Melodrama for Declamation with Piano

How Beautiful were once the Roses
(Wie waren einst so schön, so frisch die Rosen)

BY

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HOW BEAUTIFUL WERE ONCE THE ROSES
(WIE WAREN EINST SO SCHÖN, SO FRISCH DIE ROSEN)
MELODRAMA FOR DECLAMATION WITH PIANO

Poem in prose by I.S. TURGENEFF
German version by L. ESBEER
English version by NICHOLAS DOUTY

Somehow, somewhere, long, long ago, I read a poem.
Irgeudwo, irgendwann, vor langer, langer Zeit habe ich ein Gedicht gelesen.

Soon it passed out of my memory... and now only the first line remains:
Es wurde bald wieder von mir vergessen... und nur die erste Zeile blieb in meinen Gedächtnisse haften:

"How beautiful,
Wie waren einst
so schön, so frisch die Rosen!

'Tis winter now,
Jetzt ist Winter,
der Frost hat die Fensterschläfen geschlagen,
only one light burns
im dunkeln Zimmer brennt

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in the darkened room. As I sit, withdrawn into the corner, there rings through my brain:

"How beautiful, how fresh were once the roses."

And I fancy myself before the low-built windows of a Russian country house.

Softly the summer twilight falls, and fades into night.
The perfume of mignonette and of linden flowers
is wafted to me by the gentle breeze;
leaning her head upon her outstretched hands, sits a maiden
looking peacefully and silently toward the sky,
and at the window,
and in Fenstern auf die

In lauen Lüften duftet es nach Rosen und Lindenblüthe;
augestruckte Hand gestützt und den Kopf zur Schulter geweigt, sitzt ein Mädchen.
und blickt lautlos und unverwundt gen Himmel.
as if awaiting the coming
gleichsam das Erscheinen der er-

of the first star.
sten Sterne erwartend.

How true and constant are her dreaming eyes,
Wie treuherzig begeistert sind die aßnenden Augen,

how virginal her questioning half-opened lips!
wie rührend unschuldig die fragend geöffneten Lippen!

How quietly
Wie gleichmässig

cresc.
moves her breast, so girlish and yet so womanly!

How pure and tender is her youthful gaze!

I dare not speak to her, though she is very dear to me,

and quickly beats my heart!

Allegretto

ful, how sweet were once the roses.

5-73-64422-3
Other pictures, too, come into my mind.

Es erziehen vor mir andere Gestalten.

Allegro

I hear the happy sounds

Lärm länd.

of a country home.

Zwei

little blond girls, tenderly embracing each other,

Köpfchen, aneinander geschmiegt, schauen sich

at me gayly with bright little eyes;

lebhaft mit ihren hellen Auglein an;
their cheeks, red as apples
die rothen Büschchen be-

tremble with suppressed laughter;
ben vor verhaltenem Lachen;
their little hands are joined in a caress and their youthful, friendly voices echo each other
die Hände sind liebkosend verschlungen, einander in die Rede fällend schallen die jungen
in ceaseless talk.
freundlichen Stimmen;
Meno mosso

A little farther in the background other hands,
und ein wenig weiter, im Hintergrunde eines behaglichen Zimmers streifen andere, ebenfalls junge Hände.
*3) Tempo di Valse

Youthful and insecure,

*mit verworrenen Fingern*

Stray carelessly

over the keyboard of an old piano,

die Tasten eines alten Pianinos,

and a waltz of Lanner

and ein Lannerscher Walzer

makes itself heard, mingling with the noise of the patriarchal samovar.

vermag das Brummen der patriarchal Theemaschine nicht zu überflöten.

"How beautiful,

Wie waren einst

how sweet were once the roses."

so schön, so frisch die Rosen!

The candle flickers and goes out—

Die Kerze brennt trübe und verlischt—

Who coughs there, as if racked with fever

Wer ist’s, der dort so heiser und dumpf

*) The melody is that of one of Lanner’s waltzes.
and pain?  'Tis my old dog,
Austet?  Zusammengekriemt

my only companion who lies at my feet
sich mir zu Füßen, im Schlafe aufgehend, ein alter Hund, mein

waking from sleep!
einsiger Gefährte

I shudder with the cold—
Mick schaudert — Ich friere—

And all of these
Und alle sind sie längst

are dead, long, long dead.
schon tot, längst schon tot.

"How beautiful,
Wie waren einst

how fresh were once—
so schön, so frisch

the roses,"
die Rosen!

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