

Frauenliebe und -leben

A woman's life and love

music by Robert Schumann 1840

new lyrics by Eugenia Cheng 2021

(original poetry by Adelbert von Chamisso 1830)

1. Originally "Seit ich ihn gesehen"

[Since first seeing him I am blind to everything else in life]

Will the world accept me? Will I ever know?
Will the world respect me? I might never know.
So I'll make my own ambition, I'm determined to achieve
something honest, something true to all the things that I believe.

Time to start deciding where I want to go,
Time to make that journey, be it fast or slow.
I'll look back on this decision and reflect upon the day
I embarked on this endeavour in this simple way.

2. Originally "Er, der Herrlichste von allen"

[He is the greatest of them all and I am not worthy of him]

There's the life I've always dreamed of,
Now I see it hovering near,
Can I reach it? I believe it,
If I overcome my fear.

If I look beyond my doubts
I can sense my growing mind,
And the longing in my spirit
Helps me leave my doubts behind.

Soon I'll see what's in my future,
Will my star begin to shine?
There's a life I know I'm right for,
Maybe it will soon be mine.

Now is not the time for luck,
Now is not the time for hope,
It's the time to build my deepest strengths
And show that I can cope.

When the time arrives to test me
I must know that I can rise
To the moment when I'm needed -
I'll be strong and wise.

Then I'll know that I've succeeded,
Know my doubters were unjust
And the friends who always helped me,
they're the ones I'll always trust.

**3. Originally "Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben"
[I can't believe that he really loves me - I must be dreaming]**

I can't, I will not believe it,
I'm sure there's been some mistake,
I think that I must be dreaming,
I'll wake up and find it's all fake.

Perhaps they had some confusion:
They just mixed up my name,
They'll soon write back to retract it
And cancel all the acclaim.

I long to keep the illusion,
I hope that I never wake,
I'd rather remain deluded
Than hear that they made a mistake.

I can't, I will not believe it
I'm sure there's been some mistake
I think that I'm must be dreaming
I'll wake up and find it's all fake.

I long to keep the illusion,
I hope I never awake.

4. Originally "Du Ring an meinem Finger"

[You ring on my finger, you have taught me that I want to serve him forever]

The life I dreamed of building,
I'm living it here today,
Fulfilling my deepest ambition:
I'm making a difference in my chosen way.

I struggled hard to achieve this
And many people supported me,
But others said I would never
Become what I wanted to be

The life I dreamed of building
I've built in the way I hoped,
I slowly, surely reached here,
Though many opposed me I somehow coped.

I've earned success now, I've earned my place,
I've earned respect and awe,
I pledge to dispense it with care and compassion
And help those the world's rarely helped before.

The life I dreamed of building,
I'm living it here today,
Fulfilling my deepest ambition:
I'm making a difference in my chosen way.

5. Originally "Helft mir, ihr Schwestern"

[Help me sisters, help me get ready to marry him]

Help me my sisters, help me prepare to
Face the detractors who stand in my way,
Still they object and still they oppose me,
Deriding and sneering is the game they play.

Thanks to their angry endless attacks
I know my reward will be long delayed,
Help me discover how to explain that
All their values will not be betrayed.

Help me my sisters help me remember,
With your support I can always be true,
Warmth in my heart and strength in my soul
Restore my belief in the work I do.

Even in the depths of darkest despair
I know that you'll love me come what may.
Stand with me now, enfold me with love,
I'll know that I'm valued whatever they say.

Cheer for me sisters, cheer for me loudly,
Show all the doubters want me to fall.
Maybe the doubters are right to oppose me?
I will face them standing tall.

6. Originally "Süßer Freund"

[Sweet friend, we're going to have a baby and it's going to look just like you]

Sweet success, I've done what I set out to do,
Now I know I've made my greatest dreams come true.
When I think of all the pain that I've withstood,
Surely I deserve some time for feeling good.

Why this dread that's seeping through my soul tonight?
What's this fear that's flickering in the candlelight?
Can I find a way to understand my heart?
Find a way to pull my joys and fears apart?

Here is my admission:
I'm becoming sure
I do not belong here,
And I'm feeling it more and more.
Stay and hear my heart-ache,
Help to make me whole,
So I'll know what I can do
To free my soul.

Sweet success is tainted by their hatred still,
They could change - and yet I fear they never will.
I must find a way to change my life around,
To secure my freedom from this fighting ground,
My freedom.

7. Originally "An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust"

[At my heart, at my breast my child suckles - only a nursing mother can know what happiness is]

Everyone petty wants me to go,
All I suggest they just tell me, "No."
Ridiculous sniping is all that I hear,
But I'm immune for I have no fear.

I tried to best to do my part,
I was impeded from the start,
All was in vain, nobody cared
For one like me would won't be scared.

Only a saint could handle this,
I'll walk away and never miss
One single thing about this life,
The joy was not worth half the strife.

You narrow-minded people here,
You blocked every plan and every idea
But never will you destroy my heart,
You want me gone and I'll now depart.

8. Originally "Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan"

[Now you've caused me pain for the first time - you're dead, so my life is done, and I'll just withdraw into memories of you because you're my entire world]

Now has the final verdict been declared: they were unjust
I've gone and they can triumph from a far: they will I trust.
I've found a better way to be, and I've done well, I'm told.
I don't regret the past and all I tried to do before,
I'm proud of all I've done, and still I know I will do more.