

“Va, laisse couler mes larmes, (Oh, let my tears keep on flowiing) WERTHER,  
Act III: music by Jules Massenet, libretto by Edouard Blau, Paul Milliet, and  
Georges Hartmann, 1892

SYNOPSIS: Werther, a poet who embodies the spirit of the Romantic hero, i.e., he lives on the fringes of society, is deeply in love with Charlotte, wife of his friend, Albert. Although she returns his love, she does not admit it and sends Werther away until Christmas. It is the eve of the holiday and Charlotte is deeply depressed, after having read Werther’s letters. Her younger sister, Sophie, tries to cheer her up, inspiring this emotional response...

CHARLOTTE (*to SOPHIE*)

*(ne se contraignant plus)*

Va! laisse couler mes larmes;  
elles font du bien, ma chérie!  
Les larmes qu'on ne pleure pas,  
dans notre âme retombent toutes,  
et de leurs patientes gouttes  
martèlent le coeur triste et las!  
Sa résistance enfin s'épuise;  
le coeur se creuse... et s'affaiblit:  
il est trop grand,  
rien ne l'emplit;  
et trop fragile,  
tout le brise!!  
Tout le brise!

*(unable to control herself)*

Oh, let my tears keep on flowing;  
they do me good, my dearest one.  
The tears that are held back from crying  
all fall down deep inside our being,  
and from their constant drops of water  
they make the heart grow sad and weak!  
Till finally it can't keep fighting;  
the heart grows bigger...and gets weak:  
it's much too large,  
nothing can fill it;  
and, much too fragile,  
ev'rything breaks it!  
Ev'rything breaks it!

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