

## *Nun kommt die Schillerzeit!*

A CELEBRATION ON THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE POET'S DEATH

# Friedrich Schiller's 'The Song of the Bell'

by Marianna Wertz

*Marianna Wertz was vice-president of the Schiller Institute in the United States until her untimely death in January 2003. Of her many translations of Schiller's poetry, two philosophical poems, "The Song of the Bell" and "The Artists," are included in this issue of Fidelio. This introductory essay to "The Song of the Bell" first appeared in The New Federalist in December 1987.*

November 10, 1987 was the 228th anniversary of the birth of the "Poet of Freedom" Friedrich Schiller, the great German poet and playwright, who should also be known as the "Poet of the American Revolution."

In this bicentennial year of the U.S. Constitution, it is only fitting and just that a new translation be made of Schiller's great tribute to the American Revolution, "The Song of the Bell," to reawaken in Americans a love for this great republican poem, as we reawaken our commitment to the principles of the Revolution which inspired it.

In a July 1987 essay, "The U.S. Government Is in Chaos," Lyndon LaRouche drew the parallel between the crisis in Washington and developments of the French Revolution of 1789. LaRouche's purpose in making this comparison was to warn against following the economic policies of



*Liberty Bell, Philadelphia*

the Swiss-Venetian banking crowd, which, under French Finance Minister Jacques Necker, led to the horrors of the French Revolution, and under "Reaganomics" is leading the United States, and the rest of the world, rapidly to an even worse hell.

Ten years after the French Revolution began, in 1799, Friedrich Schiller composed "The Song of the Bell," to draw the lessons of the failed French Revolution for his native Germany. Germany, then still a series of feudal principalities, was in the throes of the Napoleonic Wars and seeking a republican revolution of its own. Schiller, whose reputation as "the Poet of Freedom" had been established with his earliest

play *The Robbers*, written while a student at the Karlschule Military Academy, sought in "The Song of the Bell" to educate a republican leadership in fundamental lessons of statecraft.

Schiller's poem is particularly cogent for Americans today, as it addresses, with biting sarcasm, those who have all but lost the principles of their own Revolution, in their object fixation and quest for immediate sensual gratification, and under the influence of a brainwashing media. In this poem, Mr. and Mrs. Babbitt will see themselves mirrored as Sinclair Lewis himself could never have done. By holding up this mirror to the soul of his compatriots, Schiller sought, as Lyndon and Helga LaRouche seek today, to bring about a fundamental change in the culture of the nation, as the *sine qua non* and necessary precondition for a successful republican transformation.

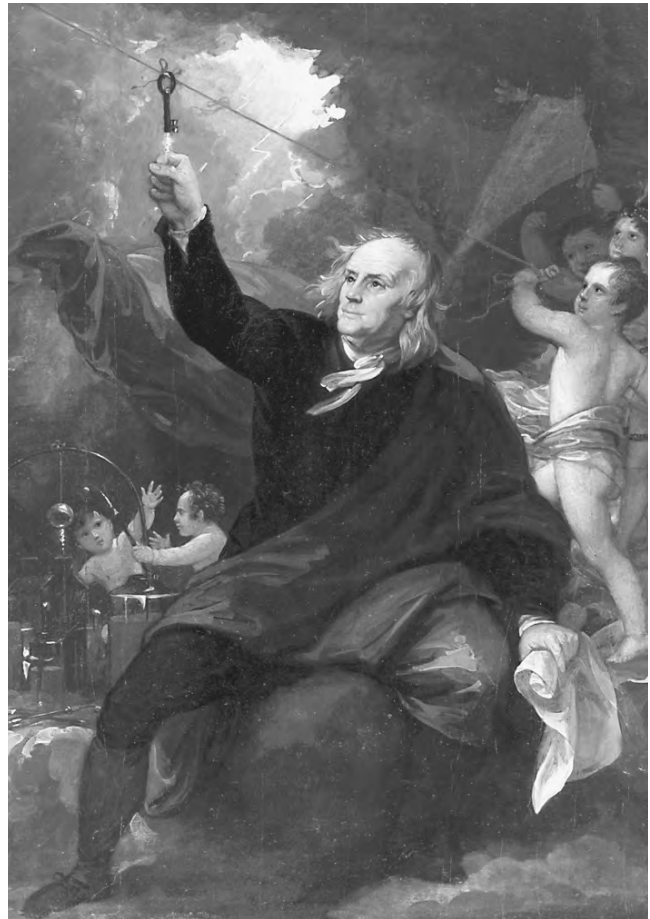
Friedrich Schiller's sympathies for the American Revolution were those of a German republican, who longed to see the same transformation in his country. As early as 1783, in a letter to his good friend Henriette von Wolzogen, Schiller writes, "... so great a desire I have, to see the New World. If North America will be free, as it is certain, then I might go there. In my arteries boils something—I would so like in this rough world to make some fissures, about which one should report."

Schiller composed "The Song of the Bell" over a period of at least two years. In a letter to the poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, dated July 7, 1797, Schiller remarks that he has just begun his "Bell Founder's Song," and had been studying the technology since the day before in *Kreimitz's Encyclopedia*, "where I very much profited. This poem lies very close to my heart," he continues, though it will "cost me many weeks," because "I need for it so many different voices (*Stimmungen*) and it is a great mass (*Masse*) to work up (*verarbeiten*)." It was not fully completed until September of 1799.

## A Fugue in Four Voices

The poem is a fugue in four principal parts, which interact and jointly develop, much as voices do in a fugal composition by Bach or Mozart. The first voice is the technological process of forging a great bell. The second voice, for which the bell is also a metaphor, deals with the development and life of the individual. The third voice concerns questions of statecraft and the French Revolution, in which the subjects of the first and second voices are placed in the larger, universal context. The fourth voice, which enters for the first time in the person of the poet, introduces Schiller's method to ensure the success of republican revolutions.

Schiller's choice of a great bell as his subject could hardly have been accidental. The opening Latin invocation betrays Schiller's thinking: "I call the living, I mourn the dead, I break the lightning." The leading symbol of



Schiller's metaphorical use of lightning—as both creative power and destructive natural force—drew on familiarity with the republican scientist Benjamin Franklin. **Above:** Benjamin West, "Benjamin Franklin Drawing Electricity from the Sky," 1816.

the American Revolution in Schiller's time was the great Liberty Bell of Philadelphia, which pealed in 1776 to proclaim the signing of the Declaration of Independence. And Benjamin Franklin, known throughout Europe as the man who "broke the lightning"—the American Prometheus—was the living symbol of that Revolution for all European republicans.

Franklin was the single most important link between the American Revolution and those French republicans, like Lafayette, Turgot, Carnot, and Lavoisier, who attempted to bring into being a constitutional monarchy in France, as the mediation for a constitutional republic. Turgot wrote of Franklin, in words which echo Schiller's, "Eripiuit coelo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis" ("He has snatched the lightning from the heavens, and the sceptre from tyrants").

But the bell is more than a metaphor for the American Revolution. The reader is struck from the outset of the poem with Schiller's meticulous description of the actual

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technology of bell-founding. Was his purpose to educate his readers about how to forge a bell? Hardly! His purpose was to forge a republican citizenry.

Schiller points to the underlying purpose of the bell-founding metaphor in the second stanza:

This it is, what all mankind graceth,  
And to this end to understand  
That he in inner heart so traceth,  
What he createth with his hand.

For Schiller, man is the creator of his own destiny, “though the blessing comes from higher.” The forging of a bell, like the forging of a republic, will succeed only when man uses his “understanding” to be like the Creator. The bell itself, therefore, is not just a poetic metaphor for the American Revolution. Much more fundamentally, Schiller uses the bell as a metaphor to demonstrate that a republican revolution is only possible through the application of the same noetic processes that go into the creation of new technologies.

## Schiller’s Meter

Schiller employs meter in this poem perhaps more skillfully than in any other composition. While he demonstrates his great skill with meter in a poem like “The Worth of Women,” where he uses two contrasting meters—a mellifluous meter for the woman’s voice, a martial meter for the man’s—here the meter is not only varied by voice, but carries the reader from one mood to another, as integral a part of conveying Schiller’s meaning as the words themselves.

Thus we see in the first stanza, the voice of the Bell is introduced with its distinctive meter: the eight-line trochaic stanza, comprised of four lines in an *abab* rhyme scheme of four feet each, followed by a rhymed couplet of two-and-a-half feet, and completed by a second rhymed couplet of four feet. This stanza form is used throughout, from opening to close, every time work on the Bell is introduced. It serves as a sort of shock wave, increasingly through the poem, breaking the preceding train of thought and lifting it to a higher conceptual plane.

This function of the Bell is actually described by Schiller in the fourth stanza:

What here below to son terrest’al  
The ever-changing fate doth bring,  
Doth strike the crown which made from metal  
Uplifting it doth sound its ring.

The second voice or theme, the development of the individual, is introduced by, and indeed flows directly from, the Bell voice, in the sixth stanza. In the closing

two lines of the fifth stanza, the Bell is introduced as a metaphor for the voice of the newborn child, whose birth is greeted, in the sixth stanza, by the Bell’s ringing. This is the first irregular stanza—i.e., we’ve had three regular Bell stanzas and two intertwining introductory 12-line stanzas of even length and meter.

Here in the sixth stanza, Schiller captures with one masterful stroke the entire process of youthful development and young love. He captures also the sharp break in that development process between childhood and adolescence with the most economical means possible: a sharp break in the meter and an unrhymed line, “The years they fly like arrows fleet.” The original German, “Die Jahre fliehen pfeilgeschwind,” actually conveys, onomatopoeically, the sound of fleeting years.

This break jars the reader from the romantic spell Schiller has been craftily casting. Schiller uses this trick throughout. One can almost hear him laughing as he catches his reader, time and again, in a romantic setting of what might be called “earthly paradise,” only to be jarred out of reverie by harsh reality.

This jarring, biting sarcasm, directed at the “fair delusion” of complacent “burghers” who seek an earthly paradise yet refuse to see the coming storm clouds of war and revolt, is fully unleashed in the next stanza. Using a sing-song meter, to ridicule the immorality of the man out to “ensnare” his fortune, Schiller mocks the shortsightedness of the family whose only concern is their earthly possessions. This stanza might fairly be dedicated to all the lovers of “free enterprise” who still believe the United States is in the “59th straight month of recovery.”

The woman’s mindlessness he shatters with the string of ten lines beginning with the word “And,” building the picture of a completely manic fool, and then crashing down with the sharp concluding line—“and resteth never.” The husband’s pride in possession is taken even harder to task, in the next verse, as Schiller completes his picture of the futility of seeking an earthly paradise: “Misfortune strideth fast.”

Having shown that family fortune is not immune to the ravages of “mighty fate,” Schiller introduces the third voice or theme—the development of a republican state—which is dependent on the development of a republican citizenry for its existence.

## Battle for Nations

The battle for the development of a republican state is the most important theme of “The Song of the Bell.” That battle is encapsulated in the eleventh stanza, where Schiller introduces the third voice.





*The fall of the Bastille, July 1789. Unchecked, the French Revolution degenerated into mob rule.*

Beneficent is the might of flame,  
 When o'er it man doth watch, doth tame,  
 And what he buildeth, what he makes,  
 For this the heav'nly powers he thanks;  
 Yet fright'ning heaven's pow'r will be,  
 When from its chains it doth break free,  
 Embarking forth on its own track,  
 Nature's daughter, free alack.

In this stanza, Schiller introduces the Promethean conception of mankind, the keeper of the “heavenly” flame, source of man’s creative powers. This Promethean purpose—what Genesis identifies as “subduing the earth”—is the basis for the creation of a republican citizenry, and for Western Judeo-Christian civilization.

In contrast, Schiller also identifies here the Dionysian conception of man—that which ruled in the French Revolution—where “nature’s daughter” was “set free” by British agents Danton, Marat, and Robespierre, to behead and destroy science itself. In the course of the French Revolution, as in its modern equivalent, the Cambodian Revolution of the 1970’s, every leading scientist was either guillotined, or silenced through fear, in The Terror of 1793-94, which killed 35-40,000 Parisians, and imprisoned another estimated 300,000 French citizens.

The following stanza is perhaps one of the greatest single poetic compositions in modern literature. No translation can do credit to Schiller’s onomatopoeic skill, his power to convey the terror and horror of a

nation which has defied God’s law, and is facing the consequences. The result of “freeing” nature, rather than tending to and developing her, is here portrayed in its terrifying fullness:

Riesengross!  
 Hoffnungslos

No German reader could forget these two one-word lines (literally, “Giant tall! Hopeless”), which, with the utmost economy, bring the reader to a full understanding of man’s smallness relative to God’s law, and the consequence of violating it. The lines also bring a pause to the frenzy, an opportunity for the reader to reflect, to collect his thoughts, and

to prepare for the battle ahead.

The next Bell stanza introduces the actual fight for the republican state. The “mould is happily made,” but what if it should break? How shall man develop in the face of the vicissitudes of life?

The “mould” that holds the family together is “broken,” with the death of the mother. *Her* “faithful rule now ceases,” but what is to replace it?

Schiller starts his answer in the pastoral passage, where he establishes the reason men built cities. “Heaven’s daughter” has erected the “holy order”—the city—in order to bring the “uncivil savage” of the countryside to “gentler customs.” And the key to his civilizing is the “dearest band” of all—love for the fatherland. Under the “freedom” of the fatherland, master and workman, king and subject, are finally equal in blessing; finally peace and “charming concord” are established, through the “busy hands” which bring their own reward to mankind.

## Schiller’s View of the French Revolution

This picture of what Schiller’s Germany could be is beautifully painted, only to be ripped apart, as Germany itself was being ripped apart under Napoleon’s troops. The once-revolutionary armies of the French Republic had become the conquering armies of France’s next emperor.

Be warned! Schiller exclaims. Woe to any state which

allows the tinder of the Dionysian mob to grow unchecked in its womb. Schiller is referring directly to the central problem of the French Revolution in this passage: France's leading republicans, men like Lafayette and Carnot, lost control of the process of creating a republic.

Once the "wizen'd hand" of the "Master"—the master craftsman or skilled artisan—is removed, "the people do themselves set free," unleashing the "murdering swarms" to rule in the "Master's" place. Concretely, the possibility of a constitutional monarchy, which could grow into a constitutional republic, was lost in France, once the idea of "democracy" took over, and that "democracy" beheaded the royal family and the scientific elite of the nation.

Here, it is useful to reflect on what Benjamin Franklin said of France's guillotined "master," Louis XVI: "Perhaps no sovereign ever born to rule had more goodness in his heart or possessed more of the milk of human kindness than Louis XVI." Of the mob which beheaded Louis, Franklin said, "A mob's a monster. Heads enough, but no brains."

As Schiller earlier developed in his *Letters on the Aesthetical Education of Man*, "liberty" does not come without duty, and "equality" does not come without shared responsibility. Contrast to this the motto of the French Revolution, as enunciated by the murderous British agent Marat, in 1793, on establishing the "Committees of Public Safety": "It is by means of violence that liberty must be established, and the moment has come for organizing instantaneously the despotism of liberty in order to crush the despotism of kings."

The consequences of basing a society on such "liberty and equality," are evident in Schiller's picture of the women of the French Revolution:

Then women to hyenas growing  
Do make with horror jester's art,  
Still quiv'ring, panther's teeth employing,  
They rip apart the en'my's heart.

Women, who for Schiller should ideally personify the concept of Grace, become "hyenas" in a state where "all the vices govern free." Even worse than a beast, Schiller declares, is "man in his deluded state." Schiller might well be describing Hollywood or New York today, or better yet, Elizabeth Taylor or Jane Fonda.

## The Path to Reason

Once Schiller completes his picture of the destructive power of man unleashed from reason, he again jars the reader forcefully, using the Bell voice to show the path

back to reason.

Schiller proclaims,

Joy unto me God hath given!  
See there! like a golden star  
From its husk, so blank and even,  
Peeleth out the metal core.  
From the crown to base  
Like the bright sun plays,  
And escutcheons' decoration  
Builder's skill gives commendation.

In this stanza, Schiller uses the first person singular—"me"—for the first time. This is the fourth voice, the voice of the real master, the poet. Here, for the first time, the poet establishes that it is through the concrete labor of the "builder" that man participates in the "divine spark"—Joy.

In Schiller's "Ode to Joy," the concept "Joy, thou beauteous godly lightning," later made famous by Beethoven's setting in his Ninth Symphony, is fully developed. It is only through this "joy"—or what Lyndon LaRouche has recently identified as the Greek concept of *agapē*, or love (translated as "charity" in the King James Bible), that man can access the divinity in himself and, indeed, become like God. This concept was central to the founding of the United States, whose Declaration of Independence proclaims "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" to be the "unalienable rights" of all human beings.

The pursuit of joy to uplift and transform the individual, as Schiller develops it, is precisely the perspective adopted by Lyndon and Helga LaRouche and their associates, to regain for humanity the republican government of which it has been robbed. In "The Song of the Bell," we find a fellow teacher:

Alone to grave, eternal singing  
Her metal mouth be consecrate . . .

So let her teach, that naught is lasting,  
That all things earthly fade away.

The Bell, christened *Concordia* at the conclusion of the poem, is a teacher of mankind, imparting the most valuable lesson of all: The longed-for joy can only be attained when man learns, like the Bell, to "sing"—to find his own immortality, not in "earthly paradise," but in "the Heavens' air." For no truth is greater than Schiller's concept, that it is only through beauty that man is led to political freedom. "The Song of the Bell" was Schiller's great contribution toward that end.

## A Lesson for Americans

In a letter composed after “The Song of the Bell,” Schiller expressed this concept in terms which Americans should take firmly to heart today:

This effort of the French people to establish their sacred rights of humanity and to gain political freedom has only brought to light their unworthiness and impotence; and, not this ill-fated nation alone, but with it a considerable part of Europe and a whole century have been hurled back into barbarism and servitude.

Of moments this was the most propitious, but it came to a corrupt generation, unworthy to seize it, unworthy to make profit by it. . . . That he is not yet ripe for civil liberty, to the attainment of whose human liberty so much is still missing.

Freedom, political and civil, remains ever and always the holiest of all possessions, the worthiest goal of all

striving, the great rallying point of all culture; but this glorious structure can only be raised upon the firm basis of an ennobled character and before a citizen can be given a constitution, one must see that the citizen be himself soundly constituted.

As Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp LaRouche writes in the Foreword to the first volume of *Friedrich Schiller, Poet of Freedom*: “Reading Schiller’s poetry, as well as his historical, philosophical, and aesthetic works, has precisely the effect on the sensitive reader of which Schiller informed us in the preface to his drama *The Bride of Messina* and in other places in his work—to produce in the reader an ennobling power which then continues to exist long after the reading is done.” In “The Song of the Bell,” Schiller has given us the knowledge, the “ennobling power,” to reforge a republican citizenry, even at this late hour. It is our responsibility to use it.

# The Song of the Bell

(1799)

*I call the living • I mourn the dead • I break the lightning*

*Walled up in the earth so steady  
Burned from clay, the mould doth stand.  
This day must the Bell be ready!  
Fresh, O workmen, be at hand!  
From the heated brow  
Sweat must freely flow,  
That the work may praise the Master,  
Though the blessing comes from higher.*

OUR work in earnest preparation,  
Befitteth well an earnest word;  
When joined by goodly conversation,  
Then flows the labor briskly forw’d.  
So let us now with care consider,  
What through a frail power springs forth:  
The wicked man one must have scorn for,  
Who ne’er reflects, what he brings forth.  
This it is, what all mankind graceth,  
And thereto his to understand,  
That he in inner heart so traceth,  
What he createth with his hand.

*Take the wood from trunk of spruce tree,  
Yet quite dry let it abide,  
That the flame compressed so tightly  
Strike the gullet deep inside!  
Cook the copper brew,  
Quick the tin in, too!  
That the glutinous bell-metal  
Flowing rightly then will settle!*

WHAT in the dam’s dark cavern dour  
The hand with fire’s help did mould,  
High in the belfry of the tower  
There will our story loud be told.  
Still will it last as years are tolling  
And many ears will it inspire  
And wail with mourners in consoling  
And harmonize devotion’s choir.  
What here below to son terrest’al  
The ever-changing fate doth bring,  
Doth strike the crown which made from metal,  
Uplifting it doth sound its ring.

*Bubbles white I see creating,  
Good! the mass doth flow at last.  
Now with potash permeating,  
Let us hasten quick the cast.  
And from lather free  
Must the mixture be,  
That from metal pure abounding  
Pure and full the voice be sounding.*

FOR with its joyful festive ringing  
It doth the child beloved greet  
On that first step his life is bringing,  
Which starts in arms of slumber sweet;  
For in the womb of time's attesting  
His fortune black or bright is resting,  
The mother's tender cares adorning  
With love, to guard his golden morning.—  
The years they fly like arrows fleet.  
From maiden breaks the lad so proudly,  
And into life so wild doth roam,  
Throughout the world he wanders widely.  
As stranger, seeks his father's home,  
And glorious, in youthful splendor,  
Like creature from the heav'nly land,  
With cheek so modest, shy and tender  
Sees he the maid before him stand.  
Then seized by nameless longing, aching,  
The young lad's heart, alone he leaves,  
From out his eyes the tears are breaking,  
His brothers' ranks so wild he flees.  
Her steps he blushing doth follow  
And is by her fair greeting blessed,  
The fairest seeks he in the meadow,  
With which by him his love is dressed.  
Oh! gentle longing, sweetest hoping,  
The first love's time of goldenness!  
The eye doth see the heavens op'ning,  
So feasts the heart in happiness—  
Oh! that it last forever greening,  
The beaut'ous time of love's beginning!

*How indeed the pipes are browning!  
This small staff do I dip in:  
When its glaze to us is shining,  
Will the casting time begin.  
Now, men, lively be!  
Test the mix for me,  
If the brittle with the nimble  
Join together 'tis good symbol.*

FOR where the rough is with the supple,  
Where strong itself with mild doth couple,

The ringing will be good and strong.  
So test therefore, who join forever,  
If heart to heart be found together!  
Delusion is short, remorse is long.  
In the bridal locks so lovely  
Plays the virgin's modest crown,  
When the churchbells pealing brightly  
To the festive gleam call down.  
Ah! Life's fairest celebrating  
Doth the May of life end, too,  
With the girdle, with the veiling  
Tears delusion fair in two.

The passion doth fly.  
Love must be enduring;  
The flowers fade by,  
Fruit must be maturing.  
The man must go out  
In hostile life living,  
Be working and striving  
And planting and making,  
Be scheming and taking,  
Through hazard and daring,  
His fortune ensnaring.  
Then streams in the wealth in an unending measure,  
The silo is filled thus with valuable treasure,  
The rooms are growing, the house stretches out.  
And indoors ruleth  
The housewife so modest,  
The mother of children,  
And governs wisely  
In matters of family,  
And maidens she traineth  
And boys she restraineth,  
And goes without ending  
Her diligent handling,  
And gains increase hence  
With ordering sense.  
And treasure on sweet-smelling presses is spreading,  
And turns 'round the tightening spindle the threading,  
And gathers in chests polished cleanly and bright  
The shimmering wool, and the linen snow-white,  
And joins to the goods, both their splendor and shimmer,  
And resteth never.

And the father with joyful glance  
From the house gable's view oh so vast  
Surveying his fortune's enhance,  
Seeth the posts of trees that are tow'ring  
And the rooms of his barns o'erflowing  
And the silos, bent low from the blessing,  
And the billows of corn unceasing,



Boasting with haughty mouth:  
“Firm, as the soil o’ th’ earth,  
'Gainst all misfortune’s pow’r  
Splendid my house doth tow’r!”—  
Yet with mighty fate supernal  
Is entwined no bond eternal,  
And misfortune strideth fast.

*Good! now be the cast beginning,  
Finely jagged is the breach.  
Yet before it start to running,  
Let us pious verses preach.  
Make the tap eject!  
God our house protect!  
Smoking in the handle’s hollow  
Shoots with fire-brownéd billow.*

BENEF’CENT is the might of flame,  
When o’er it man doth watch, doth tame,  
And what he buildeth, what he makes,  
For this the heav’nly powers he thanks;  
Yet fright’ning Heaven’s pow’r will be,  
When from its chains it doth break free,  
Embarking forth on its own track,  
Nature’s daughter, free alack.  
Woe, when it is liberated  
Growing such that none withstand,  
Through the alleys populated  
Rolls the monstrous firebrand!  
For by elements is hated  
The creation of man’s hand.  
From the heavens  
Blessing’s teeming,  
Rain is streaming;  
From the heavens, unforeseen,  
Strikes the beam!  
Hear in belfry whimpers form!  
That is storm!  
Red as blood  
Heavens broil,  
That is not the daylight’s flood!  
What a turmoil  
In the roads!  
Steam explodes!  
Climbs the fire column glowing,  
Through the streets’ long rows it’s going  
Forth it goes with wind’s speed growing,  
As in jaws of ovens cooking  
Glow the air, the beams are cracking,  
Pillars tumble, windows quav’ring,  
Children wailing, mothers wand’ring,  
Whimp’ring cattle

Under rubble,  
All is running, saving, flying,  
Bright as day the night is shining.  
Through long chain of hands, not resting  
As contesting  
Flies the bucket, lofty bowing  
Spouts the fountain, water flowing.  
Howling comes the storm a-flying,  
Which doth seek the roaring flames.  
Crackling in the well-dried grains,  
Falls it, in the roomy silo,  
On the wood of rafters hollow,  
And as if it would by blowing  
With itself the earth’s full weight  
Drag it, in its vi’lent flight,  
Into Heaven’s summit growing  
Giant tall!  
Hopeless all  
Yields the man ’fore God’s great powers,  
Idle sees he all his labors  
And amazed to ruin going.

All burnt out  
Is the setting,  
Of the savage storm’s rough bedding;  
In the empty window op’ning  
Horror’s living,  
And high Heaven’s clouds are giving  
Looks within.

Just one peek  
To the ashes  
Of his riches  
Doth the man behind him seek—  
His wanderer’s staff then gladly seizes.  
Whatever fire’s rage has cost,  
One solace sweet is e’er unmoved:  
He counts the heads of his beloved  
And see! not one dear head is lost.

*In the earth it is receivéd  
Full the mould is happ’ly made;  
Will its beauty be perceivéd,  
So be toil and art repaid?  
Should the cast not take?  
Should the moulding break?  
Ah! perhaps, whilst we are hoping,  
Harm is us already gripping.*

TO HOLY earth’s e’er-dark’ning bosom  
Do we entrust our hands’ true deed,  
The sower doth entrust his seed



And hopes, indeed, that it will blossom  
To bless, as Heaven hath decreed.  
Still costlier the seed we've buried  
With sorrow in the womb of earth  
And hope, that from the coffin carried  
'Twill bloom to fairer fortune forth.

From cathedral,  
Anxious, long,  
Bell is sounding  
Funeral song.  
Earnestly its doleful toll doth carry  
Some new wanderer on the final journey.

Ah! the wife it is, the dear one,  
Ah! it is the faithful mother,  
Whom the swarthy Prince of Shadeland  
Carries off from arm of husband,  
From the group of children dear,  
Whom she blooming to him bare,  
Whom she on her breast so true  
Watched with pleasure as they grew—  
Ah! the bonds of home so giving  
Will forevermore be loose,  
For in shadowland she's living,  
Who was mother of the house,  
For her faithful rule now ceases,  
No more keepeth watch her care,  
Henceforth in the orphaned places  
Rules the foreign, loveless e'er.

*Till the Bell be coolly laying,  
Let no stringent work ensue;  
As the bird in leaves is playing,  
May each person goodly do.  
Nods the starlit sky,  
Duty's all foreby,  
Hears the lad the vespers sounding,  
For the Master toil's abounding.*

BRISKLY hastens he his paces  
Far in forest wild the wand'rer,  
To the lovely cottage-places.  
Bleating homeward draws the sheep herd,  
And the cattle  
Broad-foreheaded, flocks so glossy,  
Come in lowing  
To accustomed stalls they're going.  
Heav'ly in  
Shakes the wagon,  
Harvest-laden,

Colored brightly  
On sheaves sightly  
Garlands lie,  
And the young folk of the reapers  
Dancing fly.  
Street and market-place grow stiller,  
Round the social flame of lighting  
Gather those in household dwelling,  
And the town gate closes creaking.  
Black bedighted  
All the earth be  
Yet the burgher is affrighted  
Not by night,  
Which the wicked has excited,  
For the watchful law's clear eye keeps sight.

Holy Order, blesséd richly,  
Heaven's daughter, equals has she  
Free and light and glad connected,  
City buildings hath erected,  
Who herein from country dwelling  
The uncivil savage calling,  
Ent'ring into human houses,  
Gentler custom she espouses,  
With the dearest band she's bound us,  
Love for fatherland weaves 'round us.

Thousand busy hands in motion  
Help in cheerful unity,  
And in fiery commotion  
Will all forces public be.  
Master and the men take action  
Under freedom's holy care,  
Each is pleased with his position,  
Scorn for every scoffer share.  
Work's the burgher's decoration,  
Labor's prize is to be blest;  
Honor kings by royal station,  
Busy hands us honor best.

Peace so gentle,  
Charming concord,  
Tarry, tarry  
Friendly o'er this city be!  
May the day be ne'er appearing,  
When the rugged hordes a-warring  
Through this quiet vale are storming,  
When the heavens,  
Which the evening's blushes pretty  
Paint so fine,  
From the village, from the city  
Wildly burning frightful shine!

*Now for me break up the building,  
Its intent is filled a-right,  
That our hearts and eyes be feasting  
On the most successful sight.  
Swing the hammer, swing,  
'Til the mantle spring!  
If the Bell be now awoken,  
Be the frame in pieces broken.*

THE MASTER can break up the framing  
With wizen'd hand, at rightful hour,  
But woe, whene'er in brooks a-flaming  
Doth free itself, the glowing ore!  
Blind-raging with the crash of thunder,  
It springs from out the bursted house,  
And as from jaws of hell asunder  
Doth spew its molten ruin out;  
Where senseless powers are commanding,  
There can no structure yet be standing,  
When peoples do themselves set free,  
There can no common welfare be.

Woe, when in womb of cities growing,  
In hush doth pile the fiery match,  
The people, chains from off it throwing,  
Doth its own help so frightful snatch!  
There to the Bell, its rope-cord pulling,  
Rebellion, doth it howling sound  
And, hallowed but for peaceful pealing,  
To violence doth strike aloud.

Liberty, Equality! Men hear sounding,  
The tranquil burgher takes up arms,  
The streets and halls are all abounding,  
And roving, draw the murd'ring swarms;  
Then women to hyenas growing  
Do make with horror jester's art,  
Still quiv'ring, panther's teeth employing,  
They rip apart the en'my's heart.  
Naught holy is there more, and cleaving  
Are bonds of pious modesty,  
The good its place to bad is leaving,  
And all the vices govern free.  
To rouse the lion, is dang'rous error,  
And ruinous is the tiger's bite,  
Yet is most terrible the terror  
Of man in his deluded state.  
Woe's them, who heaven's torch of lighting  
Unto the ever-blind do lend!  
It lights him not, 'tis but igniting,  
And land and towns to ash doth rend.

*Joy unto me God hath given!  
See there! like a golden star  
From its husk, so blank and even,  
Peeleth out the metal core.  
From the crown to base  
Like the bright sun plays,  
And escutcheons' decoration  
Builder's skill gives commendation.*

COME IN! Come in!  
Ye workmen all, do come ye close in,  
That we commence the Bell to christen,  
*Concordia* its name be given,  
To concord, in an intimate communion,  
The loving commons gathers she in union.

And be her purpose thus fulfilled,  
For which the Master did her build:  
On high above low earthly living,  
Shall she in heav'n's blue tent unfurl'd,  
Be thunder's neighbor, ever-pending,  
And border on the starry world,  
A single voice from high she raises  
Like constellations' band so bright,  
Which its creator wand'ring praises,  
And leads the wreathéd year a-right.  
Alone to grave, eternal singing  
Her metal mouth be consecrate,  
And hourly with all swiftness winging,  
Shall she be moved by time in flight,  
Her tongue to destiny is lending,  
*Herself* has heart and pity not,  
With nothing but her swing attending  
The game of life's e'er-changing lot.  
And as the ring in ears is passing  
Sent by her mighty sounding play,  
So let her teach, that naught is lasting,  
That all things earthly fade away.

*Now with rope's full power bringing  
Rock the Bell from vault with care,  
That she in the realm of ringing  
Rises, in the Heavens' air.  
Pull ye, pull ye, heave!  
She doth move, doth wave.  
Joy be she this city bringing,  
Peace be the first chime she's ringing.*

—translated by Marianna Wertz