

LYRICS of songs and choral music by Neil Buckland

(in alphabetical order of title)

A Taoist Hymn

Who can be muddy, yet in stillness slowly become limpid?
Who can in stillness, stirring, slowly come alive? (Ch. 15)

A man is supple and soft when living, but rigid and hard when dead.
Grass and trees are tender and pliant when living, but dry and brittle when dead.
Thus the hard and the stiff are companions of death;
the soft and the pliant, companions of life. (Ch. 76)

Lao Zi (attrib.), *Dao De Jing*, transl. N. Buckland and Q. Bao

Daphne Restored

Also vor allem das Schwersein – Rilke

Never will flesh and bone ascend
in myriad green significance,
never with bird or raindrop dance
light-veined on shifting planes of wind.

Words whispering among my boughs
from lovers in the moving shade
who unrehearsed in sorrow made
their time-annihilating vows

or turned in mutual warmth to pluck
love's classic fruit, entwined a wreath
of hope blown on the flute of breath.
I slept, until the lightning struck.

Bones in a twisting prism of fire,
whipcord sinew, shuddering nerves
fused with flesh in tender curves.
Deep within the central spire

muscled and globed, a pulse began.
Filmy membranes cleared to find
entire, embraced by weightless mind,
the rhymed anatomy of man

freed from a charred concavity
to learn the authentic modes of breath,
sleep's intimate mimicry of death;
to know, when morning from the eye

scours visions of invading fire
and tighter draws light's thread to suture
waking to waking grief, the future
measure of tears, and still aspire

above the body's weight, its urn
of unproliferating bones,
to heights where fading overtones
of fire and molten alloys burn,

still hope in love's brief peace to drown
the whispering of the sleepless mind
that frames all words and cannot find
one word to call the lightning down.

Gwen Harwood

Et requiem non habebant (And they rest not day and night) from Revelations

...et requiem non habebant die ac nocte, dicentia: Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus omnipotens, qui erat, et qui est, et qui venturus est. Biblia Sacra (Vulgate)

... and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. King James Bible

Half-Heard

On the road through the hills I thought I heard it,
Something moving, coming with evening,
In its slow warm breathing through the paddock-land.
The few and spiteful houses there ignored it.

It had come from the coast. I stood on the coast,
Where gulls cried angrily for something that moved,
In the sun-plains across the sea.
The water there was heavy with its hand.

And one by one the evening waves caressed the sullen sand.
Quietly they pondered on nothing at all,
On the laying of their long quiet hands, perhaps,
Upon the waiting beach.

Considering carefully nothing at all,
They too ignored the bird's half-baffled cry.

Christopher Koch

I have felt a presence

... I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

*from Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey,
On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798*
by William Wordsworth

In diebus illis... (In that time...) from Revelations

In diebus illis... vidi: et ecce ostium apertum in cælo, et vox prima, quam audivi tamquam tubæ loquentis mecum, dicens: Ascende huc, et ostendam tibi quæ oportet fieri post hæc. Biblia Sacra (Vulgate)

In that time... I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

King James Bible

The Lay of the Last Survivor

Hold now, earth, now heroes may not,
the possessions of men! Truly, from you formerly
the valiant obtained it. Death in battle has taken off,
savage deadly evil, every man
of my people, of those who gave up this life,
saw the joy of the hall;
I have no one who bears a sword
or polishes the plated vessel,
precious drinking-cup; the nobility has gone elsewhere.
The hard helmet adorned with gold must be
bereft of its plates; the polishers sleep
who should burnish the battle-mask;
and likewise the coat of mail, which in battle survived
the bite of iron weapons over the shattering of shields,
crumbles with the man.
There is no joy of the harp at all,
mirth of the glee-wood, nor does a good hawk
swoop through the hall, nor the swift steed
trample the courtyard. Evil death,
death has despatched
many of the race of men!

from *Beowulf*, ca. 8th century Anglo-Saxon, trans. David R Evans

The Lost Man

To reach the pool you must go through the rain-forest –
through the bewildering midsummer of darkness
lit with ancient fern,
laced with poison and thorn.
You must go by the way he went – the way of the bleeding
hands and feet, the blood on the stones like flowers,
under the hooded flowers
that fall on the stones like blood.

To reach the pool you must go by the black valley,
among the crowding columns made of silence,
under the hanging clouds
of leaves and voiceless birds.
To go by the way he went to the voice of the water,

where the priest stinging-tree waits with his whips and
fevers,
under the hooded flowers
that fall from the trees like blood,

you must forget the song of the gold bird dancing
over tossed light; you must remember nothing
except the drag of darkness
that draws your weakness under.
To go by the way he went, you must find beneath you
that last and faceless pool, and fall. And falling
find between breath and death
the sun by which you live.

Judith Wright

Miserere

Miserere mei Deus, secundum
magnam misericordiam tuam
et secundum multitudinem
miserationum tuarum
dele iniquitatem meam. Amplius lava me
ab iniquitate mea et a peccato
meo munda me.

Quoniam iniquitatem meam
ego cognosco
et peccatum meum contra me est semper.
Tibi soli peccavi et malum coram te feci,
ut iustificeris in sermonibus tuis
et vincas cum iudicaris.

Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti:
incerta et occulta sapientiae tuae
manifestasti mihi. Asperges me
hyssopo et mundabor; lavabis me
et super nivem dealabor.

Auditui meo dabis gaudium et
laetitiam et exsultabunt ossa
humiliata. Averte faciem tuam a
peccatis meis et omnes iniquitates
meas dele.

Cor mundum crea in me, Deus, et
spiritum rectum innova in
visceribus meis. Ne proicias me
a facie tua, et spiritum sanctum
tuum ne auferas a me.

Libera me de sanguinibus Deus,
Deus salutis meae, et exsultabit
lingua mea iustitiam tuam.
Domine labia mea aperies, et os
meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.

Quoniam si voluisses sacrificium
dedissem utique; holocaustis non
delectaberis. Sacrificium Deo
spiritus contribulatus: cor
contritum et humiliatum,
Deus, non despicias.

Psalmus L, Biblia Sacra (Vulgate)

Have mercy upon me, O God, according
to thy lovingkindness:
according unto the multitude of
thy tender mercies blot out
my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly
from mine iniquity, and cleanse me
from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions:
and my sin is ever before me.
Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and
done this evil in thy sight: that thou
mightest be justified when thou speakest,
and be clear when thou judgest.

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward
parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt
make me to know wisdom. Purge me
with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me,
and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me to hear joy and gladness;
that the bones which thou hast broken
may rejoice. Hide thy face
from my sins, and blot out all
mine iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God;
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from
thy presence; and take not thy
holy spirit from me.

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
thou God of my salvation: and my
tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth
shall shew forth thy praise.

For thou desirest not sacrifice; else
would I give it: thou delightest not
in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God
are a broken spirit: a broken
and a contrite heart,
O God, thou wilt not despise.

Psalm 51, King James Bible

(N.B. the psalms are numbered differently in the original Latin (Vulgate) and English versions.)

Musick the Mosaique of the Air

(from **Musicks Empire**)

Then Musick, the Mosaique of the Air,
Did of all these a Solemn noise prepare:
With which She gain'd the Empire of the Ear,
Including all between the Earth and Sphear.

Andrew Marvell

Musicks Empire

i

First was the World as one great Cymbal made,
Where Jarring Windes to infant Nature plaid.
All Musick was a solitary sound,
To hollow Rocks and murm'ring Fountains bound.

ii

Jubal first made the wilder Notes agree;
And Jubal tun'd Musicks Jubilee:
He call'd the Ecchoes from their sullen Cell,
And built the Organs City where they dwell.

iii

Each sought a consort in that lovely place;
And Virgin Trebles wed the manly Base.
From whence the Progeny of numbers new
Into harmonious Colonies withdrew.

iv

Some to the Lute, some to the Viol went,
And others chose the Cornet eloquent.
These practising the Wind, and those the Wire,
To sing Mens Triumphs, or in Heavens quire.

v

Then Musick, the Mosaique of the Air,
Did of all these a Solemn noise prepare:
With which She gain'd the Empire of the Ear,
Including all between the Earth and Sphear.

vi

Victorious sounds! yet here your Homage do
Unto a gentler Conqueror than you;
Who though He flies the Musick of his praise,
Would with you Heavens Hallelujahs raise.

Andrew Marvell

O Breath, O Fire

O iter fortissimum
quod penetravit omnia;
in altissimis et in terrenis
et in omnibus abyssis
tu omnes componis et colligis.

De te nubes fluunt,
ether volat,
lapides humorem habent,
aque rivulos educunt,
et terra viriditatem sudat.

O spiraculum sanctitatis,
o ignis caritatis,
tu etiam semper educis doctos
per inspirationem sapientie
letificatos.

Unde laus tibi sit,
qui es sonus laudis,
et gaudium vite,
spes et honor fortissimus
dons premia lucis.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098 – 1179)
(*O ignis spiritus*)

O mightiest path
which penetrates all things;
in the heavens and on earth
and in every abyss
you summon and unite all.

Through you the clouds billow,
the airs of heaven soar,
the stones are moistened,
the water brings forth streams,
and the earth exudes its verdure.

O breath of holiness,
o fire of love,
you breathe wisdom also into the learned
and bring them ever forth
to joy.

Whence praise be to you
who are the sound of praise
and joy of life,
hope and greatest honour,
giving the glories of light.

Translation:
Neil and Medwenna Buckland

O virtus Sapientiae

O virtus Sapientiae,
quae circuiens circuisti
comprehendendo omnia
in una via quae habet vitam,

tres alas habens,
quarum una in altum volat
et altera de terra sudat
et tertia undique volat.
Laus tibi sit, sicut te decet,
O Sapientia.

Hildegard of Bingen
(from *Symphonia armonie celestium
revelationum*)

O power of Wisdom
who, circled, circling,
embracing all
in a path full of life,

three wings you have:
one soars to the heavens,
the second emerges from the earth,
and the third flies all around us.
Praise to you, as is your due,
O Wisdom!

Transl. N. Buckland

Revelations

{4:1} *In diebus illis... vidi: et ecce ostium apertum in cælo, et vox prima, quam audivi tamquam tubæ loquentis mecum, dicens: Ascende huc, et ostendam tibi quæ oportet fieri post hæc.* In that time... I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

{4:2} *Et statim fui in Spiritu: et ecce sedes posita erat in cælo, et supra sedem sedens.* And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

{4:3} *Et qui sedebat similis erat aspectui lapidis iaspidis, et sardinis: et iris erat in circuitu sedis similis visioni smaragdinae.* And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

{4:4} *Et in circuitu sedis sedilia vigintiquattuor: et super thronos vigintiquattuor seniores sedentes, circumamicti vestimentis albis, et in capitibus eorum coronæ aureæ:* And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four & twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

{4:5} *Et de throno procedebant fulgura, et voces, et tonitrua: et septem lampades ardentes ante thronum, qui sunt septem spiritus Dei.* And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

{4:6} *Et in conspectu sedis tamquam mare vitreum simile crystallo: et in medio sedis, et in circuitu sedis quattuor animalia plena oculis ante et retro.* And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

{4:7} *Et animal primum simile leoni, et secundum animal simile vitulo, et tertium animal habens faciem quasi hominis, et quartum animal simile aquilæ volanti.* And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

{4:8} *Et quattuor animalia, singula eorum habebant alas senas: et in circuitu, et intus plena sunt oculis: et requiem non habebant die ac nocte, dicentia: Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus omnipotens, qui erat, et qui est, et qui venturus est.* And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

{4:9} *Et cum darent illa animalia gloriam, et honorem, et benedictionem sedenti super thronum, viventi in sæcula sæculorum,* And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

{4:10} *procidebant vigintiquattuor seniores ante sedentem in throno, et adorabant viventem in sæcula sæculorum, et mittebant coronas suas ante thronum, dicentes:* The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

{4:11} *Dignus es Domine Deus noster accipere gloriam, et honorem, et virtutem: quia tu creasti omnia, et propter voluntatem tuam erant, et creata sunt.* Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

The River of God

O thou that hearest prayer,
unto thee shall all flesh come.

As for our transgressions,
thou shalt purge them away.

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house,
even of thy holy temple.

All the earth shall worship thee,
and shall sing unto thee.

O God of our salvation:
who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth,

of them that dwell in the uttermost parts,
and of them that are afar off upon the sea:

Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains;
being girded with power:

Which stilleth the noise of the seas,
the noise of their waves,
and the tumult of the people.

Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening
to rejoice.

Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it:

thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God,
which is full of water:

Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly:
thou settlest the furrows thereof;

thou makest it soft with showers:
thou blessest the springing thereof.

Thou crownest the year with thy goodness;
and thy paths drop fatness.

They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness:
and the little hills rejoice on every side.

The pastures are clothed with flocks;
the valleys also are covered over with corn;

they shout for joy,
they also sing.

Psalm 65, King James Bible
(edited N. Buckland, with some additions from Psalm 66)

Then I became

Then I became as a bird,
whose body was of Oneness
and whose wings were of Everlastingness,
and I continued to fly
in the air of the Absolute,
until I passed into the sphere of Purification,
and gazed upon the field of Eternity,
and beheld there the Tree of Oneness.
When I looked I myself was all those.

Abu Yazid al-Bistami (Bayazid of Bistam),
9th century Sufi, transl. Reynold A. Nicholson