

A Poem

[Date unknown]

Oh Muses! Thanksgiving and gifts do I bring,
Now help me of great Buzigannerl to sing;
His fame and his beauty in all mouths resound,
[5] For nowhere on earth is his like to be found.

I saw him, a God not of wood, glass or tin,
And shall, without fear of committing a sin,
Prompt swear that he's earned every ounce of his fame;
His makes all his relatives skulk off in shame.

[10] But now you'll be eager to find out some more,
Of all that this Phoenix of dogs holds in store,
You'll hear every word, though it may take a while.
By many a step we shall travel our mile.

Most humbly I beg you, my lords and fair dames,
[15] (Believe me, my heart is already in flames,)
Please sit on the grass and the sweet scents inhale;
I'll sneeze out some snuff, then proceed with my tale.

And then I will go on to sing of his glory,
So touching, I trust you will weep at his story;
[20] I would only ask that you make not a sound,
Lest Muse, bard and epic all crash to the ground.

Now Zemir gave birth to this true canine king
In central Vienna, yet we know not a thing
Of day, month or hour that made her "Mamma",
[25] But if we now turn to his glorious Papa
We know neither rank, name nor anything vital,
Except that he boasted an Austrian title.

The mother, Zemir, saw her first light of day
Where one called Columbus came first, so they say,
[30] To land on that shore. Though not fully sixteen,
The world and its wonders she'd already seen

Yet all as a virgin, quite Vestal, like ice
And purer than snow. But this came at a price:
She lacked any notion – I swear this is true –
[35] Of a certain male member and what it can do.

¹ BD: Original unknown. Edition Nottebohm.

² BD: In this poem the influence of a popular poet of the day, Alois Blumauer (1755-1798), is detectable. Mozart set one of his texts, *Das Lied der Freiheit* ["The Song of freedom"] as KV 506 (at the latest towards the end of 1785).

So happy and innocent, fresh as the day,
Though scantily clothed, she was making her way
Alone by the sea-shore, a dreamy-eyed elf;
Engrossed in her day-dreams, she spoke with herself.

[40] And then – but from where? – A most handsome man came,
Not old, not too young, and of medium frame,
And stood there before her – and she stood aghast! –
She trembled – and fled – but then she stuck fast

[45] In the mud, where she struggled in vain and then fell,
And showed him the target – and bull’s eye as well.
Imagine the stranger, who shook where he stood,
With quaking and trembling; – “Oh, gladly I would

E’en forego my Paradise, which is not worth
One half of this finest of sights on the earth.”
[50] He drew nigh and wanted (most fairly and nicely)
To cover her up, and sought quite precisely

The hem of her blouse; but, trembling, his hand,
Instead of concealing, uncovered new land,
Because it had slipped between blouse and her cloak;
[55] And with all the fumbling she then soon awoke.

Dear readers, you’ve studied the ladies a bit:
Do they know what behaviour, and when, is most fit?
In this situation, as in these lines painted,
They should at least know to pretend that they’ve fainted.

[60] But as she awakened she sprang to her feet,
Cut loose with her anger, and started to beat
Him first on his ears, a terrible sound,
Then tripped him and kicked till he fell to the ground.

[65] This knight took his pasting without all demur,
Although he could think of some things he’d prefer;
“She’s bound to get tired, that’s all that I know,
For all things must pass that take place here below.”

And, just as he thought, it all started to fade,
(For patience had finally come to his aid):
[70] The sight of his suffering her anger did check;
Instead she now placed a soft paw round his neck

And kissed his still burning hot cheek without let,
Which pleasingly caused him the blows to forget,
The blows which this beauty had rained on his skull
[75] And taught him, like Xeno, on patience to mull.

He kissed, quite enraptured, her hand and her cheek,
Then asked her to sit on his lap and did speak:
“Oh beauty of beauties! – Forgive and forget
The crime I committed, and which I regret

[80] With all of my heart! Ah, the fault was not mine:
Why, then, must your tail-bone just look so divine? –
So blame yourself, beauty, not him in your arms:
Who would not risk all in pursuit of such charms?”