

**OCTOBER ROSES –
SONGS BY BRIAN BLYTH DAUBNEY
BMS433CD**

[1] The Lent Lily*

A.E.Housman (1859-1936)

'Tis spring; come out to ramble
The hilly brakes around,
For under thorn and bramble
About the hollow ground
The primroses are found.

And there's the windflower chilly
With all the winds at play,
And there's the Lenten lily
That has not long to stay
And dies on Easter day.

And since till girls go maying
You find the primrose still,
And find the windflower playing
With every wind at will,
But not the daffodil,

Bring baskets now, and sally
Upon the spring's array,
And bear from hill and valley
The daffodil away
That dies on Easter day.

[2] March*

A.E.Housman

The Sun at noon to higher air,
Unharnessing the silver Pair
That late before his chariot swam,
Rides on the gold wool of the Ram.

So braver notes the storm-cock sings
To start the rusted wheel of things,
And brutes in field and brutes in pen
Leap that the world goes round again.

The boys are up the woods with day
To fetch the daffodils away,
And home at noonday from the hills
They bring no dearth of daffodils.

Afield for palms the girls repair,
And sure enough the palms are there,
And each will find by hedge or pond
Her waving silver-tufted wand.

In farm and field through all the shire
The eye beholds the heart's desire;
Ah, let not only mine be vain,
For lovers should be loved again.

**[3] A Rose for Lidice
1967)**

Randall Swingler (1909-

Lidice lay unknown
In the lap of a lying world.
Lidice worked alone in the core of stone.
Lidice had grown from the blood of the earth;
Cold and steel were bone of Lidice's birth.

Fate chose it for hate's gangrened fury.
Hate said: Wipe out the name!
History shall abjure it!
Ah, the brave dust blew round the world;
The air flooded with blood of roses.
Hate had ploughed up the soil. Love sowed it.
Where the murderer's heel stamped on the eyes of children
The gardener's fingers fashioned them into roses.
Love is a ring once broken proves all untrue.
But the shed petals are a token of the bud's renewal.

While man's love grows and blossoms in time's ground
Lidice hangs, a garland round the cross of the world.

[4] She hath an Art

Thomas Campion (1567-1620)

Thrice toss these oaken ashes in the air;
Thrice sit thou mute in this enchanted chair;
Then thrice three times tie up this true love's knot,
And murmur soft: 'She will, or she will not.'

Go burn these poisonous weeds in yon blue fire,
These screech-owl's feathers and this prickling briar,
This cypress gathered at a dead man's grave,
That all thy fears and cares an end may have.

Then come, you fairies, dance with me a round;
Melt her hard heart with your melodious sound.
In vain are all the charms I can devise;
She hath an art to break them with her eyes.

[5] Autumn, the Fool*

Theodora Goss (b.1968)

The leaves float on the water like patches of motley –
Autumn, the fool, has dropped them into the lake,
Where they rival the costume, not of the staid brown duck,
But the splendid drake.

He capers down the lanes in his ragged garments,
A comical figure shedding last year's leaves,
But as he passes the crickets begin their wailing
And the chipmunk grieves.

The willow bends down to watch herself in the water
And shivers at the sight of her yellow hair.
Autumn the fool has passed her, and soon her branches
Will be bare.

[6] Echo and Narcissus*

Theodora Goss

Echo calls from the hillside.
Narcissus is there,
And she plaits white-flowering clover
Into his hair.

The place where he lies is a tangle
Of elder, and vines
Of the honeysuckle dangle
As he reclines.

The pool is deep that he watches
And small fishes dart,
While Echo brushes the crickets
From his rags of shirt.

I saw them there one morning,
I and a deer:
His indescribable beauty,
Her constant care.

She echoed the sounds of the crickets
(What could she say?),
And he burned in his singular beauty
On the common day.

[7] The Frost*

Theodora Goss

The frost came on the harvest
And fallow flowed the air,
The sheaves cleaved off in earnest
And all the skies grew bare,

The clouds fled off and blankness
Arrayed the atmosphere,
And autumn in her fastness
Had not one cloth to wear.

The leaves betrayed the branches
And grasses hueless hung
Upon the valley's haunches
The hueless weeds among,

And over all that landscape
The season turned,
While swallows made escape
And the berries burned.

[8] Helen in Sparta*

Theodora Goss

Helen is wandering, sunburnt, angry,
Along a road by a dusty hill,
Tripping over the rocks from a quarry,
Vaguely shrill.

The dust hangs about that hill like a nimbus,
Dust from marble, chalky-white,
Catching and milkily dispersing
The Attic light.

The quarry looks like a giant's staircase,
With blocky cuttings descending down
Into a glaring cavity – she,
With rags for gown,

Rags that resemble antique linen,
Hums and mutters and claws at her face,
Browned and withered, with white hair streaming
And a kind of grace.

She clambers up a dusty incline
And suddenly turns to stand quite still,
A mad white deity overlooking
The quarry hill.

[9] Goblin Song*

Theodora Goss

In the bright May-time
When green herbs are springing,
Our hearts they are ringing
Like bells in a tower.

We dance as do maidens
Upon the cropped hillside
When wedding the bride
Unto chivalry's flower,

We prance as do fawnlets
All lissome and amber
And plash in the river
And play by its side,

We sway like the willows
That spring by the water
Or maidens with laughter

Saluting the bride.

Out, creepings, out, crawlings,
Come into the May-light
From out of your night
Underneath the high hill,

Come dance on the grasses,
Like maidens, like fawnlets,
Disporting grotesques
Celebrating our fill,

With knob-knees and horn-nubs,
Pug-noses and tails,
With moss-covered nails,
We crouch and we cower,

In the bright May-time
When green herbs are springing
And our hearts are ringing
Like bells in a tower.

[10] Mother Redcap*

John Alan Davis (b.1929)

Far from the beach pale night-birds dip,
Locked in the moon's companionship.

Bobbing lines of naked men
Disappear to rise again.

They sift the ocean's shingled floor
For florins, groats and louis d'or,

Silver trinkets, kegs of rum,
Brandy, tea - a ruptured drum -

And by way of last caress
They rob a virgin of her dress.

Cleavers, muskets, gin to store
Are passed to watchers on the shore.

For those who fear not dead men's eyes
There's more than fish the sea supplies.

But Mother Redcap's birds of prey
Transmogrify by light of day -

Are blacksmiths, farmers, labouring men,
All honest Christian folk again.

[11] Hospital Grapes*

John Alan Davis

Your perfect grapes arrived
Seedless and milky green,
Straining at their skins
Solicitously.

With scarce a prompt
Singly they left their stalks
And in one afternoon
Each lay on my tongue-bed
And pleased me.

As we melted, I sighed,
“Whisper me words
From greener times
And I’ll promise to remember
Your veined voluptuousness.”

They told, in turn,
Of assignations by emerald pools,
Jade on a flawless neck,
Parasols of eau-de-nil
And Spring’s viridity.

By evening nothing left
But a stripped stem
Like a dendritic map
Of some space-journey
Light-years gone.

Except one stranger,
Alien to the pack,
Flushed, unyielding
And pipped with promise of tomorrow.
Such a grape I dared not touch.

[12] Young Friend

Hartley Coleridge (1796-1849)

Young friend, thou yet art young, and I
Am growing very old,
And thou hast powers, which future hours
Will perfect and unfold,
While I am waning to the west,
In truth, a great deal past my Best.

’Tis not my talent to advise
Although my head is grey,
Old Time will never make me wise
But Thee, I hope, it may –
For that is in thee, I behold
That may be wise, when thou art old;

A strong intensity of Faith
That can believe in good,

And Hope as strong, as wild bird's song
Singing in native wood,
But most of all – sweet Charity –
That cast a friendly look on me.

[13] The Singer*

Theodora Goss

The songs are done, said the singer,
And he broke the strings of the lute.
The host gazed about with anger,
The guests grew mazed and mute,
But the singer stepped from his chains,
And as he passed them by
A rankness rotted the grains
And the yellow wine grew wry.
The host, he cursed the fates,
And the guests left all too soon,
While the singer stepped through the gates
Into the wide, sweet noon.
He sang a song to the hills
Without aid of instrument,
He heard their echoed trills
And then he turned and went.

*And since the singer left,
We jangle and we start:
All toneless now and reft
The lutestrings of the heart.*

[14] I must go and sleep*

John Alan Davis

I must go and sleep, my lovely,
I must go and sleep,
Though my barns are full to bursting
And my pockets wide and deep;
Though my mind is full of pleasures
And my heart is full of joy,
I need some shade to rest in
As I used to when a boy.

When the summer's play was over,
And long were summers then,
I'd find a tree to snooze by,
To stretch and rise again;
But now it's sleep, my lovely,
My body aches for rest;
And the place I need to sleep in
Has always room for guests.

Many friends are lodged there,
They'll be sleeping too,
But I'll wake one day, my lovely,
To say 'Hello!' to you;

With bodies new and rested
And spirits young and free,
We'll wander in the woodlands
Of a bright eternity.

[15] Absence*

Charlotte Mew (1869-1928)

Sometimes I know the way
 You walk, up over the bay;
It is a wind from the far sea
That blows the fragrance of your hair to me.

Or in this garden when the breeze
 Touches my trees
To stir their dreaming shadows on the grass
 I see you pass.

In sheltered beds, the heart of every rose
 Serenely sleeps tonight. As shut as those
Your guarded heart; as safe as they from the beat, beat
Of hooves that tread dropped roses in the street.

 Turn never again
 On these eyes blind with a wild rain
Your eyes; they were stars to me. –
 There are things stars may not see.

But call, call, and though Christ stands
 Still with scarred hands
Over my mouth, I must answer. So
I will come – He shall let me go!

[16] Dirge for a Lady*

Theodora Goss

Lay her in lavender, all that is left of her;
Lavender preserves the lovely and the white.
Sweet clove and cinnamon, like a fine pomander:
Lay her in these, the delicate, the slight.

Look how her hands are turned to alabaster,
Translucent and tender, and breakable as pain.
Fine every filament, as though a thin spider
Had woven her. She's shattered and shall not arise again.

Rain, do not mourn her, nor rose adorn her.
How frail, this arrangement of elegant dry dust;
One breath shall scatter her, one teardrop tatter her.
Think of her softly, and only if you must.

Lay her in lavender, all that is left of her.
Let nothing ravel the final webs of form
Where nor the rain nor roses come, a scented sepulcher,
Airless and close, and infinitely calm.

[17] John Anderson, my Jo

Robert Burns (1759-1796)

John Anderson, my jo, John,
When we were first acquaint,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snow,
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither,
And monie a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
And hand in hand we'll go,
To sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo.

[18] Wantage Bells*

John Betjeman (1906-1984)

Now with the bells through the apple bloom
Sunday-ly sounding
And the prayers of the nuns in their chapel gloom
Us all surrounding,
Where the brook flows
Brick walls of rose
Send on the motionless meadow the bell notes rebounding

Wallflowers are bright in their beds
And their scent all pervading,
Withered are primroses heads
And the hyacinth fading,
But flowers by the score
Multitudes more
Weed flowers and seed flowers and mead flowers our paths are invading.

Where are the words to express
Such a reckless bestowing?
The voices of birds utter less
Than the thanks we are owing,
Bell notes alone
Ring praise of their own
As clear as the weed-waving brook and as evenly flowing.

[19] Shed No Tear

John Keats (1795-1821)

Shed no tear – O shed no tear!
The flower will bloom another year.
Weep no more – O weep no more!
Young buds sleep in the root's white core.

Dry your eyes – O dry your eyes,
For I was taught in Paradise
To ease my breast of melodies –
 Shed no tear.

Overhead – look overhead
'Mong the blossoms white and red –
Look up, look up – I flutter now
On this flush pomegranate bough –
See me – 'tis the silvery bill
Ever cures the good man's ill –
Shed no tear – O shed no tear!
The flower will bloom another year.
Adieu – Adieu – I fly, adieu,
I vanish in the heaven's blue –
 Adieu, Adieu!

[20] Natura Naturans

Kathleen Raine (1908-2003)

Veil upon veil
Petal and shell and scale
The dancer of the whirling dance lets fall.

Visible veils the invisible
Reveal, conceal
In bodies that most resemble
The fleeting mind of nature never still.

A young princess
Sealed in the perfect signature of what she was
With her grave lips of silent dust imparts a mystery
Hidden two thousand years under the Appian Way.

A frond in the coal,
An angel traced upon a crumbling wall,
Empty chrysalids of that bright ephemerid the soul.

[21] The Storm

William Barnes (1801-1886)

The raving storm is rife, and where a beam
 Of sunlight pierces through the misty cloud,
The spreading waters of the river gleam
 Below the ruffling wind that roars aloud
 Among the writhing saplings, lowly bow'd
With wildly fitful fury, till they seem
To sweep the ground, while trickling waters stream
 Adown their green-ribb'd sides. The cattle crowd

Before the weather-beaten hedge, and man
 Below some roof that rocks above his head
 Seeks shelter from the heavy rolling blast:

And twitt'ring birds all shield them where they can,

Below the dripping tree or broad-eav'd shed,
Until the fury of the storm is past.

[22] The Lake Isle of Innisfree*

W.B.Yeats (1865-1939)

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

[23] The Folly of Being Comforted*

W.B.Yeats

One that is ever kind said yesterday:
'Your well-beloved's hair has threads of grey,
And little shadows come about her eyes;
Time can but make it easier to be wise
Though now it seems impossible, and so
All that you need is patience.'

Heart cries, 'No,
I have not a crumb of comfort, not a grain.
Time can but make her beauty over again:
Because of that great nobleness of hers
The fire that stirs about her, when she stirs,
Burns but more clearly. O she had not these ways
When all the wild summer was in her gaze.'

O heart! O heart! if she'd but turn her head,
You'd know the folly of being comforted.

[24] The Sigh*

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

Little head against my shoulder,
Shy at first, then somewhat bolder,
And up-eyed;
Till she, with a timid quaver,
Yielded to the kiss I gave her;
But, she sighed.

That there mingled with her feeling
Some sad thought she was concealing
It implied
—Not that she had ceased to love me,
None on earth she set above me;

But she sighed.

She could not disguise a passion,
Dread, or doubt, in weakest fashion
If she tried:
Nothing seemed to hold us sundered,
Hearts were victors; so I wondered
Why she sighed.

Afterwards I knew her thoroughly,
And she loved me staunchly, truly,
Till she died;
But she never made confession
Why, at that first sweet concession,
She had sighed.

It was in our May, remember;
And though now I near November,
And abide
Till my appointed change, unfretting,
Sometimes I sit half regretting
That she sighed.

[25] Lyonesse

Thomas Hardy

When I set out for Lyonesse,
A hundred miles away,
The rime was on the spray,
And starlight lit my lonesomeness
When I set out for Lyonesse
A hundred miles away.

What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there
No prophet durst declare,
Nor did the wisest wizard guess
What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there.

When I came back from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes,
All marked with mute surprise
My radiance rare and fathomless,
When I came back from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes!

[26] The Fiddler of Dooney*

W.B. Yeats

When I play on my fiddle in Dooney,
Folk dance like a wave of the sea;
My cousin is priest in Kilvarnet,
My brother in Mocharabuiee.

I passed my brother and cousin:
They read in their books of prayer;
I read in my book of songs
I bought at the Sligo fair.

When we come at the end of time
To Peter sitting in state,
He will smile at the three old spirits,
But call me first through the gate;

For the good are always the merry,
Save by an evil chance,
And the merry love the fiddle,
And the merry love to dance:

And when the folk there spy me,
They will all come up to me,
With 'Here is the fiddler of Dooney!'
And dance like a wave of the sea.

[27] On the Death of Anne Brontë*

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)

There's little joy in life for me,
And little terror in the grave;
I've lived the parting hour to see
Of one I would have died to save.

Calmly to watch the failing breath,
Wishing each sigh might be the last;
Longing to see the shade of death
O'er those beloved features cast.

The cloud, the stillness that must part
The darling of my life from me;
And then to thank God from my heart,
To thank Him well and fervently;

Although I knew that we had lost
The hope and glory of our life;
And now, benighted, tempest-tossed,
Must bear alone the weary strife.

[28] The Cloths of Heaven*

W.B. Yeats

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

[29] October Roses*

John Alan Davis

Of course,
We are more ill-tempered,
We are pricklier,
Our bowing is shakier,
We are losing our perfume
And our memories, but we are still
Aristocracy, waving in the chill –
Always ladies, blushing, smiling, fey;
Though doomed and withering away
Like diva has-beens
Or the mothers of queens.

We do our best
To keep abreast.
Jewellery is worn
Not only evenings
And early mornings
But also, bravely, in the rain -
Bright puddles of pearls,
Chain upon chain
And tiaras of frosty diamante.

[30] Resurrection Spiritual*

John Alan Davis

Hang on to the Resurrection and shout hip, hip hurray!
You lived in fear and bitterness, but that was yesterday
There's pastures green where sheep may graze
Who won't be killed on market days
So hang on to the Resurrection
Everything is gonna be fine.

Sing loud for the Resurrection, and keep it on your lips
Enjoy your body beautiful and swing your saintly hips
However supple your body is
There's a better one that's just like His
So hang on to the Resurrection
And prepare to be surprised.

Hold tight to the Resurrection; there's no need to despair
Your bones are for recycling, but your soul will take the air
The moment that you start to rise
You'll know you're bound for Paradise
So hang on to the Resurrection; the trip's entirely free.

Stick tight to the Resurrection; those who mourn are blessed
They're certainly gonna miss you but they'll know you did your best
They'll clap their hands in unison and sweet hosannas raise
To hymn the God who died for you with praise, praise, praise.

*** First Performance of this setting.**

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge and thank for their generous permission to use their poems in song settings included in this recording: John Alan Davis, Theodora Goss, and the late Kathleen Raine. We also thank for similar permission on behalf of their respective authors: Gillon Aitken Associates Ltd on behalf of the estate of John Betjeman; the Society of Authors as the literary representative of the estate of A. E. Housman; Judith Williams on behalf of the estate of Randall Swingler; and A. P. Watts, literary agents for W. B. Yeats.

The front-cover design is based on an original water-colour by Liz Butterfield, to whom we are most grateful for permission to reproduce it here.