

Henry Purcell (1659-1695) – *Fairest Isle* (1691)

Fairest Isle

Fairest isle of isles excelling, seat of pleasures and of loves,
Venus here will choose her dwelling, and forsake her Cyprian groves.
Cupid, from his fav'rite nation, care and envy will remove;
Jealousy, that poisons passion and despair that dies for love.
Gentle murmurs, sweet complaining, sighs that blow the fire of love,
Soft repulses, kind disdainings, shall be all the pains you prove.
Every swain shall pay his duty, grateful every nymph shall prove;
And as these excel in beauty, those shall be renown'd for love.

John Dryden (1631-1700)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) – from *Five English Folk Songs* (1913)

4. The Lover's Ghost

Well met, well met, my own true love;
Long time I have been absent from thee;
I am lately come from the salt sea,
And 'tis all for the sake, my love, of thee.

I have three ships all on the salt sea,
And one of them has brought me to land,
I've four and twenty mariners on board,
You shall have music at your command.

The ship wherein my love shall sail
Is glorious for to behold,
The sails shall be of shining silk,
The mast shall be of the fine beaten gold.

I might have had a King's daughter,
And fain she would have married me,
But I forsook her crown of gold,
And 'tis all for the sake, my love, of thee.

5. Wassail Song

Wassail, Wassail, all over the town,
Our bread it is white and ale it is brown;
Our bowl it is made of the green maple tree;
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the ox and to his right eye,
Pray God send our master a good Christmas pie,
A good Christmas pie as e'er I did see.
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the ox and to his right horn,
Pray God send our master a good crop of corn,
A good crop of corn as e'er I did see,
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the ox and to his long tail,
Pray God send our master a good cask of ale,
A good cask of ale as e'er I did see,
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Come, butler, come fill us a bowl of the best;
Then I pray that your soul in heaven may rest;
But if you do bring us a bowl of the small,
May the Devil take butler, bowl and all!

Then here's to the maid in the lily white smock,
Who tripp'd to the door and slipp'd back the lock;
Who tripp'd to the door and pull'd back the pin,
For to let these jolly Wassailers walk in.

James MacMillan (b1959) – *The Gallant Weaver* (1997)

Where Cart rins rowin' to the sea,
By mony a flower and spreading tree,
There lives a lad, the lad for me,
He is a gallant Weaver.

O, I had wooers aught or nine,
They gied me rings and ribbons fine;
And I was fear'd my heart wad tine,
And I gied it to the Weaver.

My daddie sign'd my tocher-band,
To gie the lad that has the land,
But to my heart I'll add my hand,
And give it to the Weaver.

While birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
While bees delight in opening flowers,
While corn grows green in summer showers,
I love my gallant Weaver

Robert Burns (1759-1796)

Kristina Arekelyan (b1994) – *My True Love is Parted from Me* (2016)

The winter it is past, and the summer comes at last,
And the small birds sing on ev'ry tree:
The hearts of these are glad, but mine is very sad,
For my love is parted from me.

The rose upon the brier by the waters running clear
May have charms for the linnet or the bee:
Their little loves are blest, and their little hearts at rest,
But my lover is parted from me

My love is like the sun in the firmament does run -
Forever is constant and true;
But his is like the moon, that wanders up and down,
And every month it is new.

All you that are in love, and cannot it remove,
I pity the pains you endure,
For experience makes me know that your hearts are
full of woe,
A woe that no mortal can cure.

Robert Burns

Gordon Jacob arr. (1895-1984) – *The Ash Grove* (trad. Welsh) (1928)

The ash grove, how graceful, how plainly 'tis speaking
The wind through it playing has language for me.
Whenever its branches the sunlight is breaking,
A host of kind faces is gazing on me.
The friends of my childhood again are before me
Each step wakes a memory as freely I roam.
With soft whispers laden the leaves rustle o'er me
The ash grove, the ash grove alone is my home.

Down yonder green valley where streamlets meander
When twilight is fading I pensively rove
Or at the bright noontide in solitude wander
Amid the dark shades of the lonely ash grove.
'Twas there while the blackbird was cheerfully singing
I first met that dear one, the joy of my heart
Around us for gladness the bluebells were ringing
But then little thought I how soon we should part.

My lips smile no more, my heart loses its lightness;
No dream of the future my spirit can cheer.
I only can brood on the past and its brightness
The dear ones I long for again gather here.
From ev'ry dark nook they press forward to meet me;
I lift up my eyes to the broad leafy dome,
And others are there, looking downward to greet me
The ash grove, the ash grove, again is my home.

Michael Tippett (1905-1998) – from *Four Songs from the British Isles* (1957)

4. Gwennllian

Gwennllian, O my heart's delight.
You sleep unmov'd by wars command
and hold your small red-yellow apple in your hand.
Your baby cheeks, so rosy red and bright,
your heart so happy day and night.

Gwenllian, O my heart's delight.
Forget our world of woe,
O bless'd princess within your cradle,
Where you hold an apple
that is all your earthly care.
Your brothers battle bravely,
for your father's sword is at his thigh,
but you are sound asleep
and dreaming where you lie.

Gwenllian, O heart's delight.
The land shakes now with noise of Norman war.
O angels guard thy father's door!
To sleep so healthily content;
The Queens of highest line
would all forgo their thrones
for bed of such a babe so small.

Gwenllian, O my heart's delight.

Bob Chilcott (b1955) – *The Isle is Full of Noises* (2004)

Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices...

Caliban, from The Tempest Act3 Scene2

INTERVAL

Cecilia McDowall (b1951) – *Be Not Afeard* (2018)

Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open, and show riches
Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked
I cried to dream again.

...then to the elements/ Be free, and fare thou well!

Caliban The Tempest Act3 Scene2; and Prospero The Tempest Act5 Scene1

Gustav Holst arr. (1874-1934) – *I Love my Love* (trad. Cornish) (1916)

Abroad as I was walking, one evening in the spring,
I heard a maid in Bedlam so sweetly for to sing;
Her chains she rattled with her hands
And thus replied she:

“I love my love because I know my love loves me!

O cruel were his parents who sent my love to sea,
And cruel was the ship that bore my love from me;
Yet I love his parents since they're his
Although they've ruined me:

I love my love because I know my love loves me!

With straw I'll weave a garland
I'll weave it very fine;
With roses, lilies, daisies
I'll mix the eglantine;
And I'll present it to my love
When he returns from sea

For I love my love, because I know my love loves me.”

Just as she sat there weeping
Her love he came on land.
Then hearing she was in Bedlam
He ran straight out of hand.
He flew into her snow-white arms
And thus replied he:

“I love my love, because I know my love loves me.”

She said: “My love don't frighten me;
Are you my love or no?”
“O yes, my dearest Nancy
I am your love, also
I am return'd to make amends
For all your injury;

I love my love because I know my love loves me.”

So now these two are married
And happy may they be
Like turtle doves together,
In love and unity.
All pretty maids with patience wait
That have got loves at sea;

I love my love because I know my love loves me

Kerry Andrew (b1978) – *All Things are Quite Silent* (trad. English) (2013/2020)

All things are quite silent, each mortal at rest,
When me and my true love lay snug in our nest,
When a full set of ruffians broke into our cave
And they forced my dear jewel to plough the salt wave.

I begged hard for my sailor as I though I begged for life
But they'd not listen to me, although a fond wife,
Saying 'the king, he needs sailors, to the seas he must go',
And they've left me lamenting in sorrow and woe.

Through green fields and meadows we oft times have walked,
And sweet conversation of love we had talked,
Where the lark and the blackbird so sweetly did sing
And the lovely thrushes' voices made the valleys to ring.

Although my love's gone, I will not be cast down,
Who knows but my true love may once more return,
And make me amends for all trouble and strife
And my true and I love might be happy for life.

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) – from *Five Flower Songs* (1950)

4. The Evening Primrose

When once the sun sinks in the west,
And dew-drops pearl the Evening's breast;
Almost as pale as moonbeams are,
Or its companionable star,
The Evening Primrose opes anew
Its delicate blossoms to the dew;
And hermit-like, shunning the light,
Wastes its fair bloom upon the Night;
Who, blindfold to its fond caresses,
Knows not the beauty he possesses.
Thus it blooms on while Night is by;
When Day looks out with open eye,
'Bashed at the gaze it cannot shun,
It faints, and withers, and is gone.

5. The Ballad of Green Broom

There was an old man lived out in the wood,
And his trade was a-cutting of broom, green broom,
He had but one son without thought without good
Who lay in his bed till 't was noon, bright noon.

The old man awoke one morning and spoke,
He swore he would fire the room, that room,
If his John would not rise and open his eyes,
And away to the wood to cut broom, green broom.

So Johnny arose and slipp'd on his clothes
And away to the wood to cut broom, green broom,
He sharpen'd his knives, and for once he contrives
To cut a great bundle of broom, green broom.

When Johnny pass'd under a Lady's fine house,
Pass'd under a Lady's fine room, fine room,
She call'd to her maid: "Go fetch me," she said,
"Go fetch me the boy that sells broom, green broom!"

When Johnny came into the Lady's fine house,
And stood in the Lady's fine room, fine room,
"Young Johnny" she said, "Will you give up your trade
And marry a lady in bloom, full bloom?"

Johnny gave his consent, and to church they both went,
And he wedded the Lady in bloom, full bloom;
At market and fair, all folks do declare,
There's none like the Boy that sold broom, green broom.

Owain Park (b1993) – Louisa (2013)

I met Louisa in the shade,
And, having seen that lovely Maid,
Why should I fear to say
That, nymph-like, she is fleet and strong,
And down the rocks can leap along
Like rivulets in May?

And she hath smiles to earth unknown;
Smiles, that with motion of their own
Do spread, and sink, and rise;
That come and go with endless play,
And ever, as they pass away,
Are hidden in her eyes.

She loves her fire, her cottage-home;
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam
In weather rough and bleak;
And, when against the wind she strains,
Oh! might I kiss the mountain rains
That sparkle on her cheek.

Take all that's mine "beneath the moon,"
If I with her but half a noon
May sit beneath the walls
Of some old cave, or mossy nook,
When up she winds along the brook
To hunt the waterfalls.

William Wordsworth 1802

**Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) – *It is Not the Tear,*
from *Six Irish Folk Songs op78 no5* (1901)**

It is not the tear at this moment shed,
When the cold turf has just been laid o'er him,
That can tell how beloved was the friend that's fled,
Or how deep in our hearts we deplore him.
'Tis the tear, through many a long day wept,
'Tis life's whole path o'ershaded;
'Tis the one remembrance, fondly kept,
When all lighter griefs have faded.

Thus his memory, like some holy light,
Kept alive in our hearts, will improve them,
For worth shall look fairer, and truth more bright,
When we think how he lived but to love them.
And as fresher flowers the sod perfume
Where buried saints are lying,
So our hearts shall borrow a sweetening bloom
From the image he left there in dying!

Thomas Moore from Irish Melodies vol3 (1810)

Sarah Quartel (b1982) – *The Parting Glass* (trad. Scottish) (2018/2021)

Of all the money that e'er I had,
I spent it in good company.
And all the harm I've ever done,
Alas it was to none but me.
And all I've done for want of wit
To mem'ry now I can't recall;
So fill to me the parting glass,
Good night and joy be with you all.

If I had money enough to spend
And leisure time to sit awhile,
There is a fair maid in this town
That sorely has my heart beguiled.
Her rosy cheeks and ruby lips,
I own she has my heart in thrall.
Then fill to me the parting glass,
Good night and joy be with you all.

Oh, all the comrades that e'er I had,
They're sorry for my going away.
And all the sweethearts that e'er I had,
They'd wish me one more day to stay.
But since it falls unto my lot
That I should rise and you should not,
I gently rise and softly call,
Good night and joy be with you all.

Sarah Rimkus (b1990) – *Charlie is My Darling* (2016)

Oh Charlie he's my darling,
My darling, my darling,
Charlie he's my darling -
The Young Chevalier!

'Twas on a Monday morning
Right early in the year,
That Charlie came to our town -
The Young Chevalier!

As he was walking up the street
The city for to view,
O, there he spied a bonnie lass
The window looking thro'!

Sae light's he jimped up the stair,
And tirl'd at the pin;
And wha sae ready as hersel'
To let the laddie in!

He set his Jenny on his knee,
All in his Highland dress;
For brawlie weel he kend the way
To please a bonie lass.

It's up yon heathery mountain
And down yon scroggy glen,
We daurna gang a-milking
For Charlie and his men!

Robert Burns