

THE SONG OF WESTPHALIA
(1869)

BY

EMIL RITTERSHAUS
(1834 – 1897)

Let your praise ring out to the Majestic Rhine,
For from her banks the grape does grow,
Her hills bring forth iron from every mine,
There my mother's lullaby was sung long ago.

Upon the rocky hilltops the fir trees stand,
In the green valley herds of cattle graze
Whilst guardians of farmhouse and the land
The oaks their branches to the heavens raise.

Here is the cradle where my life began:
Westphalia, to thee my heart returns again and again!

Here sweet speeches are out of place,
And pretty words are not our style;
With a pretense of a warm embrace
And fraternal kiss we do not beguile.

If you want to test our soil beneath your feet,
Then search our hearts for hidden conceit —
Then look us straight in the eye!
There you will see — a Westphalian cannot lie!

Westphalian men do not mess
With childish games and childishness.

And our womenfolk, a Westphalian maid,
With eyes as blue as heaven's deepest hue,
She does not weave the intrigues of a jade
To spend a coquettish hour pretending to be true.

In her soul a gentle angel holds sway
Both by night and by day;
Faithful in sweetest bliss and in direst pain
And even till death her true heart will reign. —

A man will feel like an earl
Whose arm can clasp a Westphalian girl!

May God protect thee, o' soil so red,
Teutonic land where the legends of Wittekind thrive;
Till my body be rendered unto dust among the dead,
I from my homeland my greatest pleasure derive!

O' Westphalia, land of the Mark,
Strong as your oak where sings the lark;
Even pale lips of the dying bless thee -
In the final hour, one last soliloquy!

Land between the Rhine and Weser streams,
Westphalia, I greet thee – o' land of my dreams!

TRANSLATED BY NORMAN BARRY
(ST. PATRICK'S DAY, 2008)