

“Je suis encore tout étourdie,” (I am still so excited) MANON, Act I, music by Jules Massenet, libretto by Meilhac and Gilles, based on the novel by the Abbé Prévost. 1884

SYNOPSIS: Manon has just arrived by coach at an inn, where she meets her cousin, a soldier, who is supposed to accompany her to a convent. A simple country girl, she breathlessly describes the big adventure she has just experienced.

MANON

Je suis encore tout étourdie
Je suis encore tout engourdie...
Ah! mon cousin!
Excusez-moi! excusez un moment d'émoi...
Je suis encore tout étourdie...
Pardonnez à mon bavardage;
j'en suis à mon premier voyage!
Le coche s'éloignait à peine
que j'admirais de tous mes yeux,
les hameaux, les grands bois... la plaine...
les voyageurs jeunes et vieux...
Ah! mon cousin, excusez-moi!
c'est mon premier voyage!
Je regardais fuir, curieuse,
les arbres frissonnant au vent!
Et j'oubliais, toute joyeuse,
que je partais **pour le couvent! **
Devant tant de choses nouvelles,
ne riez pas, si je vous dis
que je croyais avoir des ailes,
et m'envoler en paradis!
Oui, mon cousin!... Puis...
j'eus un moment de tristesse...
Je pleurais... je ne sais pas pourquoi.
L'instant d'après, je le confesse,
Je riais...Ah! Ah!
Mais sans savoir pourquoi? Ah! ah! ah!
Ah! mon cousin... excusez-moi...
ah! mon cousin... pardon!
Je suis encor tout étourdie...
Je suis... encor tout engourdie!
Pardonnez à mon bavardage,
j'en suis à mon premier voyage!
(**=repeat)

I am still so excited,
I am still so light-headed...
Ah, dear cousin!
Excuse me! Excuse a moment of emotion...
I am still so excited...
Forgive me for chattering on,
this is my very first voyage!
The coach had hardly started out
when I admired with wide open eyes,
the hamlets, the great woods, the plain,
the travelers, both young and old...
Ah! dear cousin, excuse me, please!
It's my very first voyage.
Curious, I watched rushing by,
the trees, trembling in the wind.
And full of joy, I didn't recall
that I was going **to the convent.**
Faced with so many adventures,
do not laugh if I tell you now
that I thought I had sprouted wings
and was flying to paradise!
Yes, dear cousin!...Then...
I felt a moment of sadness...
I was crying...I don't know the cause.
The next moment though, I must confess,
I was laughing...Ha, ha!
But I don't know the cause. Ha, ha, ha.
Ah, dear cousin, excuse me...
Ah, dear cousin, pardon!
I am still so excited...
I am still so light-headed!
Forgive me for chattering on.
this is my very first voyage!

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