1984

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Giving Up Music

W. D. Snodgrass

What you freely relinquish can never be taken from you.

Music's like that; I shall always rejoice that, when young, I gave it up. As a student, I had been a poor violinist and pianist, a good tympanist, a promising choral conductor. The trouble was that I wanted to be an orchestral conductor and one of the drawbacks of their profession is that they have to know everything. So I gave it up. Strangely enough, others have reached the same result not by giving it up but by taking it up. Peter Everwine neglected his writing for several years while he learned the banjo. I asked him if he might not take over the university's folk music course. "Not on your life," he answered. "It's so great a vice, I wouldn't turn it into a virtue for anything."

Once I gave it up, music became a vice for me too, and so assumed a pervasive influence over my life and work which no virtue could ever achieve. This renunciation, of course, also had many secondary advantages. Consider my mournful story of how two years in the Navy and the wish to marry cost my career in music! Imagine what mileage this story had with young women—even my own wife! I no doubt modeled this story on the Duke of Windsor, who, we believed, had given up an empire for the woman he loved. For the truly spiritual, I implied, music's empire was scarcely inferior to Britain's.

Of course there were other rewards, even other causes; the Duke and I said little about those. After all, I was leaving a field where I was ill-equipped—certainly in training and self-discipline, perhaps in talent. So I escaped that otherwise inevitable confrontation where flair, enthusiasm, and brilliant fakery would not have saved me. Better yet, music soon took on all the glamour one attaches to the forbidden. How quickly dropped away that feeling of drudgery and half-heartedness I had known while trying to practice (or to not practice), those feelings most of us attach to a duty, a virtue. Once outside the conjugal state,
music eventually became a mistress.

One day when I was a graduate student at the State University of Iowa, I heard a voice; I halted, like Saul on the road to Damascus, and my life was changed. I had been scrubbing the floor of the little quonset hut where I lived with my first wife and baby daughter. The voice—a sort of tenor ex machina—was that of the great Swiss singer, Hugues Cuénod. The campus radio station was playing his album of Spanish and Italian Songs of the 16th and 17th Centuries which is still available on the Westminster Collectors’ Series and which still, after thirty years and a thousand other tenors, sends shivers down my back. Right then, even coming through my tinny little radio, it shook me to the marrow. It had everything my poems lacked.

Safely out of music, I had wandered into the Poetry Workshop at the University of Iowa and learned the kind of poem taught there—certainly better than anything I’d have devised on my own. Our classics were the French Symbolists and the English Metaphysicals—an odd combination at best. Our more immediate heroes and models were likely to be Hart Crane, Dylan Thomas and the early Robert Lowell (the only one which had yet occurred). I could indeed produce the qualities we then sought: intellectual compression, a brilliant texture, a surcharged rhythm and rhetoric. What was lacking? Only what Cuénod had in abundance: emotional (not intellectual) intensity; passion and a clear delineation of that passion’s developing shape and impulse.

True, this first jolt needed reinforcement: from Randall Jarrell, who said I was writing the very best second-rate Lowell in the whole country; from a psychotherapy which consisted, really, of restating my problem until I dropped the fancy language and got it down into my own voice where it was real enough to handle; from the young Irish student-poet John Montague, who complained that American poems hadn’t any place, happened in Never-never Land; from my fellow student Robert Shelley, who suddenly quit imitating Hart Crane and wrote, before his suicide, half a dozen exquisite lyrics in a simple and pellucid style we had all supposed to be then impossible; finally, from my own entanglement with two other groups of songs. But I think those almost stridently passionate Renaissance songs stirred me first and most deeply toward a different aesthetic direction.

The two other sets of songs were by Mozart and Mahler. When my first marriage broke up, I moved into a dank and moldy cellar where, however, the last tenant had left a recording of The Magic Flute. I had never heard it—can that be true?? —and fell hopelessly in love with Papegeno’s arias. Soon, I was trying to translate them to sing in English. When, like everyone else, I failed at this, I turned instead to write my own poem, called “Papageno” and addressed to the girl who later became my second wife.

Nothing attracts like the impossible; I tried also to translate Mahler’s Kindertotenlieder (Songs for the Death of Children)—settings of poems by Rückert. Not knowing German (it’s always easier that way) and turning to my teachers for help, I was deeply impressed by their perception and feeling for these pieces. They illuminated these texts splendidly, showed me just how they worked, what turns and twists in the language made them so unbearably poignant. At the same time, I knew that if I’d brought those same pieces as my own work, they’d have
thought them sentimental and would have been shocked at me.

As indeed they were shocked when I gave up translating the Kindertotenlieder and turned instead to write my own poems, called Heart’s Needle, modeled partly after those songs and dealing with the loss of my daughter in that divorce. Earlier poets lost their children to disease; we lost them more often to divorce, to the diseases of our spirit. Yet the children seemed no less lost (I may happily add that I was wrong about that). Here, I knew something others might not; or if they knew it, they weren’t talking. So the subject itself might well have value; clearly, my feelings about it were passionate. These were the first of my poems to receive any general notice; at the time, though, they worried my teachers that I was wasting away my talents.

Even though I gave up on the Mahler songs and the Mozart arias, I never stopped trying, year after year, to translate the Renaissance songs Cuenod had sung. And eventually I found, to my own surprise, that if I kept at it long enough I actually could make singable English versions. I decided to stop translating anything except songs. After all, other American poets were already doing splendid translations of poems from many languages. My musical background might give me advantages which others wouldn’t have. Besides, a little more each year, I had slipped under the spell of all that early music which rampant musicology was making, for the first time in centuries, once more available.

So, after ten or fifteen years of truce, music began again to infiltrate and invade my outskirts. No sooner do you begin to sing a song or two than you start wanting to accompany yourself. First I bought a guitar, then a cister (a Swedish lute with twelve strings), then a Renaissance lute of eleven strings, and an archlute with twenty-four. After that, a harpsichord, a virginals, and, after selling the two earlier lutes, a Baroque lute of twenty-one strings. And, as I began to branch into folk ballads and folk songs, an Arabic harp or kanun (the psaltery we see played by King David in medieval manuscripts or by Arabs in belly dance joints), a long-necked buzukh or saz (the bouzoukia Greeks play in their belly dance joints), a Hungarian dulcimer, a Romanian tsambal or small cimbalom (like an American hammered dulcimer), all kinds of percussion instruments.

Before too long, it was singing lessons and summer collegia with early music students and performers. These students were mostly about twenty years old, the same age I’d been when I gave up music. They could all do three times what I could do at their age: All played five or six instruments, read three clefs, transposed at sight. They sang like angels. If heaven isn’t like working with them, I’m not going. And every day they were performing masterpieces I’d never heard of when I was twenty—no one had. If I’d realized what I was giving up then, I might not have done it—then, I probably would have lost it altogether!

In time, there were concerts with early music groups who performed the songs in my translations while I introduced the programs. Sometimes they let me sing with the ensemble or play a tambourine. After that, who needs heaven?

That’s how it went— and still goes. Music takes so much time that an outsider might never guess I’d given it up. At least half my day goes there: practicing, copying, transcribing old notations. At least half my
income (after taxes) (after alimony) goes there: records, instruments, lessons. Oskar Kokoschka is supposed to have said that if you live long enough, you will see your career die and be born again three times, but that the young girls are always there. He was a pessimist: I find there are always old songs to take to bed. If you tire of the Spanish and Italian Renaissance songs, there’s the French or German Renaissance. Or the Italian lauda, Spanish cantigas, German minnesang, French trouveres, Provençal troubadours. Before that, the Carmina Burana. There is so much music—and the musicologists keep finding (or making) more. I can’t help wondering what researcher in some unknown European library may be uncovering, even today, my true Abishag!

It goes without saying that this long illicit relationship has affected my poems. Yet this influence, though perhaps more profound, is far less obvious and demonstrable than that earlier change I’ve described.

The first thing I notice is that as time has passed, I write more free verse than before, and further, I publish more of that. Actually, I have always written a fair amount of free verse, but published little of it, feeling it did little I couldn’t do in tighter forms. After knowing Whitman’s “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking,” I didn’t want to publish the kind of overconscious, soporific sludge I saw in the free verse magazines. With time, however, my pattern seems to have reversed itself: recently I’ve felt that it was my metrical verse which did little I hadn’t already seen, either in my own work or that of others; so I didn’t publish it. Proportionally, my free verse seems, at least to me, to have improved.

This improvement (as I see it) in my free verse has been helped by two seemingly opposed factors. First, I have become able, partly because of a later and more extended psychoanalysis, partly just through the natural processes of aging, to endure much more freedom and to turn it to creative purpose. That has been true both in my life and in my work. Second, and paradoxically, I have gotten rid of a number of freedoms which were no use. Translating songs has been a great help here; it is so fearfully difficult that any need I might have for limits or hobbles is already fully satisfied.

When people ask why I translate songs, I say because it’s impossible. (I seldom admit to the less heroic but equally true reason: because I love them and want to sing them in my own language.) To translate a song, not only must you reproduce the original’s dictionary sense; you must also provide a satisfactory richness in the texture of your own language—provide, if you like, a harmonization and orchestration of the basic melody which the dictionary sense supplies. You must also make your version rhyme, and usually just the way the original did. Occasionally, you can find some leeway, but any variation from that pattern of rhymes is likely to conflict with the pattern of musical repetitions. Beyond that, the number of syllables and the number and position of accents must correspond very closely to your original. This will cause special problems, and may even require deviations from the original since in some languages (e.g., French, Hungarian, Romanian) singers are used to dealing with a conflict between musical accent and word stress. Stress is so distinctive a factor in English that singers trained
in this language will find it almost impossible to cope with such conflicts. Still further, if the song is to be convincing, the local rise and fall of emotional intensity will also have to correspond; otherwise you’ll be singing some high, climactic note for a dull function word; or when you get to that ominous unexpected flat in the melody, the words will be saying something cheery or trivial.

Beyond all this, the thing has to sing. Clearly, you’ll need open, long vowels to coincide with most extended notes; again, you must avoid jumbles of consonant clustering in quick-moving passages. That doesn’t even begin to scratch the surface, though, and no one gives you any help. I know of only two books which tell you anything useful. You simply must sing the song, the passage, the line, over and over until you find something that works. Or until you give up. But that suits me; if a thing doesn’t take ten years, I figure it isn’t worth starting.

So all these restrictions which song translations naturally entail tend to free me for a looser approach to my own poems. At the same time, so much attention to music has made me more confident that I can produce a satisfactory music without the aids supplied by metrical systems. As I see it, or hear it, if there’s no satisfactory created music, there’s no poem. It’s clear that most Americans need help here. Our sense of rhythm is so corrupted and oversimplified by nineteenth-century classical music and, worse, twentieth-century dance music—that constant thump, thump, thump; that unvarying—that most of us could scarcely hope to produce a rhythm of any interest. Most metrical systems, on the other hand, have built-in tensions which are more striking and interesting than the patterns most of us invent when left on our own. Yet I suspect that the greatest poet is the one who can move outside the systems and still produce complex and exciting rhythms. And I find that, more and more, I feel confident to try that.

It is true that some of my recent pieces which look like free verse do have some hidden system. I have, for instance, a poem about some great horned owls in which every line is a variation on the owl’s call. The call consists of five notes:

HOO hoo-HOO, HOO, HOO.

My poem begins:

Wait, the great horned owls. . . .

and every line proceeds to work variations on that rhythm. In another recent poem, a belly dancer appears. That poem works variations on an old American show tune, “Heat Wave”: “We’re having a heat wave; a tropical heat wave.” My poem starts:

Like battered old millhands, they stand in the orchard.

and proceeds to work variations on that rhythm. I associate the song with a black stripper I used to see in Saratoga, who used it for her theme song; I associate her, in turn, with the belly dancers I used to see in Detroit. (It was long after I wrote the poem that I recognized this relation between rhythm, song, and subject matter. I thought I had picked the rhythmic pattern at random and that it related to nothing else.) In my poem on van Gogh’s The Starry Night every line (excepting quotations) is based on variations of the vowel sounds in van Gogh’s
last words, "Zoó heen kan gaan."

But in many other recent pieces, there is no such system—or none I know of. I think I probably wouldn’t dare try that if I weren’t saturated in music all the time. The vibrance (hence the tone) of any musical instrument with a wooden sounding board—a lute, guitar, violin, etc.—must be developed by your playing of it, by the vibrating of the instrument itself. I once heard a theory that the Stradivarius violins were so great because they were built with wood taken from torn-down cathedrals; that wood had been resounding for years with the choirs singing there and so developed a special vibrancy and resonance. I don’t suppose that’s true; an artist could choose a worse myth.

Still more recently, some other tendencies have surfaced. For some years, I have been working on a cycle of poems about the last days of the Third Reich. Throughout this cycle, The Führer Bunker, oppositions and incongruities work constantly as a principle of composition. First, there are the voices of the different characters—figures from Hitler’s government or his private life—with the disparate vocal qualities of their various personalities, techniques and aims. Each, moreover, has his or her own characterizing verse form. For some characters this is further complicated by the inclusion of musical quotations, usually rising from some darker, less recognized area of the mind. But this continual antithesis and disparity reach also into the subject matter: Never does word agree with act, ideal with performance, expectations with reality.

The simplest verse forms here are wide-open free verse pieces built on a simple, straightforward antiphony: Martin Bormann’s poems consist of quotations or paraphrases from the slushy love letters he actually wrote his wife balanced against his silent plotting against the other Nazis; Hitler’s mistress, Eva Braun, has poems which balance her conscious thoughts against those melodies she finds herself singing from time to time and which suggest something of her unconscious thoughts—"Tea for Two" or parts of the Catholic wedding mass. Conversely, Magda Goebbels, wife of the propaganda chief, uses elaborate French verse forms usually associated with poems of romantic love—villanelles, ronddeaux, triolets, etc. She has come to the bunker planning to kill her six children, then herself; she uses these poems’ repetitions to reiterate that this act, an ultimate betrayal, can be rationalized as a display of loyalty to Hitler and to her children. To use these "pretty" and often trifling forms for such purposes seems shocking, yet may have its rightness: Romantic love has been a major weapon in her long career of infidelity and betrayals. There is, besides, a curious parallel between the repetitions of these poems and those of modern advertising and propaganda; if you are telling the truth, you probably won’t need to repeat it.

Magda’s husband, Dr. Joseph Goebbels, uses four-foot iambic couplets, a finicky verse form fitting, I think, a man crippled since childhood and so likely to be obsessive about formal perfection. Much music enters his poems: German folk songs, the Niebelungenlied, bits of Don Giovanni. As he now spends much time with his children, nursery rhymes and songs often enter his thoughts, competing there with Biblical quotations and the headlines he keeps inventing. Just as the French forms sound strange in Magda’s mouth, so the lovely folk
songs, the children’s ditties seem incongruous in the sulfurous mouth of Dr. Goebbels—who would agree with us only in terming him Satanic.

Invented forms appear in the poems of Hitler’s builder, Albert Speer. In his stanzas, each line grows visually longer than that before it—like stairs, or some compulsive growth. This seems related to the grandiose, "megalomaniac" buildings Speer did for Hitler, and so comparable to Hitler’s expansion through Europe. Speer himself has come to see the whole Nazi movement as a kind of cancer, an unlimited and so malignant growth. As the threat of retribution forces him to see what crimes he has given his tacit acceptance, a flood of artistic and literary references washes into the poems, breaking down his rationalizations and, with them, the artificial stanzas.

It is strange, though, that Speer has no musical references; strange, too, that his stanzas have no relation to the poem’s music or sound—which is, for me, its life. Stanzas originated, after all, in the use of poems for song texts; here, the formal requirements tell you nothing about the created sound. This points, ultimately, to the chief failing of his career and character: a refusal to recognize the unconscious. Unlike most of the characters in the work, he is concerned with (and sometimes capable of) reason and ethical action. Yet his willful blindness to what vast, malignant forces have taken control of his nation has finally given them control of him as well.

Perhaps the character whose life was most influenced by the study of music is Heinrich Himmler, head of the Gestapo, SS, and concentration camps; his poems are devoid of it. They are printed in capitals on graph paper; each line has thirty letters and spaces; the left-hand margin forms an alphabet acrostic. A completely arbitrary form is clamped on the material just as, for twelve years, it was on much of Europe. I call this verse form the platoon; when I read it in public, I do it to a metronome.

As a child, Himmler practiced the piano for ten long years; he never made any music. A musician subjects himself to a fiercely exacting schedule—the score—to free his emotions for some higher expression. For the less gifted, however, such subjection may become an end in itself; e.g., merely to play E-flat at the 324th metronome stroke becomes the aim. Arbitrary and lifeless forms of order can seem valuable if you cannot conceive any higher purpose they might serve; so, as Eric Hoffer warns us, a failed artist may become the worst of tyrants. I keep imagining, somewhere inside the loony, occult-ridden head of “Reichs Heini” Himmler, a small, disconsolate six-year old, pale and bespectacled, while outside in the real world, his grown self marches forth to impose that order on a terror-stricken world.

As I remarked above, these incongruities are also found in the words and acts of the characters. Himmler, the most feared man in Europe, responsible for at least 10 million murders, proves to be personally vacillating and indecisive; nothing comes from his lips but high ideals and dithering worries. As for Hitler, at one moment we see him ordering gun squads out onto the streets to hang more Germans for daring to try to survive; the next he is explaining that his only fault as a ruler is that he has been too kind. On his birthday, we see him sitting aside fondling a recently born puppy, fantasying a scene in which a woman reviles, then beats a man (presumably himself), finally shifting on him.
and so bringing him to orgasm. Elsewhere, he sings snatches of Wagnerian operas and Walt Disney cartoons. Such examples could be found for any of the characters; there is probably no need further to belabor the point.

That incongruities of this sort should become a real principle of construction is enjoined upon me, I think, by imperatives both moral and aesthetic. Oddly enough, the aesthetic imperatives stem from my musical studies even more than from literary ones.

The Third Reich has become for us—for good reason—the very paradigm of evil. Yet evil, when we meet it in The Fuhrer Bunker, always comes in a human incarnation, which means always (and horrifyingly) mixed with other qualities, even its opposites. To present it in any purer form is to belie it—and worse, to make it more dismissible to the beholder, since it can then be projected as belonging only to others. Yet, once you have killed your enemy, he can exist nowhere except inside yourself. And precisely to the extent that he was powerful and frightening when alive, he is dangerous when dead, since unwilling and unrecognized admiration and envy of his powers may well turn you into him. Your need to survive led you to kill him; that same need can mislead you to become him. And since we will all die soon enough anyway, I think we cannot decide who won a war until we find out whose values prevailed.

As soon as we establish a paradigm, we start trying to pare away and forget all the exceptions, counterparadigms, complications that make a language real and human. Similarly, once we denounce Nazism as evil, we start stripping away all the complicating factors, the strange fact that some of the good people are always on the other side, the stranger fact that even the most evil man has his points, and worse, has points in common with ourselves. We desperately want our world—always elusive, discrepant, manifold—to fit better our paradigms of it. And there are uglier reasons that the mind tries to make things easy for itself. We want even more desperately to see ourselves divorced from such people, the possibility of such acts; sadly, it is easier to alter our vision of ourselves than to change ourselves. Terence was right: Nothing human is alien to us. Hitler called himself one of the great simplifiers. He made things easier for himself and his followers first by simplifying, i.e., limiting their vision, second, by declaring the Jews other than human and killing them. It is an example that fewer of us should accept. It seems immoral and dangerous to me to present the Nazis as other than human—the effect of that is to point to our own innocence. Which in our case we have not got.

Looked at from an aesthetic standpoint, it seems to me that any very satisfying work of art is built upon a structure of opposing tones and attitudes, and that the more truly opposed they are, the greater that work may become. Among literary works, one may see this most readily, perhaps, in such works as those ballads where, as G. K. Chesterton noted, we have a sharp conflict between the verses with their story of the individual's tragic misfortunes and, countering this, the voice of the chorus embodying the community's sense of resignation, affirmation, and endurance. It is obvious, too, in such poets
as Sir Walter Raleigh or John Berryman who establish a tone or style only to undercut and oppose it immediately with another. I have noted elsewhere the importance in our century of the polyvoiced poem, citing not only Berryman’s *Dream Songs* but also *The Wasteland* and certain poems of Robert Hayden and Henri Coulette. The same tendency appears even in poets like Milton (later, Hart Crane or Dylan Thomas) who do establish a tone, usually an elevated one, then try to maintain it. That implies, however, a necessary conflict between style and subject matter. The language has a constant elevation and richness incommensurate with the dictionary sense of any particular statement or any object described. Milton, incidentally, translated quite a number of the Puritan psalms; there, something similar obtains: The melody preexists the text and may, in fact, be reapplied to any number of texts. Text and tune have no immediate relation, but are separate attempts to reach the meaning of God.

In most of our poetry, however, the complications, though no less crucial, are not so clear-cut and easily demonstrable. Consequently, little viable criticism is available here; critics tend to shy away. This may be proper: The interrelations among poetry, music and the “music of verse” are so complex and intangible that utter nonsense can often be passed off on quite intelligent and learned readers. When the more accessible literal sense of the poem beckons, critics usually opt for that. Unfortunately, this leaves many with the impression that the poem resides in its dictionary sense, even though the least familiarity with translations should have dispelled such notions long ago.

Since literary critics have been little help here, I have turned to music criticism hoping to find there something applicable to my work in another art. Thus, if I take incongruity and juxtaposition as a compositional principle, that has not come about through my study of Raleigh, Berryman, Milton, or Eliot. Rather, my understanding of these poets has been shaped by my studies in the classical sonata form with its opposed themes, their development and resolution, or in the Bach Fugues, or in the choruses of the *St. Matthew Passion* with their incredible architectonics of different and opposed voices—voices which question, which answer, which lament, which console, yet which are perceived as simultaneously joined in an indissoluble structure. Music critics have long taken it as their business to analyze the emotional components of these structures and so make them more available to listeners.

I should note, however, that the *Bunker* cycle is less influenced by my work in early songs. In a sense, I do these two things as a relief from each other. (I am told that when Tennyson could no longer stand the glossy pieties of the *Idylls of the King*, he wrote dirty limericks. When I can no longer stand the horrific evils of the Third Reich—and the continuing shock of finding them not so unlike other governments, other people, I have known—I turn to the troubadours.) Though each of the poems in the cycle has some resemblance to an aria, there is nothing in early music comparable to the evil I want to explore here. Throughout the early songs, even the most heartbroken love songs, there is a simplicity, a purity and joyousness, that is mightily alien to the world of modern politics and dogma. Then again, I am not so much concerned in this cycle with the problems of the individual lyric but rather with the architecture of a larger form, made up of many voices.
Above all, I think that the far greater discordancy of these poems comes from a final and grudging admiration for twentieth-century classical music. No doubt Charles Ives’s polytonality will spring at once to mind. That is probably correct, but I think I have been even more influenced by such works as Berg’s Wozzeck and Lulu or by Bartok’s Miraculous Mandarin. And more yet by Bartok’s quartets—works stripped of all the glorious flab of the orchestra so that the whole spare muscularity of structure shines through.

I find I have been much moved, too, by the musical and vocal experiments of certain younger composers—composers trying to reunite the arts of music and speech. I think particularly of the young Chicago composer Bernard Jones and of his master, Luciano Berio. Jones’s most impressive work is a piece for four readers and a bass viol, titled Yours and Mine. The readers quote passages from Robert Browning, the Dave Clark Five, rock stars, etc.; their voices enter, drift out, reenter, over-ride each other, speak at various tempos, sometimes become weary or disappointed, at others excited and orgiastic.

Since this work will be unfamiliar to most readers, let me turn instead to a better known composition, Berio’s Sinfonia. In the fourth movement of this piece, the orchestra plays a version of Mahler’s scherzo about St. Anthony preaching to the fishes. Meantime, the Swingle Singers (the piece was written for them) speak in several languages, on divergent subjects, at various tempos, in many moods. The overall effect is enormously powerful: The result is not chaos but rather a very striking comment on the multiplicity, density, variousness of our world—on the way we must take meaning not from the sense of any one local phrase but from the overall movement of the whole. I am sorry to have to make so impressionistic and flat-footed a statement, but for the moment I must leave it there: It feels the way our world feels, the way our mind is.

And that statement, I think, resolves my earlier dichotomy between the moral and the aesthetic. When we speak of the moral, we speak of one’s responsibility to faithfully represent the shape of the world outside us; the aesthetic, to represent the shape of the psyche. Yet this subject-object dichotomy breaks down like all the others: We cannot know the qualities of our world apart from the qualities of ourselves who perceive it. Thus, even though all the incongruities I cited are historically true—those people did do all those things on those days—even so, should their use in the poems prove in the long run to be aesthetically unsatisfying, I can be confident, thereby, that I have basically misrepresented the qualities of the world as well. In such an event, I will not care which set of terms are used—the failure would be equally disastrous, described either way.

That, in any case, is where I stand today—or sit tonight. How could I be anything but glad that I gave up music? It never gave me up, but stayed and controlled my doings as I would have supposed only a lifelong love—a lost love?—could do, but as no human love ever has done in my vicinity. My only complaint—and I say this despite my earlier bravado about Kokoschka’s young loves—is that if I’d known things work this way, I’d certainly have found more things to give up sooner.