

Garcia Lorca

Another Twenty Poems

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The Ballad of the Salt-Water

The sea
smiles far-off.
Spume-teeth,
sky-lips.

‘What do you sell, troubled child,
child with naked breasts?’

‘Sir, I sell
salt-waters of the sea.’

‘What do you carry, dark child,
mingled with your blood?’

‘Sir, I carry
salt-waters of the sea.’

‘These tears of brine
where do they come from, mother?’

‘Sir, I cry
salt-waters of the sea.’

‘Heart, this deep bitterness,
where does it rise from?’

‘So bitter, the salt-waters
of the sea!’

The sea
smiles far-off.
Spume-teeth.
Sky-lips.

Encounter

Flower of sunlight.

Flower of water.

Myself: Was that you, with breasts of fire,
so that I could not see you?

She: How many times did they brush you,
the ribbons of my dress?

Myself: In your sealed throat, I hear
white voices, of my children.

She: Your children swim in my eyes,
like pale diamonds.

Myself: Was that you, my love? Where were you,
trailing infinite clouds of hair?

She: In the Moon. You smile? Well then,
round the flower of Narcissus.

Myself: In my chest, preventing sleep,
a serpent of ancient kisses.

She: The moment fell open, and settled
its roots on my sighs.

Myself: Joined by the one breeze, face to face,

we did not know each other!

She: The branches are thickening, go now.
Neither of us two has been born!

Flower of sunlight.
Flower of water.

From Moon Songs

The moon lays a long horn,
of light, on the sea.

Tremoring, ecstatic,
the grey-green unicorn.

The sky floats over the wind,
a huge flower of lotus.

(O you, walking alone,
in the last house of night!)

Dream

My heart rests, by the cold fountain.

(Fill it with threads,
spider of silence.)

The fountain-water sang it the song.

(Fill it with threads,
spider of silence.)

My heart, waking, sang its desires.

(Spider of nothingness,
spin your mystery.)

The fountain-water listened sombrely.

(Spider of nothingness,
spin your mystery.)

My heart falls into the cold of the fountain.

(White hands, far-out,
hold back the water.)

The water carries it, singing with joy.

(White hands, far-out,
nothing there in the water!)

Wish

Just your hot heart,
nothing more.

My Paradise, a field,
no nightingales,
no strings,
a river, discrete,
and a little fountain.

Without the spurs,
of the wind, in the branches,
without the star,
that wants to be leaf.

An enormous light
that will be
the glow
of the Other,
in a field of broken gazes.

A still calm
where our kisses,
sonorous circles
of echoes,
will open, far-off.

And your hot heart,
nothing more.

The Little Ballad of the Three Rivers

The Guadalquivir's river
runs past oranges and olives.
The two rivers of Granada,
fall, to wheatfields, out of snow.

Ay, Love, that goes,
and never returns!

The Guadalquivir's river
has a beard of clear garnet.
The two rivers of Granada
one of sorrow, one of blood.

Ay, Love,
vanished down the wind!

For the sailing-boats,
Seville keeps a roadway:
Through the waters of Granada
only sighs can row.

Ay, Love, that went,
and never returned!

Guadalquivir – high tower,
and breeze in the orange-trees.
Dauro, Genil – dead turrets,
dead, above the ponds.

Ay, Love,
vanished down the wind!

Who can say, if water carries
a ghost-fire of cries?

Ay, Love, that went,
and never returned!

Take the orange petals,
take the leaves of olives,
Andalusia, down to your sea.

Ay, Love,
vanished on the wind!

Paso (The Images of the Passion)

Virgin in a crinoline,
Virgin of Solitude,
spreading immensely
like a tulip-flower.

In your boat of light,
go -
through the high seas
of the city.
through turbulent singing,
through crystalline stars.
Virgin in a crinoline
through the roadway's river
you go,
down to the sea!

The Dawn

New York's dawn holds
four mud pillars,
and a hurricane of black doves,
paddling in foul water.

New York's dawn
moans on vast stairways,
searching on the ledges,
for anguished tuberose.

Dawn breaks and no one's mouth breathes it,
since hope and tomorrow, here, have no meaning.
Sometimes coins, furiously swarming,
stab and devour the abandoned children.

The first to go outside know in their bones
Paradise will not be there, nor wild loves.
They know they go to the swamp of law, and
numbers,
to play without art, and labour without fruit.

The light is buried by chains and by noise,
in the shameless challenge, of rootless science.
All across the suburbs, sleepless crowds stumble,
as if saved, by the moment, from a shipwreck of
blood.

A Singing

(From; Blood Wedding: Act I)

GRANDMOTHER:

A singing, child, a singing
about the great stallion,
who would not drink the water,
the water in its blackness,
in among the branches.
Where it finds the bridge,
it hangs there, singing.
Who knows what water is,
my child,
its tail waving,
through the dark green chambers?

MOTHER (softly):

Sleep, my flower,
the stallion is not drinking.

GRANDMOTHER:

Sleep, my rose,
the stallion is crying.
His legs are wounded,
his mane is frozen,
in his eyes,
there is a blade of silver.
They went to the river.
Ay, how they went!
Blood running,
quicker than water.

MOTHER:

Sleep, my flower,
the stallion is not drinking.

GRANDMOTHER:

Sleep, my rose,
the stallion is crying.

MOTHER:

It would not touch
the wet shore,
his burning muzzle,
silvered with flies.
He would only neigh,
to the harsh mountains,
a weight of river, dead,
against his throat.
Ay, proud stallion
that would not drink the water!
Ay, pain of snowfall,
stallion of daybreak!

GRANDMOTHER:

Do not come here! Wait,
close the window,
with branches of dream,
and dreams of branches.

MOTHER:

My child is sleeping.

GRANDMOTHER:

My child is silent.

MOTHER:

Stallion, my child

has a soft pillow.

GRANDMOTHER:

Steel for his cradle.

MOTHER:

Lace for his covers.

GRANDMOTHER:

A singing, child, a singing.

MOTHER:

Ay, proud stallion
that would not drink the water!

GRANDMOTHER:

Don't come here! Don't enter!
Go up to the mountain
through the sombre valley,
to where the wild mare is.

MOTHER (gazing):

My child is sleeping.

GRANDMOTHER:

My child is resting.

MOTHER (softly):

Sleep, my flower,
the stallion is not drinking.

GRANDMOTHER (rising, and very softly):

Sleep, my rose,
the stallion is crying.

Casida of the Recumbent Woman

To see you naked is to know the Earth.
The Earth glistening, empty of horses.
The Earth, reed-less, pure in form,
closed to futures, horizon of silver.

To see you naked is to see the concern
of rain searching for a fragile waist,
or the feverish sea's immense face,
not finding its own brightness.

Blood will cry in the alcoves,
enter with swords on fire,
but you will not know the cache,
of the toad's heart or the violet.

Your belly is a knot of roots,
your lips a dawn with no outline.
Under the bed's cool roses,
the dead moan, waiting their turn.

Gacela of the Flight

Often I lost myself in the sea,
my ears filled with fresh-cut flowers
my tongue filled with love and anguish.
often I lost myself in the sea,
as I am lost in the hearts of children.

No one when giving a kiss
fails to feel the smile of faceless people.
No one who touches a newborn child,
forgets the immobile skulls of horses.

Because the roses search the forehead,
for the toughened landscapes of bone,
and Man's hands have no fate,
but to imitate roots, under the ground.

As I am lost in the hearts of children,
often I lost myself in the sea.
Ignorant of water, I go searching,
for death, in light, consuming me.

Night of Insomniac Love

Night approached us, with a full moon.
I began to cry, and you to laugh.
Your contempt was a god, and my whinings
a chain of doves and minutes.

Night left us. Crystal of pain
you wept for distant depths.
My sadness was a cluster of agonies,
over your fragile heart of sand.

Morning joined us on the bed,
our mouths placed over the frozen jet
of a blood ,without end, that was shed.

And the sun shone through the closed balcony,
and the coral of life opened its branch,
over my shrouded heart.

Gacela of the Terrible Presence

I want the river to lose its way.
I want the wind to quit the valley.

I want the night to lose its sight,
and my heart its flower of gold;

the cattle to speak to the great leaves,
and the worm to die of shadows;

the teeth on the skull to shine,
and the silk to be drowned in yellows.

I can see wounded midnight's duel
struggling, knotted, with noon light.

I resist the broken arch, where time suffers,
and the green venom of twilight.

But do not make a black cactus,
open in reeds, of your nakedness.

Leave me afraid of dark planets,
but do not show me your calm waist.

Sonnet of the Wreath of Roses

The wreath, quick, I am dying!
Weave it quick now! Sing, and moan, sing!
Now the shadow is darkening my throat,
and January's light returns, a thousand and one
times.

Between what needs me, and my needing you,
starry air, and a trembling tree.
A thickness of windflowers lifts
a whole year, with hidden groaning.

Take joy from the fresh landscape of my wound,
break out the reeds, and the delicate streams,
and taste the blood, spilt, on thighs of sweetness.

But quick! So that joined together, and one,
time will find us ruined,
with bitten souls, and mouths bruised with love.

The Poet asks his Love to write

Visceral love, living death,
in vain, I wait your written word,
and consider, with the flower that withers,
I wish to lose you, if I have to live without self.

The air is undying: the inert rock
neither knows shadow, nor evades it.
And the heart, inside, has no use
for the honeyed frost the moon pours.

But I endured you: ripped open my veins,
a tiger, a dove, over your waist,
in a duel of teeth and lilies.

So fill my madness with speech,
or let me live in my calm
night of the soul, darkened for ever.

Song

The girl with the lovely face,
goes, gathering olives.
The wind, that towering lover,
takes her by the waist.
Four riders go by
on Andalusian ponies,
in azure and emerald suits,
in long cloaks of shadow.
'Come to Cordoba, sweetheart!'
The girl does not listen.
Three young bullfighters go by,
slim-waisted in suits of orange,
with swords of antique silver.
'Come to Sevilla, sweetheart!'
The girl does not listen.
When the twilight purples,
with the daylight's dying,
a young man goes by, holding
roses, and myrtle of moonlight.
'Come to Granada, my sweetheart!'
But the girl does not listen.
The girl, with the lovely face,
goes on gathering olives,
while the wind's grey arms
go circling her waist.

Pueblo

A calvary,
on the naked hillside.
Clear water.
Centenarian olives.
Through the narrow alleys,
men with cloaks on,
and on turrets,
wind-vanes, circling.
Eternally
rotating.
O lost pueblo,
in Andalusia of sorrows!

Landscape

The field
of olives
like a fan,
opens, and closes.
Over the olives,
deep sky,
and dark rain,
of frozen stars.
Reeds, and blackness,
tremble, by the river.
Grey air shivers.
The olives
are full of cries.
A crowd
of imprisoned birds,
moving long tails
in shadow.

The Prisoner

Through the indecisive
branches
went a girl
who was life.

Through the indecisive
branches.

She reflected daylight,
with a tiny mirror,
which was the splendour,
of her unclouded forehead.

Through the indecisive
branches.

In the dark of night,
lost, she wandered,
weeping the dew,
of this imprisoned time.

Through the indecisive
branches.

Remanso, Final Song

The night is coming.

The moonlight strikes
on evening's anvil.

The night is coming.

A giant tree clothes itself
in the leaves of cantos.

The night is coming.

If you came to see me,
on the path of storm-winds....

The night is coming.

....you would find me crying,
under high, black poplars.
Ay, girl with the dark hair!
Under high, black poplars.

A *remanso* is a still pool in running water, the liquid calm that is not swept on by the flow. I have translated *remanso* elsewhere to signify what *remains*, as Lorca's spirit remains, in the body of his poems.

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