

“En fermant les yeux,” (When I close my eyes”) “Le rêve” (The Dream aria) MANON, Act II; music by Jules Massenet, libretto by Henri Meillac and Philippe Gille, 1884, based on the novel by the Abbé Prévost, *l’Histoire du Chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut*, 1731

SYNOPSIS: Des Grieux and Manon have been living together very simply, but she is tempted by a wealthy admirer to leave her lover for a life of luxury. Returning from a long walk, Des Grieux describes the vivid daydream he has just had to Manon.

DES GRIEUX

En fermant les yeux, je vois là-bas,  
une humble retraite,  
une maisonnette, toute blanche,  
au fond des bois!

Sous ses tranquilles ombrages  
les clairs et joyeux ruisseaux,  
où se mirent les feuillages,  
chantent avec les oiseaux!

C'est le paradis! Oh, non!  
Tout est là triste et morose,  
car il y manque une chose.  
Il y faut encore Manon!

Viens! Là sera notre vie  
si tu le veux, oh, Manon!

When I close my eyes, I see afar  
a simple old cottage,  
just a tiny house, very white,  
deep in the woods!  
Beneath its placid shadows,  
the bright and bubbling springs,  
with their images of leaves,  
sing along with all the birds.  
Why, it’s paradise!... Oh, no!  
Everything is sad and somber,  
for there’s one thing that is missing.  
You still aren’t there, Manon!

Come! that’s where we’ll spend our lives,  
If you’ll agree, oh, Manon!

--From a course “Bel canto—the French Connection,” for Lifelong Learners at UC Santa Cruz ©2011



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