



*A photograph of Lorca,  
taken in 1916, when he was eighteen.*

## FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA

### THE LATER POETRY 1931 – 36

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[In the translation, the word **NOTE** indicates a particular crux of meaning that is explored further in the Notes. Click on **NOTE** for an immediate transfer to the discussion, and then on **RETURN** to come back to the poem in question.]

## INTRODUCTION

In the last year of the last century, 1999, a book was published with the arresting title *Fire, Blood, and the Alphabet*. It had been compiled to celebrate, in the words of its sub-title, 'One Hundred Years of Lorca', the centenary of the Spanish poet, Federico García Lorca, who had been born in 1898 in an Andalusian village near Granada. The book contained much fascinating material about Lorca's artistic legacy and its impact, as well as moving creative responses to his life and work. The final section, though, was concerned with the issues raised in translating his work into English; and those issues were dramatically presented by placing together no fewer than sixteen different versions of a single poem, 'Llagas de amor' (literally, 'Wounds of Love'), which was part of the sonnet sequence *Sonetos del amor oscuro* (*Sonnets of Dark Love*). In direct opposition to the poet Ted Hughes's view that 'Lorca cannot be Englished', these sixteen translations sought to proclaim the reverse: that Lorca's words could indeed be rendered into an English that was vibrant and imaginatively persuasive. The versions shared both common denominators and also differences, but whether similarities or dissimilarities prevailed, there was a richness and verbal strength in a number of them that bore witness to the successful 'Englishisation' of Lorca's original.

I want, in this introduction, to focus closely upon this single poem, because it crystallises not only the general issues that arise in the translation of Lorca's Spanish, but also the more specific matters raised in the translation of his later poetry, those poems composed between his return to Spain from New York in 1931 and his assassination in 1936. The original words of 'Llagas de amor' read:

Esta luz, este fuego que devora,  
este paisaje gris que me rodea,  
este dolor por una sola idea,  
este angustia de cielo, mundo y hora.  
Este llanto de sangre que decora

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lira sin pulso ya, lúbrica tea,  
este peso del mar que me golpea,  
este alacrán que por mi pecho mora,

son guirnalda de amor, cama de herido,  
donde sin sueño, sueño tu presencia  
entre las ruinas de mi pecho hundido.

Y aunque busco la cumber de prudencia  
me da tu corazón valle tendido  
com cicuta y pasión de amarga ciencia.

Lorca's sonnet is cast in a Petrarchan form: that is to say, a sequence of eight lines, rhyming abba abba, is followed by a sequence of six lines, rhyming cdc dcd. Following the conventions of the form, the octave presents the theme, the problem, the thesis of the poem, while the sestet offers some kind of advance, or conclusion, or resolution, to the situation that has been posited. In response to these formal features, the sixteen translators above chose the following options:

<b>number of lines</b>	10 chose to retain the fourteen lines of the sonnet form, but 6 opted for a greater number of lines. None chose fewer than 14 lines;
<b>octave/sestet structure</b>	9 chose to retain the basic octave/sestet structure, though 4 paid it no attention at all, and 3 seemed ambivalent, both following and undermining it at one and the same time;
<b>rhyme</b>	7 followed the Petrarchan rhyme scheme very closely, whilst 5 ignored it entirely, and 4 both rhymed certain lines but did not rhyme others.

The variety of response indicated by these bald facts takes on particularly dramatic shape when different versions are placed side by side. Here are four of the translations, followed by a brief, initial reaction that is far from exhaustive:

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1. This light, this fire, this quick devouring lime;  
This grey and empty landscape that surrounds me;  
This torment of one sole idea that hounds me;  
This anguish in the heavens, the world and time;

These tears of blood that decorate the strings  
Of my mute lyre, bright torch whose flame should light me;  
These batterings of a heavy sea that smite me;  
This scorpion living in my breast that sings;

These are love's garland, the wounded victim's bed  
Where sleepless I dream that with me you remain  
Among the ruins of the heart you bled.

I seek the heights of wisdom, but in vain:  
Deep in the valley of your heart I'm fed  
On hemlock, bitter knowledge bought with pain.

*(John Edmunds)*

VERY FAITHFUL TO THE FORMAL FEATURES OF THE ORIGINAL, AND WITH A PERSUASIVE RHYTHMIC FLUENCY. AN OCCASIONAL SENSE OF SLIGHTLY FORCED DICTION ('FLAME SHOULD LIGHT ME', 'SEA THAT SMITE ME'). BUT OVERALL, A FINE AND IMAGINATIVE TRANSLATION.

2. And as the sun dies  
on us  
and there's nothing we can do  
as forever isn't forever any more and this pain in a way feels  
overdue  
feels real ...  
What can I do  
but silence my mind whilst I lie awake  
longing for you?  
For all this anger, despair and agony talking  
are like wounds  
who carry with them a thousand tombs.  
Oh, insecurity... I feel imprisoned by your clutch  
and burdened by these unbearable moments for loving so  
much.

I yearn to be able to make the same sun rise again  
and from reliving dreams of our togetherness I try to abstain



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Whether this version is more, or less, effective than the four above is for others to judge. But I have tried, in this instance, to capture a tone of voice, a rhythmic urgency, that expresses the passionate force of Lorca's Spanish, and the ways in which that force is modulated from the bare, elemental anguish of the first eight lines to the marginally more subdued and reflective voice of the last six. And if the remainder of the many poems in this translation manage, similarly, to capture the shifts and complexities and enigmas of Lorca's tone and voice, they will have more than achieved their purpose.

Tim Chilcott  
December 2016

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1898 Federico García Lorca is born on 5 June in Fuente Vaqueros, an Andalusian village west of Granada, into an educated family of small landowners.
- 1909 moves with his family to Granada, and begins to show considerable talent as a musician, particularly at the piano.
- 1914 begins his first year at the University of Granada, though his subsequent university career is far from distinguished.
- 1918 his first book is published, a collection of prose pieces entitled *Impresiones y Paisajes* (Impressions and Landscapes), which meets with local acclaim but little commercial success.
- 1919 goes to the Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid, an educational institution modelled on Oxford and Cambridge, where he meets many of the major writers, critics and scholars of the day. Becomes close friends with the poet Rafael Alberti, the filmmaker Luis Buñuel, the composer Manuel de Falla, and especially the painter Salvador Dalí, with whom he later collaborates.
- 1920 his first play *El maleficio de la Mariposa* (The Butterfly's Evil Spell) is a disaster, and lasts only four performances.
- 1921 *Poema del Cante Jondo* (*Poem of the Deep Song*) is begun in August, with over half of the poems drafted between 11 and 21 November. A complete text, however, is not published until 1931.

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- 1927 a collection of poetry, *Canciones* (Songs), is published. His second play, *Mariana Pineda*, with stage settings by Dalí, opens to great acclaim in Barcelona.
- 1928 *Romancero gitano* (*The Gypsy Ballads*) is published to great acclaim. But his growing celebrity only exacerbates the tension between his public persona and his private self as a gay man. Has a passionate but abortive affair with Emilio Aladrén, a sculptor.
- 1929 leaves for New York with Fernando de los Ríos, an old family friend, and remains there for nine months. Witnesses the Wall Street crash. The volume of poems based on his experience of the city is published posthumously in 1940 as *Poeta en Nueva York* (*Poet in New York*).
- 1930 on his return to Spain, devotes himself increasingly to the theatre. The following year, begins to co-direct, and to act in, *La Barraca*, a government-sponsored student theatrical company that tours the country.
- 1933 *Bodas de sangre* (*Blood Wedding*) has an outstanding success in Spain and later in Argentina, which he visits.
- 1934 *Yerma* is written and produced. Composes his great elegy *Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías* (*Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías*), which is published the following year.
- 1935 composes the *Sonetos del Amor Oscuro* (Sonnets of Dark Love), which remain unpublished until 1984.
- 1936 *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (*The House of Bernarda Alba*).  
outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. He is accused of being a Russian spy, and on the night of 18-19 August, is executed by a firing squad of nationalist partisans near the famous spring of Fuente Grande, not far from Granada. His body is buried in an unmarked grave.

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- posthumous the Franco regime places a general ban on his work, which is not lifted until 1953, when a heavily censored *Obras Completas* (Complete Works) is published. Only after Franco's death in 1975 do the details of Lorca's life, death, and complete literary output become more widely known.

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[1931-34]

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[1932-34]

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[¡Ay voz secreta del amor oscuro!] / *[Ah, This Secret Voice of Dark  
Love]*  
El amor duerme en el pecho del poeta / *The Beloved Sleeps on the  
Poet's Breast*  
Noche del amor insomne / *Night of Sleepless Love*

[autumn 1935 – summer 1936]

**[SONETOS ESPECIALMENTE PARA LA OCASIÓN]  
[OCCASIONAL SONNETS]**

Epitafio a Isaac Albéniz / *Epitaph for Isaac Albéniz*  
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Montevideo / *At the Nameless Tomb of Herrera y Reissig in the  
Cemetery of Montevideo*  
A Mercedes en su vuelo / *To Mercedes in her Flight*



## DIVÁN DEL TAMARIT

## THE TAMARIT DIVAN

*[Divan: derived from the Persian diwan, the word refers to a collection or anthology of poetry.*

*Tamarit: here refers to the Huerta del Tamarit, a country house just outside Granada that was owned by Lorca's uncle].*

*Gacelas*

*Ghazals*

[Gacelas/Ghazals: *Persian forms of poetry, relatively short in length, generally with an erotic emphasis, and designed to be sung*].

*Gacela primera Del amor imprevisto*

Nadie comprendía el perfume  
de la oscura magnolia de tu vientre.  
Nadie sabía que martirizabas  
un colibrí de amor entre los dientes.

Mil caballitos persas se dormían  
en la plaza con luna de tu frente,  
mientras que yo enlazaba cuatro noches  
tu cintura, enemiga de la nieve.

Entre yeso y jazmines, tu mirada  
era un pálido ramo de simientes.  
Yo busqué, para darte, por mi pecho  
las letras de marfil que dicen *siempre*.

*Siempre, siempre*: jardín de mi agonía,  
tu cuerpo fugitive para siempre,  
la sangre de tus venas en mi boca,  
tu boca ya sin luz para mi muerte.

*I Ghazal of Love Unforeseen*

No one understood the perfume,  
the dark magnolia of your belly.  
No one knew that you were martyring  
love's humming-bird between your teeth.

A thousand Persian ponies fell asleep  
upon the moonlit plaza of your brow,  
while four nights through, my hands entwined  
your waist, the enemy of snow.

Between the plaster and the jasmine, your gaze –  
a pale branch bearing seed.  
I sought to give you in my heart  
the ivory letters saying *always*.

*Always, always*: garden of my agony,  
your body always slipping away,  
the blood of your veins in my mouth,  
and yours without light for my death.

*Gacela II De la terrible presencia*

Yo quiero que el agua se quede sin cauce.  
Yo quiero que el viento se quede sin valles.

Quiero que la noche se quede sin ojos  
y mi corazón sin la flor del oro;

que los bueyes hablen con las grandes hojas  
y que la lombriz se muera de sombre;

que brillen los dientes de la calavera  
y los amarillos inunden la seda.

Puedo ver el duelo de la noche herida  
luchando enroscada con el mediodía.

Resisto un ocaso de verde veneno  
y los arcos rotos donde sufre el tiempo.

Pero no illumines tu limpio desnudo  
como un negro cactus abierto en los juncos.

Déjame en un ansia de oscuros planetas,  
pero no me enseñes tu cintura fesca.

*II Ghazal of the Terrible Presence*

I want the water to be left without waterways.  
I want the wind to be left without valleys.

I want the night to be left without eyes,  
and my heart without its flower of gold.

I want the oxen to talk to great leaves  
and the earthworm perish in darkness.

I want teeth in the skull to glisten,  
and yellows to wash over silk.

I can see the struggle of wounded night  
coiled wrestling with midday.

I can withstand a sunset of green poison  
and the broken arches where time is suffering.

But do not show your total nakedness,  
like a black cactus open in the reeds.

Leave me yearning for darkened planets,  
but do not show the coolness of your waist.

*Gacela III Del amor desesperado*

La noche no quiere venir  
para que tú no vengas,  
ni yo pueda ir.

Pero yo iré,  
aunque un sol de alacranes me coma la sien.

Pero tú vendrás  
con la lengua quemada por la lluvia de sal.

El día no quiere venir  
para que tú no vengas,  
ni yo pueda ir.

Pero yo iré  
entregando a los sapos mi mordido clavel.

Pero tú vendrás  
por las turbias cloacas de la oscuridad.

Ni la noche no el día quieren venir  
para que por tí muera  
y tú mueras por mí.

*III Ghazal of Desperate Love*

Night does not want to come  
so that you cannot come,  
so that I cannot go.

But I will go,  
although a scorpion sun may claw my brow.

But you will come,  
with your tongue burnt by salty rain.

Day does not want to come  
so that you cannot come,  
so that I cannot go.

But I will go,  
and leave my bitten carnation to the toads.

But you will come  
through the murky sewers of the darkness.

Night and day do not want to come,  
so I may die for you  
and you for me.

*Gacela IV Del amor que no se deja ver*

Solamente por oír  
la campana de la Vela  
te puse una corona de verbena.

*Granada era una luna  
ahogada entre las yedras.*

Solamente por oír  
la campana de la Vela  
desgarré mi jardín de Cartagena.

*Granada era una corza  
rosa por las veletas.*

Solamente por oír  
la campana de la Vela  
me abrasaba en tu cuerpo  
sin saber de quién era.

*IV Ghazal of the Love that Hides from  
Sight*

I'd just to hear  
the bell of the Vela tower,  
and I made for you a garland of verbena.

*Granada was a moon  
drowned among the ivy.*

I'd just to hear  
the bell of the Vela tower,  
and I ripped up my Cartagena garden.

*Granada was a doe  
pink among the weather-vanes.*

I'd just to hear  
the bell of the Vela tower,  
and I burned inside your body,  
not knowing whose it was.

[the bell of the Vela tower: *the Vela tower is the largest in the Alhambra complex, topped by a bell originally used as a timepiece, as well as a warning of danger. Tradition had it that any single woman who rang the bell would be married within the year.*  
my Cartagena garden: *the reference to the Spanish city recalls a children's song, where verbena is rhymed with Cartagena*].

*Gacela V Del niño muerto*

Todas las tardes en Granada,  
todas la tardes se muere un niño.  
Todas las tardes el aqua se sienta  
a conversar con sus amigos.

Los muertos llevan alas de musgo.  
El viento nublado y el viento limpio  
son dos faisanes que vuelan por las torres  
y el día es un muchacho herido.

No quedaba en el aire ni una brizna de alondra  
cuando yo te encontré por las grutas del vino.  
No quedaba en la tierra ni una miga de nube  
cuando te ahogabas por el río.

Un gigante de aqua cayó sobre los montes  
y el valle fue rodando con perros y con lirios.  
Tu cuerpo, con la sombra violeta de mis manos,  
era, muerto en la orilla, un arcángel de frío.

*V Ghazal of the Dead Child*

Every evening in Granada,  
every evening, a child dies.  
Every evening, the water sits down  
to talk things over with its friends.

The dead wear wings of moss.  
The wind of cloud and wind of cloudless skies  
are two pheasants that circle the towers,  
and the day is a wounded boy.

Not a blade of lark was left in the air  
when I met you in the caverns of wine.  
Not a crumb of cloud was left on the earth  
when you drowned in the river.

A giant of water fell down the mountains,  
and the valley rolled over with irises and dogs.  
Your body, shadowed violet by my hands,  
was dead on the bank, an archangel of cold.

*Gacela VI De la raíz amarga*

Hay una raíz amarga  
y un mundo de mil terrazas.

Ni la mano más pequeña  
quiebra la puerta del agua.

¿Dónde vas, adónde, dónde?  
Hay un cielo de mil ventanas  
– batalla de abejas lividas –  
y hay una raíz amarga.

Amarga.

Duele en la planta del pie,  
el interior de la cara,  
y duele en el tronco fresco  
de noche recién cortada.

¡Amor, enemigo mío,  
muerde tu raíz amarga!

*VI Ghazal of the Bitter Root*

There is a bitter root  
and a world of a thousand balconies.

Not even the tiniest hand  
breaks down the door of the waters.

Where are you going, where, where?  
There's a sky of a thousand windows  
– a battle of livid bees –  
and there is a bitter root.

Bitter.

It aches in the sole of the foot,  
the inside of the face,  
and it aches in the cool trunk  
of the night, newly cut.

Love, my enemy,  
bite your bitter root!



*Gacela VII Del recuerdo de amor*

No te llevas tu recuerdo.  
Déjalo solo en mi pecho,

temblor de blanco cerezo  
en el martirio de enero.

Me separa de los muertos  
un muro de malos sueños.

Doy pena de lirio fresco  
para un corazón de yeso.

Toda la noche, en el huerto  
mis ojos, como dos perros.

Toda la noche, comiendo  
los membrillos de veneno.

Algunas veces el viento  
es un tulipán de miedo;

es un tulipán enfermo,  
la madrugada de invierno.

Un muro de malos sueños  
me separa de los muertos.

La hierba cubre en silencio  
el valle gris de tu cuerpo.

Por el arco del encuentro  
la cicuta está creciendo.

Pero deja tu recuerdo,  
déjalo solo en mi pecho.

*VII Ghazal of the Memory of Love*

Don't take your memory away with you.  
Leave it alone in my heart,

a trembling of white cherry trees  
in the martyrdom of January.

A wall of awful dreams  
divides me from the dead.

I give the grief of a fresh iris  
for a heart of plaster.

The whole night in the orchard,  
my eyes, like two dogs.

The whole night, eating  
the poisonous quinces

Sometimes the wind  
is a tulip of fear;

a sickly tulip  
are the small hours of winter.

A wall of awful dreams  
divides me from the dead.

The grass covers in silence  
your body's grey valley.

Round the arch where we met,  
hemlock is growing.

But leave me your memory,  
leave it alone in my heart.

*Gacela VIII De la muerte oscura*

Quiero dormir el sueño de las manzanas,  
alejarme del tumulto de los cementerios.  
Quiero dormir el sueño de aquel niño  
que quería cortarse el corazón en alta mar.

No quiero que me repitan que los muertos no pierden la  
sangre;  
que la boca podrida sigue pidiendo agua.  
No quiero enterarme de los martirios que de la hierba,  
ni de la luna con boca de serpiente  
que trabaja antes del amanecer.

Quiero dormir un rato,  
un rato, un minute, un siglo;  
pero que todos sepan que no he muerto;  
que hay un establo de oro en mis labios;  
que soy el pequeño amigo del viento Oeste;  
que soy la sombra inmensa de mis lágrimas.

Cúbreme por la aurora con un velo  
porque me arrojará puñados de hormigas,  
y moja con agua dura mis zapatos  
para que resbale la pinza de su alacrán.

Porque quiero dormir el sueño de las manzanas  
para aprender un llanto que me limpie de tierra;  
porque quiero vivir con aquel niño oscuro  
que quería cortarse el corazón en alta mar.

*VIII Ghazal of Dark Death*

I want to sleep the sleep of apples,  
far distant from the frenzy of the graveyards.  
I want to sleep the sleep of that child  
who yearned to cut his heart out on the deep.

I don't want to hear again that corpses lose no blood,  
that rotting mouths are begging still for water.  
I don't want to know about the torments that the grass  
inflicts,  
or of the snake-mouthed moon  
that labours before the dawn.

I want to sleep just a moment,  
a moment, a minute, a hundred years.  
But everyone should know I have not died,  
that there's a golden stable on my lips,  
that I'm the west wind's little friend,  
that I'm the enormous shadow of my tears.

Wrap a veil around me at dawn,  
for she will throw fistfuls of ants;  
and soak my shoes in hard water  
so her scorpion's sting will slide off.

Because I want to sleep the sleep of apples  
and learn a lament that will cleanse me of earth;  
because I want to live with that child of the dark  
who yearned to cut his heart out on the deep.

*Gacela IX Del amor maravilloso*

Con todo el yeso  
de los malos campos,  
eras junco de amor, jazmín mojado.

Con sur y llama  
de los malos cielos,  
eras rumor de nieve por mi pecho.

Cielos y campos  
anudaban cadenas en mis manos.

Campos y cielos  
azotaban las llagas de mi cuerpo.

*IX Ghazal of Marvellous Love*

In spite of all the chalk  
in the bad fields  
you were a reed of love, wet jasmine.

In spite of south winds and the flame  
of the bad skies  
you were a murmuring of snow upon my heart.

Skies and fields  
knotted chains round my hands.

Fields and skies  
lashed the wounds of my flesh.

*Gacela X De la huida*

Me he perdido muchas veces por el mar  
con el oído lleno de flores recién cortadas  
con la lengua llena de amor y de agonía.  
Muchas veces me he perdido por el mar,  
como me pierdo en el corazón de algunos niños.

No hay nadie que, al dar un beso,  
no sienta la sonrisa de la gente sin rostro,  
ni hay nadie que, al tocar un recién nacido,  
olvide las inmóviles calaveras de caballo.

Porque las rosas buscan en la frente  
un duro paisaje de hueso  
y las manos del hombre no tienen más sentido  
que imitar a las raíces bajo tierra.

Como me pierdo en el corazón de algunos niños,  
me he perdido muchas veces por el mar.  
Ignorante de la agua, voy buscando  
una muerte de luz que me consuma.

*X Ghazal of the Flight*

I've often lost myself within the sea,  
my ears full of fresh-cut flowers,  
my tongue full of love and agony.  
Often have I lost myself within the sea  
as I am lost within the hearts of certain boys. **NOTE**

No one can give a kiss and not then feel  
the smile of faceless people.  
No one can touch a new-born child  
and then forget the unstirred skulls of horses.

Because roses search the forehead  
for a hard landscape of bone,  
and human hands have no more point  
than mimicking the roots beneath the soil.

As I am lost within the hearts of certain boys,  
I've often lost myself within the sea.  
Not knowing water, I keep looking for  
a death of light to ravage me.

*Gacela XI Del amor con cien años*

Suben por la calle  
los cuatro galanes.

*Ay, ay, ay, ay.*

Por la calle abajo  
van los tres galanes.

*Ay, ay, ay.*

Se ciñen el talle  
esos dos galanes.

*Ay, ay.*

¡Cómo vuelve el rostro  
un galán y el aire!

Por los arrayanes  
se pasea nadie.

*XI Ghazal of Love One Hundred Years  
Old*

Up the street go  
four dishy men. **NOTE**

*Ah, ah, ah, ah.*

Down the street  
go three dishy men.

*Ah, ah, ah.*

They hold in their waists **NOTE**  
those two dishy men.

*Ah, ah.*

How he turns back his face,  
the one dishy man and the wind!

Through the myrtle groves  
no one is walking.

*Gacela del mercado matutino*

*Por el arco de Elvira  
quiero verte pasar,  
para saber tu nombre  
y ponerme a llorar.*

¿Qué luna gris de las nueve  
te desangró la mejilla?  
¿Quién recoge tu semilla  
de llamarada en la nieve?  
¿Qué alfiler de cactus breve  
asesina tu cristal? ...

*Por el arco de Elvira  
voy a verte pasar,  
para beber tus ojos  
y ponerme a llorar.*

¿Qué voz para mi castigo  
levantas por el Mercado!  
¿Qué clavel enajenado  
en los monotonos de trigo!  
¿Qué lejos estoy contigo,  
qué cerca cuando te vas!

*Por el arco de Elvira  
voy a verte passer,  
para sentir tus muslos  
y ponerme a llorar.*

*Ghazal of the Morning Market*

*Through the Arch of Elvira  
I want to see you come,  
so that I can learn your name  
and break down into tears.*

What grey moon at nine o'clock  
drew the blood so from your cheek?  
Who gathers up your seed  
of flashing flame on snow?  
What small spike of cactus  
is murdering your crystal?

*Through the Arch of Elvira  
I want to see you come,  
so that I can drink upon your eyes  
and break down into tears.*

What a voice to punish me  
you shout out in the market!  
What carnation, frenzied,  
in the mounds of wheat!  
How far, when I am with you?  
How close, when you depart?

*Through the Arch of Elvira  
I want to see you come,  
to feel your thighs  
and break down into tears.*

[the arch of Elvira: *one of the few remaining Moorish town gates in Granada*].

*Casidas*

*Casidas*

*Casida primera Del herido por el agua*

Quiero bajar al pozo,  
quiero subir los muros de Granada,  
para mirar el corazón pasado  
por el punzón oscuro de la aguas.

El niño herido gemía  
con una corona de escarcha.  
Estanques, aljibes y Fuentes  
levantaban al aire sus espadas.  
¡Ay qué furia de amor, qué hiriente filo,  
qué nocturne rumor, qué muerte blanca!  
¡Qué desiertos de luz iban hundiendo  
los arenales de la madrugada!  
El niño estaba solo  
con la ciudad dormida en la garganta.  
Un surtidor que viene de los sueños  
lo defiende del hambre de las algas.  
El niño y su agonía, frente a frente,  
eran dos verdes lluvias enlazadas.  
El niño se tendía por la tierra  
y su agonía se curvaba.

Quiero bajar al pozo,  
quiero morir mi muerte a bacanadas,  
quiero llenar mi corazón de musgo,  
para ver al herido por el agua.

*I Casida of One Wounded by Water*

I want to go down to the well,  
I want to climb up the walls of Granada,  
to gaze at the heart that's been pierced  
by the dark spike of water.

The wounded boy was moaning,  
crowned with frost.  
Pools and cisterns and fountains  
were raising their swords in the air.  
Oh, what a fury of love, how cutting the edge,  
those sounds in the night, the death this white!  
What deserts of light were sunk  
in the sands of the hour before dawn.  
The boy was alone,  
the city asleep in his throat.  
A jet of water gushing from his dreams  
protects him from the hunger of seaweed.  
The boy and his agony, face to face,  
were two green rains entwined.  
The boy stretched out on the ground,  
and his agony coiled in the air

I want to go down to the well,  
I want to die my death by mouthfuls.  
I want to fill my heart with moss,  
to see the one wounded by water.



*Casida II Del llanto*

He cerrado mi balcón  
porque no quiero oír el llanto,  
pero por detrás de los grises muros  
no se oye otra cosa que el llanto.

Hay muy pocos ángeles que canten,  
hay muy pocos perros que ladren,  
mil violines caben en la palma de mi mano.

Pero el llanto es un perro inmenso,  
el llanto es un ángel inmenso,  
el llanto es un violín inmenso,  
las lágrimas amordazan al viento,  
y no se oye otra cosa que el llanto.

*II Casida of Weeping*

I've shut the window to my balcony.  
I don't want to hear the weeping.  
But out there, behind grey walls,  
nothing is heard but the weeping.

There are very few angels that sing,  
there are very few dogs that bark.  
A thousand violins fit in the palm of my hand.

But the weeping is an enormous dog,  
the weeping is an enormous angel,  
the weeping is an enormous violin.  
Tears have muzzled the wind,  
and nothing is heard but the weeping.

*Casida III De los ramos*

Por las arboledas del Tamarit  
han venido los perros de plomo  
a esperar que se caigan los ramos,  
a esperar que se quiebren ellos solos.

El Tamarit tiene un manzano  
con una manzana de sollozos.  
Un ruiseñor agrupa los suspiros  
y un faisán los ahuyenta por el polvo.

Pero los ramos son alegres,  
los ramos son como nosotros.  
No piensan en la lluvia y se han dormido,  
como si fueran árboles, de pronto.

Sentados con el agua en las rodillas  
dos valles esperaban al Otoño.  
La penumbra con paso elefante  
empujaba las ramas y los troncos.

Por las arboledas del Tamarit  
hay muchos niños de velado rostro  
a esperar que se caigan mis ramos,  
a esperar que se quiebren ellos solos.

*III Casida of the Boughs*

Through the groves of Tamarit  
leaden dogs have come,  
waiting for the boughs to fall,  
waiting for them of their own accord to break.

There's an apple tree in Tamarit  
with an apple full of tears.  
A nightingale picks up the sighs;  
a pheasant frightens them away in dust.

But the boughs are well content,  
the boughs are just like us.  
They don't think of the rain, but fall asleep  
as trees do, just like that.

Sitting with the water at their knees,  
two valleys were waiting for the Fall.  
The half-light with elephantine step  
was pushing at branches and at trunks.

Through the groves of Tamarit,  
many boys, with faces veiled,  
waiting for my boughs to fall,  
waiting for them of their own accord to break.

*Casida IV De la mujer tendida*

Verte desnuda es recordar la Tierra,  
la Tierra lisa, limpia de caballos.  
La Tierra sin un junco, forma pura  
cerrada al porvenir: confin de plata.

Verte desnuda es comprender el ansia  
de la lluvia que busca débil talle,  
o la fiebre del mar de inmenso rostro  
sin encontrar la luz de su mejilla.

La sangre sonará por las alcobas  
y vendrá con espadas fulgurantes,  
pero tú no sabras dónde se ocultan  
el corazón de sapo o la violeta.

Tu vientre es una lancha de raíces,  
tus labios son un alba sin contorno.  
Bajo las rosas tibias de la cama  
los muertos gimen esperando turno.

*IV Casida of the Reclining Woman*

To see you naked is to remember the Earth,  
the smooth Earth that is free of horses,  
the Earth without reeds, pure form  
closed to the future: a boundary of silver.

To see you naked is to understand the longing  
of the rain that looks for a delicate waist,  
or the fever of the huge-faced sea  
that cannot find the light upon its cheek.

Blood will sound through bedrooms  
and come with flaming swords,  
but you won't know the hiding place  
of the toad's heart or of the violet.

Your womb is a struggle of roots.  
Your lips are a dawn without contour.  
Beneath the lukewarm roses of the bed,  
dead men moan, waiting for their turn.

*Casia V Del sueño al aire libre*

Flor de jazmín y toro degollado.  
Pavimentos infinito. Mapa. Sala. Arpa. Alba.  
La niña sueña un toro de jazmines  
y el toro es un sangrientos crepúsculo que brama.

Si el cielo fuera un niño pequeñito,  
los jazmines tendrían mitad de noche oscura,  
y el toro circo azul sin lidiadores,  
y un corazón al pie de una columna.

Pero el cielo es un elefante,  
el jazmín es un agua sin sangre,  
y la niña es un ramo nocturne  
por el inmenso pavimento oscuro.

Entre el jazmín y el toro  
o garfios de marfil o gente dormida.  
En el jazmín un elefante y nubes  
y en el toro el esqueleto de la niña.

*V Casida of the Dream in the Open Air*

Jasmine flower and bull beheaded.  
Infinite pavement. Map. Room. Harp. Dawn.  
The girl dreams of a jasmine bull  
and the bull is a bloody sunset bellowing.

If the sky were a tiny boy,  
the jasmines would be a half of dark night,  
the bull a blue arena without matadors,  
and a heart at the foot of a column.

But the sky is an elephant,  
the jasmine a water without blood,  
and the girl a nocturnal bough  
across the pavement, infinitely dark.

Between the jasmine and the bull  
either ivory hooks or sleeping people.  
In the jasmine, an elephant and clouds,  
and in the bull, the girl's skeleton.

*Casida VI De la mano imposible*

Yo no quiero más que una mano,  
una mano herida, si es posible.  
Yo no quiero más que una mano,  
aunque pase mil noches sin lecho.

Seré un pálido lirio de cal,  
sería una paloma amarrada a mi corazón,  
sería el guardián que en la noche de mi tránsito  
prohibiera en absolute la entrada a la luna.

Yo no quiero más que sea mano  
para los diarios aceites y la sábana blanca de mi agonía.  
Yo no quiero más que esa mano  
para tener un ala de mi muerte.

Lo demás todo pasa.  
Rubor sin nombre ya. Astro perpetuo.  
Lo demás es lo otro; viento triste,  
mientras las hojas huyen en bandadas.

*VI Casida of the Impossible Hand*

I want nothing else, just a hand,  
a wounded hand, if it's possible.  
I want nothing else, just a hand,  
though a thousand nights I spend without a bed.

It would be a pale lily of lime,  
a dove tethered fast to my heart.  
It would be the guard, on the night that I died,  
who totally blocked the moon coming in.

I want nothing else, just that hand,  
for the daily oils, and the white sheet of my agony.  
I want nothing else, just that hand,  
to carry a wing of my death.

Everything else passes away.  
A blush already nameless. Perpetual star.  
Everything else is something other: sad wind,  
while the leaves flee, whirling away in flocks.

*Casida VII De la rosa*

La rosa  
no buscaba la aurora:  
casi eterna en su ramo,  
buscaba otra cosa.

La rosa  
no buscaba ni ciencia ni sombra:  
confin de carne y sueño,  
buscaba otra cosa.

La rosa  
no buscaba la rosa:  
inmóvil por el cielo,  
buscaba otra cosa.

*VII Casida of the Rose*

The rose  
was not looking for the dawn:  
almost eternal on its stem,  
it was looking for something else.

The rose  
was not looking for science or shadow.  
Bounded by flesh and by dream,  
it was looking for something else.

The rose  
was not looking for the rose.  
In the sky, unmoving,  
it was looking for something else.

*Casida VIII De la muchacha dorada*

La muchacha dorada  
se bañaba en el agua  
y el agua se doraba.

Las algas y las ramas  
en sombre la asombraban,  
y el ruiseñor cantaba  
por la muchacha blanca.

Vino la noche clara,  
turbia de plata mala,  
con peladas montañas  
bajo la brisa parda.

La muchacha mojada  
era blanca en el agua  
y el agua, llamarada.

Vino el elba sin mancha,  
con cien caras de vaca,  
yerta y amortajada  
con heladas guirnaldas.

La muchacha de lágrimas  
se bañab entre llamas,  
y el ruiseñor lloraba  
con las alas quemadas.

La muchacha dorada  
era una blance Garza  
y el agua la doraba.

*VIII Casida of the Golden Girl*

The golden girl  
was bathing in the water  
and the water turned to gold.

The algae and the branches  
frightened her with shadow,  
and the nightingale was singing  
for the white(-faced) girl.

The clear night came,  
troubled with bad silver,  
with bleak mountains  
underneath the dull grey breeze.

The wet girl  
was white in the water  
and the water, a flash of flame.

The dawn came spotless  
with a hundred cow faces,  
with frozen garlands  
stiff and shrouded.

The girl of tears  
was bathing in flames,  
and the nightingale wept  
with burning wings.

The golden girl  
was a white heron  
and the water turned her gold.

*Casida IX De las palomas oscuras*

Por las ramas del laurel  
 vi dos palomas oscuras.  
 La una era el sol,  
 la otra la luna.  
 Vecinitas, les dije,  
 ¿dónde está mi sepultura?  
 En mi cola, dijo el sol.  
 En mi garganta, dijo la luna.  
 Y yo que estaba caminando  
 con la tierra por la cintura  
 vi dos águilas de nieve  
 y una muchacha desnuda.  
 La una era la otra  
 y la muchacha era ninguna.  
 Aguilitas, les dije,  
 ¿dónde está mi supultura?  
 En mi cola, dijo el sol.  
 En mi garganta, dijo la luna.  
 Por las ramas del laurel  
 vi dos palomas desnudas.  
 La una era la otra  
 y las dos eran ninguna.

*IX Casida of the Dark Doves*

Through the branches of laurel  
 I saw two dark doves.  
 The one was the sun,  
 the other the moon.  
 'Little neighbours,' I asked them,  
 'where is my tomb?'  
 'In my tail,' said the sun.  
 'In my throat,' said the moon.  
 And I who was walking  
 with the earth at my waist  
 saw two eagles of snow  
 and a girl who was naked.  
 The one was the other,  
 and the girl was no one.  
 'Little eagles,' I asked them,  
 'where is my tomb?'  
 'In my tail,' said the sun.  
 'In my throat,' said the moon.  
 Through the branches of laurel  
 I saw two naked doves.  
 The one was the other  
 and both of them were neither.



SEIS POEMAS GALEGOS

SIX GALICIAN POEMS

*Madrigal á cibdá de Santiago*

Chove en Santiago  
meu doce amor.  
Camelia branca do ar  
brila entebrecido o sol.

Chove en Santiago  
na noite escrua.  
Herbas de prate e sono  
cobren a valeira lúa.

Olla a choiva pol-a rúa,  
laio de pedra e cristal.  
Olla no vento esvaído  
soma e cinza do teu mar.

Soma e cinza do teu mar,  
Santiago, lonxe do sol;  
ágoa de mañán anterga  
trema no meu corazón.

*Madrigal for the City of Santiago*

It's raining in Santiago,  
my darling love.  
A white camellia of air,  
sunlight through a veil.

It's raining in Santiago  
in the darkest night.  
Grasses of silver and dream  
cover an empty moon.

Look at the rain in the streets,  
lament of stone and glass.  
Look at the threadbare wind,  
shadow and ash of your sea.

Shadow and ash of your sea,  
Santiago, far from the sun.  
Water of an ancient dawn  
is shivering in my heart.

*Romaxe de Nosa Señora da Barca*

*¡Ay ruada, ruada, ruada  
da Virxe pequena  
e a súa barca!*

A Virxe era de pedra  
e a súa coroa de prata.  
Marcelos os catro bois  
que no seu carro a levaban.

Pombas de vidro traguían  
a choiva pol-a Montana.  
Mortos e mortas de néboa  
pol-os sendeiros chegaban.

¡Virxe, deixa a túa carina  
nos doces ollos das vacas  
e leva sobr'o teu manto  
as froles da amortallada!

Pol-a testa de Galicia  
xa ven salaiando a i-alba.  
A Virxe mira pr'o mar  
dend'a porta da súa casa.

*¡Ay ruada, ruada, ruada  
da Virxe pequena  
e a súa barca!*

*Ballad of Our Lady of the Boat*

*Yes, revel away, you revellers, NOTE  
for the little Virgin  
and her boat.*

The Virgin was stone  
and her crown was silver.  
Four oxen, the colour of straw,  
were pulling her cart.

Doves of glass drew rain  
down from the mountains,  
and along paths and trails  
came the dead draped in mist.

Virgin, leave us your face  
in the sweet eyes of cows,  
and wear on your dress  
the flowers of women in mourning.

The dawn comes, sighing  
over the face of Galicia.  
From the door of her house  
the Virgin looks to the sea.

*Yes, revel away, you revellers,  
for the little Virgin  
and her boat.*

*Cántiga do neno da tenda*

Bos Aires ten unha gaita  
 sobor do Río da Prata,  
 que a toca o vento do norde  
 coa súa gris boca mollada.  
 ¡Triste Ramón de Sismundi!  
 Xunto á rúa d'Esmeralda  
 c'unha basoira de xesta  
 sacaba o polvo das caixas.  
 Ao longo das rúas infindas  
 os galegos paseiaban  
 soñando un val imposíbel  
 na verde riba da pampa.  
 ¡Triste Ramón de Sismundi!  
 Sintéu a muiñeira d'ágoa  
 mentres sete bois de lúa  
 pacían na súa lembranza.  
 Foise pr'a veira do río,  
 veira do Río da Prata.  
 Sauces e cabalos múos  
 creban o vidro das ágoas.  
 Non atopóu o xemido  
 malencónico da gaita,  
 non víu ô inmenso gaiteiro  
 coa boca frolida d'alas;  
 triste Ramón de Sismundi,  
 veira do Río da Prata,  
 víu na tarde amortecida  
 bermello muro de lama.

*Song of the Shop Boy*

Buenos Aires has a bagpipe  
 above the river Plate,  
 and the north wind is playing it  
 with its damp, grey lips.  
 Poor Ramón de Sismundi,  
 there in Esmeralda Street,  
 sweeps the dust from boxes  
 with a little straw broom.  
 Other Galicians wander  
 down the endless streets,  
 dreaming impossible valleys  
 on the green shore of the plains.  
 Poor Ramón de Sismundi.  
 He hears the water dance a jig  
 while seven oxen of the moon  
 graze upon his memory.  
 He goes down to the river's edge,  
 the banks of the river Plate.  
 Willows and silent horses  
 shatter the glass of the waters.  
 He does not find the bagpipe's  
 melancholy drone.  
 He does not see the great piper,  
 his mouth flowering into wings.  
 Poor Ramón de Sismundi,  
 on the banks of the river Plate,  
 sees only the fading afternoon  
 and the reddish wall of silt.

*Noiturnio do adoescente morto*

*Imos silandeiros orela do vado  
pra ver ô adoescente afogado.*

*Imos silandeiros veiriña do ar,  
antes que ise río o leve pr'o mar.*

Súa i-alma choraba, ferida e pequena  
embaixo os arums de pinos e d'herbas.

Ágoa despenada baixaba de lúa  
cobrindo de violas a montana núa.

O vento deixaba camellias de soma  
na lumieira murcha de súa triste boca.

¡Vinde mozos loiros do monte e do prado  
pra ver ô adoescente afogado!

¡Vinde xente escura do cume e do val  
antes que ise río o leve pr'o mar!

O leve pr'o mar de cortiñas brancas  
onde van e vên vellos bois de ágoa.

*¡Ay, cómo cantaban os albres do Sil  
sobre a verde lúa, coma un tamboril!*

*¡Mozos, imos, vinde, aixiña, chegar  
proque xa ise río o leva pr'o mar!*

*Nocturne for the Dead Boy*

*Let's go in silence to the ford,  
to see the boy who drowned there.*

*Let's go in silence to the banks of air,  
before this river takes him to the sea.*

His soul was weeping, tiny and wounded,  
under grasses and needles of pine.

Water descended, hurled down by the moon,  
and covered the bare mountain in violets.

The wind laid camellias of shadow  
upon the parched light of his sad mouth.

Come, blind boys from field and mountain,  
come and see the boy who drowned.

Come, dark folk from peak and valley,  
before this river takes him to the sea.

It takes him to the sea's white curtains,  
where ancient water-oxen come and go.

*Oh, how the trees by the river were singing  
against the green moon's tambourine.*

*Boys, let's go now, hurry away!  
Because this river takes him to the sea.*

*Canzón de cuna pra Rosalía Castro morta*

*¡Érguete, miña amiga,  
que xa cantan os galos do día!  
¡Érguete, miña amada,  
porque o vento muxe coma unha vaca!*

Os arados van e vên  
dende Santiago a Belén.  
Dende Belén a Santiago  
un anxo ven en un barco.  
Un barco de prate fina  
que trai a door de Galicia.  
Galicia deitada e queda,  
transida de tristes herbas.  
Herbas que cobren teu leito  
e a negra fronte dos teus cabelos.  
Cabelos que van ô mar  
onde as nubens teñen seu nidio pombal.

*¡Érguete, miña amiga,  
que xa cantan os galos do día!  
¡Érguete, miña amada,  
porque o vento muxe como unha vaca!*

*A Lullaby in Death for Rosalía Castro*

*Rise, my dear friend,  
for the cockerels are crowing.*

*Rise, my dear love,  
for the wind, like a cow, is lowing.*

The ploughs go up and down  
from Santiago to Bethlehem.  
From Bethlehem to Santiago,  
an angel sails in a boat.  
A boat of finest silver,  
bearing Galicia's pain.  
Galicia – stretched out, silent –  
wrapped up in grasses of sorrow.  
Grasses that cover your bed  
and the black fountain of your hair.  
Hair that flows down to the sea,  
to the clouds nesting like doves.

*Rise, my dear friend,  
for the cockerels are crowing.*

*Rise, my dear love,  
for the wind, like a cow, is lowing.*

[Rosalía de Castro: a nineteenth-century Galician poet (1837-85)  
whose writing had attracted Lorca from an early age].

*Danza da lúa en Santiago*

¡Fita aquel branco galán,  
fita seu transido corpo!

É a lúa que baila  
na Quintana dos mortos.

Fita seu corpo transido,  
negro de somas e lobos.

Nai: A lúa está bailando  
na Quintana dos mortos.

¿Quén fire poldro de pedra  
na mesma porta do sono?

¡É a lúa! ¡É a lúa  
na Quintana dos mortos!

¿Quén fita meus grises vidros  
cheos de nubens seus ollos?

É a lúa, é a lúa  
na Quintana dos mortos.

Déixame morrer no leito  
soñando na frol d'ouro.

Nai: A lúa está bailando  
na Quintana dos mortos.

¡Ai filla, c'o ar do ceo  
vólome branca de pronto!

Non é o ar, é a triste lúa  
na Quintana dos mortos.

¿Quén xime co-este xemido  
d'inmenso boi malencónico?

*Dance of the Moon in Santiago*

Look! That white cavalier,  
look at his wasting flesh!

It's the moon that's dancing  
in the courtyard of the dead.

Look at his body wasting,  
black with shadow and wolves.

Mother, the moon is dancing  
in the courtyard of the dead.

Who wounds the colt of stone  
at the gates of sleep?

The moon! It's the moon  
in the courtyard of the dead!

Who looks through my grey windows  
with eyes full of cloud?

The moon! It's the moon  
in the courtyard of the dead!

Let me die in my bed,  
flowers of gold in my dreams.

Mother, the moon is dancing  
in the courtyard of the dead.

Oh my daughter, the air in the sky  
has suddenly turned me pale!

It isn't the air, it's the unhappy moon  
in the courtyard of the dead.

Who groans with that groan  
of an ox, so massive and sad?

SEIS POEMAS GALEGOS

Nai: É a lúa, é a lúa  
na Quintana dos mortos.

¡Sí, a lúa, a lúa  
coroadada de toxo,  
que baila, e baila, e baila  
na Quintana dos mortos!

SIX GALICIAN POEMS

Mother, the moon! It's the moon  
in the courtyard of the dead.

Yes, it's the moon, the moon  
with its crown of gorse  
dancing, dancing, dancing,  
in the courtyard of the dead.



LLANTO POR  
IGNACIO SÁNCHEZ MEJÍAS

LAMENT FOR  
IGNACIO SÁNCHEZ MEJÍAS

*[Ignacio Sánchez Mejías was a celebrated bull-fighter, who died on 13 August 1934, at the age of 43, having been gored by a bull two days earlier]*

*1 La cogida y la muerte*

A las cinco de la tarde.  
 Eran las cinco en punto de la tarde.  
 Un niño trajo la blanca sábana  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
 Una espuerta de cal ya prevenida  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
 Lo demás era muerte y solo muerte  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*

El viento se llevó los algodones  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
 Y el óxido sembró cristal y níquel  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
 Ya luchan la paloma y el leopardo  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
 Y un muslo com un asta desolada  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
 Comenzaron los sonos de bordón  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
 Las campanas de arsenic y el humo  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
 En las esquinas grupos de silencio  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
 ¡Y el toro solo corazón arriba!  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
 Cuando el sudor de nieve fue llegando  
*a las cinco de la tarde,*  
 cuando la plaza se cubrió de yodo  
*a las cinco de la tarde,*  
 la muerte puso huevos en la herida  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
*A las cinco de la tarde.*  
*A las cinco en punto de la tarde.*

Un ataúd con ruedas es la cama  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
 Huesos y flautas suenan en su oído  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
 El toro ya mugía por su frente

*1 The Goring and the Death*

At five o'clock in the afternoon.  
 It was exactly five o'clock in the afternoon.  
 A boy brought in the linen sheet  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
 A basket of lime made ready  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
 The rest was death and death alone  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*

The wind blew the cotton gauze away  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
 The rust sowed glass and nickel  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
 The leopard and the dove now fight  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
 And a thigh with a devastating horn  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
 The drone-pipe sound began  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
 The bells of arsenic and smoke  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
 On the corners, silent crowds  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
 And only the bull with leaping heart  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
 When sweat of snow was falling  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon,*  
 and the bull-ring swathed in iodine  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon,*  
 death laid its eggs in the wound  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
*At five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
*At exactly five o'clock in the afternoon.*

His bed is a coffin on wheels  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
 Bones and flutes sound in his ear  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
 The bull is roaring at his forehead now

*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
El cuarto se irisaba de agonía  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
A lo lejos ya viene la gangrena  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
Trompa de lirio por las verdes ingles  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
La heridas quemaban como soles  
*a las cinco de la tarde,*  
y el gentío rompía las ventanas  
*a las cinco de la tarde.*  
A las cinco de la tarde.  
¡Ay qué terribles cinco de la tarde!  
¡Eran las cinco en todos los relojes!  
¡Eran las cinco en sombra de la tarde!

## 2 *La sangre derramada*

¡Que no quiero verla!  
  
Dile a la luna que venga,  
que no quiero ver la sangre  
de Ignacio sobre la arena.  
  
¡Que no quiero verla!  
  
La luna de par en par,  
cabbalo de nubes quietas,  
y la plaza gris del sueño  
con sauces en las barreras.  
  
¡Que no quiero verla!  
Que mi recuerdo se quema.  
¡Avisad a los jazmines  
con su blancura pequeña!  
  
¡Que no quiero verla!

*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
The room is glowing with his agony  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
From far away the gangrene comes  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
Trumpet of lily through his green groins  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
Wounds burning like suns  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon,*  
and the crowd breaking windows  
*at five o'clock in the afternoon.*  
At five o'clock in the afternoon.  
Oh that terrible five o'clock in the afternoon.  
It was five on all the clocks.  
It was five in the shade of the afternoon.

## 2 *The Spilled Blood*

I don't want to look at it!  
  
Tell the moon to come.  
I don't want to see  
Ignacio's blood on the sand.  
  
I don't want to look at it!  
  
The moon is open wide.  
A horse of quietened clouds,  
and the grey bull-ring of a dream  
with willows for its barriers.  
  
I don't want to look at it!  
The memory burns me.  
Let the jasmines know  
with their little whiteness.  
  
I don't want to look at it!

La vaca del viejo mundo  
pasaba su triste lengua  
sobre un hocico de sangres  
derramadas en la arena,  
y los toros de Guisando,  
casi muerte y casi piedra,  
mugieron como dos siglos  
hartos de pisar la tierra.

No.

¡Que no quiero verla!

Por las gradas sube Ignacio  
con toda su muerte a cuestras.

Buscaba el amanecer,  
y el amanecer no era.

Busca su perfil seguro,  
y el sueño lo desorienta.

Buscaba su hermoso cuerpo  
y encontró su sangre abierta.

¡No me digáis que la vea!

No quiero sentir el chorro  
cada vez con menos fuerza;  
ese chorro que ilumina  
los tendidos y se vuelca  
sobre la pana y el cuero  
de muchdumbre sedienta.

¿Quién me grita que me asome?

¡No me digáis que la vea!

No se cerraron sus ojos  
cuando vio los cuernos cerca,  
pero las madres terribles  
levantaron la cabeza.

Y a través de las ganaderías  
hubo un aire de voces secretas,  
que gritaban a toros celestes  
mayorales de pálida niebla.

No hubo príncipe en Sevilla  
que compararse pueda,  
ni espada como su espada  
ni corazón tan de veras.  
Como un río de leones

The heifer of the ancient world  
ran her grieving tongue  
over a snout full of blood  
spilled out upon the sand,  
and the bulls of Guisando,  
almost death, almost stone,  
bellowed, like two centuries  
weary of treading down the earth.

No.

I don't want to look at it!

Ignacio climbs the steps  
with all his death on his shoulders.

He was looking for the dawn,  
and the dawn was not there.

He's looking for his perfect profile  
and sleep makes him lose his way.

He was looking for his lovely body  
and found his spurting blood.

Don't ask me to look at it!

I don't want to feel the gush  
grow weaker every time,  
the gush that lights up  
the front rows of seats and spills  
over the corduroy and leather  
of a thirsting crowd.

Who calls me to appear?

Don't ask me to look at it!

His eyes didn't shut  
as the horns came close,  
but the terrified mothers  
lifted their heads to see.  
And across the cattle ranches  
rose a breeze of secret voices,  
ranchers in the thin, pale mist,  
calling out to all the bulls of heaven.

There was no prince in all Seville  
could be compared with him,  
no sword like his sword,  
no heart so true.  
Like a river of lions,

su maravillosa fuerza,  
y como un torso de mármol  
su dibujada prudencia.  
Aire de Roman andaluza  
le doraba la cabeza  
donde su risa era un nardo  
de sal y de inteligencia.  
¡Qué gran torero en la plaza!  
¡Qué buen Serrano en la sierra!  
¡Qué blando con las espigas!  
¡Qué duro con las espuelas!  
¡Qué tierno con el rocío!  
¡Qué deslumbrante en la feria!  
¡Qué tremendo con las últimas  
banderillas de tiniebla!

Pero ya duerme sin fin.  
Ya los musgos y la hierba  
abren con dedos seguros  
la flor de su calavera.  
Y su sangre ya viene cantando:  
cantando por marismas y praderas,  
resbalando por cuernos ateridos,  
vacilando sin alma por la niebla,  
tropezando con miles de pezuñas,  
como una larga, oscura, triste lengua,  
para formar un charco de agonía  
junto al Guadalquivir de las estrellas.

¡Oh blanco muro de España!  
¡Oh negro toro de pena!  
¡Oh sangre dura de Ignacio!  
¡Oh ruiseñor de sus venas!

No.  
¡Que no quiero verla!  
Que no hay cáliz que la contenga,  
que no hay golondrinas que se la beban,  
no hay escarcha de luz que la enfríe,  
no hay canto ni diluvio de azucenas,  
no hay cristal que la cubra de plata.  
No.  
¡¡Yo no quiero verla!!

his marvellous strength;  
like a torso of marble,  
his striking wisdom.  
The air of Andalusian Rome  
made his head golden,  
and his laughter a spikenard  
of wit and intelligence.  
How great a bullfighter in the ring!  
How wonderful a mountaineer!  
How gentle with the ears of wheat!  
How violent with the spurs!  
How tender with the dew!  
How dazzling at the fair!  
How tremendous with the last  
banderillas of darkness.

But now he sleeps forever.  
Now moss and grass  
open up with practiced fingers  
the flower of his skull.  
And now his blood comes singing:  
singing through marsh and meadow,  
sliding down cold and stiffened horns,  
wandering soullessly through the mist,  
stumbling under a thousand hooves  
like a long dark tongue of sadness,  
to form a pool of agony  
by the starry Guadalquivir.

Oh white wall of Spain!  
Oh black bull of sorrow!  
Oh thickening blood of Ignacio!  
Oh nightingale of his veins!

No.  
I don't want to look at it!  
There's no chalice can hold it,  
no swallows drink it,  
no frost of light cool it,  
no song, no flood of lilies,  
no glass can silver it.  
No.  
I don't want to look at it! Ever!! **NOTE**

### 3 *Cuerpo presente*

La piedra es una frente donde los sueños gimen  
sin tener agua curva ni cipreses helados.  
La piedra es una espalda para llevar al tiempo  
con árboles de lágrimas y cintas y planetas.

Yo he visto lluvias grises corer hacia las olas  
levantando sus tiernos brazos acribillados,  
para no ser cazadas por la piedra tendida  
que desata sus siembros sin empapar la sangre.

Porque la piedra coge simientes y nublados,  
esqueletos de alondras y lobos de penumbra;  
pero no da sonidos, ni cristales, ni fuego,  
sino plazas y plazas y otras plazas sin muros.

Ya está sobre la piedra Ignacio el bien nacido.  
Ya se acabó. ¡Qué pasa! ¡Contemplad su figura!  
La muerte lo ha cubierto de pálidos azufres  
y le ha puesto cabeza de oscuro minotauro.

La se acabó. La lluvia penetra por su boca.  
El aire como loco deja sup echo hundido,  
y el Amor, empapado con lágrimas de nieve,  
se calienta en la cumber de las ganaderías.

¿Qué dicen? Un silencio con hedores reposa.  
Estamos con un cuerpo presente que se esfuma,  
con una forma clara que tuvo ruiñeñores  
y la vemos llenarso de agujeros sin fondo.

¿Quién arruga el sudario? ¡No es verdad lo que dice!  
Aquí no canta nadie, ni llora en el rincón,  
ni pica las espuelas, ni espanta la serpiente:  
aquí no quiero más que los ojos redondos  
para ver ese cuerpo sin possible descanso.

### 3 *The Body Laid Out*

The stone is a forehead where dreams groan  
for lack of winding water or frozen cypress trees.  
The stone is a shoulder to carry time  
with trees of tears, and ribbons, and planets.

I have seen grey rains rushing to the waves  
lifting their fragile, riddled arms  
to keep from being captured by the outstretched stone  
that loosens limbs but does not dry the blood.

For stone takes seeds and clouds of storm,  
larks' skeletons and wolves of twilight,  
but gives off no sound, no glass, no fire,  
just bull-rings, and bull-rings, and one bull-ring more, without  
walls.

And now Ignacio, this noble man, lies on the stone.  
Now, it is done. What's happening? Look at him.  
Death has covered him in pale sulphur  
and given him the head of some dark minotaur.

Now, it is done. Rain falls in his mouth.  
Air rises panicked from his sunken chest,  
and love, soaked in tears of snow,  
warms itself on the heights above the cattle farms.

What are they saying? A stenching silence settles.  
We stand before a laid-out body that is vanishing,  
a clear shape that once held nightingales,  
and we see it filling up with yawning holes.

Who's crumpling the shroud? It's not true what he says!  
No one is to sing here, or weep in a corner,  
or prick his spurs, or frighten off the snake. **NOTE**  
I want nothing here but eyes wide open  
to see this body that will never rest.

LLANTO POR IGNACIO SÁNCHEZ MEJÍAS

Yo quiero ver aquí los hombres de voz dura.  
Los que doman caballos y dominan los ríos:  
los hombres que les suena el esqueleto y cantan  
con una boca llena de sol y pedernales.

Aquí quiero yo verlos. Delante de la piedra.  
Delante de este cuerpo con las riendas quebradas.  
Yo quiero que me enseñen dónde está la salida  
para este capitán atado por la muerte.

Yo quiero que me enseñen un llanto como un río  
que tenga dulces nieblas y profundas orillas,  
para llevar el cuerpo de Ignacio y que se pierda  
sin escuchar el doble resuello de los toros.

Que se pierda en la plaza redonda de la luna  
que finge cuando niña doliente res inmóvil;  
que se pierda en la noche sin canto de los peces  
y en la maleza blanca del humo congelado.

No quiero que le tapen la cara con pañuelos  
para que se acostumbre con la muerte que lleva.  
Vete, Ignacio: No sientas el caliente bramido.  
Duerme, vuela, reposa: ¡También se muere el mar!

*4 Alma ausente*

No te conoce el toro ni la higuera,  
ni caballos ni hormigas de tu casa.  
No te conoce el niño ni la tarde  
porque te has muerto para siempre.

No te conoce el lomo de la piedra,  
ni el raso negro donde te destrozas.  
No te conoce tu recuerdo mudo  
porque te has muerto para siempre.

LAMENT FOR IGNACIO SÁNCHEZ MEJÍAS

I want to see the men with harsh voices here.  
Those who break horses in, and master rivers:  
those who rattle their bones and sing  
with a mouth full of sun and flint.

I want to see them here. In front of the stone.  
In front of this body of broken reins.  
I want them to show me where there's a way out  
for this captain tied down by death.

I want them to show me tears like a river  
that has sweet mists and steep banks,  
to bear Ignacio's body and let him be lost  
without hearing the doubled snorting of the bulls.

Let him be lost in the round bullring of the moon  
that girlishly pretends to be a sad, stilled animal.  
Let him be lost in the songless night of the fishes  
and the white thicket of frozen smoke.

I don't want his face covered by handkerchiefs;  
he has to get used to the death that he bears.  
Go, Ignacio. Don't feel the hot bellowing.  
Sleep, soar, rest. Even the sea dies!

*4 Absent Soul*

Neither the bull nor the fig tree knows you,  
nor the horses, nor the ants in your house.  
Neither the child nor the afternoon knows you  
because you have died forever.

The back of the stone does not know you,  
nor the black satin in which you are broken apart.  
Your silent remembrance does not know you  
because you have died for ever.

LLANTO POR IGNACIO SÁNCHEZ MEJÍAS

El Otoño vendrá con caracolas,  
uva de niebla y montes agrupados,  
pero nadie querrá mirar tus ojos  
porque te has muerto para siempre.

Porque te has muerto para siempre,  
como todos los muertos de la Tierra,  
como todas los muertos que se olvidan  
en un montón de perros apagados.

No te conoce nadie. No. Pero yo te canto.  
Yo canto para luego tu perfil y tu gracia.  
La madurez insigne de tu conocimiento.  
Tu apetencia de muerte y el gusto de su boca.  
La tristeza que tuvo tu valiente alegría.

Tardará mucho tiempo en nacer, si es que nace,  
un andaluz tan claro, tan rico de Aventura.  
Yo canto su elegancia con palabras que gimen  
y recuerdo una brisa triste por los olivos.

LAMENT FOR IGNACIO SÁNCHEZ MEJÍAS

Autumn will come with its snails,  
with its grapes of mist and clustered hills,  
but no one will want to look in your eyes  
because you have died forever.

Because you have died forever,  
like all the dead on the earth,  
like all the dead now forgotten  
on some heap of lifeless dogs.

Nobody knows you. No. Yet I sing of you.  
I sing for posterity of your grace and your attitude, **NOTE**  
your famed ripeness of understanding,  
your craving for death and the taste of its mouth,  
the sadness your light-hearted courage contained.

An Andalusian so brilliant, so rich is his daring,  
will not for a long time, if ever, be born.  
I sing of his elegance in language that moans,  
and remember a sad breeze through the olive-trees.



SONETOS DEL AMOR OSCURO

SONNETS OF DARK LOVE

*Soneto de la guirnalda de rosas*

¡Esa guirnalda! ¡pronto! ¡que me muero!  
¡Teje deprisa! ¡canta! ¡gime! ¡canta!,  
que la sombra me enturbia la garganta  
y otra vez viene y mil la luz de enero.

Entre lo que me quieres y te pquero,  
aire de estrellas y temblor de planta,  
espesura de anémonas levanta  
con oscuro gemir un año entero.

Goza el fresco paisaje de mi herida,  
quiebra juncos y arroyos delicados,  
bebe en muslo de miel sangre vertida.

Pero ¡pronto!, que unidos, enlazados,  
boca rota de amor y alma mordida,  
el tiempo nos encuentre destrozados.

*Sonnet: The Garland of Roses*

That garland, quick! I'm at death's door.  
Weave it at once. Sing and moan and sing!  
Shadows are thickening round my throat,  
and for the thousandth time, the light of January comes in.

Between your love for me and mine for you –  
an air of stars and bushes trembling –  
a clump of anemones gathers up  
a whole long year with a shadowed moan.

Relish the new landscape of my wound,  
shatter its reeds and gentle streams,  
and drink the honeyed blood that's pouring from my thigh.

But quick! united, all entwined,  
mouths broken by love and bitten souls –  
time will find us utterly destroyed.

*Soneto de la dulce queja*

No me dejes perder la maravilla  
de tus ojos de estatua, ni el acento  
que de noche me pone en la mejilla  
la solitaria rosa de tu aliento.

Tengo miedo de ser en esta orilla  
tronco sin ramas; y lo que más siento  
es no tener la flor, pulpa o arcilla  
para el gusano de mi sufrimiento.

Si tú eres el tesero oculto mío,  
si eres mi cruz y mi dolor mojado,  
si soy el perro de tu señorío,

no me dejes perder lo que he gando  
y decora las ramas de tu río  
con hojas de mi otoño enajenado.

*Sonnet of the Sweet Complaint*

Don't ever let me lose the wonder  
of your sculptured eyes, or the cadence  
that the lone rose of your breath  
lets fall upon my cheek at night.

I am afraid of being on this shore,  
a limbless tree trunk – even more,  
of having neither flower, nor pulp, nor potter's clay,  
to feed my worm of suffering.

If you're my secret treasure,  
if you're my cross and tears of pain,  
if I'm the dog and you're the master,

don't ever let me lose what I have won,  
and decorate the branches of your river  
with my abandoned autumn leaves.

*Llagas de amor*

Esta luz, este fuego que devora,  
este paisaje gris que me rodea,  
este dolor por una sola idea,  
este angustia de cielo, mundo y hora.

Este llanto de sangre que decora  
lira sin pulso ya, lúbrica tea,  
este peso del mar que me golpea,  
este alacrán que por mi pecho mora,

son guirnalda de amor, cama de herido,  
donde sin sueño, sueño tu presencia  
entre las ruinas de mi pecho hundido.

Y aunque busco la cumber de prudencia  
me da tu corazón valle tendido  
com cicuta y pasión de amarga ciencia.

*Wounds of Love*

This blinding light, this all-consuming fire,  
and this grey landscape all around,  
this sorrow for one sole idea,  
this agony of sky and world and time,

this sobbing of the blood wrapped round  
a lifeless lyre, a torch of lust,  
this sea that pounds me with its weight,  
this scorpion living in my heart,

are all love's garland, a sickbed where  
I do not sleep, but dream that you are here  
amid the ruins of my shattered heart.

I try to scale the wisdom of the mountains,  
but your heart has given me a valley spread  
with hemlock, and desire for bitter fruit.

*El poeta pide a su amor que le escriba*

Amor de mis entrañas, viva muerte,  
en vano espero tu palabra escrita  
y pienso con la flor que se marchita  
que si vivo sin mí, quiero perderte.

El aire es inmortal; la piedra inerte  
ni conoce la sombra, ni la evita.  
Corazón interior no necesita  
la miel helada que la luna vierte.

Pero yo te sufrí; rasgué mis venas,  
tigre y paloma sobre tu cintura  
en duelo de mordiscos y azucenas.

Llena pues de palabras mi locura  
o déjame vivir en mi serena  
noche de la alma para siempre oscura.

*The Poet Asks His Love to Write to Him*

Gut-wrenching love, you living death,  
I'm waiting for your letter – all in vain.  
Like the flower that fades, I think  
that should I lose my mind, I'd want to see you damned. **NOTE**

Air is everlasting; the lifeless stone  
neither knows the shade nor draws back from it.  
The heart, deep down, does not need  
the frozen honey poured down from the moon.

For you, I suffered. I ripped my veins,  
tiger and dove around your waist,  
in a duel of bites and lilies.

So fill my lunacy with words,  
or let me live in this tranquil  
night time of my soul, forever dark.

*El poeta dice la verdad*

Quiero llorar mi pena y te lo digo  
para que tú me quieras y me llores  
en un anochecer de ruiseñores  
con un puñal, con besos y contigo.

Quiero matar al único testigo  
para el asesinato de mis flores  
y convertir mi llanto y mis sudores  
en eterno montón de duro trigo.

Que ni se acabe nunca la madeja  
del te quiero me quieres, siempre ardida  
con decrépito sol y luna vieja,

que lo que no me des y no te pida  
será para la muerte que no deja  
ni sombra por la carne estremecida.

*The Poet Tells the Truth*

I want to cry my pain and tell you –  
so that you'll want me and cry for me as well,  
in a dusk of nightingales  
with a knife blade, with kisses, and with you.

I want to kill the only witness  
to the assassination of my flowers,  
transform my sweat and weeping  
into an everlasting heap of dried-up wheat.

And never let the thread of 'I love you,  
and you love me' be broken, but always burn  
against a waning sun and aging moon.

Whatever you don't give, and I don't ask of you,  
death will take. It will not leave  
a shadow even on our pulsing flesh.

*El poeta habla por teléfono con el amor*

Tu voz regó la duna de mi pecho  
en la dulce cabina de madera.  
Por el sur de mis pies fue primavera  
y al norte de mi frente flor de helecho.

Pino de luz por el espacio estrecho  
cantó un alborada y sementera  
y mi llanto prendió por vez primera  
coronas de esperanza por el techo.

Dulce y lejana voz por mí vertida,  
dulce y lejana voz por mí gustada,  
lejana y dulce voz amortecida,

lejana como oscura corza herida,  
dulce como un sollozo en la Nevada,  
¡lejana y dulce, en tuétano metida!

*The Poet Talks to His Lover on the Telephone*

In that sweet phone booth made of wood,  
your voice watered the sand-dunes of my heart.  
South of my feet, it was spring;  
north of my forehead, ferns flowered.

In that narrow space, a pine tree of light  
sang without any dawn, without any seed,  
and for the first time, my crying strung  
garlands of hope above the roof.

A lovely, far off voice poured out for me,  
a lovely, far off voice for me to taste,  
a far off, lovely voice becoming faint,

as far off as a dark and wounded doe,  
and sweet as sobbing in the falling snow.  
Far off and lovely, in my very bone.

*El poeta pregunta a su amor por la  
«Ciudad Encantada» de Cuenca*

¿Te gustó la ciudad que gota a gota  
labró el agua en el centro de los pinos?  
¿Viste sueños y rostros y caminosa  
y muros de dolor que el aire azota?

¿Viste la grieta azul de luna rota  
que el Júcar moja de cristal y trinos?  
¿Han besado tus dedos los espinos  
que coronan de amor piedra remota?

¿Te acordaste de mí cuando subías  
al silencio que sufre la serpiente  
prisionera de grillos y de umbrías?

¿No viste por el aire transparente  
una dalia de penas y alegrías  
que te mandó mi corazón claiante?

*The Poet Asks His Lover about the  
'Enchanted City' of Cuenca*

Did you like the city carved by water,  
drop by drop, in the heart of pine trees?  
Did you see dreams and faces and streets  
and walls of anguish lashed by the air?

Did you see the blue crack of broken moon  
the river Júcar wets with glass and song?  
And did the hawthorns kiss your hands  
and crown the distant stones with love?

Did you remember me as you climbed up  
into the silence suffered by the snake,  
a prisoner of crickets and of shadiness?

Did you not see in the transparent air  
a dahlia of gladness and of grief,  
sent by my burning heart?

[Cuenca: a town in Central Spain, noted for its strange and huge formations of eroded limestone that have been likened to the ruined buildings of a colossal ancient city. The river Júcar flows through it].



*Soneto gongorino en que el poeta  
manda a su amor una paloma*

Este pichón del Tiria que te mando,  
de dulces ojos y de blanca pluma,  
sobre laurel de Grecia vierte y suma  
llama lenta de amor do estoy parando.

Su candida virtud, su cuello blando,  
en lirio doble de caliente espuma  
con un temblor de escarcha, perla y bruma  
la ausencia de tu boca está marcando.

Pasa la mano sobre su blancura  
y versa qué nevada melodía  
esparce en copos sobre tu hermosura.

Así mi corazón de noche y día  
preso en la cárcel del amor oscura  
llora sin verte su melancolía.

*Sonnet in the Style of Góngora, in which  
the Poet Sends his Belovèd a Dove*

I send you from the Turia this young dove,  
with its white feathers and gentle eyes,  
that pours out over Grecian laurel trees  
the slow flame of love here where I stay.

Its whiteness – purity – its tender throat  
in a double lily of warm foam,  
with a tremble of frost, and pearl, and mist,  
marks only the absence of your lips.

Pass your hand across its whiteness  
and you will see what melodies of snow  
it showers in flakes upon your loveliness.

And so my heart, by night and day,  
locked in the prison of this dark love,  
cries out its grief at never seeing you.

[the Turia: *the river that runs through Valencia.*  
Góngora: *a late 16th/early 17th century Spanish poet, whose  
style is exceptionally ornate and mannered*].

*[¡Ay voz secreta del amor oscuro!]*

¡Ay voz secreta del amor oscuro!  
¡Ay balido sin lanas! ¡Ay herida!  
¡Ay aguja de hiel, camellia hundida!  
¡Ay corriente sin mar, ciudad sin muro!

¡Ay noche inmensa de perfil seguro,  
montaña celestial de angustia erguida!  
¡Ay perro en corazón!, voz persuguida,  
silencio sin confin, lirio maduro.

Huye de mí, caliente voz de hielo,  
no me quieras perder en la maleza  
donde sin fruto gimen carne y cielo.

Deja el duro marfil de mi cabeza,  
apiádate de mí, ¡rompe mi duelo!,  
¡que soy amor, que soy naturaleza!

*[Ah, This Secret Voice of Dark Love]*

Ah, this secret voice of dark love,  
this bleating without wool, this wound,  
this bitter needle, this camellia dying,  
this current without sea, this city without walls.

This vast, vast night, outlined sharp,  
celestial mountain rearing up in agony.  
This dog in the heart, the voice hunted down,  
the boundless silence, the full-blown lily.

Just let me be, hot voice of ice,  
don't try to lose me in the brambles  
where flesh and sky groan fruitlessly.

Leave the hard ivory of my skull,  
have pity on me, rip my grief to shreds!  
For I am love. For I am nature.

*El amor duerme en el pecho del poeta*

Tú nunca entenderás lo que te quiero,  
porque duermes en mí y estás dormido.  
Yo te oculto llorando, perseguido  
por una voz de penetrante acero.

Norma que agita igual carne y lacero  
traspas ya mi pecho dolorido,  
y la turbias palabras han mordido  
las alas de tu espíritu severo.

Grupo de gente salta en los jardines  
esperando tu cuerpo y mi agonía  
en caballos de luz y verdes crines.

Pero sigue durmiendo, vida mía,  
¡Oye mi sangre rota en los violines!  
¡Mira que nos acechan todavía!

*The Beloved Sleeps on the Poet's Breast*

You will never understand how much I love you  
because you sleep in me and are asleep.  
I hide you as I weep, hunted  
by a voice of lacerating steel.

The rules that stir both flesh and morning star  
now pierce my aching heart,  
and blurring words have bitten through  
your ruthless spirit's wings.

A group of people prances in the gardens,  
waiting for your body and my agony,  
on horses of light with manes of green.

But go on sleeping, my life.  
Hear my broken blood in the violins!  
Look, they're lying in wait for us still!

*Noche del amor insomne*

Noche arriba los dos, con luna llena,  
yo me puse a llorar y tú reías.  
Tu desdén era un dios, las quejas mías  
momentos y palomas en cadena.

Noche abajo los dos. Cristal de pena  
llorabas tú por hondas lejanías.  
Mi dolor era un grupo de agonías  
sobre tu débril corazón de arena.

La aurora nos unió sobre la cama,  
las bocas puestas sobre el chorro helado  
de una sangre sin fin que se derrama.

Y el sol entró por el balcón cerrado  
y el coral de la vida abrió su rama  
sobre mi corazón amortajado.

*Night of Sleepless Love*

The night above the two of us, a full moon,  
I began to cry, and you laughed.  
Your disdain was like a god's, my tears  
instants in time, doves in a chain.

The night beneath the two of us. Crystal of pain,  
you were crying deep into far-off things.  
My sorrow clustered agonies  
above your fragile heart of sand.

Dawn drew us close upon the bed,  
mouths pressed upon a frozen jet  
of endless blood that was spilling out.

And the sun came through closed shutters  
and the coral of life opened its branches  
over my shrouded heart.

[SONETOS ESPECIALMENTE  
PARA LA OCASIÓN]

[OCCASIONAL SONNETS]

*Epitafio a Isaac Albéniz*

Esta piedra que vemos levantada  
sobre hierbas de muerte y barro oscuro,  
guarda lira de sombre, sol maduro,  
urna de canto sola y derramada.

Desde la sal de Cádiz a Granada,  
que erige en agua su perpetuos muro,  
en caballo andaluz de acento druo  
tu sombra gime por la luz dorada.

¡Oh dulce muerto de pequeña mano!  
¡Oh música y bondad entretejida!  
¡Oh pupila de azor, corazón sano!

Duerme cielo sin fin, niveve tendida.  
Sueña invierno de lumber, gris verano.  
¡Duerme en olvido de tu vieja vida!

*Epitaph for Isaac Albéniz*

This stone that we see raised  
up from the grass of death and dark clay  
keeps guard upon a lyre of shadow, a ripened sun,  
and an urn of song, spilling out, alone.

From the salt of Cádiz to Granada,  
that builds in water its perpetual wall,  
your shade moans for the golden light  
with the beating hooves of a horse from Andulusia.

Oh sweet dead man, with such small hands.  
Such music, such goodness, intertwined.  
Such eagle eyes, so sound a heart.

Sleep in the boundless sky, the spreading snow.  
Dream radiant winter, the summer grey.  
Sleep and forget the life you had.

[Isaac Albéniz: *the Spanish pianist and composer (1860-1909), whom Lorca much admired for having captured the depths of Andalusian song in his work*].

*En la tumba sin nombre de Herrera y Reissig  
en el cementerio de Montevideo*

Túmulo de esmeraldas y epentismo  
como errante pagoda submarina,  
ramos de muerte y alba de sentina  
ponen loco el ciprés de tu lirismo.

Anémonas con fósforo de abismo  
cubren tu calavera marfilina,  
y el aire teje una guirnalda fina  
sobre la calva azul de tu bautismo.

No llega Salambó de miel helada  
ni póstumo carbuncle de oro yerto  
que salitró de lis tu voz pasade.

Sólo un rumor de hipnótico concierto,  
una laguna turbia y disipada,  
soplan entre tus sábanas de muerto.

*At the Nameless Tomb of Herrera y Reissig  
in the Cemetery of Montevideo*

A tumulus of emeralds and of queerness, **NOTE**  
like a pagoda wandering beneath the sea,  
bouquets of death, the bilge of dawn,  
are driving the cypress of your lyricism mad.

Anemones with the phosphor of the deep  
cover the ivory of your skull,  
and the breeze weaves a delicate garland  
on the bald, blue spot of your baptism.

No Salammbô appears with frozen honey,  
no posthumous carbuncle of rigid gold  
that saltpetred with lily your voice now gone.

Only the murmurs of a mesmerising concert,  
only a dim lagoon, evaporating,  
breathe between your dead man's sheets.

[Herrera y Reissig: a poet and translator (1875-1910), who was born and who died in Montevideo. Among his works was a short series of poems entitled El collar de Salambó (Salammbô's Necklace), hence the later reference in line 9].

*A Mercedes en su vuelo*

Una viola de luz yerta y helada  
eres ya por las rocas de la altura.  
Una voz sin garganta, voz oscura  
que suena en todo sin sonar en nada.

Tu pensamiento es nieve resbalada  
en la gloria sin fin de la blancura.  
Tu perfil es perenne quemadura.  
Tu corazón, paloma desatada.

Canta ya por el aire sin cadena  
la matinal fragante melodía,  
monte de luz y llaga de azucena.

Que nosotros aquí de noche y día  
haremos en la esquina de la pena  
una guinalda de melancolía.

*To Mercedes in her Flight*

On the high rocks, you have turned into  
a viola of stiff, frozen light.  
A throatless voice, a dark voice  
sounding through everything, and through nothing.

Your thought is shifting snow  
in an endless glory of whiteness.  
Your profile, an unending burn;  
your heart, a dove let loose.

Sing now, through the chainless air,  
a fragrant morning melody,  
mountain of light, wound of white lily.

While we here, by night and day,  
weave on the corner of grief  
a garland of sadness.

[Mercedes: a young child, the daughter of friends of  
Lorca, who had recently died].



## NOTES

### **de algunos niños / of certain boys**

Although *niños* in Spanish can be gender-neutral, applying to both male and female children, Anderson [see Further Reading] points out that *niños* here can evoke a regional usage particularly common in Andalusia, which more specifically suggests ‘teenage boys’, a certain kind of whom Lorca falls in love with. **RETURN**

### **cuatro galanes / four dishy men**

The word *galanes* has multiple resonances, ranging from ‘toffs/fops’ to ‘leading man/good-looking man/ladies’ man/womaniser/hunk’. The word ‘dishy’, chosen here, seems to capture many of these resonances. **RETURN**

### **Se ciñen el talle / They hold in their waists**

The Spanish is ambiguous, and could mean that they put belts round their waists, or tightened those belts, or even put their arms round each other’s waists. The sexual allure hinted at seems well captured by the phrase ‘they hold in their waists’. **RETURN**

### **¡Ay ruada, ruada, ruada / Yes, revel away, you revellers**

As Anderson explains [see Further Reading], *ruada* in Galician refers to a procession that travels through the night in order to reach a saint’s sanctuary at the first light of day. The word has connotations of barely concealed excitement and celebration, an effect I have tried to capture in the emphatic and affirmative ‘Yes’, the freedom suggested by the preposition ‘revel *away*’, and the doubling of the notion of revelry as both a noun (‘revellers’) and a verb (‘revel away’). **RETURN**

### **¡¡Yo no quiero verla!! / I don’t want to look at it! Ever!!**

The addition of the word ‘ever’ seems justifiable in view of Lorca’s use of emphatic double exclamation marks in the Spanish. **RETURN**

### **Aquí no canta...ni llora...ni pica...ni espanta / No one is to sing...or weep...or prick...or frighten off**

The Spanish verbs here could be merely descriptive of a present situation (‘No one sings...or weeps...’, etc.); but in view of the forceful command that follows (‘I want nothing here but eyes wide open...’), it seems

legitimate to draw out their imperative force also: ‘No one *is* to sing...*is* to weep...etc.’). Hence, the translation offered here. **RETURN**

#### **tu perfil y tu gracia / your grace and your attitude**

The nouns *perfil* and *gracia* can be interpreted in both a general sense (Ignacio’s overall ‘profile’: the shape of his head and body, and the way he moved), and in a more specific sense (the stance he assumed as he faced the bull’s charge, and the ease and gracefulness with which he managed the passes). The English nouns ‘grace’ and ‘attitude’ can similarly be read in both a general and a more specific sense. **RETURN**

#### **que si vivo sin mí, quiero perderte / that should I lose my mind, I’d want to see you damned**

This seems one of the densest and most problematic lines in the entire sonnet sequence, not least because a more conventional expectation would be for the pronouns to be totally reversed, i.e. *si vivo sin tí, quiero perderme*, ‘had I to live without you, I’d want to lose myself’. Lorca is clearly alluding to lines from the mystic St. John of the Cross: *Vivo sin vivir en mí / y tan alta vida espero / que muero porque no muero* [‘I live but do not live in myself, and so strong are my hopes that I am dying of not dying’]. An initial reading might be: ‘if I am to live without myself [i.e. losing my mind because of my passion for you], then I’d rather lose you completely.’ An alternative interpretation would be more vituperative: ‘if I am to lose my mind, I yearn to see you lost [i.e. damned].’ I find this second reading somewhat more persuasive, hence its adoption above, with some variations. **RETURN**

#### **Túmulo de esmeraldas y epentismo / A tumulus of emeralds and of queerness**

*Epentismo* seems to be a neologism coined by Lorca himself to denote homoeroticism in general, and also (more specifically) to denote the quality of being artistically creative but biologically non-creative. In English, both ‘queerness’ and ‘gayness’ convey the sense of the Spanish, though the historical resonance of ‘queer’ has possibly the stronger impact. **RETURN**

## FURTHER READING AND LINKS

The literature on Lorca is vast, and every year sees ever more material appearing. The following list is therefore restricted to material focussing upon the texts and translations into English of his later poetry.

### Complete editions in Spanish

- García-Posada Miguel (ed.) *Obras Completas*, 4 vols. Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg/Círculo de Lectores, 1996-7.
- Hernández, Mario (ed.) *Obras*. Madrid: Alianza, 1981 – present.
- Hoyo, Arturo del (ed.) *Obras Completas*, 3 vols. Madrid: Aguilar, 1986.

### Editions of the later poetry in Spanish

- Anderson, Andrew A. (ed.) *Diván del Tamarit. Seis poemas galegos. Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías. Poemas suelto*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1988.
- [Infantes, Victor, ed.] *Sonetos del amor oscuro (1935-1936)*. Granada, 1983 [privately and anonymously printed first edition].
- Hernández, Mario (ed.) *Diván del Tamarit. Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías. Sonetos*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1981.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (ed.) *Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías, con dos grabados de José Hernández y otros textos de Ignacio Sánchez Mejías, Francisco García Lorca, y José Bergamín*. 2 vols. Madrid: Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 1997.

FURTHER READING AND LINKS

- \_\_\_\_\_ (ed.) *Sonetos del amor oscuro, con dibujos de Miguel Rodríguez-Acosta Carlström, introducción de Jorge Guillén y notas de Mario Hernández.* Barcelona: Maeght, 1980.
- Ruiz-Portella, Javier *Sonetos del amor oscuro. Poemas de amor y erotismo. Inéditos de madurez.* Barcelona: Ediciones Áltera, 1995.

**English translations**

- Foster, David William trans. seven of the *Sonetos del amor oscuro*, in *Columbia Anthology of Gay Literature*, ed. Byrne R.S. Fone. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
- Maurer, Christopher (ed.) *Collected Poems.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, rev. ed. 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (ed.) *Selected Poems.* London: Penguin Books, 1997.
- Merwin, W.S. *Selected Poems.* New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2005 [a re-issue, with a new introduction by W.S. Merwin, of the original 1955 edition, ed. Francisco García Lorca and Donald M. Allen].
- Sorrell, Martin *Selected Poems.* Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2007.
- Trant, Carolyn, John K. *Sonnets of Dark Love.* New York: Parvenu Walsh, Francisco Aragon Press, 2000.
- Williams, Merryn (trans) *Selected Poems.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1992.

FURTHER READING AND LINKS

**Biographies in English**

- Gibson, Ian *Federico García Lorca: A Life.* London: Faber and Faber, 1989.
- Stainton, Leslie *Lorca: A Dream of Life.* London: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1996.

**Critical texts**

- Anderson, Andrew A. *Lorca's Late Poetry: a Critical Study.* Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990.
- Doggart, Sebastian, & Michael Thompson *Fire, Blood, and the Alphabet: One Hundred Years of Lorca.* Durham: University of Durham, 1999 [contains an invaluable section on translating Lorca, as well as sixteen different versions of 'Llagas de amor'].
- Eisenberg, Daniel 'Lorca and Censorship: The Gay Artist Made Heterosexual', *Angélica* [Lucena, Spain], 2, 1991, 121-45 [an extensive and valuable discussion of the various kinds of censorship that Lorca's life and work have faced].
- Mayhew, Jonathan *Apocryphal Lorca: Translation, Parody, Kitsch.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

**Internet links**

- <http://www.garcia-lorca.org/> is the official website of the Lorca foundation, though it is currently available in Spanish only.
- <http://granadainfo.com/lorca/index> presents a detailed chronology of Lorca's life, as well as much interesting material about Granada.

#### FURTHER READING AND LINKS

The following sites present translations into English of Lorca's later poetry, often accompanied by discussion and analysis:

- Anderson, Neil      *Translating Federico García Lorca: Six Galician Poems*, at [www.drunkenboat.com/db21/translation/neil-anderson-translating-federico-garcia-lorca/](http://www.drunkenboat.com/db21/translation/neil-anderson-translating-federico-garcia-lorca/)
- Archer, Paul        *Sonnets of Dark Love*, at [http://www.paularcher.net/translations/federico\\_garcia\\_lorca/](http://www.paularcher.net/translations/federico_garcia_lorca/)
- Kline, A.S.         *Galician Poems* (selected), *Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías*, *Sonnets of Dark Love* (selected), at [www.poetryintranslation.com](http://www.poetryintranslation.com).
- Riordan, Tom       *Lorca Translation Workshop*, at <http://poetrycircle.com/forum/threads/lorca-translation-workshop.28135/>
- Tucker, Scott      *Sonnets of Dark Love*, at [www.openletteronline.com/main/2006/11/](http://www.openletteronline.com/main/2006/11/)