

# The Goldberg Variations

## Meditations on Solitude

Programme with Texts & Photographs



*Music*

**J.S. Bach - The Goldberg Variations**

*Musicians*

**Ysaÿe Trio**

*Actor*

**Sir Simon Russell Beale**

*Photographs*

**Kristina Feldhammer**

*Devised by*

**Jonathan Berman**

*Produced by*

**Emily Ingram,  
Greengage Ventures**

The work is part of a series of performances developed by Greengage, which pushes the boundaries of existing digital technology to create the magic of shared performance experiences in theatre and music.

While concert halls and traditional venues around the world remain closed and millions remain in quarantine or self-isolation, it hopes to bring the joy of performing arts to people's homes. All artists in Greengage productions are paid for their work.

Once in a while  
I just let time wear on  
leaning against a  
solitary pine  
standing speechless,  
as does the whole universe!  
Ah, who can share  
this solitude with me?

*Taigu Ryokan*



*Ohne Titel*

## Bach - Aria



There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,  
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,  
There is society, where none intrudes,  
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:  
I love not man the less, but Nature more

*Lord Byron*

## Bach - Variation 1



I have a house where I go  
When there's too many people,  
I have a house where I go  
Where no one can be;  
I have a house where I go,  
Where nobody ever says 'No';  
Where no one says anything— so  
There is no one but me.

*Alan Alexander Milne*

## Bach - Variation 2

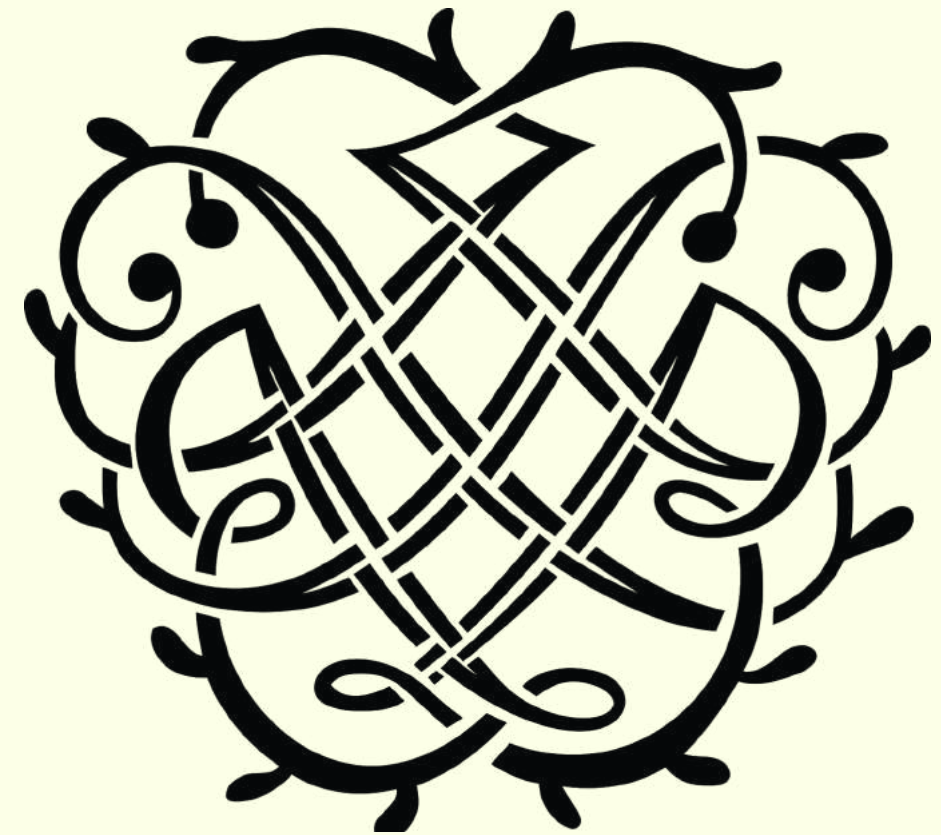


Solitude is the path over which destiny endeavours to lead man to himself. Solitude is the path that men most fear. A path fraught with terrors, where snakes and toads lie in wait.

Without solitude there is no suffering, without solitude there is no heroism. But the solitude I have in mind is not the solitude of the blithe poets or of the theatre, but where the fountain bubbles so sweetly at the mouth of the hermit's cave.

*Hermann Hesse*

## Bach - Variation 3 - Canone all'Unisono





*I lost myself in the forest that grows inside you*



O solitude! if I must with thee dwell,  
Let it not be among the jumbled heap  
Of murky buildings; climb with me the  
steep,—  
Nature's observatory—whence the dell,  
Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,  
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep  
'Mongst boughs pavillion'd, where the deer's  
swift leap  
Startles the wild bee from the fox-glove bell.  
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with  
thee,  
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,  
Whose words are images of thoughts refin'd,  
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be  
Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,  
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

*John Keats*

## Bach - Variation 4



There is a solitude of space  
A solitude of sea  
A solitude of death, but these  
Society shall be  
Compared with that profounder site  
That polar privacy  
A soul admitted to itself—  
Finite infinity.

*Emily Dickinson*

## Bach - Variation 5



Solitude is not chosen, any more than  
destiny is chosen. Solitude comes to us if we  
have within us the magic stone that attracts  
destiny.

*Hermann Hesse*



*Impermanence*



How sweet to be a Cloud  
Floating in the Blue  
It makes him very proud  
To be a little cloud.

*Alan Alexander Milne*



## Bach - Variation 6 - Canone alla Seconda



I wandered lonely as a Cloud  
That floats on high o'er Vales and Hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of golden Daffodils;  
Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.  
Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the Milky Way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.  
The waves beside them danced, but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—  
A Poet could not but be gay  
In such a jocund company:

I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the shew to me had brought:  
For oft when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude,  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the Daffodils.

*William Wordsworth*

## Bach - Variation 7



Give me the splendid silent sun with all his  
beams full-dazzling,  
Give me juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red  
from the orchard,  
Give me a field where the unmow'd grass  
grows,  
Give me an arbor, give me the trellis'd  
grape,  
Give me fresh corn and wheat, give me  
serene-moving animals  
teaching content,

*Walt Whitman*



*Ohne Titel*



Give me nights perfectly quiet, as on high  
plateaus west  
of the Mississippi, and I looking up at the  
stars;  
Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of  
beautiful flowers,  
where I can walk undisturb'd;  
Give me for marriage a sweet-breath'd  
woman, of whom  
I should never tire;  
Give me a perfect child—give me, away,  
aside from the  
noise of the world, a rural domestic life;  
Give me to warble spontaneous songs,  
reliev'd, recluse  
by myself, for my own ears only;  
Give me solitude—give me Nature—give me  
again,  
O Nature, your primal sanities!

—These, demanding to have them, (tired  
with ceaseless  
excitement, and rack'd by the war-strife;)  
These to procure, incessantly asking, rising  
in cries from  
my heart,  
While yet incessantly asking, still I adhere  
to my city;  
Day upon day, and year upon year, O city,  
walking  
your streets,  
Where you hold me enchain'd a certain  
time, refusing  
to give me up;  
Yet giving to make me glutted, enrich'd of  
soul—you  
give me forever faces;

*Walt Whitman*

## Bach - Variation 8



Solitude is independence. It had been my wish and with the years I had attained it. It was cold. Oh, cold enough! But it was also still, wonderfully still and vast like the cold stillness of space in which the stars revolve.

*Hermann Hesse*

## Bach - Variation 9 - Canone alla Terza



I am too alone in the world, and yet not alone enough  
to make every moment holy.  
I am too tiny in this world, and not tiny enough  
just to lie before you like a thing,  
shrewd and secretive.  
I want my own will, and I want simply to be with my will,  
as it goes toward action;  
and in those quiet, sometimes hardly moving times,  
when something is coming near,  
I want to be with those who know secret things  
or else alone.

I want to be a mirror for your whole body,  
and I never want to be blind, or to be too  
old  
to hold up your heavy and swaying picture.  
I want to unfold.  
I don't want to stay folded anywhere,  
because where I am folded, there I am a lie.  
and I want my grasp of things to be  
true before you. I want to describe myself  
like a painting that I looked at  
closely for a long time,  
like a saying that I finally understood,  
like the pitcher I use every day,  
like the face of my mother,  
like a ship  
that carried me  
through the wildest storm of all.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

## **Bach - Variation 10**



I must stay alone and know that I am alone  
to contemplate and feel nature in full; I  
have to surrender myself to what encircles  
me, I have to merge with my clouds and  
rocks in order to be what I am, Solitude is  
indispensable for my dialogue with nature.

*Caspar Friedrich David*



*Ohne Titel*

## Bach - Variation II



Solitude is the pre-requisite for ecstatic experience, especially the experience most valued by the post-Wagnerian artist - the condition of heroism. One can't feel oneself heroic without having first been cast-off by the world, or perhaps by having done the casting off oneself.

*Glenn Gould*

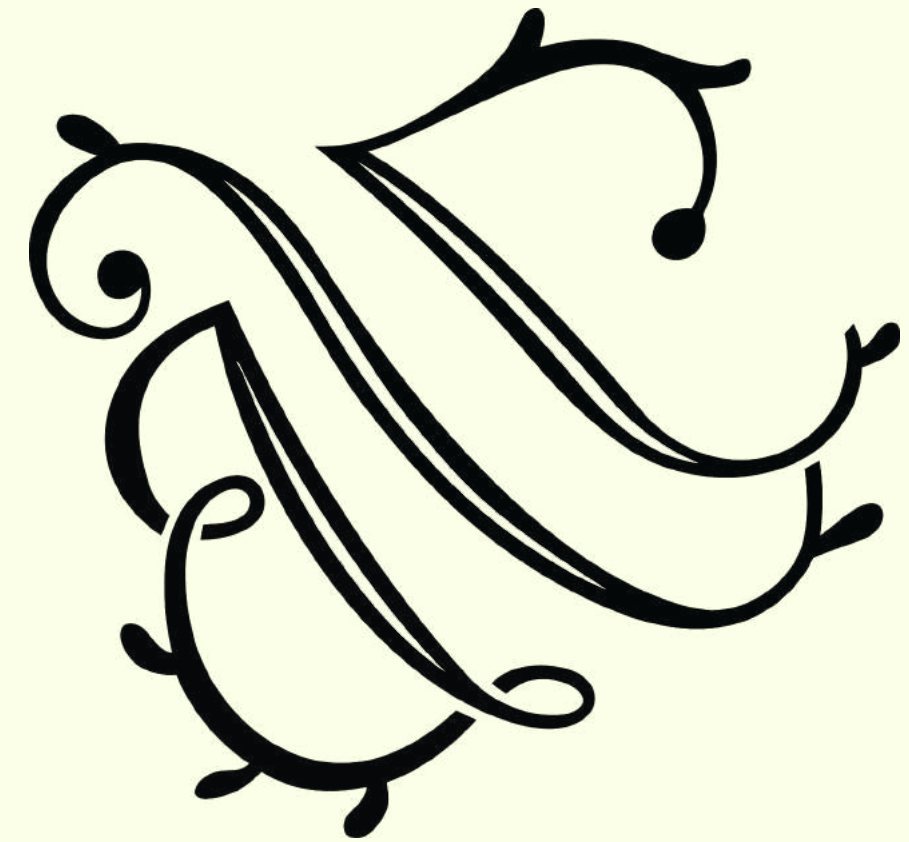
Bach - Variation 12 - Canone alla Quarta in  
moto contrario



How much better is silence; the coffee cup,  
the table. How much better to sit by myself  
like the solitary sea-bird that opens its  
wings on the stake. Let me sit here for ever  
with bare things, this coffee cup, this knife,  
this fork, things in themselves, myself being  
myself.

*Virginia Woolf*

Bach - Variation 13





*Ohne Titel*



The Loneliness One dare not sound—  
And would as soon surmise  
As in its Grave go plumbing  
To ascertain the size—  
The Loneliness whose worst alarm  
Is lest itself should see—  
And perish from before itself  
For just a scrutiny—  
The Horror not to be surveyed—  
But skirted in the Dark—  
With Consciousness suspended—  
And Being under Lock—  
I fear me this—is Loneliness—  
The Maker of the soul

Its Caverns and its Corridors  
Illuminate—or seal—

I'm Nobody! Who are you?  
Are you – Nobody – too?



Then there's a pair of us!

Don't tell! they'd advertise – you know!  
How dreary – to be – Somebody!

How public – like a Frog –  
To tell one's name – the livelong June –  
To an admiring Bog!

*Emily Dickinson*

### Bach - Variation 14



To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,  
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,  
Where things that own not man's dominion  
dwell,  
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;

To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,  
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;  
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;  
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold  
Converse with Nature's charms, and view  
her stores unroll'd.

But midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of  
men,  
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,  
And roam along, the world's tired denizen,  
With none who bless us, none whom we can  
bless;  
Minions of splendour shrinking from  
distress!

None that, with kindred consciousness  
endued,  
If we were not, would seem to smile the less  
Of all that flatter'd, follow'd, sought, and  
sued;  
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude.

*Lord Byron*

## Bach - Variation 15 - Canone alla Quinta



We must become so alone, so utterly alone,  
that we withdraw into our innermost self. It  
is a way of bitter suffering. But then our  
solitude is overcome, we are no longer  
alone, for we find that our innermost self is  
the spirit, that it is God, the indivisible.  
And suddenly we find ourselves in the  
midst of the world, yet undisturbed by its  
multiplicity, for our innermost soul we  
know ourselves to be one with all being.

*Hermann Hesse*



*Ain Soph*

## Bach - Variation 16



Happy the man, whose wish and care  
A few paternal acres bound,  
Content to breathe his native air,  
In his own ground.  
Whose herds with milk, whose fields with  
bread,  
Whose flocks supply him with attire,  
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,  
In winter fire.  
Blest, who can unconcernedly find  
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,  
In health of body, peace of mind,  
Quiet by day,  
Sound sleep by night; study and ease,  
Together mixed; sweet recreation;  
And innocence, which most does please,  
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;  
Thus unlamented let me die;  
Steal from the world, and not a stone  
Tell where I lie.

*Alexander Pope*

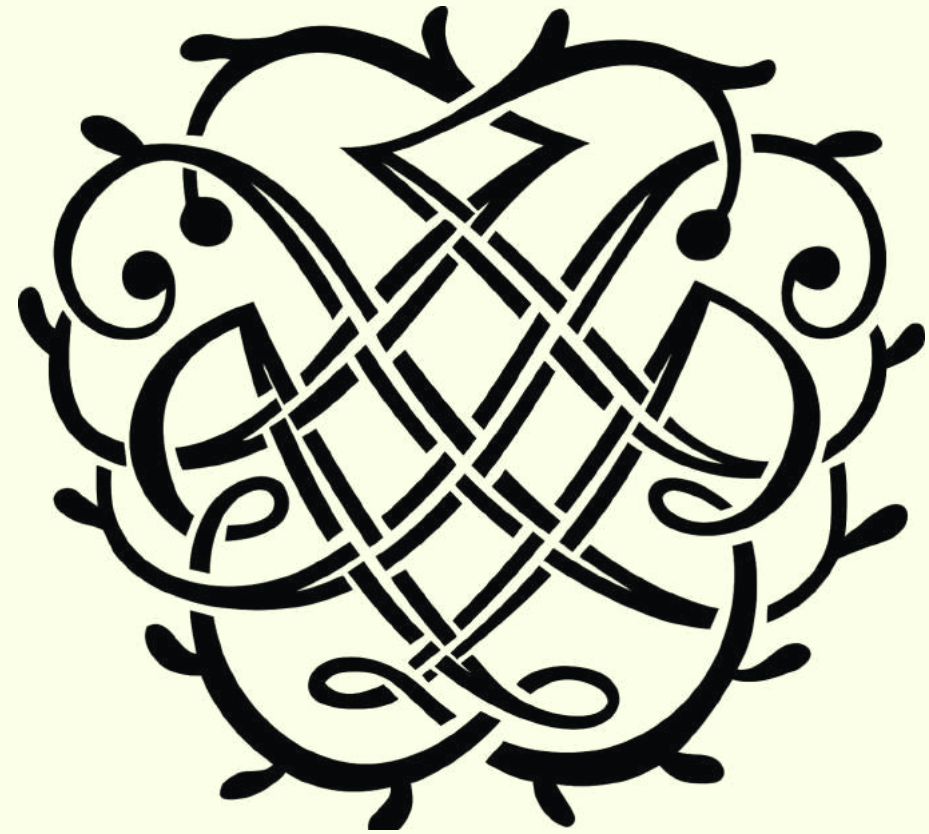
## Bach - Variation 17



Most men, the herd, have never tasted solitude. They leave father and mother, but only to crawl to a wife and quietly succumb to new warmth and new ties. They are never alone, they never commune with themselves. And when a solitary man crosses their path, they fear him and hate him like the plague; they fling stones at him and find no peace until they are far away from him. The air around him smells of stars, of cold stellar spaces; he lacks the soft warm fragrance of the home and hatchery.

*Hermann Hesse*

Bach - Variation 18 - Canone alla Sesta



*Impermanence*



I suffer from life and from other people. I can't look at reality face to face. Even the sun discourages and depresses me. Only at night and all alone, withdrawn, forgotten and lost, with no connection to anything real or useful — only then do I find myself and feel comforted.

*Fernando Pessoa*

## Bach - Variation 19



It might be lonelier  
Without the Loneliness —  
I'm so accustomed to my Fate —  
Perhaps the Other — Peace —

Would interrupt the Dark —  
And crowd the little Room —  
Too scant — by Cubits — to contain  
The Sacrament — of Him —

I am not used to Hope —  
It might intrude upon —  
Its sweet parade — blaspheme the place —  
Ordained to Suffering —

It might be easier  
To fail — with Land in Sight —  
Than gain — My Blue Peninsula —  
To perish — of Delight —

*Emily Dickinson*

**Bach - Variation 20**



TEARS! tears! tears!  
In the night, in solitude, tears,  
On the white shore dripping, dripping,  
suck'd in by the sand,  
Tears, not a star shining, all dark and  
desolate,  
Moist tears from the eyes of a muffled head;  
O who is that ghost? that form in the dark,  
with tears?  
What shapeless lump is that, bent, crouch'd  
there on the sand?  
Streaming tears, sobbing tears, throes,  
choked with wild cries;  
O storm, embodied, rising, careering with  
swift steps along the  
beach!

O wild and dismal night storm, with wind—  
O belching and desperate!  
O shade so sedate and decorous by day,  
with calm countenance  
and regulated pace,  
But away at night as you fly, none looking—  
O then the unloosen'd  
ocean,  
Of tears! tears! tears!

*Walt Whitman*

**Bach - Variation 21 - Canone alla Settima**



Loneliness is not living alone, loneliness is  
the inability to keep someone or something  
within us company, it is not a tree that  
stands alone in the middle of a plain but the  
distance between the deep sap and the bark,  
between the leaves and the roots.

*José Saramago*



**Bach - Variation 22**



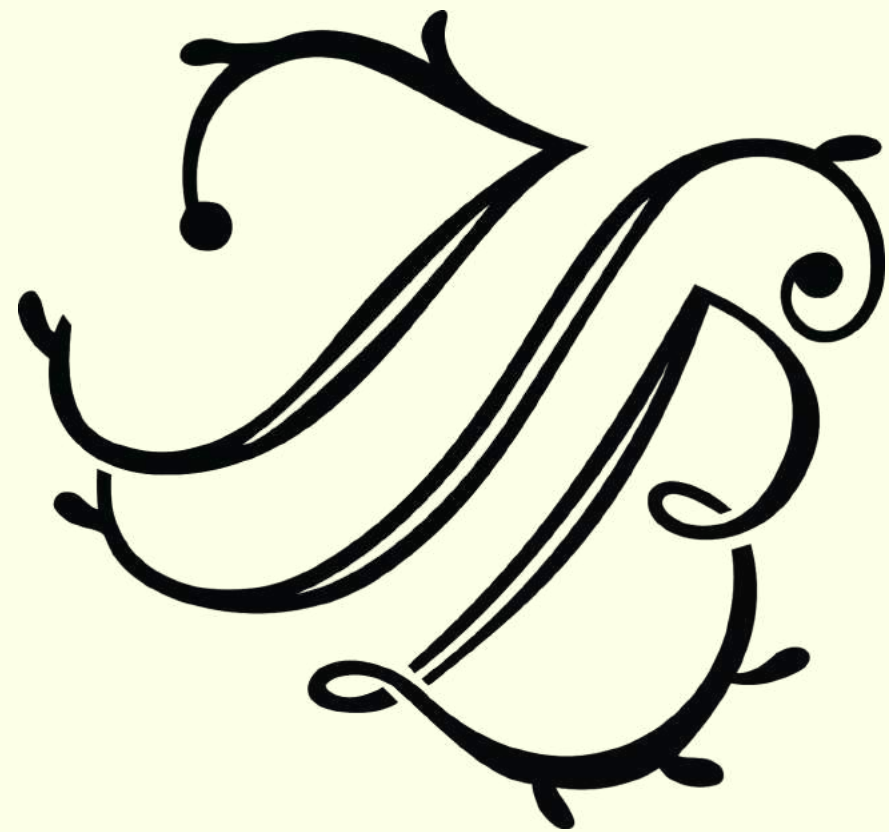
On the beach at night alone,  
As the old mother sways her to and fro  
singing her husky song,  
As I watch the bright stars shining, I think a  
thought of the clef of the universes and of  
the future.

A vast similitude interlocks all,  
All spheres, grown, ungrown, small, large,  
suns, moons, planets,  
All distances of place however wide,  
All distances of time, all inanimate forms,  
All souls, all living bodies though they be  
ever so different, or in different worlds,  
All gaseous, watery, vegetable, mineral  
processes, the fishes, the brutes,

All nations, colors, barbarisms, civilizations,  
languages,  
All identities that have existed or may exist  
on this globe, or any globe,  
All lives and deaths, all of the past, present,  
future,  
This vast similitude spans them, and always  
has spann'd,  
And shall forever span them and compactly  
hold and enclose them.

*Walt Whitman*

Bach - Variation 23



*Antelucan*



A man can be himself only so long as he is alone; and if he does not love solitude, he will not love freedom; for it is only when he is alone that he is really free.

*Arthur Schopenhauer*

## Bach - Variation 24 - Canone all'Ottava



Solitude has soft, silky hands, but with strong fingers it grasps the heart and makes it ache with sorrow.

*Kahlil Gibran*

## Bach - Variation 25



Solitude gives birth to the original in us, to beauty unfamiliar and perilous - to poetry.

*Thomas Mann*

## Bach - Variation 26

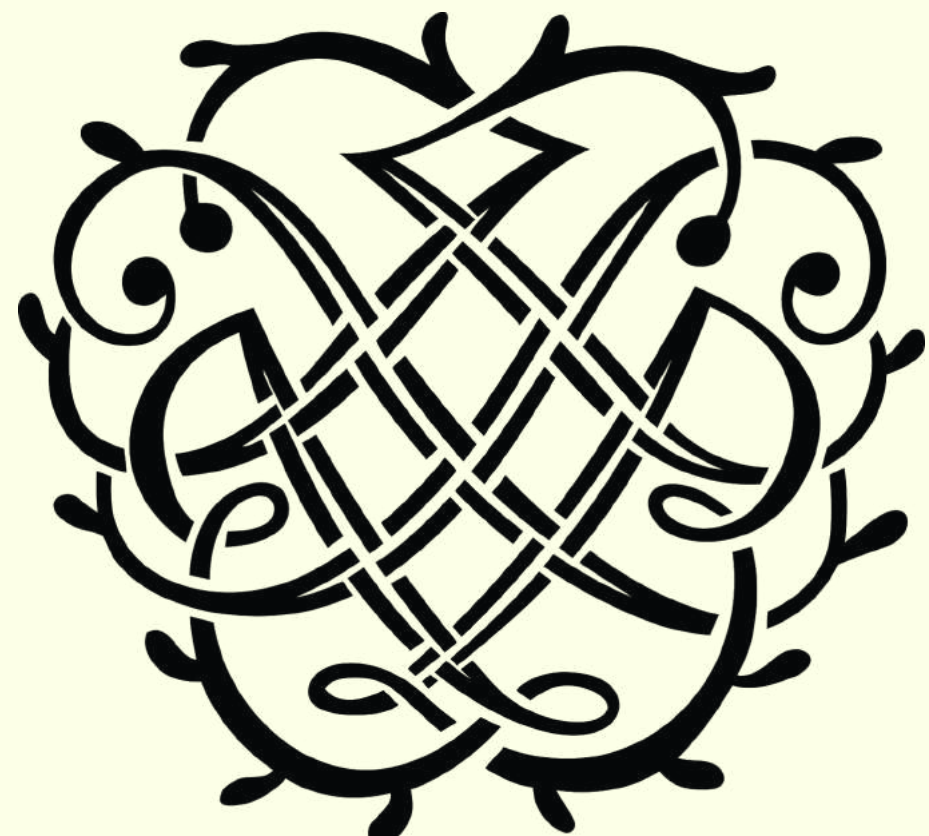


There is only one solitude, and it is vast, heavy, difficult to bear, and almost everyone has hours when he would gladly exchange it for any kind of sociability, however trivial or cheap, for the tiniest outward agreement with the first person who comes along.

But your solitude will be a support and a home for you, even in the midst of very unfamiliar circumstances, and from it you will find all your paths.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

Bach Variation 27 - Canone alla Nona



*Ohne Titel*



How quiet it is!  
On the wall where the painting hangs —  
a cricket.

*Basho*



*Ohne Titel*

## Bach - Variation 28



My hut lies in the midst of a dense wood.  
Every year the spring ivy grows longer.  
No news of men's affairs;  
only the happy songs of the woodcutter.  
When the sun comes up, I mend my robes.  
When the moon comes out, I read Buddhist  
poems.  
All that I have to report is this:  
To arrive at the true way,  
stop chasing so many things.

*Ryokan*

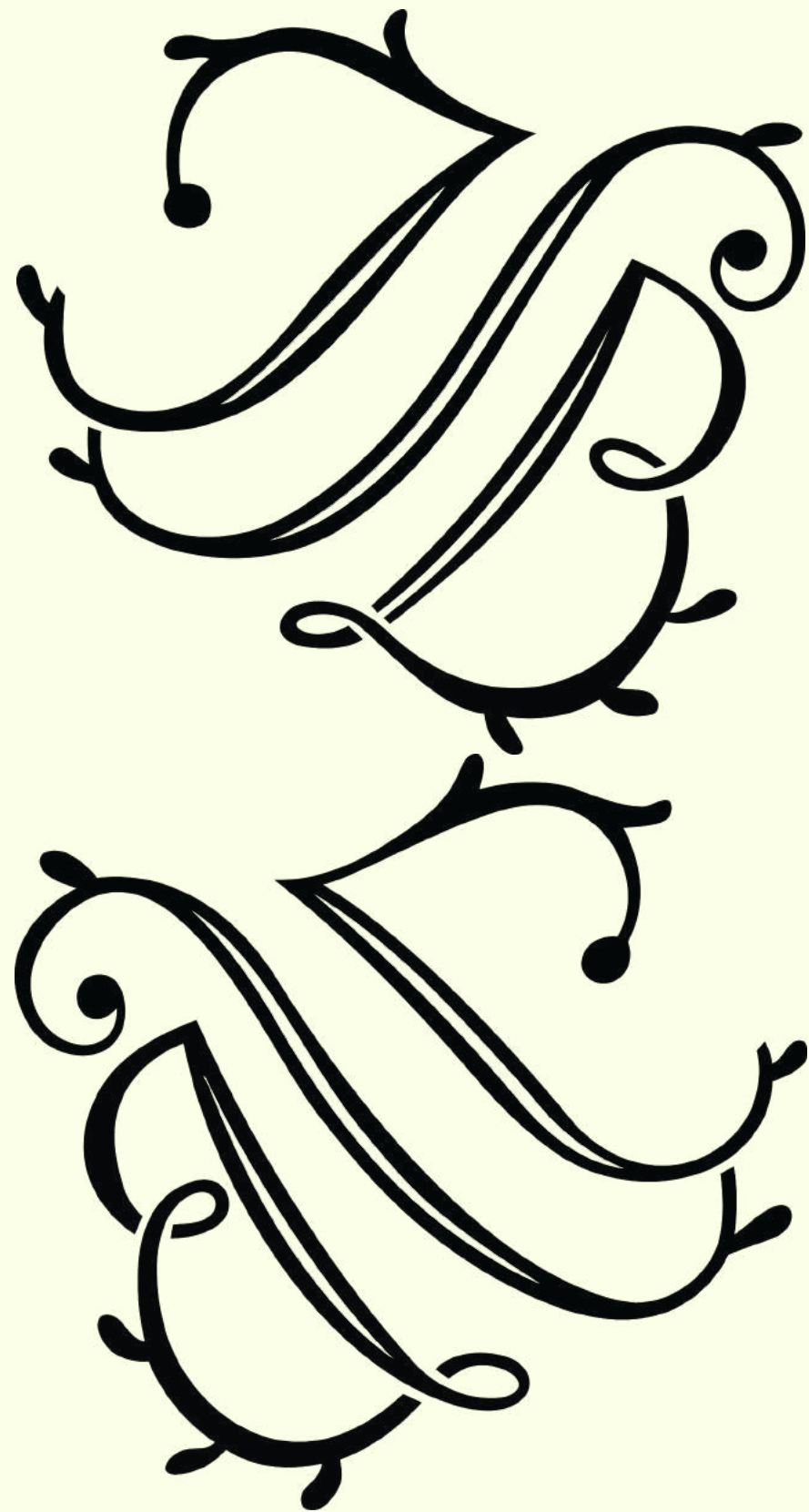
## Bach - Variation 29



Therefore, dear Sir, love your solitude and  
try to sing out with the pain it causes you.  
For those who are near you are far away...  
and this shows that the space around you is  
beginning to grow vast.... be happy about  
your growth, in which of course you can't  
take anyone with you, and be gentle with  
those who stay behind; when you see them,  
love life in a form that is not your own and  
be indulgent toward those who are growing  
old, who are afraid of the aloneness that you  
trust.... and don't expect any understanding;  
but believe in a love that is being stored up  
for you like an inheritance, and have faith  
that in this love there is a strength and a  
blessing so large that you can travel as far as  
you wish without having to step outside it.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

## Variation 30 - Quodlibet



Motionless, Siddhartha remained standing there, and for the time of one moment and breath, his heart felt cold, he felt a cold in his chest, as a small animal, a bird or a rabbit, would when seeing how alone he was.

Nobody was thus alone as he was. even the most forlorn hermit in the forest was not just one and alone, he was also surrounded by a place he belonged to. But he, Siddhartha, where did he belong to? With whom would he share his life? Whose language would he speak? Out of this moment, when the world melted away all around him, when he stood alone like a star in the sky, out of this moment of a cold and despair, Siddhartha emerged, more a self than before, more firmly concentrated.

*Hermann Hesse*



Bach - Aria



*Ohne Titel*

