

PHCD 131

CAROLE FARLEY

LA VOIX HUMAINE

Music By Francis Poulenc
Libretto by Jean Cocteau



Adelaide Symphony Orchestra
José Serebrier, Conductor



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Opera in One Act
Sung in French

Adelaide Symphony Orchestra
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TT = 42:48

[DDD]

Produced by Jeffrey Kaufman and Ettore Stratta.
Recording Engineer: Barry Wade.
Soundstream Digital Engineer: Don Morrison.
Recorded in September 1981 at the studios of the Australian
Broadcasting Commission, Adelaide.
Special thanks to the Australian Broadcasting Commission for
its cooperation in the production of this recording.
Design: Laura Gardner

Previously released on Chandos CHAN 8331
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Poulenc-Cocteau LA VOIX HUMAINE (THE HUMAN VOICE)

Jean Cocteau used the simplest of plots and minimal theatrical elements to dwell upon a deep, wide range of unspoken human emotions. The old story of the abandoned young woman desperately but unsuccessfully trying to regain her lover, who has decided to marry another woman in two days, has been transformed by Cocteau in a theatrical *tour-de-force* full of drama, tension and anguish. For 40 minutes, this "elegant young woman" pleads with her lost lover, cries, reminisces incoherently, lies, suffers and loses reality, slowly but inexorably falling into a state of depression and irreparable sadness. She seems, finally, calm and reconciled, but as she protests for the last time her eternal love and devotion to her ex-lover, she strangles herself with the telephone cord.

The play was premiered at the Paris Comédie-Française by Berthe Boyv in 1932, but the Poulenc version only came to life in 1959 at the Opéra Comique, with Denise Duval. Cocteau was enchanted. He wrote to Poulenc: "My dear Francis, you have found the only way to say my text." Indeed, Cocteau had avoided the long poetic flights, using instead interrupted, almost staggered prose to communicate this woman's anguish. Poulenc seems to have captured every nuance, avoiding the easy flowing melodies, and concentrating on the expressive elements of the human voice, whispers, sighs, sobbing phrases. The theatrical *tour-de-force* became a real concerto for soprano, with great musical difficulties added to the challenge of supporting a long, winding monologue. On the almost bare stage there is no action to speak of, just a young woman on a couch, and a telephone and, like in Wagner, the drama unfolds inside the character, while it is depicted in the music. Unlike Wagner, Poulenc has avoided the heated lyricism, following instead a pattern of broken prosaic sentences, and a drastic, almost hysterical change of moods.

The obvious precedent would be Schoenberg's *Erwartung*, also a dramatic monodrama for solo soprano. However, there are hardly two more different works. Schoenberg's lyric, expressionist work is worlds apart from Poulenc's transparent, realistic vision. The common factor is the enormous difficulty for a single actress-singer to support the lone drama on an empty stage.

The American soprano Carole Farley became, at the age of 21, the youngest leading soprano in the history of the Cologne Opera, where she made her début in the very demanding rôle of Alban Berg's *Lulu* and it was in this rôle that she later made her début at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Of her Metropolitan début, *Time* magazine wrote: "She handles Berg's music, some of the most difficult of our time, as though it were by Puccini" and *Newsweek* wrote: "A triumph of consistency and clarity. The score calls for wild, acrobatic vocal leaps which Farley spins out as sweetly and easily as if Puccini had written them."

Other difficult rôles in which Carole Farley has achieved great success are Richard Strauss's *Salome*, *Capriccio* and *Daphne*, Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* and, more recently, Marie in Berg's *Wozzeck*. Her U.S. début was with the New York City Opera in the title rôle in *La Belle Hélène* and in the standard repertoire she has also been acclaimed for her performances in *La Bohème*, *La Traviata*, *Don Giovanni*, *Die Fledermaus* and *The Bartered Bride*.

Born in Moscow, Idaho, Carole Farley showed early evidence of her wide-ranging talents: her *Lulu* début in Cologne received 15 curtain calls and she was soon in demand from many of the world's leading opera houses as far afield as the Bolshoi in Moscow to the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires. She has sung with many leading American symphony orchestras and recorded with Andre Kostelanetz and Antal Dorati. She is married to conductor and composer José Serebrier and they have a daughter, Lara.



Allô, allô...

Mais non, Madame, nous sommes plusieurs sur la ligne, raccrochez... Vous êtes avec une abonnée... Mais, Madame, raccrochez vous-même... Allô, Mademoiselle... Mais non, ce n'est pas le docteur Schmit... Zéro sept... allô c'est ridicule... On me demande; je ne sais pas. (*elle raccroche, la main sur le récepteur. On somme.*) Allô!... Mais, Madame, que voulez-vous que j'y fasse?... Comment, ma faute... pas du tout... allô, Mademoiselle... Dites à cette dame de se retirer.

(*Elle raccroche. On somme.*) Allô, c'est toi?... Oui... très bien... C'était un vrai supplice de l'entendre à travers tout ce monde... oui... oui... non... c'est une chance... Je rentre il y a dix minutes... Tu n'avais pas encore appelé?... Ah!... non, non... J'ai diné dehors... chez Marthe... Il doit être onze heures un quart... Tu es chez toi?... Ah!... non, non... J'ai diné dehors... chez Marthe... Il doit être onze heures un quart... Tu es chez toi?... Alors, regarde la pendule électrique... C'est ce que je pensais... Oui, oui, mon chéri... Hier soir je me suis couchée tout de suite et comme je ne pouvais pas m'endormir j'ai pris un comprimé... non... un seul... à neuf heures... J'avais un peu mal à la tête, mais je me suis secouée. Marthe est venue. Elle a déjeuné avec moi. J'ai fait des courses. Je suis rentrée à la maison. J'ai... Quoi?... Très forte... J'ai beaucoup, beaucoup de courage... Après? Après je me

Hello, hello...

No, no, Madame. But this is a party line. Please hang up... But I was on the wire first... If you please, will you get off the line!... Operator, please... Oh no, this is *not* Dr. Schmid... 0-0-8, not 0-0-7... Hello! this is absurd... They keep ringing. I wonder why. (*She hangs up, her hand on the receiver. The telephone rings.*) Hello!... But Madame, what do you want me to do?... What do you mean? Not at all!... Operator, please... Would you kindly tell this lady to hang up. (*She hangs up. The telephone rings.*) Hello, it's you?... Yes... quite clearly... It was dreadful not to hear what you were saying because of all those people... Yes... yes... no... It just so happens... I came back a little while ago... Perhaps you called while I was out?... Ah!... no, no... I went out for dinner... with Martha... It must be a little past eleven... Are you at home?... Then take a look at the clock in the hallway... It's just as I thought... Yes, yes, *chéri*... Last night? Last night I thought I would go to bed early, but then I had trouble in falling asleep. I took a pill... No... only one... at nine o'clock... I did have a bit of headache, but then it went away. Martha came this morning, and we had breakfast together. I did some errands, and then I came directly home... I... What?... I'm trying... Oh I think I've lots of courage... And then? And then I got dressed for the evening, had a lovely time with Martha, came home around eleven. She's really been an angel... She seems aloof, but she's really not. Yes, you

suis habillée, Marthe est venue me prendre... Je rentre de chez elle. Elle a été parfaite... Elle a cet air, mais elle ne l'est pas. Tu avais raison, comme toujours... Ma robe rose... Mon Chapeau noir... Oui, j'ai encore mon chapeau sur la tête... Et toi, tu rentres?... Tu es resté à la maison?... Quel procès?... Ah! oui... Allô... Allô, chéri... Si on coupe, redemande-moi tout de suite... Allô! Non... Je suis là... Le sac?... Tes lettres et les miennes. Tu peux les faire prendre quand tu veux... Un peu dur... Je comprends... Oh! mon chéri, ne t'excuse pas, c'est très naturel et c'est moi qui suis stupide... Tu es gentil... Tu es gentil... Mois non plus, je ne me croyais pas si forte...

2

Quelle comédie?... Allô... Qui?... Que je te joue la comédie, moi!... Tu me connais, je suis incapable de prendre sur moi... Pas due tout... Pas du tout... Très calme... Tu l'entendrais... Je dis: Tu l'entendrais. Je n'ai pas la voix d'une personne qui cache quelque chose... Non. J'ai décidé d'avoir due courage et j'en aurai... J'ai ce que je mérite. J'ai voulu être folle et avoir un bonheur fou... chéri... écoute... allô!... chéri... laisse... allô... laisse-moi parler. Ne t'accuse pas. Tout est ma faute. Si, si... Souviens-toi du dimanche de Versailles et du pneumatique... Ah!... Alors!... C'est moi qui ai voulu venir, c'est moi qui t'ai fermé la bouche, c'est moi qui t'ai dit que tout m'était égal... Non... non... là, tu es injuste... J'ai téléphoné la première... Un mardi... J'en suis sûre. Un mardi 23. Tu penses bien que je connais ces dates par

(06:23)

were completely right, as always... My red dress... My black hat... Yes, it's the one you liked—I still have it on... And you? You went out?... Or did you stay at home tonight?... What lawsuit? Ah! yes... Hello, *chéri*... If we're cut off, you must call me back right away... Hello! No... I'm still here... The bag?... Your letters and mine. Yes, you can send for it when you like... It's not easy. I understand... Darling you needn't apologize. That's not at all strange. It is I—I who am stupid... You are so nice... You are so nice... Nor did I. I didn't think I had the courage...

Putting on an act?... Hello... Who... You think I'm putting on an act? Me!... You know me well. I am not the sort who would ever pretend... Not at all... I'm not angry... You will see... I said: You will see. Tell me, do I sound like a person who has something to hide?... No. I made up my mind that I would be brave, and I will... I got what I deserved. I was out to be reckless, I was taking a chance... Darling... please listen... Hello!... *chéri*... please... hello... please let me talk. Do not blame yourself. It was all my fault. Yes, yes... You remember that Sunday in Versailles when I sent that wire?... Ah!... You see!... It was I who said I wished to come. It was I who would not let you speak. It was I who behaved as if I did not care... No... no... now you are unfair... I... I remember—I called you first... A Tuesday... I'm quite sure. Tuesday, the

coeur... ta mère? Pourquoi... Ce n'est vraiment pas la peine...

3 Je ne sais pas encore... Oui... peut-être... Oh! non, sûrement pas tout de suite, et toi?... Demain? Je ne savais pas que c'était si rapide... Alors, attends... c'est très simple... demain matin le sac sera chez le concierge. Joseph n'aura qu'à passer le prendre... Oh! moi, tu sais, il est possible que je reste, comme il est possible que j'aille passer quelques jours à la campagne, chez Marthe...

(08:55)

4 Oui, mon chéri... mais oui, mon chéri... Allô... et comme ça?... Pourtant je parle très fort... Et là, tu m'entends?... Je dis: et là, tu m'entends?... C'est drôle parce que moi je t'entends comme si tu étais dans la chambre... Allô!... allô!... Allons, bon! maintenant c'est moi qui ne t'entends plus... Si, mais très loin, très loin... Toi, tu m'entends? C'est chacun son tour... Non, très bien... J'entends même mieux que tout à l'heure, mais ton appareil résonne. On dirait que ce n'est pas ton appareil...

(10:09)

5 Je te vois, tu sais. (Il lui fait deviner)... Quel foulard?... Le foulard rouge... Tu a des manches retroussées... ta main gauche? Le récepteur. Ta main droite? Ton stylographe. Tu dessines sur le buvard des

(11:18)

twenty-third. You ought to realize that I know those dates by heart... Your mother? But why?... It is hardly worth the trouble...

I honestly don't know... Yes... perhaps... Oh no! certainly not right away. And you?... Tomorrow?... I had no idea that it would be so soon... Well then, we'll manage... it's so simple... tomorrow morning I'll leave the bag with the janitor. Joseph can come and pick it up tomorrow... Oh, I don't know. Maybe I'll stay awhile in the city. Or I may decide to go away for a couple of days in the country, at Martha's...

Yes, *chéri*... but of course, *chéri*... Hello... What is wrong?... Dearest, I am speaking loud... And now, do you hear me?... I said: and now do you hear me?... It's funny, I can hear you as plainly as if you were right here beside me... Hello!... hello!... Oh, it's really absurd! Now I cannot hear a word... As if from afar, from far... Now can you hear? It's each of us in turn... No, quite clearly... I can hear you better than before, but there is a buzz in your phone. It doesn't sound like your telephone at all...

I can see you, oh yes. (*He makes her guess*)... What scarf?... You have on the red one... You have your sleeves rolled back a little... In your left hand? The receiver. And a fountain pen in your right. You are drawing on the

profils, des coeurs, des etoiles. Ah! tu ris! J'ai des yeux à la place des oreilles... (*Avec un geste machinal de se cacher la figure.*) Oh! non, mon chéri, surtout ne me regarde pas... Peur? ...Non, je n'aurai pas peur... c'est pire... Enfin je n'ai plus l'habitude de dormir seule... Oui... oui... oui... Je te promets... Je te promets... Tu es gentil... Je ne sais pas. J'évite de me regarder. Je n'ose plus allumer dans le cabinet de toilette. Hier, je me suis trouvée nez à avec une vieille dame... Non, non! une vieille dame avec des cheveux blancs et une foule de petites rides... Tu es bien bon! mais, mon chéri, une figure admirable, c'est pire que tout, c'est pour les artistes... J'aimais mieux quand tu disais: Regardez-moi cette vilaine petite gueule!... Oui, cher Monsieur!... Je plaisantais... Tu es bête... Heureusement que tu es maladroit et que tu m'aimes. Si tu ne m'aimais pas et si tu étais adroit, le téléphone deviendrait une arme effrayante. Une arme qui ne laisse pas de traces, qui ne fait pas de bruit...

E
 Moi, méchante?... Allô... allô, chéri... Où es-tu?... allô, allô, Mademoiselle. (*Elle somme.*) Allô, Mademoiselle, on coupe. (*Elle raccroche. Silence. Elle décroche.*) Allô, c'est toi?... Mais non, Mademoiselle. On m'a coupé... Je ne sais pas... c'est-à-dire... si... attendez... Auteuil 04 virgule 7. Allô!... Pas libre?... Allô, Mademoiselle, il me redemande... Bien. (*Elle raccroche.*)

(14:34)

blotter, hearts and profiles and stars. Ah, you smile! I have eyes tucked away inside my ears... (*She makes a mechanical gesture of hiding her face.*) No, no! chéri, oh please don't look at me now... Afraid? I am not afraid... It's even worse... Oh darling, I'm no longer used to sleeping alone... Yes... yes... yes... I promise... I promise... You are so nice... I do not know. I try not to look at myself. I do not dare any more to turn on the light in my dressing room. Last night, there I was suddenly face to face with an old woman... No, no! an old woman with hair so white, and a face full of little wrinkles... You are too kind! But, chéri, a face that everyone envies—that is worst of all. That is for an actress... I preferred it when you said: "Funny face! Where did you get that funny face?"... Yes, my dear sir!... I was joking... Don't be silly... How lucky that you are so awkward and that you love me. For if you did not love me and were not so awkward, this telephone could easily become a terrible weapon. A weapon that would leave no marks, nor make a noise...

Me, naughty?... Hello!... hello! chéri... Are you there?... Hello, hello, operator. (*She rings.*) Hello. Someone cut us off. (*She hangs up. Silence. She takes the phone.*) Hello, it's you?... No, no, operator. I was cut off... I don't know... I mean... yes... just a moment... Auteuil seven-seven-three. Hello!... It's busy... Operator, he's trying to call me back... Alright. (*She hangs up. The*

On somme.) Allô! Auteuil 04 virgule 7? Allô! C'est vous, Joseph?... C'est Madame... On nous a coupés avec Monsieur... Pas là?... oui... oui... Il ne rentre pas ce soir... c'est vrai, je suis stupide! Monsieur me téléphonait d'un restaurant, on a coupé et je redemande son numéro... Excusez-moi, Joseph... Merci... merci... Bonsoir, Joseph...

(Elle raccroche et se trouve presque mal. On somme.)

(16:50)

[7] Allô! Ah! chéri! c'est toi?... On avait coupé... Non, non J'attendais. On sonnait, je décrochais et il n'y avait personne... Sans doute... Bien sûr... Tu as sommeil... Tu es bon d'avoir téléphoné... très bon *(Elle pleure... Silence)*. Non, je suis là... Quoi?... Pardonne... C'est absurde... Rien, rien... Je n'ai rien... Je te jure que je n'ai rien... C'est pareil... Rien du tout. Tu te trompes... Seulement, tu comprends, on parle, on parle... *(Elle pleure.)* Ecoute, mon amour. Je ne t'ai jamais menti... Oui, je sais, je sais, je te crois, j'en suis convaincue... non, ce n'est pas ça... c'est parce que je viens de te mentir... là... au téléphone, depuis un quart d'heure, je te mens. Je sais bien que je n'ai plus aucune chance à attendre, mais mentir ne porte pas la chance et puis je n'aime pas te mentir, je ne peux pas, je ne veux pas te mentir, même pour ton bien... Oh! rien de grave, mon chéri... Seulement je mentais en te décrivant ma robe et en te disant que j'avais diné chez Marthe... Je n'ai pas diné, je n'ai pas ma robe rose. J'ai un manteau sur ma chemise, parce qu'à force d'attendre

telephone rings.) Hello! Aureuil seven-seven-thre? Hello! It's you, Joseph?... It's Madame... Monsieur and I, we were disconnected... Not home?... Yes... yes... he's not coming back tonight... How stupid of me! Monsieur must have telephoned me from outside. We were disconnected, so I called his number—my mistake. Excuse me, Joseph... I will... Thank you... Good night, Joseph... *(She hangs up, feeling almost ill. The telephone rings.)*

Hello! Ah, chéri! It's you?... They cut us off... No, no, I was waiting. Someone rang, I answered right away, but there was no one... I suppose so... Of course... You are sleepy... It was kind of you to call again... So kind... *(She is crying... a silence.)* No, I am here... What?... Forgive me... it's too silly... Nothing... there's nothing wrong... But I swear there's nothing wrong... Nothing's changed... Not at all. You're mistaken... It is only that all this talk, this talk... *(She weeps.)* My darling, listen. I have never told you lies... Yes, I know, I know, I believe you. I'm sure of it, dear... No, it isn't that... It's only that I lied to you before... yes... on the telephone, just fifteen minutes ago. I know well that it's too late for my luck to return. But a lie won't bring me back my luck. Besides, I hate to tell you a lie. I cannot lie—I cannot lie to you, even for your own good... Oh, nothing serious, mon chéri... I lied in describing the dress that I was wearing, also when I said I had dinner with Martha... I've had no dinner, I'm not wearing my red dress, only a coat over my nightdress,

ton téléphone, à force de regarder l'appareil, de m'asseoir, de me lever, de marcher de long en large, je devenais folle! Alors j'ai mis un manteau et j'allais sortir, prendre un taxi, me faire mener sous tes fenêtres, pour attendre... eh bien! attendre, attendre je ne sais quoi... Tu as raison... Si, jet t'écoute... Je serai sage...

Je répondrai à tout, je te jure... Ici... Je n'ai rien mangé... Je ne pouvais pas... J'ai été très malade... Hier soir, j'ai voulu prendre un comprimé pour dormir; je me suis dit que si j'en prenais plus, je dormirais mieux et que si je les prenais tous, je dormirais sans rêves, sans réveil, je serais morte. (*Elle pleure.*)... J'en ai avalé douze... Dans de l'eau chaude... Comme une masse. Et j'ai eu un rêve. J'ai revé ce qui est. Je me suis réveillée toute contente parce que c'était un rêve, et quand j'ai su que c'était vrai, que j'étais seule, que je n'avais pas la tête sur ton cou, j'ai senti que je ne pouvais pas vivre... Légère, légère et froid et je ne sentais plus non coeur battre et la mort était longue à venir et comme j'avais une angoisse épouvantable, au bout d'une heure j'ai téléphoné à Marthe. Je n'avais plus le courage de mourir seule...

(23:01)

...*Chéri*... *Chéri*... Il était quatre heures du matin. Elle est arrivée avec le docteur qui habite son immeuble. J'avais plus de quarante. Le docteur a fait une ordonnance et Marthe est restée jusqu'à ce soir. Je l'ai suppliée de partir parce que tu m'avais dit que tu téléphonerais et j'avais peur qu'on m'empêche de te parler...

because I was waiting all evening for you to call. And what with my staring at the phone, and sitting down, and jumping up, and pacing up and down the room, I was almost frantic! And so I put on my coat, I was going out to take a taxi, to wander underneath your windows... stand there waiting... ah, yes, stand waiting—I don't even know what for... You are so right... Yes, I am listening... I shan't be foolish... and I will keep my head, I promise... Right here... I didn't eat a thing... I simply couldn't... Last night I meant to take a pill that would put me to sleep. I thought that if I took more than one, I'd sleep so much better. I thought that if I took them all I'd sleep without a dream and never wake—I'd sleep forever! (*She weeps.*)... And so I swallowed twelve... In hot water... All in a lump... Then—then I was dreaming. You were going away. And then when I awoke I felt so happy, because it was just a dream. But when I knew it was true, that I was alone, that my head was not against your shoulder, then I knew I could not go on living... My body felt cold and light, and my heart was no longer beating, and death was slow in coming. Since I was in terrible pain, after an hour I managed to phone Martha. I lacked the courage to die alone... *chéri*... *chéri*... It was four o'clock in the morning. Finally she came, and with her that doctor who lives in her house. I had a hundred and two. The doctor wrote out a prescription, and Martha remained till tonight. I begged her to leave me alone, since you had promised to phone me as soon as you were free—I was afraid they

Très, très bien... Ne t'inquiète pas... (*Elle pleure.*)

[9]

(23:15)

...Allô!... Je Crôyais qu'on avait coupé... Tu es bon, mon chéri... Mon pauvre chéri à qui j'ai fait du mal... Oui, parle, parle, dis n'importe quoi... Je souffrais à me rouler par terre et il suffit que tu parles pour que je me sente bien, que je ferme les yeux. Tu sais, quelquefois quand nous étions couchés et que j'avais ma tête à sa petite place contre ta poitrine, j'entendais ta voix, exactement la même que ce soir dans l'appareil...

[10]

(25:15)

Allô! J'entends de la musique... Je dis: J'entends de la musique... Eh bien, tu devrais cogner au mur et empêcher ces voisins de jouer du gramophone à des heures pareilles... C'est inutile. Du reste, le docteur de Marthe reviendra demain... Ne t'inquiète pas... Mais oui... Elle te donnera des nouvelles... Quoi?... Oh! si, mille fois mieux. Si tu n'avais pas appelé, je serais morte... (*Elle marche de long en large et sa souffrance lui tire des plaintes.*)

[11]

(26:30)

Pardonne-moi. Je sais que cette scène est intolérable et que tu as bien de la patience, mais comprends-moi, je souffre, je souffre. Ce fil, c'est le dernier qui me rattache encore à nous... Avant-hier soir? J'ai dormi. Je m'étais couchée avec le téléphone... Non, non. Dans mon lit... Oui. Je sais. Je suis très très ridicule, mais j'avais le téléphone dans mon lit et malgré tout, on est relié par le téléphone...

would try to keep us apart... I'm alright... don't you worry now... (*She weeps.*)

...Hello!... I thought they had cut us off... You're so kind, *chéri*... My darling, whom I have hurt so very much... Yes, speak. Say anything at all... I have suffered enough to drive me mad; yet you have only to speak, and I feel well again, and can close my eyes. You know, sometimes when we were in bed, and my head was resting in its usual place, pressed against your chest, I could hear your voice exactly as it sounds over the telephone tonight...

Hello! Why do I hear music?... I said: Why do I hear music?... Well then, you should knock on the wall and complain if your neighbors play their gramophone so late at night... It's useless. Anyhow, Martha's doctor is coming back tomorrow... Don't you worry now... Of course... She will let you know what he said... What?... Oh yes! so much better. If you hadn't called tonight I would have died... (*She paces up and down and her suffering makes her moan.*)

...Forgive me, dear. I know you find this scene quite unbearable, and that you are being very patient. But if you knew what torture I suffer. This wire—the only bond that still connects me with us... Monday evening? I slept quite well. I went to bed with the telephone... No, no. In my bed... Yes, I know. I'm being silly. But I kept the

Parce que tu me parles. Voilà cinq ans que je vis de toi, que tu es mon seul air respirable, que je passe mon temps à t'attendre, à te croire mort si tu es en retard, à mourir de te croire mort, à revivre quand tu entres et quand tu es là, enfin, à mourir de peur que tu partes. Maintenant j'ai de l'air parce que tu me parles... C'est entendu, mon amour; j'ai dormi. J'ai dormi parce que c'était la première fois... Le premier soir on dort... Ce qu'on ne supporte pas, c'est la seconde nuit, hier, et la troisième, demain, des jours et des jours à faire quoi, mon Dieu?... Et... et en admettant que je dorme, après le sommeil il y a les rêves et le réveil et manger et se lever et se laver et sortir et aller où?... Mais, mon pauvre chéri, je n'ai jamais eu rien d'autre à faire que toi... Marthe a sa vie organisée... Seule...

[12]

... Voilà deux jours qu'il ne quitte pas l'antichambre... J'ai voulu l'appeler, le caresser. Il refuse qu'on le touche. Un peu plus, il me mordrait... Oui, moi! Je te jure qu'il m'effraye. Il ne mange plus. Il ne bouge plus. Et quand il me regarde, il me donne la chair de poule... Comment veux-tu que je sache? Il croit peut-être que je t'ai fait du mal... Pauvre bête... Je n'ai aucune raison de lui en vouloir. Je ne le comprends que trop bien. Il t'aime. Il ne te voit plus rentrer. Il croit que c'est ma faute... Oui, mon

(29;50)

telephone in my bed. In spite of all it is a link—something that connects us... Only because you are speaking. It's five years now that I've lived through you, that I've spent my time waiting for you, thinking you were dead every time you were late—I could die at the thought—and reviving the moment you appeared; and when you were finally here, dying at the thought that you'd leave me. And now I can breathe because I hear your voice... But of course, my sweet darling, I slept. Oh indeed. I could sleep because it was only the first time... The first night you sleep... What is really hard to bear is the second night—last night; and then the third—tonight! And then day after day, doing what, dear God?... And... even if I'm able to sleep I still have to face the horror of dreams, and awaking, and eating, and getting up, and getting dressed, to go out—to go out where?... Oh my darling, my sweet, all I've ever had to fill my life was you. Martha has organized her life... I'm alone.

... The last two days he has not gone out of the hallway... I have tried to call him; I've tried to pet him. He won't even let me touch him. In fact, he almost bit me... Yes, me! He frightens me, I swear. He won't eat a thing. He doesn't move. And when he turns his eyes on me, I get gooseflesh all over... How do you expect me to know? Maybe he thinks I have done you some harm... Poor little dog... I have no reason at all to hold it against him. I can understand him so well. He loves you, he

chéri. C'est entendu; mais c'est ma faute... Oui, mon
chéri. C'est entendu; mais c'est un chien. Malgré son
intelligence, il ne peut pas le deviner... Mais je ne sais pas,
mon chéri! Comment veux-tu que je sache? On n'est plus
soi-même. Songe que j'ai déchiré tout le paquet de mes
photographies d'un seul coup, sans m'en apercevoir.
Même pour un homme ce serait un tour de force...

(31:44,20)

Allo, allo, Madame, retirez vous. Vous êtes avec des
abonnés. Allô! mais non, Madame... Mais, Madame, nous
ne cherchons pas à être intéressants... Si vous nous
trouvez ridicules, pourquoi perdez-vous votre temps au
lieu de racrocher?... Oh!... Ne te fâche pas... Enfin!...
Non, non. Elle a racroché apres avoir dit cette chose
ignoble... Tu as l'air frappé... Si, tu es frappé, je connais
ta voix... Mais, mon chéri, cette femme doit être très mal
et elle ne te connaît pas. Elle croit que tu es comme les
autres hommes... Mais non, mon chéri, ce n'est pas du
tout pareil. Pour les gens, on s'aime ou on se déteste. Les
ruptures sont des ruptures. Ils regardent vite. Tu ne leur
feras jamais comprendre... Tu ne leur feras jamais
comprendre certaines choses... Le Mieux est de faire
comme moi et de s'en moquer... Complètement... (*Elle
pousse un cri de douleur sourde.*) Oh!... Rien. Je crois que
nous parlons comme d'habitude et puis tout a coup la
vérité me revient... (*Larmes.*)... Dans le temps, on se
voyait. On pouvait perdre la tête, oublier ses promesses,
risquer l'impossible, convaincre ceux qu'on adorait en les

doesn't see you any more, and so he thinks it's my fault...
Oh yes, *chéri*. I understand. He's not to blame. In spite of
his intelligence, he surely cannot guess the truth... I don't
really know, darling! How d'you expect me to know? I am
not myself. Think of it: I tore up that package of
photographs—ripped them—just like that! and didn't
even notice. Even for a man it would have been a feat...

Hello! hello! Madame, will you hang up. But you cut
in our line. Hello! Oh no, Madame... But, Madame, we're
not trying to be interesting, I can assure you... If you
really find us so silly, why are you wasting your time
instead of hanging up?... Oh!... Don't be angry... At
last!... No, no. She just hung up, after having been so
terribly nasty... You sound upset... Yes, you are upset. I
know your voice... But dearest, she must have been a very
sick woman, and she doesn't know you at all. Perhaps she
believed you were just like the others... Oh no, *chéri*, it is
not at all the same. People think it's either love or hatred.
Once an affair is over, it's over. They know everything.
You will never make them understand... You will never
make them understand that things are not simple... It's
better to do the same as I: laugh at them all... and ignore
them... (*She utters a stifled cry of sorrow.*) Oh!... Nothing.
I could swear that we were talking just the same as
always. All of a sudden I realized the truth... (*Tears.*)...
When we still saw one another, we could still lose our
heads, forget a broken promise, and take such chances.

Je sais bien qu'il le faut, mais c'est atroce... Jamais je n'aurai ce courage... Oui, on a l'illusion d'être l'un contre l'autre et brusquement on met des caves, des égouts, tout une ville entre soi... J'ai le fil autour de mon cou... Il faut autour de mon cou... Ta voix autour de mon cou... Il faudrait que le bureau nous coupe par hasard... Oh! mon chéri! comment peux-tu imaginer que je pense une chose si laide? Je sais bien que cette opération est encore plus cruelle à faire de ton côté que du mien... non... non... A Marseille?... Ecoute, chéri, puisque vous serez à Marseille après-demain soir, je voudrais... enfin j'aimerais... j'aimerais que tu ne descendes pas à l'hôtel où nous descendons d'habitude. Tu n'es pas fâché?... Parce que les choses que je n'imagine pas n'existent pas, ou bien elles existent dans une espèce de lieu très vague et qui fait moins de mal... tu comprends?... Merci... merci. Tu es bon. Je t'aime...(Elle se lève et se dirige vers le lit avec l'appareil à la main.) Alors, voilà... J'allais dire machinalement: à tout de suite... J'en doute... Oh!... C'est mieux... Beaucoup mieux... (Elle se couche sur le lit et serre l'appareil dans ses bras.)

... I know well that we must, but it is dreadful... I never could summon up the courage... Yes, I have the illusion that I'm right beside you. And all at once, the cellars and sewers, a whole city lies between us... I have wound the cord around my neck... I can feel your voice around my neck... your voice surrounding my neck... They could hardly cut us off, except by mistake... Oh chéri! Oh how could you even imagine I'd think such an ugly thought? I am well aware that this thing is more difficult for you, more painful in every way than for me... no... no... To Marseilles?... Oh listen, chéri. Since you will be in Marseilles at least for a week, may I ask... I really would like... I would like it if you did not go to that little hotel where we always stayed together. You are not angry?... Because the things I don't have to imagine do not exist. Or let's say that they exist in some very vague kind of place that does not hurt so much... You understand?... Thank you... thank you. You are good. I love you (She gets up and walks towards the bed with the telephone in her hand)... So here we are... I was about to say, out of habit, "I'll see you soon"... I doubt it... Oh!... It's better... Much better... (She lies down on the bed and clasps the telephone in her arms.)

... Mon chéri... mon beau chéri... Je suis forte.
Dépêche-toi. Vas-y. Coupe! Coupe vite! Je t'aime, je
t'aime, je t'aime, je t'aime... t'aime...
(*Le récepteur tombe par terre.*)

Oh darling... my sweet darling... I'll be brave. Let's
make an end. Go on. Hang up! Hang up quickly! I love
you, I love you, I love you, I love you... love you... (*The
telephone falls to the ground.*)

English singing version translated by Joseph Machlis