

# **Chamber Music**

**By**

**James Joyce**

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## CHAMBER MUSIC

**I**     **Strings in the earth and air**     Make music sweet;     Strings by the river  
where     The willows meet.

      There's music along the river     For Love wanders there,     Pale flowers on  
his mantle,     Dark leaves on his hair.

      All softly playing,     With head to the music bent,     And fingers straying  
Upon an instrument.

**II     The twilight turns from amethyst**     To deep and deeper blue,     The  
lamp fills with a pale green glow     The trees of the avenue.

The old piano plays an air,     Sedate and slow and gay;     She bends upon  
the yellow keys,     Her head inclines this way.

Shy thought and grave wide eyes and hands     That wander as they list—  
The twilight turns to darker blue     With lights of amethyst.

**III At that hour when all things have repose,** O lonely watcher of the  
skies, Do you hear the night wind and the sighs Of harps playing unto  
Love to unclosethe pale gates of sunrise?

When all things repose, do you alone Awake to hear the sweet harps play  
To Love before him on his way, And the night wind answering in antiphon  
Till night is overgone?

Play on, invisible harps, unto Love, Whose way in heaven is aglow At  
that hour when soft lights come and go, Soft sweet music in the air above  
And in the earth below.

**IV      When the shy star goes forth in heaven**      All maidenly, disconsolate,  
Hear you amid the drowsy even      One who is singing by your gate.      His song  
is softer than the dew      And he is come to visit you.

O bend no more in revery      When he at eventide is calling.      Nor muse:  
Who may this singer be      Whose song about my heart is falling?      Know you  
by this, the lover's chant,      'Tis I that am your visitant.

**V    Lean out of the window,**    Goldenhair,    I hear you singing    A merry  
air.

My book was closed,    I read no more,    Watching the fire dance    On the  
floor.

I have left my book,    I have left my room,    For I heard you singing  
Through the gloom.

Singing and singing    A merry air,    Lean out of the window,  
Goldenhair.



**VI I would in that sweet bosom be** (O sweet it is and fair it is!) Where  
no rude wind might visit me. Because of sad austerities I would in that  
sweet bosom be.

I would be ever in that heart (O soft I knock and soft entreat her!)  
Where only peace might be my part. Austerities were all the sweeter So I  
were ever in that heart.

**VII My love is in a light attire**    Among the apple-trees,    Where the gay  
winds do most desire    To run in companies.

There, where the gay winds stay to woo    The young leaves as they pass,  
My love goes slowly, bending to    Her shadow on the grass;

And where the sky's a pale blue cup    Over the laughing land,    My love  
goes lightly, holding up    Her dress with dainty hand.

**VIII      Who goes amid the green wood**      With springtide all adorning her?  
Who goes amid the merry green wood      To make it merrier?

Who passes in the sunlight      By ways that know the light footfall?      Who  
passes in the sweet sunlight      With mien so virginal?

The ways of all the woodland      Gleam with a soft and golden fire—      For  
whom does all the sunny woodland      Carry so brave attire?

O, it is for my true love      The woods their rich apparel wear—      O, it is for  
my own true love,      That is so young and fair.

**IX Winds of May, that dance on the sea,**    Dancing a ring-around in glee  
From furrow to furrow, while overhead    The foam flies up to be garlanded,  
In silvery arches spanning the air,    Saw you my true love anywhere?  
Welladay! Welladay!    For the winds of May!    Love is unhappy when love is  
away!

**X Bright cap and streamers,** He sings in the hollow: Come follow,  
come follow, All you that love. Leave dreams to the dreamers  
That will not after, That song and laughter Do nothing move.

With ribbons streaming He sings the bolder; In troop at his shoulder  
The wild bees hum. And the time of dreaming Dreams is over— As lover  
to lover, Sweetheart, I come.

**XI**     **Bid adieu, adieu, adieu,**     Bid adieu to girlish days,     Happy Love is  
come to woo     Thee and woo thy girlish ways—     The zone that doth become  
thee fair,     The snood upon thy yellow hair,

When thou hast heard his name upon     The bugles of the cherubim  
Begin thou softly to unzone     Thy girlish bosom unto him     And softly to undo  
the snood     That is the sign of maidenhood.

**XII     What counsel has the hooded moon**     Put in thy heart, my shyly  
sweet,     Of Love in ancient plenilune,     Glory and stars beneath his feet—  
A sage that is but kith and kin     With the comedian Capuchin?

Believe me rather that am wise     In disregard of the divine,     A glory  
kindles in those eyes     Trembles to starlight. Mine, O Mine!     No more be tears  
in moon or mist     For thee, sweet sentimentalist.

**XIII**     **Go seek her out all courteously,**     And say I come,     Wind of spices  
whose song is ever     Epithalamium.     O, hurry over the dark lands     And  
run upon the sea     For seas and lands shall not divide us     My love and me.

Now, wind, of your good courtesy     I pray you go,     And come into her little  
garden     And sing at her window;     Singing: The bridal wind is blowing     For  
Love is at his noon;     And soon will your true love be with you,     Soon, O soon.



**XIV My dove, my beautiful one,** Arise, arise! The night-dew lies  
Upon my lips and eyes.

The odorous winds are weaving A music of sighs: Arise, arise, My  
dove, my beautiful one!

I wait by the cedar tree, My sister, my love, White breast of the dove,  
My breast shall be your bed.

The pale dew lies Like a veil on my head. My fair one, my fair dove,  
Arise, arise!

**XV**     **From dewy dreams, my soul, arise,**     From love's deep slumber and  
from death,     For lo! the trees are full of sighs     Whose leaves the morn  
admonisheth.

Eastward the gradual dawn prevails     Where softly-burning fires appear,  
Making to tremble all those veils     Of grey and golden gossamer.

While sweetly, gently, secretly,     The flowery bells of morn are stirred     And  
the wise choirs of faery     Begin (innumerable!) to be heard.

**XVI**     **O cool is the valley now**     And there, love, will we go     For many a  
choir is singing now     Where Love did sometime go.     And hear you not the  
thrushes calling,     Calling us away?     O cool and pleasant is the valley     And  
there, love, will we stay.

**XVII**     **Because your voice was at my side**     I gave him pain,     Because  
within my hand I held     Your hand again.

There is no word nor any sign     Can make amend—     He is a stranger to  
me now     Who was my friend.

**XVIII**     **O Sweetheart, hear you**     Your lover's tale;     A man shall have  
sorrow     When friends him fail.

For he shall know then     Friends be untrue     And a little ashes     Their  
words come to.

But one unto him     Will softly move     And softly woo him     In ways of  
love.

His hand is under     Her smooth round breast;     So he who has sorrow  
Shall have rest.

**IX      Be not sad because all men**      Prefer a lying clamour before you:  
Sweetheart, be at peace again—      Can they dishonour you?

They are sadder than all tears;      Their lives ascend as a continual sigh.  
Proudly answer to their tears:      As they deny, deny.

**XX In the dark pine-wood** I would we lay, In deep cool shadow At  
noon of day.

How sweet to lie there, Sweet to kiss, Where the great pine-forest  
Enaisled is!

Thy kiss descending Sweeter were With a soft tumult Of thy hair.

O unto the pine-wood At noon of day Come with me now, Sweet love,  
away.

**XXI**     **He who hath glory lost, nor** hath     Found any soul to fellow his,  
Among his foes in scorn and wrath     Holding to ancient nobleness,     That high  
unconfortable one—     His love is his companion.



**XXII Of that so sweet imprisonment** My soul, dearest, is fain— Soft  
arms that woo me to relent And woo me to detain. Ah, could they ever hold  
me there Gladly were I a prisoner!

Dearest, through interwoven arms By love made tremulous, That night  
allures me where alarms Nowise may trouble us; But sleep to dreamier  
sleep be wed Where soul with soul lies prisoned.

**XXIII      This heart that flutters near my heart**      My hope and all my riches  
is,      Unhappy when we draw apart      And happy between kiss and kiss:      My  
hope and all my riches—yes!—      And all my happiness.

For there, as in some mossy nest      The wrens will divers treasures keep,      I  
laid those treasures I possessed      Ere that mine eyes had learned to weep.  
Shall we not be as wise as they      Though love live but a day?

**XXIV      Silently she's combing,**      Combing her long hair      Silently and  
graciously,      With many a pretty air.

The sun is in the willow leaves      And on the dappled grass,      And still  
she's combing her long hair      Before the looking-glass.

I pray you, cease to comb out,      Comb out your long hair,      For I have  
heard of witchery      Under a pretty air,

That makes as one thing to the lover      Staying and going hence,      All fair,  
with many a pretty air      And many a negligence.

**XXV     Lightly come or lightly go:**     Though thy heart presage thee woe,  
Vales and many a wasted sun,     Oread let thy laughter run,     Till the  
irreverent mountain air     Ripple all thy flying hair.

Lightly, lightly—ever so:     Clouds that wrap the vales below     At the hour of  
evenstar     Lowliest attendants are;     Love and laughter song-confessed  
When the heart is heaviest.

**XXVI**     **Thou leanest to the shell of night,**     Dear lady, a divining ear.     In  
that soft choiring of delight     What sound hath made thy heart to fear?  
Seemed it of rivers rushing forth     From the grey deserts of the north?

That mood of thine     Is his, if thou but scan it well,     Who a mad tale  
bequeaths to us     At ghosting hour conjurable—     And all for some strange  
name he read     In Purchas or in Holinshed.

**XXVII**     **Though I thy Mithridates were,**     Framed to defy the poison-dart,  
Yet must thou fold me unaware     To know the rapture of thy heart,     And I  
but render and confess     The malice of thy tenderness.

For elegant and antique phrase,     Dearest, my lips wax all too wise;     Nor  
have I known a love whose praise     Our piping poets solemnize,     Neither a  
love where may not be     Ever so little falsity.

**XXVIII Gentle lady, do not sing** Sad songs about the end of love; Lay  
aside sadness and sing How love that passes is enough.

Sing about the long deep sleep Of lovers that are dead, and how In the  
grave all love shall sleep: Love is aweary now.

**XXIX**     **Dear heart, why will you use me so?**     Dear eyes that gently me  
upbraid,     Still are you beautiful—but O,     How is your beauty raimented!

Through the clear mirror of your eyes,     Through the soft sigh of kiss to kiss,  
Desolate winds assail with cries     The shadowy garden where love is.

And soon shall love dissolved be     When over us the wild winds blow—  
But you, dear love, too dear to me,     Alas! why will you use me so?



**XXX Love came to us in time gone by** When one at twilight shyly played  
And one in fear was standing nigh— For Love at first is all afraid.

We were grave lovers. Love is past That had his sweet hours many a one;  
Welcome to us now at the last The ways that we shall go upon.

**XXXI**     **O, it was out by Donnycarney**     When the bat flew from tree to tree  
My love and I did walk together;     And sweet were the words she said to me.

      Along with us the summer wind     Went murmuring—O, happily!—     But  
softer than the breath of summer     Was the kiss she gave to me.

**XXXII**     **Rain has fallen all the day.**     O come among the laden trees:  
The leaves lie thick upon the way     Of memories.

      Staying a little by the way     Of memories shall we depart.     Come, my  
beloved, where I may     Speak to your heart.

**XXXIII**      **Now, O now, in this brown land**      Where Love did so sweet music  
make      We two shall wander, hand in hand,      Forbearing for old friendship'  
sake,      Nor grieve because our love was gay      Which now is ended in this way.

A rogue in red and yellow dress      Is knocking, knocking at the tree;      And  
all around our loneliness      The wind is whistling merrily.      The leaves—they  
do not sigh at all      When the year takes them in the fall.

Now, O now, we hear no more      The vilanelle and roundelay!      Yet will we  
kiss, sweetheart, before      We take sad leave at close of day.      Grieve not,  
sweetheart, for anything—      The year, the year is gathering.

**XXXIV**      **Sleep now, O sleep now,**      O you unquiet heart!      A voice crying  
"Sleep now"      Is heard in my heart.

The voice of the winter      Is heard at the door.      O sleep, for the winter      Is  
crying "Sleep no more."

My kiss will give peace now      And quiet to your heart—      Sleep on in peace  
now,      O you unquiet heart!

**XXXV All day I hear the noise of waters** Making moan, Sad as the  
sea-bird is when, going Forth alone, He hears the winds cry to the water's  
Monotone. The grey winds, the cold winds are blowing Where I go. I  
hear the noise of many waters Far below. All day, all night, I hear them  
flowing To and fro.

**XXXVI**     **I hear an army charging upon the land,**     And the thunder of  
horses plunging, foam about their knees:     Arrogant, in black armour, behind  
them stand,     Disdaining the reins, with fluttering ships, the charioteers.  
They cry unto the night their battle-name:     I moan in sleep when I hear afar  
their whirling laughter.     They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame,  
Clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil.     They come shaking in  
triumph their long, green hair:     They come out of the sea and run shouting by  
the shore.     My heart, have you no wisdom thus to despair?     My love, my  
love, my love, why have you left me alone?