



TRUBADOURS

originals &  
translations

# The Black Veils

The songs of

Brassens

Brel

Ferré

Moustaki

&

The Black Veils

## The Black Veils

### TROUBADOURS: Originals and Translations

Written/translated & performed by Robert Alfonso & Todd Heller (the Black Veils).  
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Extra guitar on "All in Good Time" played by John Avery. Thanks John!  
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#### 11. Paris (Alfonso/Heller)

Stop crying  
About what you could have had  
Wake up now  
You know there's more than good and bad  
You still remember  
All the love she showed to you  
And how she cried when you said  
There's nothing left for me to do  
On her dress the tears were falling  
And in her eyes you saw your reflection

In Paris your money  
Paid for wine but it begged for love  
She danced like Nijinski  
While you just watched her from above  
At the American Church  
Almost down upon your knees  
You saw yourself in the mirror  
And sent it to your friends to read  
But where were you when she was crying  
And the power of the past was fading?  
You've got to change, you've got to change  
Wasn't it romantic  
Rainy nights at the piano bar  
You thought she was exotic  
And you were more than you really are  
With her wild brown hair  
You'd have given her anything  
What a dreamer  
And you think she's still suffering  
And it's a lonely song you're singing  
Liberté à St Denis

#### 12. It's a Wonderful War (Alfonso/Heller)

It's a wonderful war if you don't breathe  
It's a wonderful war if you can't read  
There's freedom for you if you'll believe  
It's a wonderful war, it's a wonderful war

It's a wonderful war if you're not poor  
It's a wonderful war if you're Christian  
There's freedom from you if you just give in  
It's a wonderful war, it's a wonderful war

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#### 13. Feu et terre (Alfonso/Heller)

Le feu, c'est masculin, comme ton père  
La terre, c'est féminin, comme ta mère  
More than one fire, on dit « les feux »  
More than one earth, on dit « les terres »

Le feu, c'est masculin, comme ton père  
La terre, c'est féminin, comme ta mère  
Père le feu, mère la terre  
Comprenez-vous les genres mes chères?  
Father fire, mother earth  
Now do you see what the genders are worth?

**TROUBADOURS:**  
**Originals and Translations**  
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(aka the Black Veils)

**9. May '40 ("Mai '40," Jacques Brel)  
English translation: Alfonso/Heller**

They played a tune just like this tune  
The day the war came around  
They played a tune just like this tune  
The day the war came to town

My eleven years of altitude  
Discovered stunned and amazed  
Stragglers soldiers tired and dazed  
Bringing back my belgitude  
The men were turning into men  
The stations swallowed troops away  
Those who hadn't gone away  
And the women  
The women clung to their husbands

They played a tune just like this tune....

See how the spring goes up in flames  
The gunners passed us and they sang  
Now they're coming back again  
Their heads bowed down between their legs  
We watched them pass before us crying  
Our big brothers become old men  
And our fathers turned to fog  
And the women  
The women clung to their children.

They played a tune just like this tune....

I discovered refugees  
A peasant wandering in a daze  
A man from the suburbs who'd escaped  
An open city that was seized  
I discovered the refused

Who'd had his gun replaced with fear  
Walking broken and abused  
And the women  
The women clung to their tears

They played a tune just like this tune....

The sky more blue than we were used to  
May of '40 raised a salute  
To some disciplined German troops  
Who crushed my belgitude  
Honor ran out of patience  
And every town was struck with dread  
And every city snuffed out dead  
And the women  
The women clung to their silence.

**10. Mon amour d'antan (Alfonso/Heller)**

Ses yeux verts sourient dans ma memoir  
Elle chante à ma paresse  
Elle danse dans mes pleurs de joie  
Et sur la tombe de ma tendresse

Ses mains douces font des gestes noirs  
Sa voix sanglote *je t'aime toujours*  
La voiture de mon amour ne freine pas  
Quand elle danse dans le carrefour

Oui c'est mon amour  
Oui c'est bien mon amour d'antan

Ses yeux verts s'éclairent dans ma memoir  
Perçant la brume sur cet étang  
Et quand elle danse vers ma détresse  
Je vois encore ma femme d'antan.

**1. Sarah ("Sarah," Georges Moustaki)  
English translation: Alfonso/Heller**

The woman lying in my bed  
Turned twenty long ago  
Her eyes engraved  
With rings of age  
Or love you'd say  
And the day to day  
Her lips worn out  
By all the mouths  
Kisses she's had  
So often bad  
Her color faint  
Despite the paint  
More pale than cream  
Or a cold moonbeam

The woman lying in my bed  
Turned twenty long ago  
The breasts that sag  
From the loves she's had  
You wouldn't call  
Pet names at all  
Her body tired  
From men's desires  
Loved far too much  
But not enough  
Her back's bent down  
So weighted down  
By the memories  
She's had to flee

The woman lying in my bed  
Turned twenty long ago  
But don't you laugh  
And don't you touch  
And save your crumbs  
And your sarcasms  
Because tonight  
We'll reunite  
Her body her hands  
At my command  
And it's her heart  
Covered with scars  
And full of tears  
That calms my fears.



## 2. Tango Último (Alfonso/Heller)

Le seguí del aeropuerto de Bogotá  
A través de los ríos, bosques  
y montañas profundos y oscuros  
Hasta tu pueblo de Bucaramanga  
Por fin, llegaste al bar del Blue Lion  
Con tu séquito de tontos muchachos  
Y un grupo de música tocaba  
un canción romántica  
Bailaste un tango lento con un niño  
A las cuatro de la mañana  
Te fue con al mejor postor  
Y las fantasmas de la noche volvían  
al cementerio del día.

He let the flowers die  
She watches butterflies  
The witless old woman cries  
There's a lot of that going around.

Au salon des somnambules  
Cinq heures du matin  
Les mains tremblant  
Je te vois encore ma belle  
Tous mes demains  
Comme avant, avant-hier  
Sauvage en simple déesse...  
Ou peut-être que tu as oublié...  
Je t'ai apporté une glace et des allumettes  
Tant de choses sont périssables!

Et il n'y a pas beaucoup de choses  
qui durent longtemps  
Sauf la mort, l'amour, et leurs parfums.

Friends never come around  
She'll never miss the sound  
They lost everything they'd found  
Waiting around to die.

Entonces, por fin has ganado  
Ganas siempre y siempre ganaras  
Y estoy aquí en las Islas de los Roques  
El tiempo no es feliz como  
los días tranquilos en Clichy  
Para siempre exiliado de corazón,  
de fe, y de alma!



## 7. Snowfall on Liège ("Il neige sur Liège," Jacques Brel) English translation: Alfonso/Heller

It snows, it snows on Liège  
And the snow over Liège  
Puts on gloves for her show  
It snows, it snows on Liège  
Black bow of the Meuse  
On a white clown's brow

So shatter the cries  
Of the hours and the birds  
Of the kids rolling hoops  
And the dark and the drab  
It snows, it snows on Liège  
Let the river flow through silently

It snows, it snows on Liège  
And so swirls the snow  
Between the sky and Liège  
That no one there knows if it snows,  
If it snows on Liège  
Or if it's Liège that's snowing  
Towards the sky

And the blowing snow weds  
The green lovers in haste  
Whose course can be traced  
Along the pale white square  
It snows, it snows on Liège  
Let the river deliver silently

Tonight, tonight it snows  
Upon my dreams and Liège  
Let the river pierce through silently.



## 8. Angel on a Pony (Alfonso/Heller)

Angels swimming in the air  
They're having fun everywhere  
They sprinkle stardust on the roof  
And they laugh and they fly away

Angel on a pony  
I know you'll never be phony  
Hey pretty angel can I take a ride with you?

Girls are swimming in the stars  
They're looking pretty in their cars  
I've got a bucket of hearts in my hand  
And I'm looking in the stars for you

Angel on a pony  
Don't bring no phony  
Hey pretty angel  
can I take a ride with you?

Let's take a trip to the Amazon  
We'll stop in Reykjavik and Viet Nam  
Find a castle we can call our own  
And do our magic when the lawyers come!

Angel on a pony  
What's your patrimony  
Hey pretty angel can I take a ride with you?

### 6. All in Good Time

("Avec le temps," Léo Ferré)

English translation: Alfonso/Heller

All in good time... all in good time,  
everything goes  
You forget the face and  
you forget the voice  
When the heart beats no more,  
don't go looking for more  
Just let it go, it's just as well

All in good time... all in good time,  
everything goes  
The other one who you loved and you  
sought in the rain  
The one who you knew  
from barely a glance  
Between the words, between the lines,  
behind the mask  
Of a painted-up vow that's turned in  
for the night  
All in good time it all fades out of sight

All in good time... all in good time,  
everything goes  
Even the sweetest memories –  
you've got that kind of face  
At the gallery I look for deals in the aisles  
of death  
Saturday night when tenderness  
just up and leaves

All in good time... all in good time,  
everything goes  
The other one who you took  
for not much, for a sneeze  
The one you adored and adorned  
with the wind  
The one you sold your soul to  
for a penny or two  
And you followed behind just  
like a dog  
All in good time, oh, it's all right

All in good time... all in good time,  
everything goes  
The passions all gone  
and the voices all gone  
That whispered to you like those  
poor people do  
Don't stay out late, and most of all,  
don't catch cold

All in good time... all in good time,  
everything goes  
And you feel all worn out like a  
pastured old horse  
And you feel yourself freeze in one more  
random bed  
And you're all alone but it's clear in your head  
That you've been betrayed by all those lost years  
All in good time... love disappears.

### 3. Jaurès ("Jaurès," Jacques Brel)

English translation: Alfonso/Heller

They were all used up at fifteen,  
They faded just as they turned green,  
Those twelve months were all December.  
What kind of life did our grandparents lead  
Between their absinthe and their Mass?  
They were old before they started.  
Fifteen hours each day on a leash  
Leaves your face as gray as cinders.  
Oh yes Sir, oh yes Master,

Why did they kill Jaurès?  
Why did they kill Jaurès?

Well you can't say that they were slaves  
To talk about the way they lived;  
When you start out beaten down  
It's hard to leave the place that made you.

And still somehow hope could bloom  
In the dreams that rose before their eyes,  
The dreams of those few who refused  
To crawl the whole way to their deaths.  
Oh yes Master, oh yes Sir,

Why did they kill Jaurès?  
Why did they kill Jaurès?

If they had the bad luck to survive  
It was only to go off to the war,  
Just to end their lives in war,  
On the orders of men with swords  
Who sent them off without a thought  
To offer up on the fields of horror  
Their 20 years yet to be born,  
And so they died, wracked with fear,  
Completely wretched, oh yes Master,  
Covered in payers, oh yes Sir....

Demand of the world you young and  
blessed  
At least the time for souvenirs,  
At least the time for sighs and tears.

Why did they kill Jaurès?  
Why did they kill Jaurès?



**4. Don't Leave Me**  
(*"Ne me quitte pas,"* Jacques Brel)  
English trans.: Alfonso/Heller

Don't leave me  
Just forget it all  
We can forget it all  
It's gone now, see  
Just forget the times  
Our desires crossed  
And the time we lost  
Thinking how we might  
Forget those hours  
That would crucify  
On a cross of "why"  
That joy of ours  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
  
I will offer you  
Pearls made of rain  
That come from a land  
Where rain never falls  
I'll dig in the dirt  
Even after I'm gone  
Just to cover your long  
Form in gold and light  
I will make you a land  
Where the king will be love  
Where the law will be love  
And where you will be queen

Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
I'll invent for you  
The words of a fool  
As plain as can be  
I will tell you then  
About those lovers who  
Twice saw their two  
Hearts melt into one  
Then I'll retell the one  
About the king who died  
Because he was denied  
The light of your sun  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
  
It's often been seen  
A volcano explode  
When it was believed  
To be far too old  
And then it appears  
In some burned-out fields  
That the wheat grows in yields  
Like the greatest of years

And when night comes back  
For the sky to burn true  
Will the red and the black  
Stay apart and as two  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
  
Don't leave me  
I won't cry anymore  
I won't talk anymore  
I'll just hide in here  
Just to look at you  
As you dance and smile  
And listen to you  
Sing, and then laugh  
Let me turn into  
The shadow of your shadow  
The shadow of your hand  
The shadow of your dog  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me  
Don't leave me.



**5. Good Man from Auvergne**  
(*Chanson pour l'Auvergnat* G. Brassens)  
English translation: Alfonso/Heller

This song's for you good man from Auvergne  
Who didn't think twice when you did learn  
T'was cold in my life and not as it should  
You gave me four pieces of wood  
T'was you who gave me fire when  
All the fine gentle women and men  
All those good folks with style and grace  
Slammed the door right in my face  
It seemed nothing more than a wood fire  
But it did warm my body entire  
And in my soul it's burning still  
Its joyfulness forever will  
Good man from Auvergne when you pass away  
When Azreal's driver takes you that day  
May he speed you 'cross the heavens above  
To eternal love  
  
This song's for you good innkeeper's wife  
Who didn't think twice about saving my life  
When I was starving and surely half dead  
You shared with me four crusts of bread  
T'was you who opened your cupboard when  
All the fine gentle women and men  
All those good folks with honor and grace  
Made light of the need on my face  
It seemed nothing more than a crust of bread  
But it did warm my body well fed  
And in my soul it's burning still  
The feast in it forever will

Good innkeeper's wife when you pass away  
When Azreal's driver takes you that day  
May he speed you 'cross the heavens above  
To eternal love

This song's for you good man from afar  
Who didn't think twice about who you are  
When I was condemned and taken away  
By the local constabulary  
You who didn't applaud it when  
All the fine gentle women and men  
All those good folks were happy and gay  
To see my corpse carted away  
T'was nothing more than a sweet smile  
But it did warm me all the while  
And in my soul it's just begun  
To shine like the afternoon sun  
Good man from afar when you pass away  
When Azreal's driver takes you that day  
May he speed you 'cross the heavens above  
To eternal love

