

Refer to lines 321-336 for the Jaufre Rudel legend.

1 Before our lives divide for ever,  
2 While time is with us and hands are free,  
3 (Time, swift to fasten and swift to sever  
4 Hand from hand, as we stand by the sea)  
5 I will say no word that a man might say  
6 Whose whole life's love goes down in a day;  
7 For this could never have been; and never,  
8 Though the gods and the years relent, shall be.

9 Is it worth a tear, is it worth an hour,  
10 To think of things that are well outworn?  
11 Of fruitless husk and fugitive flower,  
12 The dream foregone and the deed forborne?  
13 Though joy be done with and grief be vain,  
14 Time shall not sever us wholly in twain;  
15 Earth is not spoilt for a single shower;  
16 But the rain has ruined the ungrown corn.

17 It will grow not again, this fruit of my heart,  
18 Smitten with sunbeams, ruined with rain.  
19 The singing seasons divide and depart,  
20 Winter and summer depart in twain.  
21 It will grow not again, it is ruined at root,  
22 The bloodlike blossom, the dull red fruit;  
23 Though the heart yet sickens, the lips yet smart,  
24 With sullen savour of poisonous pain.

25 I have given no man of my fruit to eat;  
26 I trod the grapes, I have drunken the wine.  
27 Had you eaten and drunken and found it sweet,  
28 This wild new growth of the corn and vine,  
29 This wine and bread without lees or leaven,  
30 We had grown as gods, as the gods in heaven,  
31 Souls fair to look upon, goodly to greet,

32 One splendid spirit, your soul and mine.  
33 In the change of years, in the coil of things,  
34 In the clamour and rumour of life to be,  
35 We, drinking love at the furthest springs,  
36 Covered with love as a covering tree,  
37 We had grown as gods, as the gods above,  
38 Filled from the heart to the lips with love,  
39 Held fast in his hands, clothed warm with his wings,  
40 O love, my love, had you loved but me!

41 We had stood as the sure stars stand, and moved  
42 As the moon moves, loving the world; and seen  
43 Grief collapse as a thing disproved,  
44 Death consume as a thing unclean.  
45 Twain halves of a perfect heart, made fast  
46 Soul to soul while the years fell past;  
47 Had you loved me once, as you have not loved;  
48 Had the chance been with us that has not been.

49 I have put my days and dreams out of mind,  
50 Days that are over, dreams that are done.  
51 Though we seek life through, we shall surely find  
52 There is none of them clear to us now, not one.  
53 But clear are these things; the grass and the sand,  
54 Where, sure as the eyes reach, ever at hand,  
55 With lips wide open and face burnt blind,  
56 The strong sea-daisies feast on the sun.

57 The low downs lean to the sea; the stream,  
58 One loose thin pulseless tremulous vein,  
59 Rapid and vivid and dumb as a dream,  
60 Works downward, sick of the sun and the rain;  
61 No wind is rough with the rank rare flowers;  
62 The sweet sea, mother of loves and hours,  
63 Shudders and shines as the grey winds gleam,

64 Turning her smile to a fugitive pain.  
65 Mother of loves that are swift to fade,  
66 Mother of mutable winds and hours.  
67 A barren mother, a mother-maid,  
68 Cold and clean as her faint salt flowers.  
69 I would we twain were even as she,  
70 Lost in the night and the light of the sea,  
71 Where faint sounds falter and wan beams wade,  
72 Break, and are broken, and shed into showers.

73 The loves and hours of the life of a man,  
74 They are swift and sad, being born of the sea.  
75 Hours that rejoice and regret for a span,  
76 Born with a man's breath, mortal as he;  
77 Loves that are lost ere they come to birth,  
78 Weeds of the wave, without fruit upon earth.  
79 I lose what I long for, save what I can,  
80 My love, my love, and no love for me!

81 It is not much that a man can save  
82 On the sands of life, in the straits of time,  
83 Who swims in sight of the great third wave  
84 That never a swimmer shall cross or climb.  
85 Some waif washed up with the strays and spars  
86 That ebb-tide shows to the shore and the stars;  
87 Weed from the water, grass from a grave,  
88 A broken blossom, a ruined rhyme.

89 There will no man do for your sake, I think,  
90 What I would have done for the least word said.  
91 I had wrung life dry for your lips to drink,  
92 Broken it up for your daily bread:  
93 Body for body and blood for blood,  
94 As the flow of the full sea risen to flood  
95 That yearns and trembles before it sink,

96 I had given, and lain down for you, glad and dead.

97 Yea, hope at highest and all her fruit,

98 And time at fullest and all his dower,

99 I had given you surely, and life to boot,

100 Were we once made one for a single hour.

101 But now, you are twain, you are cloven apart,

102 Flesh of his flesh, but heart of my heart;

103 And deep in one is the bitter root,

104 And sweet for one is the lifelong flower.

105 To have died if you cared I should die for you, clung

106 To my life if you bade me, played my part

107 As it pleased you -- these were the thoughts that stung,

108 The dreams that smote with a keener dart

109 Than shafts of love or arrows of death;

110 These were but as fire is, dust, or breath,

111 Or poisonous foam on the tender tongue

112 Of the little snakes that eat my heart.

113 I wish we were dead together to-day,

114 Lost sight of, hidden away out of sight,

115 Clasped and clothed in the cloven clay,

116 Out of the world's way, out of the light,

117 Out of the ages of worldly weather,

118 Forgotten of all men altogether,

119 As the world's first dead, taken wholly away,

120 Made one with death, filled full of the night.

121 How we should slumber, how we should sleep,

122 Far in the dark with the dreams and the dews!

123 And dreaming, grow to each other, and weep,

124 Laugh low, live softly, murmur and muse;

125 Yea, and it may be, struck through by the dream,

126 Feel the dust quicken and quiver, and seem

127 Alive as of old to the lips, and leap

128 Spirit to spirit as lovers use.  
129 Sick dreams and sad of a dull delight;  
130 For what shall it profit when men are dead  
131 To have dreamed, to have loved with the whole soul's might,  
132 To have looked for day when the day was fled?  
133 Let come what will, there is one thing worth,  
134 To have had fair love in the life upon earth:  
135 To have held love safe till the day grew night,  
136 While skies had colour and lips were red.  
  
137 Would I lose you now? would I take you then,  
138 If I lose you now that my heart has need?  
139 And come what may after death to men,  
140 What thing worth this will the dead years breed?  
141 Lose life, lose all; but at least I know,  
142 O sweet life's love, having loved you so,  
143 Had I reached you on earth, I should lose not again,  
144 In death nor life, nor in dream or deed.  
  
145 Yea, I know this well: were you once sealed mine,  
146 Mine in the blood's beat, mine in the breath,  
147 Mixed into me as honey in wine,  
148 Not time, that sayeth and gainsayeth,  
149 Nor all strong things had severed us then;  
150 Not wrath of gods, nor wisdom of men,  
151 Nor all things earthly, nor all divine,  
152 Nor joy nor sorrow, nor life nor death.  
  
153 I had grown pure as the dawn and the dew,  
154 You had grown strong as the sun or the sea.  
155 But none shall triumph a whole life through:  
156 For death is one, and the fates are three.  
157 At the door of life, by the gate of breath,  
158 There are worse things waiting for men than death;  
159 Death could not sever my soul and you,

160 As these have severed your soul from me.  
161 You have chosen and clung to the chance they sent you,  
162 Life sweet as perfume and pure as prayer.  
163 But will it not one day in heaven repent you?  
164 Will they solace you wholly, the days that were?  
165 Will you lift up your eyes between sadness and bliss,  
166 Meet mine, and see where the great love is,  
167 And tremble and turn and be changed? Content you;  
168 The gate is strait; I shall not be there.

169 But you, had you chosen, had you stretched hand,  
170 Had you seen good such a thing were done,  
171 I too might have stood with the souls that stand  
172 In the sun's sight, clothed with the light of the sun;  
173 But who now on earth need care how I live?  
174 Have the high gods anything left to give,  
175 Save dust and laurels and gold and sand?  
176 Which gifts are goodly; but I will none.

177 O all fair lovers about the world,  
178 There is none of you, none, that shall comfort me.  
179 My thoughts are as dead things, wrecked and whirled  
180 Round and round in a gulf of the sea;  
181 And still, through the sound and the straining stream,  
182 Through the coil and chafe, they gleam in a dream,  
183 The bright fine lips so cruelly curled,  
184 And strange swift eyes where the soul sits free.

185 Free, without pity, withheld from woe,  
186 Ignorant; fair as the eyes are fair.  
187 Would I have you change now, change at a blow,  
188 Startled and stricken, awake and aware?  
189 Yea, if I could, would I have you see  
190 My very love of you filling me,  
191 And know my soul to the quick, as I know

192 The likeness and look of your throat and hair?

193 I shall not change you. Nay, though I might,

194 Would I change my sweet one love with a word?

195 I had rather your hair should change in a night,

196 Clear now as the plume of a black bright bird;

197 Your face fail suddenly, cease, turn grey,

198 Die as a leaf that dies in a day.

199 I will keep my soul in a place out of sight,

200 Far off, where the pulse of it is not heard.

201 Far off it walks, in a bleak blown space,

202 Full of the sound of the sorrow of years.

203 I have woven a veil for the weeping face,

204 Whose lips have drunken the wine of tears;

205 I have found a way for the failing feet,

206 A place for slumber and sorrow to meet;

207 There is no rumour about the place,

208 Nor light, nor any that sees or hears.

209 I have hidden my soul out of sight, and said

210 "Let none take pity upon thee, none

211 Comfort thy crying: for lo, thou art dead,

212 Lie still now, safe out of sight of the sun.

213 Have I not built thee a grave, and wrought

214 Thy grave-clothes on thee of grievous thought,

215 With soft spun verses and tears unshed,

216 And sweet light visions of things undone?

217 "I have given thee garments and balm and myrrh,

218 And gold, and beautiful burial things.

219 But thou, be at peace now, make no stir;

220 Is not thy grave as a royal king's?

221 Fret not thyself though the end were sore;

222 Sleep, be patient, vex me no more.

223 Sleep; what hast thou to do with her?

224 The eyes that weep, with the mouth that sings?"

225 Where the dead red leaves of the years lie rotten,

226 The cold old crimes and the deeds thrown by,

227 The misconceived and the misbegotten,

228 I would find a sin to do ere I die,

229 Sure to dissolve and destroy me all through,

230 That would set you higher in heaven, serve you

231 And leave you happy, when clean forgotten,

232 As a dead man out of mind, am I.

233 Your lithe hands draw me, your face burns through me,

234 I am swift to follow you, keen to see;

235 But love lacks might to redeem or undo me;

236 As I have been, I know I shall surely be;

237 "What should such fellows as I do?" Nay,

238 My part were worse if I chose to play;

239 For the worst is this after all; if they knew me,

240 Not a soul upon earth would pity me.

241 And I play not for pity of these; but you,

242 If you saw with your soul what man am I,

243 You would praise me at least that my soul all through

244 Clove to you, loathing the lives that lie;

245 The souls and lips that are bought and sold,

246 The smiles of silver and kisses of gold,

247 The lapdog loves that whine as they chew,

248 The little lovers that curse and cry.

249 There are fairer women, I hear; that may be;

250 But I, that I love you and find you fair,

251 Who are more than fair in my eyes if they be,

252 Do the high gods know or the great gods care?

253 Though the swords in my heart for one were seven,

254 Should the iron hollow of doubtful heaven,

255 That knows not itself whether night-time or day be,

256 Reverberate words and a foolish prayer?

257 I will go back to the great sweet mother,

258 Mother and lover of men, the sea.

259 I will go down to her, I and none other,

260 Close with her, kiss her and mix her with me;

261 Cling to her, strive with her, hold her fast:

262 O fair white mother, in days long past

263 Born without sister, born without brother,

264 Set free my soul as thy soul is free.

265 O fair green-girdled mother of mine,

266 Sea, that art clothed with the sun and the rain,

267 Thy sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,

268 Thy large embraces are keen like pain.

269 Save me and hide me with all thy waves,

270 Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,

271 Those pure cold populous graves of thine

272 Wrought without hand in a world without stain.

273 I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,

274 Change as the winds change, veer in the tide;

275 My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,

276 I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside;

277 Sleep, and not know if she be, if she were,

278 Filled full with life to the eyes and hair,

279 As a rose is fulfilled to the roseleaf tips

280 With splendid summer and perfume and pride.

281 This woven raiment of nights and days,

282 Were it once cast off and unwound from me,

283 Naked and glad would I walk in thy ways,

284 Alive and aware of thy ways and thee;

285 Clear of the whole world, hidden at home,

286 Clothed with the green and crowned with the foam,

287 A pulse of the life of thy straits and bays,

288 A vein in the heart of the streams of the sea.

289 Fair mother, fed with the lives of men,  
290 Thou art subtle and cruel of heart, men say.  
291 Thou hast taken, and shalt not render again;  
292 Thou art full of thy dead, and cold as they.  
293 But death is the worst that comes of thee;  
294 Thou art fed with our dead, O mother, O sea,  
295 But when hast thou fed on our hearts? or when,  
296 Having given us love, hast thou taken away?

297 O tender-hearted, O perfect lover,  
298 Thy lips are bitter, and sweet thine heart.  
299 The hopes that hurt and the dreams that hover,  
300 Shall they not vanish away and apart?  
301 But thou, thou art sure, thou art older than earth;  
302 Thou art strong for death and fruitful of birth;  
303 Thy depths conceal and thy gulfs discover;  
304 From the first thou wert; in the end thou art.

305 And grief shall endure not for ever, I know.  
306 As things that are not shall these things be;  
307 We shall live through seasons of sun and of snow,  
308 And none be grievous as this to me.  
309 We shall hear, as one in a trance that hears,  
310 The sound of time, the rhyme of the years;  
311 Wrecked hope and passionate pain will grow  
312 As tender things of a spring-tide sea.

313 Sea-fruit that swings in the waves that hiss,  
314 Drowned gold and purple and royal rings.  
315 And all time past, was it all for this?  
316 Times unforgotten, and treasures of things?  
317 Swift years of liking and sweet long laughter,  
318 That wist not well of the years thereafter  
319 Till love woke, smitten at heart by a kiss,

320 With lips that trembled and trailing wings?  
321 There lived a singer in France of old  
322 By the tideless dolorous midland sea.  
323 In a land of sand and ruin and gold  
324 There shone one woman, and none but she.  
325 And finding life for her love's sake fail,  
326 Being fain to see her, he bade set sail,  
327 Touched land, and saw her as life grew cold,  
328 And praised God, seeing; and so died he.  
  
329 Died, praising God for his gift and grace:  
330 For she bowed down to him weeping, and said  
331 "Live;" and her tears were shed on his face  
332 Or ever the life in his face was shed.  
333 The sharp tears fell through her hair, and stung  
334 Once, and her close lips touched him and clung  
335 Once, and grew one with his lips for a space;  
336 And so drew back, and the man was dead.  
  
337 O brother, the gods were good to you.  
338 Sleep, and be glad while the world endures.  
339 Be well content as the years wear through;  
340 Give thanks for life, and the loves and lures;  
341 Give thanks for life, O brother, and death,  
342 For the sweet last sound of her feet, her breath,  
343 For gifts she gave you, gracious and few,  
344 Tears and kisses, that lady of yours.  
  
345 Rest, and be glad of the gods; but I,  
346 How shall I praise them, or how take rest?  
347 There is not room under all the sky  
348 For me that know not of worst or best,  
349 Dream or desire of the days before,  
350 Sweet things or bitterness, any more.  
351 Love will not come to me now though I die,

352 As love came close to you, breast to breast.

353 I shall never be friends again with roses;

354 I shall loathe sweet tunes, where a note grown strong

355 Relents and recoils, and climbs and closes,

356 As a wave of the sea turned back by song.

357 There are sounds where the soul's delight takes fire,

358 Face to face with its own desire;

359 A delight that rebels, a desire that reposes;

360 I shall hate sweet music my whole life long.

361 The pulse of war and passion of wonder,

362 The heavens that murmur, the sounds that shine,

363 The stars that sing and the loves that thunder,

364 The music burning at heart like wine,

365 An armed archangel whose hands raise up

366 All senses mixed in the spirit's cup

367 Till flesh and spirit are molten in sunder --

368 These things are over, and no more mine.

369 These were a part of the playing I heard

370 Once, ere my love and my heart were at strife;

371 Love that sings and hath wings as a bird,

372 Balm of the wound and heft of the knife.

373 Fairer than earth is the sea, and sleep

374 Than overwatching of eyes that weep,

375 Now time has done with his one sweet word,

376 The wine and leaven of lovely life.

377 I shall go my ways, tread out my measure,

378 Fill the days of my daily breath

379 With fugitive things not good to treasure,

380 Do as the world doth, say as it saith;

381 But if we had loved each other -- O sweet,

382 Had you felt, lying under the palms of your feet,

383 The heart of my heart, beating harder with pleasure

384 To feel you tread it to dust and death --

385 Ah, had I not taken my life up and given

386 All that life gives and the years let go,

387 The wine and honey, the balm and leaven,

388 The dreams reared high and the hopes brought low?

389 Come life, come death, not a word be said;

390 Should I lose you living, and vex you dead?

391 I never shall tell you on earth; and in heaven,

392 If I cry to you then, will you hear or know?