

Classic Poetry Series

Heinrich Heine
- poems -

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Heinrich Heine(13 December 1797 – 17 February 1856)

Christian Johann Heinrich Heine was one of the most significant German poets of the 19th century. He was also a journalist, essayist, and literary critic. He is best known outside Germany for his early lyric poetry, which was set to music in the form of Lieder (art songs) by composers such as Robert Schumann and Franz Schubert. Heine's later verse and prose is distinguished by its satirical wit and irony. His radical political views led to many of his works being banned by German authorities. Heine spent the last 25 years of his life as an expatriate in Paris.

Childhood and Youth

Heine was born in Düsseldorf, Rhineland, into a Jewish family. He was called "Harry" as a child, but after his baptism in 1825 he became "Heinrich". Heine's father, Samson Heine (1764–1828), was a textile merchant. His mother Peira (known as "Betty"), née van Geldern (1771–1859), was the daughter of a physician. Heinrich was the eldest of the four children; his siblings were Charlotte, Gustav - who later became Baron Heine-Geldern and publisher of the Viennese newspaper Das Fremdenblatt - and Maximilian, later a physician in Saint Petersburg.

Düsseldorf was then a small town with a population of around 16,000. The Revolution in neighbouring France and the subsequent Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars which involved Germany meant that Düsseldorf had a complicated political history during Heine's childhood. It had been the capital of the Duchy of Jülich-Berg but at the time of his birth it was under French occupation. Then it went to the Elector of Bavaria before being conquered by Napoleon in 1806. Napoleon turned it into the capital of the Grand Duchy of Berg, one of three French states he established in Germany. It was first ruled by Joachim Murat, then by Napoleon himself. In 1815, on Napoleon's downfall, it became part of Prussia. Heine's formative years were thus spent under French influence. The adult Heine would always be devoted to the French for introducing the Napoleonic Code and trial by jury. He glossed over the negative aspects of French rule: the heavy taxation, conscription and the economic depression brought on by the Continental Blockade. He greatly admired Napoleon as the promoter of the revolutionary ideals of liberty and equality. Heine loathed the political atmosphere in Germany after Napoleon's defeat, which was marked by the conservative policies of the Austrian chancellor Metternich, who tried to

reverse the effects of the French Revolution.

Heine's parents were not particularly devout Jews. When he was a young child they sent him to a Jewish school where he learned a smattering of Hebrew. Thereafter he attended Catholic schools. Here he learned French, which would be his second language, although he always spoke it with a German accent. He also acquired a lifelong love for Rhineland folklore.

In 1814 Heine went to a business school in Düsseldorf where he learned to read English, the commercial language of the time. The most successful member of the Heine family was his uncle Salomon, who was a millionaire banker in Hamburg. In 1816 Heine moved to Hamburg to become an apprentice at Heckscher & Co, his uncle Salomon's bank, but he displayed little aptitude for business. He learned to hate Hamburg with its commercial ethos but it would become one of the poles of his life alongside Paris. When he was 18, Heine almost certainly had an unrequited love for his cousin Amalie, Salomon's daughter. Whether he then transferred his affections (equally unsuccessfully) to her sister Therese is unknown. This period in Heine's life is not very clear, but it seems that his father Samson's business deteriorated and Samson Heine effectively became the ward of his brother Salomon.

Universities

Salomon realised that his nephew had no talent for trade and it was decided that Heine should enter the law. So, in 1819, Heine went to the University of Bonn (then in Prussia). Political life in Germany was divided between conservatives and liberals. The conservatives, who were in power, wanted to restore things to the way they were before the French Revolution. They were against German unification because they felt a united Germany might fall victim to revolutionary ideas. Most German states were absolutist monarchies with a censored press. The opponents of the conservatives, the liberals, wanted to replace absolutism with representative, constitutional government, equality before the law and a free press. At the University of Bonn, liberal students were at war with the conservative authorities. Heine was a radical liberal and one of the first things he did after his arrival was to take part in a parade which violated the Carlsbad Decrees, a series of measures introduced by Metternich to suppress liberal political activity.

Heine was more interested in studying history and literature than law. The university had engaged the famous literary critic and thinker August Wilhelm Schlegel as a lecturer and Heine heard him talk about the Nibelungenlied and Romanticism. Though he would later mock Schlegel, Heine found in him a

sympathetic critic for his early verses. Heine began to acquire a reputation as a poet at Bonn. He also wrote two tragedies, *Almansor* and *William Ratcliff*, but they had little success in the theatre.

After a year at Bonn, Heine left to continue his law studies at the University of Göttingen. Heine hated the town. It was part of Hanover, ruled by the King of England, the power Heine blamed for bringing Napoleon down. Here the poet experienced an aristocratic snobbery absent elsewhere. He also hated law as the Historical School of law he had to study was used to bolster the reactionary form of government he opposed. Other events conspired to make Heine loathe this period of his life: he was expelled from a student fraternity for anti-Semitic reasons and he heard the news that his cousin Amalie had become engaged. When Heine challenged another student, Wiebel, to a duel (the first of ten known incidents throughout his life), the authorities stepped in and Heine was suspended from the university for six months. His uncle now decided to send him to the University of Berlin.

Heine arrived in Berlin in March 1821. It was the biggest, most cosmopolitan city he had ever visited (its population was about 200,000). The university gave Heine access to notable cultural figures as lecturers: the Sanskritist Franz Bopp and the Homer critic F.A. Wolf, who inspired Heine's lifelong love of Aristophanes. Most important was the philosopher Hegel, whose influence on Heine is hard to gauge. He probably gave Heine and other young students the idea that history had a meaning which could be seen as progressive. Heine also made valuable acquaintances in Berlin, notably the liberal Karl August Varnhagen and his Jewish wife Rahel, who held a leading salon. Another friend was the satirist Karl Immermann, who had praised Heine's first verse collection, *Gedichte*, when it appeared in December 1821. During his time in Berlin Heine also joined the *Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden*, a society which attempted to achieve a balance between the Jewish faith and modernity. Since Heine was not very religious in outlook he soon lost interest, but he also began to investigate Jewish history. He was particularly drawn to the Spanish Jews of the Middle Ages. In 1824 Heine began a historical novel, *Der Rabbi von Bacherach*, which he never managed to finish.

In May 1823 Heine left Berlin for good and joined his family at their new home in Lüneburg. Here he began to write the poems of the cycle *Die Heimkehr* ("The Homecoming"). He returned to Göttingen where he was again bored by the law. In September 1824 he decided to take a break and set off on a trip through the Harz mountains. On his return he started writing an account of it, *Die Harzreise*.

On 28 June 1825 Heine converted to Protestantism. The Prussian government

had been gradually restoring discrimination against Jews. In 1822 it introduced a law excluding Jews from academic posts and Heine had ambitions for a university career. As Heine said in self-justification, his conversion was "the ticket of admission into European culture". In the event, Heine's conversion, which was reluctant, never brought him any benefits in his career.

Julius Campe and First Literary Successes

Heine now had to search for a job. He was only really suited to writing but it was extremely difficult to be a professional writer in Germany. The market for literary works was small and it was only possible to make a living by writing virtually non-stop. Heine was incapable of doing this so he never had enough money to cover his expenses. Before finding work, Heine visited the North Sea resort of Norderney which inspired the free verse poems of his cycle *Die Nordsee*.

In Hamburg one evening in January 1826 Heine met Julius Campe, who would be his chief publisher for the rest of his life. Their stormy relationship has been compared to a marriage. Campe was a liberal who published as many dissident authors as he could. He had developed various techniques for evading the authorities. The laws of the time stated that any book under 320 pages had to be submitted to censorship (the authorities thought long books would cause little trouble as they were unpopular). One way round censorship was to publish dissident works in large print to increase the number of pages beyond 320. The censorship in Hamburg was relatively lax but Campe had to worry about Prussia, the largest German state which had the largest market for books (it was estimated that one-third of the German readership was Prussian). Initially, any book which had passed the censor in a German state was able to be sold in any of the other states but in 1834 this loophole was closed. Campe was reluctant to publish uncensored books as he had bad experience of print runs being confiscated. Heine resisted all censorship. So this issue became a bone of contention between the two. But the relationship between author and publisher started well: Campe published the first volume of *Reisebilder* ("Travel Pictures") in May 1826. This volume included *Die Harzreise*, which marked a new style of German travel-writing, mixing Romantic descriptions of Nature with satire. Heine's *Buch der Lieder* followed in 1827. This was a collection of already published poems. No one expected it would be one of the most popular books of German verse ever published and sales were slow to start with, picking up when composers began setting Heine's poems as *Lieder*. For example the poem "Allnächtlich im Traume" of the *Buch der Lieder* was set to music by Robert Schumann as well as by Felix Mendelssohn. It contains the ironical disillusionment which is typical of Heine:

*Allnächtlich im Traume seh ich dich,
Und sehe dich freundlich grüßen,
Und lautaufweinend stürz ich mich
Zu deinen süßen Füßen.*

Du siehst mich an wehmütiglich,
Und schüttelst das blonde Köpfchen;
Aus deinen Augen schleichen sich
Die Perlentranentröpfchen.

Du sagst mir heimlich ein leises Wort,
Und gibst mir den Strauß von Zypressen.
Ich wache auf, und der Strauß ist fort,
Und das Wort hab ich vergessen.

(non-literal translation in verse by Hal Draper:)

Nightly I see you in dreams-you speak,
With kindness sincerest,
I throw myself, weeping aloud and weak
At your sweet feet, my dearest.

You look at me with wistful woe,
And shake your golden curls;
And stealing from your eyes there flow
The teardrops like to pearls.

You breathe in my ear a secret word,
A garland of cypress for token.
I wake; it is gone; the dream is blurred,
And forgotten the word that was spoken.

Starting from the mid-1820s Heine distanced himself from Romanticism by adding irony, sarcasm and satire into his poetry and making fun of the sentimental-romantic awe of nature and of figures of speech in contemporary poetry and literature. An example are these lines:

*Das Fräulein stand am Meere
Und seufzte lang und bang.
Es rührte sie so sehre
der Sonnenuntergang.*

Mein Fräulein! Sein sie munter,
Das ist ein altes Stück;
Hier vorne geht sie unter
Und kehrt von hinten zurück.

A mistress stood by the sea
sighing long and anxiously.
She was so deeply stirred
By the setting sun

My Fräulein!, be gay,
This is an old play;
ahead of you it sets
And from behind it returns.

Heine became increasingly critical of despotism and reactionary chauvinism in Germany, of nobility and clerics but also of the narrow-mindedness of ordinary people and of the rising German form of nationalism, especially in contrast to the French and the revolution. Nevertheless, he made a point of stressing his love for his Fatherland:

Plant the black, red, gold banner at the summit of the German idea, make it the standard of free mankind, and I will shed my dear heart's blood for it. Rest assured, I love the Fatherland just as much as you do.

Travel and The Platen Affair

The first volume of travel writings was such a success that Campe pressed Heine for another. Reisebilder II appeared in April 1827. It contains the second cycle of North Sea poems, a prose essay on the North Sea as well as a new work, Ideen: Das Buch Le Grand, which contains the following satire on German censorship:

The German Censors — — — — —
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Heine went to England to avoid what he predicted would be controversy over the publication of this work. In London he cashed a cheque from his uncle for £200 (equal to £15,086 today), much to Salomon's chagrin. Heine was unimpressed by the English: he found them commercial and prosaic and still blamed them for the defeat of Napoleon.

On his return to Germany, Cotta, the liberal publisher of [Goethe](http://www.poemhunter.com/johann-wolfgang-von-goethe/) and [Schiller](http://www.poemhunter.com/friedrich-schiller/), offered Heine a job co-editing a magazine, Politische Annalen, in Munich. Heine did not find work on the newspaper congenial, and instead tried to obtain a professorship at Munich University, with no success. After a few months he took a trip to northern Italy, visiting Lucca, Florence and Venice, but was forced to return when he received news that his father had died. This Italian journey resulted in a series of new works: Die Reise von München nach Genua ("Journey from Munich to Genoa"), Die Bäder von Lucca ("The Baths of Lucca") and Die Stadt Lucca ("The Town of Lucca"). Die Bäder von Lucca embroiled Heine in controversy. The aristocratic poet [August von Platen](http://www.poemhunter.com/august-graf-von-platen/) had been annoyed by some epigrams by Immermann which Heine had included in the second volume of Reisebilder. He counter-attacked by writing a play, Die romantische Ödipus, which included anti-Semitic jibes about Heine. Heine was stung and responded by mocking Platen's homosexuality in Die Bäder von Lucca.

Paris Years

Foreign Correspondent

In 1831 Heine left Germany for France, settling in Paris for his remaining 25

years of life. His move was prompted by the July Revolution of 1830 which had made Louis-Philippe the "Citizen King" of the French. Heine shared liberal enthusiasm for the revolution, which he felt had the potential to overturn the conservative political order in Europe. Heine was also attracted by the prospect of freedom from German censorship and was interested in the new French utopian political doctrine of Saint-Simonianism. Saint-Simonianism preached a new social order in which meritocracy would replace hereditary distinctions in rank and wealth. There would also be female emancipation and an important role for artists and scientists. Heine frequented some Saint-Simonian meetings after his arrival in Paris but within a few years his enthusiasm for the ideology - and other forms of utopianism- had waned.

Heine soon became a celebrity in France. Paris offered him a cultural richness unavailable in the smaller cities of Germany. He made many famous acquaintances (the closest were Gérard de Nerval and Hector Berlioz) but he always remained something of an outsider. He had little interest in French literature and wrote everything in German, subsequently translating it into French with the help of a collaborator.

In Paris Heine earned money working as the French correspondent for one of Cotta's newspapers, the Allgemeine Zeitung. The first event he covered was the Salon of 1831. His articles were eventually collected in a volume entitled *Französische Zustände* ("Conditions in France"). Heine saw himself as a mediator between Germany and France. If the two countries understood one another there would be progress. To further this aim he published *De l'Allemagne* ("On Germany") in French (begun 1833). In its later German version, the book is divided into two: *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* ("Religion and Philosophy in Germany") and *Die romantische Schule* ("The Romantic School"). Heine was deliberately attacking Madame de Staël's book *De l'Allemagne* (1813) which he viewed as reactionary, Romantic and obscurantist. He felt de Staël had portrayed a Germany of "poets and thinkers", dreamy, religious, introverted and cut off from the revolutionary currents of the modern world. Heine thought that such an image suited the oppressive German authorities. He also had an Enlightenment view of the past, seeing it as mired in superstition and atrocities. "Religion and Philosophy in Germany" describes the replacement of traditional "spiritualist" religion by a pantheism which pays attention to human material needs. According to Heine, pantheism had been repressed by Christianity and had survived in German folklore. He predicted that German thought would prove a more explosive force than the French Revolution.

Heine had had few serious love affairs, but in late 1834 he made the acquaintance of a 19-year old Paris shopgirl, Crescence Eugénie Mirat, whom he

nicknamed "Mathilde". Heine reluctantly fell in love with her. She was illiterate, knew no German, and had no interest in cultural or intellectual matters. Nevertheless she moved in with Heine in 1836 and lived with him for the rest of his life (they were married in 1841).

Young Germany and Ludwig Börne

Heine and his fellow radical exile in Paris, Ludwig Börne, had become the role models for a younger generation of writers who were given the name "Young Germany". They included Karl Gutzkow, Heinrich Laube, Theodor Mundt and Ludolf Wienbarg. They were liberal, but not actively political. Nevertheless, they still fell foul of the authorities. In 1835 Gutzkow published a novel, *Wally die Zweiflerin* ("Wally the Sceptic"), which contained criticism of the institution of marriage and some mildly erotic passages. In November of that year, the German Diet consequently banned publication of works by the Young Germans in Germany and – on Metternich's insistence – Heine's name was added to their number. Heine, however, continued to comment on German politics and society from a distance. His publisher was able to find some ways of getting around the censors and he was still free, of course, to publish in France.

Heine's relationship with his fellow dissident Ludwig Börne was troubled. Since Börne did not attack religion or traditional morality like Heine, the German authorities hounded him less although they still banned his books as soon as they appeared. Börne was the idol of German immigrant workers in Paris. He was also a republican, while Heine was not. Heine regarded Börne, with his admiration for Robespierre, as a puritanical neo-Jacobin and remained aloof from him in Paris, which upset Börne, who began to criticise him (mostly semi-privately). In February 1837, Börne died. When Heine heard that Gutzkow was writing a biography of Börne, he began work on his own, severely critical "memorial" of the man. When the book was published in 1840 it was universally disliked by the radicals and served to alienate Heine from his public. Even his enemies admitted that Börne was a man of integrity so Heine's ad hominem attacks on him were viewed as being in poor taste. Heine had made personal attacks on Börne's closest friend Jeannette Wihl so Jeannette's husband challenged Heine to a duel. It was the last Heine ever fought - he received a flesh wound in the hip. Before fighting, he decided to safeguard Mathilde's future in the event of his death by marrying her.

Heine continued to write reports for Cotta's *Allgemeine Zeitung* (and, when Cotta died, for his son and successor). One event which really galvanised him was the 1840 Damascus Affair in which Jews in Damascus had been subject to blood libel and accused of murdering an old Catholic monk. This led to a wave of anti-

Semitic persecution. The French government, aiming at imperialism in the Middle East and not wanting to offend the Catholic party, had failed to condemn the outrage. On the other hand, the Austrian consul in Damascus had assiduously exposed the blood libel as a fraud. For Heine, this was a reversal of values: reactionary Austria standing up for the Jews while revolutionary France temporised. Heine responded by dusting off and publishing his unfinished novel about the persecution of Jews in the Middle Ages, *Der Rabbi von Bacherach*.

Political Poetry and Karl Marx

In 1840 German poetry took a more directly political turn when the new King William Frederick IV ascended the throne. Initially it was thought he might be a "popular monarch" and during this honeymoon period of his early reign (1840–42) censorship was relaxed. This led to the emergence of popular political poets (so-called *Tendenzdichter*), including Hoffmann von Fallersleben (the author of "*Deutschland Über Alles*"), Ferdinand Freiligrath and Georg Herwegh. Heine looked down on these writers on aesthetic grounds – they were bad poets in his opinion – but his verse of the 1840s became more political too. Heine's mode was satirical attack: against the Kings of Bavaria and Prussia (he never for one moment shared the belief that Frederick William IV might be more liberal); against the political torpor of the German people; and against the greed and cruelty of the ruling class. The most popular of Heine's political poems was his least typical, *Die schlesischen Weber* ("The Silesian Weavers"), based on the uprising of weavers in Peterswaldau in 1844.

In October 1843, Karl Marx and his wife Jenny von Westphalen arrived in Paris after the Prussian government had suppressed Marx's radical newspaper. The Marx family settled in Rue Vaneau. Marx was an admirer of Heine and his early writings show Heine's influence. In December Heine met the Marxes and got on well with them. He published several poems, including *Die schlesischen Weber* in Marx's new journal *Vorwärts* ("Forwards"). Ultimately Heine's ideas of revolution through sensual emancipation and Marx's "scientific materialism" were incompatible, but both writers shared the same negativity and lack of faith in the bourgeoisie. In the isolation he felt after the Börne debacle, Marx's friendship came as a relief to Heine, since he did not really like the other radicals. On the other hand, he did not share Marx's faith in the industrial proletariat and remained on the fringes of socialist circles. The Prussian government, angry at the publication of *Vorwärts*, put pressure on France to deal with its authors and in January 1845 Marx was deported to Belgium. Heine could not be expelled from the country because, since he was born under French occupation, he had the right of residence in France. Thereafter Heine and Marx maintained a sporadic correspondence but in time their admiration for one another faded. Heine always

had mixed feelings about communism. He believed its radicalism and materialism would destroy much of the European culture that he loved and admired. In the French edition of "Lutetia" Heine wrote, one year before he died: "This confession, that the future belongs to the Communists, I made with an undertone of the greatest fear and sorrow and, oh!, this undertone by no means is a mask! Indeed, with fear and terror I imagine the time, when those dark iconoclasts come to power: with their raw fists they will batter all marble images of my beloved world of art, they will ruin all those fantastic anecdotes that the poets loved so much, they will chop down my Laurel forests and plant potatoes and, oh!, the herbs chandler will use my Book of Songs to make bags for coffee and snuff for the old women of the future – oh!, I can foresee all this and I feel deeply sorry thinking of this decline threatening my poetry and the old world order - And yet, I freely confess, the same thoughts have a magical appeal upon my soul which I cannot resist In my chest there are two voices in their favour which cannot be silenced because the first one is that of logic ... and as I cannot object to the premise "that all people have the right to eat", I must defer to all the conclusions....The second of the two compelling voices, of which I am talking, is even more powerful than the first, because it is the voice of hatred, the hatred I dedicate to this common enemy that constitutes the most distinctive contrast to communism and that will oppose the angry giant already at the first instance – I am talking about the party of the so-called advocates of nationality in Germany, about those false patriots whose love for the fatherland only exists in the shape of imbecile distaste of foreign countries and neighbouring peoples and who daily pour their bile especially on France".

In October–December 1843 Heine made a journey to Hamburg to see his aged mother and to patch things up with Campe with whom he had had a quarrel. He was reconciled with the publisher who agreed to provide Mathilde with an annuity for the rest of her life after Heine's death. Heine repeated the trip with his wife in July–October 1844 to see Uncle Salomon, but this time things did not go so well. It was the last time Heine would ever leave France. At the time, Heine was working on two linked but antithetical poems with Shakespearean titles: Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen ("Germany. A Winter's Tale") and Atta Troll: Ein Sommernachtstraum ("Atta Troll: A Midsummer Night's Dream"). The former is based on his journey to Germany in late 1843 and outdoes the radical poets in its satirical attacks on the political situation in the country. Atta Troll (actually begun in 1841 after a trip to the Pyrenees) mocks the literary failings Heine saw in the radical poets, particularly Freiligrath. It tells the story of the hunt for a runaway bear, Atta Troll, who symbolises many of the attitudes Heine despised, including a simple-minded egalitarianism and a religious view which makes God in the believer's image (Atta Troll conceives God as an enormous, heavenly polar bear). Atta Troll's cubs embody the nationalistic views Heine loathed.

Atta Troll was not published until 1847, but Deutschland appeared in 1844 as part of a collection Neue Gedichte ("New Poems"), which gathered all the verse Heine had written since 1831. In the same year Uncle Salomon died. This put a stop to Heine's annual subsidy of 4,800 francs. Salomon left Heine and his brothers 8,000 francs each in his will. Heine's cousin Carl, the inheritor of Salomon's business, offered to pay him 2,000 francs a year at his discretion. Heine was furious; he had expected much more from the will and his campaign to make Carl revise its terms occupied him for the next two years.

In 1844, Heine wrote series of musical feuilletons over several different music seasons discussing the music of the day. His review of the musical season of 1844, written in Paris on April 25, 1844, is the first place where he uses the term Lisztomania, a term used to describe the intense fan frenzy directed toward Franz Liszt during his performances. However, Heine was not always honorable in his musical criticism. In April 1844 he wrote to Liszt suggesting that he might like to look at a newspaper review he had written of Liszt's performance before his concert; he indicated that that it contained comments Liszt would not like. Liszt took this as an attempt to extort money for a positive review and did not meet Heine. Heine's review subsequently appeared on April 25 in Musikalische Berichte aus Paris and attributed Liszt's success to lavish expenditures on bouquets and to the wild behaviour of his hysterical female "fans." Liszt then broke relations with Heine. Liszt was not the only musician to be blackmailed by Heine for the nonpayment of "appreciation money." Meyerbeer had both lent and given money to Heine, but after refusing to hand over a further 500 francs was repaid by being dubbed "a music corrupter" in Heine's poem Die Menge tut all his brilliance and insight, Heine's place in the history of music criticism is tarnished.

Last Years: The "mattress-grave"

In May 1848, Heine, who had not been well, suddenly fell paralyzed and had to be confined to bed. He would not leave what he called his "mattress-grave" (Matratzengruft) until his death eight years later. He also experienced difficulties with his eyes. It had been suggested that he suffered from multiple sclerosis or syphilis, although in 1997 it was confirmed through an analysis of the poet's hair that he had suffered from chronic lead poisoning. He bore his sufferings stoically and he won much public sympathy for his plight. His illness meant he paid less attention than he might otherwise have done to the revolutions which broke out in France and Germany in 1848. He was sceptical about the Frankfurt Assembly and continued to attack the King of Prussia. When the revolution collapsed, Heine resumed his oppositional stance. At first he had some hope Louis Napoleon might be a good leader in France but he soon began to share the opinion of Marx

towards him as the new emperor began to crack down on liberalism and socialism. In 1848 Heine also returned to religious faith. In fact, he had never claimed to be an atheist. Nevertheless, he remained sceptical of organised religion.

He continued to work from his sickbed: on the collections of poems *Romanzero* and *Gedichte*. 1853 und 1854, on the journalism collected in *Lutezia*, and on his unfinished memoirs. During these final years Heine had a love affair with the young Camille Selden, who visited him regularly. He died on 17 February 1856 and was interred in the Paris Cimetière de Montmartre. His wife Mathilde survived him, dying in 1883. The couple had no children.

Legacy

Among the thousands of books burned on Berlin's Opernplatz in 1933, following the Nazi raid on the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft, were works by Heinrich Heine. To commemorate the terrible event, one of the most famous lines of Heine's 1821 play *Almansor* was engraved in the ground at the site: "Das war ein Vorspiel nur, dort wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen." ("That was but a prelude; where they burn books, they will ultimately burn people also.")

In 1834, 99 years before Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party seized power in Germany, Heine wrote in his work "The History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany":

<i>Christianity - and that is its greatest merit - has somewhat mitigated that brutal Germanic love of war, but it could not destroy it. Should that subduing talisman, the cross, be shattered, the frenzied madness of the ancient warriors, that insane Berserk rage of which Nordic bards have spoken and sung so often, will once more burst into flame. This talisman is fragile, and the day will come when it will collapse miserably. Then the ancient stony gods will rise from the forgotten debris and rub the dust of a thousand years from their eyes, and finally Thor with his giant hammer will jump up and smash the Gothic cathedrals. (...)

Do not smile at my advice -- the advice of a dreamer who warns you against Kantians, Fichteans, and philosophers of nature. Do not smile at the visionary who anticipates the same revolution in the realm of the visible as has taken place in the spiritual. Thought precedes action as lightning precedes thunder. German thunder is of true Germanic character; it is not very nimble, but rumbles along ponderously. Yet, it will come and when you hear a crashing such as never before has been heard in the world's history, then you know that the German

thunderbolt has fallen at last. At that uproar the eagles of the air will drop dead, and lions in the remotest deserts of Africa will hide in their royal dens. A play will be performed in Germany which will make the French Revolution look like an innocent idyll.

Music

Many composers have set Heine's works to music. They include Robert Schumann (especially his Lieder cycle Dichterliebe), Friedrich Silcher (who wrote a popular setting of "Die Lorelei", one of Heine's best known poems), Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn, Fanny Mendelssohn, Johannes Brahms, Hugo Wolf, Richard Strauss, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Edward MacDowell, and Richard Wagner; and in the 20th century Hans Werner Henze, Carl Orff, Lord Berners, Paul Lincke, Yehezkel Braun, and Friedrich Baumfelder (who wrote another setting of "Die Lorelei", as well as "Die blauen Frühlingsaugen" and "Wir wuchsen in demselben Thal" in his Zwei Lieder).

Heine's play William Ratcliff was used for the libretti of operas by César Cui (William Ratcliff) and Pietro Mascagni (Guglielmo Ratcliff). Frank van der Stucken composed a "symphonic prologue" to the same play.

Controversy

In the 1890s, amidst a flowering of affection for Heine leading up to the centennial of his birth, plans were enacted to honor Heine with a memorial; these were strongly supported by one of Heine's greatest admirers, Elisabeth of Bavaria, Empress of Austria. The empress commissioned a statue from the sculptor Louis Hasselriis. Another memorial, a sculpted fountain, was commissioned for Düsseldorf. While at first the plan met with enthusiasm, the concept was gradually bogged down in anti-Semitic, nationalist, and religious criticism; by the time the fountain was finished, there was no place to put it. Through the intervention of German American activists, the memorial was ultimately transplanted into The Bronx. Known in English as the Lorelei Fountain, Germans refer to it as the Heinrich Heine Memorial. Also, after years of controversy, the University of Düsseldorf was named Heinrich Heine University. Today the city honours its poet with a boulevard (Heinrich-Heine-Allee) and a modern monument. The Heine statue, originally located in Corfu, was rejected by Hamburg, but eventually found a home in Toulon.

In Israel, the attitude to Heine has long been the subject of debate between secularists, who number him among the most prominent figures of Jewish history, and the religious who consider his conversion to Christianity to be an

unforgivable act of betrayal. Due to such debates, the city of Tel-Aviv delayed naming a street for Heine, and the street finally chosen to bear his name is located in a rather desolate industrial zone rather than in the vicinity of Tel-Aviv University, suggested by some public figures as the appropriate location.

Ha'ir (a left-leaning Tel-Aviv magazine) sarcastically suggested that "The Exiling of Heine Street" symbolically re-enacted the course of Heine's own life. Since then, a street in the Yemin Moshe neighborhood of Jerusalem and a community center in Haifa have been named after Heine. A Heine Appreciation Society is active in Israel, led by prominent political figures from both the left and right camps. His quote about burning books is prominently displayed in the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum in Jerusalem. (It is also displayed in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

A Palm-Tree

A single fir-tree, lonely,
on a northern mountain height,
sleeps in a white blanket,
draped in snow and ice.

His dreams are of a palm-tree,
who, far in eastern lands,
weeps, all alone and silent,
among the burning sands.

Heinrich Heine

Abenddämmerung

Am blassen Meeresstrande
Saß ich gedankenbekümmert und einsam.
Die Sonne neigte sich tiefer, und warf
Glührote Streifen auf das Wasser,
Und die weißen, weiten Wellen,
Von der Flut gedrängt,
Schäumten und rauschten näher und näher -
Ein seltsam Geräusch, ein Flüstern und Pfeifen,
Ein Lachen und Murmeln, Seufzen und Sausen,
Dazwischen ein wiegenliedheimliches Singen -
Mir war, als hört ich verschollne Sagen,
Uralte, liebliche Märchen,
Die ich einst, als Knabe,
Von Nachbarskindern vernahm,
Wenn wir am Sommerabend,
Auf den Treppensteinen der Haustür,
Zum stillen Erzählen niederkauerten,
Mit kleinen horchenden Herzen
Und neugierklugen Augen; -
Während die großen Mädchen,
Neben duftenden Blumentöpfen,
Gegenüber am Fenster saßen,
Rosengesichter,
Lächelnd und mondbeglänzt.

Heinrich Heine

Ad Finem

The years they come and go,
The races drop in the grave,
Yet never the love doth so
Which here in my heart I have.

Could I see thee but once, one day,
And sink down so on my knee,
And die in thy sight while I say,
'Lady, I love but thee!'

Heinrich Heine

Als Ich, Auf Der Reise

Just by chance on my journey
I met my beloved's kin,
Sister and father and mother
Knew me, and welcomed me in.
They asked me how I was faring,
And said, as I entered the place,
That I wasn't changed a bit, just
A little thin in the face.
I asked after aunts and cousins,
After many a tiresome one,
And asked how their little dog,
With its soft little bark had done.
And I asked about my darling,
Married now, by and by:
They kindly gave me an answer:
In childbed she did lie.
And I offered congratulations,
And murmured lovingly,
To give her a thousand greetings
With all their heart, from me.
Little sister interrupted:
Their dog so sweet and fine,
Had grown quite large and fierce,
And been drowned in the Rhine.
That little one's like my darling,
Especially when she smiles:
The look that made me miserable:
She has the selfsame eyes.

Heinrich Heine

Altes Kaminstück

Outside, white snowflakes are blowing
Through the night: the storm is loud:
Here I'm alone, beside the blazing
Hearth inside, warm, quietly bowed.
I sit here in my chair, just thinking,
Here beside the crackling glow,
Kettle humming, as its boiling,
Melodies from long ago.
And my little cat sits near me
Warms its paws beside the coals,
While the flames are flickering, weaving
Brave imaginings in my soul.
Now many a long forgotten age
Rises in twilight air,
As if in shining masquerade,
And faded splendour, there.
Lovely women with knowing glances
Beckoning with sweet mystery,
And Harlequins in prancing dances
Leaping, laughing merrily.
Marble gods from furthest distance
Greet me: near them, dreamlike, grow
Flowers, from tales, that entrance
In the moonlight glow.
Many a magic castle, rising,
Swims uncertainly to view,
Behind them gleaming knights riding
And with them pageboys too.
And all of this goes flashing by,
Hurrying on in shadow flight –
Ah! The kettle's boiling over,
And the little cat howls with fright.

Heinrich Heine

Death

Our death is in the cool of night,
our life is in the pool of day.
The darkness glows, I'm drowning,
the day has tired me with light.

Over my head in leaves grown deep,
sings the young nightingale.
It only sings of love there,
I hear it in my sleep.

Heinrich Heine

Death And His Brother Sleep ('morphine')

There's a mirror likeness between those two
shining, youthfully-fledged figures, though
one seems paler than the other and more austere,
I might even say more perfect, more distinguished,
than he, who would take me confidingly in his arms –
how soft then and loving his smile, how blessed his glance!
Then, it might well have been that his wreath
of white poppies gently touched my forehead, at times,
and drove the pain from my mind with its strange scent.
But that is transient. I can only, now, be well,
when the other one, so serious and pale,
the older brother, lowers his dark torch. –
Sleep is so good, Death is better, yet
surely never to have been born is best.

Heinrich Heine

Der Asra

Every day so lovely, shining,
Up and down, the Sultan's daughter
Walked at evening by the water,
Where the white fountain splashes.
Every day the young slave stood
By the water, in the evening,
Where the white fountain splashes,
Every day grew pale, and paler.
Then the princess came one evening,
Quickly speaking to him, softly,
'Your true name – I wish to know it,
Your true homeland, and your nation.'
And the slave said, 'I am called
Mahomet, I am from Yemen,
And my tribe, it is the Asra,
Who die, when they love.'

Heinrich Heine

Der Scheidende

It has died in me, as it must,
Every idle, earthly lust,
My hatred too of wickedness,
Utterly now, even the sense,
Of my own, of other men's distress –
All that's living in me is Death!
The curtain falls, the play is done,
And my dear German public's gone,
Wandering home, and yawning so,
Those good folk aren't stupid though:
They'll dine happily enough tonight,
Drink, and sing, and laugh – He's right,
The noble hero in Homer's book,
Who said once that the meanest schmuck,
The lowest little Philistine there,
In Stuttgart (am Neckar), is happier
Than I, son of Peleus, the hero, furred,
The shadow prince in the Underworld.

Heinrich Heine

Der Tod, Das Ist

Our death is in the cool of night,
Our life is in the pool of day.
The darkness glows, I'm drowning,
Day's tired me with light.
Over my head in leaves grown deep,
Sings the young nightingale.
It only sings of love there,
I hear it in my sleep.

Heinrich Heine

Die Lorelei

I know not its significance
Yet, sadness is in my mind ...
There's a fairy tale from times past
Its message left behind.

The air is cool as light recedes
And calmly flows the Rhine;
The peak of a nearby mountain glows
In the diurnal Sun's decline.

Above a chaste woman sits
Radiant and quite unaware;
With golden jewelry flashing
She combs her golden hair.

She strokes it with a glittering comb,
As she toils a song's befalling.
A song of torment, a song of woe
With a melody enthralling.

Her song is heard by the boatmen near
Who are seized with grief and pain
And tho' there are dangerous rocks nearby
To her visage and song they strain.

So, the boat is lost and the boatmen, too
Engulfed, as the shores came nigh
By the beautiful face and enticing refrain,
The song of the Lorelei.

(translated by David Doggett, 2011)

Heinrich Heine

Die Unbekannte

My golden-haired beauty,
I'm always sure of seeing,
In the Tuileries Gardens,
Under the chestnut trees.
Every day she's out walking
With two ugly old ladies –
Are they aunts? Or dragons,
Disguised in women's clothing?
Could no one give me a clue then,
Of who she was? I asked my friends,
All of them, but all in vain,
I was nearly ill with passion.
Daunted by the moustaches
Of her elderly companions,
And daunted by my own heart
Even more completely,
I never dared to whisper
A single sighed word in passing,
Scarce dared to show my ardour,
By the passion in my glances.
Only today I've learnt at last
Her name. She's called Laura,
Like the beautiful Provençale
A great poet fell in love with.
She's called Laura! Now I've got as
Far as, long ago, Petrarch did,
Who praised the lovely woman
In canzones and sonettos.
She's called Laura! Just like Petrarch,
I can try platonic toying
With her name's melodic music –
He himself achieved no more.

Heinrich Heine

E'En As A Lovely Flower

E'en as a lovely flower,
So fair, so pure thou art;
I gaze on thee, and sadness
Comes stealing o'er my heart.

My hands I fain had folded
Upon thy soft brown hair,
Praying that God may keep thee
So lovely, pure and fair.

Heinrich Heine

Ein Fichtenbaum

A single fir-tree, lonely,
On a northern mountain height,
Sleeps in a white blanket,
Draped in snow and ice.
His dreams are of a palm-tree,
Who, far in eastern lands,
Weeps, all alone and silent,
Among the burning sands.

Heinrich Heine

Ein Weib

They loved each other with love so deep,
She was a tramp and he was a thief.
When he was plying his naughty craft,
She lay on the bed and laughed.
The days went by in pleasure and joy,
At night in the sheets she hugged her boy.
When they dragged him off to jail at last,
She stood at the window and laughed.
He wrote to her saying: 'O come to me,
I long for you, so badly, you see,
I'm weeping: I'm fading fast –
She shook her head and laughed.
At six in the morning they hung him high,
At seven they buried him under the sky,
But as eight o'clock went past
She drank red wine and laughed.

Heinrich Heine

Einst Sah Ich Viele

I saw a crowd of flowers in bloom,
On my way: too lazy of course
To stir myself and pick them too,
I rode on by, on my proud horse.
Now, when I'm wretched and I'm dying,
Now, when my grave's already aired,
Often in memory, painful, mocking,
The scent of flowers I scorned is there.
One, especially, of fiery yellow,
A violet, burns inside my head,
How I regret I never fully
Had that sweetheart in her bed.
My solace: Lethe's water can
Even now, not lacking in its powers,
Refresh the foolish heart of Man,
With sweet forgetful midnight hours.

Heinrich Heine

Es Liegt Der Heisse Sommer

There lies the heat of summer
On your cheek's lovely art:
There lies the cold of winter
Within your little heart.
That will change, beloved,
The end not as the start!
Winter on your cheek then,
Summer in your heart.

Heinrich Heine

Es War Ein Alter König

There was a king, now ageing,
With heart of lead, and head so grey.
He took a wife, the old king,
A young wife too, men say.
There was a handsome pageboy
With hair of gold, and thoughts so free:
He bore the silks with joy
That trailed behind the queen.
Do you know the ancient singing?
It rings so true: it rings so sweet!
Both had to die, of loving,
Of love that was too deep.

Heinrich Heine

From 'To Seraphime'

Wandl' ich in dem Wald des Abends

Through the wood when I am wandering
In the dusky eventide,
Goes a dainty form in silence
Always closely at my side.

Is not this thy veil, the white one?
This the gentle face I love?
Is it merely moonlight breaking
Through the gloomy firs above?

Is that sound the sound of weeping
From mine own eyes welling deep?
Or dost thou, Beloved, truly
Walk to-night by me and weep?

Es ragt ins Meer der Runenstein

The Runic stone from the sea rears high
Where I sit and dream and ponder;
The winds they pipe; the sea-gulls cry;
The billows foam and wander.

Oh, many a maiden loved have I,
With many a lad gone roaming—
Where are they now? The winds, they sigh—
The billows wander foaming.

Heinrich Heine

Gedächtnisfeier

Not a Mass will be sung then,
Not a Kaddish will be said,
Nothing sung, and nothing spoken,
On the day when I am dead.
But perhaps another day
When the weather's mild, serene,
My Matilde will go walking,
In Montmartre, with Pauline.
With a wreath of immortelles,
She'll come to dress my grave,
And she'll sigh: 'Oh, poor man.'
That moist sadness in her gaze.
A shame I'm so high up,
And I've no chair for my sweet,
Not a stool to offer her,
Ah, she trips with weary feet!
Don't, my sweet, plump child,
Make your way back home on foot,
Behind the iron railings,
The cabs are waiting, look.

Heinrich Heine

I Love This White And Slender Body

I Love this white and slender body,
These limbs that answer Love's caresses,
Passionate eyes, and forehead covered
With heavy waves of thick, black tresses.

You are the very one I've searched for
In many lands, in every weather.
You are my sort; you understand me;
As equals we can talk together.

In me you've found the man you care for.
And, for a while, you'll richly pay me
With kindness, kisses and endearments--
And then, as usual, you'll betray me.

Heinrich Heine

Ich Glaub Nicht An Den Himmel

I don't believe in Heaven,
Whose peace the preacher cites:
I only trust your eyes now,
They're my heavenly lights.
I don't believe in God above,
Who gets the preacher's nod:
I only trust your heart now,
And have no other god.
I don't believe in Devils,
In hell or hell's black art:
I only trust your eyes now,
And your devil's heart.

Heinrich Heine

Ich Hatte Einst

I had a lovely homeland long ago.
The oak trees seemed
So tall there, and the violets blew so sweet.
It was a dream.
It kissed me in German, spoke in German
(You'd scarce believe
How good it sounds) the words: I love you true!
It was a dream.

Heinrich Heine

Ich Kann Es Nicht Vergessen

I can't forget I had you,
Dear woman, sweet to hold,
That I once possessed you,
Your body, and your soul.
I still want your body,
That body young and true,
They can bury your soul, love,
I've soul enough for two.
I'll cut my soul in pieces,
And breathe half into you,
And hug you: we must be, yes,
One soul and body too.

Heinrich Heine

Ich Weiss Nicht, Was Soll Es Bedeuten

I don't know what it could mean,
Or why I'm so sad: I find,
A fairy-tale, from times unseen,
Won't vanish from my mind.
The air is cool and it darkens,
And quiet flows the Rhine:
The tops of the mountains sparkle,
In evening's after-shine.
The loveliest of maidens,
She's wonderful, sits there,
Her golden jewels glisten,
She combs her golden hair.
She combs it with a comb of gold,
And sings a song as well:
Its strangeness too is old
And casts a powerful spell.
It grips the boatman in his boat
With a wild pang of woe:
He only looks up to the heights,
Can't see the rocks below.
The waves end by swallowing
The boat and its boatman,
That's what, by her singing,
The Lorelei has done.

Heinrich Heine

In The Underworld

'O to be a bachelor!
Pluto now forever sighs.
'In my marriage miseries,
I perceive, without a wife
Hell was not a hell before.

'O to be a bachelor!
Since my Proserpine is mine,
Daily for my grave I pine,
When she raileth I can hear
Barking Cerberus no more.

'My poor heart needs rest and ease,
In the realm of shades I cry,-
No lost soul is sad as I.
Sisyphus I envy now,
And the fair Danaides.'

II.

In the realm of shades, on a throne of gold,
By the side of her royal spouse, behold
Fair Proserpine,
With gloomy mien,
While deep sighs upheave her bosom.

'The roses, the passionate song I miss
Of the nightingale; yea, and the sun's warm kiss.
Midst the Lemur's dread,
And the ghostly dead,
Now withers my life's young blossom.

'I am fast in the yoke of marriage bound
To this cursed rat-hole underground.
Through my window at night,
Peers each ghostly sprite,
And the Styx murmurs lower and lower.

'To-day I have Charon invited to dinner,
He is bald, and his limbs they grow thinner and thinner,
And the judges, beside,
Of the dead, dismal-eyed,
In such company I shall grow sour.'

III.

Whilst their grievance each is venting
In the underworld below,
Ceres, on the earth lamenting,
Wrathful wanders to and fro.

With no hood in sloven fashion,
Neither mantle o'er her gown,
She declaims that lamentation
Unto all of us well-known;

'Is the blessed spring-tide here?
Has the earth again grown young?
Green the sunny hills appear,
And the icy band is sprung.

'Mirrored from the clear blue river.
Zeus, unclouded, laugheth out,
Softer zephyr's wings now quiver,
Buds upon the fresh twig sprout.'

In the hedge a new refrain;
Call the Oreads from the shore,
'All thy flowers come again,
But thy daughter comes no more.'

Ah, how many weary days
I have sought o'er wide earth's space.
Titan, all thy sunny rays
I have sent on her dear trace.

Yet not one renews assurance
Of the darling face I wot,
Day, that finds all things, the durance

Of my lost one, findeth not.

'Hast thou ravished, Zeus, my daughter?
Or, love-smitten by her charms,
Hath, o'er Orcus's night-black water,
Pluto snatched her in his arms?

'Who towards that gloomy strand
Herald of my grief will be?
Ever floats the bark from land,
Bearing phantoms ceaselessly.

'Closed those shadowy fields are ever
Unto any blessed sight.
Since the Styx hath been a river,
It hath borne no living wight.

'There are thousand stairs descending,
But not one leads upward there.
To her tears no token lending,
At the anxious mother's prayer.'

IV.

Oh, my mother-in-law, Ceres,
Cease thy cries, no longer mourn.
I will grant thee, what so dear is,
I myself so much have borne.

Take thou comfort. We will fairly
Thy child's ownership divide;
And for six moons shall she yearly
In the upper world abide.

Help thee through long summer hours
In thy husbandry affairs;
Binding up for thee the flowers,
While a new straw-hat she wears.

She will dream when twilight pleasant
Colors all the sky with rose;

When by brooks some clownish peasant
Sweetly on his sheep's pipe blows.

Not a harvest dance without her,
She will frisk with Jack and Bess;
Midst the geese and calves about her
She will prove a lioness.

Hail, sweet rest! I breathe free, single,
Here in Orcus far from strife,
Punch with Lethe I will mingle,
And forget I have a wife.

V.

At times thy glance appeareth to importune,
As though thou didst some secret longing prove.
Alas, too well I know it,- thy misfortune
A life frustrated, a frustrated love.

How sad thine eyes are! Yet have I no power
To give thee back thy youth with pleasure rife;
Incurably thy heart must ache each hour
For love frustrated and frustrated life.

Heinrich Heine

Meergruß

Thalatta! Thalatta!

Sei mir begrüßt, du ewiges Meer!
Sei mir begrüßt zehntausendmal,
Aus jauchzendem Herzen,
Wie einst dich begrüßten
Zehntausend Griechenherzen,
Unglückbekämpfende, heimatverlangende,
Weltberühmte Griechenherzen.

Es wogten die Fluten,
Sie wogten und brausten,
Die Sonne goß eilig herunter
Die spielenden Rosenlichter,
Die aufgescheuchten Möwenzüge
Flatterten fort, lautschreiend,
Es stampften die Rosse, es klirrten die Schilde,
Und weithin erscholl es wie Siegesruf:
Thalatta! Thalatta!

Sei mir begrüßt, du ewiges Meer!
Wie Sprache der Heimat rauscht mir dein Wasser,
Wie Träume der Kindheit seh ich es flimmern
Auf deinem wogenden Wellengebiet,
Und alte Erinnerung erzählt mir aufs neue
Von all dem lieben, herrlichen Spielzeug,
Von all den blinkenden Weihnachtsgaben,
Von all den roten Korallenbäumen,
Goldfischchen, Perlen und bunten Muscheln,
Die du geheimnisvoll bewahrst,
Dort unten im klaren Kristallhaus.

O! wie hab ich geschmachtet in öder Fremde!
Gleich einer welken Blume
In des Botanikers blecherner Kapsel,
Lag mir das Herz in der Brust.
Mir ist, als saß ich winterlange,
Ein Kranker, in dunkler Krankenstube,
Und nun verlaß ich sie plötzlich,
Und blendend strahlt mir entgegen

Der smaragdene Frühling, der sonnengeweckte,
Und es rauschen die weißen Blütenbäume,
Und die jungen Blumen schauen mich an,
Mit bunten, duftenden Augen,
Und es duftet und summt, und atmet und lacht,
Und im blauen Himmel singen die Vöglein —
Thalatta! Thalatta!

Du tapferes Rückzugherz!
Wie oft, wie bitteroft
Bedrängten dich des Nordens Barbarinnen!
Aus großen, siegenden Augen
Schossen sie brennende Pfeile;
Mit krummgeschliffenen Worten
Drohten sie mir die Brust zu spalten;
Mit Keilschriftbillets zerschlugen sie mir
Das arme, betäubte Gehirn —
Vergebens hielt ich den Schild entgegen,
Die Pfeile zischten, die Hiebe krachten,
Und von des Nordens Barbarinnen
Ward ich gedrängt bis ans Meer
Und frei aufatmend begrüß ich das Meer,
Das liebe, rettende Meer —
Thalatta! Thalatta!

Heinrich Heine

Mein Kind, Wir Waren Kinder

My child, we were just children,
Two happy kids, that's all:
We crept into the henhouse,
And hid there in the straw.
We crowed like the cockerel,
And all the passers-by –
Thought our: 'Cock-a-doodle-doo!'
Was the real cockerel's cry.
We papered over the boxes
We found around the yard,
And we lived there together
In our elegant house of card.
The neighbour's cat, the old one,
She often came for tea:
We paid her our respects, then,
I bowed and you curtsayed.
We asked how she was feeling,
Politely and with care:
Since then we've said the same
To many an ancient fur.
We often sat there chatting,
Sensibly, as folks do,
Complaining how much better
It was in our day too:
How love and faith and loyalty
Have vanished from the earth,
How dear the coffee is now,
How hard to garner wealth!....
They're gone our games as children,
Everything goes, we see –
Wealth and Earth and ages,
Faith, love and loyalty.

Heinrich Heine

Mein Tag War Heiter

My day was happy, fortunate my night.
My People loved me when I struck the lyre
Of Poetry. Passion was my song, and fire:
There it kindled many a lovely light.
My summer's still ablaze but I've already
Dragged to the barn the crop I brought to birth –
And now I have to leave all that the Earth
Made so dear to me and loved so dearly!
The instrument sinks from my hand.
The glass breaks in splinters, that to my lips
Overconfidently, I so cheerfully pressed.
Oh God! How deeply bitter dying is!
How sweet and intimate the life of Man,
In this sweet, intimate and earthly nest.

Heinrich Heine

Morphine

There's a mirror likeness between the two
Bright, youthfully-shaped figures, though
One's paler than the other and more austere,
I might even say more perfect, more distinguished,
Than the one who'd take me confidingly in his arms –
How soft then, loving, his smile, how blessed his glance!
Then it might well have been, that his wreath
Of white poppies touched my forehead, at times,
Drove the pain from my mind with its strange scent.
But all that's transient. I can only, now, be well,
When the other one, so serious and pale,
The older brother, lowers his dark torch. –
Sleep is good: and Death is better, yet
Surely never to have been born is best.

Heinrich Heine

My Darling, We Sat Together

My darling, we sat together,
We two, in our frail boat;
The night was calm o'er the wide sea
Whereon we were afloat.

The Specter-Island, the lovely,
Lay dim in the moon's mild glance;
There sounded sweetest music,
There waded the shadowy dance.

It sounded sweeter and sweeter,
It waded there to and fro;
But we slid past forlornly
Upon the great sea-flow.

Heinrich Heine

New Spring (1831)

Leise zieht durch mein Gemüt

Soft, aloft, the bells do ring,
Gentlest thoughts they sing me.
Ring and sing, my song of spring,
Through the blue sky wing thee

To the house of budding flowers,
Borne by Echo fleeting.
Shouldst thou chance to see a Rose—
Say, I send her greeting!

Die Rose duftet

The Rose is fragrant—yet if she doth know
Her sweet scent's meaning, if the Nightingale
Herself feels aught that through Man's soul doth flow
At sound of her enraptured madrigal,

I know not, I. Yet often much offence
We find in truth! If Rose and Philomel
Do but pretend emotion, evidence
We have enough that such lies profit well.

Wie des Monies Abbild zittert

As the moon's fair image trembles
In the troubled, tossing tides,
Though herself, serene and stately,
O'er heaven's vaulted pathway glides,

Even so glidest thou, Beloved,
Still, serene; thine image taken
In my heart but seems to tremble,
For my heart is tossed and shaken.

Es war ein alter KSnig

There was an aged monarch,

His heart was sad, his hair was grey;
Alas, poor fool, he took him
A wife that was young and gay!

There was a handsome page-boy,
Light was his heart and gold his hair;
The silken train he carried
Of that queen so young and fair.

Dost thou not know my story,
So sweet, so sad to tell?
Death was the lovers' portion
Because they loved too well.

Durch den Wald im Mondenscheine

Through the forest, in the moonlight,
Late I saw the elfin train
Pass with hunting-horns resounding,
Heard their horse-bells ring again.

Golden antlers, nobly branching,
Crowned each little snow-white steed;
Like a flight of wild swans homing
Through the glades they passed at speed.

Smiled the Fairy Queen upon me—
Smiled, and looked, and passed me by.
Does her smile mean love's renewal?
Does it mean that I must die?

Die holden Wunsche bliihen

The tender wishes blossom,
And wither at a breath,
And bloom again, and wither—
Until they cease in death.

'Tis knowing this that saddens
For me the love most blest:
My heart has learned such wisdom
That it bleeds within my breast.

Heinrich Heine

Night On The Shore

Starless and cold is the night:
The sea is foaming,
And over the sea, flat on his belly,
Lies the formless wind from the north,
In secret, grumbling furtively,
Like a grumpy misery back in good humour,
Chattering gaily to the waters,
Telling many mad stories,
Stories of giants, miraculous slayings,
The ancient sagas of Norway.
In between, he smiles and howls till the echoes are heard
Of the old magic spells of the Edda,
And runic rhymes,
So mystical, so magically powerful,
That the white children of the waves
Spring up and dance for joy,
Wildly drunk.

Meanwhile, along the sea-shore,
Over the wave-washed sand,
A stranger walks, with a step
Wilder still than the wind and waves.
Where he treads
Fire flashes, mussels crack;
He wraps himself in his grey cloak
And swiftly goes through the hurrying night –
Surely lit by the little light
That shimmers and glimmers so gloriously
From the fisherman's lonely hut.

Father and brother are on the sea
And quiet alone in the hut remains
The fisherman's daughter,
The fisherman's beautiful daughter.
She sits by the hearth,
And listen to the kettle,
With its sweet whistle,
And throws the crackling brushwood upon the fire,
And blows upon it,

So that red flickering lights
Magically shine upon
The angelic face,
And on the delicate white shoulders,
That lurk and peep out
Of the grey coarse chemise,
And on her anxious little hands
That cling so close
About her skirt.

Suddenly open the door springs,
And enters in the stranger out of the night.
Lovesure his eye rests
Upon the pale and trembling girl.
He throws his coat upon the floor,
And, smiling, says:
'You see, my child, I keep my word;
I come, and with me comes
The old times when the gods of the sky
Came down to the daughters of men,
And embraced the daughters of men,
And from them begot
A race of sceptred kings
And heroes, wonders of the world.
But be amazed no more, my child,
Because of my divinity,
And please, make me some tea with rum.
We also freeze, the immortal gods,
Easily catching a godly cold,
And an immortal cough.'

Heinrich Heine

Of Pearls And Stars

The pearly treasures of the sea,
The lights that spatter heaven above,
More precious than these wonders are
My heart-of-hearts filled with your love.

The ocean's power, the heavenly sights
Cannot outweigh a love filled heart.
And sparkling stars or glowing pearls
Pale as love flashes, beams and darts.

So, little, youthful maiden come
Into my ample, feverish heart
For heaven and earth and sea and sky
Do melt as love has melt my heart.

The following English translation of 'The Sea Hath its Pearls' was composed by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882).

The Sea Hath Its Pearls

The sea hath its pearls,
The heaven hath its stars;
But my heart, my heart,
My heart hath its love.

Great are the sea, and the heaven;
Yet greater is my heart,
And fairer than pearls or stars
Flashes and beams my love.

Thou little, youthful maiden,
Come unto my great heart;
My heart, and the sea and the heaven
Are melting away with love!

Heinrich Heine

Still Ist Die Nacht

The night is so still, the streets are at rest,
This is the house that my love graced,
This is the town she's long since left,
But the house is here in the selfsame place.
A man's there too, who stands and stares,
And wrings his hands, in violent pain:
When I see his look it makes me scared –
The moonlight shows my face again.
You doppel-gänger! You pallid creature!
Why do you act that torment through,
Love, torturing me on this very corner,
For so many nights, those years I knew.

Heinrich Heine

The Asra

Every day so lovely, shining,
up and down, the Sultan's daughter
walked at evening by the water,
where the white fountain splashes.

Every day the young slave stood
by the water, in the evening,
where the white fountain splashes,
each day growing pale and paler.

Then the princess came one evening,
quickly speaking to him, softly,
'Your true name – I wish to know it,
your true homeland and your nation.'

And the slave said, 'I am called
Mahomet, I am from Yemen,
and my tribe, it is the Asra,
who die, when they love.'

Heinrich Heine

The Evening Gossip

We sat by the fisher's cottage,
We looked on sea and sky,
We saw the mists of evening
Come riding and rolling by :

The lights in the lighthouse window
Brighter and brighter grew,
And on the dim horizon
A ship still hung in view.

We spake of storm and shipwreck,
Of the seaman's anxious life ;
How he floats 'twixt sky and water,
'Twixt joy and sorrow's strife :

We spoke of coasts far distant,
We spoke of south and north,
Strange men, and stranger customs,
That those wild lands send forth :

Of the giant trees of Ganges,
Whose balm perfumes the breeze ;
And the fair and slender creatures,
That kneel by the lotus-trees :

Of the flat-skulled, wide-mouthed, Laplanders,
So dirty and so small ;
Who bake their fish on the embers,
And cower, and shake, and squall.

The maidens listened earnestly,
At last the tales were ended ;
The ship was gone, the dusky night
Had on our talk descended.

Heinrich Heine

The Fir-Tree And The Palm

A lonely fir-tree standeth
On a height where north winds blow ;
It sleepeth, with whitened garment,
Enshrouded by ice and snow.

It dreameth of a palm-tree,
That far in the Eastern land,
Lonely and silent, mourneth
On its burning shelf of sand.

Heinrich Heine

The Hostile Brothers

Yonder, on the mountain summit,
Lies the castle wrapped in night;
In the valley gleam the sparkles
Struck from clashing swords in fight.

Brothers they who thus in fury
Fierce encounter hand to hand ;
Say, what cause could make a brother
'Gainst a brother turn his brand ?

Countess Laura's beaming glances
Did the fatal feud inflame,
Kindling both with equal passion
For the fair and noble dame.

Which hath gained the fair one's favor ?
Which shall win her for his bride ? —
Vain to scan her heart's inclining;
Draw the sword, let that decide.

Wild and desperate grows the combat,
Clashing strokes like thunder fly ;
All ! beware, ye savage warriors!
Evil powers by night are nigh.

Woe for von, ye bloody brothers !
Woe for thee, thou bloody vale !
By each other's swords expiring,
Sink the brothers, stark and pale.

Many a century has departed,
Many a race has found a tomb,
Yet from yonder rocky summits
Frown those moss-grown towers of gloom ;

And within the dreary valley
Fearful sights are seen by night ;
There, us midnight strikes, the brothers
Still renew their ghastly fight.

Heinrich Heine

The Lore-Lei

I know not whence it rises,
This thought so full of woe ;
But a tale of times departed
Haunts me, and will not go.

The air is cool, and it darkens,
And calmly flows the Rhine,
The mountain-peaks are sparkling
In the sunny evening-shine.

And yonder sits a maiden,
The fairest of the fair ;
With gold is her garment glittering,
And she combs her golden hair:

With a golden comb she combs it;
And a wild song singeth she,
That melts the heart with a wondrous
And powerful melody

.
The boatman feels his bosom
With a nameless longing move ;
He sees not the gulfs before him,
His gaze is fixed above,

Till over boat and boatman
The Rhine's deep waters run :
And this, with her magic singing,
The Lore-lei has done !

Heinrich Heine

The North Sea -- First Cycle

I Coronation

Ho, songs! My own good songs and trusty!
Up, up! and don your arms!
Let blow the merry bugles,
And lift upon my shield
This fair young Maiden,
Who now alone shall rule
O'er all my heart as rightful Queen.

Hail, hail 'to thee, my fair young Queen!

From the sun above thee
I'll snatch the beaming fiery gold,
And from it weave a diadem
For thine anointed head.
From the fluttering silk of the heaven's blue curtain,
Wherein the jewels of night are gleaming,
I'll cut the richest piece,
And this, for coronation-mantle,
I'll hang upon thy royal shoulder.
I'll give thee a royal household
Of sonnets in starch and buckram,
Haughty terzains and courtierlike stanzas ;
As running footman take my Wit,
As Court-fool, my Imagination,
As Herald, with laughing tears for his bearing,
My Humour will serve thee well.
But I myself, your Majesty,
I humbly kneel before you,
Presenting on crimson velvet Cushion,
With my homage profound,
That morsel of sense
Which of her mercy she has left me still-
Your predecessor in the realm.

II

Evening Twilight

On the wan sea-strand
Lonely I lay, and in sorrowful brooding.
The sun sank lower and lower, and flung
His red rays, glowing, on the water,
And I watched the far white billows,
In the grip of the flood,
Foaming and roaring, nigher and nigher—
Strange medley of sounds! a whispering and wailing,
A laughing and murmuring, sobbing and sighing,
Low voices, the while, a strange lullaby singing.
Methought I heard long-forgotten legends,
World-old adorable folk-tales,
That long since in boyhood
From neighbours' children I learnt;
When, of a summer evening,
On the steps of stone by the house-door,
We squatted for quiet story-telling,
With small hearts eagerly listening
And young eyes keen for wonders;
While the fair grown-up maidens
Sat, 'mid balm-breathing pots of flowers,
At a window over the way there,
With rosy faces,
Smiling and lit by the moon.

III

Sunset

The red and glowing sun goes down,
Down into yon far-shuddering sea,
A world of waters, silver-grey;
Airy cloudlets tinted rosily
After him float; while, o'er against him,
From autumn's duskily-looming cloud-veils
With sorrowful death-pale visage,
Breaks the gentle moon,
And after her, tiny sparklers,
Shimmer the stars out of space.

Once through heaven went shining,

Wedded and one,
Luna the Goddess, and Sol the God,
And the stars in multitudes thronged around them,
Their little, innocent children.

But evil tongues came whispering discord,
And parted in anger
The august and radiant wedded pair.

Now, in lonely splendour, by day
The Sun-god on high goes his ancient round,
Still, for his majesty,
Blandly worshipt, and much belauded
By proud and fortune-hardened worldlings.
But all night long
Through heaven wanders Luna,
The wretched mother,
With all her orphans, her starry children,
And she gleams in silent sorrow,
And love-lorn maidens and gentle poets
Vow to her tears and songs.

Ah, tender Luna! with woman's heart
Ever she dotes on her beautiful spouse,
Still at even, trembling and pale,
Forth will she peer from her veil of cloud,
And after him aching she gazes,
And fain in her anguish would cry to him: ' Come!
Come! The children are pining for thee——'
Naught the implacable Sun-god heeds,
At the sight of his consort he flushes
His luridest crimson,
In wrath and pain;
And unrelenting he hastens down
To his widower's bed in the sea-waves cold. .
Evil tongues with a whisper
Thus brought down such ruin and sorrow
Even on the gods, the immortals!
And the wretched gods, high-moving in heaven,
Wander in anguish
Comfortless ways without ending,
And die can they never,

But still drag with them
Their radiant sorrow.

But I, a mere man,
So lowly planted, of Death so favoured,
I'll whine here no longer.

IV

A Night by the Strand

Starless and cold is the night,
Wide yawns the sea,
And over the sea, flat on his paunch,
Sprawls that uncouth lubber, the northwind,
And, quite at his ease, with hoarse, piping voice,
Like a peevish curmudgeon who grows good-humoured,
Chats to the water below;
And he spins mad yarns without number,
Slaughter-breathing tales of giants,
World-old Norwegian sagas;
And between-whiles, far-bellowing, laughs he, and
howls he
The magic songs of the Edda,
And runic-spell rhymes,
So darkly defiant, and potent in glamour,
That the white sea-children
Leap their highest and cheer him,
Drunk with insolent glee.

Meanwhile, on the shore's flat margin,
Over the tide-washed, surf-wetted sand,
Strides a stranger, the heart within him
A wilder thing than wind or billows.
Where his feet fall
Sparks fly out, and crackle the sea-shells;
And he wraps him close in his mist-grey mantle,
And swiftly strides through the blustering night;
Surely led by the little candle
That pleasantly luring glimmers
From the fisherman's lonely cabin.

Father and brother are on the sea,
And all alone by herself is left
In the cabin the fisherman's daughter,
The strangely beautiful fisherman's daughter.
By the hearth she sits,
And lists to the humming kettle's
Bodeful, sweet, mysterious murmur;
And feeds the fire with sharp-crackling brushwood,
And blows it up,
Till the flickering ruddy blazes
Gleam again with magic beauty
On the face fresh and blooming,
On the tender, fair young shoulder,
So winsomely peeping
From the smock of coarse grey homespun,
And on the careful neat little hand,
As it binds the petticoat-skirt more tightly
Round her shapely haunches.

But on a sudden the door springs wide,
And at once walks in the night-wandering stranger;
Bold with love his eye reposes
On the fair and slender maiden,
Who trembling before him stands,
Aghast, like a terrified lily;
And he flings on the floor his mantle,
And laughs, and says:

'Behold, my child, I keep my word,
For I come, and with me there comes
The good old time when the gods out of heaven
Stooped in love to the daughters of men,
And, the daughters of men embracing,
Begot upon them
Kings, and races of sceptre-bearers,
And heroes famous on earth.
But gape there, my child, no longer
Over my godliness,
And I beg of thee brew me some tea with rum;
For outside 'twas cold,
And in such a night-wind,
Gods though we be, eternal, we shiver,

And easily catch the godliest of snuffles,
And even a cough that's immortal.

V

Poseidon

The sun's bright beams were playing
Over the rolling waste of the sea;
Far in the roadstead glittered the ship
That waited there to bear me homeward;
Only the waft of a fair wind failed us,
And I sat in peace on a silver sand-hill
On the lonely strand.
And I read the Song of Odysseus,
That old, that ever-youthful song,
From out whose leaves, where ocean murmured,
There joyously breathed on me
The breath of the gods,
And the sunny springtime of mortals,
And the burgeoning heaven of Hellas.

My noble heart still faithfully followed
The son of Laertes in wandering and danger,
Sat beside him, heavy in spirit,
By friendly hearth-sides,
Where queens were spinning purple linen;
And helped him to lie, and craftily vanish . . .',
From giants' caverns, and arms of sea-nymphs;
Followed him down through Cimmerian night,
And through storm and shipwreck,
Still suffering with him unspeakable sorrow.

Sighing I spoke: 'O cruel Poseidon,
Thy wrath is dreadful!
For myself I fear
In my homeward sailing.'

The words were scarce spoken,
When up foamed the sea
And from the white-capt waves arose,
With sedge-crowned brows, the head of the Sea-god,

In scorn he bellowed:
' Keep a bold heart, my bardling!
I care not in the least to endanger
Thy wretched smack there,
Nor make thy life, so precious, a burden
With even a redoubtable tossing;
For thee, my bardling, I owe thee no grudge,
Thou never didst damage the tiniest turret
In Priam's citadel holy;
No tiniest eyelash didst thou e'er singe
In the eye of my son Polyphemus,
And thee hath never counselled and kept
The Goddess of Prudence, Pallas Athena.'

Thus roared Poseidon,
And into the sea plunged back;
While, over his vulgar sailor's joke,
Laughed under the water
Amphitrite, the buxom fishwife,
And the stupid daughters of Nereus.

VI

Declaration

Duskily fell the evening twilight,
Wilder blustered the tide,
And I sat on the shore, and gazed upon
The white dance of the billows,
And then my breast upswelled like the sea,
And longing seized me, and deep home-sickness
For thee, thou image sweet,
That hoverest ever o'er me,
Dost call me everywhere,
Everywhere, everywhere,
In the snore of the wind, in the roar of the sea,
In the sigh of my own fond heart.

With fragile reed I wrote in the sand:
'Agnes, I love but thee!'
But cruel billows came pouring in
Over the tender confession,

And blotted it out.
O brittlest of reeds, O sand so unstable,
O treacherous billows, I'll trust you no more!
The heavens grow darker, my heart grows wilder,
And with strong right hand, from Norway's forests,
I pluck the tallest fir-tree,
And plunging it deep
Into Etna's glowing crater, and wielding
This for my fire-steeped pen titanic,
Write on the gloomy vault of heaven:
'Agnes, I love but thee!'

Night after night, blazing on high,
Shall bum the unquenchable scripture of flame,
And myriads to come, earth's unborn generations,
Read, rejoicing, the heavenly motto:
'Agnes, I love but thee!'

VII

A Night in the Cabin

The sea hath its pearls for treasure,
The heavens their starry jewels,
But ah! my heart, my heart,
My heart hath its own love.

Great are the sea and the heavens,
But greater is my heart,
And fairer than pearls or starlets
Beameth and gleameth my love.

Thou young and slender maiden,
Come to my mighty heart;
My heart, and the sea, and the heavens
Are dying for utter love.

On the dark blue vault of heaven,
Where the loveliest stars are twinkling,
Oh, that I might press my kisses,
Wildly press with stormy weeping!

Those bright stars in thousands twinkling
Are the eyes of my Beloved,
Thousandfold their tender greeting
Shines from the blue vault of heaven.

To the dark vault of heaven,
To the eyes of my Beloved,
I uplift my arms devoutly,
And beseech them and implore them:

Sweetest eyes, ye gracious candles,
Oh, possess my soul with blessing,
Let my spirit fly to inherit
You and your whole heaven of blisses!

From the eyes of heaven up yonder
Golden sparks fall trembling downward,
Through the night, as Love my spirit
Fills, expands through boundless heaven.

O ye eyes of heaven up yonder,
Weep yourselves into my spirit,
Till your starry tears with radiance
Flood and overflow my spirit!

Gently rocked by ocean-billows
And the tides of dreamy musing,
I lie quiet in the cabin,
In my dark berth in the comer.

Through the open hatchway gazing,
Bright I see the stars up yonder,
The belov'd sweet eyes in heaven
Of my sweet, my well-beloved.

Those belov'd sweet eyes in heaven,
O'er my head their watch are keeping,
And they glimmer and they shimmer
From the dark blue vault of heaven.

Toward the dark blue vault of heaven
Blissfully I gaze long hours,

Till a wan white veil of sea-mist
Hides me from those eyes beloved.

On the vessel's thin planking,
Where my dream-haunted head lies,
Batter the billows, the boisterous billows;
They welter and murmur
Aside in my ear:
'Thou dream-befooled fellow!
Thy arm is short, and the heavens are far,
And the stars up yonder are firmly fastened
With golden rivets—
In vain is thy longing, in vain is thy sighing,
'Twere better for thee to go to sleep.'

In dreams I saw a moorland vast and dreary,
All muffled thick with white and silent snow,
And under the white snow I lay deep-buried,
And slept the cold and lonely sleep of death.

But from the gloomy heaven above looked ever
The starry eyes upon my grave below,
Those gentle eyes! From heaven they shone victorious,
And calmly bright, and ever full of love.

VIII

Storm

Loud rages the Storm,
And he flogs the billows,
And the billows, foaming and combing,
Tower aloft, and in white water-mountains
Heave restless, forever restless;
And the good ship upclimbs them,
Eagerly toiling;
Then, suddenly plunging, she sounds
The gloomy waves' wide-yawning abysses.

O Sea!
Mother of Beauty, the foam-born cruel one!
Grandmother of Love, have mercy upon me!

There comes hovering, scenting corpses,
That white apparition, the sea-mew;
And, whetting her beak on the topmast,
She lusts with greedy lust for the heart
That with praise of thy daughter resounds,
And which thy grandson, the little rogue,
Hath chosen for toy.

In vain are my pleading and prayer!
My call dies away in the rage of the storm,
In the noise of winds warring.
They howl, and whistle, and prattle, and roar,
Like a madhouse of sounds!
And in the lulls I hear distinctly
Siren wailing of harp-strings,
Wildest yearning of song,
Soul-dissolving and soul-lacerating;
Surely that voice I remember!

Far on the rocky coast of Scotland
Looms a castle, jutting and beetling
Grey o'er the shattering surge;
There, at a deep high-vaulted window,
Stands a woman, sickly and fair,
Ghostly fragile, and marble-pale;
And she sweeps her harp as she sings,
And the rough wind raves through her long locks rudely,
And bears her gloomy song
Over the raging waste of the sea.

IX

Calm

Calm the ocean lies, the sunbeams
Shimmering, dancing on the water,
And the ship through heaving jewels
Gently cleaves her green sea-furrow. '

By the tiller lies the Pilot
On his belly, gently snoring.
Patching sails beside the foremast,

Cross-legged, squats the tarry ship-boy.

Red his cheeks beneath their griming
Bum; his wide mouth sadly twitches,
And his beautiful big eyes are
Piteously o'erbrimmed with sorrow.

For the Skipper stands before him,
Raging, swearing, roaring: 'Curse you,
You young rogue, you've been and robbed me,
From the cask you've stol'n a herring!'

Calm the ocean! From the ground-swell
Boldly leaps a smart young spratling,
Warms his little head in sunshine,
Glad with tiny tail he splashes.

But from airy height a sea-gull
Darts like lightning on the spratling,
And, his hasty prey half-swallowed,
Soars again into the azure.

X

Ocean-wraith

But I, the while, leant over the gunwale,
With rapt eyes dreamily gazing,
Far down through the water clear as crystal,
Still gazing deeper and deeper—
Till, deep in the sea's abysses,
First like a glimmering dawn-cloud,
But ever growing clearer in colour,
Domes of churches and towers loomed upward;
And soon, as clear as day, a city entire,
Antiquated, Netherlandish,
And busy with folk.
There solemn burghers in sable mantles,
With prim white neck-ruffs and chains of honour,
And long in sword, and long in the visage,
Gravely stride through the swarming market
Tow'rd the Town Hall, high of stairway,

Where Emperors, marble phantoms,
Guard are keeping with sceptre and sword.
And near them, before long rows of houses,
With windows a-gleam like mirrors,
And quaint pyramidal pollard lindens,
Maidens walk with rustling of satin,
Slender-waisted, their flower-like faces
Framed demurely in coifs black-bordered,
Their golden tresses outripling.
Gay attired gallants, in Spanish costume
Come swaggering to meet them, and bowing.
Aged women,
In sober old-fashioned garments,
With hymn-book and rosary in their hands,
Haste, with faltering footsteps,
To the great cathedral,
Impelled by the carillon's pealing
And muttering organ's tone.

Me too that far-off music grips
With its mysterious shudder!
An infinite longing, deepest sorrow
O'ersteals my heart,
My scarcely healed heart;—
I feel as though its wounds were gently
Kissed open by beloved lips,
And set once more a-bleeding—
Blood-drops, warm and crimson,
Fall slowly, slowly dripping fall
On a grey old house below there,
In the deep sea-city,
On an old and steeply-gabled house,
Tenantless now, and melancholy;
Save at the basement window
A maiden sits,
And leans her head on her arm,
Like a poor and forsaken child—
And I know thee, thou poor forsaken child I

So deep, so ocean-deep, then,
Thou hiddest thyself from me
In childish ill-humour,

And ne'er couldst again come up,
But strange must dwell in a land of strangers,
These centuries long;
And all the while, with soul full of grief,
O'er the whole wide world have I sought thee,
For ever have sought thee,
Thou ever-belov'd one,
Thou long, long lost one!
But now I have found thee—
Ay, now I have found thee again, and gaze in
Thy own sweet face,
Those eyes, so grave and loyal,
That smile so tender—
And never, never again will I leave thee,
And I come to thee, down to thee.
And with arms outstretched to enfold thee
Down will I plunge to thy heart!

Just in the nick of time here
The wideawake skipper gripped my foot,
And pulled me back from the bulwark,
And cried, maliciously laughing:
'Devil come for you. Doctor?'

XI

Purification

Bide thou in thine own deeps of ocean,
Delirious dream,
Thou who once for many a night
Didst wring my heart with bliss deceiving,
And now, as ocean-wraith,
In day's clear light hast come to ensnare me—
Bide thou below there for evermore;
And I fling, moreover, down to thee
All my old sins and my sorrows;
And the cap and bells of my folly,
That so long round my head have jingled;
And the cold, sleek-glistening serpent-skin,
Hypocrisy,
That all too long my spirit strangled,

The sickly spirit,
The God-belying, the angel-belying,
Unholy spirit—
Yoho! yoho! Here comes a breeze!
Up with the sails! They flutter and fill!
O'er the calm treacherous plains of ocean
Speeds the good ship, '
And 'Hurrah!' cries the soul set free.

XII

Peace

High in heaven the sun was riding,
Round him white billowy clouds.
The sea was calm,
And musing I lay in the stern of the vessel,
Dreamily musing—and, half in waking
And half in slumber, I saw the Christ,
The Saviour of men.
In white and flowing raiment
He walked, a giant shape,
Over land and sea;
His head rose high into heaven,
His hands he stretched as in blessing
Over land and sea;
While, for the heart in his breast,
The sun he carried,
The golden fire-flaming sun;
And his golden fire-flaming sun-heart
Poured forth its beams of mercy,
And its kindly all-fostering light,
Illuming and warming,
Over land and sea.

Peals of bells rang, drawing festally,
As though swans with wreaths of roses
Towed her onward, the swift-gliding ship,
And drew her in play to the shore's green places,
Whereby men dwelt in their lofty-steepled
•Sky-scaling town.

O peace mysterious! How still the town!
At rest were the rumble and roar
Of trade, with its chaffer and swelter;
And through the clean and echoing alleys
Wandered the townsfolk, clothed in white raiment,
Palm-branches bearing.
And where two met, with sympathy
Each looked on each, and read his bosom,
And; trembling for love and sweet self-abnegation,
Each on his brow kissed the other,
Uplifting their eyes
To the sun-bright heart of the Saviour,
That shed from the heavens his crimson blood
In glad atonement;
Then, thrice-redeemed, they cried aloud:
'Blessed be Jesus Christ!'

Heinrich Heine

The North Sea -- Second Cycle

I

Greeting to the Sea

Thalatta! Thalatta!

I hail thee, O Sea, thou Ancient of Days!
I hail thee, O Sea, ten thousand times
With jubilant heart,
Of yore as once hailed thee
Those Grecian hearts ten thousand,
Homestead-desiring, calamity-mastering,
World-renowned bold Grecian hearts.

The billows were heaving,
Were heaving and roaring,
The sun shed briskly from heaven
His quivering rosy sparklets,
In sudden scare the tribes of sea-birds
Rose on the wing, loud-shrieking;
O'er stamping of war-steeds and clang of shields smitten,
Far-pealed that shout, like a victor's cry:
'Thalatta I Thalatta!

I hail thee, O Sea, thou Ancient of Days!
Like speech of my homestead murmurs thy water,
Like dreams of my childhood shimmer before me
The heaving leagues of thy billowy realm,
As Memory, the grey-beard, remurmurs his stories
Of all those dear magnificent playthings,
Of all those glittering Christmas-presents,
Of all those branchy red trees of coral,
Gold-fishes, pearls, and shimmering sea-shells,
Which thou mysteriously dost guard
Down there in thy lucid crystal house.

Oh, how long have I languished in lonely exile!
Like a poor fading flow'ret
Shut in a botanist's tin for collecting
Drooped the sick heart in my breast.

Meseems I've sat the livelong winter,
A sick man alone in his gloomy sick-room,
And now have suddenly left it;
And blindingly flashes upon me
The emerald spring by the sun awakened,
And the trees are a-whisper with snowy blossom,
And the fair young flowers gaze in my face,
Their bright eyes brimming with sweetness;
All's odour and hum, and laughter and breeze,
And in heaven's blue deep the birds are all singing-
Thalatta! Thalatta!

Thou valiant homing heart,
How oft, how bitter oft,
The northern she-barbarians have beset thee!
From great eyes, roving for conquest,
Shooting their fiery arrows;
With words ground crooked like sabres,
Threatening still to cleave my bosom;
With letters like clubs they battered to bits-,-
My feeble and stupefied brain—
In vain I braced my buckler against them,'
The shafts flew hissing, the blows fell crashing,
And by the northern she-barbarians
Down was I driven to the sea—
And, breathing freely, I hail thee, O Sea,
Thou kindly, rescuing Sea,
Thalatta! Thalatta!

II

Thunderstorm

Dull tempest lies prone on the ocean,
And through the lurid wall of cloud
Darts the lightning with zigzags flare,
Swift-illumining, and swiftly vanished,
As a gleek from the brain of Kronion.
Over the waste of weltering water
Far the thunders go rolling,
And lustily leap the white sea-horses
That Boreas once in his might

Sired on the alluring mares of Erichthon;
And the sea-fowl anxiously o'er them hover,
Like shades that flit by the Styx,
Whom Charon repels from the night-coloured barge.
Woeful pinnacle of pleasure,
Which there goes dancing the direst dance!
Aeolus sends her the briskest of partners,
Who strike up madly a rollicking round-dance,
And one doth pipe, and one doth blow,
A third on double-bass keeps brumming,
And the tottering steersman grips the tiller,
And with fixed eye looks down on his compass,
The shuddering soul of the vessel,
Then lifts his hands imploring to heaven:
'Oh, succour me. Castor, Tamer of Steeds,
And thou, valiant with fists, Polydeuces!'

III

Shipwreck

Hope gone, and Love gone! All dashed to pieces!
And myself—most like a drowned body
That grumblingly the sea hath cast up,
Lie on the strand here,
The bald and desolate strand.
There heaves before me the waste of waters,
Nothing behind me but trouble and sorrow,
And over my head hurry the rain-clouds;
The grey and formless daughters of air,
Who from the sea, in cloudy pitchers,
Draw up the water,
And with labour lift it, and lift it,
But to pour it again in the sea,
A dull and most wearisome task,
And useless as my own vain life is.

The waves are murmuring, the sea-gulls crying,
Wafts of old memories over me steal,
Old dreams long forgotten, old visions long vanished,
Sweet and torturing, rise from the deep..

A woman dwells in the Norland,
A fairest woman, royally fair.
The amorous white folds of her gown
Clasp close her slender cypress-like form;
The dark wealth of her tresses
Falls, like a night of bliss,
From her head, with its garland of plaits, downflowing
To curl itself dreamily sweet
Round a face sweet in its paleness;
And from that face, sweet in its paleness,
Large and intense her dark eye flashes,
Like a black sun from heaven.

O thou swarthy sun, how oft,
Witchingly oft, I drank from thee ;;; ,... ;
The flames of a madness ecstatic, .,•,,-»>,...•..- ;'
And stood and reeled, as one drunk with fire—
Then hovered a smile of dovelike mildness
O'er the proud lips, ripe in their haughty curving,
And the proud lips, ripe in their haughty curving,
Sighed forth words more sweet than moonlight,
And tender as breath of roses—
And then my soul shook its pinions,
And soared, like an eagle, aloft into heaven!

Hush! ye billows and sea-fowl!
For all is over, hope and good-fortune,
Hope gone and Love gone! On earth I lie lonely,
A desolate shipwrecked man,
And bury my burning face here
In the wet sea-sand.

IV

Sunset

The sun in glory
Has paced serenely into the sea,
The wavering waters are softly tinged
With the gloom of night;
Yet still the afterglow
Strews them over with golden spangles;

And the might of the murmuring tide
Shoreward urges the white-capt billows,
That gambol as briskly and blithely *
As woolly white flocks of lambkins,
At even, when, singing, the herd-boy drives them
From pasture home.

'How glorious the sun is!'
So said, long silence breaking, the friend
With whom o'er the strand I was wandering;
And half in jest, half in sad earnest,
Assured me he held the sun to be
A beautiful woman the hoary sea-god
Had married for mere convenience;
The livelong day she wanders in gladness
The heights of heaven, her purple robe
Ablaze with diamonds flashing,
Of all admired, of all beloved—
All the wide world's fair creatures,
And gladdening all the world's fair creatures
With her bright face's warmth and radiance;
But in the evening, desolate, helpless,
Back must she come, like a slave,
To the damp sea-hall, and barren embraces,
Of her hoary spouse.

'Trust me'—further my friend went on,
And laughed and sighed, and again laughed dryly—
'They live down below there in tenderest wedlock!
For either they sleep, or wrangle so savagely
The sea above them foams with the strife,
And 'mid roaring of billows the sailor hears
How the greybeard miscalls his dame:
'All creation's bold strumpet!
Wanton of radiance!
The livelong day for others thou glowest,
At night for me thou art frosty and jaded!'
And after such curtain-lectures,
What wonder? into passionate weeping
The proud sun breaks, and bewails her fortune,
And wails so bitterly long, the sea-god
Springs from his couch there in sheer desperation,

And swiftly swims up to the sea's broad surface,
His wits and his wind to recover.
'I saw him myself, 'twas only last night,
Peering, breast-high, above the billows.
A jacket of yellow flannel he wore,
And on his head a lily-white nightcap,
And wrinkled and sere was his face.'

V

The Song of the Oceanids

Pallor of evening blanches the sea,
And lonely there, with his soul so lonely,
Sits a man on the bald sea-strand,
And stares with death-cold gaze aloft
At the far-off death-cold vault of heaven;
And stares o'er the waste of weltering sea—
Airy sailors, his sighs go soaring,
And back to him come in sorrow,
For barred to their entrance the heart they have found
Wherein they fain had anchored.
Then so loud he groans that the white-wing'd sea-gulls,
Scared from their sandy nesting-places,
In flocks around him circle,
And he speaks these words to them, strangely laughing:

'Poor, black-legged sea-fowl!
On snowy pinions ocean o'erhovering,
With crooked beaks the sea-water sipping,
And train-oily seal-blubber gobbling,
Your life is bitter as is your diet!
But I, happy mortal, I taste but of dainties!
I feed on the sweetest breath of roses,
The brides of the nightingale, fed by the moon;
I feed on yet sweeter confectioner's cates,
Filled full of rich cream thickly-clotted;
And the sweetest sweet I have tasted,
Love, sweet love, sweet being-beloved.

'She loves me! she loves me! the sweetest maiden!
This morning at home, from her balcony leaning,

She looks through the gloaming away down the high road,
And listens, longing for me—yes, really!
In vain she peers all around her, then sighs she,
And sighing down she goes to the garden,
And wanders in balm and moonlight,
And speaks to the flowers, and fain must tell them
How I, her Beloved, am oh, so dear!
And so worth her loving—yes, really!
In bed thereafter, asleep, in her dreams,
Her innocence plays with my image dear;
Next morning, even, at breakfast,
In her glistening bread and butter
Spies she my countenance smiling,
And she eats it up for love—yes, really!

E'en so boasts he, and boasts he,
And ever the sea-gulls' wild screaming
Seems cold and ironical tittering.
The mists of gloaming rise from the sea;
From opalescent grey cloud looks weirdly,
Peering forth, the wan yellow moon!
Up surge, moaning, the ocean billows,
And deep from the surging and moaning sea,
As mournful as whispering breezes,
Sounds the Song of the Oceanids,
The beautiful, pitiful water-wives,
And loveliest the voice, o'er the others outringing,
Of Peleus' consort, the silver-footed,
And they sing to him, sighing:

'O fool, thou fool, thou hectoring fool!
Thou tortured of sorrow!
Thy hopes behind thee lie slaughtered most wretchedly,
Poor babes of the heart fondly dandled,
And ah! thy heart, like Niobe,
Grows marble through grief!
Black night sinks down o'er thy brain,
And there flash through the gloom the lightnings of madness,
In thy grief-wrung boasting!
O fool, thou fool, thou hectoring fool!
Stiff-necked art thou, like thy forbear,
The Titan so haughty who stole from Jove's children

The heavenly fire, and gave it to men,
And plagued by the vulture, nailed to the rock-wall,
Defied Olympus, defying and groaning
Till we could hear in our green sea-deeps,
And came to him with comforting song,
O fool, thou fool, thou hectoring fool!
Thou art in sooth yet feebler than he,
And 'twere mere common sense that the gods thou shouldst honour,
And patiently bear thy misery's burden,
Ay, patiently bear it for ages and ages,
Till Atlas' self shall his patience lose,
And the heavy world shall pitch from his shoulders
Into endless night.'

So sounded the song of the Oceanids,
The beautiful, pitiful water-wives,
Till waves growing louder quite over-roared it—
Into the clouds went plunging the moon,
Night over me yawned,
And I sat long, long, in the darkness weeping.

VI

The Gods of Greece

O moon in full bloom! in thy soft light
The sea is a-shine like flowing gold;
With noonday clearness, yet glamour of gloaming,
It rests in peace on the strand's broad bosom;
Through the starless azure of heaven,
Huge the white clouds go sailing,
Like forms of gods colossal, moulded
In glimmering marble.

Nay, in good sooth, no clouds are those yonder I
These are themselves, the gods of old Hellas,
Who once in gladness the world o'erlorded;
But now, defunct and supplanted,
Like monstrous ghosts make spectral procession
Through midnight spaces of heaven.

Awed, and mysteriously dazzled, I gaze on

The airy Pantheon,
Dumb-moving, majestic, dreadfully moving,
Giants in stature.
He there is Kronion, the King of Heaven,
Snow-white gleam the curls on his brow,
Those curls so renowned that made tremble Olympus;
And cold in his hand are his thunders extinct,
And in his visage dwell sorrow and care,
Though there sits ever his ancient pride.
Those times were better, far better, O Zeus,
When thou divinely didst gloat on
Fair boys, and fair nymphs, and hecatombs also!
But e'en the gods may not lord it for ever,
The younger still drive out the elder,
As thou thyself o'er thy hoary father,
And over thy Titan uncles usurpedst,
Jupiter Parricida!
Thee too I know, thee too, proud Juno!
In spite of thine anguish of jealous care,
Another the sceptre has won from thy keeping,
And thou art no more the Queen of Heaven,
And thy great ox-eyes have grown dull,
And power from thy lily-white arms has vanished,
And never more thy wrath shall swoop on
The virgin filled with the godhead,
And the wonder-working strong son of Zeus.
Thee too, I know thee, Pallas Athena!
With shield and wisdom hadst thou no skill
To turn from the gods this destruction?
Thee too I know, even thee. Aphrodite!
Once the golden, and now the silvern!
But certes the zone of desire still decks thee,
Though creeps my spirit before thy beauty;
And me wouldst thou bless with thy body so fair,
Like other heroes, of dread I should die—
As pale corpse-goddess thou seem'st to me,
Venus Libitina!
No more with love upon thee there
Gazes thy terrible Ares.
How mournfully looks Phoebus Apollo,
The youthful! Dumb is his lyre
That gladdened the gods at Olympian feasts.

Yet mournfuller looks Hephaistos,
And truly the Limper shall never more
Play the Hebe in heaven,
And serve with zeal to the gods assembled
The genial nectar.—And long is extinguished
The gods' inextinguishable laughter.
Ye gods of Greece, I have never loved you!
For Greeks I hold in distinct aversion,
And even Romans I frankly hate;
Yet sacred compassion and shuddering pity
O'erflow my heart,
When thus I see you there above me,
Ye gods long forsaken,
Dead, night-wandering phantoms,
Weak as clouds that the wind scares by!
And when I bethink me what quaking wind-bags
Are these new gods who have overcome you,
These new sad gods who are now the fashion,
The malice cloaked in the sheepskin of meekness—
Oh, my heart swells with gloomiest rage,
And I would batter the modern temples,
And battle for you, ye gods of Hellas,
For you and your genial ambrosial right,
And before your altars majestic,
Rebuilt once more, and a-smoke with sacrifice,
I myself would kneel to you, praying,
And lift to you arms beseeching—

For always, ye old gods of Hellas,
Have ye of old in the battle of mortals
Stood by the side of the conqueror stoutly;
But man is magnanimous rather than ye,
And I stand here now in the battle of gods
Firm on your side, ye old gods, though vanquished

Thus I spake, and above me visibly
Blushed those pallid and cloudy spectres,
And gazed at me even as the dying,
Transfigured by pain—and suddenly vanished.
The moon just then had hidden
Under the clouds, which drove on her darkly;
Loudly murmured the sea,

And bright paced forth, victorious in heaven,
The stars eternal.

VII

Questions

At night by the sea, the desolate sea,
Doth a young man stand,
His head full of doubt, his heart full of anguish,
And with livid lips he questions the billows:

'The Riddle of Life, oh, read me,
That world-old tormenting riddle,
O'er which have been addled heads without number,
Heads in strange hieroglyphic bonnets,
Heads in turbans, and barret-caps black,
Heads in perukes, and a thousand other
Plagued and perspiring heads of mortals—
Tell me now the meaning of man!
Whence comes he coming ? Where goes he gone ?
Who dwells up there in the golden starfields?'

The billows but murmur their murmur eternal,
Still blows the wind, the clouds still go sailing,
The stars go on twinkling, indifferent and cold,
And a fool waits for the answer.

VIII

The Phoenix

There comes a bird flown out of the west,
And eastward flies he,
To his home in an eastern garden,
Where groves of spice are breathing and growing,
And palm-trees whisper, and cool springs bubble—
And flying sings the bird of wonder:

'She loves him! she loves him!
In her little heart she enshrines his picture,
And keeps it sweetly, secretly hidden,

And knows not 'tis there!
But in her dreams he stands before her,
She weeps and implores, and his hand she kisses,
And his name she utters,
And uttering it wakens, and lies affrighted,
And rubs in her wonder her beautiful eyes—
She loves him! she loves him!

At the foot of the mast I was leaning on deck,
Where as I stood I could hear the bird's song.
Like dusky green coursers with manes of bright silver,
Tossing their foam-crests, bounded the billows;
Like swans in flight sailed over the ocean,
With glimmering canvas, the Heligolanders,
The nomads bold of the North Sea!
Over me, in the eternal blue,
Hovered the white-winged clouds,
And sparkled the sun eternal,
The rose of the heavens, that blooms so fiercely,
And laughed on the ocean that mirrored him;—
And heaven, and sea, and my own swelling heart
Resounded in echo:
'She loves him! she loves him!'

IX

Sea-sickness

The afternoon clouds droop downward,
Greyly they sag o'er the breast of the sea,
Which heaves to meet them in sullen gloom,
And the ship scuds fast between;

Sea-sick, ever I sit by the mainmast,
And there on myself make reflections full many,
Primeval ashen-grey reflections,
That Father Lot made long ago,
When pleasant things he 'd enjoyed too freely,
And found himself after in evil case.
I think, too, sometimes of other old stories:
How pilgrims marked with the cross in the old-time
Devoutly would kiss, in their stormy sea-faring,

The Blessed Virgin's comfortful picture;
How sea-sick knights, in as dire sea-trouble,
Each one the cherished glove of his lady
Would press to his lips, and straight gat comfort—
But here I 'm sitting and chewing morosely
An old red-herring, that salty consoler
When you 're sick as a cat, and down as a dog.

All the while the good ship fights
With the wild and buffeting tide;
Like a war-horse uprearing poises she now
On her shuddering stern, till the rudder creaks,
Then downward she plunges, heels over head,
Into the bellowing water-gulf;
Anon, as one reckless, faint with love,
Fain would she gently nestle
On the gloomy breast of the giant billow,
That, mightily roaring,
Comes tumbling aboard her, a sea-waterfall,
And drenches myself with foam.

Oh, this heaving, and swaying, and rocking
Is past all bearing!
In vain my eyes go peering to seek
The German coastline. Alas! but water!
For ever but water, unstable water!

As the winter traveller at evening will yearn
For a warm, heart-comforting cup of tea,
So yearns my heart even now for thee,
My German Fatherland!
Though evermore thy pleasant soil be encumbered
With madness, hussars, and wretched verses,
And pamphlets weak and small-beery;
Though evermore thy zebras
On roses go browsing instead of thistles;
Though for evermore thy noble monkeys
So lazily strut in superior splendour,
And think themselves better than all their brothers,
The vulgar herd of dull plodding cattle;
Though evermore thy worthy Snail-Council
May deem itself immortal,

It creeps along at such a snail-pace,
And day by day will vote on the question:
'Does the cheese to the tribe of the cheesemites belong ?'
And consumes long years in profound debate
On modes of improving Egyptian hoggets,
And making their fleeces grow longer,
That the shepherd may shear them just like the others,
No favour shown—
Though for ever injustice and folly
May flourish, Germany, o'er thee,
For thee my bowels are yearning now:
For thou art at least still good firm dry land.

X

In Haven

Happy the man who has come to his haven,
And left the sea with its tempests behind him,
And cosy now and quiet sits
In the pleasant town-cellar at Bremen.

How kindly looks the world, and how cheery
Reflected in this brimming rummer,
And how the billowing microcosmos
Sunnily fathoms the thirst of my heart!
All things I see in the glass,
Ancient and modern histories of nations,
Turks and Greeks, and Hegel and Gans,
Groves of lemons, and guards parading,
Berlin and Gotham, and Tunis, and Hamburg;
But fore all else my belov'd one's image,
That angel's head on its Rhine-wine gold-ground.

Oh, how fair! how fair art thou, Beloved!
Fair as a rose thou seemest!
Not like the Rose of Shiraz,
The Bride of the Nightingale, Hafiz-besung;
Not like the Rose of Sharon,
Whose holy crimson the Prophets have glorified;—
Thy peer is ' The Rose' in the Cellar of Bremen I
That is the Rose of Roses.

The older she grows the lovelier she blushes,
And her heavenly breath has made me thrice blessed,
Her breath has inspired me, and made me so drunk,
That gripped he not fast the hair of my head,
Mine host of the Cellar of Bremen,
I'd turn topsy-turvy!

The honest man! We sat there together,
And drank like two brothers,
Discoursing on high mysterious matters,
We-sighed and sank on each other's bosoms, '.:
And his convert am I to the True Faith,—Charity—
I drank to the health of my bitterest foes, And all bad poets forgave as freely
As I myself would fain be forgiven.
I wept most devoutly, whereafter
The Gates of Salvation opened to me,
Where the 'Twelve Apostles,' the holy big wine-casks,
Preach in silence, yet well comprehended
Of all the nations I

These are heroes!
Uncomely outside in their wooden jackets,
They are within more bright and beautiful
Than all the haughty Priests of the Temple,
And all King Herod's guardsmen and sycophants,
Bephrant with gold, and in purple raiment—
Well, I have always declared
That not among quite common people,
Nay, but the best society going,
Lived for ever the King of Heaven(

Hallelujah! how pleasantly breathe on me
The palm-trees of Beth-El!
How sweetly the myrrh breathes from Hebron I
How rushes Jordan and reels in his gladness'.—
And I reel with him now, and reeling
Lugs me from stair unto stair to daylight
Mine excellent host of the Cellar of Bremen.

Mine excellent host of the Cellar of Bremen!
Behold, on the roofs of the houses sitting,
The angels, gloriously drunk, and singing;

Yon sun, all aglow up above them,
Is only the jolly red nose of a toper,
The World-Spirit's nose 'tis;
And round the World-Spirit's big red nose there
Circles, reeling, the drunken world.

XI

Epilogue

As in the cornfields the golden wheat-ears,
So wax and so wave in the spirit of man
Thoughts in thousands.
Ay, but ever the love-thoughts tender
Spring between them like happy corn-flowers,
Blue and scarlet flowers.

Blue and scarlet flowers!
The churl of a reaper rejects you as useless,
Clowns in dull scorn but thresh you to pieces,
And even the neediest vagrant,
Whom the sight of you comforts and cheers,
Shakes his wise pate,
And pretty weeds will call you.
But the fair maid of the village,
Her garland weaving,
Respects you and plucks you,
To twine with you her beauteous tresses;
And decked with you thus, she hastes to the dance-floor,
Where fiddles and flutes are merrily sounding,
Or to the silent beech-tree,
Where the voice of her lover sounds sweeter by far
Than flutes do or fiddles.

Heinrich Heine

The Old Dream Comes Again To Me

The old dream comes again to me:
With May-night stars above,
We two sat under the linden-tree
And swore eternal love.

Again and again we plighted troth,
We chattered, and laughed, and kissed;
To make me well remember my oath
You gave me a bite on the wrist.

O darling with the eyes serene,
And with the teeth so white!
The vows were proper to the scene,
Superfluous was the bite.

Heinrich Heine

The Tear

The latest light of evening
Upon the waters shone,
And still we sat in the lonely hut,
In silence and alone.

The sea-fog grew, the screaming mew
Rose on the water's swell,
And silently in her gentle eye
Gathered the tears and fell

.
I saw them stand on the lily hand,
Upon my knee I sank,
And, kneeling there, from her fingers fair
The precious dew I drank.

And sense and power, since that sad hour,
In longing waste away ;
Ah me ! I fear, in each witching tear
Some subtile poison lay.

Heinrich Heine

The Voyage

As at times a moonbeam pierces
Through the thickest cloudy rack,
So to me, through days so dreary,
One bright image struggles back.

Seated all on deck, we floated
Down the Rhine's majestic stream;
On its borders, summer-laden,
Slept the peaceful evening-gleam.

Brooding, at the feet I laid me
Of a fair and gentle one,
On whose placid, pallid features
Played the ruddy-golden sun.

Lutes were ringing, youth« were singing,
Swelled my heart with feeling strange;
Bluer grew the heaven above us,
Wider grew the spirit's range.

Fairy-like beside us flitted
Rock and ruin, wood and plain ;
And I gazed on all reflected
In my loved one's eyes again.

Heinrich Heine

This Mad Carnival Of Loving

This mad carnival of loving,
This wild orgy of the flesh,
Ends at last and we two, sobered,
Look at one another, yawning.

Emptied the inflaming cup
That was filled with sensuous potions,
Foaming, almost running over--
Emptied is the flaming cup.

All the violins are silent
That impelled our feet to dancing,
To the giddy dance of passion--
Silent are the violins.

All the lanterns now are darkened
That once poured their streaming brilliance
On the masquerades and murmurs--
Darkened now are all the lanterns.

Heinrich Heine

To Edom!

WITH each other, brother fashion,
Have we borne this many an age.
Thou hast borne with my existence,
And I borne have with thy rage.

Many a time, in days of darkness,
Wonder-strange hath been thy mood,
And thy dear and pious talons
Hast thou reddened in my blood.

Now our friendship groweth closer;
Nay, it waxeth daily now:
I myself begin to bluster
And am nigh as mad as thou.

Heinrich Heine

Unterm Weissen Baume

Sitting under white branches,
You can hear the wind blowing,
In blankets of mist shrouded,
See the silent clouds flowing.
See how the fields and forests
Are bare, extinguished, down below –
Winter round you and inside you,
And your heart frozen so.
Suddenly white flakes are falling
Over you, and crossly
You think it's the tree sprinkling
A snow flurry across you.
But it's not a snow flurry,
You soon see, with joyful dread,
It's fragrant Spring blossom
Teasing, veiling you instead.
What sweet, terrible enchantment,
Winter's changing into May,
Snow is changing into blossom,
Your heart's in love again.

Heinrich Heine

Wenn Ich, Beseligt

When I'm made happy by lovely kisses,
Lying so sweetly in your arms' prisons,
You mustn't speak of Germany to me –
I just can't stand it – I have my reasons.
Oh, leave me in peace about Germany!
Don't plague me with endless questions, mit
Homeland, tribe, and national customs –
I have my reasons – I just can't stand it.
The oak trees are green: blue are the eyes
Of German women: they pine in season
And sigh about faith, hope, love, but I,
I just can't stand it – I have my reasons.

Heinrich Heine

Where?

Where shall I, of wandering weary,
Find my resting-place at last?
Under drooping southern palm-trees?
Under limes the Rhine sweeps past?

Will it be in deserts lonely,
Dug by unfamiliar hands?
Shall I slumber where the ocean
Crawls along the yellow sands?

It matters not! Around me ever
There as here God's heaven lies,
And by night, as death-lamps o'er me,
Lo, His stars sweep through the skies!

Heinrich Heine

Why The Roses Are So Pale

O dearest, canst thou tell me why
The rose should be so pale?
And why the azure violet
Should wither in the vale?

And why the lark should in the cloud
So sorrowfully sing?
And why from loveliest balsam-buds
A scent of death should spring?

And why the sun upon the mead
So chillingly should frown?
And why the earth should, like a grave,
Be moldering and brown?

And why it is that I myself
So languishing should be?
And why it is, my heart of hearts,
That thou forsakest me?

Heinrich Heine

With A Copy Of 'The Rabbi Of Bachwach'

Burst out in wailing riot,
Thou darkling martyr-lay,
That in my soul, flame-quiet,
I've borne this many a day!

It thrills through every hearing
And so the heart doth gain.
I've conjured up, unfearing,
The thousand-year-old pain.

Great, little, weep and even
Cold hearts do tearful grow :
The small stars weep in heaven,
The maids and flowers below.

The tears, still southward fleeting,
To the still conclave go
And all, each other meeting,
Into the Jordan flow.

Heinrich Heine

Zueignung

Mir träumte einst von wildem Minneglüh'n,
Von hübschen Locken, Myrten und Resede,
Von süßen Lippen und von bitterer Rede,
Von düst'rer Lieder düster'n Melodie'n.

Verblichen und verweht sind längst die Träume,
Verweht ist auch mein liebstes Traumgebild!
Geblieden ist mir nur was gluterfüllt
Ich einst gegossen hab' in weiche Reime.

Du bliebst, verwaistes Lied! Verweh' jetzt auch,
Und such' das Traumbild, das mir längst entschwunden,
Und grüße mir's, wenn du es aufgefunden, --
Dem luft'gen Schatten send' ich luft'gen Hauch.

Heinrich Heine