

"Che gelida manina," from Puccini's *La Bohème*

What a chilly little hand,
let me warm it for you.
What's the use of looking?
We won't find it in the dark.
But luckily
it's a moonlit night,
and the moon
is near us here.
Wait, mademoiselle,
I will tell you in two words
who I am, what I do,
and how I live. May I?
Who am I? I am a poet.
What do I do? I write.
And how do I live? I live.
In my carefree poverty
I squander rhymes
and love songs like a lord.
When it comes to dreams and visions
and castles in the air,
I've the soul of a millionaire.
From time to time two thieves
steal all the jewels
out of my safe, two pretty eyes.
They came in with you just now,
and my customary dreams
my lovely dreams,
melted at once into thin air!
But the theft doesn't anger me,
for their place has been
taken by hope!
Now that you know all about me,
you tell me who you are.
Please do!