

# ADULT FICTION

## POETRY – GERMAN

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SWA-PY-GR1 Switzerland 1996

### VERENA – DIE QUELLE – IN DER HÖHLE \*

SW – Fiction – Poetry

**Comp:** Carl RÜTTI

**Scr:** Silja WALTER (From her book “Gesamtausgabe,  
Band 8 – Lyrik”)

**Perf:** Silja WALTER (reader)

**Prod:** David Goode

**Prod. Co:** Herald Records

**Rec. Loc:** Propstei Church, St. Gerold; Austria

**Rec. Date:** Sept. 1995

**Time:** 0:42



Silja WALTER



**CD:** VERENA – DIE QUELLE

Herald HAVPCD 186 (2XCDs) (Disc 2 – Tk 1)

**Notes:** “In 1993 the Swiss artist Maria Hafner painted a cycle called *Verena, die Quelle* (Verena, the Source); it was a kind of interpretation in pictures of the legend of Verena (a 4th-century holy woman, much revered in Switzerland). Then she decided to enlarge her work about the impressive life of this fascinating woman by combining the three arts of poetry, painting, and music. The famous Swiss poet Silja Walter (sister Maria Hewdwig from the Benedictine monastery of Fahr) wrote poems to the paintings. Finally the music was written as a result of the text and pictures.” (Anon 2014a)

Here is the short poem, “In der Höhle” –

Hinaus aus der Stadt.  
Hinein ins Gestein.  
Flucht in die Schlucht  
meiner Seele.

Out of the town.  
Straight into the rock.  
Flight into the gorge  
my soul.

Die Nacht sitzt darin,  
Als wär sie ihr Haus  
da tropft sie sich,  
tropft sie sich,  
tropft sie sich aus.  
Aber das Frühlicht  
kommt nicht.

The night sits therein  
As she was in her house  
there she drops off,  
she drops off,  
she drops off spent.  
But the dawn light  
does not come.

O Nacht meiner Seele,  
wer weiß, wer ich bin?  
Verlassene Höhle,  
zerfallene Hütte,  
wo ist meine Mitte?

O night of my soul;  
who knows who I am?  
Abandoned cave,  
ruined hut,  
where is my center?



Carl Rütli, the composer of music inspired by these paintings and poems, wrote: “The paintings by Maria Hafner, from which the poems arose, inspired me especially for sounds and instrumentation.... The

recording of Silja Walter reading her own poems herself makes the synthesis of the three arts complete.” (Rütti 2014) For Rütti’s composition, “In der Höhle,” see under Contemporary Art Music – Choral – *Verena – Die Quelle*.

This is not a religious poem rather it is a poem inspired by a religious person. Saint Verena might have been a contemporary of Saint Maurice in the latter half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century AD. According to tradition, she joined the Theban Legion on its mission to Rhaetia (part of present day Switzerland) in order to be with and care for her relative Saint Victor, who was a Theban soldier. When Saints Maurice and Victor and other members of the Theban Legion were martyred, Verena fled to the life of a hermit. (Anon. 2014b) She settled in a cave in a limestone gorge, two kilometers north of the Aare River in Solothurn, Switzerland.



The old engraving of the St. Verena Chapel was illustrated by David Herrliberger (1697-1777) and drafted by Emanuel Büchel.

“The valley abounds in caves and grottoes, partly natural, partly artificial, and at its further extremity, within a natural shelf of over-arching cliffs, stands the little chapel of S. Verena. Behind the altar a small cave has been cut in the rock, and now contains a representation of the Holy Sepulchre. In this cave the pious maiden lived, spending her time in prayer and in ministering to the cleanliness of soul and body of the peasantry in the neighborhood.” (Baring-Gould 1875) In a later work, Baring-Gould again mentions Verena and the cave – “There is no mention of this hermitage earlier than 1426, and the legend has grown up since. That the cave was much more ancient, and was invested with holy awe, is no doubt true. In fact, there is reason to believe that Verena was a German goddess.... The way to the chapel is through woods, the valley closing in till bold rocks are reached....From this a long and steep stair leads up to the chapel, cut deep in the rock, with an altar in it... On the other side of the chapel a long stone stair leads again into the open air.” (Baring-Gould 1911)

**Ref: Ref:** Anon. 2014a, Carl Rütli, Verena – Die Quelle CD, [heraldday](#)

Anon. 2014b, Verena, History, [Wikipedia](#)

Baring-Gould, Rev. S. 1875, *The Lives of the Saints – September*, John Hodges, London, p. 2-4

Baring-Gould, Rev. S. 1911, *Cliff Castles and Cave Dwellings of Europe*, Seeley & Co. Ltd., London, p. 210

Carl Rütti, Verena – Die Quelle CD, [Amazon](#)

Carl Rütti, Verena – Die Quelle CD, End of Stanza 2 & Stanza 3, [CDUniverse](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

Rütti, Carl 2014, Verena – Die Quelle CD, [heraldday](#)

Silja Walter, Biography, (in English), [Wikipedia](#) & (in German), [Wikipedia](#)

Silja Walter, Gesamtausgabe, Band 8 – Lyrik, [paulusedition.ch](#)

[caveinspiredmusic.com](http://caveinspiredmusic.com)