

Garcia Lorca



Five in the Afternoon

‘Y mi sangre sobre el campo
sea rosado y dulce limo
donde claven sus azadas
los cansados campesinos.’

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Singing Cafè
(From Flamenco Vignettes)

Lamps of crystal
and green mirrors.

On the dark stage
Parrala holds
a dialogue
with death.
Calls her,
she won't come,
Calls her again.
The people
swallow their sobbing.
And in the green mirrors
long trails of silk
move.

The Guitar

It begins, the lament
of the guitar.
The wineglass of dawn
is broken.
It begins, the lament
of the guitar.
It's useless to silence it.
Impossible
to silence it.
It cries monotonously
as the water cries,
as the wind cries
over the snow.
Impossible
to silence it.
It cries for
distant things.
Sands of the hot South
that demand white camellias.
It cries arrows with no targets,
evening with no morning,
and the first dead bird
on the branch.

Oh, the guitar!
Heart wounded deep
by five swords.

Journey

A hundred riders in mourning,
where might they be going,
along the low horizon
of the orange grove?
They could not arrive
at Sevilla or Cordoba.
Nor at Granada, she who sighs
for the sea.
These drowsy horses
may carry them
to the labyrinth of crosses
where the singing trembles.
With seven nailed sighs,
where might they be going
the hundred Andalusian riders
of the orange-grove?

Lola

Under the orange-tree
she washes baby-clothes.
Her eyes of green
and voice of violet.

Ay, love,
under the orange-tree in bloom!

The water in the ditch
flowed, filled with light,
a sparrow chirped
in the little olive-tree.

Ay, love,
under the orange-tree in bloom!

Later, when Lola
has exhausted the soap,
young bullfighters will come.

Ay, love,
under the orange-tree in bloom!

Malagueña

Death

enters, and leaves,
the tavern.

Black horses
and sinister people
travel the deep roads
of the guitar.

And there's a smell of salt
and of female blood
in the fevered tuberose
of the shore.

Death

enters and leaves,
and leaves and enters
the death
of the tavern.

Sonnet

A long ghost of silver moving
the night-wind's sighing
opened my old hurt with its grey hand
and moved on: I was left yearning.

Wound of love that will grant my life
endless blood and pure welling light.
Cleft in which Philomel, struck dumb,
will find her grove, her grief and tender nest.

Ay, what sweet murmurs in my head!
I'll lie down by the single flower
where your beauty floats without a soul.

And the wandering waters will turn yellow,
as my blood runs through the moist
and fragrant undergrowth of the shore.

Serenata
(Homage to Lope de Vega)

By the river banks
the night is wetting itself
and on Lolita's breasts
the branches die of love.

The branches die of love.

The naked night sings
over the March bridgeheads.
Lolita washes her body
with brine and tuberose.

The branches die of love.

The night of aniseed and silver
shines on the rooftops.
Silver of streams and mirrors.
Aniseed of your white thighs.

The branches die of love.

Preciosa and the Breeze

Preciosa comes playing
her moon of parchment
on an amphibious path
of crystals and laurels.
The silence without stars
fleeing from the sound,
falls to the sea that pounds and sings,
its night filled with fish.
On the peaks of the sierra
the carabineers are sleeping
guarding the white turrets
where the English live.
And the gypsies of the water
build, to amuse themselves,
bowers, out of snails
and twigs of green pine.

Preciosa comes playing
her moon of parchment.
Seeing her, the wind rises,
the one that never sleeps.
Saint Christopher, naked
full of celestial tongues
gazes at the child playing
a sweet distracted piping.

- Child, let me lift your dress
so that I can see you.
Open the blue rose of your womb
with my ancient fingers.

Preciosa hurls her tambourine
and runs without stopping.
The man-in-the-wind pursues her
with a burning sword.

The sea gathers its murmurs.
The olive-trees whiten.
The flutes of the shadows sound,
and the smooth gong of the snow.

Run, Preciosa, run,
lest the green wind catch you!
Run, Preciosa, run!
See where he comes!
The satyr of pale stars
with his shining tongues.

Preciosa, full of fear,
way beyond the pines,
enters the house that belongs,
to the English Consul.

Alarmed at her cries
three carabineers come,
their black capes belted,
and their caps over their brows.

The Englishman gives the gypsy girl
a glass of lukewarm milk,
and a cup of gin that
Preciosa does not drink.

And while, with tears, she tells
those people of her ordeal,
the angry wind bites the air
above the roofs of slate.

The Quarrel

In mid-ravine
the Albacete knives
lovely with enemy blood
shine like fishes.
A hard light of playing-cards
silhouettes on the sharp green
angry horses
and profiles of riders.
In the heart of an olive-tree
two old women grieve.
The bull of the quarrel
climbs the walls.
Black angels bring
wet snow and handkerchiefs.
Angels with vast wings
like Albacete knives.
Juan Antonio of Montilla,
dead, rolls down the slope,
his corpse covered with lilies
and a pomegranate on his brow.
Now he mounts a cross of fire
on the roadway of death.

The judge, with the civil guard,
comes through the olives.
The slippery blood moans
a mute serpent song.
'Gentlemen of the civil guard:
here it is as always.
We have four dead Romans
and five Carthaginians.'

The afternoon delirious
with figs and heated murmurs,
fainted on the horsemen's
wounded thighs.
And black angels flew
on the west wind.
Angels with long tresses
and hearts of oil.

The Gypsy Nun

Silence of lime and myrtle.
Mallows in slender grasses.
The nun embroiders wallflowers
on a straw-coloured cloth.
In the chandelier, fly
seven prismatic birds.
The church grunts in the distance
like a bear belly upwards.
How she sews! With what grace!
On the straw-coloured cloth
she wants to embroider
the flowers of her fantasy.
What sunflowers! What magnolias
of sequins and ribbons!
What crocuses and moons
on the cloth over the altar!
Five grapefruit sweeten
in the nearby kitchen.
The five wounds-of-Christ
cut in Almería.
Through the eyes of the nun
two horsemen gallop.
A last quiet murmur
takes off her camisole.

And gazing at clouds and hills
in the strict distance,
her heart of sugar
and verbena breaks.
Oh what a high plain
with twenty suns above it!
What standing rivers
her fantasy sees setting!
But she goes on with her flowers,
while standing, in the breeze,
the light plays chess
high in the lattice-window.

Ballad of the Black Sorrow

The beaks of cockerels dig,
searching for the dawn,
when down the dark hill
comes Soledad Montoya.
Her skin of yellow copper
smells of horse and shadow.
Her breasts, like smoky anvils,
howl round-songs.

‘Soledad, who do you ask for
alone, at this hour?’

‘I ask for who I ask for,
say, what is it to you?
I come seeking what I seek,
my happiness and my self.’

‘Soledad of my regrets,
the mare that runs away
meets the sea at last
and is swallowed by the waves.’

‘Don’t recall the sea to me
for black sorrow wells
in the lands of olive-trees
beneath the murmur of leaves.’

‘Soledad, what sorrow you have!
What sorrow, so pitiful!

You cry lemon juice
sour from waiting, and your lips.’
‘What sorrow, so great! I run
through my house like a madwoman,
my two braids trailing on the floor,
from the kitchen to the bedroom.
What sorrow! I show clothes
and flesh made of jet.
Ay, my linen shifts!
Ay, my thighs of poppy!

‘Soledad: bathe your body
with the skylarks’ water
and let your heart be
at peace, Soledad Montoya.’

Down below the river sings:
flight of sky and leaves.
The new light crowns itself
with pumpkin flowers.
O sorrow of the gypsies!
Sorrow, pure and always lonely.
Oh sorrow of the dark river-bed
and the far dawn!

Saint Gabriel
(Sevilla)

1

A lovely reed-like boy,
wide shoulders, slim waist,
skin of nocturnal apple-trees,
sad mouth and large eyes,
with nerves of hot silver,
walks the empty street.
His shoes of leather
crush the dahlias of air,
in a double-rhythm beating out
quick celestial dirges.
On the margins of the sea
there's no palm-tree his equal,
no crowned emperor,
no bright wandering star.
When his head bends down
over his breast of jasper,
the night seeks out the plains,
because it needs to kneel.
The guitars sound only
for Saint Gabriel the Archangel,
tamer of pale moths,
and enemy of willows.

‘Saint Gabriel: the child cries
in his mother’s womb.
Don’t forget the gypsies
gifted you your costume.’

2

Royal Annunciation,
sweetly moonlit and poorly clothed
opens the door to the starlight
that comes along the street.
The Archangel Saint Gabriel
scion of the Giralda tower,
came to pay a visit,
between a lily and a smile.
In his embroidered waistcoat
hidden crickets throbbed.
The stars of the night
turned into bells.
‘Saint Gabriel: Here am I
with three nails of joy.
Your jasmine radiance folds
around my flushed cheeks.
‘God save you, Annunciation.
Dark-haired girl of wonder.
You’ll have a child more beautiful
than the stems of the breeze.’
‘Ah, Saint Gabriel, joy of my eyes!

Little Gabriel my darling!
I dream a chair of carnations
for you to sit on.’
‘God save you, Annunciation,
sweetly moonlit and poorly clothed.
Your child will have on his breast
a mole and three scars.’
‘Ah, Saint Gabriel, how you shine!
Little Gabriel my darling!
In the depths of my breasts
warm milk already wells.’
God save you, Annunciation.
Mother of a hundred houses.
Your eyes shine with arid
landscapes of horsemen.’

In amazed Annunciation’s
womb, the child sings.
Three bunches of green almond
quiver in his little voice.
Now Saint Gabriel climbed
a ladder through the air.
The stars in the night
turned to immortelles.

Saint Michael
(Granada)

They are seen from the verandahs
on the mountain, mountain, mountain,
mules and mules' shadows
weighed down with sunflowers.

Their eyes in the shadows
are dulled by immense night.
Salt-laden dawn rustles
in the corners of the breeze.

A sky of white mules
closes its reflective eyes,
granting the quiet half-light
a heart-filled ending.
And the water turns cold
so no-one touches it.
Water maddened and exposed
on the mountain, mountain, mountain.

Saint Michael, covered in lace,
shows his lovely thighs,
in his tower room,
encircled by lanterns.

The Archangel, domesticated,
in the twelve-o-clock gesture,
pretends to a sweet anger
of plumage and nightingales.
Saint Michael sings in the glass,
effeminate one, of three thousand nights,
fragrant with eau de cologne,
and far from the flowers.

The sea dances on the sands,
a poem of balconies.
The shores of the moonlight
lose reeds, gain voices.
Field-hands are coming
eating sunflower seeds,
backsides large and dark
like planets of copper.
Tall gentlemen come by
and ladies with sad deportment,
dark-haired with nostalgia
for a past of nightingales.
And the Bishop of Manila,
blind with saffron, and poor,
speaks a two-sided mass
for the women and the men.

Saint Michael is motionless
in the bedroom of his tower,
his petticoats encrusted
with spangles and brocades.

Saint Michael, king of globes,
and odd numbers,
in the Berberesque delicacy
of cries and windowed balconies.

Ballad of the Spanish Civil Guard

The horses are black.
The horseshoes are black.
Stains of ink and wax
shine on their capes.
They have leaden skulls
so they do not cry.
With souls of leather
they ride down the road.
Hunchbacked and nocturnal
wherever they move, they command
silences of dark rubber
and fears of fine sand.
They pass, if they wish to pass,
and hidden in their heads
is a vague astronomy
of indefinite pistols.

Oh city of the gypsies!
Banners on street-corners.
The moon and the pumpkin
with preserved cherries.
Oh city of the gypsies!
Who could see you and not remember?
City of sorrow and musk,
with towers of cinnamon.

When night came near,
night that night deepened,
the gypsies at their forges
beat out suns and arrows.
A badly wounded stallion
knocked against all the doors.
Roosters of glass were crowing
through Jerez de la Frontera.
Naked the wind turns
the corner of surprise,
in the night silver-night
night the night deepened.

The Virgin and Saint Joseph
have lost their castanets,
and search for the gypsies
to see if they can find them.
The Virgin comes draped
in the mayoress's dress,
of chocolate papers
with necklaces of almonds.
Saint Joseph swings his arms
under a cloak of silk.
Behind comes Pedro Domecq
with three sultans of Persia.
The half moon dreamed
an ecstasy of storks.

Banners and lanterns
invaded the flat roofs.
Through the mirrors wept
ballerinas without hips.
Water and shadow, shadow and water
through Jerez de la Frontera.

Oh city of the gypsies!
Banners on street-corners.
Quench your green lamps
the worthies are coming.
Oh city of the gypsies!
Who could see you and not remember?
Leave her far from the sea
without combs in her hair.

They ride two abreast
towards the festive city.
A murmur of immortelles
invades the cartridge-belts.
They ride two abreast.
A doubled nocturne of cloth.
They fancy the sky to be
a showcase for spurs.

The city, free from fear,
multiplied its doors.
Forty civil guards
enter them to plunder.
The clocks came to a halt,
and the cognac in the bottles
disguised itself as November
so as not to raise suspicion.

A flight of intense shrieks
rose from the weathercocks.
The sabres chopped at the breezes
that the hooves trampled.
Along the streets of shadow
old gypsy women ran,
with the drowsy horses,
and the jars of coins.
Through the steep streets
sinister cloaks climb,
leaving behind them
whirlwinds of scissors.

At a gate to Bethlehem
the gypsies congregate.
Saint Joseph, wounded everywhere,
shrouds a young girl.
Stubborn rifles crack
sounding in the night.
The Virgin heals children
with spittle from a star.
But the Civil Guard
advance, sowing flames,
where young and naked
imagination is burnt out.
Rosa of the Camborios
moans in her doorway,
with her two severed breasts
lying on a tray.
And other girls ran
chased by their tresses
through air where roses
of black gunpowder burst.
When all the roofs
were furrows in the earth
the dawn heaved its shoulders
in a vast silhouette of stone.

O city of the gypsies!
The Civil Guard depart
through a tunnel of silence
while flames surround you.

O city of the gypsies!
Who could see you and not remember?
Let them find you on my forehead:
a play of moon and sand.

Thamar and Amnon

The moon turns in the sky
over lands without water
while the summer sows
murmurs of tiger and flame.
Over the roofs
metal nerves jangled.
Rippling air stirred
with woolly bleatings.
The earth offered itself
full of scarred wounds,
or shuddering with the fierce
searings of white light.

Thamar was dreaming
of birds in her throat
to the sound of cold tambourines
and moonlit zithers.
Her nakedness in the eaves,
the sharp north of a palm-tree,
demands snowflakes on her belly,
and hailstones on her shoulders.
Thamar was singing
naked on the terrace.

Around her feet
five frozen pigeons.
Amnon, slim, precise,
watched her from the tower,
with thighs of foam,
and quivering beard.
Her bright nakedness
was stretched out on the terrace
with the murmur in her teeth
of a newly struck arrow.
Amnon was gazing
at the low, round moon,
and in the moon he saw
his sister's hard breasts.

Amnon lay on his bed
at half past three.
The whole room suffered
from his eyes filled with wings.
The solid light buries
villages in brown sand,
or reveals the ephemeral
coral of roses and dahlias.
Pure captive well-water
gushes silence into jars.
The cobra stretches, sings
in the moss of tree-trunks.
Amnon moans among

the coolness of bed-sheets.
The ivy of a shiver
clothes his burning flesh.
Thamar enters silently
through the room's silence,
the colour of vein and Danube,
troubled by distant footprints.
'Thamar, erase my vision
with your certain dawn.
The threads of my blood weave
frills on your skirt.'
'Let me be, brother,
Your kisses on my shoulder
are wasps and little breezes
in a double swarm of flutes.'
'Thamar, you have in your high breasts
two fishes that call to me,
and in your fingertips
the murmur of a captive rose.'

The king's hundred horses
neighed in the courtyard.
The slenderness of the vine
resisted buckets of sunlight.
Now he grasps her by the hair,
now he tears her under-things.
Warm corals drawing streams
on a light-coloured map.

Oh, what cries were heard
above the houses!

What a thicket of knives
and torn tunics.

Slaves go up and down
the saddened stairs.

Thighs and pistons play
under stationary clouds.

Gypsy virgins scream
around Tamar,
others gather drops
from her martyred flower.

White cloths redden
in the closed rooms.

Murmurs of warm daybreak
changing vines and fishes.

Amnon, angry violator,
flees on his pony.

Negroes loose arrows at him
from the walls and towers.

And when the four hooves
become four echoes,

King David cuts his harp-strings
with a pair of scissors.

Sound of the Cuban Negroes

When the moon has risen full I'm off to Santiago, Cuba,
off to Santiago
in a wagon of black water.

Off to Santiago.

Singing palms above the roof-tops.

Off to Santiago.

When the palm-tree wants to be stork,
off to Santiago.

And the banana-tree jellyfish,
I'm off to Santiago.

Off to Santiago
with the blond head of Fonseca.

Off to Santiago.

With the rose, Juliet's and Romeo's,
off to Santiago.

Sea of paper, coins of silver,
off to Santiago.

Oh, Cuba! Oh, rhythm of dried seeds!
Off to Santiago.

Oh, waist of fire, drop of wood!
Off to Santiago.

Harp of living tree-trunks. Caiman. Flower of tobacco.
Off to Santiago.

I always said I'd be off, off to Santiago,
in a wagon of black water.

Off to Santiago.
Air and alcohol on the wheels,
I'm going to Santiago.
My coral in the twilight,
off to Santiago.
The ocean drowned in the sand,
off to Santiago.
Heat whitening, fruit rotting,
off to Santiago.
Oh, the sugar-cane's dumb coolness!
Oh, Cuba, curve of sigh and clay!
I'm off to Santiago.

Galician Poems

Madrigal for the City of Santiago

It rains on Santiago
my sweet love.
White camellia of air,
sunlight in a veil.

It rains on Santiago,
in the dark night.
Grass of silver and dream
covers the empty moon.

See the rain in the streets,
the lament of stone and glass.
See on the fading wind
your sea's shadow and ash.

Your sea's shadow and ash,
Santiago, far from the sun:
shivering in my heart,
water of ancient dawn.

Nocturne of the Drowned Youth

Let's go, silent, down by the ford
to see the youth drowned in the water.

Let's go, silent, to the banks of air,
before the stream takes him down to the sea.

His soul wept, tiny and wounded,
under pine-needles and grasses.

Water fell, hurled by the moon,
clothed the naked mountain with violets.

The wind threw camellias of twilight
into the parched light of his sad mouth.

Come, blind boys of mountain and field,
come see the youth who drowned in the water.

Come shadowy folk of the valleys and peaks,
before the stream takes him down to the sea.

It carries him down to the sea's white curtain
where old oxen come and go in the water.

Ay, how the trees by the river sang
over the green moon's tambourine!

Boys, let's go, now, hurry, away!
Because the stream takes him down to the sea!

Dance of the Santiago Moon

Look at that white gallant
look at his wasted flesh!

It's the moon that's dancing
in the Courtyard of the Dead.

Look at his wasted flesh,
black with twilight and wolves.

Mother: The moon dances
in the Courtyard of the Dead.

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

It's the moon! It's the moon
in the Courtyard of the Dead!

Who looks in my grey windows,
with an eye full of cloud?

It's the moon! It's the moon
in the Courtyard of the Dead!

Let me die in my bed
dreaming the flower of gold.

Mother: The moon dances
in the Courtyard of the Dead.

Ay, daughter, the air in the sky
has suddenly turned me white!

It isn't the air, it's the sad moon
in the Courtyard of the Dead.

Who groans with that groan
of an ox, huge and malcontent?

Mother: It's the moon, the moon
in the Courtyard of the Dead.

Yes, the moon, the moon,
crowned with yellow gorse,
that dances, dances, dances,
in the Courtyard of the Dead!

Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías

1. The Goring and the Death

At five in the afternoon.

It was just five in the afternoon.

A boy brought the white sheet
at five in the afternoon.

A basket of lime made ready
at five in the afternoon.

The rest was death and only death
at five in the afternoon.

The wind blew the cotton wool away
at five in the afternoon.

And oxide scattered nickel and glass
at five in the afternoon.

Now the dove and the leopard fight
at five in the afternoon.

And a thigh with a desolate horn
at five in the afternoon.

The bass-pipe sound began
at five in the afternoon.

The bells of arsenic, the smoke
at five in the afternoon.

Silent crowds on corners
at five in the afternoon.

And only the bull with risen heart!

at five in the afternoon.

When the snow-sweat appeared

at five in the afternoon.

when the arena was splashed with iodine

at five in the afternoon.

death laid its eggs in the wound

at five in the afternoon.

At five in the afternoon.

At just five in the afternoon.

A coffin on wheels for his bed
at five in the afternoon.
Bones and flutes sound in his ear
at five in the afternoon.
Now the bull bellows on his brow
at five in the afternoon.
The room glows with agony
at five in the afternoon.
Now out of distance gangrene comes
at five in the afternoon.
Trumpets of lilies for the green groin
at five in the afternoon.
Wounds burning like suns
at five in the afternoon,
and the people smashing windows
at five in the afternoon.
At five in the afternoon.
Ay, what a fearful five in the afternoon!
It was five on every clock!
It was five of a dark afternoon!

2. The Spilt Blood

I don't want to see it!

Tell the moon to come,
I don't want to see the blood
of Ignacio on the sand.

I don't want to see it!

The moon wide open,
mare of still clouds,
and the grey bullring of dream
with osiers in the barriers.

I don't want to see it!
How the memory burns me.
Inform the jasmines
with their tiny whiteness!

I don't want to see it!

The heifer of the ancient world
licked her saddened tongue
over a snout-full of blood
spilled on the sand,
and the bulls of Guisando,
part death, and part stone,

bellowed like two centuries
weary of pawing the ground.

No.

I don't want to see it!

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

He was seeking the dawn,
and the dawn was not there.

He seeks his perfect profile
and sleep disorients him.

He was seeking his lovely body
and met his gushing blood.

Don't ask me to look!

I don't want to feel the flow
any more, its ebbing force:

the flow that illuminates
the front rows and spills
over the leather and corduroy
of the thirsty masses.

Who calls me to appear?

Don't ask me to look!

His eyes did not shut
when he saw the horns nearby,
though the terrifying mothers
lifted up their heads.

And sweeping the herds

came a breeze of secret voices,
ranchers of the pale mist, calling
to the bulls of the sky.

There was never a prince of Seville
to compare with him,
nor a sword like his sword,
nor a heart so true.

His marvellous strength
like a river of lions
and like a marble torso
the profile of his judgment.

The air of an Andalusian Rome
gilded his head,
while his laughter was a tuberose
of wit and intellect.

How great a bullfighter in the arena!
How fine a mountaineer in the sierra!
How gentle with ears of wheat!
How fierce with the spurs!
How tender with the dew!
How dazzling at the fair!
How tremendous with the last
banderillas of darkness!

But now his sleep is endless.
Now the mosses and grass
open with skilled fingers

the flower of his skull.
And now his blood goes singing:
singing through marsh and meadows,
sliding down numbed horns,
wandering soulless in mist
encountering a thousand hooves
like a long dark tongue of sadness
to form a pool of agony
near the starry Guadalquivir.

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

No.
I don't want to see it!
There's no cup to hold it,
no swallow to drink it,
no frost of light to cool it,
no song, no deluge of lilies,
no crystal to silver it.

No.
I don't want to see it!!

3. The Body Laid-Out

The stone is a brow where dreams groan,
holding no winding water or frozen cypress.
The stone is a shoulder to bear time
with trees of tears, ribbons, planets.

I have watched grey rains running to the waves
lifting their fragile, riddled arms,
so as not to be caught by the outstretched stone
that unties their limbs without drinking their blood.

Because stone collects seeds and banks of cloud,
skeletons of larks and twilight wolves,
but gives up no sounds, crystals, fire, only bullrings
and bullrings, and more bullrings with no walls.

Now Ignacio the well-born lies on the stone.
Now it's done. What passes? Contemplate his form!
Death has covered him with pale sulphur
given him the head of a dark minotaur.

Now it's done! Rain penetrates his mouth.
Air rises mad from his sunken chest,
and love, soaked with tears of snow,
warms himself on the heights among herds.

What are they saying? A stinking silence settles.
We are with a laid-out corpse that vanishes,
with a clear form that held nightingales
and we see it riddled with countless holes.

Who disturbs the shroud? It's not true what he says!
No one's singing here, or weeps in a corner,
or pricks his spurs, or frightens off snakes:
here I want nothing but open eyes
to see that body that can't rest.

I want to see the men with harsh voices here.
Those who tame horses and subdue rivers:
the men who rattle their bones and sing
with a mouth full of sun and flints.

I want to see them here. In front of the stone.
In front of this body with broken sinews.
I want them to show me where there's an exit
for this captain bound by death.

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

Let him be lost in the moon's round bullring
that imitates, new, a bull stilled by pain.
let him be lost in the night with no singing of fish
and in the white weeds of congealed smoke.

I don't want them to cover his face with a cloth,
so he can grow accustomed to death that he bears.
Go, Ignacio: don't feel the hot bellowing.
Sleep, soar, rest: even the ocean dies!

4. The Soul Absent

Neither the bull nor the fig tree know you,
nor your horses, nor the ants under your floor.
Neither the child nor the evening know you,
because you have died forever.

The spine of rock does not know you,
nor the black satin where you are ruined,
Your mute remembrance does not know you,
because you have died forever.

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

Because you have died forever,
like all the dead of the Earth,
like all the dead forgotten
in a pile of lifeless curs.

No one knows you. No. But I sing of you.
I sing for others your profile and grace.
The famed ripeness of your understanding.
Your appetite for death, pleasure in its savour.
The sadness your valiant gaiety contained.

Not for a long time, if ever, will there be born,
an Andalusian so brilliant, so rich in adventure.
I sing his elegance in words that moan,
and remember a sad breeze through the olive-trees.

Sonnet of the Sweet Complaint

Don't let me ever lose the wonder
of your eyes like a statue's, or the stress
placed on my cheek at night.
by the solitary rose of your breath.

I'm afraid of being on this shore
a branch-less trunk: this deepest feeling
of having no bloom, or pulp, or clay
for the worm of my suffering.

If you're my hidden treasure,
if you're my cross, and my moist pain,
if I'm a dog, of yours, my master,

never let me lose what I have gained,
and decorate the branches of your stream
with the leaves of my enraptured autumn.

Wounds of Love

This light, this flame that devours,
this grey country that surrounds me,
this pain from a sole idea,
this anguish of the sky, earth and hour,

this lament of blood that now adorns
a lyre with no pulse, lubricious torch,
this weight of sea that breaks on me,
this scorpion that lives inside my breast,

are a garland of love, bed of the wounded,
where dreamlessly, I dream of your presence
among the ruins of my sunken breast.

And though I seek the summit of discretion
your heart grants me a valley stretched below,
with hemlock and bitter wisdom's passion.

The Beloved Sleeps on the Breast of the Poet

You will never know how much I love you
because you sleep and have slept in me.
I hide you weeping, pursued
by a voice of penetrating steel.

A law that disturbs both flesh and star
pierces my aching breast now,
and clouded words have eaten at
the wings of your severe spirit.

A knot of people leap in the gardens
waiting for your body and my pain
on horses of light with emerald manes.

But, my beloved, keep on sleeping.
Hear my shattered blood in the violins!
Beware lest they still lie in wait for us!

Two Laws

Sketch of the Moon

The law of the past encountered
in my present night.
Splendour of adolescence
that opposes snowfall.
My two children of secrecy
cannot yield you a place,
dark-haired moon-girls of air
with exposed hearts.
But my love seeks the garden
where your spirit does not die.

Sketch of the Sun

Law of hip and breast
under the outstretched branch,
ancient and newly born
power of the Spring.
Now, bee, my nakedness wants
to be the dahlia of your fate,
the murmur or wine
of your madness and number:
but my love looks for the pure
madness of breeze and warbling.

Sonnet

I know that my outline will be tranquil
in the north-wind of a sky without reflections,
mercury of watching, chaste mirror
where the pulse of my spirit is broken.

Because if ivy and the coolness of linen
are the law of the body I leave behind,
my outline in the sand will be the ancient
unembarrassed silence of the crocodile.

And though my tongue of frozen doves
will never hold the flavour of flame,
only the lost taste of broom,

I'll be the free mark of oppressed laws
on the neck of the stiff branch
and on the endless aching dahlias.

Night-Song of the Andalusian Sailors

From Cádiz to Gibraltar
how fine the road!
The sea knows I go by,
by the sighs.

Ay, girl of mine, girl of mine,
how full of boats is Málaga harbour!

From Cádiz to Sevilla
how many little lemons!
The lemon-trees know me,
by the sighs.

Ay, girl of mine, girl of mine,
how full of boats is Málaga harbour!

From Sevilla to Carmona
there isn't a single knife.
The half moon slices,
and, wounded, the air goes by.

Ay, boy of mine, boy of mine,
let the waves carry off my stallion!

Through the pale salt-seams
I forgot you, my love.
He who needs a heart
let him ask for my forgetting.

Ay, boy of mine, boy of mine,
let the waves carry off my stallion!

Cádiz, let the sea flow over you,
don't advance this way.
Sevilla, on your feet,
so you don't drown in the river.

Ay, girl of mine!
Ay, boy of mine!
How fine the road!
How full of boats the harbour,
and how cold it is in the square!

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