

Garcilaso de la Vega

The Sonnets

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Translator's Introduction

Garcilaso (*García Laso*) de la Vega, (c.1501 – 1536), a Spanish soldier-poet in the manner of Philip Sydney, was born to a noble family in Toledo. Joining Charles V's Imperial Guard in 1520, Garcilaso, in 1525, married Elena de Zúñiga, a lady-in-waiting to Charles' sister, Leonor. Involved in the emperor's campaigns in Italy, Germany, France, and Tunisia, he was later wounded in battle at Le Muy in Provence, and died at Nice.

Garcilaso well-educated and knowledgeable in the Classics and the Romance languages, was highly influential in introducing Italian poetry, and Neo-Platonic concepts, to Spain; his verse, published posthumously by Juan Boscán in 1543, being admired, for example, by both Góngora and Quevedo.

In the twentieth century, García Lorca found a kindred spirit in his poetry, particularly the forty sonnets, and Lorca's own *Sonetos del amor oscuro* (*Sonnets of Hidden Love*) possess a similar emotional strength and directness. Garcilaso's other verse includes elegies, letters, eclogues and odes, stylistically influential as regards Spanish poetry but more conventional in content.

I : When I stop, to contemplate my state (*Cuando me paro a contemplar mi estado*)

When I stop, to contemplate my state,
 And view the steps that have led me here,
 I find, considering how I've gone astray,
 That I might well have come to greater ill.

And yet if I neglect to recall my path,
 I know not how to such great ill I've come:
 I know I'm dying, feel my death the more,
 Seeing that all my love must die with me.

I shall die, of giving my heart, foolishly,
To the one who well knows how to slay me,
If she wishes, and even seeks so to do.

For if I can slay myself by my own will,
Hers, which is not a party to my love,
Is yet more able. What else should it do?

II: At last, into your hands, I have come (*En fin, a vuestras manos he venido*)

At last, into your hands, I have come,
Knowing that I must die, bound so tight
That even to ease my pain with complaint,
Is already, as a remedy, denied me.

I know not what it is has spared my life,
Unless, that is, it was preserved to show
By my sole example, how deep the blade
Can cut, though rendering but a single blow.

Where my tears were shed, and flowed down,
A harsh and bitter drought yet produced
Scant fruit, to accompany my ill-fortune.

Let the tears I've wept for you, suffice;
Punish no more my weakened frame,
But seek your vengeance in my death!

III: The Mediterranean and its shores I leave (*La mar en medio y tierras he dejado*)

The Mediterranean and its shores I leave
The land where I possessed a wealth of bliss,
And, each day, further away I journey,
From the people, language, customs that I know.

Already quite uncertain of my return,
I muse on fantasies, seek for remedies,
Of which the most powerful is my hope
That this day will end my life of care.

And yet I could be cured of every ill
Could I see you, lady; or would hope to be,
Could I but hope without my losing hope.

But, seeing you not, no cure avails me;
If it be not death, I foresee no remedy,
And if it be death, tis not *I* may declare it.

**IV: For a while, my hope will rise to the heights (*Un rato se levanta mi
esperanza*)**

For a while, my hope will rise to the heights,
But, weary then of raising itself on high,
Soon falls again, leaves me in sorry plight,
Giving way to wretchedness once more.

Who can bear the change from good to ill?
O weary heart! Strive then, in your sad state;
Labour the times of sadness to endure,
For often better fortune dispels the worse.

By force of arms, I'll undertake, alone,
To shatter a solid mountain in my way,
A thousand obstacles that block my path.

Death, imprisonment, no such barriers,
Can stop my eyes seeking yours, as I desire,
As man, of flesh and blood, or naked shade.

**V: Your every gesture's written in my soul (*Escrito está en mi alma
vuestro gesto*)**

Your every gesture's written in my soul,
And so, when I desire to write of you,
I but read what you alone have written,
Myself alone; none knowing, even you.

In this state am I, and will always be:
Though in me is not all I see in you,
All that I see not, I still comprehend,
Turning to belief those first assumptions.

I was born, it seems, only to love you;
My soul ever trimmed to your measure,
My love for you, a habit of my soul.

I confess, all that I have I owe to you.
Born through you, you grant me a hold on life;
I'll find death through you; through you I die.

**VI: By the harshest pathways I have travelled (*Por ásperos caminos he
llegado*)**

By the harshest pathways I have travelled
To a place where, for fear, I dare not move.
And if I seek to take but a single step
I'm dragged back there, once more, by my hair.

Yet such am I, that, with death by my side,
I still seek fresh counsel for living;
I know the better yet the worse approve,
Due to ill-custom perhaps, or ill-fate.

And then, another thing, my brief time,
The ever-errant journey of my life,
From my first beginnings, until now,

The inclination, I no longer defy,
And certain death, the end of all this hurt,

They lead me to neglect all remedy.

VII: He that has lost so much can lose no more (*No pierda más quien ha tanto perdido*)

He that has lost so much can lose no more.
Let what I have endured till now suffice.
Help me, love, I who have never tried,
To defend myself from all that you desired.

Like a man shipwrecked, that has yet escaped,
Free of the storm in which I found himself,
I have dressed your temple, and adorned
With my wet clothing, all its sacred walls.

I'd sworn never again would I indulge in,
Devote my powers to, or give consent
To any other such risks: yet, all in vain.

I cannot save myself from what must be,
And, in this, I break not the oath I swore;
Unlike the rest, it being not in my power.

VIII: From that pure and most excellent face (*De aquella vista pura y excelente*)

From that pure and most excellent face
The spirit leaps out, burning and alive,
And on being received by my two eyes,
Moves inward swiftly to the ill within.

Encountering, in its path, most readily,
My own spirit, and driven by that fire,
It then escapes from me, like a lost cry
Born of the good that, in me, is present.

I imagine her, when absent, in my mind,

My spirit, believing then that it sees her,
Restless, aflame, fiery beyond measure;

But not finding, there, the easy passage,
That her own spirit forged, on entering,
It seeks then to emerge where there's no way.

IX: If in my absence from you, my lady (*Señora mía, si yo de vos ausente*)

If in my absence from you, my lady,
Living this, my life, failing to die,
I seem to offend my love for you,
And the good I enjoyed while present,

I soon experience a fresh annoyance,
In seeing that, despairing thus of life,
I lose whatever good it is I hoped for,
Entering upon what seems at variance.

At such variance are my feelings then,
You being absent, and so contrary,
I know not what decrees it so strongly.

Amongst them I ever find dissension,
With such skill they battle night and day,
Agreeing only that they wish me harm.

X: Oh, sweet pledges, boding but ill for me (*¡Oh dulces prendas, por mi mal halladas*)

Oh, sweet pledges, boding but ill for me,
Happy, and sweet, when heaven so decreed,
You are bound together in memory,
And with her have in my death conspired.

Who would have thought, in those times past,

When I saw such good arise through you,
That you would be with me, now, on a day
When you'd be viewed with such a weight of pain?

Since, in a single hour, you've robbed me of
All the good that, through them, you intended,
Take then the ill, as well, you've left behind.

Or I'll suspect you brought me to such good
Because in truth you wished to see me die
Surrounded by such sorrowful memories.

XI: Lovely nymphs that haunt the river's depths (*Hermosas ninfas, que, en el río metidas*)

Lovely nymphs that haunt the river's depths,
Content to live within its glittering streams,
Among the ever-glistening rocks and pebbles,
Among its glassy upraised shining columns,

Now labouring at your enchanting fabrics,
And weaving delicate garments in its flow,
Or now, apart, one amongst the others,
Relating all your tales of life and love,

Leave your labours for a while and raise
Your blonde heads to turn your gaze on me,
Nor cease to do so while I'm passing by,

Whether it is, with pity, you then listen,
Or weeping, and transformed thus to water,
You seek to console me, for a little while.

XII: If to restrain impossible desire (*Si para refrenar este deseo*)

If, to restrain impossible desire,
Mad, and vain, and fearful, in its nature,

And guard against so dangerous an ill,
Is to comprehend what I credit not,

It benefits me not to view what I see,
Ever too adventurous, or too fearful,
In such confusion that I never dare,
To grasp the ill in me that I possess.

What use can it be to view the painting
Of him who, with melting waxen wings,
Fell, granting name and fame to a sea;

Or that other picture, where the poplars
Show their grief at his wild, fiery plunge
Into the barely cold, still cooling, water?

Note: In myth, Icarus was given wax wings by his father Daedalus, but flew too close to the sun, and fell into the sea, thereafter named the Icarian Sea. Phaethon wished to drive the chariot of his father, Helios the Sun god, but likewise, mounting too close to the sun, he fell into the river Po, his sisters being transformed to black poplar trees, exuding tears of amber. See Ovid's Metamorphoses, Book VIII, and Book II respectively.

XIII: Daphne's arms were already changing (A Dafne ya los brazos le crecían)

Daphne's arms were already changing,
Extending themselves, as long branches;
I saw that flowing hair of deepest gold,
As I looked on, turning to green leaves.

In sheathes of bark they hid themselves,
Those tender limbs, still losing their heat,
Her white feet sank deep into the earth
While turning, there, to twisting roots.

He who was the cause of her distress,

In his sorrow, then watered the laurel,
Springing thence, with his flowing tears.

Oh, sad transformation, oh sorry state!
That the very reason for his weeping
Survives, each day, through his lament.

Note: In the myth, Daphne, a naiad, was pursued by the god Apollo. Her father, the river god Peneus, transformed her to a laurel-tree, to save her from Apollo's advances. See Ovid's Metamorphoses Book I.

XIV: Like to the tender mother who denies (Como la tierna madre, que el doliente)

Like to the tender mother who denies
Her tearful son, who's ill, what he desires,
Knowing that the very thing he longs for,
Will only serve to increase his pain,

And so, through love of him, will not comply,
At last, moved by her pity, acquiesces,
And, forgetful of the evil so incurred,
Runs to appease him, doubling the harm,

So, to my illness, my inflamed thoughts,
That, while dealing pain, plead with me,
I seek to deny the fatal food that harms.

And yet they beg and weep so, night and day,
That, to all that they ask for, I consent,
Forgetful of their ill-fortune, and mine.

XV: If lamentation and complaint could so (Si quejas y lamentos pueden tanto)

If lamentation and complaint could so
Curb the flow of rivers in their course,

And, in the shadowy mountain ranges,
Move all of their varied trees with song;

If cold stones and fierce tigers stirred
Of themselves to listen to those cries,
That, at last, with lesser cause than mine,
Descended even to the fearful realm,

Why can it not ease my weary life,
One passed, thus, in tears and misery,
That heart that's so hardened against me?

The voice of one who mourns himself as lost
Should, in truth, be heard with greater pity
Than that of him who mourned and lost another.

Note: In myth, Orpheus the Thracian poet and lyre-player, was able to move mountains, creatures, trees and stones with his powers of song. He descended to the underworld hoping to lead his Eurydice, who had died, bitten by a snake, back to the upper realms. He charmed Dis and Persephone, its deities, but disobeyed the command not to look back at Eurydice, and so lost her a second time. See Ovid's Metamorphoses Book X.

XVI: Epitaph for His Brother (No las francesas armas odiosas)

Not the hateful weapons of the French,
Driven, in hot anger, against my chest,
Nor the venomous flight of sharp arrows
Discharged from the shelter of the walls,

Nor the dangerous skirmishes pursued,
Nor the fiery thunderbolts that flew,
Counterparts to those that Vulcan wrought,
With skilful art, for Jupiter on high,

Could shorten my life by a single hour,
However much I risked myself in war,

Offering myself to the harsh hands of fate.

And yet the infected air, in a single day,
Denied me breath, and buried me in you,
Parthenope, so far from my native land.

Note: Garcilaso's brother, Fernando de Guzman, serving in the army of the emperor during the siege of Naples (Parthenope) by the French (1528), died of the plague there, at the age of twenty.

XVII: Thinking a straight road lay before me (*Pensando que el camino iba derecho*)

Thinking a straight road lay before me,
I yet encountered such misfortunes,
Not even the strangest fancies of the mad
Could conjure them, in wild imagination.

The widest plain seems but a narrow pass,
The brightest of nights seems dark to me,
Bitter and harsh, the sweetest company,
While the softest of beds a battlefield.

In my dreams, if any dreams do come,
Only the signs and images of death
Prove in accord now with my wearied soul.

In short, however I exercise my powers,
I deem, in myself, that each passing hour
Renders them less than they were before.

XVIII If tis true that I am wax to your will (*Si a vuestra voluntad yo soy de cera*)

If tis true that I am wax to your will,
That your eyes for me replace the sun,
While all those are lacking in their senses

Who are not inflamed so, or conquered,

How can a thing arise that, were it not
Seen and proved in me, so many times,
My senses themselves scarce would credit,
Since it appears so contrary to reason?

And that is: that while I am inflamed,
By your burning glance, and set alight,
Such that I barely cling to life itself,

Yet if I am assailed, when drawing closer,
By your gaze, I feel so chilled within,
The blood coagulates in every vein.

XIX: To Julio Cesare Caracciolo (*Julio, después que me partí llorando*)

Julio, after I've departed, weeping,
From one, from whom my thought never parts,
And left that aspect of my soul behind,
That gives life and strength to the body,

I turn to casting up a strict account
Of all that I possess, and thus discover
That all the good I owned to fails me;
That the very air I breathe is lacking.

In that state of fear, my tongue yet tries
To speak with you, O my sweet friend,
About the memory of that fateful day

On which, as a witness, I first gained
The power to bear news of your soul,
And to learn of my own soul from you.

Note: Julio (Giulio) Cesare Caracciolo is likely the Neapolitan sonneteer of that name (fl:1531 onwards) whom Garcilaso may well have known in Naples, during his presence there from late 1532 to early 1536.

XX: With such force and vigour they combine (Con tal fuerza y vigor son concertados)

With such force and vigour, they combine,
These harsh winds, to achieve my ruin,
They disperse all my most tender thoughts,
That, later, will lie scattered, all about me.

The evil is: that only my cares remain,
Except, that is, for those occurrences,
That are strong, and are deeply rooted,
And are well-served by all my senses.

Yet, on the other hand, I do not grieve,
My blessings having made their departure,
For the deep woes that abide with me.

As before, they clasp and console me;
Since, in the journey of this harsh life,
They bring about a shortening of the road.

XXI: To Alonso De Avilo (Clarísimo Marqués, en quién derrama)

Illustrious Marquis, on whom heaven pours
Every gift and blessing known to this world,
If, to the heights to which your worth summons,
As does the shining splendour of your fame,

My verse might reach, and so grant that fame
A voice resounding higher, more profound,
Your name, without peer, shall live forever,
While rendering those who love you immortal.

All that is desired from the heavens above,
All that we strive to gather on this Earth,
All may be found, and witnessed, here, in you.

In short, Nature formed you without equal,
New in concept, in kind unknown before,
Wrought with an art that equalled her thought.

Note: Alfonso d'Avalos d'Aquino, 2nd Marquis of Vasto (1502 –1546), was an Italian condottiero, renowned for his service in favour of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain.

XXII: With an intense desire to bring to light (Con ansia extrema de mirar qué tiene)

With an intense desire to bring to light
All that may lie hidden in your heart's core,
And see if that within matches that without,
And corresponds to its fair appearance,

I fix my gaze upon your breast, yet find
My eyes are thwarted at the first encounter
My sight unable to attain the depths
And witness there what the soul contains.

These eyes must halt before the obstacle,
Sadly created, to my woe, by a hand
Unforgiving even of its own fair form.

So that I see the death of all my hopes,
While the blow my love dealt, all in vain,
'Served not to pass beyond the coat of mail'

Note: The last line quotes (in Italian, in the original), Petrarch's Canzoniere: XXIII, line 34. The translation here interprets the Italian 'gona: garment', in a defensive military sense, since it is by no means obvious that

the poem is written to a woman. The Petrarch poem illuminates this one, but compare also Shakespeare's sonnets to a male companion.

XXIII: While the colours of the lily and the rose (*En tanto que de rosa y azucena*)

While the colours of the lily and the rose
Are displayed there, upon your face,
And while your open and ardent glance
Inflames the heart, and yet restrains it,

And while the wind stirs and entangles
That hair, extracted from some vein of gold,
That waves about the lovely upright neck,
Spreading and flowing o'er its whiteness,

Gather the sweet fruit of your joyful spring,
Before the anger of tempestuous weather
Covers the lovely mountain-top with snow.

Ever the ice-filled wind will spoil the rose,
And age will swiftly seek to alter all,
Rather than change its established custom.

XXIV: To Maria de Cardona (*Ilustre honor del nombre de Cardona*)

You, who adorn the name of Cardona,
The Tenth Muse haunting Parnassus' heights,
And noble subject of the immortal verse
Of Tansillo, Minturno, Tasso's school,

If in the middle of his road, the strength
And spirit desert not your Laso's lyre,
Then my bold steps might bear me upwards
To the rarely-won summit of Helicon.

There I might bring, without weariness,

To the sweet sound of its curbed flow,
Along an uncut course, dry earth as yet,

My native, rich, and celebrated Tagus,
Paying a golden tribute to your name,
With the treasures of its gleaming sand.

Note: Maria de Cardona (1509-1563) an Italian noblewoman and patron of the arts, was Countess of Avellino, Marquise of Padula, and Baroness of Candida. Luigi Tansillo (1510-1568), Antonio Minturno (1500-1574), and Bernardo Tasso (1493-1569, the father of Torquato) were contemporary Italian poets. Laso is García Laso, the poet himself. In Classical poetry the river Tagus was noted for its gold-bearing sands.

XXV: Oh, Fate, the agent of my wretchedness (¡Oh hado ejecutivo en mis dolores)

O, Fate, the agent of my wretchedness,
How I have felt the harshness of your rule!
You fell the living tree with careless hands,
Scatter its fruit and flowers on the ground.

Within a little space, my love now lies,
With every hope that I once possessed,
Turned to ashes, disdained and scorned,
Deaf to my lament, to my every cry.

Receive, Fate, the tears I shed, this day,
On this grave, and those destined to be,
Even if they must fall here fruitlessly,

Until the dark comes, and eternal night,
Closes these eyes that have seen your power,
Granting me others, with which to view you.

XXVI: The solid base is toppled to the ground (*Echado está por tierra el fundamento*)

The solid base is toppled to the ground:
That which once sustained my weary life.
How many the fine things lost in a day!
How many the hopes borne on the breeze!

Oh, how idle are my many thoughts
Ever preoccupied with my own good!
A thousand times misfortune punishes
All my hopes that, likewise, are as vain.

Many a time, I'm forced to surrender,
And yet, at other moments, I resist,
With such fierceness, and such strength
I feel I might split the rocks above me.

This the desire that yet drives me on:
The wish to return and view, one day,
One it was better never to have seen.

XXVII: After Ausiàs March (*Amor, amor, un hábito vestí*)

Amor, Amor, in brightest robes I dressed,
Such garments as were cut from your cloth,
That, as I donned them, hung loose about me,
And yet, once on, seemed narrow and tight.

And, though to wearing them I gave consent,
Such deep regret has afterwards seized me,
That, many a time, I try, in my anguish,
To tear away that which I chose myself.

But who can free themselves from such things,
Who possesses so contrary a nature,
He has learnt to conform to their measure?

If, by chance, I yet retain a little reason,
It, nonetheless, must fail to reveal itself,
Unable to resolve such contradictions.

Note: Ausiàs March (1400 –1459) was a late medieval Spanish poet and knight from Gandia, Valencia, and a major poet of the Catalan/Valencian ‘Golden Century’.

XXVIII: To Juan Boscán (*Boscán, vengado estáis, con mengua mía*)

Boscán, you’re revenged with the waning
Of my past harshness and severity,
You, who were accustomed to rebuke me,
Revealing your soft-hearted tenderness,

While I now chastise myself every day,
For all my boorishness and rudeness,
And likewise for my baseness might well seek
Chastisement, and correction, the more.

Know that, though of age and fully-armed,
Yet, with eyes wide open, I’ve surrendered
To the lad that *you* know, blind and naked,

While no heart has ever been consumed
By so beautiful a fire; if I’m asked,
I am the ashes, and, being ash, am mute.

**XXIX: As the spirited Leander swam the waves (*Pasando el mar
Leandro el animoso*)**

As the spirited Leander swam the waves,
Burning, deep within, with amorous fire,
The wind strengthened, working away
At those waters roused to impetuous fury.

Overcome by his swift arduous labours,
And unable then to counter the swell,
Losing more than his own life in dying,
Failing there, of the sweet reward he sought,

He strained, full weary now, to raise a cry,
Calling out to the waves in this manner:
(Though by them his cry must go unheard)

‘If you can do no other now than drown me,
Then vent your fury, waves, on my return.
Destroy me, then; but spare me as I go!

Note: Juan Boscán, (Joan Boscán, I Almogàver, c. 1490-1542) was a Catalan poet from Barcelona who wrote in Castilian, adapting it to reflect Italian metres and verse forms. Garcilaso, his younger friend, followed his example, their works appeared together posthumously in 1543.

**XXX: Suspicion, roused by my sad fantasies (Sospechas, que, en mi
triste fantasia)**

Suspicion, roused by my sad fantasies,
You that wage fierce war on my emotions,
Ever tormenting my afflicted heart,
Your harsh fingers working, night and day,

My spirit is weak, resistance done with;
Surrendering swiftly, overcome by you,
I am left to repent my efforts, wasted
In countering you with such persistence.

Lift me now, bear me to that fearsome place,
To which, before this day, I shut my eyes,
So that I might not see my death writ there.

I lay down those weapons that, till now,
Granted a defence, in my wretchedness;

On your chariot, in triumph, hang the spoils!

XXXI: Of my own self, within me, was engendered (*Dentro en mi alma fue de mí engendrado*)

Of my own self, within me, was engendered
A love most sweet, one, at its birth, approved
By my sentiments, as is an only child,
Lately born, but longed-for, many-a-while.

Yet, after it, was born one that destroyed
Every single shred of amorous thought,
Transforming my first feeling of delight,
With its harsh rigours, to cruel torment.

O sad child, that inspires its father, Love,
Yet slays me, the grandsire! Why are you
Discontented so, with him that got you?

O jealous Fear! What dreadful form is yours,
That Envy, your own, most fierce, mother,
Is scared to view the monster that she bore!

XXXII: I am bathed in my own tears, endlessly (*Estoy contino en lágrimas bañado*)

I am bathed in my own tears, endlessly,
Forever filling the air with my sighs,
And it hurts me that I dare not tell you
That I've reached so sad a state, through you,

On seeing where I am, what I've come to,
By following the strait path after you,
Such that, though I seek to turn and flee,
I feel dismay, viewing the path behind,

While, if I seek to scale the mountain height,

The sad examples of those who've fallen
Scare me, at every step along the way.

Above all the light of hope has failed me,
With which I was accustomed to travel
The dark realm of your neglectfulness.

XXXIII: To Mario Galeota (*Mario, el ingrato Amor, como testigo*)

(Written from Goleta, Tunisia)

Mario, Ungrateful Love, who bears witness
To my pure faith in him, and constancy,
Exerting, over me, his baser nature,
Seeking to do more harm to his true friend,

Fearing that, if I should speak or write
Of his ill character, it would lessen him,
Lacking the strength to hurt me cruelly,
Has empowered the hands of my enemies.

So, in the part that governs my right hand,
And sets down the mind's deepest thoughts,
He has sought my harm, by wounding me.

Yet I'll take good care that the offence
Costs the vile offender most dearly,
Being free, healed, and eager to repay.

Note: Mario Galeota (c. 1499 – 1585) was a Neapolitan nobleman and poet, his father being Giovanni Bernardino, lord of Monasterace (Calabria). Galeota was persecuted by the Inquisition, in Rome, as an adherent of the doctrines of the Spanish heretic Juan de Valdés, but was later freed from imprisonment, and abjured his heretical beliefs. Garcilaso, after having been named mayor of Reggio Calabria in 1534, had participated in the siege of Goleta in 1535, and after its capture, in a cavalry combat near the walls of Tunis, was wounded by two spear thrusts, to the mouth and the right arm.

XXXIV: Now that I've shaken off the heavy yoke (*Gracias al cielo doy que ya del cuello*)

Now that I've shaken off the heavy yoke,
Thanks be to heaven, from my weary neck,
And from the shore, can view, without fear,
The storm that blows above the raging sea,

I can view, hanging by a fragile thread,
The life of the intoxicated lover,
Spent in error, in slumbering self-deceit,
Deaf to the voices that cry a warning.

And so, I can smile at all mortal ills,
Though my heart is not so inhuman,
In doing so, indeed, as it may seem,

I, merely, behave as the healthy will,
Not smiling at the pain others suffer,
But viewing the distress from which I'm free.

XXXV: To Boscán (*Boscán, las armas y el furor de Mart*)

(Written from Goleta)

Boscán, the weapons and the rage of Mars
Who watering Libyan soil with his blood,
Will make this dusty region green again,
And so, revive the empire won by Rome,

Has roused again, in memory, the skill
And the valour of those Italians of old,
By whose strong and courageous hands
Africa was conquered, from east to west.

Here, where the fierce lightning-bolt of Rome,

Of which the fiery and unfettered flame
Left nothing of great Carthage but her name,

Love stirs my thoughts, and stirs them once more,
Wounding, and kindling, the trembling spirit,
Until I waste away, midst tears and ashes.

XXXVI: At the entrance to a desert valley (A la entrada de un valle, en un desierto)

At the entrance to a desert valley,
Where none had crossed, or now were seen,
I saw a stray dog, acting most strangely,
In an extremity of bewildered sorrow;

Now howling in grief to the empty sky,
Now running, to and fro, along the trail,
Now loping, returning, halting, waiting,
All the time as if troubled half to death.

It was parted from its master's presence,
Now failed to see him, and so felt the pain;
Behold how far the ills of absence reach!

I, moved with sympathy for his mischance,
Called out to him: 'Sufferer, be patient;
I, that can reason, my love's absent too.'

XXXVII: My tongue moves as my sorrow guides it (Mi lengua va por do el dolor la guía)

My tongue moves as my sorrow guides it,
I journey with sorrow without a guide;
And both must navigate with pure skill,
Each obliged to halt where it would not;

I, because my only companion

Is that which often renders me a fool,
My tongue, because it's often forced to say
More, indeed, than it had sought to do.

And the law that rules this is so unjust
That, though it knows me to be innocent,
I pay for that other's fault and my own.

Why am I guilty of the foolishness
It speaks, if I'm tormented so by woe
That suffering itself scarcely knows me?

**XXXVIII: Little by little, I feel my sorrows wane (*Siento el dolor
menguarme poco a poco*)**

Little by little, I feel my sorrows wane,
Not because they feel less hard to bear
But in that feeling is dulled by feeling,
After I am maddened so with feeling.

Nor do I think my senses are deranged,
Because I am so deafened by my pride,
That I can't cease feeling and suffering;
For if I cease feeling, I'll lose my mind.

Both do me harm, my feelings, my madness,
Deprived of the first for being so much mine,
Destroyed by the other for being so in thrall.

It must seem to others that I talk nonsense,
In priding myself on what destroys me:
Yet I deem it a stroke of rare good fortune.

**XXXIX: O Jealousy, so sharp a curb on love (*¡Oh celos, de amor
terrible freno*)**

O Jealousy, so sharp a curb on love,
Curbing me instantly, and biting deep,
Sister to cruelty, and shameful death,
That, at a glance, alter the tranquil sky!

O serpent, born of the sweetest bower
Of fair flowers, so that hope might die!
After a fair beginning, comes ill-chance,
After the sweetmeats, your poisonous fare!

From what infernal depths do you arise?
O cruel monster, and our mortal plague,
How sad and harsh you render all my days!

Back to the depths! Add not, to my ills,
Wretched suspicion. Why come you here?
Is not my love enough, with all its woes?

**XL: My ills in me have wrought such foundations (*El mal en mí ha
hecho su cimienta*)**

My ills, in me, have wrought such foundations,
And labour at them with such artistry,
They reveal the work to be determined
Seeks to be established there forever.

They deal with me, in such a manner,
That though a thousand folk might die
I must be preserved to feel more pain.
All things vanish, but my inmost woe.

My whole being is transformed to sadness,
And it seems, must so remain, forever,
For death comes not to that which has no life.

Of all my ills continuance is the worst,
My greatest good ever to go weeping:

See what ill comes of the good I speak of!

Index of First Lines

When I stop, to contemplate my state,
At last, into your hands, I have come,
The Mediterranean and its shores I leave
For a while, my hope will rise to the heights,
Your every gesture's written in my soul,
By the harshest pathways I have travelled
He that has lost so much can lose no more.
From that pure and most excellent face
If in my absence from you, my lady,
Oh, sweet pledges, boding but ill for me,
Lovely nymphs that haunt the river's depths,
If, to restrain impossible desire,
Daphne's arms were already changing,
Like to the tender mother who denies
If lamentation and complaint could so
Not the hateful weapons of the French,
Thinking a straight road lay before me,
If tis true that I am wax to your will,
Julio, after I've departed, weeping,
With such force and vigour, they combine,
Illustrious Marquis, on whom heaven pours
With an intense desire to bring to light
While the colours of the lily and the rose
You, who adorn the name of Cardona,
O, Fate, the agent of my wretchedness,
The solid base is toppled to the ground:
Amor, Amor, in brightest robes I dressed,
Boscán, you're revenged with the waning
As the spirited Leander swam the waves,
Suspicion, roused by my sad fantasies,
Of my own self, within me, was engendered
I am bathed in my own tears, endlessly,
Mario, Ungrateful Love, who bears witness

Now that I've shaken off the heavy yoke,
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