

Richard Wagner – *Tristan und Isolde*, Act III Liebestod (1859, prem. 1865)

Language: German

Text: Richard Wagner

This entire passage is sung by Isolde.

[Stage direction: Isolde, aware of nothing round about her, fixes her gaze with mounting ecstasy upon Tristan's body.]

Mild und leise
wie er lächelt,
wie das Auge
hold er öffnet ---
seht ihr's Freunde?
Seht ihr's nicht?

Immer lichter
wie er leuchtet,
stern-umstrahlet
hoch sich hebt?
Seht ihr's nicht?

Wie das Herz ihm
mutig schwillt,
voll und hehr
im Busen ihm quillt?
Wie den Lippen,
wonnig mild,
süßer Atem
sanft entweht ---
Freunde! Seht!
Fühlt und seht ihr's nicht?

Hör ich nur
diese Weise,
die so wunder-
voll und leise,
Wonne klagend,
alles sagend,
mild versöhnend
aus ihm tönend,
in mich dringet,
auf sich schwinget,
hold erhallend
um mich klinget?

Heller schallend,
mich umwallend,
sind es Wellen

How gently and quietly
he smiles,
how fondly
he opens his eyes!
Do you see, friends?
Do you not see?

How he shines
ever brighter,
soaring on high,
stars sparkling around him?
Do you not see?

How his heart
proudly swells
and, brave and full,
pulses in his breast?
How softly and gently
from his lips
sweet breath
flutters –
see, friends!
Do you not feel and see it?

Do I alone
hear this melody
which, so wondrous
and tender
in its blissful lament,
all-revealing,
gently pardoning,
sounding from him,
pierces me through,
rises above,
blessedly echoing
and ringing round me?

Resounding yet more clearly,
wafting about me,
are they waves

sanfter Lüfte?
Sind es Wogen
wonniger Düfte?
Wie sie schwellen,
mich umrauschen,
soll ich atmen,
soll ich lauschen?
Soll ich schlürfen,
untertauchen?
Süß in Düften
mich verhauchen?
In dem wogenden Schwall,
in dem tönenden Schall,
in des Welt-Atems
wehendem All ---
ertrinken,
versinken ---
unbewußt ---
höchste Lust!

of refreshing breezes?
Are they clouds
of heavenly fragrance?
As they swell
and roar round me,
shall I breathe them,
shall I listen to them?
Shall I sip them,
plunge beneath them,
Expire
in sweet perfume?
In the surging swell,
in the ringing sound,
in the vast wave
of the world's breath –
to drown,
to sink
unconscious –
supreme bliss!

[Stage direction: Isolde sinks gently, as if transfigured, in Brangaene's arms, on to Tristan's body. Those standing around are awed and deeply moved. Mark blesses the bodies. –The curtain falls slowly.]