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The Choral Music of  
**ANTONIN TUČAPSKÝ** (b. 1928)  
PREMIER RECORDINGS

**The Sacrifice** (1977)

(31:45)

**Five Lenten Motets** (cont.)

For mixed choir, baritone solo and organ

[10]

3. Filiae Jerusalem

3:01

[1] I "Oh all ye, who passe by" 4:05

[11]

4. Eli, Eli

2:11

[2] II "Mine own Apostle,  
who the bag did beare" 5:29

[12]

5. Pater meus

2:05

[3] III "Yet my disciples sleep" 4:35

**Lauds** (1976)

(11:15)

[4] IV "I answer nothing" (*Bar. solo*) 3:48

For unacc. mixed choir

[5] V "Heark now how they crie aloud" 3:35

[13]

1. If I could tell you

6:39

[6] VI "And now, I am deliver'd  
unto death" (*Bar. solo*) 4:16

[14]

2. Lauds

4:33

[7] VII "O all ye, who passe by" 5:24

**The Seven Sorrows** (1989)\*

10:16

**Five Lenten Motets** (1977)

(11:45)

(a cappella)

[15]

A chain of images for mixed choir & violin

[8] 1. Tristis est anima mea 1:55

\*Written for and premiered in Bath by Bath

[9] 2. Pater mi 2:18

Camerata, Director Nigel Perrin, in October 1989

**Total time: 65:30**

Colin Hunt, Organ • Stephen Foulkes, Baritone • Tomáš Tuláček, Violin  
BATH CAMERATA Nigel Perrin, Director

The above individual timings will normally each include two pauses, one before the beginning and one after the end of each movement or work.

Texts and Translations included in the booklet.

Recording location: The Sacrifice: Wells Cathedral on 27 January 1996.

Remaining works: St. George's Brandon Hill, Bristol on 28 January 1996.

Recording Engineer: Antony Askew. Recording Producer: Siva Oke.

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The choral music of



Antonin

TUČAPSKÝ



THE SACRIFICE

FIVE LENTEN MOTETS

LAUDS

THE SEVEN SORROWS

Bath Camerata

Nigel Perrin, Director

If Britain's musical culture has a well-earned reputation for insularity, it has unexpectedly proven able to absorb a number of gifted composers whose antecedents lie elsewhere. Andrzej Panufnik, Roberto Gerhard, Matyas Seiber, Berthold Goldschmidt and Franz Reizenstein are amongst those who have translated themselves successfully into British musical life, albeit not without struggle. To that list should be added Antonín Tučapský, who, since his arrival in 1975, has met with a steadily growing measure of both performance and acclaim.

Tučapský's first musical life began in Moravia, where he was born near Brno in 1928. After education at the Janáček Academy of Music and the University of Brno he embarked on a busy career as a composer and conductor, particularly of choral music. For ten years he was director of the famous Moravian Teachers' Choir, with whom he toured Europe making frequent broadcasts and recordings, some of which are still available in today's catalogues. However his marriage in the early 1970's to an English singer, combined with Czechoslovakia's changed political climate post-1968 resulted in an abrupt and mysterious end to his musical activities. Dismissed from his posts and forced to accept work as a manual labourer, Tučapský eventually took the option to leave his country and settle in London, where he has lived and worked ever since. Appointed a professor at Trinity College of Music he has continued to compose prolifically in a variety of genres, but with choral music very much to the fore. So it is appropriate that this first CD devoted entirely to Tučapský's compositions should include a cross-section of his outstanding contribution to the chamber-choir repertoire.

Although he has adapted his idiom to fit the needs of the English language and its institutions, Tučapský's work nonetheless breathes a different spirit from that of his English-born contemporaries. Where their music typically draws on Vaughan Williams, Holst, Walton, Britten, Tippett and Howells, Tučapský's resources include a sound-world inherited from Janáček and Martinu. The three earliest choral works on this disc reveal both Tučapský's unique voice and directness of expression that he brings to all his music.

Most substantial amongst them is *The Sacrifice*, a cantata for chorus and organ in seven sections setting verses from a lengthy devotional poem by the English divine, George Herbert (1593-1633). Herbert's poem is a meditation, told from Christ's viewpoint in the first person, on events leading up to the crucifixion. Betrayal, not just by Judas and trusted friends but by a people, is the poem's central theme: its anger and sorrow boil over into music of drama and conviction.

The first section (I) serves both as prologue and as an introduction to several elements that will prove significant in the work's progress. These include the halting four-note organ motif and ostinato of the opening bars (heard again in section VII), and the grief-laden motif at the section's close, which occurs (in modified form) in most of the succeeding movements. Section II, focusing on Judas' betrayal is propelled by a raging torrent of sound from the organ, climaxing in a memorably dramatic spoken crescendo as the apostle seals his bargain "with a kisse". Section III opens as a dreamy nocturne for the sleeping disciples, but eventually breaks down into the rollicking chaos of their flight from the mob, to be followed (section IV) by a central point of meditation, as a baritone solo propounds a seemingly hopeless message of passive, loving resistance in the face of his (Christ's) tormentors. Then it's back to action, as Section V is rent by the crowd's shouts of "Crucify!", thrillingly evoked in jagged cross-rhythms.

Section VI, marked "adagio triste", is a movement of resignation, and also of emotional warmth, particularly in the tender E major ostinatos of the chorus' "Weep not, dear friends"; perhaps the most poignant and, in its nostalgia, most obviously Moravian passage in this highly charged yet skilfully worked cantata. Movement VII brings *The Sacrifice* both full circle and to a philosophical/musical crux, described by two downward shifting glissandi for the chorus. The outworn, untrustworthy Old Testament world of words can be superseded only by the new world of sorrows, for "by sorrow I must win". With this bleak New Testament vision, the work closes in a glacial D major.

Also amongst Tučapský's early compositions after leaving Czechoslovakia is the set of *Five Lenten Motets*, written in 1977 in memory of his parents, who had died ten years before. They are simple and moving works in which grief, though profound, is always put into perspective; all five end in a major key. All use biblical texts; four (numbers 1,2,4, and 5) set sayings of Christ prior to or during the crucifixion, whilst the third, *Filiae Jerusalem*, uses a solo tenor as protagonist. The very economy of the pieces heightens their dramatic strength, with passages where the texture blossoms from four into six or eight parts sounding unusually rich in such austere surroundings.

*Lauds*, written in the summer of 1976, stands at the other extreme of Tučapský's output. Whilst retaining essentially conservative musical values, Tučapský has not been afraid to experiment with vocal resources, and the challenge of Auden's image-rich text provoked an

unusually extreme harmonic language and a highly effective use of both glissandi and speech. It is difficult not to read an empathy between poet and composer into Tučapský's settings of *Lauds I* so soon after the fracture in his own life, which perhaps finds its musical symbol in the near-atonal shouted refrain, "time will say nothing", that on several occasions brings the piece to a juddering halt. *Lauds II*, without losing sight of its predecessor's insecurities is more optimistic, an evocative dawn-scape with fanfares for the cock-crows and resonant, chiming bells. Time's dripping mill-wheel is turning, the birds sing once again, life begins (in the words of another poet) "afresh, afresh, afresh".

*The Seven Sorrows*, written for the Bath Camerata in 1989 is the most recent work included here. Tučapský describes it as a chain of images, in which the verses of Ted Hughes' poem are linked together by means of a solo violin, rhapsodising above and between the choral sections. Tučapský's choice of text and scoring underline his assimilation into English culture, yet his otherness is also implied, for despite the obvious opportunities, there is no hint of English pastoralism in the music any more than in Hughes' poem. Technically, the work is a *tour de force* of careful harmonic organisation, rarely settled in key but consistently tonal, and, despite reaching a distant E-flat major at its midpoint, always moving towards a predestined A major. More philosophically Tučapský, as in the *Lenten Motets*, finds a surprisingly heart-warming vision in unpromising circumstances. Without masking the poem's brutal imagery, he turns its nihilism into a nostalgic celebration of life; a resigned, humane acceptance of inevitable cruelty, in man as in time's passing seasons.

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**NIGEL PERRIN**, best known as one of the original King's Singers, began his musical career as a boy chorister at Ely Cathedral before winning a choral scholarship to King's College, Cambridge. He left the group in 1980 to pursue a freelance career. He is currently Head of Singing at Marlborough College and is on the staff of Wells Cathedral School. He is the musical director of the City of Bath Bach choir with whom he recently conducted a performance of Mozart's *Requiem* in Bath Abbey with the Bournemouth Sinfonietta as part of the *Mozartfest*, and is Chorus Master of the Bath Festival Chorus. His own chamber choir **BATH CAMERATA**, formed in 1986, is acknowledged to be one of the finest choirs in the country. It gained instant renown by reaching the finals of the prestigious Sainsbury's Choir of the Year Competition.

Since then, the choir has gone on to achieve international recognition in competitions and festivals in France, Italy, Spain, Northern Ireland and Eire. Besides appearing at the World Showcase Theatre at Disneyworld and receiving two PRS Awards for performing contemporary music, the choir has, for the last five years, given acclaimed concerts in the Bath International Festival.

Si la culture musicale britannique a une réputation d'insularité bien méritée, elle prouve de façon inattendue qu'elle est capable d'absorber nombre de talentueux compositeurs dont les racines se trouvent ailleurs. Andrzej Panufnik, Roberto Gerhard, Matyas Seiber, Berthold Goldschmidt et Franz Reizenstein sont parmi ceux qui se sont adaptés avec succès, non sans peine, à la vie musicale anglaise. A ceux-là l'on devrait ajouter Antonin Tučapský qui, depuis son arrivée en 1975, a vu ses performances grandir en commune mesure avec ses acclamations.

Tučapský fait ses premiers pas musicaux en Moravie, son pays natal. Il est né en 1928, à proximité de Brno. Après ses études à l'Académie de Musique Janáček et à l'Université de Brno, il s'engage dans une carrière affairée, aussi bien de compositeur que de chef d'orchestre, surtout dans le domaine de la musique de chorale. Il dirige pendant dix ans la célèbre Chorale de Professeurs moraviens, avec laquelle il fait le tour de l'Europe, faisant fréquemment des émissions de radio et des enregistrements, dont certains sont toujours disponibles dans les catalogues d'aujourd'hui. Cependant, la combinaison de son mariage, au début des années 1970, avec une chanteuse d'origine britannique et du changement du climat politique post-68 en Tchécoslovaquie, a pour conséquence une fin brutale autant que mystérieuse de son activité musicale. Démenti de ses fonctions et obligé d'accepter des travaux manuels, Tučapský finit par choisir l'option de quitter son pays et de s'établir à Londres où il a vécu et travaillé depuis. Nommé professeur au Conservatoire de Musique Trinity, il continue à composer de manière prolifique en variant les genres, mais il met surtout l'accent sur la musique de chorale. Ainsi, il est normal que ce premier CD, consacré entièrement aux œuvres de Tučapský, comporte une part représentative de sa contribution exceptionnelle au répertoire de la musique de chorale de chambre.

Bien qu'ayant adapté ses idiomes aux besoins de la langue et des institutions anglaises, son œuvre insuffle néanmoins un esprit différent de celles de ses contemporains anglais. Alors que leurs musiques sont typiquement inspirées de Vaughan Williams, Holst, Walton, Britten,

Tippett et Howells, celles de Tučapský trouvent leurs sources dans le monde sonore hérité de Janáček et Martinu. Sur ce disque, les trois plus anciennes musiques de chorale révèlent à la fois la voix unique de Tučapský et l'expression directe qu'il apporte à l'ensemble de sa musique.

La plus substantielle de ses œuvres est *Le Sacrifice*, une cantate en sept parties pour chœur et orgue, sur des vers d'un long poème religieux, écrit par le théologien anglais George Herbert (1593-1633). Le poème de Herbert récite à la première personne du point de vue du Christ, est une méditation sur les événements qui l'ont conduit à la crucifixion. La trahison, non uniquement par Judas et des amis de confiance, mais par un peuple entier, est le thème du poème: sa colère et son chagrin bouillonnent dans une musique de drame et de conviction.

La Section I est à la fois prologue et introduction et comporte plusieurs éléments qui se révèlent importants dans la progression de l'œuvre. Ceux-ci comprennent le motif hésitant de quatre notes pour orgue, la contrainte des mesures d'ouverture (reproduits dans la Section VII) et le motif plein de chagrin en fin de section, qui apparaît sous une autre forme dans la plupart des mouvements successifs. La Section II, axée sur la trahison de Judas, est animée par l'orgue dans un torrent furieux de sons, qui atteint son point culminant dans un crescendo "parlé", mémorablement dramatique, quand l'apôtre scelle son destin par "le baiser". La Section III s'ouvre sur une nocturne rêveuse de disciples ensommeillés, sombrant finalement dans le bruyant chaos de leur fuite de la foule, suivie (Section IV) par le point central de la méditation, alors qu'un bariton solo délivre un message, apparemment sans espoir, appelant à la résistance passive et affectueuse, mêlée de compassion vis-à-vis de ses tourmenteurs (du Christ). De retour à l'action, la Section V, déchirée par les cris appelant à la crucifixion, est marquée émotionnellement par des rythmes syncopés.

La Section VI, nommée "adagio triste", est un mouvement de résignation et aussi de chaleur émotionnelle, en particulier dans la tendresse du chœur dans les contraintes en mi majeur, telles que "Ne pleurez pas chers amis", peut-être le passage le plus poignant, et, dans la nostalgie qu'il évoque, évidemment le passage le plus moravien de cette cantate très chargée mais travaillée avec "maestria". Le Mouvement VII apporte "Le Sacrifice", à la fois à un tour complet et au cœur philosophique/musical, décrit ici par deux glissandis descendants du chœur. Le monde des mots dépassé et non crédible de l'ancien Testament ne peut être remplacé que par le nouveau monde de tristesse car "par la tristesse je vainqu岸rai". Avec cette vision sombre du nouveau Testament, l'œuvre s'achève sur un glacial ré majeur.

*Five Lenten Motets (Cinq motets de carême)* figure également parmi les premières œuvres de Tučapský, composées à son départ de Tchécoslovaquie, écrites en 1977 à la mémoire de ses parents qui avaient trouvé la mort dix ans auparavant. Ce sont des œuvres simples et émouvantes dans lesquelles le chagrin, bien que profond, est toujours mis en perspective. Elles s'achèvent toutes en clé majeure et se servent de textes bibliques. Quatre d'entre elles (numéros 1,2,4,5) sont adaptées sur les paroles prononcées par le Christ, avant ou pendant la Crucifixion, alors que la troisième, *Filias Jerusalem*, utilise comme protagoniste un ténor solo. C'est l'économie même de ces œuvres qui fait ressortir leur force dramatique, avec des passages où la texture s'épanouit de quatre à six ou huit parties à travers de sons étrangement riches dans ce contexte tellement austère.

*Lauds (Hymnes)*, écrit en été 1976, se trouve à l'autre extrémité des œuvres de Tučapský. Tout en gardant des valeurs musicales essentiellement conservatrices, Tučapský n'a pas hésité à expérimenter avec des ressources vocales, alors que le défi du texte d'Auden, si riche en images, a provoqué un langage harmonique, inhabituellement extrême et à la fois un usage très efficace de glissandis et de paroles. On peut difficilement ne pas se rendre compte de l'empathie qui existe entre le poète et le compositeur dans l'adaptation de *Lauds I* de Tučapský, peu après la fracture de sa propre vie, qui trouve peut-être son symbole musical dans le refrain chanté à haute voix de manière presque atonale: *Le temps ne nous apprendra rien* qui, a plusieurs reprises, mène l'œuvre à un arrêt trépidant. *Lauds II* est plus optimiste sans toutefois oublier l'insécurité de son œuvre précédente, une image évocatrice avec des fanfares pour le chant du coq et le carillonnement des cloches, la roue ruisselante du moulin du temps qui s'envole, les oiseaux qui chantent de nouveau, la vie qui "recommence, recommence, recommence" (par les mots d'un autre poète).

*The Seven Sorrows (sept chants de douleur)* écrit en 1989 pour la Camerata de Bath, est ici l'œuvre la plus récente. Tučapský la décrit comme une suite d'images dans laquelle les vers du poème de Ted Hughes sont enchaînés au moyen d'un violon solo, s'extasiant au-dessus et entre les différentes parties du chœur. Le choix des textes et d'orchestration de Tučapský accentue son assimilation à la culture anglaise, mais ses autres origines sont aussi sous-entendues car, en dépit des opportunités évidentes, il n'y a dans la musique aucune trace de pastoralisme anglais, pas plus que dans le poème de Hughes. Techniquement, l'œuvre est un tour de force d'une disposition harmonique et soigneuse mise en mesure de consistance tonale, et, en dépit de sa distance du mi bémol majeur, en son milieu, toujours avançant vers un la

majeur prédestiné. Plus philosophiquement, Tučapský, comme dans *Lenten Motets*, trouve une vision étonnamment chaleureuse dans des circonstances peu prometteuses. Sans masquer les images brutales du poème, il transforme son nihilisme en célébration nostalgique de la vie: l'acceptation résignée par l'homme de son inévitable cruauté, chez l'homme, comme dans les saisons qui passent.

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**NIGEL PERRIN**, plus connu comme l'un des premiers chanteurs du groupe King Singers, a commencé sa carrière musicale en tant que choriste à la Cathédrale de Ely avant d'obtenir une bourse au King's College de Cambridge. Il a quitté le groupe en 1980 pour se lancer dans une carrière indépendante. Il est actuellement chef du chant au Marlborough College et enseigne à l'École de la Cathédrale de Wells. Directeur de la Chorale de Bach de la ville de Bath, il a dirigé dernièrement le Requiem de Mozart, joué dans l'Abbaye de Bath par la Sinfonietta de Bournemouth dans le cadre du Festival de Mozart; il est également chef du chant de la Chorale du Festival de Bath. Sa propre chorale de musique de chambre, la **BATH CAMERATA**, fondée en 1986, est reconnue comme l'une des meilleures chorales du pays. Elle a eu une renommée immédiate en atteignant la finale de la Compétition prestigieuse de l'Année de la Chorale de Sainsbury. Depuis, la chorale s'est fait une réputation mondiale au cours de concours et de festivals en France, en Italie, en Espagne, en Irlande du Nord et en Eire. Outre qu'elle a joué au World Showcase Theatre à Disneyworld et qu'elle a remporté deux prix PRS pour sa musique contemporaine, la chorale a, au cours de ces cinq dernières années, donné des concerts hautement appréciés au Festival International de Bath.

Traduction: *Natasa Papaeracleous & Rea Rapa*

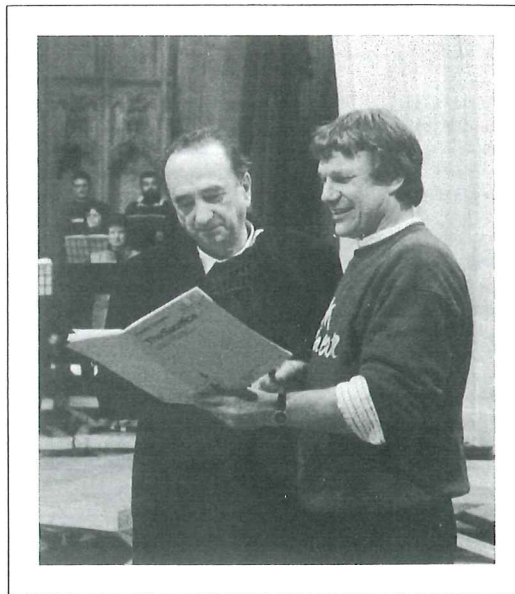
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Music published by Robertson Publications.

*Lauds*: Words by W.H. Auden.

*The Seven Sorrows*: Words by Ted Hughes, 1976.

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Left to right: Antonín Tučapský and Nigel Perrin

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THE SACRIFICE

*Le Sacrifice*  
*Das Opfer*

- [1] I  
Oh, all ye, who passe by,  
Oh all ye, whose eyes and minde to  
wordly things are sharp, but to me  
blinde,  
To me, who took eyes that I might  
you finde:  
Was ever grief like mine?  
The Princes of my people make a  
head against their Maker:  
They do wish me dead, who cannot  
wish, except I give them bread:  
Was ever grief like mine?
- [2] II  
Mine own Apostle, who the bag did  
beare,  
Although he had all I had, he did  
not forbear to sell me also and to  
put me there:  
Was ever grief like mine?  
Judas, dost thou betray me with a  
kisse,  
And misse of life, just at the gates  
of life and blisse?  
Canst thou finde hell about my  
lips?  
Mine own Apostle, who the bag  
did beare  
For thirtie pence he did my death  
devise,

Who at three hundred did the  
ointment prize,  
Not half so sweet as my sweet  
sacrifice:  
Was ever grief like mine?

- [3] III  
Yet my disciples sleep, I cannot gain  
one houre of watching:  
But their drowsie brain comforts not  
me and doth my doctrine stain:  
Was ever grief like mine?  
Arise, they come, look how they  
runne!  
Alas, what haste they make  
to be undone!  
How with their lanterns do they  
seek the sunne!  
With clubs and staves they seek me,  
as a thief,  
Who am the Way and Truth, the  
true relief:  
Most true to those who are my  
greatest grief.

- [4] IV  
I answer nothing but with patience  
prove if stonie hearts will melt with  
gentle love,  
But who does hawk at eagles with a  
dove?  
My silence rather doth augment  
their crie:

My dove doth back into my bosome  
flie, because the raging waters still  
are high:  
Was ever grief like mine?

- [5] V  
Hearc how they crie aloud still  
crucifie,  
It is not fit he live a day who cannot  
live less than eternally!  
Pilate, a stranger, holdeth off: but  
they, mine own deare people, crie  
crucifie,  
With noises confused frightening the  
day;  
Yet still they shout and crie aloud  
and stop their eares,  
Putting my life among their sinnes  
and feares,  
And therefore wish my bloud on  
them and theirs.

- [6] VI  
And now, I am deliver'd unto  
death,  
Which each one calls for so with  
utmost breath,  
That he before me well might  
suffered.  
Weep not, deare friends, since I for  
both have wept,  
When all my tears were bloud, the  
while you slept:

Your tears for your own fortunes  
should be kept:  
Was ever grief like mine?

- [7] VII  
O all ye who passe by, behold and  
see;  
Man stole the fruit but I must  
climbe the tree;  
The tree of life to all, but only me:  
Was ever grief like mine?  
Lo, here I hang, charg'd with a  
world of sinne,  
The greater world o'th two;  
For that came in by words, but this  
by sorrow I must win:  
Was ever grief like mine?  
*George Herbert (1593-1633)*

FIVE LENTEN MOTETS  
*Fünf Motetten für Fastenzeit*  
*Cinq motets de carême*

- [8] 1. *Tristis est anima mea*  
*Tristis est anima mea*  
*Deep is the sadness in my soul*  
*usque ad mortem;*  
*as though death had come for me;*  
*sustinete hic,*  
*remain here with me,*  
*et vigilate mecum.*  
*and let us pray together.*

9 2. *Pater mi*  
Pater mi,  
Father mine,  
Pater, si non potest hic calix  
transire,  
Father, deliver me from drinking this  
bitter chalice,  
nisi bibam illum, pater mi;  
but if it must be drunk, not as I wish but  
as Thou wilt, Father mine,  
fiat voluntas tua.  
let Thy will be done.

10 3. *Filiae Jerusalem*  
Filiae Jerusalem,  
Daughters of Jerusalem,  
nolite flere super me  
for me do not weep, do not cry;  
sed super vos ipsas flete  
but for yourselves do weep,  
et super filios vestros flete.  
and also for your sons, indeed, do weep.  
Quoniam ecce venient dies,  
in quibus dicent:  
For behold, the days are approaching  
when they will say:  
Beatae steriles, et ventres qui non  
genuerunt,  
Bless'd be the barren, whose wombs, have  
never giv'n birth,  
et ubera quae non lactaverunt.  
and whose breasts never gave suck.  
Tunc incipient dicere montibus:

Then some will start to ask of the  
mountains:  
"Cadite super nos",  
"Fall, mountains, fall on us",  
et colibus: "Operite nos."  
and of the hills: "Cover us and bury us".  
Quia si non viridi ligno haec  
faciunt, in arido quid fiet?  
For if, when the tree is green, things such  
as these are done, what are they to do,  
when the wood will be dry?

11 4. *Eli, Eli*  
Eli, Eli, lamma sabactani.  
Deus meus ut quid dereliquisti me.  
Father, Father, why hast Thou forsaken  
me.

12 5. *Pater meus*  
Pater meus, in manus tuas  
commendo spiritum meum.  
Father, into Thy keeping I now deliver  
my spirit.  
Consummatum est.  
Now has come the end.

LAUDS  
Hymnes  
Lobeshymnen

13 1. *If I could tell you*  
Time will say nothing but I told  
you so,

Time only knows the price we  
have to pay;  
If I could tell you I would let you  
know.

If we should weep when clowns  
put on their show,  
If we should stumble when  
musicians play,  
Time will say nothing but I told  
you so.

There are no fortunes to be told,  
although,  
Because I love you more than I can  
say,  
If I could tell you I would let you  
know.

The winds must come from  
somewhere when they blow,  
There must be reasons why the  
leaves decay;  
Time will say nothing but I told you  
so.

Perhaps the roses really want to  
grow,  
The vision seriously intends to stay;  
If I could tell you I would let you  
know.

Suppose the lions all get up and go,

And all the brooks and soldiers run  
away;  
Will Time say nothing but I told you  
so?  
If I could tell you I would let you  
know.

14 2. *Lauds*  
Among the leaves the small birds  
sing;  
The crow of the cock commands  
awaking:  
In solitude, for company.

Bright shines the sun on creatures  
mortal;  
Men of their neighbours become  
sensible:  
In solitude, for company.

The crow of the cock commands  
awaking:  
Already the mass-bell goes dong-ding:  
In solitude, for company.

Men of their neighbours become  
sensible:  
God bless the Realm, God bless the  
People:  
In solitude, for company.

W.H. Auden

15 THE SEVEN SORROWS

*Sept chants de douleur*  
*Die sieben Kummer*

The first sorrow of autumn  
Is the slow goodbye  
Of the garden who stands so long in the  
evening—

A brown poppy head,  
The stalk of a lily,  
And still cannot go.

The second sorrow  
Is the empty feet  
Of the pheasant who hangs from a  
hook with his brothers.

The woodland of gold  
Is folded in feathers  
With its head in a bag.

And the third sorrow  
Is the slow goodbye  
Of the sun who has gathered the birds  
and who gathers  
The minutes of evening,  
The golden and holy  
Ground of the picture.

The fourth sorrow  
Is the pond gone black  
Ruined and sunken the city of water—  
The Beetle's palace,  
The catacombs  
Of the dragonfly.

And the fifth sorrow  
Is the slow goodbye  
Of the woodland that quietly breaks up  
its camp.

One day it's gone.  
It has left only litter—  
Firewood, tentpoles.

And the sixth sorrow  
Is the fox's sorrow  
The joy of the huntsman, the joy of the  
hounds,

The hooves that pound  
Till earth closes her ear  
To the fox's prayer.

And the seventh sorrow  
Is the slow goodbye  
Of the face with its wrinkles that looks  
through the window

As the year packs up  
Like a tatty fairground  
That came for the children.

*Ted Hughes*

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