
And hail him, who led us to you!

A Deputation of Gnomes (*To Great Pan.*)

When the rich and shining goods,
Spread threadlike through the deep,
Then delicate divining rods, 5900
Reveal what labyrinths keep.

Bending in our dark vaults, there,
As troglodytes we're measured,
While in the purest daylight air,
Gracious, you divide the treasure. 5905

Now we find we've discovered
A marvellous fountain here,
Promising, easily, to deliver
Things that infrequently appear.

It all waits for your command: 5910
Master, take and care for it: do.
Every treasure in your hand,
Helps the whole world too.

Plutus (*To the Herald.*)

We must grasp things in the highest sense,
And let what may come, come, with confidence. 5915
You've shown the highest courage once before.
So now too what is fearful, we must try it:
World, and posterity, will stubbornly deny it,
So pen it faithfully in your report.

The Herald (*Grasping the wand in Plutus' hand, and assisting with the Masquerade.*)

The dwarves lead on great Pan, 5920
Gently, to the fiery fountain:
It boils from the deep profound,
Then sinks again, through the ground,
And gloomy is its open round:
Yet shows again the heat and glow. 5925
Great Pan stands there, well disposed,
Pleased with all this wondrous thing,
Pearl foam, right, left, showering.
How can he trust such a show?
He bends to look inside, and so, 5930
His beard gets caught within! –
Who's made that hairless chin?
His hand hides it from our vision. –
What follows is all clumsy action:
The beard, on fire, flies back, soon 5935
Scorching garland, chest and head:
Delight is turned to pain instead. –
They rush to quench it all again,
But none of them are free of flames,
And how they flare and dart, 5940
Exciting fire in every part:
Wreathed in that element,
The whole masked crowd is burnt.
But what's all this news about,
Ear after ear, mouth after mouth! 5945
O eternally unlucky night
So little of it's turned out right!

Tomorrow's dawn will declare
 What nobody wants to hear:
 In every ear we'll hear it plain: 5950
 'The Emperor is in such pain.'
 O, would that it were something other!
 Burnt, Emperor and Court together.
 Cursed be those who led him astray,
 In resinous twigs did him array, 5955
 To rage, and bellow out that song,
 To the ruin of all that throng.
 O Youth, Youth will you never
 Restrict joy's purest measure?
 O Power, Power, will you never, 5960
 Sense *and* Omnipotence treasure?
 The 'forest' too is soon in flames,
 The pointed tongues play their games,
 To the real wooden beams lick higher:
 We're threatened by universal fire. 5965
 The cup of misery overflows,
 Who will save us? No one knows.
 See, Imperial splendour, by dawn's light,
 Turned to a heap of ash, in a single night.

Plutus

That's enough terror overhead, 5970
 Let help arrive here, instead! –
 Strike, you heavenly wand, with power,
 So the earth will ring and tremor!
 You, the wide realms of air,
 Fill with cool fragrance there! 5975
 Hurry down, to sweep around us,
 Cloudy mists and swelling vapours,
 Quench the thronging flames!
 Murmuring, trickling, fogs gather,
 Sliding, rolling, softly drenching, 5980
 Slipping everywhere, and quenching.
 You, the moist, who soothe forever,
 Change them all to gleaming weather,
 All these empty fiery games! –

Threatening Spirits, that would harm,
We, by magic, will disarm.

5985

Part II Act I Scene IV: A Pleasure Garden in the Morning Sun

(The Emperor, his Court, Noblemen and Ladies: Faust and Mephistopheles dressed fashionably but not ostentatiously, both kneel.)

Faust

Sire, forgive the fiery conjuring tricks?

The Emperor *(Beckoning to him to rise.)*

More fun, in that vein, would be my wish. –
At once, I saw myself in a glowing sphere,
It seemed as if I were divine Pluto, there, 5990
A rocky depth of mine, and darkness, lay
Glowing with flame: out of each vent played
A thousand wild and whirling fires,
And flickered in the vault together, higher,
Licking upwards to the highest dome, 5995
That now seemed there, and now was gone.
Through a far space wound with fiery pillars,
I saw a long line of people approach us,
Crowding till they formed a circle near,
And paid me homage, as they do forever. 6000
From Court, I knew one face, and then another's,
I seemed the Prince of a thousand salamanders.

Mephistopheles

You are, Sire! Since every element
Knows your Majesty, amongst all men.
You've now proved the fire obedient: 6005
Leap in the sea, in its wildest torrent,
You'll barely touch its pearl-strewn bed,
A noble dome will rise round you, instead:
You'll see green translucent waves swelling
Purple edged, to make the loveliest dwelling, 6010
And you will be its centre. At each step
Wherever you go, the palace follows yet,
The very walls themselves delight in life,

Flash to and fro, in swarming arrow-flight.
Sea-wonders crowd around this sweet new sight, 6015
Shoot past, still not allowed to enter quite.
There, golden-scaled, bright sea-dragons play,
The shark gapes wide, you smile in his face.
However much your court attracts you now,
You've never seen such an amazing crowd. 6020
Nor will you part there from the loveliest:
The Nereids will be gathering, curious,
To this wondrous house, in seas eternally fresh,
The youngest shy and pleasure-loving, like fish,
The old ones: cunning. Thetis at the news, 6025
Gives hand and lips to this second Peleus. –
A seat there, on the height of Olympus, too...

The Emperor

I'll leave the airy spaces all to you:
Soon enough we'll be climbing to that throne.

Mephistopheles

And, Sire, the Earth already is your own! 6030

The Emperor

What brought you here, now: what good fortune,
Straight from the Thousand Nights and One?
If you're as fertile as Scheherezade
I'll guarantee you a sublime reward.
Be ready then, when your world's light, 6035
As it often does, disappoints me quite.

The Steward (*Entering hastily.*)

Your Supreme Highness, I never thought
To announce such luck, the finest wrought,
As this is, for me the greatest blessing,
Which I've revealed in your presence: 6040
For debt after debt I've accounted,

The usurer's claws now are blunted,
I'm free of Hell's pain, and then,
It can't be any brighter in Heaven.

The Commander in Chief (*Follows hastily.*)

Something's paid of what we owe, 6045
The Army's all renewed their vow,
The Cavalry's fresh blood is up,
And girls and landlords can sup.

The Emperor

Now your chests breathe easier!
Now your furrowed brows are clear! 6050
How quickly you hurried to the hall!

The Treasurer (*Appearing.*)

Ask *them*: it was they who did it all.

Faust

It's right the Chancellor should read the page.

The Chancellor (*Coming forward slowly.*)

I'm happy enough to do so, in my old age. –
See and hear the scroll, heavy with destiny, 6055
That's changed to happiness, our misery.
'To whom it concerns, may you all know,
This paper's worth a thousand crowns, or so.
As a secure pledge, it will underwrite,
All buried treasure, our Emperor's right. 6060
Now, as soon as the treasure's excavated,
It's taken care of, and well compensated.'

The Emperor

I smell a fraud, a monstrous imposture!
Who forged the Emperor's signature?
Have they gone unpunished for their crime? 6065

The Treasurer

Remember! You yourself it was that signed:
Last night. You acted as great Pan,
Here's how the Chancellor's speech began:
'Grant yourself this great festive pleasure,
The People's Good: a few strokes of the feather.' 6070
You wrote it here, and while night ruled the land,
A thousand artists created another thousand,
So all might benefit from your good deed,
We stamped the whole series with your screed,
Tens, Thirties, Fifties, Hundreds, all are done. 6075
You can't think how well the folk get on.
See your city once half-dead with decay,
Now all's alive, enjoying its new day!
Though your name's long filled the world with glee,
They've never gazed at it so happily. 6080
Now the alphabet's superfluous,
In these marks there's bliss for all of us.

The Emperor

And my people value it as gold, you say?
The Court and Army treat it as real pay?
Then I must yield, though it's wonderful to me. 6085

The Steward

It was impossible to catch the escapee:
It flashed like lightning through the land:
The moneychanger's shops are jammed,
Men pay, themselves, the papers mount
They're gold and silver, and at a discount. 6090
Now used by landlords, butchers, bakers:

Half the world think they're merrymakers,
The others, newly clothed, are on show.
The drapers cut the cloth: the tailors sew.
The toast is 'Hail, the Emperor!' in the bars, 6095
With cooking, roasting, tinkling of jars.

Mephistopheles

Strolling, lonely, on the terrace,
You see a beauty, smartly dressed,
One eye hidden by her peacock fan,
She smiles sweetly, looks at your hand: 6100
And, quicker than wit or eloquence,
Love's sweetest favour's arranged at once.
You're not plagued with pouch or wallet,
A note beneath the heart, install it,
Paired with love-letters, conveniently. 6105
The priest carries his in a breviary,
And wouldn't the soldier be quicker on his way,
With a lighter belt around his middle, say.
Your Majesty will forgive me if, in miniature,
I produce a low note, in our high adventure. 6110

Faust

The wealth of treasure that solidifies,
That in your land, in deep earth lies,
Is all unused. In our boldest thought,
Such riches are only feebly caught:
Imagination, in its highest flight, 6115
Strives to, but can't reach that height.
But grasping Spirits, worthy to look deeply,
Trust in things without limit, limitlessly.

Mephistopheles

Such paper's convenient, for rather than a lot
Of gold and silver, you know what you've got. 6120
You've no need of bartering and exchanging,
Just drown your needs in wine and love-making.

If you lack coin, there's moneychangers' mile,
And if it fails, you dig the ground a while.
Cups and chains are auctioned: well, 6125
Since the paper, in this way, pays for itself,
It shames the doubters, and their acid wit,
People want nothing else, they're used to it.
So now in all of your Imperial land
You've gems, gold, paper enough to hand. 6130

The Emperor

The Empire thanks you deeply for this bliss:
We want the reward to match your service.
We entrust you with the riches underground,
You are the best custodians to be found.
You know the furthest well-concealed hoard, 6135
And when men dig, it's you must give the word.
You masters of our treasure, then, unite,
Accept your roles with honour and delight:
They make the Underworld, and the Upper,
Happy in their agreement, fit together. 6140

The Treasurer

No dispute will divide us in the future:
I'm happy to have a wizard for a partner.

(He exits with Faust.)

The Emperor

Now, presents for the court: everyone
Confess to me whatever it is you want.

A Page *(Accepting his present.)*

I'll live well, happy, have the best of things. 6145

Another (*Also.*)

I'll quickly buy my lover chains and rings.

A Chamberlain

I'll drink wines that are twice as fine.

A Second Chamberlain

The dice in my pockets itch I find.

A Knight (*Thoughtfully.*)

My lands and castle will be free of debt.

A Second Knight

It's treasure: a second treasure I will get.

6150

The Emperor

I hoped for desire and courage for new deeds:
But whoever knows you, thinks you slight indeed.
I see, clearly: despite this treasure and more,
You're all the same, still, as you were before.

The Fool (*Recovered, and approaching the throne.*)

You're handing presents out: give me one too!

6155

The Emperor

Alive again? You'd drink it all you fool.

The Fool

Magic papers! I don't understand them, truly.

The Emperor

That I'd believe: you'll only use them badly.

The Fool

Others are falling: I don't know what to do.

The Emperor

Just pick them up: those are all yours too.

6160

(The Emperor exits.)

The Fool

Five thousand crowns I'm holding, in my hand!

Mephistopheles

You two-legged wineskin, so you still stand?

The Fool

I've had my luck, but this is the best yet.

Mephistopheles

You're so delighted: look, it's made you sweat.

The Fool

But see here, is it truly worth real gold?

6165

Mephistopheles

You've there just what belly and throat are owed.

The Fool

And can I buy a cottage, cow and field?

Mephistopheles

Why yes! There's nothing to it: make a bid.

The Fool

A castle: with forests, hunting, fishing?

Mephistopheles

Trust me!
To see you a proper Lord would make me happy!

6170

The Fool

Tonight I'll plant my weight on what I'll get! –

(He Exits.)

Mephistopheles

Who doubts now that our Fool's full of wit!

Part II Act I Scene V: A Gloomy Gallery

(Faust. Mephistopheles.)

Mephistopheles

Why bring me here to this dark passage?
Isn't there fun enough inside,
In the Court's colourful tide, 6175
Opportunities for jests and sharp practice?

Faust

Don't give me that: in the good old days
You wore us out in a thousand ways:
And now this wandering, there and here,
Is only so I can't catch your ear. 6180
But there's something I need done:
Commander and Chamberlain egg me on.
The Emperor, I must work quickly for him,
Wants Helen and Paris to appear before him:
He wants to see the ideal form of Man 6185
Clearly revealed to him, and Woman.
Get to work! I daren't break my word.

Mephistopheles

Such a thoughtless promise was absurd.

Faust

Friend, you haven't considered
Where your powers have lead us: 6190
First we made him rich, and how,
So he wants us to amuse him now.

Mephistopheles

You think it's fixed that quickly:
We're looking at a deeper track,

To the strangest realm, and wickedly, 6195
Adding new faults to the old,
Do you think it's easy to call Helen back,
Like a pasteboard spirit edged with gold –
Witch-bitches, ghost-hostesses, freely,
Or dwarf-maidens, I'll serve you equally: 6200
But Devil's sweethearts, though you're for them,
Still you can't, as heroines, applaud them.

Faust

Still the same old story, every day!
With you, things are always difficult.
You're the father of all obstacles, 6205
For every miracle you want more pay.
I know: a little muttering, and it's done:
At a blink, you'll bring her here.

Mephistopheles

With Pagan folk I don't get on:
They live in their own Hell there: 6210
Yet, there is a way.

Faust

Tell, without delay!

Mephistopheles

Unwillingly! There's a greater mystery, I say,
Goddesses, enthroned on high, and solitary.
No space round them, not even time: only
To speak of them embarrasses me. 6215
They are The Mothers!

Faust (*Terrified.*)

Mothers!

Mephistopheles

Are you afraid?

Faust

The Mothers! Mothers! It sounds so strange!

Mephistopheles

As, it is. Goddesses, unknown, as you see,
To you Mortals, not named by us willingly.
You must dig in the Depths to reach them:
It's your own fault that we need them.

6220

Faust

Where is the path?

Mephistopheles

No path! Into the un-enterable,
Never to be entered: One path to the un-askable,
Never to be asked. Are you ready?
No locks, no bolts to manipulate,
You'll drift about in solitary space.
Can you conceive the waste and solitary?

6225

Faust

I think you might spare the speeches then:
They always smell of the witches' kitchen,
Of a long forgotten time, to me.
Have I not trafficked with the world?
Learned the void, the void unfurled? –
When I spoke with reason, as I descried,
Contradiction, doubly loud, replied:
Have I not fled, from hateful trickery,
Into the wild, into the solitary,
And, not to lose all, and live alone,
Surrendered to the Devil's own?

6230

6235

Mephistopheles

And if you'd swum through every ocean,
And seen the boundless space all round 6240
You'd still have seen wave on wave in motion,
Though you might have been afraid to drown.
You'd have seen *something*. Seen, within
The green still seas, the leaping dolphin:
Seen clouds go by, Sun, Moon and star – 6245
You'll see none in the endless void, afar,
Hear not a single footstep fall,
Find no firm place to rest at all.

Faust

You speak as chief of all Mystagogues, who
Deceive their neophytes, the loyal and true: 6250
Only reversed. You send me to the Void,
So I'll increase the power and skill employed:
To use me, like a cat, that's your desire:
Just to claw your chestnuts from the fire.
The same as ever! I'll find what I'll discover: 6255
In your Nothingness, I hope, the All I will recover.

Mephistopheles

I'll praise you, before you separate from me,
That you know the Devil, I can truly see:
Here take this key.

Faust

That tiny thing!

Mephistopheles

Grasp it, it has a worth you're undervaluing. 6260

Faust

It's growing in my hand, it shines and glows!

Mephistopheles

What one possesses in it, would you now know?
The key will sniff the place out, from all others.
Follow it down: it leads you to the Mothers.

Faust

The Mothers! That always strikes me like a blow! 6265
What is that word that, once heard, scares me so?

Mephistopheles

Are you so limited one new word disturbs you?
Will you only hear what you're accustomed to?
Don't be troubled, whatever strange sound rings,
You've already long been used to marvellous things. 6270

Faust

Yes, there's no good for me in lethargy.
A shudder's the truest sign of humanity:
Though the world is such we may not feel it,
Once seized by it, we feel Immensity deeply.

Mephistopheles

Then, descend! I might as easily say rise! 6275
It's all the same. Escape from what exists,
Into the boundless realm where all Form lies!
Delight in what's no longer on the list:
Where turmoil rolls along all cloudily:
Then, far from your body, swing the key! 6280

Faust (*Inspired.*)

Good! I feel new strength, firmly grasped,
My heart expands, on now to the great task.

Mephistopheles

Sight of a glowing tripod will tell you, finally,
You're in the last deep, deepest there might be.
By its light you'll see the Mothers, 6285
Some sit about, as they wish, the others,
Stand and move. Formation, Transformation,
Eternal minds in eternal recreation.
Images of all creatures float, portrayed:
They'll not see you: they only see a shade. 6290
Be of good heart, the danger there is great,
Go to the tripod: don't hesitate,
And touch it with the key!

(*Faust assumes a commanding attitude with the key.*)

Mephistopheles (*Watching him.*)

That's right!
It will close itself, and follow as a servant might:
Exalted by your good luck, you'll calmly rise, 6295
And be back with it, before you've blinked your eyes.
And, once you've brought it here all right,
Call the Hero and Heroine from the night,
The first man who has ever achieved it:
It's done, and you're the one who did it. 6300
By magic process then you'll surely find,
The incense' vapour will become divine.

Faust

And now: what?

Mephistopheles

Strain with all your being: downward.
Stamp to descend, stamp again to go upward.

(Faust stamps and sinks out of sight.)

If he might only gain some good from that key!
I'm curious as to whether he'll return to me.

6305

Part II Act I Scene VI: Brilliantly Lit Halls

(The Emperor and Princes. The Court in Action.)

The Chamberlain *(To Mephistopheles)*

You still owe us that scene with the Spirits:
The Emperor's impatient. Get on with it!

The Steward

That's what His Grace just now was saying:
You! Don't offend His Majesty by delaying.

6310

Mephistopheles

That's why my companion has just gone:
He knows how to put the whole thing on,
And has to labour away in silence: still,
All the most special diligence he applies:
He who'd own that treasure, the Beautiful,
Needs highest arts, the magic of the wise.

6315

The Steward

The arts you need are neither here nor there:
The Emperor orders it to be prepared.

A Blonde Lady *(Approaching Mephistopheles.)*

Sir, a word! You see a clear complexion,
Yet it's not so in summertime's dejection!
A hundred red-brown freckles all sprout there,
And cover my white skin: I'm in despair.
A cure!

6320

Mephistopheles

A pity! Such a shining beauty,
Spotted like a panther-cub, in May!
Take frogspawn, toads' tongues, in cohabitation, 6325
Skilfully, under a full moon, make a distillation,
When it wanes, apply it undiluted,
When spring comes, the spots have been uprooted.

A Dark-haired Lady

The crowd are pressing round to squeeze you dry.
I ask a cure! For a frozen foot 6330
That hinders me in dancing, walking by,
And I curtsey awkwardly to boot.

Mephistopheles

Permit a little kick from my foot.

The Dark-haired Lady

Well, between lovers that's occurred before.

Mephistopheles

Child! My kick means something more. 6335
Like cures like, when one's suffering:
Foot heals foot, and so with every member.
Come! Pay attention! No retaliation there.

The Dark-haired Lady (*Crying out.*)

Ouch! Ouch! That hurt! I call that kicking
Like a horse's hoof.

Mephistopheles

With that the cure I bring. 6340
You can indulge in any amount of dancing,
Touch feet under the table with your darling.

A Lady (*Pushing forward.*)

Let me through! My suffering is so great,
He used to hold me in his heart's embrace:
Yesterday his joy was in my glances, 6345
He turns his back on me: with her romances.

Mephistopheles

That's serious, but listen to me now.
You must gently press your advances,
Take this charcoal: mark him anyhow,
On his cloak or on his sleeve alight, 6350
He'll feel sweet Remorse's blow.
Swallow the charcoal straight away,
No wine or water on your lips all day:
He'll be sighing at your door tonight.

The Lady

It's not poisonous?

Mephistopheles (*Offended.*)

Respect now, where it's due! 6355
You'd have to travel far to find such charcoal:
It comes from the dying pyre at a funeral,
On which I, once more, diligently blew.

A Page

I'm in love: they say I'm not old enough to.

Mephistopheles (*Aside.*)

I'm not sure now, whom I should listen to. 6360

(*To the Page.*)

Don't set your heart on the younger ones.
The older will value what they've won.

(*Others crowd round.*)

More, already! What a demanding crew!
I'll help myself, and out now with the truth:
The worst expedient! The pain is great, you see. – 6365
O Mothers, Mothers! Just let Faust go free!

(*Gazing round him.*)

The lights burn dim, already, in the hall,
The Court's moving off, and they're all
Arranged in their proper rank, I see,
Through the far aisles and galleries. 6370
Now they assemble in the largest place,
The vast Hall of the Knights, there's barely space,
Who bought the mass of bright tapestry,
Filled corners, niches like an armoury.
Here I doubt there's need of magic spells: 6375
The ghosts will find this place for themselves.

Part II Act I Scene VII: The Hall of the Knights, Dimly Lit

(The Emperor and Court.)

The Herald

My ancient duty, to announce the play,
Is thwarted by the Spirits' secret action:
Please forgive: there's no sensible way
To explain such confused transformation. 6380
The chairs are here: the stools and all:
The emperor's high up, by the wall:
He can see the battles on the tapestry
From mighty ages: watching comfortably.
Here they all sit now, Prince, Court around, 6385
Benches packed together, as background:
In this hour of spirits, too, the lovers
Have lovingly found room beside their lovers.
And now that all have found their proper places,
We're ready: let the spirits show their faces! 6390

(Trumpets.)

The Astrologer

Begin the drama then without delay,
The Emperor commands: take walls away!
No further hindrance, here magic is at hand:
The Tapestry's shrivelled as if by burning brand.
The walls divide, and sweep apart, as one, 6395
An empty stage it seems has been created,
A mysterious light falls on our faces,
And I climb up to the proscenium.

Mephistopheles (*Rising to view in the prompter's box.*)

From here I hope for general acclamation,
Prompting is the devil's true oration. 6400

(To the Astrologer.)

You know the measures that all the stars obey,
You'll understand my whispers in a masterly way.

The Astrologer

By miraculous power appears to view,
A massive temple-front: it's ancient too.
Like Atlas, who once held up the sky, 6405
The many rows of columns stand on high.
They might well bear the stony weight,
Since two could raise a building straight.

The Architect

That's the antique! It doesn't earn my praise,
Clumsy, overstretched we call it, nowadays. 6410
Men think that crude is noble: bulk is greatness.
I love slender shafts, uplifting, boundless:
A pointed arch sends the spirit to the sky:
Architecture such as that will edify.

The Astrologer

Receive with reverence these hours the stars allow: 6415
Let words of magic bind pure Reason now:
Let marvellously daring Fantasy,
In return, sweep onward, wide and free.
Your eyes see what you daringly conceived:
It's impossible, so more worthy to be believed. 6420

(Faust rises into view on the other side of the proscenium.)

In priestly vestments, crowned, a wondrous man,
Fulfilling what he confidently began.
A tripod rises with him from deep abyss,
I smell the odour of incense in the dish.
He prepares to bless this sacred labour: 6425
From this moment on it will find favour.

Faust (*Sublimely.*)

In your name, Mothers, you enthroned
In boundlessness, set eternally alone,
And yet together. All the Forms of Life
Float round your heads, active, not alive. 6430
Whatever was, in all its glow and gleam,
Moves there still, since it must always be.
And you assign it, with omnipotent might,
To day's pavilion or the vault of night.
Life holds some fast on its sweet track, 6435
Others the bold magician must bring back:
Filled with faith, and richly generous,
He shows, what each desires, the Marvellous.

The Astrologer

The glowing key has scarcely touched the dish,
At once the room is filled with darkened mist: 6440
It swirls about, as puffs of cloud will do,
Grows, condenses, shrinks, and splits in two.
And now behold a spirit-masterpiece!
As it moves about, there's music without cease.
In heavenly tones, pours out a who-knows-how, 6445
And while it moves, all's turned to melody now.
The pillared shafts, even the tri-glyph, ringing
I think that the whole temple's singing.
The dark sinks down: from the light mist,
A handsome youth steps out in time to it. 6450
I needn't name him, so my task is finished,
Who doesn't know the name of charming Paris!

A Lady

O! What a shining healthy powerful youth!

A Second

Like a peach, so fresh and full of juice!

A Third

The finely delineated, sweetly swelling lip!

6455

A Fourth

From such a cup you'd surely like to sip?

A Fifth

He's quite pretty, but a little unrefined.

A Sixth

He could be a bit more graceful, to my mind.

A Knight

I sense the shepherd here, I think,
No trace of Courtier or Prince.

6460

Another

Yes! Half naked the youth's quite handsome
We'd need to see him first with armour on!

A Lady

He sits down so gently and pleasantly.

A Knight

You'd like to sit on his lap, comfortably?

Another

He lifts his arm so lightly above his head.

6465

A Chamberlain

The lout! That's not acceptable: how ill-bred!

A Lady

You lords find fault with everything.

The Chamberlain

In the Emperor's presence, all that stretching!

The Lady

He's posed there! He thinks he's quite alone.

The Chamberlain

Even a play should be polite in tone.

6470

The Lady

Now sleep has overcome the charming boy.

The Chamberlain

And now he'll snore: that's natural, what joy!

A Young Lady

What refreshes my heart so deeply, that fragrance
Mixed with fumes from the burning incense?

An Older Lady

Truly! It's breath penetrates one's nature, 6475
It comes from him!

An Elderly lady

It's the sap of nurture,
It's generated in youth, like ambrosia,
And spreads around in the atmosphere.

(Helen emerges.)

Mephistopheles

So that's her! I'd not lose sleep for that. She
Is quite pretty, true, but doesn't do much for me. 6480

The Astrologer

There's nothing more now for me to do,
As men of honour confess, I confess it too.
Beauty comes: if only I'd a tongue of fire! –
Beauty so many songs has forever inspired –
Whom she appears to, of self he's dispossessed, 6485
Whom she belonged to, was too greatly blessed.

Faust

Is this the fount of beauty? Have I still, eyes?
What pours here, through my mind, so richly?
My dreadful journey yields a blessed prize.
How void the world was, undeveloped for me! 6490
What is it now since my priesthood?
Desirable, lasting, solid underfoot!

The power of my life's breath should
Fail, if I'm ever again estranged from you! –
The perfect form that drew me before, 6495
Delighting me, in the magic mirror,
Was only an airy phantom of such beauty! – You
Are the true embodiment of my passion:
Towards you is my powers' whole direction
To you, love, feeling, faith, madness are owed. 6500

Mephistopheles (*From the prompter's box.*)

Calm yourself, now, and don't fail in your role!

An Older Lady

Tall, well formed, only the head is small.

A Younger Lady

Just look! Could clumsier feet exist at all?

A Diplomat

I've seen princesses of this kind: though
I think she's beautiful, from head to toe. 6505

A Courtier

Soft and sly, she goes towards the sleeper.

A Lady

How ugly, near that form so young and pure.

A Poet

From her Beauty shines towards him.

A Lady

A picture! Luna and Endymion!

The Poet

Quite so! The goddess seems to descend,
Leans above him to drink his breath, ah then:
Enviably! – A Kiss! – The cup's full to excess.

6510

A Duenna

In front of everyone! What utter madness!

Faust

A dreadful favour to grant a boy! –

Mephistopheles

Quiet now! Be still!
And let the spectre do what it will.

6515

A Courtier

She slips away, lightly: he awakes.

A Lady

Just as I thought! That glance she takes!

A Courtier

He stares! It's wonderful what's happening.

A Lady

But not so wonderful what she sees in him.

A Courtier

She turns towards him now with dignity. 6520

A Lady

I see she'll soon take him through his lesson:
At such times men behave quite stupidly,
Perhaps he even thinks that's he the first one.

A Knight

Let me be worthy! Majestically fine! –

A Lady

The trollop! I'd call that table wine! 6525

A Page

I'd like to swap his place for mine!

A Courtier

Who wouldn't be tangled in such a net?

A Lady

That treasure's been handled often, you forget,
And the gilding's mostly rubbed away.

Another

Worthless since it was ten years old, I'd say. 6530

A Knight

Sometimes one takes the best that one can get:
I'd be content with the loveliness that's left.

A Learned Man

I see clearly but I'll confess, quite freely,
It's doubtful if that's the true one I see.
The Present's tempted to exaggerate, 6535
I hold to what the ancient texts relate.
There I read she gave particular joy
To all the grey-bearded men of Troy:
And that fits perfectly here too, you see:
I'm not young: still she gives joy to me. 6540

The Astrologer

No longer a boy! A daring hero, he:
Grasped she defends herself, but barely.
He lifts her high in his strong arms, too,
Will he carry her off?

Faust

Audacious fool!
You dare? Do you hear? Stop! Enough, I say! 6545

Mephistopheles

You created the mime these phantoms play!

The Astrologer

A word! After what we've been given,
I'll call this piece: *The Rape of Helen*.

Faust

What rape! Am I nothing in this place!
Is this key no longer in my hand! 6550
It led me through terror, waste and wave,
Through solitude, to where, set firm, I stand.
Here's a foothold! Here's reality,
Where spirit dare with spirits disagree,
And prepare itself for its great, dual mastery. 6555

She was so far: how could she closer shine!
I'll rescue her, and she'll be doubly mine.
The risk! The Mothers! They must grant her!
Who knows her once, can never live without her.

The Astrologer

What are you doing, Faust! Faust! –With force 6560
He seizes her, the form dims in its course.
He turns the key against the youth, and then,
Touches him! – Ah! – Gone, in a moment! Gone!

(An explosion. Faust falls to the ground. The spirits vanish in mist.)

Mephistopheles *(Taking Faust on his shoulders.)*

You've done it now! Carrying fools, my friend,
Brings harm to the Devil himself, in the end. 6565

(Darkness. Tumult.)

**Part II Act II Scene I: A High-Arched, Narrow, Gothic Chamber
Formerly Faust's, Unchanged**

Mephistopheles (*Entering from behind a curtain. As he holds it up and looks behind him, Faust is seen lying stretched out on an antiquated bed.*)

Lie there, unlucky man! One tempted by
The bonds of a love not readily undone!
The man whom Helena shall paralyse
Won't find it easy to regain his reason.

(*Looking around him.*)

I look upwards, here, around me, 6570
All's unaltered, and undamaged:
Stained glass, there, shows darkly,
Spiders have added to their webs:
The ink is dry: the paper's yellow,
But everything's still in its place: 6575
Even the quill-pen's here, on show,
With which Faust and the Devil embraced.
Yes! Deeper in the nib there's still
A drop of blood, I tempted him to spill.
It's a unique piece, in my book, 6580
So I'll wish the great collectors luck.
The old fur-robe, on the hook, too,
Reminds me of a joke or two,
That time when I taught the student,
What, perhaps, in youth, he's glad he learnt. 6585
Truly the same desire is on me, for
You, smoke-singed gown: you and I,
To flaunt ourselves once more as a professor,
And speak as one who's always in the right.
How to achieve that all the learned know: 6590
It's something the Devil lost long ago.

(*He shakes the fur as he takes it down, and moths, crickets and beetles fly out.*)

Chorus of Insects

Greetings! We're greeting
Our Patron of old,
We're floating and buzzing,
To us you're well known. 6595
Singly, in silence,
You sowed us like plants.
Father, in thousands
We've come to the dance.
The jester is snugly 6600
Contained in the breast,
The lice in the fur they
Are sooner expressed.

Mephistopheles

What a nice surprise, this young brood of mine!
One merely sows, and harvests in due time. 6605
I'll shake this ancient fleece about,
Here and there, one flutters out. –
Away! Around! In a hundred leavings,
Hurry and hide yourself, you darlings.
There, where the ancient boxes lie, 6610
Here, in the smoky parchment try,
In that broken dusty old pottery,
Or the skull, its eye-sockets empty.
All this jumbled mildewed existence,
Always gives one whims and fancies. 6615
Again let's dress up as a lecturer!
Today I'll be the Principal, once more.
But it's no use naming myself, you see:
Where are the people, to welcome me?

Famulus (*A College Servant, tottering here, down the long gallery*)

What a noise! What a quake! 6620
The stairs sway, the walls shake:
Through the windows' trembling colours
I see the lightning gleam above us.
The floor leaps, and, on high,
Plaster, rubble from the sky. 6625
And the door, once tightly locked,
By wondrous force is thrown back. –
There! How fearful! A giant
Look, in Faust's old garment!
At his gazing, and his pleas, 6630
I want to sink to my knees.
Shall I go? Shall I remain?
Oh, what will happen to me, then!

Mephistopheles

Here, my friend! – You're called Nicodemus.

Famulus

Honoured Sir! That's my name – *Oremus*. 6635

Mephistopheles

Enough of that!

Famulus

How pleased I am you knew me!

Mephistopheles

I know you well: a student still, I see,
Mossy Sir! After all, a learned man
Studies hard, and does the best he can.
So one builds a respectable house of cards, 6640
That greater minds can't finish afterwards.

But he's a witty fellow, is your master,
Who doesn't know the noble Doctor Wagner?
He's the first in all the world of learning!
He's unique: wisdom, each day increasing,
And all of it he still holds together, 6645
Crowds, around him, panting, gather
Listeners, eaves'-droppers, welcome.
Alone, he shines there at the rostrum.
He holds a key, just like Saint Peter, 6650
That unlocks the lower, and the higher.
He glows and sparkles above the rest,
No name and fame has wider standing:
Even that of Faust has dimmed, at best:
He's the one who's always inventing. 6655

Famulus

Forgive me, honoured Sir, if I dare
To speak, and contradict you, there:
There's no question of that, I must declare:
Since modesty's his role, as all discern.
Discovering nothing of the circumstances, 6660
Baffled by the great man's disappearance:
He seeks all health and comfort in his return.
The room waits for its old master
While Doctor Faustus is away,
Untouched, still, as in his day. 6665
And I scarcely dare to enter.
What can the stars be doing? –
The walls themselves are frightening me:
The doorframes quiver, bolts work free,
Or you yourself couldn't have got in. 6670

Mephistopheles

And your great man where is he?
Lead me there: or bring him here to me!

Famulus

Oh! His warnings are quite clear,
I'm not allowed to interfere.
For months I've left him in utter peace, 6675
Till his great work is complete.
He, the most delicate of scholars,
His face looks like a charcoal burner's,
Blackened now from nose to ears,
Eyes crimson, blowing up the fires, 6680
All the while, so enthusiastic:
Clinking of tongs, that's his music.

Mephistopheles

Why would he deny an entrance to me?
I'm one who'd speed his luck, you see.

(The Famulus exits: Mephistopheles sits down, gravely.)

I've hardly taken my seat here, 6685
And I see a guest behind my chair.
But he's one of the new school's persuasion:
He'll be arrogant, I think, on this occasion.

Baccalaureus *(Storming along the corridor.)*

I find the gates and doors are open!
Now there's room at last for hope then, 6690
That it won't be merely as before,
A live man, acting as a corpse,
Wasting away, and rotting,
Till he merely dies of living.

These walls and these partitions, 6695
Bow and sink towards perdition,
And if we don't look about us,
Their decline and fall will rout us.
I'm audacious, no one more so,
But no further in do I go. 6700

What will I find here today?
It's years since I've been this way,
Where timid and innocent
As a freshman I was sent!
Where I trusted in my elders, 6705
Edified by all their blather.

From the dry old books, they knew
They lied to me: what they knew,
Not believing in it truly,
Stealing life itself, from me. 6710
What? – There, in his cell,
Sits a darkly bright one still!

With astonishment now, nearer,
See him sitting in his dark fur,
Truly, as I left him sitting 6715
Still in all his coarse wrapping!
Then he seemed a fount of wisdom,
Since I didn't understand him.
He won't find me so today,
Fresh and new, I'm on my way! 6720

Sir, if in Lethe's melancholy stream
That bald nodding head's not swum,
See your grateful scholar come,
Outgrown, his academic dream.
I find you now, as I saw you: 6725
I was another though: that's true.

Mephistopheles

I'm glad the ringing brought you.
I rated you once before as high:
The caterpillar, the chrysalis too,
Showed the bright future butterfly. 6730
Your curly hair and pointed collar,
Made you a childishly pleasing scholar.
You never wore pigtails I believe? –

And today you're cropped like a Swede.
I see you're bold and resolute: 6735
But don't go home too absolute!

Baccalaureus

My old master! We're in our old places:
But don't think to renew time's journey,
And spare me words with dual-faces:
I treat them now quite differently. 6740
You teased the true, and honest youth.
It wasn't difficult for you to do
It's what no one dares to do today.

Mephistopheles

Pure truth on the young is thrown away,
The little beaks don't like it, any way, 6745
But afterwards when years have passed,
And they've learnt it for themselves at last,
And think it came from them, not school:
Then we hear: 'The Master was a fool.'

Baccalaureus

A rascal, maybe! – What teacher ever shows us 6750
The Truth directly, underneath our noses?
They know the way to make it seem more, or less,
Now serious, now playful, as suits the children best.

Mephistopheles

There's a moment given us for learning, truly:
But you're ready now to teach, yourself, I see. 6755
For many moons, united with their suns,
You the riches of experience have won.

Baccalaureus

Experience! Mist and Foam!
And not the Spirit's equal.
Confess! What one has known,
Is not worth knowing at all.

6760

Mephistopheles (*After a pause.*)

I've thought so for ages. I was a Fool,
But I think that shallow now I'm sensible.

Baccalaureus

That pleases me! I hear pure Reason's sound:
The first old man of sense I've ever found.

6765

Mephistopheles

I sought for treasure, buried gold,
And brought to light frightful coals.

Baccalaureus

Confess now, your skull, bald and old,
Is worth no more than that empty poll.

Mephistopheles (*Amiably.*)

Do you know, my friend, how rude you seem to me?

6770

Baccalaureus

In German, one's lying if one speaks politely.

Mephistopheles (*Wheeling his chair nearer to the proscenium and the audience.*)

Up here I'm dazed by light and air:
Shall I take shelter with you down there?

Baccalaureus

I find it arrogant that in times like these,
A man wants to be what he no longer is. 6775
Man's life is in his arteries, and when
Are they so vibrant as in younger men?
There the fresh blood full of strength
Creates new life from its own life again.
There all works, and things get done, 6780
The waverers fall, the capable get on.
While we've conquered half the world,
What have you done? Nodded, curled
In the sun, dreamed, weighed, plan on plan.
For sure, age is a chilling fever: 6785
The frost of whims and need ahead.
When your thirtieth year is over,
A man's as good as dead.
It would be best to seek an early grave.

Mephistopheles

That leaves the Devil nothing more to say. 6790

Baccalaureus

Unless I will it, no Devil can exist.

Mephistopheles (*Aside.*)

The Devil will still trip you, in a bit.

Baccalaureus

This is youth's noblest profession!

The world was nothing before my creation:
I drew the Sun out of the sea: 6795
The Moon began her changeful course with me:
The daylight decked my path to greet me,
The Earth flowered, grew green, to meet me.
At my command, in primal night,
The stars in splendour swam to sight. 6800
Who, but I, loosed from its prison
Cramped thought's philistinism?
I, quite free, as my spirit cites,
Happily following my inner light,
And speeding on, in delight, 6805
Darkness behind: and all before me, bright.

Mephistopheles

Go forth in splendour, you primal man! –
How could insight harm you, ever:
Who can think of stupid things or clever,
That past ages didn't, long ago, understand. 6810
Yet there's no danger from him, you see,
He'll think about it differently in time:
Even if the grape-juice acts absurdly,
In the end it changes into wine.

(To the younger members of the audience, who do not applaud.)

My words have left you cold, I gather,
May it be so for you, sweet children:
But think: the Devil's a lot older,
So you need to be old to understand him!

Part II Act II Scene II: A Laboratory

(In the fashion of the Middle Ages: lots of heavy apparatus for strange purposes.)

Wagner *(At the furnace.)*

The fearful bell is sounding,
The soot-black walls shudder. 6820

My deepest expectation
Will be unsure no longer.

Soon the dark itself will lighten:
Soon in the innermost phial,
It will glow like living fire, 6825

Yes, like the noblest ruby's glow,
Lightning flashing in the shadow.

A clearest white light shines now!
Ah, not to lose it once more! –

Oh, God! Who's rattling at the door? 6830

Mephistopheles *(Entering.)*

Greetings! And kindly meant now.

Wagner *(Anxiously.)*

Welcome, to the planet of the hour!

(Whispering.)

But stifle your breath, and words' power,
A noble work is likewise being weighed.

Mephistopheles *(Whispering.)*

What might it be?

Wagner *(Whispering.)*

A Man is being made. 6835

Mephistopheles

A Man? And what loving couple
Have you got hidden, up the chimney?

Wagner

God Forbid! How unfashionable!
We're free of all that idle foolery.
The tender moment from which life emerged, 6840
The charming power with which its inner urge,
Took and gave, and clearly stamped its seal,
First in a near, and then a further field,
We now divest of all that dignity:
Though the creatures still enjoy it, we, 6845
As Men, with all our greater gifts, begin,
To have, as we should, a nobler origin.

(He turns towards the furnace.)

It brightens! See! – Now there's a real chance,
That, if from the hundred-fold substance,
By mixing – since mixing makes it happen – 6850
The stuff of human life's compounded,
And distilled in a flask, well-founded,
And in proper combination, grounded,
Then the silent work is done.

(He turns again to the furnace.)

It will be! The mass is clearer! 6855
The proof comes nearer, nearer:
What man praises in deepest Nature,
Through Reason we dare to probe it,
And what she organises, here,
We're now able to crystallise it. 6860

Mephistopheles

Who lives a while, gains much experience,
And nothing new can happen on his journey.
In years of travelling, and in my presence,
I've seen, already, crystallised humanity.

Wagner (*Up till now attending to the phial.*)

It rises: flashes, there's expansion 6865
In a moment more it will be done.
Great aims seem foolish at the outset:
But we'll laugh at Chance itself, yet,
And brains, with thoughts to celebrate,
In the future, a Thinker will create. 6870

(*He inspects the phial, rapturously.*)

The glass rings with sweet power,
It darkens, clears: it must have being!
In a delicate form I see appear
A well-behaved little Man behaving.
What can the world ask more, what can we? 6875
Now that this mystery's visible to each.
Give ear to what these sounds may be,
They make a voice: they're forming speech.

Homunculus (*From the phial, to Wagner.*)

Now, father! That was no joke. How are you?
Come: press me tenderly to your heart, too! 6880
But not too hard, the glass may be too thin.
It's in the very nature of the thing:
For the natural the world has barely space:
What's artificial commands a narrow place.

(*To Mephistopheles.*)

But you, Rascal, my dear Cousin, are you 6885
Here at the right moment? I thank you, too.

Good fortune's led you here to me:
Since I exist, I must be doing, you see.
I'd like to begin my work today:
You're skilful at shortening the way. 6890

Wagner

But first, a word! Till now I've had no direction,
When old or young teased me with a question.
For example: no one's found out, ever,
What makes body and soul fit together:
Stick tight, as if there'll be no separation, 6895
Yet always cause each other irritation.
So then, -

Mephistopheles

Stop! I'd rather he told me,
Why married people get by so wretchedly?
You'll never discover that, my friend.
There's work to do the little Man can tend. 6900

Homunculus

What work's to do?

Mephistopheles (*Pointing to a side door.*)

Employ your gifts on this!

Wagner (*Still gazing at the phial.*)

Truly, you're the loveliest boy there is!

(*The side-door opens: Faust is seen stretched out on a couch.*)

Homunculus (*Astonished.*)

Interesting!

(The phial slips out of Wagner's hands, hovers over Faust, and shines on him.)

Lovely surroundings! – Clear water
In thick forest! Women there: undressing.
The loveliest of all! – It's getting clearer. 6905
One's left, different from the rest, gleaming:
Of highest race, for sure, a heavenly name.
She places her foot in the transparent glow,
Her noble body's sweetly living flame
Cools itself in the yielding crystal flow. – 6910
But what's that rush of beating wings for:
That thrashing, splashing, in the mirror?
The lovely girls, intimidated, flee:
Their queen, alone, looks on, composedly,
To see, with a proud feminine pleasure, 6915
The Swan-Prince press against her knee, there,
Forward yet tame. Familiar, he seems. –
But suddenly a vapour heaves,
And covers, with the veil it weaves,
The loveliest of scenes. 6920

Mephistopheles

All the things that you could murmur!
So little: and such a great dreamer.
I see nothing –

Homunculus

So I believe. You're Northern,
In the age of mist you're born then, 6925
In a jumble of priest-craft and chivalry,
So how could your sight be free!
You're at home with darkness.

(He gazes around.)

Brown repulsive, mildewed walls,
Low, pointed arches, full of scrolls! –
One wakes, and gives another pain, 6930
On the spot, dead then, he'll remain.
Wooded founts, swans, naked beauty,
That was his far-sighted dream:
How could this place do duty!
I can scarcely endure the scene. 6935
Carry him off!

Mephistopheles

I'd be happy: a last chance.

Homunculus

Order the soldier to the fight,
Lead the maiden to the dance,
Then everything's done right.
Even now, thinks, quick as light, 6940
It's Classical Walpurgis Night:
That's the best, if he were sent
To his own true element!

Mephistopheles

I've never heard that event named, here.

Homunculus

How could it come to your ear? 6945
Only Romantic ghosts, for you:
A true ghost must be Classic too.

Mephistopheles

Which path do we take there? Already
Your antique colleagues quite repel me.

Homunculus

North-westward Satan, is your pleasure ground, 6950
But this time we're South-eastward bound –
In wider space flows Peneus, the free
By bushes, groves, and damp still bays:
Its levels stretch to mountain ways,
And over it Pharsalus: old, yet contemporary. 6955

Mephistopheles

Oh! Enough! And keep all the fight,
Of tyranny and slavery, out of sight.
It bores me: they're scarce done when
They start the whole thing over again:
And no one sees: they're being re-aligned, 6960
By Asmodeus, who works them from behind.
They clash, it's said, for Freedom's right:
Seen rightly, slave with slave is all the fight.

Homunculus

Leave Mankind's wilfulness to me, then.
Each man defends himself, as best he can, 6965
From childhood, till, at last, he is a man.
Just ask how we can get back there again.
Have you a method, then, let's see:
If you haven't, leave it all to me.

Mephistopheles

There's many a Brocken trick I could display, 6970
But I find that Pagan bolts have barred the way.
The whole Greek race was never that much use!
They dazzle with the senses' freer play: it's true:

They lure the heart of man to happier sins:
While ours, one always finds, are gloomy things.
And now, what?

6975

Homunculus

Once you weren't so witless:
When I spoke about Thessalian witches.
I can deliver what I said: just think a little.

Mephistopheles (*Lustfully.*)

Thessalian witches! Good! They're the people
I once enquired about long ago.
I don't think it would suit me, at all,
To live with them night after night, though,
Still, a visit, and a trial –

6980

Homunculus

This mantle here,
Fold it around your knight there!
As before, the cloak can carry another,
One of you, along with the other.
I'll light the way.

6985

Wagner (*Anxiously.*)

And I?

Homunculus

Well, now, you
Stay home, there are important things to do.
Unfold all your ancient parchments,
Then, by rote, collect life's elements,
And place them together with due care,
Consider *What*, more deeply consider *How*.
Meanwhile round the world, a bit, I'll fare,
And find the last dot on the 'i', for now.

6990

Then the great work will see its final stage:
Great effort will merit great reward, you'll see:
Gold, honour, fame, a long and ripe old age,
And science too – and virtue, possibly.
Farewell!

6995

Wagner (*Sadly.*)

Farewell! It gives me pain.
Already, I fear, I'll not see you again.

7000

Mephistopheles

Now to Peneus, lively, on!
Sir Cousin's highly rated.

(*To the audience.*)

In the end we're dependent on
The creatures we've created.

**Part II Act II Scene III: Classical Walpurgis Night.
The Pharsalian Fields.**

(Darkness.)

Erichtho (*The Thessalian Witch, see Lucan's Pharsalia*)

This night's awesome feast, as so often in the past,	7005
I enter now, I, Erichtho, the gloomy one:	
Not so abominable as the wretched poets	
Painted me, with excessive slander...they never	
Cease their blame or praise...I see the valley whiten	
With waves of tents that gleam greyer in the distance,	7010
The after-image of that anxious, fearful night.	
How often it's repeated! In eternity	
Acted out, again, forever...No one gives the realm	
To another: to the one whose power won it:	
Whose strength rules. Since each, incapable of ruling	7015
His inner self, would gladly rule his neighbour's will,	
In the manner that his proud mind dictates to him...	
But here a great instance was fought out, to the end,	
Of how force may battle against a greater force,	
Freedom's lovely thousand-blossomed garland be torn,	7020
And stubborn laurel be wound round the ruler's brow.	
Here, Pompey dreams of his youth and former greatness,	
There, Caesar, listening, watches the balance tremble!	
It settles, and the world knows whom it sinks towards.	
The watch fires, glowing, send out their crimson flames:	7025
The field exhales those images of squandered blood,	
And lured by the strange wondrous splendour of the night,	
A legion of Hellenic legends gather here.	
They hover around all the fires uncertainly,	
Or sit nearby, the fabled forms of ancient days....	7030
The Moon, not full it is true, but of clearest light,	
Rises, scattering mild radiance everywhere:	
The ghostly tents vanish: the fires burn bluish now.	
But, over my head, what sudden meteor's this?	
It shines, illuminates the material globe.	7035
I smell Life. It's not fitting for me to approach	
Closer to the living, since I'm harmful to them:	

It gives me a bad name, and is no benefit to me.
It sinks down already. I give way, thoughtfully!

(She Exits. The Airy Travellers speak from above.)

Homunculus

Once again float round the circle 7040
Over flames and shuddering horror:
On the ground, and in the vale still,
It's quite ghostly, we discover.

Mephistopheles

It's the same as through my old window
In the grim and tangled north, 7045
Really loathsome ghosts below,
I'm at home here: and there, of course.

Homunculus

See! There's a tall one striding,
With gigantic steps, before us.

Mephistopheles

As if she were afraid, now: gliding 7050
Through the air above, she saw us.

Homunculus

Let her stride! Right away,
Set the knight down there:
He'll return to life again,
Once he breathes this mythic air. 7055

Faust (*As he touches the ground.*)

Where is she?

Homunculus

We can't say, I fear,
But you can probably enquire here.
Hurry now before it's daylight,
Go and search, from fire to fire:
Who found his way to the Mothers' side, 7060
Won't find this harder to survive.

Mephistopheles

On my own behalf too, I'm here:
But I don't know anything better
Than each to seek, among the fires,
The adventure he desires. 7065
Then, so that we can reunite,
Little one, shine your ringing light.

Homunculus

It shines like this, and rings.

(*The glass shines and rings out powerfully.*)

Now off to new and wondrous things!

Faust (*Alone.*)

Where is she? – But no further answer seek... 7070
If this is not the soil she trod,
Nor the wave that bathed her foot,
It is the air that spoke her speech.
Here! By a miracle, on Hellenic land!
I feel, the earth, too, where I stand: 7075
A fresh power glows in me, the Sleeper,
So I am Antaeus-like in nature.

And I find the strangest things lie here,
First let me search this Labyrinth of fire.

(He moves away.)

(On the Upper Peneus)

Mephistopheles *(Looking around.)*

And as I wander through these fires, 7080
I feel myself a total stranger: in the event,
They're mostly naked, a shirt here and there:
The Sphinx shameless, the Gryphon impudent:
And what's more, curly-haired and winged,
Before, behind, in eyes, reflected things... 7085
Of course, at heart, indecency's my ideal,
But I find the Antique is a little too real.
One should control all with a modern mind,
Overlay it with fashions of assorted kinds....
Repulsive people! Yet still I have to meet them, 7090
And, as a new guest too, correctly greet them...
Luck to you, fair ladies, and men, you wise grey ones!

A Gryphon *(Snarling. For the gold-guarding Gryphons see Herodotus' Histories.)*

Not Grey ones! Gryphons! – No one likes the name
Of something grey. Every word rings
With what conditioned it: its origins: 7095
Grey, grievous, grumpy, gruesome, gravely, grimly,
Similarly harmonious etymologically,
Disharmonise us.

Mephistopheles

And yet, without deviation,
You like the *gryp* in your proud name of Gryphon.

The Gryphon *(Snarling continuously.)*

Naturally! The relationship's tried and tested: 7100
It was often censured, but more often praised:
One *grips* maidens, money, gold,
To the gripper, Fortune's never cold.

Giant Ants

You spoke of gold: we've collected lots of it,
In rocks and caves, secretly, we've crammed it: 7105
The Arimaspi, discovered it all, one day,
They're laughing now: they took it far away.

The Gryphon

We'll soon make them confess.

The Arimaspi (*For the Scythian race of the Arimaspi and their association with gold mining see Herodotus' Histories*)

But not on this night of public festival.
By morning we'll have spent it all. 7110
This time at least we'll achieve success.

Mephistopheles (*Sitting among the Sphinxes.*)

How free, and easy, I feel here,
I understand you, one and all.

Sphinx

We breathe out spirit-tones, clear,
That for you become substantial. 7115
Now name yourself, so we can know your fame.

Mephistopheles

Men choose to saddle me with a host of names...
Are there Britons here? They travel about so much,
Looking for battlefields, and ruined walls,
The dullest classical places, waterfalls: 7120
Here's a site that's worth all their fuss.
They spoke of me too: in their Mysteries:
And portrayed me there as Old Iniquity.

A Sphinx

How so?

Mephistopheles

I don't know why that should be.

A Sphinx

Perhaps you've knowledge of the stars? 7125
What do you think of the present hour?

Mephistopheles (*Gazing upwards.*)

Star glides by star, the horned moon shines bright,
And I feel happy here, in this mournful site,
I warm myself on a lion skin: your right.
To have to take off, again: that would be hard: 7130
Give us a riddle, or at least charades.

Sphinx

To express yourself, that would be a riddle.
Try for once to solve your own inner muddle:
'Needed by the good man and the sinful,
To the first a breastplate in ascetic swordplay, 7135
A wild friend for the other, to show the way,
And both amusing Zeus with their display.'

The First Gryphon (*Snarling.*)

I don't like him!

The Second Gryphon (*Snarling more fiercely.*)

What's he after?

Both Gryphons

The nasty thing, he's not been heard of here!

Mephistopheles (*Nastily*)

Perhaps you think a guest's nails can't claw
Every bit as sharply as those talons of yours?
Just try it, then!

A Sphinx (*Gently.*)

You'll only stay until,
You leave our company, yourself, as you will:
In your own land everything worked for you,
But this if I'm not wrong's too much for you.

Mephistopheles

Looked at above, you're rather appetising,
But lower down the creature's somewhat frightening.

A Sphinx

False one, you'll do bitter penance,
These claws of ours are sound and good:
You with your withered horse's hoof,
Aren't comfortable in our presence.

(The Sirens start to sing, above them.)

What are those birds shaking
The poplar branches by the stream?

A Sphinx

Take care! The song they're making
Conquered the best there's ever been.

The Sirens

Ah, why should you choose to live
Amongst amazing ugliness!
Listen, we flock to you, ah yes,
With tuneful sounds, in excess,
That Sirens ought to give.

7160

The Sphinxes (*Mocking them.*)

Make them fly down here to us!
Their falcon-claws, so hideous,
They've hidden in the leaves:
They'll fall on you, cruelly, you see
If you choose to hear them sigh.

7165

The Sirens

Away with hate! Away with envy!
We gather purest ecstasies,
Scattered through the sky!
On the earth, or on the sea,
With the happiest gestures, we
Greet men who wander by.

7170

Mephistopheles

This is news of the sweetest,
Here from lyre and chest,
One note twines round another.
But this warbling's lost on me:
It crawls into my ear, you see,
Yet my heart feels nothing, here.

7175

The Sphinxes

Don't talk of hearts! That's idle:
A leather bag would do as well,
To match that face you wear.

7180

Faust (*Approaching.*)

Marvellous! Gazing's enough for me,
At grand repulsiveness, and solidity:
I suspect I'll find good fortune shortly:
Where will this serious gazing take me?

(*He points at the Sphinxes.*)

Once Oedipus stood in front of them: 7185

(*He points at the Sirens.*)

Ulysses writhed in ropes for them:

(*He points to the Ants.*)

They gathered a mighty treasure.

(*He points to the Gryphons.*)

They guarded it in fullest measure.
I feel new power flowing through me:
Mighty these forms: of mighty memory. 7190

Mephistopheles

Once you'd have run from things like these,
But now they look good to you:
When a man seeks his beloved, he's
Ready to meet monsters too.

Faust (*To the Sphinxes.*)

You female forms, tell me then, 7195
Have any of you seen Helen?

The Sphinxes

None of us lasted till her day,
Hercules the last did slay.
You can ask Chiron, anyway:
He gallops round in this spirit night:
When he stops for you, you might.

7200

The Sirens

You will not fail at all!...
How Ulysses lingered with us,
Not hurrying scornfully by us,
He'd many times recall:
All will be shown you,
If you make your journey to
Our fields, in the green sea.

7205

A Sphinx

Don't let yourself be deceived.
Instead of Ulysses self-bonded,
We bind with good advice. On!
When you reach noble Chiron,
You'll find it's as I promised.

7210

(Faust wanders off.)

Mephistopheles *(In a temper.)*

What croaks by me on beating wing,
So quick that one can't see a thing.
And one behind the other, flying?
Even a hunter would weary of these.

7215

A Sphinx

That storm, like the winds of winter, here,
Hercules' arrows could scarce get near:
They are the swift Stymphalides,

7220

And their croaked greetings are well-meant,
The vulture-beaked, and goose-webbed.
They'd gladly appear in our place,
As a closely-related race.

Mephistopheles (*As if intimidated.*)

Something else is having a hissing fit. 7225

Sphinx

Don't be worried about those either!
They're the heads of the Lernaean Hydra,
Lopped from the trunk, but think they're it.
But, what's the matter, now then?
Why all the restless movements? 7230
Where are you going? He's gone!...
I see that Chorus over there, that one,
Has turned your head. You'll get nowhere,
Go on: greet every sweet face there!
They're Lamiae, the lustful girls, 7235
With smiling lips, impudent curls,
The race of Satyrs all delight in:
With them a cloven foot's the very thing.

Mephistopheles

Will you stay here? So I can find you again.

Sphinx

Yes! Mix with the flighty rabble. 7240
In Egypt, we were accustomed, you know,
To rule for a thousand years or so.
And if you respect our location,
We'll regulate the days of Moon and Sun.
We'll sit in front of the Pyramids, 7245
To pass judgement on the nations:
With changeless faces, there, amid
War and peace, and inundations.

(On the Lower Peneus.)

(The river-god, surrounded by nymphs and tributary streams.)

Peneus

Stir, you reed-beds, whispering, flowing!
Sigh softly, slender rushes, bowing, 7250
Lightly, willow-bushes, rustling,
Lisp, you poplar-branches trembling,
Through the broken dream!.....
Dreadful premonitions wake me,
Secret quivering, now, shakes me, 7255
In my peaceful wandering stream.

Faust *(Approaching the river.)*

If I heard true, as I believe:
From behind the tangled leaves
Of these shrubs and branches,
Came sounds of human voices. 7260
Then the fount seemed to chatter,
And the breeze filled with laughter.

The Nymphs *(To Faust.)*

Just to lie here, now,
For you would be best,
Reviving your wearied 7265
Body with coolness,
Enjoy here forever
Your fugitive rest:
Murmuring, trickling,
We'll whisper, and bless. 7270

Faust

I'm awake! O let them linger there
Those images without compare,
As they reached my sight.
I'm moved so marvellously!
Is it dream? Or is it memory? 7275
Once before, I knew this delight.
The waters creep through the freshness,
The softly swaying bushes' thickness,
Without rushing, barely trickling:
A hundred founts from all sides press, 7280
And gather to the purest brightness,
Fill the pool's shallow ring.
Glowing limbs of young girls are
Reflected by the liquid mirror,
And added to the eye's delight! 7285
Companionably, bathing joyfully,
Swimming boldly, wading shyly,
Crying out, at last, in watery fight.
This sight's enough to renew
My eyes with gazing at the view, 7290
But ever wider vision strains.
My glance cuts sharply through the cover,
Rich foliage, green wealth, around her,
Serves to hide the noble queen.

Marvellous! The swans approaching: 7295
From the bays, come softly swimming,
Majestically pure their movement.
Floating calm, in sweet society,
But how proudly, self-delightedly,
Head and neck are lifted, bent..... 7300
One shines out above all others,
Boasting boldly of his favours,
Sailing swiftly in their race:
His ruffled plumage swelling,
Wave-like, on the wave he's stirring, 7305
He hastens to the sacred place...
The others swimming here and there,

With their smooth shining feathers,
Soon meet in fine contention,
Drive away the frightened maidens, 7310
Not thinking of their service, then
But only of their own protection.

The Nymphs

Sisters, bend and set you ears
To the river-banks' green turf:
If I hear rightly, coming near, 7315
That's the sound of hooves on earth.
If I only knew who that message might
Be bringing, swiftly, to the Night!

Faust

To me, the ground seems ringing, too
Echoing to some swift stallion's hoof. 7320
There, gaze, my eyes!
Good luck, is nigh,
Will it come to me as well?
O, wonder without parallel!
A rider trots towards us, now, 7325
Gifted, shines with spirit and power
Grafted to a snow-white horse...
I know him too, I can't be wrong,
It's Philyra's famous son! –
Halt, Chiron! Halt! Hear my discourse... 7330

Chiron (*The Centaur.*)

What then? What is it?

Faust

Delay a moment!

Chiron

I never rest.

Faust

Well, take me with you, then!

Chiron

Mount! And I can question you, at leisure:
Where are you going? You're by the river,
I'll carry you through the flood, with pleasure.

7335

Faust (*Mounting his back.*)

Wherever you wish. My thanks forever...
You, the great man, the noble teacher,
Famed for educating the race of heroes,
That splendid company of the Argonauts,
And all who edified the Poets' thoughts.

7340

Chiron

All that in its proper place!
As Mentor, even Pallas wasn't rated:
In the end they do things their own way,
As if they'd none of them been educated.

Faust

The doctor who can name the plants,
And roots, profoundly, understands:
Who heals the sick, and soothes the wound,
Here, strong in mind and body, have I found!

7345

Chiron

When a hero was injured near me.
I gave the right assistance and advice: 7350
But, at last, bequeathed my art, you see,
To priests, and herb-gathering old wives.

Faust

You've a truly great man's ways:
He won't hear a word of praise.
He'll modestly defer to us 7355
And act as if all were equals.

Chiron

You seem artful at those pretences,
Which flatter common folk and princes.

Faust

But surely you'd confess today:
You saw the greatest, of your age, 7360
Among the noblest deeds, you trod,
And lived life as a demi-god.
Among those great heroic forms,
Who was the finest of them all?

Chiron

Among the Argonauts, in my day, 7365
Each was worthy, in his own way.
And with the powers he inhaled,
Knew enough when others failed.
Castor and Pollux always conquered,
When youth and beauty were honoured. 7370
In determination, and swift help to others,
First was Calais, and Zetes his brother,
Thoughtful, clever, strong, well-advised,
Jason conquered, woman-folk's delight.

Then Orpheus: gentle, always brooding, 7375
Sounding the lyre, quite over-powering.
Sharp-eyed Lynceus, by night and day,
Steering the sacred ship past reef and bay...
Let such dangers always be faced as brothers:
If one achieves he's praised by all the others. 7380

Faust

Of Hercules, you say nothing?

Chiron

Oh! Don't rouse my yearning....
Never noting how Phoebus
Ares, or Hermes, were defined,
With my own eyes I saw before us 7385
What all men praise as divine.
He was born a king, no other,
A splendid youth to gaze upon:
Yielding to his elder brother,
And the loveliest of women. 7390
Gaea's never known a second,
Nor Hebe led such on to heaven's zone:
In vain for him they sing the songs,
In vain for him they carve the stone.

Faust

The sculptors never caught his form, 7395
However many images they made.
You've spoken of the loveliest man,
Now speak about the loveliest maid!

Chiron

What!...I won't talk of woman's beauty,
It's so often a frozen mask to me: 7400
I can only praise that nature, truly,
Flowing freely, and cheerfully.
Beauty's delighted with itself:
Grace makes it irresistible,
Like Helen, whom I carried. 7405

Faust

You carried her?

Chiron

Yes on this very back.

Faust

Was I not sufficiently aroused?
Such a seat, now, will bring me luck!

Chiron

She gripped me by the mane, so,
As you are doing.

Faust

I'm vanquished, oh, 7410
Completely! Tell me, why here?
She is my one and only desire!
Carried her from where, to where?

Chiron

That's easy to tell, since you enquire.
At that time, the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, 7415
Freed their sister, Helen, from a nest of robbers.

The robbers then, not used to being conquered,
Regained their courage, and chased them onward.
The sister and brothers' hasty course was halted
By all the swamps that lie below Eleusis: 7420
The brothers waded: I swam over, swiftly:
Then she sprang off, and, stroking gently
My wet mane, caressed me, thanked me,
Confident, sweetly clever were her ways.
She was so charming! Youth, delighting Age! 7425

Faust

Only ten years old!...

Chiron

The philologists deceive you,
I see, while deceiving themselves too.
It's strange that with a mythological woman,
Poets use her, at will, to draw our attention,
She can never age, is never old, 7430
Cast in the same enticing mould,
Seduced when young, in age delights:
Enough, no age restricts a poet's flights.

Faust

Then let her be as if no age has bound her!
As Achilles on Pherae once found her, 7435
Beyond all ages. What rare luck:
In spite of every fate, to win her love!
And shall I, by the strength of my yearning,
Not draw that unique form towards me, living,
That eternal being, equal to the divine, 7440
Great yet tender: kind as she's sublime.
You saw her once: today I too have seen her,
Lovely in her attraction: as lovely as desired.
Now my soul and being is strongly tied:
If I can't win her, I shan't survive. 7445

Chiron

Ah, stranger! You're enraptured like Mankind:
Among us Spirits you seem maddened, blind.
Yet now your fate is to be met with here:
Though only for a moment, every year,
I take the time to call on Manto, there, 7450
Aesculapius' daughter: in silent prayer
Imploring her father to add to his fame,
Enlighten, at last, each rash doctor's brain,
And persuade them never to deal death again...
I like her best of all the crowd of Sibyls, 7455
Free of grimaces, kind and generous:
If you stay with her, she's the power too,
To heal you totally: with herbs and roots.

Faust

I don't need healing: my mind is filled with power:
There I'd become as base as others are. 7460

Chiron

Don't scorn the healing of the noble fount!
We've reached the place, so, quick, dismount!

Faust

Tell me, where, through pebbly water,
In the gloomy night, you've brought us?

Chiron

Here Greece and Rome braved the fight, 7465
Olympus to your left, Peneus on the right,
The greatest empire lost here to the sand:
A king flees: and citizens win the land.
Gaze around! Famous Tempe is nearby,
Eternal, there, under the moonlit sky. 7470

Manto (*Inside, dreaming.*)

Horses' hooves sound
On sacred ground,
Demi-gods are nigh us.

Chiron

Quite right!
Just open your eyes!

7475

Manto (*Waking.*)

Welcome! I see you don't keep away.

Chiron

And your temple's still here to stay!

Manto

You still gallop round, untiringly?

Chiron

And you, as ever, sit peacefully,
While I enjoy circling round.

7480

Manto

I wait, and Time circles me I've found.
And him?

Chiron

The shadowy night
Has whirled him to our sight.
Helen he wants to win,
Helen's maddening him.
And he doesn't know where or how to begin:

7485

Above all he deserves the Aesculapian healing.

Manto

I like the ones who want impossible things.

(Chiron is already far off.)

Rash man, advance, here's joy for you!
This dark path leads to Persephone too.
Under Olympus' hollow foot, stealing,
She listens for secret, forbidden greeting.
I smuggled Orpheus down here once before:
Use your chance better! Quick! Be sure!

7490

(They descend.)

Part II Act II Scene IV: On The Upper Peneus Again

The Sirens

Plunge now in Peneus' flood! 7495
Here you can delight in swimming,
Song on song too, harmonising,
Does unlucky people good.
There's no healing without water!
With the shining crowd run we 7500
Quick, to the Aegean Sea,
Where every joy's on offer.

(An Earthquake.)

The foaming wave sweeps wider,
Flowing in its bed no longer:
Earth shakes and waters roar, 7505
Stony banks split once more.
We fly on! Come, one and all!
We'll not profit from this at all.
On! Each noble, happy guest,
To the ocean's cheerful zest, 7510
Gleaming, where the trembling waves
Lightly heaving, wash the bays:
Where the moon's reflected light,
Wets with heaven's dew, at night.
There, a freely flowing life, 7515
Here, an earthquake's fearful strife:
Every clever one, hasten on!
This place is a hideous one.

Seismos (*Growling and jolting in the deep.*)

Push again, with power,
With your shoulders, tower! 7520
So the world above is ours,
Where all must yield to us.

The Sphinxes

What a horrid shuddering,
Ugly, hideous juddering! 7525
What a quivering and swaying,
Back and forwards, playing!
What an intolerable fuss!
But we'll not lose our place,
Even if all hell shakes.
Now a dome is lifted, 7530
Wonderful. He's gifted
It to us, the ancient one,
Delos' isle was his creation,
Driven from out the wave,
To bring Latona aid. 7535
He with striving, pushing, pressing,
Arms straight, and shoulders bending,
Like an Atlas in his action,
Lifts rock and earth, in motion,
Shingle, gravel, sand: the floors 7540
All along our peaceful shores.
Rips our vale's quiet surface up,
Crosswise, with a single cut:
Fiercely, and unwearied,
A colossal caryatid, 7545
Bears a fearsome weight of boulders,
Still buried, downwards to his shoulders:
But he'll come no further, now,
The Sphinxes' place is here, we vow.

Seismos

I myself achieved all this, 7550
Man should admit it, finally:
If I'd not jolted and shaken it,
How could the world be so lovely? –
How could your peaks stand so high,
In the pure and splendid blue, 7555
If I'd not pushed them to the sky,
Picturesque and charming too?
Then, thinking of my high ancestry,
Night and Chaos, I behaved badly,
And, a company of Titans, we 7560
With Pelion and Ossa played madly,
Romp round in youthful glee,
Till, we tired of it, at last,
And set both mountains, wickedly,
On Parnassus, as a double hat.... 7565
There, now, Apollo's sweet retreat,
With the happy band of Muses.
And Jupiter, thunderbolts complete:
I even raised the high seat he uses.
So now with monstrous striving 7570
I've pushed this upwards, from the deep,
And call, aloud, to their new being,
The joyful dwellers of the steep.

The Sphinxes

One would think long ago,
This was lifted to the sky, 7575
Had we not seen from down below,
How it wormed its way on high.
A bushy forest covers it,
And rock on rock is piled around:
Sphinxes don't care about it, 7580
It won't disturb our sacred ground.

The Gryphons

Gold in leaves, and gold in spangles,
Through the cracks, see, it tremble.
Don't you rob us of our treasure,
Ants, come, gather it together!

7585

Chorus of Ants

As this the giant ones
Threw to the sky,
You restless-footed ones,
Quick, climb it on high!
Rapidly in and out!
In cracks like these,
Every crumb about's
Worth you can seize.
You must uncover
Even the slightest,
In every corner
Quick as the brightest.
You must be everywhere,
Swarming around: then,
Only bring gold here!
Forget the mountain.

7590

7595

7600

The Gryphons

Come! Come! Heap the gold!
With our claws, we'll keep hold:
They are the best locks yet:
Great treasures they protect.

7605

The Pygmies (*Classical Dwarves.*)

We've acquired some room,
How, it isn't clear.
Don't ask where we're from:
The main thing is we're here!
Life is cheerfully suited

7610

To every sort of land:
Where a rock is lifted,
Dwarves are there, on hand.
Men and maids, quick and busy,
Exemplary, every pair: 7615
In Paradise, once, maybe,
A similar race lived there.
But the best is here we find,
Thankfully our fate is blessed:
Mother Earth is always kind, 7620
In the East as in the West.

The Dactyls (*Little Ironworkers.*)

If she can bring to light
The Little Ones in a night,
The Littlest Ones, she can make
And each will still find a mate. 7625

The Pygmy-Elders

Hurry: make space:
A convenient place!
Quickly, to work!
Strength, never shirk!
While we're in peace, 7630
Our smithy increase,
To furnish the horde
With armour and sword.
All you ant-forms,
Moving in swarms, 7635
Bring us the ore!
And all you Dactyls,
So many, so little,
You are commanded
To bring us the wood! 7640
Heap it up higher,
Secretive fire,
Fetch coals as you should.

The Pygmy Generalissimo

Look lively, though,
With arrow and bow! 7645
Shoot me the herons
Out in the ponds,
Countless they're nests,
Proud are their breasts,
Shoot them, together, 7650
All in one blow!
So we can show
Helmets with feathers.

Ants and Dactyls

Who now can save us!
We bring the iron 7655
They forge the fetters.
It won't be soon
This thing will end,
Meanwhile we bend.

The Cranes of Ibycus

Cries of murdered, calls of dying! 7660
Fearful fluttering and flying!
Such deep moans, and such groans
Carry to our airy zones!
All already slaughtered,
Blood is reddening the water, 7665
Misshapen dwarfish passions,
Steal the herons' noblest gems.
Now they're waving on their helmets:
Those fat-bellied bow-legged serpents.
You our armies' members, 7670
Files of ocean-wanderers,
You we call to vengeance,
To kin-related business.
No one spare his strength or blood!
Show hatred always to that brood! 7675

(They disperse, croaking.)

Mephistopheles *(On the plain.)*

Northern witches were easily controlled,
But over foreign spirits I've no hold.
The Blocksberg's a most convenient locale,
Wherever you are, you'll find yourself there still.
Dame Ilse watches for us, from her tall stone, 7680
And Heinrich's still awake on his high throne,
At Elend, the Snorers snore away,
All's done for a thousand years and a day.
Who knows here if, where he sits, you see,
The Earth won't swell up beneath his feet?.... 7685
I wander happily through a level valley,
And in a moment there, thrown up behind me,
A mountain, true it's hardly to be called one,
But high enough to hide the Sphinxes' home –
Still, the valley breeds many a fire here, 7690
And so illuminates this mad affair....
The magic sparks of that charming chorus.
Still enticing, vanishing, hover near us.
Gently now! All too used to nibbling,
Wherever we are, we find ourselves snatching. 7695

The Lamiae *(Drawing Mephistopheles after them.)*

Faster, and faster!
And ever further!
Then hover again,
Chattering, staying.
It's such a pleasure, 7700
To make the old sinner,
Pursue us, at whim,
Doing hard penance.
See, with his lame stance,
He hobbles forwards, 7705
He stumbles onwards:
Trailing his leg, mind:

As we flee from him
He follows behind!

Mephistopheles (*Standing still.*)

Cursed fate! Cheated every which way! 7710
Since Adam, seduced and led astray!
We grow old, but who grows wise?
Now, I'm tormented to the skies!
We know they're a wholly useless sex,
With laced-in bodies, and painted looks. 7715
No healthy response at all, at bottom,
Wherever you grip, their limbs are rotten.
We know, we see, we grasp their ways,
But still we dance when woman plays!

The Lamiae (*Pausing.*)

Stop! He thinks: pauses: stays too: 7720
Return, then, lest he should escape you!

Mephistopheles (*Striding forwards.*)

On, then! And let no indecision
Grip my flesh, some foolish cavil:
Since if there were no witches given,
Who the devil'd want to be a devil! 7725

The Lamiae (*Very graciously.*)

We are circling round the hero!
Let love, in his heart, be sure to
Choose one of us for certain though.

Mephistopheles

True, in this uncertain shimmer,
You seem pretty girls together, 7730
I'd like not to scorn you so.

Empusa (*The demon. Pressing forward.*)

Nor me! I'm the very thing,
Let me join your following.

The Lamiae

She's one too many in our crowd,
She'll spoil our game if she's allowed.

7735

Empusa (*To Mephistopheles.*)

Greetings from Empusa, to you,
Your cousin, with the ass's hoof!
You've only a horse's hoof, it's true,
Yet, cousin, all the best to you!

Mephistopheles

I thought there were only strangers here,
Sadly, now, relatives appear:
It's the old story: in their dozens,
From Hartz to Hellas, always cousins!

7740

Empusa

I act quickly with decision,
I can alter to your vision:
But to honour you today
My ass's head I display.

7745

Mephistopheles

I see great things are signified,
By the relationship implied:
Be that as it may, yet I,
The ass's head will still deny.

7750

The Lamiae

That ugly thing gives the frights,
To all that's lovely and delights:
The lovely and delightful before,
When she arrives, are so no more!

7755

Mephistopheles

These cousins too, so soft and slender,
Are all suspicious, all that gender:
And beneath their cheeks, those roses,
There too, I fear, are metamorphoses.

The Lamiae

Try us then! We're many.
Grasp! And if you're lucky,
Secure the finest prize.
What was all that lusting for?
You're a miserable suitor,
Strutting, boasting of your size! –
Now he's mixing with our crowd:
Drop your masks: you're allowed:
And bare your being to his eyes.

7760

7765

Mephistopheles

I've chosen the loveliest one...

(Clasping her.)

Oh! What a skinny broom!

7770

(Clasping another.)

And this one?...Wizened looks!

The Lamiae

You're worth better? Not in our books.

Mephistopheles

That little one might suit my plans...
A lizard gliding through my hands!
And snakelike are her slippery tresses. 7775
I try the tall one to compare...
I grip a *thyrsus* without hair,
A pinecone, for a head, impresses!
What next?....A fat one, see,
Perhaps she'll enliven me: 7780
Let's risk it, then! Here she is!
So puffy, flabby, in the East
There they'd prize her looks, at least...
But, oh! The puff-ball's split!

The Lamiae

Scatter widely, swaying, floating, 7785
Surround him in dark flight, like lightning,
The trespassing witch's son!
Circles, terrifying, winging!
Bat-like in a silent flickering!
He'll be grateful when we've done. 7790

Mephistopheles (*Shaking himself.*)

I'm no cleverer it seems, at all:
Here's absurd, and so's the north,
Here and there, the spirits tricky,
Poetry and people tacky.
Here too it's masquerade, I find: 7795
As everywhere, the dance of mind.
I grasped a lovely masked procession,
And caught things from a horror show...
I'd gladly settle for a false impression,
If it would last a little longer, though. 7800

(He loses his way among the rocks.)

Where am I now? Where will it wander?
There was a path, now it's a horror.
I got here by smooth and level ways,
And now the scree prevents escape.
I clamber up and down in vain,
How shall I find the Sphinx again?
I've never known anything like it, quite,
A mountain range in a single night!
I call it a lively witches' ride,
They've brought the Blocksberg, beside.

7805

7810

An Oread *(A mountain nymph, from the natural rock.)*

Climb up here! My range is old,
In primeval forms the peaks unfold.
Respect the steep and rocky stair,
Pindus' last slopes stretch there!
Unshakeable, once I stood, as now,
When Pompey fled across my brow.
Beside me, illusion's stones will go,
As soon as ever the cock shall crow.
I often see such fables thrown on high,
And suddenly sink back again and die.

7815

7820

Mephistopheles

Honour to you, you noble length,
Garlanded high with oaken strength!
The clearest moonlight never weaves
Through the darkness of your leaves –
I see a light, with parting glow,
Through the silent bushes go.
How all things come together!
Homunculus it is who's there!
Which way now, little fellow?

7825

Homunculus

I flit about from hill to hollow 7830
And, in the truest sense, I'd gladly 'be',
I'm so impatient, now, to smash the glass:
Only, so far, given what I can see,
I wouldn't want to do it in this pass.
But in confidence I confess I was 7835
On the trail of two philosophers,
All I heard them say was: Nature, Nature!
I'll not part from them for anything,
They must know about earthly being:
And in the end I'll find out, too, 7840
The cleverest place to travel to.

Mephistopheles

Well, do it on your own behalf, here.
Where the spirits all find their place,
The Philosopher can show his face.
To please you with his art and favour, 7845
He'll make you a dozen, any flavour.
You'll have no intellect, unless you err.
If you want to 'be', make it your own affair!

Homunculus

Good advice too is not to be disdained.

Mephistopheles

Then off with you! I'll look around again. 7850

(They part.)

Anaxagoras (*To Thales.*)

The stubborn mind will never ever bend:
What more do you need to be enlightened?

Thales

The waves will gladly bow to every wind,
Yet far from the jagged cliffs they'll end.

Anaxagoras

This cliff came about by fiery vapours. 7855

Thales

By moisture living things were created.

Homunculus (*Between the two.*)

Let me walk beside you, please.
I myself desire to 'be'!

Anaxagoras

Have you, O Thales, in a single night
Brought a mount, from mud, to light? 7860

Thales

Never has nature in her living flow,
Been bound to day, night, and hours, though.
She creates every form by rule,
At her greatest, force is never her tool.

Anaxagoras

Here it was! Furious Plutonic fire, 7865
Monstrous Aeolian vapours thrown higher,
Broke through the ancient earth's smooth crust,
And raised the new mount with a swift up-thrust.

Thales

What more will come of it?
It's there, that's fine: let it sit. 7870
One loses time in remonstrance,
And only leads the patient folk a dance.

Anaxagoras

The Mount quickly filled with Myrmidons,
Living in the rocky clefts and caverns:
Pygmies, ants and fingerlings, 7875
And other active little things.

(To Homunculus.)

You've not striven hard for greatness,
Lived hermit-like, in narrowness:
If you can accustom yourself to power,
I'll crown you their king, in an hour. 7880

Homunculus

What does Thales say?

Thales

It's not my recommendation:
With small means, you'll only do small actions:
With great means, the small achieve great ones.
Look there! A dark cloud, see, the cranes come!
So the excitable crowd will threaten, 7885
And they would threaten the king so.

With sharpened beak, and grasping claw,
 They tread the small ones to the floor:
 Fate falls like lightning on those below.
 It was a crime to kill the herons, 7890
 Caught on their quiet and peaceful ponds.
 But that rain of arrowed slaughter,
 Brings cruel and bloody vengeance after,
 Summons the anger of their kin above,
 To spill the Pygmies' guilty blood. 7895
 What need for helmets, shields and spears?
 What use the dwarves' heron-feather?
 How Dactyls and Ants hide together!
 The army wavers, flies, and disappears.

Anaxagoras (*After a moment, solemnly.*)

Till now I've praised the subterranean powers, 7900
 But turn, in this case, to higher ones than ours...
 You! Above, always evergreen,
 Triple-named, triply to be seen,
 I cry to you, by my people's woe,
 Diana, Luna, Hecate, so! 7905
 You, in deepest thought, the heartening,
 You power profound, calmly shining,
 Reveal your dark side's fearful shower,
 Without spells, show your ancient power!

(*A pause.*)

Am I heard so swiftly? 7910
 Has my cry
 To the deep sky
 Stirred Nature's ranks so quickly?
 Already, greater, greater, nearing,
 The Goddess' orb'd throne appearing, 7915
 Monstrous, fearful to the sight!
 With fires that redden in the night...
 No closer, threatening disc of power!
 You'll straight destroy us: sea and shore!
 So it was true, the Thessalian women, 7920

Trusted with wicked magic runes,
Enchanted you from your circling path,
Wrested evil things from you, in wrath?...
The bright shield now darkens,
Suddenly splits: flashes, sparkles!
What a hissing! What a drumming!
Thunder, wind, and rain are coming! –
Humbled, on the steps of your throne! –
Forgive me! I brought this on, alone.

7925

(He throws himself on his face.)

Thales

What has this man not heard and seen!
I'm not sure what it was that's been,
I'm not sensitive to it like him, I find.
We'd confess, these are crazy times,
The Moon is quivering quite gently,
In her place, though, just as formerly.

7930

7935

Homunculus

Look there, at the Pygmies seat!
The mount was round, now it's a peak.
I felt the monstrous recoil's thunder,
A rock fell from the Moon up yonder:
All alike, without asking too,
Friend and foe it squashed and slew.
I have to praise powers like those,
All creation in a single night,
Alike up there as down below,
Bringing a mountain-heap to light.

7940

7945

Thales

Peace! It was just an imaginary sight.
So farewell to that ugly brood!
You didn't become king, that's good.
Off now to the sea-festival, joy-blessed,
Where they'll honour a marvellous guest.

7950

(They exit.)

Mephistopheles (*Climbing up the opposite side.*)

I'll have to climb through these steep rocks,
Through the roots of ancient oaks!
In my Hartz range, the smell of resin
Has a hint of pitch, almost as pleasant
As sulphur...but here, among the Greeks,
There's not a sniff, wherever one seeks:
But I'm still rather curious to know
How they make hellfire and brimstone glow.

7955

A Dryad (*A wood nymph.*)

In your own land, you're naturally adept,
Abroad, you don't know enough as yet.
You shouldn't think about home, here
With these ancient oak trees to revere.

7960

Mephistopheles

One thinks of all one's left: besides,
What one's used to is paradise.
But tell me what's in that cave
Dimly crouching, a triple shape?

7965

The Dryad

Daughters of Phorkyas! Enter the place,
And speak to them, if you're not afraid.

Mephistopheles

Why not! – I'll look, and I'm amazed!
Proud as I am, I must confess, though, 7970
I've never seen the likes of those,
They're as foul as Ugliness any day....
How can one find deadly sin
Ugly at all when one has seen
This triple monstrosity? 7975
We wouldn't let them cross the sill
Of the worst chamber of our hell.
But here, in the land of beauty, all things Greek,
Are famous now because they're so antique...
They seem to scent my presence: stirring, 7980
Like vampire bats, squeaking, twittering.

The Phorkyads (*The Three Graeae*)

Give me the eye, Sisters, so I can find
Who's wandering so near our shrine.

Mephistopheles

Most Revered! Allow me near,
To receive a triple blessing here. 7985
I come, as yet unknown it's true,
But distantly related, I think, to you.
I've already seen the elder gods,
Bowed low before Rhea and Ops:
I even saw the Fates, your sisters, 7990
Yesterday, or the day before:
But I've never seen the likes of you.
I'm silenced now, and delighted too.

The Phorkyads

This spirit seems to have some sense.

Mephistopheles

I'm amazed no poet's had the intelligence
To sing of you. Tell me, how can that be?
I've never seen you properly painted:
The chisel should only try to carve you,
Not the likes of Pallas, Venus, Juno.

7995

The Phorkyads

Deep in solitude and stillest night,
No one ever thought to show us three aright.

8000

Mephistopheles

How could they? Here, concealed from view.
You can't see anyone: and they can't see you.
You need to achieve a suitable place,
Where art and splendour share the space,
Where every day, as walking, living heroes,
With giant steps, each block of marble goes.
Where –

8005

The Phorkyads

Be silent, and don't tempt us to roam!
What use would it be to us, to be better known?
Born in the night, and related to the night,
To ourselves, almost: to others quite out of sight.

8010

Mephistopheles

In that case, there's little more to say:
One can oneself to others still betray.
One eye's enough for three, one tooth as well:
Then it should be mythically possible,
To contain three beings in two,
And leave me the third form, too.
For a little while.

8015

A Phorkyad

What do you think? Shall we try?

The Others

Let's! – But without the tooth and eye.

Mephistopheles

Now you've denied me the best features of all: 8020
How can I show your strict and perfect form?

A Phorkyad

Shut one eye, that's easy to do,
Let one greedy tooth show too,
In profile you'll at once achieve
A sisterly likeness, to deceive. 8025

Mephistopheles

Many thanks! Done!

The Phorkyads

Done!

Mephistopheles (*As a Phorkyad, in profile.*)

Already I'm one,
Of Chaos's well-beloved sons!

The Phorkyads

We're Chaos's daughters, of undisputed right.

Mephistopheles

O shame, now I'll be called a hermaphrodite.

The Phorkyads

What a beauty in our sisterly trio!
We've two eyes, and two teeth now.

8030

Mephistopheles

I'll hide myself from every eye, as well,
And frighten devils in the lakes of Hell.

(He exits.)

Part II Act II Scene V: Rocky Coves in the Aegean Sea

(The Moon, lingering, at the zenith.)

The Sirens *(Lying on the cliffs round about, playing flutes and singing.)*

Though the Thessalian witch-women
Wickedly, dragged you down to them, 8035
With their horrors, long ago, in the dark,
Look quietly down, now, from the arc
Of night, on waves of glittering sparks:
Mildly flashing, bright crowds, these:
Shine now upon the swelling seas, 8040
Which raise themselves from the deep!
We're sworn to serve you, thus,
Sweet Luna, show grace to us.

The Nereids and Tritons *(As marvels of the deep.)*

Sound out loud, with clearer tones,
Ringing through the sea's wide zones: 8045
Call the peoples of the deep!
Before the storm's ravening face,
We sank to the stillest place,
Now we're drawn, by singing, sweet.
See, how we've adorned ourselves, 8050
In our great delight, as well,
With our crowns, so nobly gemmed,
And our belts with spangles hemmed!
These spoils, now, before you, we lay,
Treasures, shipwrecked here, and swallowed, 8055
Your enticing songs they followed,
You the daemons of our bay.

The Sirens

We know well, in ocean freshness,
Fishes play in slippery smoothness,
Flickering lives, devoid of pain: 8060
Yet you festive crowds that stray

We would rather find today,
That you're more than fish, again.

The Nereids and Tritons

Before we came to meet you,
We were thinking of that too: 8065
Speed away now, sisters: brothers!
It only needs the slightest journey,
For most effective proof that we,
Certainly, are more than fishes.

(They swim off.)

The Sirens

They've vanished in a moment! 8070
To Samothrace they're bent,
Gone, with a favourable breeze.
What is it they think they'll see,
In the realm of the noble Cabiri?
They're gods! But wondrously strange, 8075
Always causing their forms to change,
Never knowing what they might be.
Stay at your clear height,
Sweet Luna, graceful light,
So we'll remain nocturnal, 8080
Not chased by the diurnal!

Thales *(On the shore, to Homunculus.)*

I'd gladly lead you to old Nereus:
His home's not far away and cavernous,
But his head, it's of the very stubbornest,
He's a sour-top, and quite the nastiest. 8085
The whole human race can't satisfy
Him, the grumbler, and needn't try.
Yet to him the future is revealed,
And so all show respect, and yield
Him honour in his high position: 8090

He's done quite well by many a one.

Homunculus

Then let's try him, and hurry on!
My glass and flame won't fail our mission.

Nereus (*The sea-god.*)

Are those human voices, in my ear?
How quickly my deepest anger stirs! 8095
Forms, reaching for the gods, in their endeavour,
Yet condemned to be themselves, forever.
In ancient times I had heavenly rest,
Yet drove myself to act well to the best:
And then, when I'd finished what I'd done, 8100
It was quite clear that nothing had been won.

Thales

And yet, Old Man of the Sea, we trust you:
You're the Wise: so don't drive us from you!
See this flame, he's almost human, really,
He yields himself to your advice, completely. 8105

Nereus

What advice! Has Mankind valued my advice?
A wise word's frozen in a stubborn ear.
No matter how often some harsh action strikes,
People remain as self-willed as before.
I warned Paris himself, in a fatherly way, 8110
Before the foreign girl tempted him to stray.
He stood bravely on the shore of Greece,
And I told him what my Spirit could see:
The smoke-filled air, the streaming blood,
Glowing timbers, slaughter's flood, 8115
Troy's day of judgement, caught in verse,
Its horrors known for ten thousand years.
The old man's words seemed idle to the young,

He followed his need, and Ilium was gone –
 A bloody corpse, frozen with ancient pain, 8120
 For Pindus' eagles, a literary gain.
 Ulysses too! Didn't I tell him about
 Circe's wiles, that Cyclopean lout?
 The indecision in his own shallow mind,
 And all of it! What benefit did he find? 8125
 Till, late indeed, the ocean favoured him more,
 And brought him, wave-tossed, to a friendly shore.

Thales

Such behaviour brings the wise man pain,
 Yet the good will chance it all again.
 An ounce of thanks will still please them deeply, 8130
 Outweighing tons of ingratitude completely.
 And it's nothing slight we ask of you:
 The boy here wants to exist, and wisely too.

Nereus

Don't ruin such a rare mood as this!
 Greater needs await me, today, than his: 8135
 I've summoned all my daughters here to me,
 The Dorides, the Graces of the Sea.
 Neither Olympus, nor your lands can show
 Such lovely forms, with such delicate flow,
 They fling themselves, with graceful actions, 8140
 From sea-horses to Neptune's stallions,
 Blending so sensitively with the element,
 That they seem made of foam, to all intent.
 In a play of colours, on Venus' chariot shell,
 Galatea, the loveliest, comes to me, as well, 8145
 Who, since Cypris turned away from us,
 Rules as the new divinity of Paphos.
 And so, heiress, for ages now, the sweet one,
 Holds town, and temple, chariot and throne.
 Away! It's time for a father's enjoyments, 8150
 Hearts without hate, lips without judgements.
 Away, to Proteus! Ask that wondrous man:

How man exists, and changes, if he can.

(He vanishes into the sea.)

Thales

We'll achieve nothing by that game,
Meet Proteus: he'll vanish, just the same: 8155
And if he stays, he'll only tell you,
What will amaze you, and confuse you.
But you've need of such advice,
Well, make tracks, then, and we'll try!

(They depart.)

The Sirens *(On the rocks above.)*

What is it we see whitening 8160
The realms of ocean, brightening?
As when the wind prevails,
And shows the snowy sails,
So the Ocean's daughters,
Transfigured, light the waters. 8165
Let us clamber shore-wards,
So we can hear their voices.

The Nereids and Tritons

What in our hands we treasure,
Will give you all great pleasure.
Chelone's turtle shield 8170
The shining form we wield:
On it gods we're bringing:
Your noblest songs, be singing.

The Sirens

Little in form,
Great in the storm, 8175
Saving the shipwrecked,

Gods always respected.

The Nereid and Tritons

We bring the peaceful Cabiri
To lead in your festivity,
Since in their holy presence,
Neptune's always pleasant.

8180

The Sirens

We're attendant on you:
When a ship broke in two,
Their sovereign power too,
Protected the crew.

8185

The Nereids and Tritons

We've brought three of them along,
The fourth said he wouldn't come:
He said he was the real one,
The only thinker of the squadron.

The Sirens

One god will always mock
At some other god.
Honour all their courtesy,
Be fearful of their injury.

8190

The Nereids and Tritons

Actually, there are seven.

The Sirens

Where are the other three, then?

8195

The Nereids and Tritons

We really can't tell you that,
On Olympus one might ask:
There the eighth pines away,
No one thinks of him today!
Granted us in mercy,
But not yet completely.
These, the incomparable,
Ever wider yearning,
Hungering, are longing
For the unattainable.

8200

8205

The Sirens

We're ones who know
Where it's enthroned,
To moon and to sun,
We pray: and it's done.

The Nereids and Tritons

See how our great glory grows,
We lead them to the feast!

8210

The Sirens

The heroes of ancient story,
Are deficient now in glory,
Whatever we might be told:
Though they won the fleece of gold,
You're the Cabiri.

8215

(Repeated as a full chorus.)

'Though they won the fleece of gold,
We're the Cabiri'.

(The Nereids and Tritons move past.)

Homunculus

I see these unformed ones,
Like pots of shoddy clay,
Against them wise men run,
And break their heads today.

8220

Thales

That's what men ask of the dust:
The coin gains value from its rust.

Proteus (*Unnoticed.*)

It pleases me, an old connoisseur of fable!
The odder it is, the more respectable.

8225

Thales

Where are you, Proteus?

Proteus (*Like a ventriloquist, apparently far, and close to.*)

Here! Here, too!

Thales

An old joke, which I'll forgive you:
No idle words for a friend, please!
I know you're trying to deceive.

8230

Proteus (*As if from the distance.*)

Farewell!

Thales (*Quietly to Homunculus.*)

He's quite near. So, light, afresh!
He's just as curious as any fish:
And whatever form he hides in,
A flame will easily entice him.

Homunculus

I'll pour out a whole flood of light, 8235
But soft, so the glass is still all right.

Proteus (*In the form of a giant turtle.*)

What shines with such grace and beauty?

Thales (*Covering up Homunculus.*)

Good! If you wish, come close to see.
It's worth a little trouble, if you can:
Show yourself two-footed like a man. 8240
At our discretion, and by our favour.
We'll show you what we're hiding here.

Proteus (*In a noble form.*)

You still know all the worldly tricks.

Thales

Changing shape is what you still like best.

(*He reveals Homunculus.*)

Proteus (*Astonished.*)

A shining dwarf! That, I've never seen! 8245

Thales

He seeks advice, and would gladly 'be'.
He is, as I've heard him say before,
Quite miraculously, only half born.
He's not lacking in mental qualities,
But short of physical capabilities: 8250
Only the glass has given him weight at all,
He'd gladly be embodied, first of all.

Proteus

You are a true virgin's son,
Before you should be, you're already one!

Thales (*Whispering.*)

From another point of view, it's critical: 8255
I think it makes him hermaphroditical.

Proteus

All the easier to achieve success:
Whatever he gets will suit him best.
No need to think about it here:
In the ocean deep you must appear! 8260
There, first, in miniature, one snatches,
Enjoying the smallest things to swallow,
Bigger and bigger, with what one catches,
Forming the higher being to follow.

Homunculus

Here quite gentle breezes blow, 8265
It's open: the fragrance delights me so!

Proteus

I think so too, loveliest of youths!
And, further on, it's more enjoyable:
On that shoreline's slender tooth,
The watery halo's indescribable. 8270
There we'll see the crowds near to,
Drifting smoothly, to our view,
Come with me!

Thales

I'll keep you company.

Homunculus

A triply odd spirit-journey!

Part II Act II Scene VI: The Telchines of Rhodes

(The Telchines, on sea-horses and dragons, wielding Neptune's trident.)

Chorus of Telchines *(The nine dog-headed Children of the Sea)*

Oh, we are the ones who once forged Neptune's trident, 8275
With which he controls the tumultuous torrent.
When the thunder erupts from the heavens, and rumbles,
Neptune will reply to those terrible grumbles:
And however the lightning zig-zags above us,
Breaker upon breaker beneath will splash upwards: 8280
And whatever struggles between them in terror,
Long hurled all about, the deep seas will devour:
And that's why he's loaned us his sceptre today –
Now we float, calm and light, in our festive display.

The Sirens

You, to Helios consecrated, 8285
You, with bright day's blessing freighted,
Greetings to this hour when
Luna's high worship rules again!

The Telchines

Loveliest goddess of all in your sphere above!
To hear your brother praised, is something you love. 8290
To blessed Rhodes lend an ear, now, from the sky,
Where an endless Paeon, to him, rises on high.
He begins the day's course: he ends it again,
He eyes us all with his radiant fiery eye, then.
The mountains, the city, the sea and the strand, 8295
Please the great god, lovely and bright is the land.
No mist drifts above us, and if one appears,
A ray, and a breeze: and the island shows clear!
There the high god's in hundreds of statues displayed,
As a youth, and a giant, the mild and the grave. 8300
We were the first to carve forms: we began
The depiction of gods in the image of Man.

Proteus

Let them sing on then, and let them boast!
To the sun's sacred rays, a living host,
All their works are an empty jest. 8305
They melt and shape untiringly:
And once, in bronze, it's plain to see,
They think they've caught the very best.
What happens at last to these proud ones?
The god's statues standing high – 8310
An earthquake tosses to the sky:
Long since, they're all melted down.
Earth's toil, whatever else it may be,
Is nothing still, but drudgery:
The waves grant a life that's better: 8315
I'll bear you to eternal waters,
As Proteus-Dolphin.

(Transforming himself.)

That's soon done!
Now you'll find your fairest luck:
I'm carrying you across my back,
To wed you with the ocean. 8320

Thales

Yield to your praiseworthy wish,
Start at the beginning, with the fish!
Be ready for the swiftest working!
Be ruled by the eternal norms,
Move through a thousand, thousand forms, 8325
And you'll ascend in time to Man.

Proteus

With spirit, join the watery plan,
Equal in size, where all began,
And move here as you wish to do:

Don't wrestle with the higher orders: 8330
Once man, inside mankind's borders,
Then all will be over with you.

Thales

That's as may be: it's still fine,
To be a real man, in your own time.

Proteus (*To Thales.*)

As long as it's someone of your kind! 8335
You don't just live for some brief time:
With your pale and ghostly peers,
I've watched you already for hundreds of years.

The Sirens (*On the rocky cliffs.*)

What's that ring of little clouds, set
In a circle round the moon? 8340
They are doves, by love ignited,
Winged, white as winter noon.
All her ardent flocks of birds:
Paphos, now, has sent to us,
So our festival's completed, 8345
Sweet and clear our happy bliss!

Nereus (*Approaching Thales.*)

Though some nocturnal wanderer
Might call it only airy moonshine:
We spirits think it something other,
It's one true meaning we can find: 8350
They are doves that accompany
My daughter in her moving shell.
Wondrous flights of artistry,
Learnt in ancient times, as well.

Thales

I too think that thing is best, 8355
That can please the real man,
And in warm and silent nest,
Keep living Sacredness to hand.

Psylli and Marsi (*Peoples of Italy and North Africa. On sea-bulls, sea-heifers and sea-rams.*)

In the hollow caves of Cyprus
Not yet rocked, by the sea-god, 8360
Not yet shaken, by old Seismos,
Breathed on, by eternal breezes,
And, as in the ancient days,
Delighting in peaceful ways,
With us Venus' chariot stays, 8365
And through nocturnal murmurs,
Through the sweet entwining waters,
We lead the loveliest of daughters,
Unseen by newer generation.
Travelling on our gentle journey 8370
No winged lion, or eagle fear we,
Neither cross nor crescent,
Though it's throned in heaven,
Though it moves and sways,
Though it drives and slays, 8375
Crops, towns, in ruin lays.
We, swiftly bring on
The loveliest of women.

The Sirens

Lightly now, and gently go,
Round the chariot, ring on ring, 8380
Often weaving, row by row,
All in order, round it, snaking,
Approach you active Nereids
Sturdy women, sweetly wild,
Tender Dorides bring, amidst, 8385

Galatea, Mother's child:
Most, so goddess-like her calm,
Worthy of immortality,
Yet enticing, with her charm,
As human femininity. 8390

The Dorides (*In Chorus, mounted on dolphins, passing Nereus.*)

Lend us, Luna, light and shadow,
Clarity for flowering youth!
Charming husbands here we show:
Plead for them with our father, too.

(*To Nereus.*)

They are boys, whom we rescued 8395
From the breaker's teeth, and then,
In the reeds and mosses bedded,
Warmed them back to life again,
Now with glowing kisses they
Must thank us truly here today: 8400
Look with favour now on them!

Nereus

Here there's a dual prize, I find, to treasure:
You show compassion, and it brings you pleasure.

The Dorides

Father, praise our mission, all,
And sanction our fond request, 8405
Let us hold them fast, immortal,
On each young eternal breast.

Nereus

Be happy with your handsome catch,
Accept the youngsters here, as men:
I can't myself grant what you ask, 8410

Since Zeus alone can make it happen.
The waves that heave and rock you
Leave no place for love to stand,
So when this inclination leaves you,
Send them quietly back to land.

8415

The Dorides

Sweet boys, you are so dear to us,
But sadly we must separate:
We asked eternal faithfulness,
But the gods forbid that fate.

The Young Men

We're the valiant sailor lads,
If you'd refresh us further,
We've never had it quite so good
And we'll never have it better.

8420

(Galatea approaches on her shell-chariot.)

Nereus

It's you, my darling!

Galatea

O father! Delight!
Linger, you dolphins, I'm gripped by the sight.

8425

Nereus

Past already, they're moving past,
Wheeling in circular motion:
What care they for the heart's deep emotion!
Ah, if they'd just take me with them, at last!
And yet, a single glance gives here,
Something that will last all year.

8430

Thales

Hail! Hail! Anew!
How happy I feel, too,
Pierced by the Beautiful and True....
All things came from the watery view! 8435
All things are sustained by water!
Ocean, grant us your realm forever.
If you didn't produce the clouds,
No flowing streams would be allowed,
The rivers wouldn't roar and shout, 8440
The streams would never bubble out,
Where would hill, plain, and world be then?
The freshness of life's what you maintain.

An Echo (*A chorus from the collective circles.*)

The freshness of life flows back from you, again.

Nereus

Floating, turning, they change place, 8445
Far off, no longer face to face:
In extended linking circles,
Appropriate to the festival,
The countless company's weaving.
But Galatea's throne of shell, 8450
I see it clearly: see it still.
It gleams like a star,
Through the throng,
A crowd, the Beloved shines among!
Though just as far, 8455
It shimmers bright and clear,
Always true, and near.

Homunculus

In this delightful ocean
Whatever I may shine on,
Is all sweet and fair. 8460

Proteus

In this living ocean,
You light's shining motion,
First rings in splendour there.

Nereus

At the heart of the throng, what mystery
Offers itself for our eyes to see? 8465
What shines round the shell, at Galatea's feet?
Now waxing powerful, now gentle and sweet,
As if it were fed by the pulses of Love.

Thales

Homunculus, drawn there by Proteus....
Those are the symptoms of imperious yearning, 8470
I'd expect now the sound of an anguished ringing:
He'll shatter himself on the glittering throne:
He glitters, he flashes, already, it's done.

The Sirens

What fiery wonder transfigures the waves, there,
As one on another sparkles and breaks, there? 8475
It flashes and flickers and brightens towards us:
The nocturnal tracks of the bodies shine round us,
And everything near is surrounded with flame:
So let Eros rule, now: who started the game!
Hail to the sea! Hail to the waves! 8480
Circled, now, by the sacred blaze!
Hail to water! Hail to fire!
Hail to the rarest sweet desire!

All In Chorus

Hail, the gently flowing breeze!
Hail, hidden caverns of the seas! 8485

Be honoured now, for evermore,
You, the Elemental four!

Part II Act III Scene I: Before the Palace of Menelaus in Sparta

(Helen enters with the Chorus of Captive Trojan Women. Panthalis is leader of the Chorus.)

Helen

I, Helen the much admired yet much reviled,
Come from the shore, where recently we landed,
Still drunk with the violent rocking of those waves 8490
That from Phrygian heights on high-arched backs,
By Poseidon's favour, and the East Wind's power,
Carried us here to the coast of my native land.
There, below us, beside his bravest soldiers
King Menelaus, now, celebrates his return. 8495
But you, bid me welcome, you, the lofty house
Tyndareus my father built when he returned,
Close by the slope of Pallas Athene's hill:
Here, where with Clytemnestra, in sisterhood, I
And Castor and Pollux, grew and happily played: 8500
You, more nobly adorned than all Sparta's houses.
Be greeted by me, you honoured double doors!
Once, Menelaus the shining bridegroom came
To me, through your friendly inviting portals,
I, the one singled out from among so many. 8505
Open to me once more, so that I might fulfil,
The King's command, truly, as a wife should.
Let me pass! And let everything be left behind,
That raged round me, till now, so full of doom.
For since, light in heart, I left this place behind, 8510
Seeking out Venus' temple, in sacred duty,
Where instead a Trojan robber abducted me,
Many things have happened, men, far and wide,
Gladly tell of, though she's not so glad to hear them,
Round whom the story grew, and myth was spun. 8515

Chorus

O marvellous woman, don't disdain
Inheritance of the noblest estate!

For the highest fate's granted to you alone,
The glory of beauty that towers above all.
The Hero's name sounds his advance, 8520
And proudly he strides:
But he bows down, most stubborn of men,
Before conquering Beauty, in mind and sense.

Helen

Enough of that! I'm brought here by my husband,
I've been sent ahead by him, now, to his city: 8525
But what the meaning of it is I can hardly guess.
Do I come as his wife? Do I come as the Queen?
Or a sacrifice, for a Prince's bitter pain,
And the ill fortune long endured by the Greeks?
I'm conquered: but am I a prisoner? I can't tell! 8530
True, the Immortals appointed Fame, and Fate,
As the two ambiguous, doubtful companions
Of Beauty, to stand here at this threshold with me,
The gloomy, threatening presences by my side.
Even in the hollow ship my husband seldom 8535
Gazed at me, or spoke an encouraging word.
He sat in front of me, as if in evil thought.
But scarcely had the foremost ship's prow greeted
Land, in that deep bay Eurotas' mouth has made,
Than he spoke to us, as the gods had urged him: 8540
'Here my soldiers will disembark in ordered ranks,
I'll muster them, ranged along the ocean's-shore:
But you'll go on, ever on along the banks
Of sacred Eurotas, shining with bright orchards,
Guide the horses through gleaming water meadows, 8545
Till of your lovely journey you make an end,
Where Lacedemon, once a rich spreading field,
Surrounded by austere mountains, was created.
Walk through the high-towered house of princes,
And summon the capable old Stewardess 8550
Along with the maidservants I left behind,
Let her display the store of rich treasure to you,
That which your father left, and that I myself
Have added to, amassing it in war and peace.

You'll find it all still in the most perfect order: 8555
It is a prince's privilege that he should find
That all is loyalty, on returning to his house,
All that he's left behind still in its proper place.
Since no slave has the power to effect a change.'

Chorus

Let this treasure, so steadily massed, 8560
Bring you delight, now, in eye and breast!
For the necklace bright, and the crown of gold,
Were resting, and darkening, in proud repose:
But enter now, and claim them all,
They'll quickly respond. 8565
I love to see Beauty itself compete
Against gold and pearls and glittering gems.

Helen

So again there came my lord's imperious speech:
'When you've examined all of it in due order,
Take as many tripods as you think you'll need, 8570
And as many vessels as sacrifice requires,
To fulfil the customs of the sacred rites.
Take cauldrons, and basins, and circular bowls:
The purest of water from the holy fountains,
In deep urns: take care that you've dry wood too, 8575
Such as will quickly catch fire, and hold all ready:
And finally don't forget a well-honed knife:
Everything else I'll leave for your decision.'
So he spoke, at the same time urging my going:
But he who commanded marked out nothing living 8580
To be slain: to honour the Olympian gods.
Essential, but I'll think no more about it,
And leave all things in the hands of the gods:
They fulfil whatever is in their mind to do,
Whether or not we think it good or evil: 8585
In either case we mortals must endure it.
Often the priest's heavy axe has been lifted,
From the bowed neck of the sacrificial victim,

So he could not slaughter it, being hindered,
By enemies near, or the gods' intervention. 8590

Chorus

What might happen, think not of that:
Queen, go on, now, step inside,
And be brave!
Good and evil come
Unannounced, to Mankind: 8595
Though it's proclaimed, we'll not believe.
Troy still burned: did we not see
Death in our faces, shameful death:
And are we not here,
Your friends, happily serving, 8600
Seeing the blinding sun in the sky
Seeing the Loveliest on Earth,
You, the kind: we the joyous?

Helen

Let it be, as it will! Whatever awaits me,
I must go, swiftly, up to that royal house, 8605
Long forsaken, often longed for, almost lost,
That's before my eyes once more: I know not how.
My feet don't carry me onwards so bravely, now,
Up those high steps, I skipped over as a child.

Chorus

Sorrowful prisoners, 8610
Oh, cast away, Sisters,
All your pain, to the winds:
Share in your mistress' joy
Share now in Helen's joy,
Who returns, truly late indeed,
To her father's hearth and home, 8615
But with all the more firm a step,
Delightedly approaching.

Praise the sacred gods,
Creating happiness, 8620
Bringing the wanderer home!
See the freed prisoner
Soar on uplifted wings,
Over harshness, while, all in vain,
The captives, so full of longing, 8625
Pine away, arms still outstretched,
To the walls of their prison.

But a god snatched her up, then,
The far-exiled:
And from Ilium's fall, 8630
Carried her back once more, home
To the old, to the newly adorned, her
Father's house,
From unspeakable
Rapture and torment, 8635
Now, reborn, to remember
The days of her childhood.

Panthalis (*As leader of the Chorus.*)

Now leave behind the joyful path of your singing,
And turn your eyes towards the open doorway!
Sisters, what do I see! Surely the Queen returns 8640
Waking towards us, again, with anxious steps?
What is it, great Queen? What can you have met with,
Within the halls of your house, instead of greetings,
To cause you such trembling? You can hide nothing,
Since I see your reluctance written on your brow, 8645
And amazement competes there with noble anger.

Helen (*Who has left the doors open, in her turmoil.*)

A daughter of Zeus is stirred by no common fear,
No lightly passing hand of Terror can touch her:
Only the Horror that the womb of ancient Night,
Raised from chaos, and shaped in its many forms, 8650
In glowing clouds that shoot, upwards and outwards,

From the peak's fiery throat, to shake the hero's breast.
So here today the Stygian gods have marked
The entrance to my house with terror: and gladly
I'd take myself far away, like a guest let go, 8655
Far from this often trodden, long yearned for threshold.
But no! I've retreated here now, into the light,
And you Powers will drive me no further, whoever
You are. Rather, I'll think of some consecration,
So the hearth-fire, cleansed, greets the wife, as the lord. 8660

The Leader of the Chorus

Noble lady, reveal to your maidservants here,
Who help you reverently, what has happened.

Helen

You'll see what I saw yourselves, with your own eyes,
If ancient Night has not, straight away, swallowed it,
That shape of hers: withdrawn it to her heart's depths. 8665
But I'll picture it to you in words, so you'll know:
As, with those recent orders in mind, I trod,
Gravely, through the palace's innermost room,
Awed by the silence of the gloomy corridors,
No sound of busy labour greeting my ears, 8670
No sound of prompt, diligent effort meeting my eye,
No Stewardess appeared, and no maidservants,
No courtesy such as usually greets the stranger.
But as I approached closer to the hearth stone
Beside the glowing ashes that remained, I saw 8675
A veiled woman, vast shape, seated on the floor,
Not like one who's asleep, but one deep in thought.
I summoned her to work, with words of command,
Thinking she was the Stewardess whom my husband,
Had placed there perhaps, with foresight, when he left. 8680
But she still sat there, crouched and immovable:
At last, stirred by my threats, she raised her arm,
As if she gestured me away from hearth and hall.
I turned aside from her, angrily, and sped,
To the steps where the Thalamos is adorned 8685

On high, and close beside it the treasure house:
Suddenly that strange shape sprang up from the floor,
Barring my way, imperiously, showing herself,
Tall and haggard, with hollow, blood-coloured gaze:
A shape so weird that mind and eye were troubled. 8690
But I talk to the wind: for words weary themselves
Trying to conjure forms, vainly, like some creator.
See for yourselves! She even dares the daylight!
Here am I mistress, till the King, my lord, shall come.
Phoebus, beauty's friend, drives the horrid spawn of Night 8695
To caverns underground, or he binds them fast.

(Phorkyas appears on the threshold, between the doorposts.)

Chorus

Much have I learned, although the locks
Curl youthfully still across my temples!
Many the terrible things I've seen,
The soldiers' misery, Ilium's night, 8700
When it fell.

Through the clouded, and dust-filled turmoil,
The press of warriors, I heard the gods
Calling terribly, heard the ringing
Iron voice of Discord through the field, 8705
City-wards.

Ah! They still stood there, Ilium's
Walls, but the glow of the flames
Soon ran from neighbour to neighbour,
Ever spreading, hither and thither, 8710
With the breath of their storm,
Over the darkening city.

Fleeing, through smoke and heat, I saw
Amid the tongues of soaring fire,
The fearful angry presence of gods, 8715
Marvellous, those striding figures,
Like giants, they were, through the gloom,
The fire-illuminated vapour.

Did I see that Confusion,
Or did the fear-consumed Spirit 8720
Create it? Never will I be able,
To say, but I'm truly certain
Of this, that here I see, Her,
Monstrous shape to my eyes:
My hand could even touch Her, 8725
If terror did not restrain me,
Saving me from danger.

Which of the daughters
Of Phorkyas are you?
Since I liken you 8730
To that family.

Are you perhaps one of the Graeae,
A single eye and a single tooth,
Owned alternately between you,
One born of greyness? 8735

Monster, do you dare
Here, next to Beauty,
Show yourself to Phoebus,
And his knowing gaze?

Then step out before him regardless: 8740
Since he'll not look at what's ugly,
Just as his holy eye,
Has never seen shadow.

Yet we mortals are compelled, ah,
By unfortunate gloomy fate, 8745
To the unspeakably painful sight
She, reprehensible, ever ill fated,
Provokes in the lover of Beauty.

Yet hear me then, if you boldly
Encounter us: hear the curse, 8750
Hear the threat of every abuse,
From the condemnatory mouth of the fortunate,
Whom the gods themselves have created.

Phorkyas (*The transformed Mephistopheles.*)

The saying is old, with meaning noble and true,
That Beauty and Shame, together, hand in hand, 8755
Never pursue the same path, over green Earth.
Such ancient, deep-rooted hatred lives in both,
That whenever they meet, by chance, on the way,
The one will always turn her back on her rival.
Then quickly and fiercely each goes on, again, 8760
Shame downcast, but Beauty mocking in spirit,
Till in the end Orcus' dark void shall take her,
If age hasn't, long before then, tamed her pride.
So now I find you, impudent, come from abroad,
With overflowing arrogance, like the cranes, 8765
Their noisily croaking ranks, high overhead,
Their long cloud, sending its creaking tones, down here,
Tempting the quiet traveller to look upwards:
Yet they pursue their way, while he follows his:
And that's the way it will be with us as well. 8770
What then are you, wild Maenads or Bacchantes,
That dare to rage round the great royal palace?
Who are you, then, who howl at this high house's
Stewardess, like a pack of bitches, at the moon?
Do you think it's hidden from me what race you are? 8775
You brood, begotten in battle, raised on slaughter,
Lusting for men, the seducers and the seduced,
Draining the soldiers' and the citizens' powers!
To see your crowd's like watching a vast swarm

Of locusts settle here, darkening the fields. 8780
You the wasters of others labour! Nibbling,
Destroying, the ripening crops of prosperity!
Defeated, bartered, sold in the market, you!

Helen

Who abuses the servants before the mistress,
Presumptuously usurping a wife's true rights? 8785
Only to her is it given to praise whatever's
Praiseworthy: and to punish what is at fault.
I'm well content, as well, with all the services
They provided to me, when Ilium's great might,
Stood beleaguered, and fell in ruins: none the less 8790
Just as we've endured the wretched wandering
Journey, where often one thinks only of oneself,
So here I expect it now from a happier crew:
A lord asks how slaves serve, not what they are.
So be silent, then, and no longer jeer at them. 8795
If you've guarded the king's house well until now,
In place of the mistress, such is to your credit:
But now that she comes herself, you should draw back,
Lest you find punishment instead of fair reward.

Phorkyas

Disciplining servants is a prerogative 8800
That the noble wife of a king, loved by the gods,
Has duly earned by years of wise discretion.
Since you, acknowledged, take up your former place
Once more, as Queen, and mistress of the house,
Resume the slackened reins again, and rule here, 8805
Hold the treasure in your keeping, and us with it.
But first of all defend me, who am the elder,
Against this crowd, who if they are compared
To your swanlike beauty, are only cackling geese.

The Leader of the Chorus

How ugly ugliness looks, next to beauty.

8810

Phorkyas

How stupid the lack of reason, next to sense.

(From here on the Chorus answer in turn, stepping forward one by one.)

First Member of the Chorus

Tell us of Father Erebus: tell us of Mother Night.

Phorkyas

Speak about Scylla, sweet sister of *your* race.

Second Member of the Chorus

There are plenty of monsters in *your* family tree.

Phorkyas

Go down to Orcus, look for *your* tribe down there!

8815

Third Member of the Chorus

Those who are down there are far too young for *you*.

Phorkyas

Try your arts of seduction on old Tiresias.

Fourth Member of the Chorus

Orion's nurse was *your* great great-grandchild.

Phorkyas

I suspect that the Harpies raised you all, on filth.

Fifth Member of the Chorus

What do you feed *your* perfect leanness on? 8820

Phorkyas

Not on the blood that you all lust so much for.

Sixth Member of the Chorus

You hunger for corpses, you, foul corpse yourself!

Phorkyas

Vampire's teeth gleam there, in your shameless muzzle.

The Leader of the Chorus

It would shut yours tight, if I called out who you are.

Phorkyas

Well say your own name first: that'll solve the riddle. 8825

Helen

I intervene, not in anger but in sorrow,
To forbid this alternating discord!
A ruler meets with nothing that's more harmful
Than private disputes of his quarrelling servants.
Then his firm orders are no longer answered 8830
With swiftly answering and harmonious action,
Instead, wilful commotion roars around him:
Self-composure lost, he abuses them in vain.
Not only that. Unacceptably, in anger,
You've summoned the wretched shapes of dreadful forms, 8835

They surround me, so I feel I'm being whirled
To Orcus, from these familiar paternal fields.
Am I remembering? Did delusion grip me?
Was I all of that? Am I, now? And shall be still,
Symbol of dream and fear, to those who waste cities? 8840
The maidservants shudder, but you, the eldest,
Stand there calmly: speak words of reason to me!

Phorkyas

The favour of the gods seems only a dream
To one who recalls the troubles of long ages.
But you, blessed, beyond all aim and measure, 8845
Quickly inflamed to every sort of daring risk,
Only found fires of love, in the realm of life,
Theseus, driven by lust, abducted you, a child,
He strong as Hercules: a man nobly formed.

Helen

He carried me off, a slender ten-year old fawn, 8850
And caged me in Aphidnus' tower in Attica.

Phorkyas

But soon freed, by the hands of Castor and Pollux,
A crowd of suitors, the heroes, swarmed round you.

Helen

Yet, I freely confess, above all, Patroclus
The image of Achilles, had my secret favour, 8855

Phorkyas

But your father's will bound you to Menelaus,
The brave sea rover, the defender of his house.

Helen

He gave him his daughter, and command of the state.
Hermione came from our married existence.

Phorkyas

But while he disputed his right to far off Crete, 8860
To you, the lonely, came all too handsome a guest.

Helen

Why do you recall that semi-widowhood,
And all the terrible ruin it caused around me?

Phorkyas

To me, a free-born Cretan, his same journey 8865
Brought captivity and years of slavery.

Helen

He ordered you here at once, as Stewardess,
Entrusting the fortress and his treasure to you.

Phorkyas

Which you abandoned, for Ilium's high city,
And the inexhaustible delights of love.

Helen

Not delights, be sure! All too bitter a sorrow 8870
Was poured endlessly over my head and breast.

Phorkyas

Yet they say that you appeared in dual form,
Seen in Troy and, at the same time, in Egypt.

Helen

Don't confuse my clouded, wandering mind completely.
To this moment, I don't know which of them I am. 8875

Phorkyas

Then they say: Achilles became your companion,
Came, burning, from the empty realm of shadows!
He'd loved you before, opposing fate's command.

Helen

As phantom, I bound myself to a phantom.
It was a dream, as the tales themselves tell. 8880
I fade, now, become a phantom to myself.

(She sinks into the arms of the Chorus.)

Chorus

Silence! Silence!
False-seeing one, false-speaking one, you!
Out of the terrible single-toothed
Mouth, what might be breathed, so, 8885
Out of so frightful a throat of horror!
Now the malevolent, seemingly benevolent,
Wolf's anger under the woolly fleece,
Is more terrible to me than the jaws
Of the three-headed dog. 8890
We stand here anxiously listening:
When? How? Where, will such malice
Break out now
From this predatory monster?

Now rather than friendly words, richly laced 8895
With trust, waters of Lethe, sweet and mild,
You stir up all from the past,
The evil more than the good,
And instantly darken

The gleam of the present 8900
And also the future's
Sweetly glimmering, hopeful dawn.

Silence! Silence!
So the Queen's spirit, now,
Almost ready to leave her, 8905
Can still hold, and uphold
This, the form of all forms
On which the sun ever lighted.

(Helen has recovered, and stands in the centre again.)

Phorkyas

Shining out from fleeting vapours, comes the sunlight of our day, here,
That when veiled could so delight us, but in splendour only blinds us. 8910
As the world is open to you, when you show your lovely face, now,
Though they scorn me so as ugly, still I know the beautiful.

Helen

I step, trembling, from the abyss that, in fainting, closed around me,
And would gladly rest my body, tired and weary are my limbs:
But it's proper for a Queen, then, as it is for all about her, 8915
To be calm, and courageous, whatever harm shall threaten.

Phorkyas

In your Majesty, and Beauty, standing here, now, before us,
Your look says it commands us. What do you command? Speak out.

Helen

Prepare yourselves to atone for what your quarrel has neglected:
Hurry with your sacrifice, now, as the king himself commanded. 8920

Phorkyas

All is ready in the palace, bowls, and tripods, sharpened axe-blade,
For the sprinkling, incense burning: show me now the ready victim!

Helen

That the king has failed to tell me.

Phorkyas

He said nothing? Words of woe!

Helen

What's this woe that overcomes you?

Phorkyas

Queen, it means you must be slaughtered!

Helen

I?

Phorkyas

And them.

Chorus

Oh, pain and suffering!

Phorkyas

You will fall beneath the axe. 8925

Helen

Presaged, though still dreadful: I, alas!

Phorkyas

There's no escaping.

Chorus

Oh! And us? What happens to us?

Phorkyas

She will die a noble death, then:
But you'll hang in rows together, struggling, all along the rafters
Holding up the gabled roof there, as bird-catchers dangle thrushes.

(Helena and the Chorus stand stunned and alarmed, in striking composed groups.)

Phantoms! – Frozen images, you stand, parted 8930
From that light you can't belong to, in your terror.
Men, and the tribe of phantoms you resemble,
Will never willingly forgo the sunlight:
But none are saved from their fate, or can defer it.
All know it's true, but only a few accept it. 8935
Enough, you're lost! Now, quickly: start the work.

(She claps her hands: muffled dwarfish forms appear in the doorway, and quickly carry out her orders.)

This way, you spheres, shadowy rounded forms!
Roll over here: and do what harm you wish.
Set up the gold-horned altar that you carry,
Let the gleaming axe lie there on the silver rim, 8940
Fill the urns with water to wash away
All the hideous stains of darkened blood.
Spread the rich carpets out, here, over the dust,
So the sacrifice can kneel in royal manner,
And be wrapped around, once the head is severed, 8945
And buried decently there, and with due honour.

The Leader of the Chorus

The Queen stands here beside us deep in thought,
The maidservants wither away like mown grass:
I think that I, as the eldest, am bound, in sacred duty,
To barter words with you, the eldest of all by far. 8950
You're wise, experienced, and seem well-disposed,
And though this foolish crowd baited you in error,
Speak of a way to escape this fate, if you know it.

Phorkyas

That's easily done: it depends on the Queen alone,
To save herself, and you her followers with her. 8955
But decision is required, and of the swiftest.

Chorus

Most honoured of Fates, wisest of Sibyls, you,
Hold the gold shears apart: bring both aid and light:
Already, we feel ourselves swinging, struggling,
Fearful, for our limbs would rather be dancing, 8960
And afterwards rest, soft, on our lovers' breast.

Helen

Let them be afraid! I feel pain but no terror:
Yet if rescue's possible, I gladly accept.
To the wise, far-seeing mind, the impossible
Is often revealed as possible. Speak: say on! 8965

Chorus

Speak, and tell us, tell us quickly: how we might escape the terror,
Dreadful nooses that still threaten, like some kind of evil necklace
Wound around our tender necks? Already we, oh, wretched creatures,
Feel the choking, suffocating, if you, Rhea, the great mother
Of the gods, won't show us mercy. 8970

Phorkyas

Have you the patience to listen, to long winded
Speeches, in silence? The history's endless.

Chorus

Patience enough! While we're listening, we're alive.

Phorkyas

He who stays at home to guard his noble wealth
And secures the high walls of his lofty dwelling, 8975
And maintains his roof against the driving rain,
Will prosper in all the days of his long life:
But whoever, in guilt, crosses the square-cut stones
Of the sacred threshold, swiftly, with fleeing steps,
Will, indeed find the ancient place, on their return, 8980
But altered in every way, if not overthrown.

Helen

Why recount these familiar sayings here?
If you'd relate things: don't provoke annoyance.

Phorkyas

It's simple fact, in no way a criticism.
Menelaus sailed from bay to bay, looting, 8985
Skirted the coast and islands, aggressively,
Returned with the spoils that are rusting there.
Then he spent ten long years there in front of Troy:
And I don't know how many more, on the way home.
And how are things now with this place where we stand, 8990
Tyndareus' noble house, and the region round?

Helen

Do you embrace all scorn so completely
You can only open your mouth to criticise?

Phorkyas

The vales were neglected for so many years,
Those that rise behind Sparta, to the northward, 8995
Beyond Taygetus, from where, a living stream,
Eurotas, pours downward, then along our valley,
Flows by our broad reed-beds, to feed your swans.
Up there, in the mountain vales, a bold race settled,
Pushing southward from Cimmerian darkness, 9000
And then built an inaccessible fortress there,
From which, at will, they harass land and people.

Helen

Have they achieved all that? It seems unlikely.

Phorkyas

They've had time, perhaps twenty years in all.

Helena

Is there a leader? Are they a band of robbers? 9005

Phorkyas

Not robbers, but one of them acts as leader.
I don't curse him, though he attacked me too.
He might have taken all, but was satisfied
With gifts, not tribute, as he called them.

Helen

How did he look?

Phorkyas

Less than evil! He pleased me well. 9010
He's vigorous, daring, and sophisticated,

An intelligent man: as few among the Greeks.
 They call his race Barbarians, but I'm doubtful
 If they are any crueller than those heroes
 Who proved such devourers of men, before Troy. 9015
 I respected his greatness, and confided in him.
 His fortress! You should see with your own eyes!
 It's a great deal more than the clumsy masonry
 Your father rolled together, higgledy-piggledy,
 Cyclopean as a Cyclops, piling raw stone, 9020
 Over raw stone: there, instead there, it's all
 Plumb line and balance: it's laid out by rule.
 Look from outside! It rises straight to the sky,
 So firm, tightly jointed – smooth as a steel mirror
 To climb – that even your thoughts slide off! 9025
 And, inside, great courts with plenty of room,
 Ringed by buildings, of every use and nature.
 There you'll see pillars, columns, arches, quoins,
 Balconies, galleries, facing inwards and outwards,
 And coats of arms.

Chorus

What arms are those?

Phorkyas

Ajax carried 9030
 A writhing snake on his shield: you yourself saw it.
 The Seven against Thebes also bore their symbols
 On each of their shields, replete with meaning.
 There you saw moons, and stars in the night sky,
 Heroes and Goddesses, torches, ladders, swords, 9035
 And whatever fierce weapons threaten fine cities.
 Our heroic band carries such images too,
 In bright colours, bestowed by our ancestors.
 There you see lions, eagles with beaks and claws,
 Horns of oxen, wings, roses, and peacocks' tails, 9040
 Bands too made of gold, black, silver, blue and red.
 The like of these hang in their halls, row on row.
 In spacious halls, as wide as the whole wide world:

You could dance there!

Chorus

Say then, are there dancers, there?

Phorkyas

The best! A lively crowd of golden-haired youths. 9045
The fragrance of youth! Paris was fragrant, thus,
When he grew close to the Queen.

Helen

You mistake your role
Completely: now speak your closing lines to me!

Phorkyas

No, you speak the last! Grave, and distinct say: Yes!
And I'll surround you with that fortress.

Chorus

O, speak 9050
That one short word, and save both yourself, and us!

Helen

What? Do I fear King Menelaus would commit
Such a cruel offence as to make me kill myself?

Phorkyas

Have you forgotten how he wreaked mutilation,
Unheard-of, on Deiphobus, dead Paris' brother, 9055
Because he stubbornly claimed you, the widow,
And prized you? He cropped both nose and ears,
And disfigured him, there: It was terrible to see.

Helen

Yes he did that, and he did it for my sake.

Phorkyas

Because of it, now, he'll do the same to you. 9060
Beauty is indivisible: he who owns it
Destroys it, rather than share a part of it.

(Trumpets sound in the distance: the Chorus starts in terror.)

As a trumpet call pierces the ear to grip
And tear the innards: Jealousy drives her claws
Into the breast of him who can never forget 9065
What once he had, and lost, and no longer has.

Chorus

Don't you hear the trumpets calling? Don't you see the flash of swords?

Phorkyas

King and master, now be welcome, gladly I'll offer my account.

Chorus

But, what of us?

Phorkyas

In truth, you know that her death's before your eyes,
Find your own death there within them: there's no hope left for you. 9070

(A Pause.)

Helen

I ponder this simple thing that I might try.
You are a hostile daemon: I feel it deeply,

I'm fearful you'll still make evil out of good.
But then, I'll follow you to that fortress, there:
I know the rest: but what the Queen might conceal 9075
Concerning it, mysteriously, in her heart,
Be unknown to all. Now, old one, lead the way!

Chorus

O, how gladly we're going,
On hurrying feet:
Death is behind: 9080
Before us again,
Towering fortress
Inaccessible walls.
Though they guard us as well
As Ilium's citadel, 9085
Still in the end, it
Fell, through the basest of ruses.

(Mists rise and spread, obscuring the background, and the nearer part of the scene, at will.)

What is this? How?
Sisters, look round!
Wasn't it loveliest day? 9090
Strips of vapour hover about,
Rise from Eurotas' holy stream:
Already the loveliest
Reed-wreathed shore has vanished from sight:
And the proud, free, graceful 9095
Gentle glide of the swans
Swimming in sociable joy,
I alas see, no more!

Yet still, still
I hear them calling, 9100
In hoarse tones, calling afar!
Proclaiming death, they are speaking.
Ah, that to us they may not,
Instead of salvation promised,

Proclaim our ruin, at last: 9105
To us, the swanlike, long,
Lovely, white-throated, and ah!
Our Queen born of the swan.
Woe to us, woe!

All's hidden already 9110
Vapour's swirling around.
Now we can't see one another!
What's happening? Are we moving?

We're hovering with
Straggling steps along the ground? 9115
Can't you see? Isn't that Hermes
Soaring ahead? Doesn't his gold wand gleam,
Beckoning us, ordering us back again
To the wholly joyless, and greyly-twilit,
Intangible, phantom-filled, 9120
Overcrowded, ever-empty Hades?

Yes, at once, now, all is darkening, dully all the vapours vanish,
Grey with gloom, and brown as walls. Walls appearing to our vision,
Blank now to our clearer vision. A court now is it? Or a deep pit?
Fearful, though, in either case, now! Sisters, oh! We are imprisoned, 9125
Captives, as we've never been.

Part II Act III Scene II: The Inner Court of The Castle

(Surrounded with richly ornamented buildings of the Middle Ages.)

The Leader of the Chorus

Hasty and foolish, and typical of womankind!
They hang on the moment, sport of every breeze,
Of every chance and mischance, never knowing
How to suffer either calmly! One's always certain, 9130
Fiercely, to contradict the others, others her:
Only, they laugh or cry alike, in joy or pain.
Now, hush! And listen to what our high-minded
Mistress may decide, here, for herself and us.

Helen

Pythoness, where are you? However you're named: 9135
Come out from the arches of this dark fortress.
If you come from the wondrous lord and hero
To announce me, and ready a fit reception,
Accept my thanks, and lead me there quickly:
I wish my wanderings ended. I want to rest. 9140

The Leader of the Chorus

Queen, in vain, you look about in all directions:
That wretched shape has vanished, stayed perhaps
There in the vapour, out of whose depths we came,
I cannot tell how, so swiftly, without a footfall.
Perhaps she wanders lost in the vast labyrinth 9145
Of these many castles wondrously merged in one.
Seeking high and princely greeting from her lord.
But see! There a crowd moves about in readiness.
Along galleries, at windows, through the doors
Come a crowd of servants, scurrying to and fro: 9150
It proclaims a noblest welcome for the guest.

Chorus

My heart is eased! O, see over there,
How a company of handsome youths approach
With lingering step, in dignified order,
Marching in ranks. Who gave out the command 9155
To marshal them, and so quickly arranged
All this youthful team of so handsome a race?
What shall I admire most? Is it the graceful step,
Or the curls of hair on the palest of brows,
Or the rounded cheeks with a peach's blushes, 9160
And like it also, in their silkiest down?
I'd gladly bite, yet I'm frightened to try it:
Since in a similar case, and I shudder to say it,
The mouth was as suddenly filled, with ashes!

But the handsomest 9165
Come to us now:
What do they carry?
Steps for the throne,
Carpets and seat,
Curtain, canopy, 9170
Jewelled finery:
Waving above us,
Forming a garland,
Over the head of our Queen:
For she, already, invited 9175
Ascends, to the noble seat.
Forward now,
Step by step,
Solemnly ranked.
Worthy, O worthy, triply worthy, 9180
Let such a reception be blessed!

(What the Chorus has described takes place. After the boys and squires have descended in long procession, Faust appears above, at the top of the staircase, in the costume of a knight of the Middle Ages, and then descends slowly and with dignity.)

The Leader of the Chorus (*Observing him closely.*)

If indeed the gods have not, as they often do,
Only lent this man brave form, for an instant,
Exalted his dignity, and charming presence,
As a temporary act, then whatever he does 9185
He'll succeed, whether it's warring with men,
Or in the lesser struggles with lovely ladies.
Truly I prefer him to hosts of others,
Whom my eyes have seen, the highly praised.
I see the Prince approach, with slow solemn step, 9190
Restrained by reverence: Queen, turn towards him!

Faust (*Approaching: a man in chains at his side.*)

Instead of the usual calm greeting
Instead of a reverential welcome,
Here I bring a wretch bound fast with chains,
Who failed so in his duty, I failed mine. 9195
Kneel here, so this noble lady
May hear a prompt confession of your guilt.
This, royal Mistress, is the man selected
Because of his keen vision to gaze about
From the high tower, and to look keenly
At heaven's spaces, and the breadth of earth, 9200
To report whatever moves here or there,
From the encircling hills, to the castle,
Whether a transit of the woolly flocks,
Or soldiers: so we can protect the first,
Attack the others. Today, negligence! 9205
You came here: he had nothing to report:
We failed in the reception you deserved,
In honour of the guest. Now he forfeits
His guilty life, and would have shed his blood 9210
In a merited death: but only you alone
Shall pardon him or punish, as you wish.

Helen

Such great power you choose to grant me,
As judge, as Mistress too, though, I suspect
You intend it as a kind of test – 9215
Yet, I'll employ a judge's first duty,
To give the accused a hearing. Speak out.

Lynceus, the Warden of the Tower

Let me kneel, and let me see her,
Let me live, or let me die,
Already I'm devoted to her 9220
Heavenly lady from on high.

Waiting for the dawn's advances,
Gazing at her eastern house,
Suddenly the sunlight dances,
Marvellously in the south! 9225

Drawn to see the marvel closer,
Instead of the ravine and height,
Instead of earth and heaven there,
I gazed at her, the sole delight.

I was granted powers of vision 9230
Like the lynx, high in the tree:
But now I peered in indecision
As in a dark and clouded dream.

How think? Even if I'd so wished?
Wall, and tower? Bolted gate? 9235
Mist, it rose, and cleared the mist,
Came the Goddess here in state!

I surrendered heart and eye
Drinking in the gentle light:
How that beauty blinds, and I
Was blinded wholly by the sight. 9240

I forgot the watchman's duty,
And the promised trumpet call:
Threaten then, now, to destroy me –
Anger lies in Beauty's thrall. 9245

Helen

I cannot punish this evil that I brought here,
With me. Ah me! What a fierce fate it is
Pursues me, so that everywhere I possess
The hearts of men, and that they neither spare
Themselves nor anything else of worth. 9250
They steal, seduce, fight: rushing to and fro,
Demigods, heroes, gods, even daemons
Led me in my wanderings, here and there.
Alone I've confused the world, doubly so:
Now I bring threefold, fourfold woe on woe. 9255
Take this innocent away: let him go.
It's no shame to be deceived by the gods.

Faust

O Queen, amazed, I see them both together:
The certain archer, and the stricken prey:
I see the bow, from which the shaft was loosed, 9260
That wounded him. Arrow after arrow,
Now strikes me. Imagining the feathered whirr
Of arrows crossing every court and hall.
What am I now? My walls you make unsafe
My most faithful servants, you make rebels, 9265
Already I fear my army too obeys
A victorious and unconquered lady.
What's left to do but add myself as well,
And all that I have vainly imagined mine?
Freely and loyally, before your feet, 9270

Let me acknowledge you as Mistress,
Whose presence wins you throne and ownership.

Lynceus (*Carrying a chest, with men bringing others.*)

Queen, once more I advance!
The rich man begs a glance,
He sees you and at a glimpse, 9275
He's a beggar, and a prince.

What am I now? What was I once?
What's to be willed? What's to be done?
What use the eye's clearest sight!
It glances from your royal might. 9280

From the Eastwards we pressed on,
And suddenly the West were gone.
So wide and long the people massed,
The first knew nothing of the last.

The first rank fell: the next stood fast, 9285
The third ranks' lances unsurpassed:
Each man was like a hundredfold,
Thousands died there, all untold.

We pressed forwards: we stormed on,
We were masters, then were gone: 9290
And where I ruled as chief today,
Tomorrow robbed, and stole away.

We looked – and rapid was that look:
The loveliest women there we took,
We took the oxen from the stall, 9295
We took the horses, took them all.

But my delight was to discover
The rarest things I could uncover:
And what other men might grasp,
To me was only withered grass. 9300

I was on the trail of treasure,
Whatever my sharp eye could measure,
In every pocket I could see,
Every chest was glass to me.

Heaps of gold, they were mine, 9305
And the noblest gems I'd find:
Yet now the emeralds alone
Are worthy to adorn your throne.

Sway there now 'twixt ear and lip,
You pearly spheres from oceans deep: 9310
A place the rubies dare not seek,
So pale beside your rosy cheek.

And so the riches, every prize,
I set down here before your eyes:
Before your feet I gladly yield, 9315
The spoils of many a bloody field.

As many chests as I've brought you,
I've many iron caskets too:
Let me follow your path still
And your treasure chambers fill. 9320

You'd scarcely mounted to the throne,
When all bowed down, to you alone,
Wisdom, riches, worldly power,
Before your grace, that very hour.

I held it all fast: that is true 9325
But now it's loosed, and all for you.
I thought its worth was plain to see,
But now it's nothing much, to me.

Everything I've owned will pass
From me like mown and withered grass. 9330
O, give me just one brightening glance,
And all the value's in its dance!

Faust

Quickly, remove the heap that boldness won,
And take no blame for it, but seek no praise.
All is hers already, that the castle 9335
Hides in its lap: you offer these few things
In vain. Go and pile treasure on treasure,
In due order. Present a fine array
Of unseen splendours! Let the vaulted halls
Gleam like the clearest sky, let Paradise 9340
Be created from their dead existence.
Quickly let flowery carpet on carpet
Be unrolled beneath her foot: she'll step
On softest ground: and let her noble gaze,
Blinding all but the Gods, fall on splendour. 9345

Lynceus

What the lord commands is nothing,
For the servants, a mere plaything:
This exalted beauty rules
Over blood and treasure too.
The whole army now is tamed, 9350
All the swords are blunt again,
Near this form of noble gold,
The sun itself is pale and cold,
Near the riches of her face
All is but an empty space. 9355

Helen (*To Faust.*)

I wish to speak to you, come here then
Beside me! For the empty place invites
Its lord, and so secures this place for me.

Faust

First, let my loyal dedication please you,
While I kneel, noble lady: let me kiss 9360
The gracious hand that lifts me to your side.
Confirm me as co-regent of a realm
Of unknown borders, win now for yourself
Protector, slave, worshipper all in one!

Helen

So many wonders do I see, and hear 9365
Amazement grips me, there's much I would know.
But teach me why that man spoke aloud
With curious speech, familiar but strange.
Each sound seeming to give way to the next,
And when a word gave pleasure to the ear, 9370
Another came, as if to caress the first.

Faust

If my people's speech already pleases you,
O, you'll be delighted with our singing:
It completely satisfies the heart and mind.
But to be sure of it, we'll practise too: 9375
Alternate speech entices, calls it, forth.

Helen

You'll tell me how to speak with lovely art?

Faust

It's easy, it must pour forth from the heart.
And if the breast then overflows with yearning,
One looks around and asks –

Helen

- who else is burning. 9380

Faust

Not backwards, forwards is the spirit's sight,
This moment now, alone, –

Helen

- is our delight.

Faust

She's treasure and commitment, wealth and land:
What confirmation does she give –

Helen

– my hand.

Chorus

Who's offended that our Princess 9385
Grants the master of the castle
A show of friendliness?

Let's confess, that we're as fully
Prisoners, as we've been till now
Since the shameful overthrow 9390
Of Ilium, and the anxious,
Sad, and labyrinthine voyage.

Women, used to men's desires,
Are not particular,
They *are* proficient. 9395

And they award an equal right
To shepherds with their golden hair,
Dark, fauns perhaps, bristling there,
As opportunity affords,
To bodies in their vigour. 9400

Already they sit closer, closer,
Drawn towards each other,
Shoulder to shoulder, knee to knee,
Hand in hand they sway
Across the thrones' 9405
Soft cushioned, majesty.
Their private raptures
Revealed so boldly
To the eyes of the people. 9410

Helen

I feel so far away and yet so near,
And gladly say now: 'Here, I am! Here!'

Faust

I scarcely breathe, I tremble, speech is dead:
This is a dream: time and place have fled.

Helen

I seem exhausted, yet created new, 9415
Enmeshed with you, the unknown and the true.

Faust

Don't seek to analyse so rare a fate!
Our duty is to live: though but a day.

Phorkyas (*Entering suddenly.*)

Spell the letters in love's primer,
Only loving, pass your time here, 9420
Passing, let love be sublime here,
But the moment isn't right.
Don't you feel it, this dark presage?
Don't you hear the trumpet's message?
Your destruction is in sight. 9425
Menelaus with his army

Is advancing on you quickly,
Arm yourself, for bitter fight!
Overwhelmed by the winners,
And defiled, like Deiphobus, 9430
You'll all pay, for this delight.
First the lighter vessels shatter,
Then, for this one, at the altar,
The newly sharpened axe shines bright.

Faust

Rash disturbance! Insistent, she comes pushing in here: 9435
Senseless haste is wrong, even where there's danger.
Unlucky news makes the fairest messenger ugly:
You, ugliest of all, bring only bad news gladly.
But you'll not succeed for once: disturb the air
With your empty breath. There's no danger looming here, 9440
Your danger's only an idle threat to me.

*(Calls, and explosions from the towers, trumpets and cornets, martial music.
A powerful army marches past.)*

No! Now you'll see the heroes gather,
The whole wide land will here unite:
He deserves the ladies' favour,
Who, in their defence, shall fight. 9445

(To the leaders, who step forward from the ranks, and advance.)

Rage silently, and do your duty,
Then you'll achieve the victory,
You, the prime of northern beauty,
You, the flower of the east.

Cased in steel, with steel gleaming, 9450
The army shatters realms at will,
They appear: the earth is shaking,
They advance, it echoes still.

At Pylos, once, we came to shore,
Old Nestor is no longer living, 9455
Our independent army saw
Us shatter all the mighty kings.

From these walls, in an instant,
Send Menelaus back to sea:
There robbing, killing, is his errand, 9460
As is his wish and destiny.

Dukes, I greet you every one,
Commanded by the Spartan Queen:
At her feet lay vale and mountain,
Win the kingdoms in between. 9465

Germans, with your walls and towers,
Defend Corinth and her bays!
Then Achaia's hundred gorges
I'll trust to you, the Goths, always.

Let the Franks advance on Elis, 9470
Messene, to the Saxons brave,
Normans, hold the Argolis,
Rule the shore: and rule the wave.

When everyone has his own land,
At foreign foes, let force be aimed, 9475
While Sparta holds the high command
Our Queen's ancestral domain.

She'll behold you each, delighting
In lands, possessed of every right:
And at her feet you'll seek her blessing, 9480
Acknowledgement, and law and light.

*(Faust descends from the throne: the Princes form a circle round him to
receive individual commands and instructions.)*

Chorus

Who wants the loveliest for himself,
First, above everything,
Would be wise to have weapons about him:
He might well gain by flattery 9485
Whoever is noblest on Earth:
But he won't possess her in peace:
The sly, and insidious tempt her from him,
Robbers will boldly steal her from him:
He must prepare to foil them. 9490

So I praise our Prince the while,
And think him nobler than the rest,
Since he combines wisdom and strength,
So that the powerful show obedience,
Waiting his every command. 9495
They follow his orders faithfully,
Each as much for his own profit
As for the ruler's reward and thanks,
Winning the highest fame for both.

Who now will drag her away 9500
From the powerful possessor?
She belongs to him: let her be his,
Doubly bestowed by us, so she
And he, are surrounded inside by thick walls,
Outside, by the greatest of armies. 9505

Faust

The gifts that, on those here, I bestow –
To each of them a prosperous land –
Are great and glorious, let them go!
We in the middle take our stand.

In their rivalry they'll protect you 9510
Half-island ringed by leaping waves,
While these slender hills connect you
To Europe's last great mountain range.

This land, that outshines every land,
Be blessed for every race forever, 9515
Delivered to my Queen's command,
That, long ago now, wondered at her,

There, by Eurotas' whispering light,
She broke radiant from the shell,
That brightness dazzling the sight 9520
Of siblings: Leda's eyes, as well.

This land now turns to you alone,
Offering you its noblest flower:
Oh, though the whole world is your own,
Let your country hold you in its power! 9525

And though you may endure the sun's cold arrow
Up there, on the mountain's jagged height,
See, how the rocky hillside's green below, now,
Where the goat may crop its meagre right.

The sources leap, all streams rush down as one, 9530
Gorge, slope, and meadow are already green.
On a hundred hills, rock-folded, steep and broken,
The scattered woolly flocks are clearly seen.

Spread all around, with cautious measured stride,
The horned cattle tread the dizzy edge: 9535
But here there's shelter that the caves provide,
Hundreds to hide them all, on the rocky ledge.

Pan guards them too: and lively nymphs live there,
In the damp fresh space of bushy clefts,
And, yearning upward to the higher air, 9540
The crowded tree its slender branches lifts.

Primeval woods! The mighty oaks their cap:
Whose stubborn boughs stick out from them, in state:
While kindly maples, pregnant with sweet sap,
Soar cleanly upward, toying with the weight. 9545

Pure mother's milk, in that still realm of shadows,
Flows rich, in readiness for lamb and child:
Fruit's not lacking, gift of fertile meadows,
And from the hollow trunk drips honey mild.

Here well-being's granted all the race, 9550
Cheek and lips both to joy consent,
Each one is immortal, in their place:
And all there are healthy and content.

And thus the lovely child, of purest days,
Grows, and achieves his father's strength. 9555
We're amazed, the question's still, always:
Are these gods, or are they truly men?

When Apollo took a shepherd's form,
The fairest of them was like the sun:
Since, where pure Nature is the norm, 9560
Then all the worlds must move as one.

(Taking his seat beside her.)

So, this have you, and this have I achieved:
Let the past fade behind us: it is gone!
Oh, know yourself from highest gods conceived,
To the first world, alone then, you belong. 9565

No solid fortresses shall ring you round!
In eternal youth, stands as it stood –
So our stay with all delight be crowned –
Arcadia in Sparta's neighbourhood.

Lured here to tread this blessed ground, 9570
You fled towards a happy destiny!
Let our thrones as arbours now be found,
Our joy be Arcadian, and free!

(The scene is completely transformed. Bowers are built against a range of rocky caverns. A shadowy grove runs to the foot of the rocks that rise on all sides. Faust and Helen are not visible: the Chorus lie scattered about in sleep.)

Phorkyas

I'm not sure how long these women have been sleeping:
Nor do I know whether they allowed themselves 9575
To dream what I saw clearly with my own eyes.
Therefore I'll wake them. The young will be amazed,
You bearded ones, too, who sit waiting there, below,
To understand the meaning of these wonders.
Wake! Wake, and shake the dew from your hair, 9580
The slumber from your eyes! Don't blink so, but hear me!

Chorus

Tell us, quickly, quickly, all the wonders that have happened!
If we can't believe them, we'll enjoy them with more pleasure.
For we're wholly weary sitting, staring at these empty stones.

Phorkyas

You've hardly rubbed your eyes, yet you're already weary, children? 9585
Well, listen: in these caverns, in these grottos, in these arbours,
Shade and shelter have been granted, to the two idyllic lovers,
Our Master and our Mistress.

Chorus

What, within there?

Phorkyas

Sweetly sundered,
From the world, alone they summoned me to grant them quiet service.
At their side I stood there, honoured, yet still, as one who's trusted, 9590
Always gazed at something other, turning here and there at random.
Looked for roots and bark and mosses, being skilled in all the potions,
And so they were left alone.

Chorus

You speak as if a whole world's space were hidden there inside, now,
Woods and fields and lakes and rivers: what a fantasy you spin! 9595

Phorkyas

It's true: you're inexperienced, and its depths are unexplored!
I felt, lost in contemplation, hall on hall there, court on court.
In an instant laughter echoes, through the cavernous recesses:
There I see a boy is springing, from his mother to his father,
From his father to his mother, all is dandling and caressing, 9600
And a foolish, a fond teasing, shouts of play, and cries of joy,
Alternate, there, and I'm deaf.
A naked wingless Spirit, like a faun, and yet no creature,
Leaps across the solid floor, and the ground beneath responding,
Sends him flying through the ether, till the second leap or so, there, 9605
He can touch the cavern roof.
Anxiously his mother's calling: 'Leap as often as you like, dear,
But all flying is forbidden, so beware of taking flight.'
And his loyal father warns him: 'In the earth's the power of swiftness,
That will quickly send you flying: touch the ground then with your toe, 9610
And like that son of Earth's, Antaeus, you'll soon find strength again.'
So he leaps the rocky masses of the cavern, from a cornice,
To another and around then, as a ball does when it's thrown.
But suddenly he's vanished in a crevice of the cavern,
And it seems he's lost. His mother grieves for him, father comforts, 9615
I stand there, wondering anxiously, but there again's the vision!
Do buried treasures lie there? Robes embroidered all with flowers,
He has fittingly assumed.
Tassels tremble from his shoulders, ribbons flutter round his chest,
In his hand a golden lyre, like a miniature Apollo, 9620
He steps happily to the overhanging brink: amazing.

And the parents in delight clasp each other to their hearts,
What's that shining round his temples? It's hard to see what's gleaming,
Is it gold and gems, or flames, now, of the spirit's supreme power?
So he moves as if the stately boy's proclaimed to us already 9625
The future Lord of Beauty, in whose members the eternal
Melodies are stirring: and so you too will also hear him,
And you too will also see him, with the rarest show of wonder.

Chorus

Do you call this a marvel,
Crete has begotten? 9630
Can you never have listened
To what Poetry teaches?
Have you never once heard Ionia's,
Have you never listened to Hellas'
Most ancient of legends 9635
Of the gods and heroes?

All things that happen
In this present age,
Are mournful echoes
Of our ancestors' nobler times: 9640
And your story can't equal
That, loveliest of lies,
Easier to believe than Truth,
That they sang of Maia's son.

That delicate and strong, yet 9645
Scarcely born, suckling child,
Would you swaddle him in purest down,
Clothe him in costly jewelled bindings,
The crowd of chattering nurses'
Utterly senseless notion. 9650

But strong and yet delicate,
Already the supple rascal,
Draws forth his lithe body,
Leaves behind that royal,
But timid, constraining shell, 9655

Silent, there, in its place:

Like the finished butterfly,
From the chilly chrysalis,
Slipping, with quick unfolding wings,
Boldly into the sunlit air, 9660
And courageously fluttering.
So did he, the liveliest,

And he quickly demonstrated
By the most skilful arts,
That he'd always be the patron 9665
Daemon of thieves and jesters
And all seekers of profit.

From the Sea God he quickly stole
His trident, and from Ares himself,
Slyly, his sword from its scabbard: 9670
Bow and arrows from Phoebus too,
And tongs from Hephaestus:

He even stole Father Zeus'
Lightning bolts, not scared of fire:
Then he tripped poor Eros up, 9675
In the toils of a wrestling match:
As Venus kissed him, too, stole away,
The ribbons from her breasts.

(A pure melodious and exquisite music echoes from the cave. All listen and appear deeply moved. There is a full musical accompaniment from this point to the designated pause.)

Phorkyas

Hear the loveliest of music,
Free from old mythology! 9680
All your gods and all their antics,
Let them go, they're history.

None can understand you more,
We demand a higher art:
From the heart itself must pour, 9685
What will influence the heart.

(She retires towards the rocks.)

Be you stirred, you awesome being,
By the sweet and flattering sound,
We, renewed to life, are feeling,
Moved to tears of joy, around. 9690

Let the sun be lost from heaven
So it's daylight in the soul,
We'll discover in the heart, then,
What the Earth fails to hold.

(Helen. Faust. Euphorion, in costume as previously described.)

Euphorion

Hear the song of childhood sung now, 9695
Its delight belongs to you,
See me leap about in time, now
Let my parents' hearts leap too.

Helen

It requires two noble hearts
For Love to bless humanity, 9700
But to be a thing apart
They must make a precious three.

Faust

All we sought is now discovered:
I am yours, and you are mine:
And we two are bound together,
There's no better fate to find.

9705

Chorus

They'll delight for many years
In this child's tender glow,
Ah, this partnership of peers,
How it's beauty moves me, so!

9710

Euphorion

Now let me leap, oh,
Now let me spring!
High in the air, go
Circling all things,
That's the desire
That's driving me on.

9715

Faust

Yet, gently! Gently!
Not into danger,
Lest a chance downfall,
Awaits the ranger,
Straight away grounds you,
Our darling son!

9720

Euphorion

I can't stick fast to
The ground any more:
Let go my hands and
Let go my hair,
Let go my clothes!
They are all mine.

9725

Helen

O think! Please think,
Whom you belong to!
How it would grieve us,
How you'd destroy too,
That sweet achievement,
Yours, his and mine.

9730

Chorus

I fear this unity
Soon will unwind!

9735

Helen and Faust

Calm yourself! Calm excess,
To please your parents,
Too great a liveliness,
Impulsive violence!
In rural peacefulness,
Brighten the plain.

9740

Euphorion

If that's what you wish, yes,
I'll stop, I'll restrain.

(He winds, dancing, through the chorus and draws them along with him.)

I'll hover here, lightly
Lively the crew.
Is this the melody,
And measure too?

9745

Helen

Yes that is neatly done:
Lead all the fairest on, 9750
Through intricacy.

Faust

Would it were over then!
Such entertainment
Won't delight me.

Chorus (*With Euphorion, dancing nimbly and singing, in interlinking ranks.*)

When your arms equally 9755
Are charmingly lifted,
Your curling hair's brightly
Loosened and shifted.

When with a foot so light
Over the earth in flight, 9760
Thither and back again,
Step upon step, you rain,

Then your goal is in sight,
Loveliest child:
All of our hearts, beguiled, 9765
With yours unite.

(*Pause.*)

Euphorion

You're like so many
Light-footed fawns:
Now to new games we
Are quickly re-born! 9770
I'll be the hunter,
You be the prey.

Chorus

If you would catch us
Don't be so eager,
We too are anxious 9775
When all is over,
To clasp the form,
You so sweetly display!

Euphorion

Now through the vale!
Up hill and down dale! 9780
What I gain easily
Is tedious to see,
Only what's forcibly
Won delights me.

Helen and Faust

How wild he is now! And how stubborn! 9785
There's little hope of moderation.
That's the sound of blowing horns,
Through the woods and valley ringing:
What noise, and what confusion!

Chorus (*Entering one by one, in haste.*)

He is running from us swiftly: 9790
Scorning us and always mocking,
Now he drags one from the crowd: she,
The wildest of us all.

Euphorion (*Dragging along a young girl.*)

Here I'll drag the little quarry,
To enforce my wish entirely: 9795
For my joy, and my desire,
Press her wilful heart, on fire,

Kiss her stubborn mouth at length
And proclaim my will and strength.

The Girl

Let me go! Since there's a strong 9800
Resistant spirit in this body:
My will, like yours, if I'm not wrong,
Says I'm not taken easily.

You think I'm in any danger?
Force of arms is it, you claim! 9805
Hold me fast, you foolish ranger,
And I'll scotch your little game.

(She turns to flame and flashes into the air.)

Follow me through flowing air,
Follow me through caverns bare,
Catch your fleeing prey again! 9810

Euphorion *(Shaking off the flames.)*

Rocks all around me here,
Deep in the forest view,
Make me a prisoner,
Though I'm still young and new.

Breezes are blowing fair, 9815
Waves now are breaking there:
I hear both far away,
I'd gladly be there today.

(He leaps further up the rocks.)

Helen, Faust and the Chorus

A chamois you'd imitate?
We're fearful of your fate. 9820

Euphorion

Ever higher I must climb.
Ever further I must see.

Now I know where I stand!
Amidst this semi-island,
Amidst Pelop's country, 9825
Earth – kindred to the sea.

Chorus

Why not live here, in peace,
Among hills and groves?
Vines then for you we'll seek, 9830
Vines in their rows.

Vines on high ridges stand,
Figs, there, and apples gold,
Stay in this lovely land
Stay, and grow old!

Euphorion

Do you dream of peaceful days? 9835
Dream, then as dreamers may.
War is the watchword though.
Victory! It rings out so.

Chorus

He who in time of peace
Wishes for war, soon 9840
Witness's the decease,
Of hope, and fortune.

Euphorion

Those who made this land,
With danger on every hand,

Free, and courageously, 9845
Gave their blood lavishly:

Bring holy meaning
To that sacrifice –
See us still conquering
All whom we fight! 9850

Chorus

Look up there, how high he climbs!
Yet he seems to us no smaller:
In his armour, as in triumph,
How he gleams in steel and silver.

Euphorion

Each one's no longer conscious 9855
Of the high wall, or the rest:
Since the one enduring fortress,
Is the soldier's iron breast.

If you'd live unconquered,
Quickly arm, and fight the real foe: 9860
Every wife an Amazon bred,
And every child a hero.

Chorus

Sacred Poetry
Climbing, and heavenly!
Shines there, the fairest star, 9865
Far there, and still so far!
And yet it reaches here,
Always, and still we hear,
Joy, where we are.

Euphorion

No, not as a child do I appear, 9870
This youth comes armed, you see:
In spirit he's already a peer,
Of the strong, the bold, and free.
Now I go!
Now, and lo, 9875
The path to glory shines for me.

Helen and Faust

You've scarcely been called to being,
Scarcely come to daylight's gleam,
And from the heights you're yearning,
For the place of pain, it seems. 9880
Are we two
Naught to you?
Is the sweetest bond a dream?

Euphorion

Don't you hear the thundering wave?
Through vale on vale the echoes call, 9885
Host on host, in sand and spray,
Shock on shock, in anguished fall.
Understand
The command
Is death, now and for all. 9890

Helen, Faust and the Chorus

What horror! What disaster!
Is then death ordained for you?

Euphorion

Should I watch it from afar?
No! I'll share their trouble too.

Helen, Faust and the Chorus

Exuberance, danger, 9895
Deadliest fate!

Euphorion

Yes! – I am winged here,
I will not wait!
Onward! I must! I must!
Let me but fly! 9900

(He hurls himself into the air: his clothes bear him a moment, his head is illuminated and a streak of light follows.)

Chorus

Icarus! Icarus!
No more! We sigh.

(A beautiful youth falls at the parents' feet. We imagine we see a well-known form in the dead body, but the physical part vanishes at once, while an aureole rises like a comet to heaven. The clothes, cloak and lyre remain on the ground.)

Helen and Faust

At once, joy is followed,
By bitterest pain.

Euphorion *(From the depths.)*

Mother, don't leave me alone, 9905
In the shadows' domain!

(Pause)

Chorus (*Dirge.*)

Not alone! – No matter where you are,
For we believe in following you:
Oh! Though from the day you part,
Not one heart will part from you. 9910
We scarcely wish to mourn you, even,
We sing in envy of your fate:
To you the clearest light of heaven,
Gave song and courage, true and great.

Ah! You were born for earthly fate, 9915
High descent and supreme power:
Youth, sadly, while you went astray,
Was torn from you in its first hour!
You saw the world, with clearer vision,
You understood the yearning heart, 9920
The glow of lovely woman's passion,
And all singing's rarest art.

Yet, irresistibly, you ran free,
In nets of indiscipline: you
Divorced yourself violently, 9925
From custom, and from rule:
Until at last, through thinking deeper,
You gave courage greater weight,
And wished to win to splendour,
But that could not be your fate. 9930

Whose then? – The gloomy question,
That destiny itself conceals,
While in days unblessed by fortune,
Our people's silent blood congeals.
But new songs will refresh them, 9935
No longer bow them to the floor,
The earth shall see them once again,
As it saw them once before.

(A complete Pause. The music ends.)

Helen *(To Faust.)*

Alas, the ancient word proves true for me, as well:
That joy and beauty never lastingly unite. 9940
The thread of life, as the thread of love, is torn:
Painfully, lamenting both, I must say: farewell,
And enter your embrace, once, and then no more.
Persephone, receive me, and this child of ours!

(She embraces Faust: her body vanishes, her dress and veil remain in his hands.)

Phorkyas *(To Faust.)*

Hold tight to what alone remains to you. 9945
Don't let the garment go. Already, daemons
Pull at its hem, and wish to drag it down
Into the Underworld. Hold tight to it, now!
It no longer veils the divinity you've lost,
But it is divine. Employ then the priceless, 9950
Noble gift for yourself, and soar on high:
It will carry you quickly from the lowest
To the highest ether, while you can endure.
We'll meet once more, far away from here.

(Helen's garments dissolve in mist, surround Faust, life him into the air, and drift away with him.)

(Phorkyas takes Euphorion's tunic, cloak and lyre from the ground, steps forward to the proscenium, holds them aloft and speaks.)

As always, I've discovered something good! 9955
The flame itself has gone, that's understood,
Yet, for the world, I can't be truly sad.
Here's enough to fuel the poets' regiment,
Stir their guild to envy, make them mad,
And if I still can't lend them any talent, 9960
At least I'll have a costume for the lad.

(She seats herself on a low column in the proscenium.)

Panthalis

Quick now, girls! We're all free of the magic now,
That old Thessalian woman's enthralling spell,
That jangling dizziness of confusing sound,
Troubling the ear, and more the inner sense. 9965
Down to Hades! Since with solemn step the Queen
Descended swiftly. Let her faithful servants'
Footsteps follow her downward path without delay.
We'll find her beside the Unfathomable Throne.

Chorus

Of course, queens are happy anywhere: 9970
Even in Hades they're on top,
Associating proudly with their peers,
Persephone's intimate company.
But for us, then, in the background,
Of the asphodel-meadowed depths, 9975
With their long rows of poplars,
Their fruitless crowds of willows,
What fun is there for us,
Piping like bats at twilight,
In cheerless, ghostly whispers? 9980

Panthalis

Who wins no name, and wills no noble work,
Belongs to the elements: so away with you!
My own intense desire's to be with my Queen,
The individual's loyalty and not just service.

(Exits.)

All

We're returned to the light of day, 9985

No longer individual, it's true,
We feel it, and we know it,
But we'll never go back to Hades.
Ever-living Nature,
Makes the most valid claim 9990
On our spirits, and we on her.

A Section of the Chorus

We in all the thousand branches' whispering tremors, swaying murmurs,
Sweetly rocked, will lightly draw the root-born founts of being upwards,
To the twigs: and now with leaves, and now with the exuberant blossom,
We'll adorn their floating tresses, freely thriving in the breezes. 9995
Straight away, now, as the fruit falls, happy crowds and flocks will gather,
For the picking and the tasting, swift-arriving, busy-thronging:
Bending down, now, all around us, as before the early gods.

A Second Section of the Chorus

We, against the rocky cliff face, by the smooth far-gleaming mirror,
We will nestle, softly moving, in the gentle waves that flatter: 10000
Listening, hearing every echo, birdsong, now, or reedy fluting,
To the fearful voice of Pan, too, we'll provide a ready answer:
To the murmuring, send a murmur: to the thunder roll our thunder,
In earth-shaking repetition, in threefold, or tenfold echo.

A Third Section of the Chorus

Sisters! We, of nimbler senses, hurry onwards with the waters: 10005
For the richly covered, far-off, mountain ranges each entice us.
Ever deeper, ever downward, in meandering curves we'll water
First the meadows, then the pastures, then the house and the garden,
Where the slender tips of cypress, over banks and watery mirror,
Over all the landscape, mark it, soaring skywards in the air. 10010

A Fourth Section of the Chorus

Wander where you please, you others: we will circle, we will rustle
Round the densely planted hillside, where the vine stock's growing green:
There, each day, we'll pay attention to the cultivator's passion,

Watch his diligence and care, there: watch for its uncertain outcome.
 How he hoes, how he digs there, how he heaps, and prunes, and ties, 10015
 Prays to all the gods above him, most of all prays to the sun god.
 The effeminate one, Bacchus, gives scant thought to faithful servants,
 Rests in arbours, lolls in caverns, flirting with the youngest Faun.
 Whatsoever he might need there, for his half-befuddled dreaming,
 Is left for him in wineskins, stored around in jars and vessels, 10020
 Right and left, in cool recesses, gathered through the endless ages.
 But when the gods, that's Helios we mean before all others,
 Cooling, wetting, warming, heating, fill the vineyard's horn of plenty,
 Where the silent grower laboured, suddenly it's all enlivened,
 And in every leaf there's rustling, rustling now from vine to vine. 10025
 Baskets creaking, buckets rattling, the tubs are carried groaning,
 All towards enormous vats there, to the lusty treaders' dance:
 So, then, all the sacred bounty, of the pure bred juicy harvest,
 Fiercely trodden, spurting, foaming, mingled there, is crudely squashed.
 Now the cymbals' brazen clamour's ringing boldly in our ears, 10030
 As Dionysus from his Mysteries is unveiled, and is revealed:
 Here with his goat-foot Satyrs, whirling goat-foot Satyresses,
 And Silenus's, unruly, long-eared ass, that brays amongst them.
 Nothing's spared! The cloven feet now, trample on all decency:
 All the senses whirl, bewildered: hideously, ears are stunned, there. 10035
 Drunkards fumble for their wine-cups, head and bellies over-full,
 Here and there one has misgivings, but can only swell the riot,
 Since to hold the latest vintage, one must drain the oldest skin!

(The curtain falls. Phorkyas in the proscenium rises to full height, steps down from her tragic buskins, removes her mask and veil, and reveals herself as Mephistopheles, to point the last lines, by way of epilogue.)

Part II Act IV Scene I: High Mountains

(Fierce, jagged rocky peaks. A cloud approaches, pauses and settles on a projecting ledge. It parts.)

Faust *(Steps out.)*

Gazing at those deep solitudes beneath my feet,
I tread the mountain brink with deliberation, 10040
Leaving the cloud-vehicle that carried me,
Softly, through bright day, over land and ocean.
Slowly, not dispersing, now, it moves away.
With a rolling movement, travelling eastward,
And the eye follows in wondering admiration. 10045
Moving it divides, wave-like and changeable.
Yet it shapes itself – My eyes can't deceive me! –
I see, reclining there, nobly, on sunlit pillows,
A godlike female form, though it's immense!
An image of Juno, Leda, or Helen herself, 10050
Royally lovely, floating before my eyes.
Ah! It's already melting! Formlessly huge
And towering it hangs in far icy eastern hills,
Reflecting deep meaning from fine fleeting days.
Yet a soft, delicate band of mist still clings 10055
To head and body, coolly caressing: and cheers me.
Now it lifts lightly, soars higher and higher, there,
Condensing. Does its enticing shape deceive me,
Like some long-forgotten joy of earliest youth?
The first riches of the heart's depths flow again: 10060
I'd liken it to Aurora's Love, light-winged:
The first, swiftly felt, scarcely understood glance,
That outshines every treasure when it's held fast.
The lovely form rises, now, like spiritual beauty,
Not melting further, but lifting through the air, 10065
And carries, far-off, the best of what I am.

(A seven-league boot strides forward: another follows immediately. Mephistopheles steps out of them. The boots stride off quickly.)

Now *that* I call real onward striding!

But tell me why you're all alone,
Climbing here among the horrors,
In these horrendous gulfs of stone? 10070
I know them well, but with another face,
In truth, the floor of Hell's a similar place.

Faust

You're never short of a foolish fantasy:
You've dusted that one off again I see.

Mephistopheles (*Seriously*)

When the Lord God – and I know why as well – 10075
Banished us from the air to deepest deeps,
There, where round and round the glow of Hell,
An eternal inward self-fuelled fire leaps,
We found we were too brightly illuminated,
Quite crowded, and uncomfortably situated. 10080
All the devils fell to fits of coughing,
The vents above them and beneath them puffing,
Hell swollen with the sulphur's stench and acid,
Gave out its gas! The bubble was so massive,
That soon the level surface of the earth, 10085
Thick as it was, was forced to crack and burst.
So we all gained another mountain from it,
And what was ground, before, now is summit.
From this they deduced the truest law,
Turn lowest into highest, to be sure, 10090
Since we escaped from fiery prison there,
To excessive power in the freer air:
An open mystery, yet well concealed,
And only lately publicly revealed. (*Ephesians vi:xii*)

Faust

To me the mountain masses are nobly dumb, 10095
I don't ask why they are, or where they're from.
When Nature in herself was grounded
The ball of Earth she neatly rounded,
Delighting in the mountains and the deep,
Setting rock on rock, and peak on peak, 10100
Sloping the hills conveniently downward,
Softening them to vales, gently bounded.
They grow green, and joyfully she ranges,
Without the need for any violent changes.

Mephistopheles

Yes, so you say! It's clear as day to you: 10105
But he knows otherwise who saw it too.
I was there, while the void seethed below,
Enduring all that swollen, fiery tide:
When Moloch's hammer forged cliffs, at a blow,
And flung the ruined mountains, far and wide. 10110
Those foreign boulders scattered through the land:
Who knows what forces left them high and dry?
Philosophers all have failed to understand,
The rocks are there, and we must let them stand,
We've damaged them, already, where they lie. 10115
Only the true believers, the people, know,
And nothing will shake their fond opinion,
They, since their wisdom ripened long ago,
Say it's due to Satan's wonderful dominion.
The traveller climbs, with faith's crutch, over ridges, 10120
Across the Devil's rocks, and Devil's bridges.

Faust

Yet it's still worth noting, since every feature,
Reveals what it is the Devil sees in Nature.

Mephistopheles

What's that to me! Let Nature be what she is!
The Devil was there: that's what I'd have you notice! 10125
We're the folk, you see, who achieve great things:
The signs are tumult, force, and what nonsense brings! –
But shall I make myself understood at last: it's best:
Did nothing at all of ours please you in the slightest?
You've looked down, from immeasurable heights, 10130
On the riches of the world, and its splendid sights. (*Matthew iv*)
Yet, hard as you may be to fire,
Didn't you feel some deep desire?

Faust

I did! I saw a mighty plan.
Guess!

Mephistopheles

Oh, that's easily done. 10135
I'd find myself some capital city,
It's core the citizens' greedy plenty,
Crooked alleys and pointed gables,
Cabbage, turnips, onions, market tables:
Butcher's stalls where flies all cluster: 10140
Round the fattened joints, pass muster:
Wherever you move, there you'll find
Stench and activity, intertwined.
Then wide streets, and wider squares,
Measured, elegant thoroughfares: 10145
And, at their end, no gates to bar you:
Just boundless far-flung suburbs too.
There I love to see all the carriages go by,
The noisy rushing about from side to side,
The endless running to and fro, 10150
Of scattered ants in ceaseless flow.
And when I walk, and when I ride,
I'd be the central point implied,
A hundred thousand honouring me.

Faust

That could never content me though. 10155
A swelling crowd is fine to see,
All well-fed in their way, agreed,
Well-bred, well-taught, all the three –
Yet you've only made more rebels grow.

Mephistopheles

For myself, I'd deliberately create 10160
A pleasure house in a pleasant place.
Woods, hills, fields, meadows, open ground,
With splendid gardens all around.
Between green walls of velvet leaves,
Straight walks, where artful shadows please, 10165
Waterfalls, spanning the rocks, in pairs,
And all those kinds of water-jet affairs:
Rising nobly, while all round the dish,
A thousand little fountains hiss and piss.
Then I'd have a hut, snug and convenient, 10170
Where beautiful women might be content:
And pass the boundless time away
In the sweetest solitude, and play.
Women, I say: since, one and all,
I think of their loveliness in the plural. 10175

Faust

Sardanapalus! Modern and rural!

Mephistopheles

Then might one ask to know your yearning?
It's something daring: I've no doubt.
Since the moon was near you in your journeying,
Might it be moon-madness you're about? 10180

Faust

Not at all! This earthly round
Grants space for some mighty thing.
We'll attempt what's astonishing,
New strength for daring work I've found.

Mephistopheles

And shall you earn more glory by it too? 10185
One sees the heroines have been with you.

Faust

I'll win power, and property!
The deed is all, and not the glory.

Mephistopheles

Yet future poets' verse will stress
The splendour of your bright success, 10190
And inspire fools to foolishness.

Faust

All that's far from you, indeed.
What do you know of what Men need?
Your contrary being, bitter, dire,
What does it know of Man's desire? 10195

Mephistopheles

Let it all be as you wish it then!
Trust fancy's flight to me again.

Faust

My eyes were drawn towards the deepest ocean:
It swelled, and heaped itself, upon itself,
Then ebbd, and shook its waves again in motion, 10200

Storming towards the wide shore's level shelf.
And that annoyed me: as the exuberance
Of a free spirit, that values all its rights,
Will transmit uneasy feelings to the dance
Of the passionate blood that it excites. 10205
I thought it chance: I gazed more intensely:
The waves paused, rolled away from me,
Far from what they'd reached in their pride:
Time passes, and then once more comes the tide.

Mephistopheles (*To the audience.*)

There's nothing new in that to greet my ears, 10210
I've known it for a hundred thousand years.

Faust (*Continuing passionately.*)

It sweeps along, to whatever thousand ends:
Fruitless itself, it fruitlessly extends:
It swells and rolls and breaks and overwhelms
The empty stretches of its barren realms. 10215
There wave rules power-inspired wave, again
Draws back – and yet still there's nothing gained.
If anything makes me despair, of my intent,
It's the aimless force of that wild element!
Then my spirit dared to soar high above: 10220
Here I must fight, and this I must remove.
And it's possible! – However tides may flow,
At last they nestle round the hills below:
So they are tamed in their exuberance,
A modest height tops their proud advance, 10225
A modest depth draws them forcefully on.
Quick, through my mind, leapt plan after plan:
Let rich enjoyment be mine for evermore,
To keep the noble ocean from the shore,
To channel all the wide and watery waste, 10230
And urge it backwards to its own deep place.
Step by step I know how to design it:
That's my desire, so be brave and promote it!

(On the right, from the distance, behind the audience, the sound of drums and military music.)

Mephistopheles

That's trivial! Can you hear the distant drums?

Faust

War again! The wise man hates it when it comes. 10235

Mephistopheles

War or peace, it's wise to seize the chance,
And gain advantage from the circumstance.
One waits, one notes each favourable moment.
Opportunity's about, so Faust, be ardent!

Faust

Spare me all your riddles, if you please! 10240
Once and for all, say, what am I to seize?

Mephistopheles

Nothing was hidden from me on my journey:
The noble Emperor's consumed by worry.
You know him. While we both supplied him,
Those illusory riches in his hand, beside him, 10245
The whole world then was open to him.

Young, the throne was granted to him,
And it pleased him to assume, wrongly,
That he could easily combine the two,
Enjoy the essential and the lovely too: 10250
Both government and pleasure, jointly.

Faust

A fatal error! He who wishes to command
Must make command his joy, and though

His mind is full of all the noblest plans,
What he intends, must let no other know. 10255
What he whispers then in some faithful ear,
Is done, and the world will be amazed to hear.
So he'll remain supreme, above them all,
And noblest: pleasure comes before a fall.

Mephistopheles

That's not the man! He enjoyed himself, and how! 10260
Meanwhile anarchy brought the empire down,
While great fought little, and orders crossed,
And brothers fought with brothers, and were lost,
Castle with castle, city against city,
The guilds at war with the nobility: 10265
The bishops with their congregation:
No friends, and only a hostile nation.
In churches death and slaughter: through the gate
Every merchant and trader swift to his fate.
Now, everywhere, man's audacity shows: 10270
The word is 'defend your life'. And so it goes.

Faust

So it goes – it stumbles, falls, and stands again,
Then tumbles headlong, and lies there in pain.

Mephistopheles

None dared to criticise the situation,
Each could, and would improve his station. 10275
Even the smallest wished to be great enough.
But for the best it proved a step too much.
The capable declared, with energy:
'He who brings peace can have the mastery.
The Emperor can't, and will not – let us choose 10280
A new Emperor, who'll inspire the realm anew.
While each man achieves security,
In a world that's re-created freshly,
Let peace and justice there be wedded, too.'

Faust

That smacks of priesthood. 10285

Mephistopheles

The priests were there, yes,
Defending their well-fed stomachs with the rest,
And they were more involved than all the others.
The rebels swarmed: and were blessed as brothers:
Then the Emperor, whom we had made happy,
Advanced, for his last battle, that's as maybe. 10290

Faust

I'm sorry for him: He was so frank and open.

Mephistopheles

We'll watch! While there's life there's hope again.
Let's set him free, from this narrow valley!
He's a thousand times saved, if they would rally.
Who knows how the dice might fall, if so: 10295
Good luck, and he'll have treasures to bestow.

*(They cross over the middle range of hills, and view the army in the valley.
Drums and military music sound from below.)*

The position they've taken, there, looks fine:
We'll join them: victory – in the nick of time.

Faust

And what should I expect to see?
A hollow show! Blind magic! Trickery! 10300

Mephistopheles

Strategy, and how to win a battle!
Think hard, and be on your mettle,
Keep dreaming of your mighty aim.
If we return the Emperor his land,
You can kneel, and make a claim,
In payment, for the boundless strand.

10305

Faust

You've managed all the other things,
So win the battle, and what it brings!

Mephistopheles

No, you'll win it! There, beneath,
You'll be their commander-in-chief.

10310

Faust

That's a somewhat glorified position:
Knowing nothing, to command the mission!

Mephistopheles

Leave it to the General Staff to care,
And see a Field-Marshal newborn there.
I know all about Un-Councils of War
Form your War Council, quickly, therefore,
From ancient hills' ancient human power:
Bless those who can pile peaks in a tower.

10315

Faust

What do I see, what warriors approach?
Have you truly roused the mountain folk?

10320

Mephistopheles

No! But like Shakespeare's Peter Quince,
I've picked the very best of what there is.

(The Three Mighty Warriors appear.)

Here are my lads arriving now!
You see they're all of different ages,
And clothes and armour too: allow 10325
That you'll be fine when battle rages.

(To the audience.)

Every child today loves to see
Knights in armour take the floor:
Allegorical though they may be,
They'll delight them all the more. 10330

Bullyboy *(Young, lightly armed, plainly clothed.)*

If someone meets me face to face,
I'll shake a fist right there in his ugly mug,
And when the yellow-belly runs away,
I'll grasp his hair, and give a nasty tug.

Grab-quick *(Mature, well-armed, richly dressed.)*

Such idle brawling's foolishness, 10335
That's how to ruin the day:
Don't be slow first to possess,
Then afterwards you'll get your way.

Hold-tight *(Older, heavily armed, without a cloak.)*

But that's the path where little's won!
Great possession's quickly gone, 10340
Vanishing in the stream of life.
It's fine to take, but best to hold:
Let grey hairs command the bold,

And you'll lose nothing in the strife.

Part II Act IV Scene II: On the Headland

(Drums and military music from below. The Emperor's tent is pitched.)

(The Emperor, Commander-in-Chief, Guardsmen.)

The Commander-in-Chief

It still seems the most likely strategy, 10345
To have made our whole army wait,
Here below, in this convenient valley:
I hope the choice is truly fortunate.

The Emperor

Whatever will happen now, we'll soon see:
But I don't like this half-retreat, it's weak. 10350

The Commander-in-Chief

Look here, my Prince, on our right flank!
This terrain is one that Generals like to thank:
The hills aren't steep, but there's no ready access,
So it protects us, while denying them success:
We're half-concealed, on undulating ground: 10355
Their cavalry won't dare to circle round.

The Emperor

There's nothing left for me to do, but praise:
Here strength and bravery may have their day.

The Commander-in-Chief

There, in the centre of the level space,
See the phalanx, eagerly in place. 10360
The lances shine and glitter in the air,
Through the sunlit mist of morning, there.
And all the mighty square is swaying darkly!

Thousands inspired to fierce activity.
There you can see our power *en masse*,
I trust it to split the enemy in half. 10365

The Emperor

This is the first time I've ever gazed on such a sight.
Forces like these are worth double when they fight.

The Commander-in-Chief

I've nothing to report about our left,
Valiant heroes hold the rocky cleft,
Weapons gleam across the rocky dale,
A vital pass protects the narrow vale.
Here the enemy power, I think, will shatter,
Taken unawares in this bloody matter. 10370

The Emperor

There they advance, my faithless kith and kin,
Even as they call me brother, uncle, cousin,
Ever more widely, allowing men's respect
For throne and sceptre to fall into neglect:
Ruining the empire with their fighting,
And now, against me, rebelliously uniting. 10380
The mob is swayed, uncertain in its mind,
Then, wherever the stream flows, flows behind.

The Commander-in-Chief

A faithful soldier hastens towards us, look,
One sent for news, perhaps he's had some luck!

First Scout

Luckily we met success,
Brave and cunning in our skill,
Probing, out to east and west,
Yet bring you bad news, still. 10385

Many swear their loyalty,
Many a faithful company: 10390
Yet all idly apologetic:
Quailing inwardly, apathetic.

The Emperor

From selfishness they learn self-preservation,
Not honour, affection, gratitude, dedication.
No one thinks that when time brings the reckoning, 10395
The neighbour's house ignites theirs while it's burning.

The Commander-in-Chief

The second scout's approaching, slowly,
On stumbling legs: a man full weary.

Second Scout

At first we easily detected
The nature of their wild plan: 10400
Then, suddenly, and unexpected,
A second Emperor was at hand.
And in a calm, and orderly manner
Withdrew the army from the deep:
Unfurling his deceitful banner: 10405
They all followed him, like sheep!

The Emperor

A second Emperor's fortunate for me:
Since I'm the Emperor, plain as plain can be.
Now as a soldier I'll dress myself, again,
In armour, dedicated to this higher aim. 10410
My entertainments, fine as they all were,
Lacking in nothing, never brought me danger.
While you suggested something innocent,
My heart longed to fight the tournament:
And had you not dissuaded me from war, 10415
I'd have shone in glorious deeds before.

But when I was mirrored in that realm of fire,
I felt my heart was mine, and made entire:
The fierce element entered in my fate,
Only a dream, and yet the dream was great. 10420
I've thought confusedly of fame and glory:
Yet all was my own neglect, an evil story.

(The heralds are sent to challenge the rival Emperor to single combat.)

(Faust enters, in armour, with half-closed visor. The Three Mighty Warriors appear armed and dressed as previously described.)

Faust

We're here, and hope our presence is accepted:
Though needless, caution's often well respected. 10425
You know how hill-folk consider and explore:
They study nature and the mountains' lore.
The spirits drawn from out the level valley,
Are happier than ever in the wide hill-country.
They still work the labyrinthine masses,
Among metallic fumes of noble gases. 10430
Intent on separating, proving, blending,
Their only aim some innovative finding.
With gentle touch and spiritual power,
They build transparent forms, by the hour:
Then in eternal silence, in the crystal, 10435
They watch the destiny of all things mortal.

The Emperor

I've heard it said: and I believe it's true:
But, gallant soldier, what's all that to you?

Faust

Your true and honourable servant there,
Is that Sabine, the Norcian Necromancer. 10440
What fearful fate once hung above his head!
Crackling wood, the stinging fire ahead:

Dry timber packed already round his feet,
With rolls of pitch and brimstone all complete:
No warrior, god, or devil to the rescue, 10445
The Emperor saved his life: and that was you,
In Rome: he was obliged, and none the less
Anxiously, he contemplates your progress.
Wholly forgotten: every hour, just for you,
He studies the stars and the abyss too. 10450
He sent us on, by the swiftest path,
To help you. Great is the mountain craft:
There Nature works omnipotent, and free,
Though foolish clerics call it wizardry.

The Emperor

On joyful days, when we greet our guests, 10455
Who gather pleasantly, with happy jests,
It gives us pleasure, when they pull and push,
And fill the halls and chambers with their crush.
Yet the brave man meets with noblest welcome,
When in fierce support he deigns to come, 10460
At the dawning of some perilous day,
When fate's balance holds us in its sway.
Yet while some time this moment can afford,
Hold back your strong hand from the eager sword,
Honour the instant, when thousands march, 10465
For or against me, taking up the torch.
Self's the Man! Who claims the crown and throne,
Must be worthy of the honour, on his own.
May the phantom now that stands against me,
Who calls himself the Emperor of my country, 10470
The army's leader, and the lords' crowned head,
Be hurled by my own fist among the dead.

Faust

Whatever the need to finish what you've started,
It would go ill if you and your head were parted.
Isn't your helmet decked with plume and crest? 10475
It shields the head that fills our hearts with zest.

Without a head what can the members do?
If it should sleep, they sink in silence too:
If it's injured, they're all hurt alike,
And if it's healed they quickly stir to life. 10480
Swiftly the arm will assert its right:
And shield the head then from the fight:
The sword at once perceives its duty,
Strikes again, and parries strongly:
The brave foot, owning its luck again, 10485
Plants itself on the necks of the slain.

The Emperor

Such is my wrath, that's how I'd use the fool,
And set his head in front of me, for a stool.

Heralds (*Returning.*)

Our advances they reject,
With little honour, or respect. 10490
Our strong, and noble ultimatum,
They treated as an empty statement:
'Your Emperor is wholly lost,
An echo of some ancient rhyme:
When we think about the past, 10495
His tale will be: Once upon a time.'

Faust

It's come to pass as the best of men demand,
Those firm and true, at your right hand:
There is the foe: your men stand by us:
Order the advance, the time's propitious. 10500

The Emperor

I hereby relinquish the command.

(*To the Commander-In-Chief*)

Prince, I entrust the duty to your hand.

The Commander-in-Chief

Then let the right wing start its assault!
The enemy left's ascending, even now,
And in a moment will be forced to halt. 10505
To our young faithfuls they will have to bow.

Faust

Let this brave hero, straight away,
Join your ranks, without delay,
So that in your ranks he might,
Make a brave show in the fight. 10510

(He points to the Mighty Warrior on the right.)

Bully-Boy *(Coming forward.)*

He who shows his face to me, won't turn
Before his front and back teeth shatter:
He who shows his back to me will earn
A blow to make his head much flatter.
And if your soldiers then advance 10515
With sword and mace, together,
Man after man, the foe will dance,
And in their own blood quickly smother.

(He exits.)

The Commander-in-Chief

Let the central phalanx follow slowly,
Engage the enemy with force and cunning: 10520
There on the right they're almost ready
To surrender, you can see them running.

Faust (*Pointing to the central Warrior*)

Let this man follow at your command!
He's quick, and grabs with either hand.

Grab-quick (*Comes forward.*)

The thirst for plunder now will greet 10525
The Emperor's troops' advancing feet,
And all will gather, with intent,
At the rival Emperor's tent.
He won't linger on his throne:
I'll lead the phalanx on my own. 10530

Swift-plunder (*A camp follower, fawning on him.*)

Although he and I aren't wed,
He's my sweetheart. Here instead
Autumn ripens for the bold!
Woman's fierce when she takes hold,
Merciless, in a plundering crowd, 10535
Forward to victory! All's allowed.

(*They exit together.*)

The Commander-in-Chief

As I anticipated on our left flank,
They hurl their right, in force, at last.
We'll resist their furious ranks,
And keep them from the narrow pass. 10540

Faust (*Beckoning to the Warrior on the left.*)

Prince, take note of this man too:
No shame if the strong are stronger than you.

Hold-tight (*Coming forward.*)

Let the flanks forget their fear!

I seize the ground where I appear:
In me are born the powers of old, 10545
No lightning splits what I shall hold.

Mephistopheles (*Descending from above.*)

Now see how from the hinterland
Of this rocky jagged land,
An armed host bursts forth
On narrow pathways from the north, 10550
With sword and helmet, shield and spear,
Forming a rampart in our rear:
They wait for the signal to charge on.

(*Aside, to the knowing ones.*)

You mustn't ask me where they're from.
I've gathered them from everywhere, 10555
The armouries all around are bare:
They stood on foot, and sat astride,
Like lords of earth on every side:
They were emperors, knights, and kings,
Now they're the empty shells of things: 10560
I've dressed so many spirits for the strife,
It's like the Middle Ages come to life.
Whichever little devils are inside,
They'll have enough effect to turn the tide.

(*Aloud.*)

Listen how they show their anger, 10565
Jostling, in metallic clangour!
The ragged banners flutter free,
That waited restless for the breeze.
Think: here's an ancient race that's ready
To mingle in our new dispute, and gladly. 10570

(*A tremendous peal of trumpets from above: a perceptible tremor in the hostile army.*)

Faust

The far horizon darkens swiftly,
Yet, here and there, and meaningfully,
There's an incipient crimson glow,
Already the battlefield gleams there,
The rocks, the woods, the atmosphere, 10575
The very heavens join the show.

Mephistopheles

The right flank holds in strength:
There's Bullyboy the nimble giant,
Towering over all, defiant,
And charging them at length. 10580

The Emperor

First I saw an arm uplifted,
Then at least a dozen shifted:
The thing's unnatural.

Faust

Don't you know the bands of mist
That drift round the Sicilian cliffs? 10585
There, in the daylight, clear,
In mid-air, hovering about
Mirrored in peculiar cloud,
Marvellous images appear.
Cities wander to and fro, 10590
Gardens rise above, below,
As form on form fills the air.

The Emperor

Yet it's suspicious! All about
The tips of spears are shining out:
On our phalanx' gleaming lances, 10595
I see a crowd of flame-lets dances.

It looks quite ghostly there, to me.

Faust

Forgive me, Lord, those are the traces
Of natural spirits, vanished races,
A glimmer of the Dioscuri, 10600
Sailors invoke in tempest's fury:
They show their last strength there.

The Emperor

But tell me: who then might command
Nature's assistance for our land,
This gathering of the rare? 10605

Mephistopheles

Who else than that noble Master,
Who takes your destiny to heart?
The thought of military disaster
Moves him deeply, stirs his art.
In gratitude, he wants to save you, 10610
Though he himself should suffer too.

The Emperor

They cheered me, when I was invested:
So I was keen to see my power tested:
I found it useful, without much thought, as ruler,
To send that wise man where the air was cooler. 10615
I robbed the clergy of a fond desire,
And hardly won their favour from the fire.
Now that so many years have gone
Is this the reward of what I'd done?

Faust

Good deeds from the heart reap riches: 10620
Let your glance stray upwards now!
I think he'll send a sign, a show,
Attend: straight away it's as he wishes.

The Emperor

An eagle soars in the upper air,
A Gryphon attacks him there. 10625

Faust

Attend: It's an auspicious feature.
The Gryphon's a fabulous creature:
How could he forget who's regal,
And tangle with a real eagle?

The Emperor

And now, they fly in wider gyres, 10630
They wheel together: swiftly now
Then dash against each other's bow,
So neck and chest are ripped entire.

Faust

Now note the miserable Gryphon,
Ripped and rumpled, hurt quite badly, 10635
Now, with his lion's tail all torn,
He falls, and vanishes in a tree.

The Emperor

As it's prophesied, so let it be!
This whole thing's astounding me.

Mephistopheles (*Towards the right.*)

Driven by blows, ten times repeated, 10640
The enemy force has retreated,
And in the uncertain fight
Drifts away towards the right,
So defusing all the force
Of their army's sinister course. 10645
Our phalanx with its spears tightening
Moves to the right, and like lightening
Strikes them in the weakest place:
Now like the storm-driven waves
They roar, with opposing force, 10650
Wildly on their dual course:
Gloriously all sound dies away,
And victory is ours, I'd say!

The Emperor (*On the left, to Faust.*)

See! Something looks suspicious,
Our position's inauspicious, 10655
Not a stone's hurled in the air,
The cliffs below are taken there,
Bare the narrows, to the pass.
Now! The enemy *en masse*
Are ever nearer to the sun, 10660
Perhaps we're already overrun:
An end to this unholy strife!
Your arts won't save my life.

(*Pause.*)

Mephistopheles

See, my two ravens come winging,
What news might they be bringing? 10665
I fear we're in trouble here.

The Emperor

What do they mean these wretched birds?
Their black wings turn hitherwards,
Out of the heat of battle they steer.

Mephistopheles (*To the ravens.*)

Both of you sit by my ear, 10670
None are lost if you are near,
Your council's always good to hear.

Faust (*To the Emperor.*)

You'll know about homing pigeons
Ones that return from distant regions,
To their nest, and food, and young. 10675
Here's a slightly different kind:
Pigeon post in peace is fine,
Raven posts to war belong.

Mephistopheles

The birds announce a dreadful fate:
Beware the enemy at the gate, 10680
Near our heroes' rocky wall!
They've attained the narrow height,
If they gain the pass, and fight,
Our position's critical.

The Emperor

So I'm betrayed at last! 10685
Into your net I'll be cast:
I shudder as it entangles me.

Mephistopheles

Courage, now! Not yet, their victory.
Patience and skill unties the knot!
It's often fiercest at the end. 10690
The pair of messengers, we've got:
Command me, I'll command them!

The Commander-In-Chief (*Who has arrived, meanwhile.*)

You've united with this pair,
Tormenting me while I was there,
No luck comes from wizardry. 10695
I can't fathom now how to win
Those should finish, that begin:
Take this baton away from me.

The Emperor

Keep it for another day, one better
And blessed with better fortune. 10700
I shudder at this messenger,
And his company of ravens.

(To Mephistopheles.)

I'll not grant the baton to you,
You're not the proper man:
Give commands: free us too! 10705
Do whatever it is you can.

(He exits into his tent with the Commander-In-Chief.)

Mephistopheles

Let that blunt stick protect the man!
It's of small use in anyone's hand:
It has a cross, too, painted on.

10730

I shudder myself at this wild waterfall.

Mephistopheles

I can see nothing of these watery lies,
They only serve for fooling human eyes, 10735
I delight instead in wonders that befall.
In companies, their men plunge down,
The fools imagine that they'll drown,
While free to breathe, on solid ground,
With swimming strokes, they run around. 10740
It's bewildering them all.

(The Ravens return.)

I'll praise you to the noble Master: but see,
If you'd like to display your own mastery,
Hurry to the glowing smithy,
Where the dwarf folk never weary, 10745
Hammering sparks from steel and stone.
Ask for, once you've chattered first,
A fire to shine: sparkle, and burst,
The finest that man's ever known.
It's true that far off lightning flashes, 10750
And stars that fall in sudden dashes,
Can happen any summer's night:
But lightning in the tangled bushes,
And stars that fizzle in the rushes,
They're not such a common sight. 10755
Don't trouble about my command,
Ask first, then afterwards demand.

(The Ravens fly off. All takes place as ordered.)

Darkness cloaks the enemy!
Their footsteps meet uncertainty!
Everywhere are wandering flares, 10760
And those sudden blinding glares!
It's all beautiful indeed,
Now some noise is what we need.

Faust

The empty armour from each vaulted room,
Feels itself stiffen in the airy gloom: 10765
There it rattles, clatters all around,
A marvellous, and deceptive sound.

Mephistopheles

That's it! They no longer feel constrained:
Already their blows fall unrestrained,
As in the nobility of their former life. 10770
Breastplates and helmets gleam,
As Guelph and Ghibelline,
They quickly renew eternal strife.
Locked in hereditary bile,
They prove themselves, un-reconciled: 10775
Far and wide the noise is rife.
In the end, by all the Devils, yes!
Partisan hatred's still the best,
Till final ruin ends the tale:
Here rise the sounds of utter panic, 10780
And others bitter and Satanic,
Terrify, along the vale.

(Warlike tumult from the orchestra, finally changing to a lively martial air.)

Part II Act IV Scene III: The Rival Emperor's Tent

(A throne amongst rich trappings. Grab-quick and Swift-plunder.)

Swift-plunder

We're the first ones here, I see!

Grab-quick

No Raven flies as fast as me.

Swift-plunder

O! Look at the treasure there on top!
What will I grab? How shall I stop?

10785

Grab-quick

The whole place is still full of loot,
I don't know where to start, in truth!

Swift-plunder

This fur-rug, this'll go far,
Often my bed's far too hard.

10790

Grab-quick

Here's a morning star in steel,
I've always longed for one, I feel.

Swift-plunder

This red mantle, trimmed with gold,
Is like the one my dream foretold.

Grab-quick (*Taking a weapon.*)

With this the deed is swiftly done, 10795
You strike him dead and then move on.
You've already packed so much stuff,
And yet you've nothing good enough.
Leave your plunder in its place,
And put a casket in the space! 10800
The army's pay is what they hold,
In their fat bellies, purest gold.

Swift-plunder

What a murderous weight it is!
I can't lift: I can't carry it.

Grab-quick

Bend down: quick! You'll have to bow! 10805
I'll strap it to your back for now.

Swift-plunder

Oh! Ah! Now it's in front, too!
The weight's broken my cross in two.

(The chest falls and bursts open.)

Grab-quick

There's the red gold in a heap –
Quickly now, take and keep! 10810

Swift-plunder (*Crouching.*)

Quickly then, just fill my lap!
There'll still be enough perhaps.

Grab-quick

That's enough! Now off you go!

(Swift-plunder rises.)

Oh! Your apron has a hole!
Wherever you walk or stand,
You're sowing gold on every hand.

10815

Guardsmen of the True Emperor

What are you doing here, at leisure,
Rummaging in the Imperial treasure?

Grab-quick

We risked our bodies in the ranks,
And take away our share of thanks.
That's the rule, in enemy tents,
And we're soldiers too, my friends.

10820

The Guardsmen

That won't wash in our army:
You can't be soldier and thief equally:
Whoever serves our Emperor,
Is an honest soldier, and no more.

10825

Grab-quick

That honesty, we know it, son,
It's called: a contribution.
You're all the same: it's a crime,
'Give!' is the password every time,

10830

(To Swift-plunder.)

Take what you've got: and leave the rest,
Here one's hardly a welcome guest.

(They both exit.)

A Guardsman

Tell me why you didn't land
That churl with a good right hand.

A Second Guardsman

I don't know, my strength was gone, 10835
They were a pair of ghostly ones.

A Third Guardsman

There was something nasty in my eye,
I couldn't see: they flickered by.

A Fourth Guardsman

I don't know what to say:
It was sweltering hot today, 10840
So sultry, so close as well,
One man stood, another fell:
You staggered around and struck, in one,
At every blow you killed someone,
There was a mist in front of your eyes, 10845
Then a buzz, and rustle, and hiss went by:
So it went on, and here we are, now,
I don't know what happened, anyhow.

(The Emperor enters, accompanied by Four Princes. The Guardsmen exit.)

Now, let him do as he may! The battle here is done,
The host is scattered in flight, across the field new won. 10850
Here is the traitor's treasure, and his empty throne,
Where tapestries hang round, closed in a narrow zone.
Protected by our guard of honour, we'll wait
Imperially, for the people's delegate.
Messengers of joy arrive from every side: 10855

The Empire's calm, and we're mutually reconciled.
Though some wizardry was involved in our fight,
In the end we fought with only our own true might.
There were of course a few lucky accidents:
Stones from the sky, a shower of blood on their tents, 10860
Strange and mighty sounds from the rocky caves,
That lifted our hearts, and terrified their braves.
The conquered fell, beneath our relentless scorn,
Praising the kind god, our ranks cheer once more.
And all, without coercion, shout together as one: 10865
'God be praised!' from a million throats is wrung.
Yet in highest praise I turn my own pious glance
As I seldom do, towards my own circumstance.
A young man may well squander his early days,
But age teaches him all the error of his ways. 10870
Therefore at once without delay I bind you to me,
You noble four, to my House, Court and country.

(To the First.)

Prince, yours was the army's ordering, wisely planned,
Then, at the height of the battle, its bold command:
Now act, in time of peace, as the hour requires you to, 10875
I name you High-Marshall, and confer the sword on you.

The High-Marshall

Your loyal army, deployed, on my orders,
Internally, will now defend your borders,
Let us, too, prepare the table on feast days,
In your spacious castle's ancestral ways. 10880
Always to be your High Majesty's defence,
Standing beside you, or marching in advance.

The Emperor *(To the Second.)*

You, who show yourself as gracious as you're brave,
Be our High-Chamberlain: the office is grave.
You become the overseer of all our attendants, 10885
Great evil comes from strife among dependants:

So let your example honourably recall
How they may please their prince, the court and all.

The High-Chamberlain

Be gracious, that the Lords may further your great aim:
Assist the best and cause no injury to the lame, 10890
Be open without cunning: be calm without deceit!
If you know me, Sire, my ambition is complete.
But on the feast may I now deploy my imagination?
When you're at table, I shall bear the golden basin,
I'll hold your rings, that on those joyful days 10895
Your hands may be refreshed, as I am by your gaze.

The Emperor

I feel too serious for ready celebration,
But, be it so, as a joyful inauguration!

(To the Third.)

I make you High-Steward! Oversee the chase,
The poultry yard, and such, around the place: 10900
Give me the finest dishes, choice and rare,
In their right month, and carefully prepared.

The High-Steward

Strict fast will be my pleasant punishment,
Till I can serve the tastiest refreshment.
Your kitchen staff will join with me to bring 10905
The distant near, and make the year take wing.
Yet early and rare won't stimulate your fires,
Simple and strong, is what your taste desires.

The Emperor *(To the Fourth.)*

Since planning feasts is unavoidable here,
Young hero, I'll give you my cup to bear. 10910
High-Cupbearer, take care those cellars of mine

Are richly filled with casks of vintage wine.
Be temperate yourself: don't lose your reason
In the wild delight of momentary temptation!

The High-Cupbearer

The young, if you trust in them, my Prince, 10915
Grow to manhood, almost before you'd notice.
I'll take my place too at your noble feast:
And load the imperial table with all that's best,
With every kind of vessel, in silver and gold,
But the handsomest of all for you I'll hold: 10920
A clear Venetian glass, where joy is waiting,
That strengthens the taste, without intoxicating.
One often trusts too much in such a treasure:
But your restraint, Lord, will protect your pleasure.

The Emperor

What I bestow on you at this grave moment, 10925
You hear, in confidence, has my true intent.
The Emperor's word is great, his gift is sure,
But to be enacted it needs his signature,
His noble mark. Here's the right man I see
True to his time, to complete the formality. 10930

(The Archbishop and High-Chancellor enters.)

If the arch can trust the keystone's part,
Then it's raised securely, with lasting art.
You see four Princes here! And I've explained
How my House and Court must be sustained.
Now, what the empire holds within its bounds 10935
Is placed, with weight and power, in your hands.
You'll outshine all others in your estates:
So I've extended your walls and gates,
With the lost possessions of our enemy.
I award you fine lands, for your loyalty. 10940
Together with the right, in due course,
To buy, exchange, or add to them by force:

Then, be it known, I grant you unhindered use –
Of what belongs to you, the landlord's dues.
When you as judges speak your final thought, 10945
No appeal shall be heard by a higher court.
Then taxes, levies, rents, and tolls and fees,
Are yours: of mines, mints, salt the royalties.
And to display my gratitude completely,
I've raised you all to highest majesty. 10950

The Archbishop

On behalf of us all I give our deepest thanks to you!
You make us strong and sure: increasing your power too.

The Emperor

To you five, still higher favours will I give.
I live for my empire, and I still wish to live:
Yet ancient, noble ties draw the careful thinker 10955
From present things to those that follow after.
I too, in time, must leave all I still hold dear,
It's your duty then to name a new ruler, here.
At our holy altar, crown and raise him high:
What war begins ends peacefully, by and by. 10960

The High-Chancellor

With pride at heart, yet humble in gesture, too,
We, the Earth's noblest princes bow to you.
So long as blood fills our loyal veins, then still
Are we the body that obeys your every will.

The Emperor

Now, to conclude, let everything we've enacted 10965
Be set down for the future, as we've contracted.
As Lords you hold your possessions, free in fact,
With this condition, that they remain intact.
And what you have from us, whatever else is won,
Shall descend in due measure to the eldest son. 10970

The High-Chancellor

I'll entrust it to parchment straight away,
This weightiest statute to bless us, and the state:
The Chancery will provide fair copy, and reveal
You as confirmed, my Lords, by sign and seal.

The Emperor

And so I dismiss you that you may deliberate 10975
Together, concerning this great day for our state.

(The Secular Princes exit.)

The Archbishop

The Chancellor leaves, the Bishop remains here,
With this grave warning to offer in your ear.
His paternal heart, anxiously, fears for you.

The Emperor

Speak, in this happy hour, what care's on view? 10980

The Archbishop

With what bitter pain I find that even at this hour,
Your hallowed head still toys with Satan's power!
True, you've secured the throne now, yet it seems,
Sadly, scorning God, and the Pope's great schemes.
When he learns of it, swift punishment he'll bring, 10985
And destroy your sinful realm with holy lightning.

He's not forgotten how, at that earlier time,
Of coronation, you freed the wizard: in crime.
With your diadem, you injured Christianity,
Striking a cursed head with the first act of mercy. 10990

Now beat your breast and from your guilty measure,
Give back to the holy shrine a little treasure:
You, taught humility, devote to pious use, and good,

The spacious stretch of hills where your tent stood.
Where evil spirits gathered for your protection, 10995
And the Prince of Liars secured your attention:
Grant mount and forest deep, as far as they extend,
And heights, the green slopes adorn, without end.
Clear lakes rich in fish, countless streams that flow,
Winding swiftly, that rush to the valleys below: 11000
Then the broad vale itself, meadow, lawn and hollow:
Show your remorse: gain the mercy that must follow.

The Emperor

I'm deeply fearful of this, my heavy sin:
Yourself, mark out the borders of the scheme.

The Archbishop

First then the place profaned by such sinfulness, 11005
Dedicate that to the service of heavenliness.
Thick walls rise quickly, at the mind's desire,
Already the sun's dawn glance lights the choir,
The growing building takes the cross's structure,
The nave long and high, a delight to each believer: 11010
Already as they press eagerly through the doors,
A first peal rings through hills, down valley floors,
From the high tower, that's striving towards heaven,
The penitent comes, to whom new life is given.
That day of consecration – may it be soon! – 11015
When your presence grants the greatest boon.

The Emperor

Let the pious mind proclaim so great an action,
In praising the Lord, I'll achieve my expiation.
Enough! I already feel my mind's exaltation.

The Archbishop

As Chancellor I require a formal proclamation. 11020

The Emperor

A formal document: lay that before me,
I'll be pleased to sign whatever the Church agrees.

The Archbishop (*Has taken leave, but turns back at the door.*)

At the same time devote the total income of the land,
As it arises, tithes, taxes, levies, to the work on hand,
Forever. It needs to be maintained, fairly, 11025
And its careful upkeep will cost us dearly.
From all that plunder, grant us a measure of gold,
To build it quickly there, in that desert fold.
Moreover we'll need, I can't help mentioning,
Timber from far off, lime, slate, and such things. 11030
Exhorted from the pulpit, the folk will haul it,
The Church will bless the man who learns to serve it.

(*He exits.*)

The Emperor

The sin with which my soul is heavy, is full sore:
Wretched Sorcerers have wounded me, once more.

The Archbishop (*Returning, yet again, and bowing deeply.*)

Pardon, my Lord! The Imperial shore was given 11035
To that disreputable man, I'll excommunicate him,
Unless you in penitence grant the Church, there, too,
Its tithes, and gifts, and taxes: the whole of its revenue.

The Emperor (*In a bad humour.*)

That land doesn't exist, it lies there under the sea.

The Archbishop

Who's patient, and is right, his time is yet to be. 11040
For us, your word must wait on one man's desire.

(He exits.)

The Emperor *(Alone.)*

I might as well sign away the whole wide empire.

Part II Act V Scene I: Open Country

The Wanderer

Yes! Here are the dusky lindens,
Standing round, in mighty age.
And here am I, returning to them, 11045
After so long a pilgrimage!
It still appears the same old place:
Here's the hut that sheltered me,
When the storm-uplifted wave,
Hurled me shore-wards from the sea! 11050
My hosts are those I would bless,
A brave, a hospitable pair,
Who if I meet them, I confess,
Must already be white haired.
Ah! They were pious people! 11055
Shall I call, or knock? – Greetings,
If, as open-hearted, you still
Enjoy good luck, in meetings!

Baucis (*A little woman, very aged.*)

Gentle stranger! Quietly, quietly!
Peace! Let my husband rest! 11060
Long sleep lends the elderly,
Little time to work, at best.

The Wanderer

Tell me, Mother: are you that wife
To whom thanks should be given:
Who brought a young man back to life, 11065
When wife and husband worked as one?
Are you that Baucis who tirelessly
Restored my almost-vanished breath?

(*Her husband appears.*)

Are you that Philemon, who bravely

Saved my wealth from watery death? 11070
Your swiftly burning fire,
Your silvery sounding bell,
In chance, dread and dire,
Was the outcome that befell.
And now let me walk about, 11075
And view the boundless ocean:
Let me kneel, and be devout:
Mind troubled with emotion.

(He walks on, over the downs.)

Philemon *(To Baucis.)*

Hurry now, and lay the table,
Underneath the garden trees. 11080
Let him go: as in the fable,
He'll not credit what he sees.

(He follows, and stands beside the Wanderer.)

Where wave on wave, foaming wildly,
Savagely mistreated you,
See a garden planted, widely, 11085
See the Paradisial view.
I was too old to seize the day,
Unfit to work as long ago:
And while my powers ebbd away,
The tide extended its wide flow. 11090
Clever Lords set their bold servants
Digging ditches, building dikes,
To gain the mastery of ocean,
Diminishing its natural rights.
See green meadow bordering meadow, 11095
Field and garden, wood and town. –
But it's time to eat, so follow,
Sunset is approaching now.
See the sails, far away there,
Seeking port before the night. 11100
The birds fly homeward through the air:

Their harbour too heaves in sight.
So gaze then, at the whole horizon,
Where the blue sea used to flow,
Right and left there, to your vision,
Densely peopled space below.

11105

Part II Act V Scene II: In the Little Garden

(The three of them at table.)

Baucis *(To the stranger.)*

Are you dumb? And will you lift
Not a morsel to your mouth?

Philemon

He wants to comprehend the gift:
Tell him, freely then: speak out.

11110

Baucis

Well! It was a marvel, really!
It troubles me to this day:
Then its whole nature, surely,
Was peculiar, in its way.

Philemon

Is the Emperor, then, at fault,
Who granted him the land?
Didn't a herald make his halt,
Crying out what was planned?
Not far away there, on the dunes,
The first bold step was made,
Tents, huts! – And on the downs,
A palace, quickly raised.

11115

11120

Baucis

For days, work rumbled on in vain,
Pick and shovel, blow on blow:
Where the night's fires flamed,
Next day a dam would follow.
Human blood was forced to flow,
At night, rose the sound of pain:

11125

The seaward floating fiery glow
Was a canal, come dawn again.
He's a godless man: he'd steal
Our hut, and our few acres:
But like subjects we must kneel,
When we boast such neighbours.

11130

Philemon

Yet he's offered us another
Holding, on his new-won land!

11135

Baucis

Never trust what's built on water,
On the heights maintain your stand.

Philemon

Let's make our way to the chapel,
To watch the last glow of light,
Kneel, pray, and sound the bell,
And trust in God's ancient might!

11140

Part II Act V Scene III: The Palace

(Spacious pleasure-gardens: a broad straight canal. Faust in extreme old age, walking about, thoughtfully.)

Lynceus, the Warder *(Through a speaking trumpet.)*

The sun is fading, the last boats
Sail swiftly to the harbour here.
One large vessel gently floats, 11145
Down the canal: and draws near.
The bright flags flutter merrily,
The masts are trimmed, in time:
The boatmen all praise you gladly,
Fortune celebrates your prime. 11150

(The little bell on the dunes rings out.)

Faust *(Startled.)*

Accursed ringing! Wounding me
With shame: a treacherous blow:
My realm's laid out there, endlessly,
But, at my back, this vexes so,
Proclaiming, with its jealous sound: 11155
My great estate is less than fine,
The old hut, all the trees around,
The crumbling chapel, are not mine.
And even if I wished to rest there,
A strange shadow makes me shudder, 11160
It's a thorn in my eye, and deeper:
Oh! Would I were somewhere other!

The Warder *(From above.)*

The boat is sailing, brightly dressed,
Towards us, on the evening breeze!
Heaped, with boxes, sacks and chests, 11165
From its journey on the seas!

(A splendid boat, richly and brightly loaded with foreign goods.)

(Mephistopheles. The Three Mighty Warriors.)

Chorus

Here we land,
Already, here.
Hail to our Lord,
Our patron dear! 11170

(They disembark: the goods are unloaded.)

Mephistopheles

We've proven ourselves in every way,
Pleased, if we win our patron's praise.
We took two ships when we sailed before
With twenty ships we dock, once more.
What we've achieved, each fine thing, 11175
You'll see from the cargo that we bring.
The ocean's freedom frees the mind
There all thought is left behind!
You only need a handy grip,
You catch a fish, or take a ship, 11180
And once you're lord of all three,
The fourth one's tackled easily:
The fifth one's in an evil plight,
You have the might, and so the right.
You wonder what, and never how. 11185
I know a little of navigation:
War, trade, and piracy, allow,
As three in one, no separation.

The Three Mighty Warriors

No thanks for us!
No thanks at all! 11190
As if we've brought
A stench, that's all.
He pulls a
Nasty face again:
These royal goods 11195
Don't please him then.

Mephistopheles

Don't expect more
Pay for it!
What you've had
Is what you get. 11200

The Warriors

That was only
To pass the time:
We want an equal
Share in crime.

Mephistopheles

Then first set out in 11205
Hall on hall,
The costly treasures,
One and all!
And coming to
The splendid show, 11210
He'll think it all the
More, you know,
He won't be mean,
With you, at least,
He'll give the fleet, 11215
Feast on feast.
Tomorrow motley birds attend,

I want to take good care of them.

(The cargo is removed.)

(To Faust.)

This splendid fortune you embrace
With wrinkled brow, and gloomy face! 11220
Your noble wisdom has been crowned,
Sea's reconciled with solid ground:
From the shore, on swifter track,
The sea wills out the ship, and back:
So speak, that here, from your spire, 11225
Your arms might grip the world entire.
From this place the trench was cut,
Here stood the first wooden hut:
A little ditch was traced from here,
Where now vessels' wakes appear. 11230
Your servants' toil, your thought so wise,
Have won the Earth and Ocean's prize.
From here on –

Faust

– that accursed *here*!
That always brings me wretched fear,
To you who are so clever, I say it, 11235
It gives my heart sting on sting,
It's impossible for me to bear it.
I'm ashamed to even speak the thing.
The old ones up there should yield,
I want the limes as my retreat, 11240
The least tree in another's field,
Detracts from my whole estate.
There, to stand and look around,
I'll build a frame from bough to bough,
My gaze revealing, under the sun, 11245
A view of everything I've done,
Overseeing, as the eye falls on it,
A masterpiece of the human spirit,
Forging with intelligence,

A wider human residence. 11250
That's the worst suffering can bring,
Being rich, to feel we lack something.
The bell's chime, the lindens' breeze,
Like tombs in churchyards stifle me.
The exercise of my all-conquering will 11255
Is shattered in the sand, here, and lies still.
How can I drive it from my nature!
The bell peals, and I'm an angry creature.

Mephistopheles

It's natural! Intense frustration
Drives a man to desperation. 11260
Who doubts it! That clang I fear
Falls cruelly on a noble ear.
And that wretched *bing-bang-bong*,
Through the clear evening sky, that gong,
Is joined to every chance event, 11265
From first bath to last interment.
As if between its *bing* and *bong*
Life's a dream, and then is gone.

Faust

Such obstinacy and opposition
Diminishes the noblest position, 11270
Until in endless pain, one must
Grow deeply weary of being just.

Mephistopheles

Why bother yourself so much about them?
Shouldn't you long ago have colonised them?

Faust

Then go and push them aside for me! – 11275
You know the land, with my approval,
Set aside for the old folks removal.

Mephistopheles

We'll take them up, and set them down,
They'll stand, once more: I'll be bound:
When they've survived a little force, 11280
They'll be reconciled to it, of course.

(He whistles shrilly.)

Come: perform your Lord's command!
And tomorrow let the feast be planned.

The Three Warriors

This old Lord received us badly,
A feast now is our right: believe me. 11285

Mephistopheles *(To the audience.)*

And here we see, as long ago
Naboth's vineyard still on show. *(Kings I:21)*

Part II Act V Scene IV: Dead of Night

Lynceus, the Warder (*Singing on the watch-tower of the palace.*)

For seeing, I'm born,
For watching, employed,
To the tower, I'm sworn, 11290
While the world, I enjoy.
I gaze at the far,
I stare at the near,
The moon and the star,
The forest and deer: 11295
The eternally lovely
Adornment, I view,
And as it delights me
I delight myself too.
You, fortunate eyes, 11300
All you've seen, there,
Let it be as it may,
Yet it was so fair!

(*Pause.*)

I'm not positioned here, on high,
Just for my own enjoyment: 11305
What horror, meant to terrify,
Threatens from the firmament!
I see sparks of fire gushing
Through the lindens' double night,
Fanned by the wind's rushing, 11310
Ever stronger grows the light.
Ah! Within, the hut is burning,
Damp and mossy though it stand:
Swift help, in this direction turning,
Is needed, yet no aid's to hand. 11315
Ah! The pious old couple,
So careful ever of the fire,
Made a prey to smoke, to stifle,
On this dreadful pyre!
The flame burns on: glowing red,

It's now a blackened mossy pile: 11320
 If only those good folk are rescued,
 From those fires of hell, run wild!
 A bright tongue of lightning heaves,
 Through the branches, through the leaves: 11325
 Breaking, snapping, catching swiftly,
 Withered branches flicker, glow.
 Why have I such powers to see!
 Why are mine the eyes that know!
 The little chapel now collapses, 11330
 With the falling branches' weight.
 Already with bright snakelike flashes,
 The treetops, gripped, meet their fate.
 Glowing crimson, to their hollow
 Roots, the trunks now burn with ease. – 11335

(A long pause. Chant.)

What used to please my eyes, below,
 Has vanished with the centuries.

Faust *(On the balcony, towards the downs.)*

What whining song is that, above?
 Too late its word and tone reach me.
 The watchman wails: yes, I'm moved: 11340
 Annoyed by this impatient deed.
 But let the lime-trees be erased,
 A horror now of half-burnt timber,
 A watchtower can soon be raised,
 To gaze around at boundless splendour. 11345
 From there I'll see my new creation,
 One set aside for that old pair: at least,
 They'll feel benign consideration,
 Enjoying their last days in peace.

Mephistopheles and the Three Warriors *(Below.)*

Here we come, and at the double: 11350
 Pardon us! We've caused you trouble.

We knocked, and knocked on the door,
But it seemed locked for evermore:
We rattled it, and shook it too,
Until the planks broke in two: 11355
We called aloud, and threatened, then,
But there was no reply, again.
And as happens in such cases,
They heard nothing, hid their faces:
But we commenced without delay 11360
To drive the stubborn folk away.
That pair knew scant anxiety,
They died of terror, peacefully.
A stranger, who was hiding there,
And wished to fight, we tried to scare. 11365
But in the fast and furious bout,
From the coals that lay about,
The straw took fire. Now all three,
In that one pyre, burn merrily.

Faust

Were you deaf to what I said? 11370
I wanted them moved, not dead.
This mindless, and savage blow,
Earns my curse: share it, and go!

Chorus

The ancient proverb says of course:
Yield willingly to a greater force! 11375
While if you're bold and opt for strife,
You'll stake your house, and home – and life.

(They exit.)

Faust *(On the balcony.)*

Stars hide their faces, and their glow,
The fire sinks, and flickers low:
A moist breeze fans the dying ember, 11380

Bringing smoke and vapour closer.
Quickly said, too quickly done, I fear! –
Now, what hovers like a shadow, here?

Part II Act V Scene V: Midnight

(Four Grey Women enter.)

The First

I am called Want.

The Second

I am called Guilt.

The Third

I am called Care.

The Fourth

Necessity, I.

11385

Three Together (*Want, Guilt and Necessity*)

The door is shut tight, and we cannot get in:
The owner is rich: he won't have us within.

Want

I shrink to a shadow.

Guilt

To emptiest space.

Need

The wealthy from me turn their pampered face.

Care

Sisters, you can't enter, daren't enter there. 11390
But, through the keyhole now, always slips, Care.

(Care disappears.)

Want

You, my Grey Sisters, take your flight too.

Guilt

Close by your side, I come following you.

Necessity

Close at your heels is Necessity's breath.

The Three

The clouds there are moving, and cover the stars! 11395
Behind us, behind us! From far, oh, from far,
He's coming, our Brother, he's coming, he's – Death.

Faust (*In the Palace.*)

I saw four: but only three went away:
I caught no meaning from the words they say.
It sounded as if I heard – 'Necessity's breath', 11400
And then a gloomy rhyming word, like – 'Death'.
It rang hollow, ghostly, subdued, to me.
Even now I've not won my liberty.
If I could banish Sorcery from my track,
Unlearn the magic-spells that draw me back, 11405
And stand before you, Nature, as mere Man,
It would be worth the pain of being Human.
So was I, a seeker in the darkness,
Cursing both self and world, in wickedness.
Now the air is filled with phantom shapes, 11410

It's hard to see how anyone escapes.
Though day may smile on us with rational gleams,
The night entwines us in a web of dreams:
We come happily from the fields of youth,
A bird croaks: what? Misfortune: is our truth. 11415
Cloaked with superstitions, soon and late:
It's wedded to us, warns us: shows our fate.
And so, alone, intimidated, we stand.
The door creaks, yet no one is at hand.

(Anxiously.)

Is anyone there?

Care
The answer must be, yes! 11420

Faust

And you, who then are you?

Care
I am your guest.

Faust

Be gone!

Care
I am here, in my proper place.

Faust *(First angered, then composed, addressing himself.)*

Take care: of magic spells show not a trace.

Care

Though the ear choose not to hear,
In the heart I echo, clear: 11425
Savage power I exercise,
Transformed I am, to mortal eyes.
On the land, and on the ocean,
Evermore the dread companion,
Always found, and never sought, 11430
Praised, as well as cursed, in thought. –
Have you yourself not known Care?

Faust

I sped through the World that's there:
Gripped by the hair every appetite,
And let go those that failed to delight, 11435
Let those fly that quite escaped me.
I've desired, achieved my course,
Desired again, and so, with force,
Stormed through life: first powerfully,
But wisely now: and thoughtfully. 11440
Earth's sphere's familiar enough to me,
The view beyond is barred eternally:
The fool who sets his sights up there,
Creates his own likeness in the air!
Let him stand, and look around him well: 11445
This world means something to the capable.
Why does he need to roam eternity!
Let him grasp what is firm reality.
So let him wander down his earthly day:
And if ghosts haunt him, go on his way, 11450
Find joy and suffering in striding on,
Dissatisfied with every hour that's gone.

Care

When of man I take possession,
Then his whole world is lessened:
Endless gloom meets his eyes, 11455
No more suns will set or rise,
Though intact, to outer sense,
He lives in the dark, intense,
Never knowing how to measure
Any portion of his treasure. 11460
Good and ill are merely chance,
He starves, food in his hands:
Be it joy or be it sorrow
He delays it till tomorrow,
Waiting for the future, ever, 11465
Finding his fulfilment, never.

Faust

Be gone! And don't come near me!
Such nonsense I'll not understand.
Away, with your evil litany,
Sent to confuse the cleverest man! 11470

Care

Shall he come, or shall he go?
All decision is denied him:
In the middle of the road,
He staggers, feeling round him.
He's ever more deeply lost, 11475
Seeing everything star-crossed,
Wearies himself and all the rest,
Stifles as he holds his breath:
Lifeless, but not yet gone under,
Resists despair or surrender. 11480
So, with an incessant rolling,
A painful end, and hard going,
Now free, and now constrained,
In half sleep, poorly entertained,

Confine him in a little space: 11485
Prepare him for Hell's other place.

Faust

Unholy spectre! So you hand our race
To the ravages of a thousand devils:
Even transform our worthless days
To a wretched knot of entangling evils. 11490
It's hard I know to free oneself from Demons,
The strong spirit-bonds are not lightly broken:
And yet, Care, I'll not recognise you, nor even,
That creeping power of yours, by any token.

Care

Feel it now, as on the wind, 11495
I, and my curse, depart, again.
Lifelong, all you men are blind,
Now, Faust, be so to the end!

(She breathes in his face, and departs.)

Faust *(Now blind.)*

The night seems deeper all around me,
Only within me is there gleaming light: 11500
I must finish what I've done, and hurry,
The master's word alone declares what's right.
Up from your beds, you slaves! Man on man!
Reveal the daring of my favoured plan.
Seize the tools: on with pick and spade! 11505
Let the end-result be now displayed.
Strict order, and swift industry
Then the finest prize we'll see:
And so the greatest work may stand,
One mind equal to a thousand hands. 11510

Part II Act V Scene VI: The Great Outer Court of the Palace

(Torches.)

Mephistopheles *(In advance, as Overseer.)*

Come on! Come on! In here, in here!
Quivering spirits of the dead,
All you patchwork semi-natures,
Sinew, bone, and tendon wed.

The Spirits of the Dead *(Lemures, in Chorus.)*

Swiftly now we are on hand	11515
With half an impression,	
That it concerns a tract of land,	
Of which we'll gain possession.	
Pointed stakes with us appear,	
Chains to measure ground on:	11520
But why you've called us here	
Is something we've forgotten.	

Mephistopheles

Artistic effort's not the prize:	
Carry it out in your own manner!	
Lay the longest one of you lengthwise,	11525
Then pile the turf on him, you others.	
Do as they once did for our fathers there,	
Dig out a somewhat lengthened square!	
Gone from a palace to a narrow place:	
It's still as stupid an end for man to face.	11530

The Spirits of the Dead *(Digging with mocking gestures.)*

When I was young and lived and loved,
I thought it was very sweet:
To happy sounds, and cheerful steps,
I lifted up my feet.

Now treacherous old age has clawed 11535
Me with his crutch, since when
I stumble at the grave's wide door,
Why do they leave it open!

Faust (*Comes from the Palace, groping his way past the doorposts.*)

How the clattering of shovels cheers me!
It's the crews still labouring on, 11540
Till earth is reconciled to man,
The waves accept their boundaries,
And ocean's bound with iron bands.

Mephistopheles (*Aside.*)

And yet with all your walls and dams
You're merely dancing to our tune: 11545
Since you prepare for our Neptune,
The Water-demon, one vast feast.
You'll be lost in every way –
The elements are ours, today,
And ruin comes on running feet. 11550

Faust

Overseer!

Mephistopheles

Here!

Faust

Any way you can
Bring crowds of labourers together,
Spurred by force or hope of pleasure,
By pay, enticement or press-gang!
Report to me on progress every day, 11555
The depth of earth and gravel dug away.

Mephistopheles (*Half-aloud.*)

Reporting it to me the word they gave,
Was not quite gravel, it was more like – grave.

Faust

A swamp lies there below the hill,
Infecting everything I've done: 11560
My last and greatest act of will
Succeeds when that foul pool is gone.
Let me make room for many a million,
Not wholly secure, but free to work on.
Green fertile fields, where men and herds 11565
May gain swift comfort from the new-made earth.
Quickly settled in those hills' embrace,
Piled high by a brave, industrious race.
And in the centre here, a Paradise,
Whose boundaries hold back the raging tide, 11570
And though it gnaws to enter in by force,
The common urge unites to halt its course.
Yes, I've surrendered to this thought's insistence,
The last word Wisdom ever has to say:
He only earns his Freedom and Existence, 11575
Who's forced to win them freshly every day.
Childhood, manhood, age's vigorous years,
Surrounded by dangers, they'll spend here.
I wish to gaze again on such a land,
Free earth: where a free race, in freedom, stand. 11580
Then, to the Moment I'd dare say:
'Stay a while! You are so lovely!'
Through aeons, then, never to fade away
This path of mine through all that's earthly. –
Anticipating, here, its deep enjoyment, 11585
Now I savour it, that highest moment.

(Faust sinks back, the spirits of the dead take him and lay him on the ground.)

Mephistopheles

No bliss satisfied him, no enjoyment,
And so he tried to catch at shifting forms:
The last, the worst, the emptiest of moments,
He wished to hold at last in his arms. 11590
Though against me he tried to stand,
Time is master: age lies on the sand.
The clock stands still –

Chorus

Stands still! As midnight: silent.
The hand moves.

Mephistopheles

It falls, and all is spent.

Chorus

It's past.

Mephistopheles

Past! A stupid word. 11595
Then, why?
Past, and pure nothing, complete monotony!
What use is this eternal creation!
Creating, to achieve annihilation!
'There, it's past!' What's to read in it? 11600
It's just the same as if it never lived,
Yet chases round in circles, as if it did.
I'd prefer to have the everlasting void.

Burial

A Spirit of the Dead (*Solo.*)

Who's built the house so badly,
With shovel and with spade? 11605

Spirits of the Dead (*Chorus.*)

For you dull guest, in hempen dress,
It was all too carefully made.

A Spirit of the Dead (*Solo.*)

Who's decked the hall so badly?
Where now the table and chairs?

Spirits of the Dead (*Chorus.*)

Borrowed for a little while: 11610
There are many creditors.

Mephistopheles

The body's here: if the spirit tries to fly,
I'll show it my blood-signed title swiftly:
Yet men have found so many methods, sadly,
To cheat the Devil of their souls, or try. 11615

We carry on the same old way,
New ones aren't recommended:
I used to work alone: today
I have to use the help extended.
And everything goes badly too! 11620

Ancient right, traditional use,
One can't rely on those much longer.
At the last breath, once, the soul was out,
I slipped by, and like the swiftest mouse,
Caught her! Held her fast, my claws were stronger. 11625
Now she lingers, won't leave the gloomy place,
The foul corpse's hideous house, until

The elements force her, in hatred still,
And drive her out at last, in disgrace.
And though the hour and minute plague me, 11630
‘When’, ‘how’ and ‘where’, still the tiresome query:
Old Death has lost his ancient power,
‘Whether’ is doubtful, never mind the hour:
Often, with lust, I saw the rigid frame
It was a sham: it stirred, and rose again. 11635

(He makes fantastic, whirling conjuring gestures.)

Now quick! Redouble your paces, too,
You gentlemen, straight or twisted-horned,
The old Devil’s grain and kernel born,
And bring Hell’s jaws along with you.
True Hell has many jaws! Yes, many! 11640
To swallow according to standing and worth:
However in this last game of all we’re ready
To be a little less considerate, henceforth.

(The fearful jaws of Hell open on the left.)

The tusks yawn wide: the jaws of the abyss,
Flow with raging flames, in fury, 11645
And in the boiling background hiss,
I see the eternal glow of the fiery city.
The crimson tide breaks against the teeth,
The damned in hope of help swim through:
But the vast hyena mangles them beneath, 11650
And sends them to new anguish in the brew.
There are many corners to discover,
So many horrors in such little room!
You’ve done quite well at frightening sinners,
But still they think it dream, deceit, untrue. 11655

(To the fat devils with short straight horns.)

Now, you fat-bellied rascals with fiery cheeks!
You’ve grown that way eating hellish sulphur:
Stumpy, short, with thick immoveable necks!

Watch below, for any glow of phosphor:
That's the soul, Psyche with the wings, 11660
Pluck them off and she's a nasty worm:
I'll stamp her with my signature, first thing,
Then off with her to the whirling fiery storm!
Pass on towards the nether regions,
You barrels, since all that's your duty: 11665
Whether she lives there, that's the notion,
None know with any accuracy.
She'll gladly lodge in the navel –
Lest she slip away from there, be careful.

(To the lean devils with long crooked horns.)

You, clowns, you giant flying creatures, 11670
Grasp at the air: grant yourselves no rest!
Your strong arms and sharp-clawed features,
Are sure to hold the fluttering fugitive fast.
She's stuck there inside her ancient house,
And Spirit will always look for a way out. 11675

(Glory from above, on the right.)

The Heavenly Host

Messengers follow
Heavenly kin, oh,
In leisurely flight:
Sin they forgive,
Dust they make live: 11680
The friendship they show
To Nature below,
Floating they'll give,
As they slowly alight!

Mephistopheles

I hear discords, all that nasty jingling, 11685
Coming from up there, with unwelcome day:
It's always that childish, girlish bungling,

That pious taste loves to hear and play.
You know how we in despicable moments,
Considered the ruin of the human race: 11690
But the most shameful of compliments,
Is that their prayers are a worse disgrace.
These dandies come, the hypocrites:
They've snatched a heap of souls away,
Use our own weapons too to do it: 11695
They're Devils in disguise, I'd say.
To lose this one is everlasting shame:
On to the grave, and renew your claim!

The Choir of Angels (*Scattering roses*)

Roses, you dazzling ones,
Balsam you're sending us, 11700
Floating and trembling,
Secretly quickening,
Branches inspiring us,
Buds sweetly firing us,
Hasten to bloom! 11705
Crimson and green, here
Springtime assume!
Carry the sleeper
To Paradise' room.

Mephistopheles (*To the devils.*)

Why duck and dive? Is that Hell's custom? 11710
Stand still, and let them do their scattering.
Every gawk in place, and face them!
They think with such a flowery smattering,
To cool the heat of devils' chattering:
At your breath it melts and shrinks, again. 11715
Now blow, you blowers! – Enough, enough!
Your bubbling's faded all that stuff. –
Not so fiercely! Close your mouths and noses!
Ah, now you've been too violent with the roses,
Where's the moderation you should have learnt? 11720
They're not just shrivelling: they're burning, burnt!

They float about in flames, poisonous, bright:
Avoid them: close together, huddle tight! –
Your power's waning! And your courage too!
The devils sniff the strange, seductive brew. 11725

The Choir of Angels

Blossoms, of joyfulness,
Flames, of true happiness,
Love, they radiate,
Bliss, they now create,
As the heart may. 11730
Words that are truest,
Air of the clearest,
Gathering round us
Eternal day!

Mephistopheles

O, curses! O shower of shame that's shed! 11735
Each Satan's standing on his head,
The Fatties spin like tops, in curves,
And plunge arse-upwards into Hell.
Go find the hot baths you deserve!
While at my post I'll stand here still. – 11740

(He beats at the hovering roses.)

Will-o'-the wisps, be gone! Though you burn bright,
Snatched at, in the end, you're disgusting shite.
Why'd you keep fluttering here? Buzz off! –
They stick like tar and sulphur: filthy stuff.

The Choir of Angels

What is not part of you, 11745
You need not share it:
What inwardly troubles you,
You need not bear it.
Should it close in, with force,

We will deflect its course. 11750
Only the loving, Love
Guides to its source!

Mephistopheles

My head and heart are burnt: my liver's burnt,
By a devilish element!
Sharper than the fires of Hell! – 11755
That's what makes you cry, so, as well,
You, the unlucky in love! Disdained,
Heads turned to the beloved, strained.
Mine, too! What's twisted it to one side?
Are they and I not sworn to eternal strife? 11760
I, once fiercely hostile to their very sight.
Has an alien force pierced me through and through?
I gladly gaze at them, loveliest of youths:
What holds me back from cursing at the light? –
And if I let myself be seduced, 11765
Who'll play the fool in future?
These airy fellows that I hate, too,
How lovely to me now they all appear! –
You sweet children, tell me then:
Aren't you part of Lucifer's race? 11770
You're so nice I'd like to kiss you, and again,
It feels as if this is your proper place.
It feels as comfortable, as natural to me,
As if we'd met a thousand times before:
So surreptitiously catlike, so lustfully: 11775
The loveliness with each glance quickens more.
Oh, come nearer: Oh, only glance at me!

The Angels

We're here already, why so cautiously?
We are close, and, if you can, then stay!

(The Angels come forward and occupy the whole space.)

Mephistopheles (*Crowded into the proscenium.*)

You scorn us, the spirits of the damned, 11780
Yet you're of the true Sorcerers' brand:
You lead both man and wife astray. –
What wretched luck, and dire!
Is this Love's own element?
My whole body's bathed in fire, 11785
I scarcely feel, my head's so burnt. –
You float to and fro, sink down a while,
Move your sweet limbs with earthly guile:
True, a grave expression suits you well,
But I'd still like to see you smile a little! 11790
That would be an eternal delight to me.
Like the lovers' mutual glance, you see:
A simper round the mouth, is how it's done,
You, the tall lad, you could make me love you,
The priest's pose doesn't really suit you, 11795
So show a little lust, and look hereon!
You could be more modestly naked too,
That robe's long hem, so demure in its rising –
They turn away – and seen from the rear view –
Those rascals now are really appetising! 11800

The Choir of Angels

You, loving fires,
Brighter, now, fanned,
Heal the damned,
With Truth, the higher!
Let them be freed 11805
From evil indeed,
Blissfully grace,
The eternal embrace.

Mephistopheles (*Collecting himself.*)

What's happening to me! – Like Job, in fact
All boils: so I scare myself, and yet I've won 11810
As well, since, now my inspection's done,
And my trust in self and tribe's well placed,
The Devil's noble bits appear intact,
This love-bewitchment's only on the surface:
The wretched flames already smother, 11815
And, as is right, I curse you all together!

The Choir of Angels

Pure incandescence!
Whom its flames bless,
Blissful with goodness,
Is their existence. 11820
Gathered together,
Rise now, and praise!
Spirit can breathe here,
In purer waves!

(They rise, carrying away the immortal part of Faust.)

Mephistopheles (*Looking round him.*)

How then? – Where did they vanish to? 11825
You took me by surprise, you adolescents.
Now with what they've salvaged from the tomb,
As their own prize, they've flown off to heaven:
They've stolen a great, a unique treasure:
That noble soul, mortgaged to my pleasure, 11830
They've snatched it away, with cunning even.
But whom could I complain to, anyway?
Who'd grant me my well-earned right?
You've been swindled in your old age,
You've deserved it, this wretched slight. 11835
At great expense, shameful! And it's gone:
I've mishandled it all disgracefully,
A common lust, an absurd passion,

Swayed the hardened devil foolishly.
And if Experience was in a mess,
With all these childish, stupid things,
It was, in truth, no trivial Foolishness,
That took possession of him in the end.

11840

Part II Act V Scene VII: Mountain Gorges, Forest, Rock, Desert

(Holy Hermits, divided in ascending planes, posted among the ravines.)

Chorus and Echo

Forests, they wave around,
Over them, cliffs bear down, 11845
Roots cling to rocky ground,
Trunk upon trunk is bound,
Wave after wave sprays up,
Deep caves protecting us.
Lions prowl silently, 11850
Round us, still friendly,
Honouring sacred space,
Love's holy hiding place.

Pater Ecstaticus *(Hovering up and down.)*

Eternal, fire of bliss,
Glow of love's bond this is, 11855
Pain in the heart, seething,
Rapture divine, foaming.
Arrows, come, piercing me,
Spears, compelling me,
Clubs, you may shatter me, 11860
Lightning may flash through me!
So passes the nullity
Of all unreality,
And from the lasting star
Shines Love's eternal core. 11865

Pater Profundis *(At a lower level.)*

As this rocky abyss at my feet,
Rests on a deeper abyss,
As a thousand glittering streams meet
In the foaming flood's downward hiss,
As with its own strong impulse, above, 11870
The tree lifts skywards in the air:

Even so all-powerful love,
 Creates all things, in its care.
 Around me there's a savage roar,
 As if the rocks and forests sway, 11875
 Yet full of love the waters pour,
 Rushing bountifully away,
 Sent to irrigate the valley here:
 The lightning that flashed down,
 Must purify the atmosphere, 11880
 With poisonous vapours bound –
 They are love's messengers, they tell
 Of what creates eternally around us.
 May it inflame me inwardly, as well,
 Since my spirit, cold and confounded, 11885
 Torments itself, bound in the dull senses,
 As sharp-toothed fetters' agonising art.
 Oh, God! Calm my thoughts, pacify us,
 And bring light to my needy heart!

Pater Seraphicus (*In the middle regions.*)

What a mist of morning hovers 11890
 Through the pine-trees' swaying hair!
 Can I guess what it might cover?
 A crowd of spirits live there.

Choir of Sacred Young Boys

Tell us, Father, where we wander,
 Tell us, Kind One, who we are? 11895
 We are happy: Being's tender
 To all who are, all who are.

Pater Seraphicus

Young boys! Born at midnight's hour,
 Mind and spirit half-unveiled,
 For your parents, a lost dower, 11900
 For the angels, profit gained.
 You can feel that one who loves

Is near to you, so come to me:
Yet of earthly ways and moves,
You bear no traces, happily. 11905
Rise into my eyes, those known
Organs of the earthly life,
You can use them as your own,
Gaze at all the spaces wide!

(He absorbs them into himself.)

Those are trees: those are cliffs, 11910
A stream of water, rushing round,
With gigantic leaps it lifts,
Shortening its journey down.

The Young Boys (*From within him.*)

That's indeed a mighty vision,
But it's gloomy here, you know, 11915
With fear and dread we're all shaken.
Father, Kind one, let us go!

Pater Seraphicus

Rise upwards to the highest sphere,
Grow unnoticed there forever,
While in pure eternal manner, 11920
God's presence makes you stronger.
Such is the spirit's libation,
Blending with the freest air:
Love's eternal revelation,
Bliss is unfolded there. 11925

The Choir of Young Boys (*Circling round the highest summit.*)

Hands now entwining,
Joyfully circling round,
Soaring and singing
With sacred feeling's sound!
In the divinely taught, 11930

Now you should trust:
He whom your worship sought
You'll see at last.

The Angels (*Soaring in the highest atmosphere, carrying the immortal part of Faust.*)

He's escaped, this noble member
Of the spirit world, from evil, 11935
Whoever strives, in his endeavour,
We can rescue from the devil.
And if he has Love within,
Granted from above,
The sacred crowd will meet him, 11940
With welcome, and with love.

The Younger Angels

Every rose from the hands
Of those penitents, loving, holy,
Helped us win the victory,
The highest work, completed, stands, 11945
The treasure of this soul we've won.
Evil bowed to petals thrown,
Devils fled the blows we threw.
Instead of Hell's hurts anew,
They felt spirits' loving pain: 11950
Pierced with agony again
The old devil-master too was gone.
Shout with joy! All is done.

The More Perfect Angels

Carrying earthly remains
Is hard to endure, 11955
Though they survive the flames,
They are still the impure.
Once a great spirit's strength
So tightly fits
All the four elements, 11960

No angel splits
That double nature wed,
The inwardly binding:
To Eternal Love instead
Is left the unwinding. 11965

The Younger Angels

Misted on rocky heights
Now we are feeling,
Nearing our clearer sight
Spiritual Being. 11970
These clouds are vanishing

A crowd I see, moving,
Of sacred young men,
Freed from their earthly gloom,
Circling together,
Delighting again, 11975

In the spring's brighter bloom,
In higher air.
Let them together then,
Lead him on: risen,
Perfect, and there! 11980

The Young Boys

Joyfully we receive
Him as a chrysalis:
So that we now achieve
A pledge of our bliss. 11985
Let all the threads be lost

That now surround him!
He is already blessed,
Divine Love has found him.

Doctor Marianus (*The transformed Faust: in the highest purest cell.*)

Here is the freest view,
Of spirit borne skywards. 11990
There women moving too

Drifting on upwards.
The splendour I see within
Garlands of stars,
There, all the Heavens' Queen 11995
Shines from afar.

(Enraptured.)

Highest Queen of all the world!
Let me, in the blue,
With all heaven's web unfurled,
Know your mystery too. 12000

Approve the tender, serious,
Stir of the human heart,
And in love's sacred bliss,
Raise it higher, through your art.
Our courage is unconquerable 12005
When you command on high:
But our glow is gentler, still,
When you are satisfied.

Virgin, pure, of loveliest mind,
Mother, in all nobility, 12010
Peer to everything divine,
Queen of our reality.

Such light cloud fragments
Wind all around her,
They are the penitents, 12015
Women so tender,

All around her knees,
Breathing the air, free,
Desiring her mercy.
You are the Virginal Mother, 12020

It's not surprising
Those seduced by another
Towards you are rising.
Taken in weakness now,
They are all harder to save: 12025

Who can resist the power
Of desires that enslave?
How quickly the feet may slip

On smooth, sloping ground!
Who's un-tempted by glance and lip, 12030
Or by flattering sounds?

(The Mater Gloriosa soars into space.)

Choir of Female Penitents

You soar, on high, now,
Towards the eternal realm,
Hear our pleading, though,
You, the peerless one, 12035
Oh, merciful one!

Magna Peccatrix *(The sinful woman who anointed Christ's feet, See Luke vii:36)*

By the love that at the feet there
Of your son, divine, transfigured,
Let the tears like balsam flow there,
Despite the Pharisees' derision: 12040
By the vessel, that so richly
Spread its fragrance on the ground,
By the locks of hair that softly
Dried the holy feet, shed round –

The Woman of Samaria *(The woman at the well, See John iv)*

By the well, where once before 12045
Abraham's flocks were driven,
By the jar, that cooled the Saviour,
That to sacred lips was given:
By the pure and flowing fountain,
That poured out its clear water, 12050
Overflowing, bright and certain,
Through all the worlds, forever.

Mary of Egypt *(Acta Sanctorum)*

By the consecrated place

Where the Lord's body lay:
By the warning arm, against my face, 12055
That thrust me far from the doorway:
By my forty years' repentance,
Faithful, in that desert land:
By the blissful final sentence
That I wrote there on the sand – 12060

All Three

Since you offer your presence
To the worst sinner,
The prize of penitence
Soars upwards forever,
Begrudge not this true soul, 12065
Who, this once, transgressed,
Not knowing she might fall,
Commensurate forgiveness!

A Penitent, Formerly Named Gretchen (*Stealing closer.*)

Oh, bow down,
You peerless one, 12070
You radiant one,
Your face, in mercy, towards my bane!
My true beloved,
No longer clouded,
Returns to me again. 12075

The Sacred Young Boys (*Nearing, hovering in circles.*)

With mighty limbs, already
He is beyond us there,
Returning to us, so richly,
The rewards of our care.
We were taken early 12080
Out of life's chorus:
Yet he's learned, so he
Will gently teach us.

The Penitent, Formerly Named Gretchen

Changed to himself, he's scarce aware
Of the spirits' noble choir all around, 12085
He hardly knows his new life, there,
Already he's so like the sacred crowd.
See, how he's thrown off every bond
Of his old earthbound integument,
And his first youth now's re-found, 12090
It shines through his ethereal garment.
Allow me to teach him, here,
The new light still blinds him so.

The Mater Gloriosa

Come! Rise towards the higher spheres!
Gaining awareness of you, he will follow. 12095

Doctor Marianus (*Bowing, in adoration.*)

Gaze towards that saving gaze,
All you, the penitent and tender,
To all those blissful ways,
Give thanks, and follow after.
Let every finer sense, unseen, 12100
Be offered to her service,
Virgin, Mother now, and Queen,
Goddess, grant your mercies!

The Mystic Choir

All of the transient,
Is parable, only: 12105
The insufficient,
Here, grows to reality:
The indescribable,
Here, is done:
Woman, eternal, 12110
Beckons us on.

