

# 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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## Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Singing Café.....                                 | 5  |
| The Guitar .....                                  | 6  |
| Journey .....                                     | 8  |
| Lola .....  | 9  |
| Malagueña.....                                    | 10 |
| Sonnet.....                                       | 11 |
| Serenata .....                                    | 12 |
| Preciosa and the Breeze.....                      | 13 |
| The Quarrel .....                                 | 16 |
| The Gypsy Nun .....                               | 18 |
| Ballad of the Black Sorrow .....                  | 20 |
| Saint Gabriel.....                                | 23 |
| Saint Michael .....                               | 26 |
| Ballad of the Spanish Civil Guard.....            | 29 |
| Thamar and Amnon.....                             | 35 |
| Sound of the Cuban Negroes.....                   | 39 |
| Madrigal for the City of Santiago.....            | 41 |
| Nocturne of the Drowned Youth .....               | 42 |
| Dance of the Santiago Moon .....                  | 44 |
| Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías .....           | 47 |
| Sonnet of the Sweet Complaint .....               | 59 |
| Wounds of Love .....                              | 60 |
| The Beloved Sleeps on the Breast of the Poet..... | 61 |
| Two Laws.....                                     | 62 |
| Sonnet.....                                       | 63 |
| Night-Song of the Andalusian Sailors .....        | 64 |

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| Index of First Lines ..... | 66 |
|----------------------------|----|

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!

## Index of First Lines

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Lamps of crystal .....   | 5  |
| It begins, the lament .....                                      | 6  |
| A hundred riders in mourning, .....                              | 8  |
| Under the orange-tree.....                                       | 9  |
| Death .....  | 10 |
| A long ghost of silver moving.....                               | 11 |
| By the river banks .....   | 12 |
| Preciosa comes playing .....                                     | 13 |
| In mid-ravine.....   | 16 |
| Silence of lime and myrtle.....                                  | 18 |
| The beaks of cockerels dig, .....                                | 20 |
| A lovely reed-like boy,.....                                     | 23 |
| They are seen from the verandahs .....                           | 26 |
| The horses are black.....  | 29 |
| The moon turns in the sky .....                                  | 35 |
| When the moon has risen full I'm off to Santiago, Cuba,<br>..... | 39 |
| It rains on Santiago.....  | 41 |
| Let's go, silent, down by the ford.....                          | 42 |
| Look at that white gallant.....                                  | 44 |
| At five in the afternoon. ....                                   | 47 |
| Don't let me ever lose the wonder.....                           | 59 |
| This light, this flame that devours, .....                       | 60 |
| You will never know how much I love you .....                    | 61 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| The law of the past encountered.....          | 62 |
| Law of hip and breast.....                    | 62 |
| I know that my outline will be tranquil ..... | 63 |
| From Cádiz to Gibraltar .....                 | 64 |