**Wiederfinden**

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Ist es möglich, Stern der Sterne,
Drück’ ich wieder dich ans Herz!
Ach! was ist die Nacht der Ferne
Für ein Abgrund, für ein Schmerz.
Ja du bist es! meiner Freuden
Süßer, lieber Widerpart;
Eingedenk vergangner Leiden
Schaudr’ ich vor der Gegenwart.

Als die Welt im tiefsten Grunde
Lag an Gottes ew’ger Brust,
Ordnet’ er die erste Stunde
Mit erhabner Schöpfungslust,
Und er sprach das Wort: Es werde!
Da erklang ein schmerzlich Ach!
Als das All, mit Machtgebärde,
In die Wirklichkeiten brach.

Auf that sich das Licht! sich trennte
Scheu die Finsterniss von ihm,
Und sogleich die Elemente
Scheidend auseinander fliehn.
Rasch, in wilden wüsten Träumen,
Jedes nach der Weite rang,
Starr, in ungemessnen Räumen,
Ohne Sehnsucht, ohne Klang.

Stumm war alles, still und öde,
Einsam Gott zum erstenmal!
Da erschuf er Morgenröthe,
Die erbarmte sich der Quaal;
Sie entwickelte dem Trüben
Ein erklingend Farbenspiel
Und nun konnte wieder lieben
Was erst auseinander fiel.

Und mit eiligem Bestreben
Sucht sich was sich angehört,
Und zu ungemessnem Leben
Ist Gefühl und Blick gekehrt.

Sey’s Ergreifen, sey es Raffen,
Wenn es nur sich fasst und hält!
Allah braucht nicht mehr zu schaffen,
Wir erschaffen seine Welt.

So, mit morgenrothen Flügeln
Riss es mich an deinen Mund,
Und die Nacht mit tausend Siegeln
Kräftigt sternenhell den Bund.
Beyde sind wir auf der Erde
Musterhaft in Freud und Quaal
Und ein zweytes Wort: Es werde!
Trennt uns nicht zum zweytenmal.

**Reunited**

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Is it possible, star of stars,
That, once more, I press you to my heart!
Oh! What pain has our night apart

Brought in its abyss!

Yes! It is you and of my joys

The sweet and dearest counterpart;

But mindful of those sorrows past,
I tremble at the present.

When the world in formless being
Lay in God’s eternal breast,
He ordained with sublime desire
That first hour of His creation;
And he spoke the words: ‘Let there be’
Whereon resounded a piercing cry
As the universe with mighty thrust
Became reality.

Responding to command, the light
Tore darkness fearfully away
As, at once, the elements
Flew apart from one another.
Quickly, in wild and furious dreams
Each one fled afar,
Bleakly, in unmeasured space,
Soundlessly, without a care.

All was dumb and silent waste
As God first stood alone!
Therefore, He created morning dawn,
And anguish faded in its mercy;
It developed from the gloom
A striking play of colour
Investing, now, with love again
That which to contention fell;

Then sought, with hurried striving,
All that belonged together
Thus, returning to unbounded life
The sense of sight and feeling.

However seized, however grasped,
May it stay firm and hold secure.
Allah need create no more
When we can build upon his world.

Just so, those wings of morning dawn
Have drawn me to your mouth,
And star-bright night with a thousand seals
Has strengthened our bond with light.
We are both, upon the earth,

Paragons of joy and grief alike
And a second word: ‘Let there be’
Will part us not a second time.

*Translation: © David Paley*

**The Reunion**

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Can it be! Of stars the star,

Do I press thee to my heart?
In the night of distance far,
What deep gulf, what bitter smart!
Yes, 'tis thou, indeed at last,
Of my joys the partner dear!
Mindful, though, of sorrows past,
I the present needs must fear.

When the still unfashioned earth
Lay on God's eternal breast,
He ordained its hour of birth,
With creative joy possessed.
Then a heavy sigh arose,
When He spake the sentence: -- "Be!"
And the All, with mighty throes,
Burst into reality.

And when thus was born the light,
Darkness near it feared to stay,
And the elements with might
Fled on every side away;
Each on some far-distant trace,
Each with visions wild employed,
Numb, in boundless realms of space,
Harmony and feeling-void.

Dumb was all, all still and dead,
For the first time, God alone!
Then He formed the morning-red,
Which soon made its kindness known:
It unravelled from the waste
Bright and glowing harmony,
And once more with love was graced
What contended formerly.

And with earnest, noble strife,
Each its own peculiar sought;
Back to full, unbounded life,
Sight and feeling soon were brought.
Wherefore, if 'tis done, explore
How? why give the manner, name?
Allah need create no more,
We his world ourselves can frame.

So, with morning pinions brought,
To thy mouth was I impelled;
Stamped with thousand seals by night,
Star-clear is the bond fast held.
Paragons on earth are we
Both of grief and joy sublime,
And a second sentence: -- "Be!"
Parts us not a second time.

*Translation: John Storer Cobb*