Unrequited Love and Unrealized Dominants

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At the beginning of this century, Paul Mies observed that a number of Brahms's *Lieder* end with plagal cadences and ascending melodies, and that together these devices project a sad, yearning mood.[1] The plagal cadence was used with increasing frequency by many nineteenth-century composers to conclude both songs and instrumental pieces, and Leonard Meyer attributes this practice to the cadence's aesthetic quality, stating that: "Ideologically, [plagal cadences] were consonant with the Romantic valuing of openness, because they create less decisive closure than authentic cadences."[2] The choice of this type of cadence also reflects nineteenth-century composers' interests in substitutions of the subdominant for the dominant at important structural points and as a primary tonal goal. In recent literature, this wider application of the subdominant has been interpreted as a progressive stylistic trait, and in some cases, including the *Lieder* of Wolf and Tchaikovsky, the use of the subdominant has been tied to programs or texts.[3] Although Brahms's employment of plagal cadences has not gone without notice,

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[1] *Stilmomente und Ausdrucksstilformen im Brahms'schen Lied* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1923), 104-8.

[2] *Style and Music: Theory, History and Ideology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 285.

[3] Deborah J. Stein, *Hugo Wolf's Lieder and Extensions of Tonality* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985); Joseph Kraus, "Love Forever Lost: Musical Expression and the Plagal Domain in Two Songs from Tchaikovsky's *Six Romances*, Op. 28," paper read at the Arnold Schoenberg Institute/Music Theory Society of New York State, Joint Meeting, Columbia University, 1991.

few scholars have attempted to relate his use of the subdominant to extra-musical ideas. Nevertheless, the association of plagal cadences and songs of longing, which Mies observed, is quite clear.

The specific cadences that Mies quotes to support his interpretation do not all function in the same manner, and in some cases the subdominant chord is not the main chord of the cadence; instead, it functions as a passing or embellishing chord, delaying the tonic.[4] In most of the other cases, a plagal cadence is used in conjunction with a perfect authentic cadence. The plagal cadence either follows the structural close of the song—that is, it concludes the coda—or it occurs at the end of the voice's melody and the piano provides the structural close.[5] These procedures do not differ from those of many contemporary composers, and are also evident in Brahms's instrumental pieces. By contrast, some of his songs employ plagal cadences in a more innovative manner, using them as substitutes for an expected final authentic cadence. In these pieces, a strong sense of closure is evaded not only by the choice of cadence, but also by an ascending melody, which does not end on the tonic. These weaker concluding cadences displace the expected structural close of the entire piece, and, consequently, their influence is evident at even the deepest structural levels.

During the past two decades, the traditional judgment of Brahms as a conservative has been gradually negated. For the most part, the new, more appreciative interpretation has

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[4]See, for example "An die Nachtigall" (Op. 46, no. 4). Meyer (p. 286) quotes a somewhat similar example of this practice in Chopin's Fantasie in F minor/A♭ major, Op. 49.

[5]The first case is represented by "Du sprichst, daß ich mich täuschte" (Op. 32, no. 6) and "Mädchenlied" (Op. 85, no. 3), and the second by "Das Mädchen spricht" (Op. 107, no. 3).

focused on the composer's treatment of motives,[6] and few studies have seriously questioned Brahms's conventional association with established forms and genres rather than with experimentation with unusual tonal structures. Nevertheless, the *Lieder* in which a plagal cadence replaces the expected final authentic cadence demonstrate that Brahms treated conventional structures with great flexibility. In these pieces, a normal structural close is subverted by the suppression of the expected dominant at the final cadence. Yet all of these songs use conventional forms, and can be divided into two categories according to form: the first includes strophic variation songs, and the second binary and ternary songs. Neither group is associated with a discrete compositional period, and the songs are characterized by varying degrees of harmonic complexity and success in handling of the tonal language.

In this article, I will focus on three songs that exemplify these unusual tonal structures. "Kein Haus, keine Heimat" (Op. 94, no. 5) represents the strophic type, while "In Waldeseinsamkeit" (Op. 85, no. 6) and "Es schauen die Blumen" (Op. 96, no. 3) represent the binary and ternary group. In all three songs, the closing ascending melodies and plagal cadences contribute to the sensitive portrayal of the despondent protagonist, and, in general, all three are noteworthy for their vivid and detailed depiction of the texts. These text-music relationships range from foreground word painting to motivic transformations, some of which I will note during the respective analyses.

Strophic Variation Songs

For Brahms, strophic variation was an ideal song form, and his student Gustav Jenner demonstrates the richness of this approach by describing some of the many ways in which an

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[6]See, for example, Walter Frisch *Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) and Kevin Korsyn, "Brahms Research and Aesthetic Ideology," *Music Analysis* 12/1 (March 1993):89-93.

initial stanza of music can be varied.[7] In particular, Jenner notes that Brahms may rewrite the beginning or the end of a stanza, thus allowing stanzas to end with different cadences and in keys other than the tonic. In most of Brahms's songs, including "Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer" (Op. 105, no. 2), the structural close takes places in the final stanza. This is such a common event that a perfect authentic cadence at the end of an initial stanza is rarely assumed to be the structural close of the song. "Kein Haus, keine Heimat," however, questions this assumption: its first stanza includes a structural dominant, but its second replaces this chord with the subdominant, closing without an authentic cadence. Two of Brahms's earliest songs, "Mondnacht" (WoO 21) and "In der Fremde" (Op. 3, no. 5) similarly challenge strophic conventions; in both songs, the final stanzas—in which the structural dominant is expected to appear—avoid a convincing structural cadence.

Brahms wrote "Kein Haus, keine Heimat" in 1883 or 1884. He excerpted the text from Friedrich Halm's *In der Südesee*, a drama describing the survivors of a shipwreck, one of whom is a dispirited black man who volunteers to die so that the others will have enough water.[8] Ironically, one of the people his death saves is a white girl who had earlier rejected his friendship by saying, "Nein, du bist schwarz." The two

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[7]Gustav Jenner, *Johannes Brahms als Mensch, Lehrer und Künstler: Studien und Erlebnisse* (Marburg in Hessen: N.G. Elwert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1905; 2d ed. 1930; reprint, Munich: Wollenweber, 1989), 30-31.

[8]Halm was a pseudonym for Eligius von Münch-Bellinghausen (1806-71), a public official. Brahms set four of his poems around the same time as writing "Kein Haus" (1883-84). They are: "Steig auf, geliebter Schatten" (Op. 94, no. 2); "Bei dir sind meine Gedanken" (Op. 95, no. 2); "Beim Abschied" (Op. 95, no. 3); and "Der Jäger" (Op. 95, no. 4). In a letter to Brahms, Theodor Billroth describes the two Halm poems in Op. 94 as melancholy and bitter, and he prefers both the poem and music of "Steig auf" to that of "Kein Haus." Letter of August 6, 1884. *Billroth und Brahms im Briefwechsel*, ed. Otto Gottlieb-Billroth (Urban & Schwarzenberg, 1935), 362.

stanzas that Brahms set belong to this man's song—his last utterance before killing himself.[9] Brahms aptly depicted the bleakness of this character's world view by a disjunct, unornamented melodic line, which contains little rhythmic variation, and by a sparse, syncopated accompaniment. As Craig Bell states, the song is "brutally terse."[10]

The song is in strophic variation form, with the second stanza closely following the first. Both stanzas begin with the same triadic melody, and these arch-shaped segments contrast with the descending motion of the second phrases. These phrases begin on $\hat{8}$, but neither includes a complete descent to $\hat{1}$. In the first stanza the lower octave is reached, but G ($\hat{4}$) is omitted. By contrast, this note is included in the second stanza, but the descent does not complete the octave. After reaching F in m. 18, the melody returns to A. Rising gestures at the end of a phrase are often associated with a question, and here the ascent alludes to the man's quest for the meaning of his existence.

Just as the man interprets his situation as futile, so too the harmonic and melodic structure is stagnant, not venturing much beyond the tonic triad. This lack of mobility is ultimately suggested by the absence of a decisive authentic cadence in the concluding stanza. The first stanza ends with an authentic cadence, and because stanza 2 repeats so much of stanza 1, the listener expects it to conclude with a similar cadence. The melody and harmony, however, begin to change with the upbeat to m. 18, and the expected final dominant chord is replaced by a subdominant, which effects a plagal cadence.

The unrealized dominant drastically affects the song's tonal structure. In many pieces, a closing plagal cadence is associated with a coda, but the second stanza of this song does

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[9]The texts of the three songs analyzed in this article (as well as translations) are given in the appendix.

[10]*The Lieder of Brahms* (Darley: The Grain-Aig Press, 1979), 112.

not behave as though the structural closure has already occurred, and a closing authentic cadence is expected up until the very last measures. As Example 1 demonstrates, the song falls into two parts: the first ends with an authentic cadence, while the second ends with a plagal cadence. Owing both to the second stanza's substitution of IV for V and to the melodic ascent to $\hat{5}$, the song does not have a structural close.

Lacking both the supertonic and leading-tone approach to the tonic, a plagal cadence does not provide as strong a conclusion as would a perfect authentic cadence. In this song, the weaker cadence emphasizes the man's final unanswered question, which is also suggested by the rising melodic conclusion.[11] In order to compensate partially for this weaker close, the piano concludes with its highest and loudest notes, as well as a turn to the parallel major. These gestures, combined with the syncopation of the last chords, also serve to emphasize the man's pain and frustration as he questions his place in the world.

"Kein Haus" is quite an unusual song, and Max Friedländer states that Brahms used it as an experiment in dramatic writing.[12] While Friedländer was referring to the melodic structure, the song's surprising final cadence and tonal structure are also quite unconventional. None of Brahms's other strophic variation songs conclude with a similar substitution of cadences that affects the large-scale tonal structure. The unusual quality of this small song is perhaps best grasped when it is compared with "Du sprichst, daß ich mich täuschte" (Op. 32, no. 6). Like "Kein Haus," this song is in strophic variation form and its last stanza

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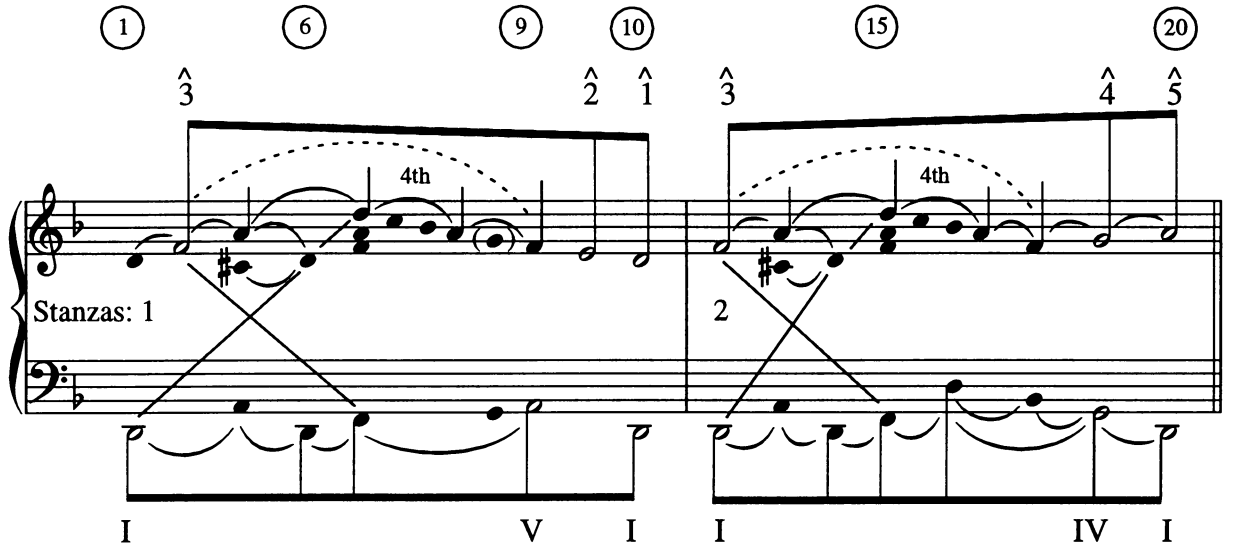
[11]In his analysis of "Das Mädchen spricht" (Op. 107, no. 3), Schenker also associates a plagal cadence and an ascending melody with a question. "Kritik: Johannes Brahms. Fünf Lieder für eine Singstimme mit Pianoforte, Op. 107," *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* 22/40 (October 1891):515.

[12]*Brahms Lieder*, trans. C. Leonard Leese (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), 159.

Example 1. Reduction of "Kein Haus, keine Heimat"



concludes with a plagal cadence. Unlike "Kein Haus," however, "Du sprichst" has a structural close, and the last stanza clearly functions as a coda.

The text of the C-minor "Du sprichst" tells of a person attempting to cope with the rejection of a loved one.[13] It comprises three stanzas, all of which end with an anguished plea. Each stanza begins with new music, but stanzas 1 and 2 end with the same phrase,[14] and a variation of this phrase ends stanza 3. Whereas stanzas 1 and 2 conclude with perfect authentic cadences, stanza 3 concludes with a plagal cadence that is related to the text. At the end of the first two stanzas, the protagonist claims that he was loved, and in stanza 2 he demands that the woman confess that she had loved him (see Table 1). At the end of stanza 3, however, the character emphatically declares that the woman should admit she loved him, and then leave him alone. Although it may be possible to read this couplet as being stronger than the final couplets of the preceding stanzas, Brahms's music suggests that he read it as being less forceful.[15]

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[13]The gender of the protagonist in this song is not clear. Nevertheless, it is traditionally viewed as being a man, in part because the other songs from this cycle also have a male protagonist. For instance, Karl Geiringer suggests that, in each text of Op. 32, "In spite of all his efforts to free himself from his beloved, in the end the man unconditionally admits her sovereignty." *Brahms: His Life and Work*, 3d ed. (New York: Da Capo, 1982), 270-71.

[14]The only change in the conclusion of stanza 2 occurs in m. 25, where the *forte* indication appears in the vocal line as well as in the piano part.

[15]The last two lines of each stanza of "Du sprichst" function as a type of refrain. In this song, the refrain is closely connected to the main body of the stanza, but in a number of other songs the refrain is a clearly defined separate section, and it often begins the song as well as ends it. The circularity of this type of structure (often reinforced by beginning and ending the song on the same note) is another way in which Brahms conveys the idea of ongoing turmoil. By repeating the opening phrases at the end, he suggests that the protagonists have not overcome their problem, but rather remain in the same place where they began. In "Mädchenlied" (Op. 85, no. 3) and "Vom Strande" (Op. 69, no. 6), this feeling is promoted by the avoidance of an authentic cadence at the end of the refrains.

Table 1. Last lines of each stanza of "Du sprichst"[16]

Stanza 1	Stanza 2	Stanza 3
Ich weiß ja doch, du liebtest, Allein du liebst nicht mehr! (I know you were in love, but you are no longer in love!)	Du liebtest mich, bekenn es, Allein du liebst nicht mehr! (You loved me, confess it, but you are no longer in love.)	Gesteh nur, daß du liebtest, Und liebe mich nicht mehr! (Just admit that you were in love, and love me no longer.)

[16]Translations based on those by Stanley Appelbaum, *Johannes Brahms: Complete Songs for Solo Voice and Piano*, Series I (New York: Dover, 1979).

The first two stanzas end with a fourth-motive repeated in stretto, conveying the protagonist's agitation, followed by a perfect authentic cadence. Stanza 3, by comparison, ends without these urgent imitative lines. While the other two stanzas conclude with a demanding *forte*, the *forte* indications on "liebe" in stanza 3 are immediately followed by a *decrescendo*, which, combined with the melodic pattern, produce a moaning sound (mm. 39 and 40).[17] While these motives and dynamics suggest the man's pain and his reluctance to part with the woman—emotions further implied by the melody's ascending conclusion and the piano's unsettling rhythmic motives—they are less forceful than the closing gestures of the preceeding stanzas, suggesting that the character at least comprehends the woman's rejection.[18] Similarly, the harmonies of this final stanza allude to these confused emotions. After the perfect authentic close of stanza 2, stanza 3 continues the tonic (C) pedal point of the preceding interlude for four measures and then uses a sequence suggesting F minor and B♭ minor (mm. 35–38). Stanzas 1 and 2 include a similar sequence to approach the authentic cadence, but in stanza 3, instead of progressing to the dominant, the sequence leads directly to the tonic, which is retained as a pedal point until the end of the song. In this way, the tonic, reached at the end of stanza 2, is prolonged throughout stanza 3 by its lower neighbor, B♭.

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[17]At the end of stanzas 1 and 2, the dynamic level quickly fades to *piano* for the beginning of the following stanza. In the printed editions of this song, stanza 3 ends *forte*. However, the autograph, which is housed at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna, includes a diminuendo after the *forte* marking in m. 43. (This autograph was not used for the collected edition of Brahms's works.)

[18]This rhythmic pattern is derived from the piano's uneasy duplet-triplet pattern of mm. 3-4. It appears in the interludes and first phrases of stanzas 2 and 3, and it is varied during the final measures of stanza 3 (mm. 41-43). In this last passage, the pattern is spread across three measures, and the augmented triplet figure delays the resolution to the tonic until the very last note.

The repetition of the tonic at the beginning of the third stanza suggests that a coda has already begun, and that the cadence at the end of stanza 2 is the structural close of the song. This authentic cadence occurs at the end of Brahms's most dramatic stanza, in which the protagonist recalls the kisses of his sweetheart and demands that she admit she had loved him. By contrast, the music for stanza 3, with its prolongation of the tonic (without a decisive, authentic cadence) and its ascending melodic conclusion, suggests the decisive action of the narrative (the man's realization that the woman no longer loves him) has already taken place. This tonal structure is not nearly as startling as that of "Kein Haus" because, from its very first notes, the third stanza behaves like a coda. By contrast, the last stanza of the later song begins like the first, and there is no hint that the preceding authentic cadence is the structural close of the piece.

There are only two other strophic variation songs by Brahms that lack normal structural closes, "Mondnacht" (WoO 21) and "In der Fremde" (Op. 3, no. 5), but neither has exactly the same sort of clear-cut replacement of the dominant by the subdominant as "Du sprichst" and "Kein Haus;" instead, both completely avoid a structural dominant. These song are among Brahms's earliest (dating from 1852-53), and they are more problematic than the later ones. In "Mondnacht," the first and second stanzas are set to the same music. This strophe concludes with an authentic cadence, but it is not accompanied by a structural descent. The following strophe modulates away from the tonic, returning to it via a ii^{6}_{5}. This chord stands in place of a structural dominant, and it is followed by a tonic pedal point. "In der Fremde" comprises two stanzas; the first ends with a cadence in the relative major, while the second ends with a tonic pedal point. This pedal is preceded by an authentic cadence, but it is weakly articulated and its melody only descends to $\hat{3}$. Moreover, it comes too soon after a tonicization of the mediant to be heard as a convincing structural close. As in "Mondnacht," the pedal partially

compensates for the absence of a structural dominant and a descent to $\hat{1}$. Both songs are settings of Eichendorff poems permeated by the Romantic ideal of man's longing to be one with nature. In both songs, the absence of a structural close can be associated with Brahms's attempt to convey the protagonists' endless yearning. Nevertheless, these concluding passages are quite clumsy, and they point to problems in Brahms's early compositional technique. By comparison, there is nothing clumsy about the structure of "Kein Haus," where the overtly simple foreground conceals a tonal structure that deviates from normal practices in a surprising manner.

Binary and Ternary Songs

The other songs that evade conventional structural closure are in binary and ternary forms, and their tonal structures can best be understood as variants of Schenker's interruption model. The two songs representing this group are "In Waldeseinsamkeit" and "Es schauen die Blumen." Written in 1878 and 1884, these songs share a number of characteristics: both are in B, they have similar melodic motives, and both end with plagal cadences accompanied by an ascending tonic triad ending on $\hat{5}$.[19] These concluding cadences affect the large-scale tonal structures in similar ways. In both songs, the programmatic interpretation of the final cadence—as well as of the tonal structure—is not immediately apparent, and therefore I will begin each analysis with a discussion of the types of foreground text-music relationships that support my reading of the deeper levels.

The text of "In Waldeseinsamkeit" is a three-stanza poem by Karl Lemcke. The first stanza depicts a couple in a forest, the second reveals that one member of the pair is troubled, and the third implies that this person's longings are

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[19]A number of commentators have noted the similar key, motives, and conclusions of these songs, including Friedländer (p. 165) and Mies (p. 79).

not satisfied. Brahms uses a variety of methods to depict the troubled character, including rhythmic and harmonic tension, and the main groups of motives are both associated with sadness: the first is characterized by the neighbor motion $\hat{5}$-$\flat\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$, and the second includes various types of descending tetrachords.

"In Waldeseinsamkeit" is in ternary form: the first and last stanzas begin in a similar manner, while the second is more turbulent, with contrasting harmonies and rhythms. All three stanzas have in common the two recurring groups of motives. The melody of the first stanza begins with a rising sixth-descending third motive that is transformed and modified to include a semitone neighbor motion (Example 2). The bass immediately transposes this new motive to begin on B, and the voice imitates this transposition (this is marked by asterisks in Example 2). In this version of the motive, the neighbor motion is on scale degrees $\hat{5}$-$\flat\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ (F♯-G-F♯). As Carl Schachter has observed, this type of semitone neighbor motion around $\hat{5}$ has frequently been associated with sadness, in part because of the final, descending semitone.[20] In its first appearance in "In Waldeseinsamkeit," this motive coincides with the word "Sehnsucht," which means yearning. In stanza 2, it is heard in the inner voice of mm. 14-15, in the context of D major. These measures fall at the midpoint of the most active passage in the song; it is characterized by faster surface rhythms and a series of pungent suspensions that convey the protagonist's agitation. In stanza 3, the motive is expanded in the melody (mm. 27-29), and its last two notes (G-F♯) are recalled by the piano during the final cadence (mm. 30-31). All of these repetitions coincide with the description of a nightingale's song. In literature, this bird

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[20] "Motive and Text in Four Schubert Songs," in *Aspects of Schenkerian Theory*, ed. David Beach (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 70.

is usually associated with unrequited love,[21] and the pairing of this image with the neighbor motive again suggests the yearning mood of the protagonist.

The character's unhappiness is also alluded to by the descending fourths that are repeated in the inner voices throughout the song. The first chromatic notes, in mm. 4 and 5, are part of a descending chromatic tetrachord (Example 2).[22] This traditional symbol of trouble or grief appears just as the voice enters, and, along with the bass's syncopations, it alludes to the uneasiness of the protagonist. The corresponding lines of text also convey this image: although the character sits at the feet of the loved one, it is the loneliness of the forest, and not its beauty, that is described.

During the unrest of stanza 2, the melody includes two embellished fourths (mm. 14-17, D_5-A_4 and $C\sharp_5$-$G\sharp_4$).[23] Both fourths are transpositions of the Phrygian tetrachord, a motive that has been frequently associated with grief.[24] Example 3 gives a reduction of stanza 1, revealing two other statements of this motive: it is prolonged through the stanza in the top voice ($D\sharp_5$-$A\sharp_4$), and it also occurs in the bass ($F\sharp_2$-$C\sharp_2$). Phrygian fourths appear in a number of other Brahms songs that also depict disconsolate protagonists, including "Kein Haus" (Example 1) and "Es schauen die Blumen."

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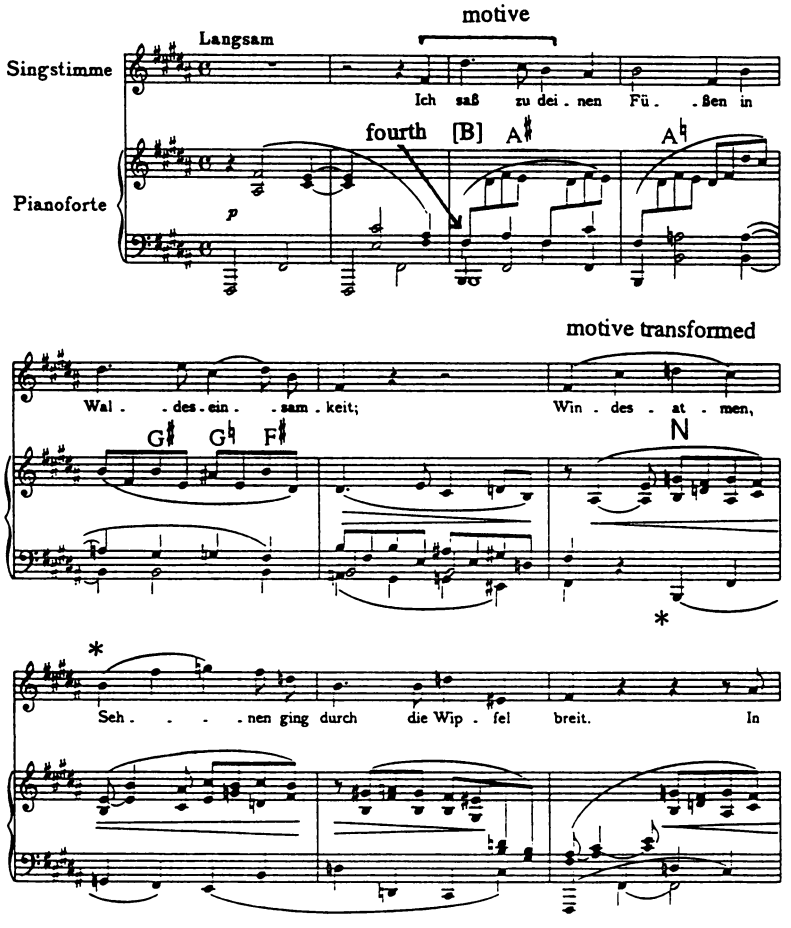
[21]Elaine Brody and Robert A. Fowkes, *The German Lied and its Poetry* (New York: New York University Press, 1971), 108.

[22]The first note of this fourth, B, is implied. The piano's imitation of the melody's initial $F\sharp$ to $D\sharp$ leap stands in place of the B, which is suggested by the preceding $A\sharp$. Two other fourths occur at the end of the first phrase—one in the tenor line, and the other in the bass (mm. 5-7).

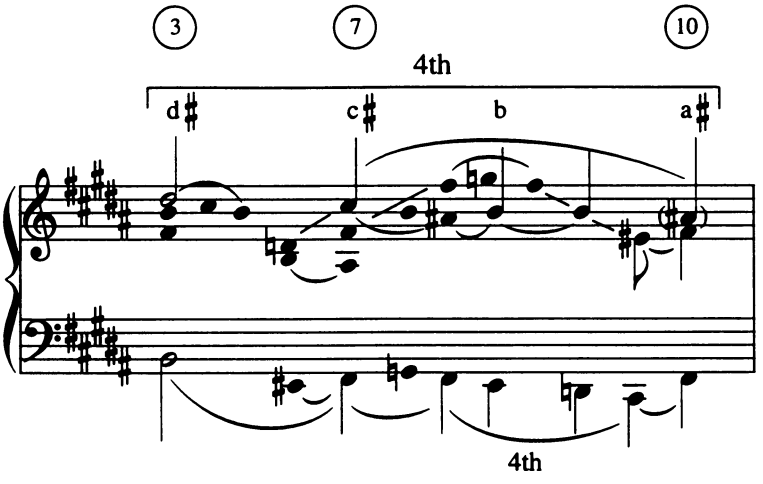
[23]This system of pitch designation is recommended by the Acoustical Society of America; C_4 = middle C.

[24]William Kimmel, "The Phrygian Inflection and the Appearances of Death in Music," *College Music Symposium* 20/2 (Fall 1980):42-76.

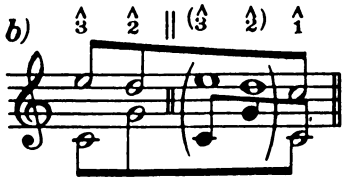
Example 2. "In Waldeseinsamkeit," measures 1-10



Example 3. Reduction of "In Waldeseinsamkeit," stanza 1



Example 4. Figure 21b from *Free Composition*



With its syncopations and chromatic motives, the first stanza of "In Waldeseinsamkeit" introduces the chromatic and rhythmic conflicts that come to the fore in the second.[25] By contrast, the third stanza is more relaxed and seems to suggest that the protagonist may have been quieted. Indeed, Max Harrison concludes that "the emotional modulations of the middle part contrast with the serene harmonies at the close."[26] The large-scale structure of the song, however, implies that the protagonist's deepest longings remain unfulfilled.

Like sonata-form movements, ternary pieces reduce to two parts at deep middleground level. Figure 21b from *Free Composition* (shown in Example 4) illustrates this structure.[27] The first section ends on the dominant with $\hat{2}$ in the upper voice. Schenker calls this point an interruption because the melody does not continue immediately to the tonic; rather, it appears to start over again, returning to the first note of the fundamental line. Once again, the piece proceeds to the dominant, but this time the structural line continues its descent to $\hat{1}$ as the dominant resolves to the tonic.

Example 5 gives a middleground reduction of "In Waldeseinsamkeit," and a comparison with Example 4 demonstrates the ways in which this song departs from conventional interruption structure. The dominant is reached at the end of stanza 1 and is prolonged until the end of stanza 2. At the beginning of stanza 3, the tonic is reestablished, and the structural line returns to $\hat{3}$. The last

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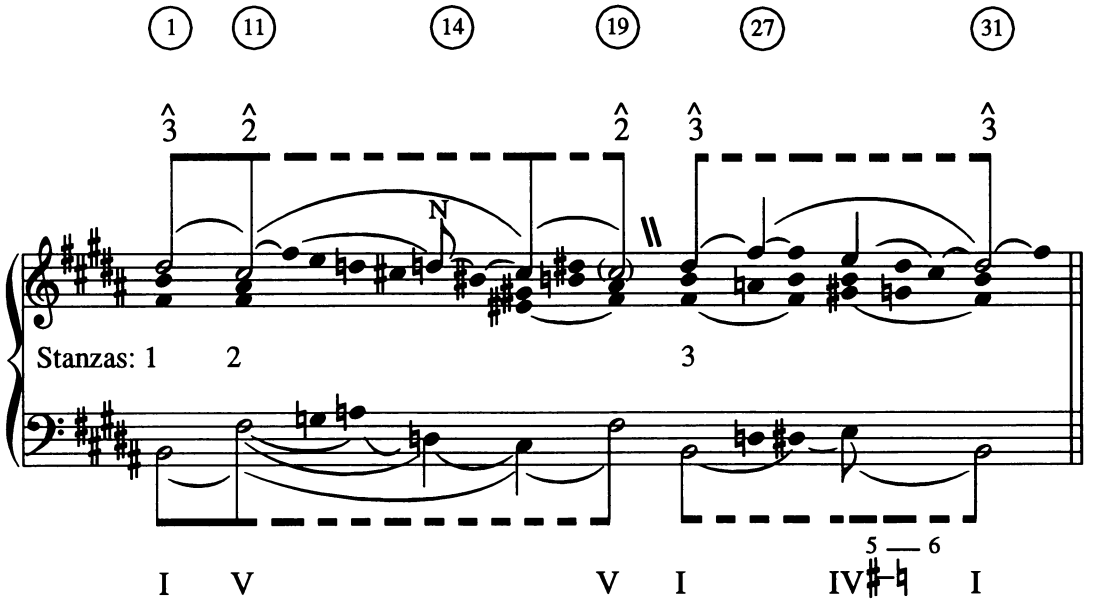
[25]In particular, the notes D♮ and G♮, which are included in the neighbor-note motives of mm. 7-8, anticipate the modulation to D major in stanza 2. These two chromatic notes are also prominent in the last phrase of stanza 3 (mm. 27-32).

[26]*The Lieder of Brahms* (New York: Praeger, 1972), 35. Similarly, Bell describes "Im Waldeseinsamkeit" as a "rapturous embrace of lovers in the hush of the twilight" (104).

[27]Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition (Der freie Satz)*, trans. and ed. Ernst Oster (New York: Longman, 1979), 36-37 and Fig. 21b.

Example 5. Reduction of "In Waldesamkeit"



section of a ternary piece usually includes an authentic cadence, but here the dominant does not return. It may have been possible for Brahms to harmonize the last measures of the melody with an authentic cadence, but instead he uses the subdominant, employing a minor inflection before moving to the tonic. As Meyer notes, this type of plagal formulation—proceeding from minor IV to major I—was the most favored during the nineteenth century,[28] and it occurs at the end of the quintessential Romantic work *Tristan and Isolde* (which, coincidentally, ends in the same key as this Brahms song). Lacking both a final structural dominant and a melodic descent to the tonic, "In Waldeseinsamkeit" does not have a normal structural close, and the resulting sense of openness or incompleteness conveys the wistful conclusion of the text, in which the *far-off* song of the nightingale symbolizes the protagonist's yearning.

Whereas "In Waldeseinsamkeit" is in ternary form, "Es schauen die Blumen" is in binary form. Its text, a one-stanza poem by Heine, is a much more artful piece of writing than the Lemcke text of the earlier song. The first three couplets are tightly unified by word repetitions and rhymes, but the fourth is rather different, as it does not use the repeated words "es," "zu," or "leuchtenden," and it changes the alliteration to emphasize harder consonants. These structural changes underscore the poem's ironic ending, when Heine reveals that the protagonist is not at all happy. One of Brahms's tasks in setting this text, then, is to capture the ironic conclusion.

Brahms imitates Heine's word repetitions, rhymes, and parallel construction of the first three couplets by setting each couplet to a variation of one four-measure phrase, which is similar to the opening melody of "In Waldeseinsamkeit" (mm. 7-10). This phrase comprises two two-measure segments, both based on the rising sixth-falling third motive that first appears in the piano figuration (m. 1), and these

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[28]Meyer, 288. The two other Brahms songs analyzed in the present article also use this formulation.

segments are linked by the piano's descending sixth (D_5-$F\sharp_4$), which is also an important motive. This phrase is repeated for the second couplet, but there are some changes: the tonic in m. 14 is approached via a ii^6 instead of a V^7 (perhaps in anticipation of the song's ending), and the raised third is introduced (m. 13) and retained throughout the rest of the song.[29] The third couplet begins with a varied repetition of the second segment of phrase 2, and it expands this segment by sequentially repeating its descending third until reaching $G\sharp_5$ (m. 18), the highest note of the song. This note underscores the word "meinem," which introduces the protagonist, but the climax of the song occurs on the next word, "Lieb," which coincides with the arrival of the dominant—the goal of the sequences.[30] It is only with this line of text that we become aware that Heine's poem is a love song, and Brahms not only emphasizes the importance of this disclosure by the harmonic drive and ascending pitch, but also by a phrase expansion. Whereas the preceding couplets each span four measures, the third reaches to six measures by drawing out and repeating the word "alle" (mm. 16-17), suggesting the all-encompassing nature of the protagonist's love.

Just as Heine separates the last couplet from the main part of the text, so, too, Brahms clearly sets off his last period. He repeats Heine's last couplet, creating a discrete section for it. After a rest, in m. 20, this section begins quietly, and the left

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[29]This change to the major third anticipates the unexpected ironic twist, in that Brahms uses the change in mode precisely opposite to what might be expected. (That is, from minor to major rather than from major to minor.) It should be noted, however, that Brahms did not always use B major for joyful songs, as "In Waldeseinsamkeit" and "Es träumte mir" (Op. 57, no. 3) demonstrate.

[30]William Horne notes that this climactic couplet is also emphasized by alliteration. The tendency toward "l" sounds is particularly marked here, making their absence in the final couplet even more noticeable. "Brahms' Heine-Lieder," in *Brahms als Liedkomponist*, ed. Peter Jost (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1992), 110.

hand has a new syncopated tonic pedal. Although the two phrases in this section begin with the descending third of the first two phrases, their second segments are different, as they continue to descend. In particular, the melodic line of the first phrase descends a sixth ($D\sharp_5$-$F\sharp_4$, mm. 21-24). Although this descending motive had appeared in the first two phrases, this is the first time that it spans an entire four-measure phrase in the melody.

Aside from the descending sixths, the song includes a number of descending fourths, some of which are derived from the larger sixth. The fourth B_4 to $F\sharp_4$ in mm. 8-9 is a transposition of the Phrygian tetrachord, and this motive appears in inner voices until the final couplet, when the fourths $D\sharp_5$ to $A\sharp_4$ and B_4 to $F\sharp_4$ appear in the melody. This transference to the melody coincides with Heine's ironic conclusion, when he reveals that the protagonist's love is not reciprocated.

The yearning of the protagonist is further emphasized by the concluding plagal cadence and ascending melody (which is anticipated by the piano in mm. 26-27). This ascent from B_4 to $F\sharp_5$ includes a passing $C\sharp_5$ that occurs over the subdominant (m. 28). Instead of using this chord, Brahms could have harmonized his melody with a cadential V^{6-5}_{4-3} (mm. 27-28), as shown in Example 6. (In this version, the $C\sharp_5$ would be a structural tone and would lead down to the tonic.) By contrast, Brahms's conclusion is less definitive, and it better portrays the mood of the text.

Like the ending of "In Waldeseinsamkeit," the final plagal cadence in this song influences the reading of its deep-level tonal structure. "Es schauen die Blumen" can best be understood in relation to Schenker's two-part form, which, like ternary pieces, is characterized by a deep-level interruption.[31] The graph in Example 7 shows that the first section ends with the exhilarating tonicization of the dominant

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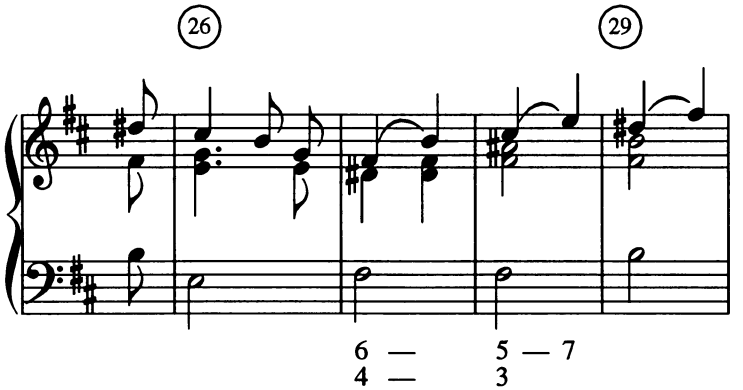
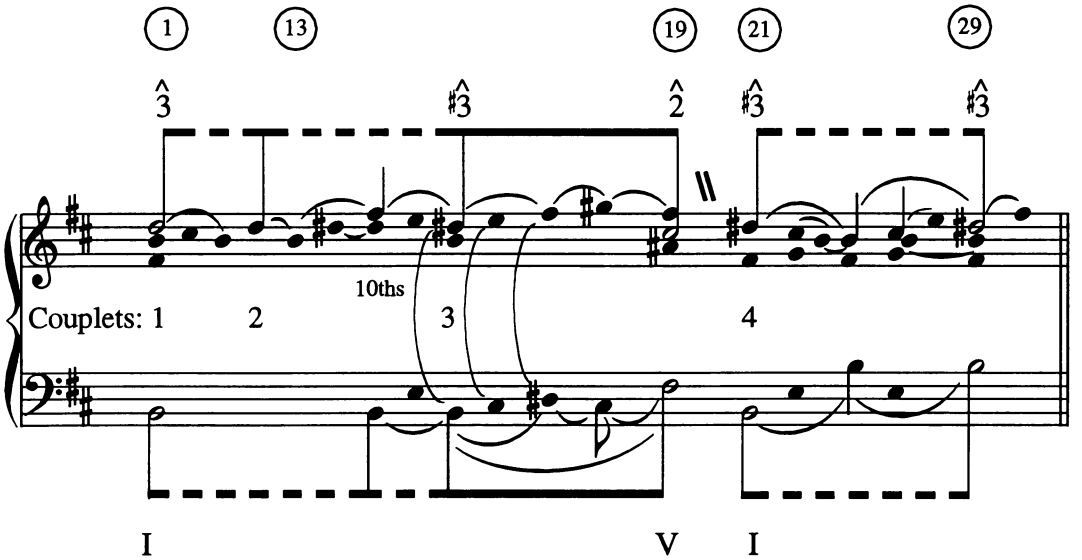
[31]This interpretation was suggested to me by Carl Schachter.

Example 6. Hypothetical final cadence for "Es schauen die Blumen"



Example 7. Reduction of "Es schauen die Blumen"



in mm. 18-20. The second section begins like the first, reinstating the tonic and the *Kopfton* (now $\sharp\hat{3}$), but, instead of regaining the dominant, the last phrase reaches the subdominant and then progresses directly to the tonic. As in "In Waldeseinsamkeit," the top line does not descend to the tonic, rather, it returns to the first note of the fundamental line, $D\sharp_5$, and then arpeggiates to $F\sharp_5$.[32]

The two-part form of "Es schauen die Blumen" is suggested by Heine's ironic conclusion. The new, sadder mood of the last couplet is conveyed by the softer dynamics, the syncopated bass notes, and the minor subdominant. Furthermore, not until this couplet do the Phrygian fourths appear in the melody, nor is the descending sixth prolonged through an entire phrase. While the drive to the tonicization of the dominant brilliantly underscores the introduction of the protagonist, the subsequent interruption (in m. 20) mirrors the disjunction caused by the poem's ironic twist. This point is further marked by the sudden discontinuation of the piano figuration in m. 20. After a moment's silence, the voice starts the second section by itself. The piano, however, had already anticipated the change in mood. The approach to the dominant favors major chords, but the piano's $G\natural$ in m. 20 suggests the return of the tonic minor. Although the following section uses the raised third, $G\natural$ appears in the melody on the words "wehmütig and trüb" (mm. 23-24), and it is part of the minor subdominant chord of the closing cadence (mm. 26 and 28). The perfect fusion of the text and music in this song is attested to by Elizabeth Herzogenberg, who describes it as "a marvel of compactness," and praises its "ingenuity"—particularly the beauty of the last phrase.[33]

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[32]The $F\sharp_5$s in mm. 19 and 29 reflect the rhyme of "trüb" and "Lieb."

[33]Letter dated May 21 and 22, 1885. *Johannes Brahms: The Herzogenberg Correspondence*, trans. Hannah Bryant (New York: Da Capo, 1987), 229.

Plagal cadences do not afford the same strong sense of closure as authentic cadences; when they are used at the end of a piece, they are often combined with a number of other gestures that suggest closure, as well as with such secondary parameters as softer dynamics and a slower tempo.[34] In Wolf's songs, these ancillary closing gestures include ostinati and pedal points.[35] Similarly, in both "In Waldeseinsamkeit" and "Es schauen die Blumen," Brahms attempts to compensate for the unrealized dominant and the associated absence of a final structural cadence. In the former, a feeling of partial closure is conveyed by the slower declamation rate, the bass arpeggio down to B in m. 25, and the piano's new, more expansive, triplet figuration; in the latter, closure is suggested by the repeated tonic in the bass during mm. 21-25 and by the gradual disintegration of the piano's figuration during the final phrase. (This motive is derived from the piano's tag that concludes each of the first two couplets—mm. 10 and 14.)

There are at least two other Brahms songs with tonal structures resembling "Es schauen die Blumen" and "In Waldeseinsamkeit;" they are "An eine Aeolsharfe" (Op. 19, no. 5) and "Der Strom, der neben mir verrauschte" (Op. 32, no. 4).[36] Both of these songs significantly predate the other two; Brahms composed "An eine Aeolsharfe" in 1858 and

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[34]For a discussion of another nineteenth-century composer's use of secondary parameters to create closure, see Robert G. Hopkins, *Closure and Mahler's Music* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

[35]Stein, 55.

[36]Brahms also uses a similar type of structure in the *a capella* chorus "O süßer Mai" (Op. 93a, no. 3), which dates from just prior to "Es schauen die Blumen." This chorus is in ternary form, and the bass provides a tonic pedal point throughout most of the final section. Tonal closure is suggested by a diminished seventh (on $\hat{7}$) moving to the tonic in the upper voices in m. 32. As in the songs, the melody concludes with an ascent, this time ending on $\hat{3}$.

"Der Strom" in 1864.[37] Both are more complicated and more chromatic that the two I have discussed. "Der Strom," in particular, is quite adventurous; it frequently substitutes an inversion for expected root-position dominant chords, and even at the point of interruption a first-inversion dominant chord substitutes for the conventional $\frac{5}{3}$. As with the strophic songs I have discussed, this group of songs demonstrates how, in later life, Brahms returned to a type of structure with which he had experimented in earlier decades. The later songs, however, are marked by a simpler harmonic vocabulary, and a more successful treatment of the tonal structures.

These Brahms songs, with their wistful texts and important subdominants, are typical of the nineteenth century. Mies was no doubt aware of this, and he favorably compares Brahms's expressive plagal closes with those of Wolf.[38] Stein concludes that Wolf's extensions to the plagal domain are quite conservative, and even songs that substitute the subdominant for the dominant at deep structural levels employ authentic cadences on the foreground.[39] This contrasts with the Brahms songs where the dominant is completely omitted from the final sections. As might be expected from a composer favoring through-composed songs, Wolf did not use the types of structures described above. Perhaps these Brahms songs are actually more radical than those of Wolf because their departures from tonal norms are so unexpected, especially since their tonal language initially seems quite simple.

As Mies noted, the texts of all these Brahms songs are pervaded by a deep sense of yearning, which is often

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[37]I analyze these songs in chapter 7 of my dissertation, "Text-Music Relationships in the *Lieder* of Johannes Brahms" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York Graduate Center, 1992).

[38]Mies, 108 and 110.

[39]Stein, chapter 2.

associated with unrequited love. Brahms set these texts with great compassion: his treatment of dissonance, rhythm, and motives contributes to the penetrating musical characterizations. The weakened closures, achieved through plagal cadences and ascending melodies, symbolize the protagonists' unresolved problems. Their intense pain, moreover, is evoked by the disturbances to conventional tonal structures that are the end result of these cadences.

Appendix

"Kein Haus, keine Heimat" Op. 94, no. 5 (text by Friedrich Halm)

Kein Haus, keine Heimat,
kein Weib, und kein Kind,
so wirbl' ich, ein Strohhalm,
in Wetter und Wind!

Well' auf und Well' nieder,
bald dort und bald hier;
Welt, fragst du nach mir nicht,
was frag' ich nach dir?

No house, no homeland,
no wife and no child,
thus I am whirled like a straw
in storm and wind.

Ebb and flow,
now here, now there;
world, if you don't ask about me,
why should I ask about you?

(trans. after Stanley Appelbaum)[40]

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[40]Translations by Appelbaum are taken from *Johannes Brahms: Complete Songs for Solo Voice and Piano*, Series III (New York: Dover, 1980).

"In Waldeseinsamkeit" Op. 85, no. 6 (text by Karl Lemcke)

Ich saß zu deinen Füßen
in Waldeseinsamkeit;
Windesatmen, Sehnen
ging durch die Wipfel breit.

In stummem Ringen senkt' ich
das Haupt in deinen Schoß,
und meine bebenden Hände
um deine Knie ich schloß.

Die Sonne ging hinunter,
der Tag verglühte all,
ferne, ferne, ferne
sang eine Nachtigall.

I sat at your feet
in the loneliness of the forest;
the breathing of the wind, and a yearning
stirred the treetops all around.

In silent struggle I laid
my head in your lap
and closed my trembling hands
around your knee.

The sun went down,
the daylight vanished completely;
far away, far away, far away
a nightingale sang.

(trans. Stanley Appelbaum)

"Es schauen die Blumen" Op. 96, no. 3 (text by Heine)

Es schauen die Blumen alle
zur leuchtenden Sonne hinauf;
es nehmen die Ströme alle
zum leuchtenden Meere den Lauf.
Es flattern die Lieder alle,
zu meinem leuchtenden Lieb.
Nehmt mit meine Tränen und Seufzer,
ihr Lieder, wehmütig und trüb!

All the flowers gaze up
to the gleaming sun.
All the streams run down
to the gleaming sea.
All songs fly
to my gleaming sweetheart:
Take my tears and sighs too,
you songs, mournful and gloomy!

(trans. after William Mann)[41]

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[41]Booklet to Deutsche Grammophon's *Johannes Brahms Lieder* (Hamburg: Polydor International, 1983).