

## David Bednall: Three Songs of Love

### Texts

First Love, by John Clare (1793–1864)

I ne'er was struck before that hour  
With love so sudden and so sweet,  
Her face it bloomed like a sweet flower  
And stole my heart away complete.  
My face turned pale as deadly pale,  
My legs refused to walk away,  
And when she looked, what could I ail?  
My life and all seemed turned to clay.

And then my blood rushed to my face  
And took my eyesight quite away,  
The trees and bushes round the place  
Seemed midnight at noonday.  
I could not see a single thing,  
Words from my eyes did start—  
They spoke as chords do from the string,  
And blood burnt round my heart.

Are flowers the winter's choice?  
Is love's bed always snow?  
She seemed to hear my silent voice,  
Not love's appeals to know.  
I never saw so sweet a face  
As that I stood before.  
My heart has left its dwelling-place  
And can return no more.

Though you are in your shining days,  
by W B Yeats (1865–1939)

Though you are in your shining days,  
Voices among the crowd  
And new friends busy with your praise,  
Be not unkind or proud,  
But think about old friends the most:  
Time's bitter flood will rise,  
Your beauty perish and be lost  
For all eyes but these eyes.

He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven,  
by W B Yeats

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,  
Enwrought with golden and silver light,  
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths  
Of night and light and the half-light,  
I would spread the cloths under your feet:  
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

Then and Now, by John McCrae (1872–1918)

Beneath her window in the fragrant night  
I half forget how truant years have flown  
Since I looked up to see her chamber-light,  
Or catch, perchance, her slender shadow thrown  
Upon the casement; but the nodding leaves  
Sweep lazily across the unlit pane,  
And to and fro beneath the shadowy eaves,  
Like restless birds, the breath of coming rain  
Creeps, lilac-laden, up the village street  
When all is still, as if the very trees  
Were listening for the coming of her feet  
That come no more; yet, lest I weep, the breeze  
Sings some forgotten song of those old years  
Until my heart grows far too glad for tears.