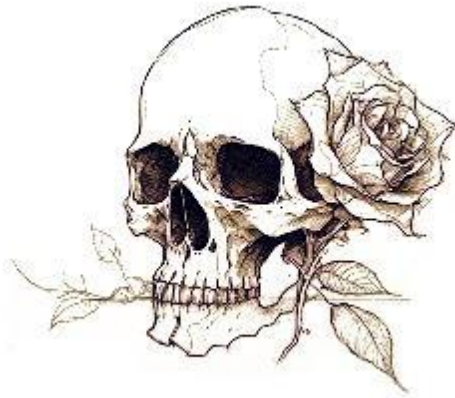


# Federico García Lorca



## Poems of Love & Death

Translated into English by

*A. S. Kline*

Poetry In Translation

[www.poetryintranslation.com](http://www.poetryintranslation.com)

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This print edition is published by

**Poetry In Translation** ([www.poetryintranslation.com](http://www.poetryintranslation.com)),

via Amazon EU S.à.r.l. (a Luxembourg company with registration number B-101818 and its registered office at 5 Rue Plaetis, L-2338, Luxembourg )



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

(From: *Cicada! – Libro de Poemas*, 1921)

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## Translator's Introduction

Federico García Lorca (1898-1936), poet, playwright, and theatre director was a member of the early twentieth century group of Spanish poets who introduced the tenets of European movements (including symbolism, futurism, and surrealism) to Spanish literature. He was born in Fuente Vaqueros, near Granada, and educated in Granada and Madrid, where he befriended Dalí, Buñuel and Jiménez. His work became widely known on the publication of *Romancero gitano* (*Gypsy Ballads*, 1928), which incorporated themes and motifs from his native Andalusia, in a stylistically avant-garde manner. After his visit to the Americas, and New York City (1929 -1930), the latter recalled in the poems of *Poeta en Nueva York* (*Poet in New York*, 1942) Lorca returned to Spain where he wrote his later plays, *Blood Wedding* (1932), *Yerma* (1934), and *The House of Bernarda Alba* (1936).

The poet was executed by Nationalist forces at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. His remains have not been found, while the motive for his death remains in dispute; speculatively it was aroused by his sexual orientation, his politics, or both, while a personal dispute nonetheless remains a strong possibility.

Lorca's poetry appeals through its immediacy, its skilful exploitation of the vibrant Spanish language, its transmission of iconic elements of Andalusian culture, and its emotional intensity and honesty. Its apparent simplicity is often deceptive, while its resonances are moving and profound; though, truly, little can be said of it that is not better expressed by the poems themselves.

*From: Libro de Poemas, 1921*

**Weather-Vane (Veleta)**

*(July 1920, Fuente Vaqueros, Granada)*

Wind of the South.  
Dark-haired, ardent,  
you come over my flesh  
bringing me seed  
of brilliant  
gazes, soaked  
in orange blossom.

You make the moon red  
and make a sobbing  
in the captive poplars, but you come  
too late!  
I've rolled up the night of my story  
on the shelf!

Without any wind,  
Look out!  
Spin, heart;  
spin, heart.

Breeze of the North,

white bear of the wind!  
you come over my flesh  
trembling with auroras  
boreales,  
with your cloak  
of spectral captains  
and screaming with laughter  
at Dante.  
O polisher of stars!  
But you come  
too late.  
My chest is covered with moss  
and I've lost the key.

Without any wind,  
Look out!  
Spin, heart;  
spin, heart.

Gnomish airs, and winds  
from nowhere.  
Mosquitoes of the rose  
with pyramidal petals,  
Trade winds weaned  
among the rough trees,  
flutes in the tempest,  
leave me be!  
Strong chains hold

my memory,  
and the bird is captive  
whose warbling draws  
the evening.

The things that are gone never return,  
all the world knows that,  
and among the clear crowd of the winds  
it's useless to complain.  
Isn't that so, poplar, master of the breeze?  
It's useless to complain!

Without any wind,  
Look out!  
Spin, heart;  
spin, heart.

## **New Songs** **(*Cantos Nuevos*)**

The afternoon speaks: 'I am thirsty for shadows!'  
The moon speaks: 'I thirst for stars.'  
The crystalline fountain asks for lips  
and the wind for sighs.

I am thirsty for perfumes and laughter.  
I thirst for new songs  
without moons or irises,  
and without loves that have died.

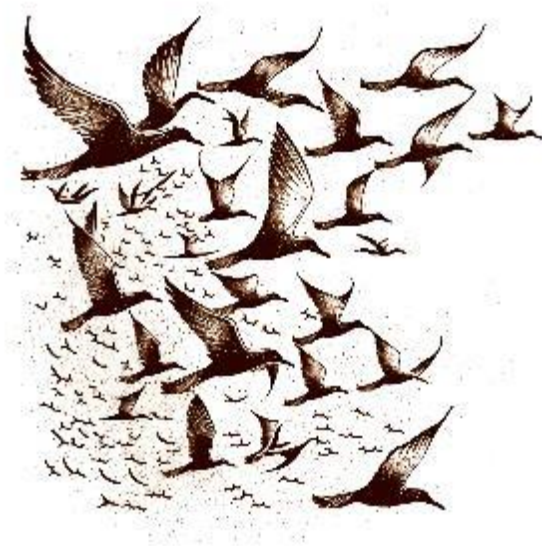
A song of the morning that might tremble  
the quiet still pools  
of the future. And fill with hope  
their waves and mud.

A song, luminous and restful,  
full of pensiveness,  
innocent of miseries and anguish,  
innocent of dream.

A song without lyric substance that fills  
the silence with laughter.  
(A flock of blind doves  
thrown into mystery.)



A song that might go to the soul of things  
and to the soul of the winds  
and that might rest at last in the joy  
of the eternal heart.



## **Dream (*Sueño*)**

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.

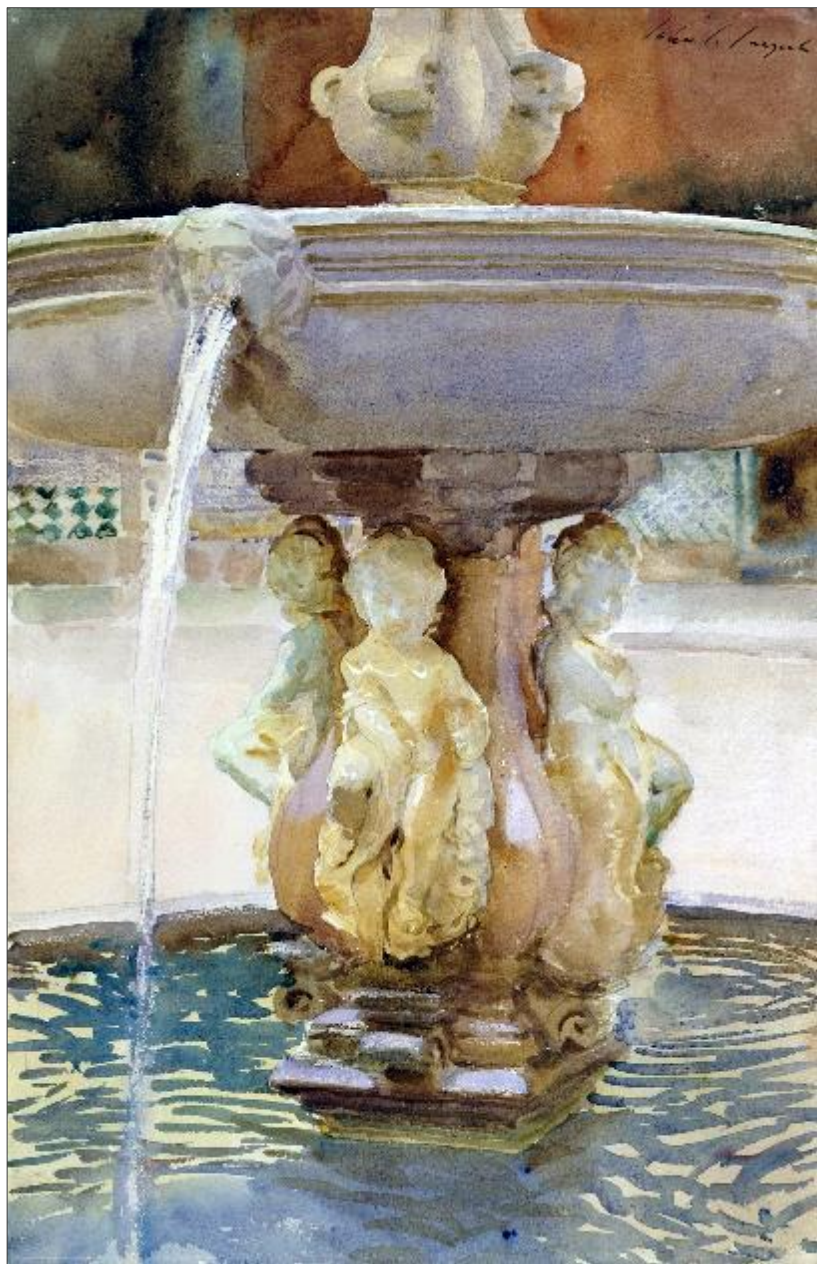
(Spider of nothingness,  
spin your mystery.)

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!)



Spanish Fountain (1912)  
John Singer Sargent (American, 1856-1925)  
*Artvee*

## **Ballad of the Small Plaza** *(Balada de la placate)*

Singing of children  
in the night silence:  
Light of the stream, and  
calm of the fountain!

### **THE CHILDREN**

What does your heart hold,  
divine in its gladness?

### **MYSELF**

A peal from the bell-tower,  
lost in the dimness.

### **THE CHILDREN**

You leave us singing  
in the small plaza.  
Light of the stream, and  
calm of the fountain!

What do you hold in  
your hands of springtime?

**MYSELF**

A rose of blood, and  
a lily of whiteness.

**THE CHILDREN**

Dip them in water  
of the song of the ages.  
Light of the stream, and  
calm of the fountain!

What does your tongue feel,  
scarlet and thirsting?

**MYSELF**

A taste of the bones  
of my giant forehead.

**THE CHILDREN**

Drink the still water  
of the song of the ages.  
Light of the stream, and  
calm of the fountain!

Why do you roam far  
from the small plaza?

**MYSELF**

I go to find Mages  
and find princesses.

**THE CHILDREN**

Who showed you the road there,  
the road of the poets?

**MYSELF**

The fount and the stream of  
the song of the ages.

**THE CHILDREN**

Do you go far from  
the earth and the ocean?

**MYSELF**

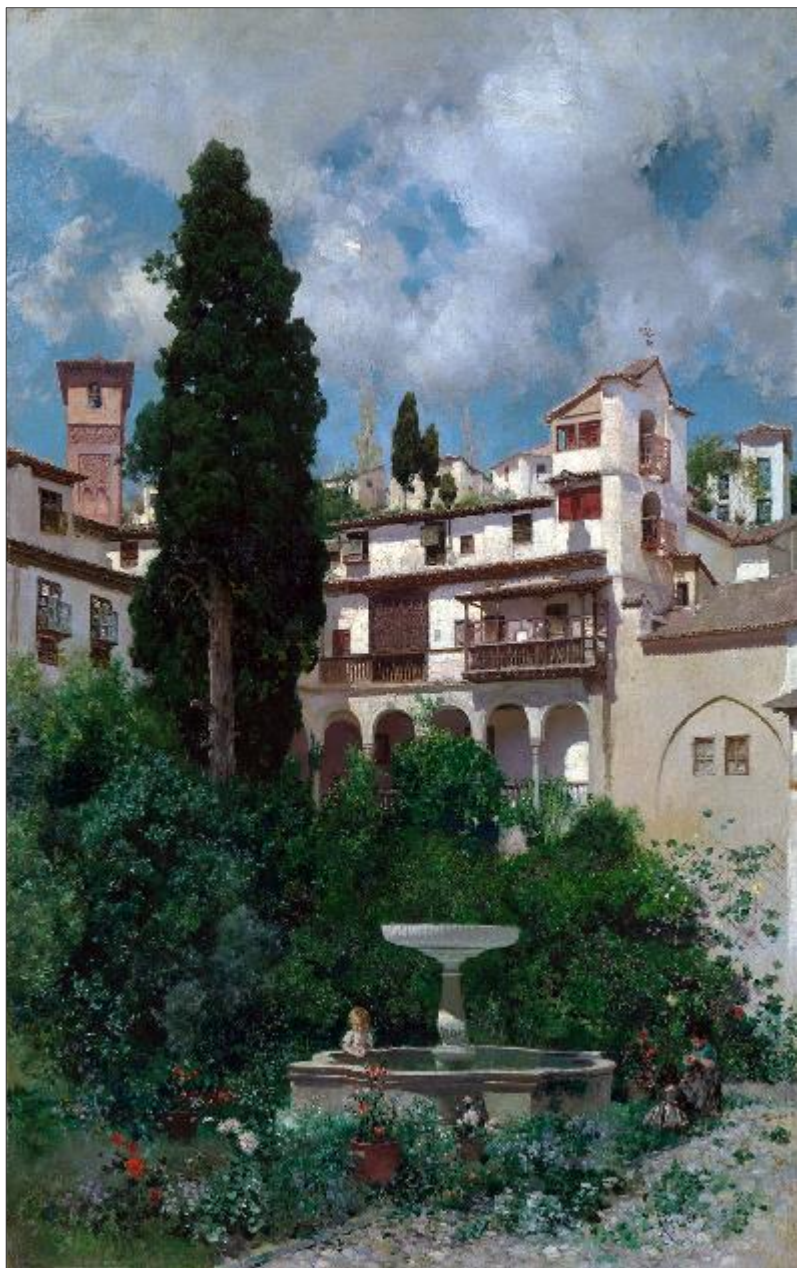
It's filled with light, is  
my heart of silk, and  
with bells that are lost,  
with bees and with lilies,  
and I will go far off,  
behind those hills there,  
close to the starlight,

to ask of the Christ there  
Lord, to return me  
my child's soul, ancient,  
ripened with legends,  
with a cap of feathers,  
and a sword of wood.

### THE CHILDREN

You leave us singing  
in the small plaza.  
Light of the stream, and  
calm of the fountain!

Enormous pupils  
of the parched palm fronds  
hurt by the wind, they  
weep their dead leaves.



A Spanish Garden (1871)  
Martín Rico y Ortega (Spanish, 1833-1908)  
*Artvee*



## **The Ballad of the Salt-Water** *(La balada del agua del mar)*

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?’

From: Libro de Poemas, 1921

'So bitter, the salt-waters  
of the sea!'

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



The Rock of Gibraltar from Algeciras (Spain) (1843)

George Lothian Hall (English, 1825-1888)

*Artvee*

## Wish (*Deseo*)

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.

**Invocation to the Laurel**  
***(Invocación al laurel)***

*(1919 For Pepe Cienfuegos)*

Over the horizon, lost in confusion,  
came the sad night, pregnant with stars.  
I, like the bearded mage of the tales,  
knew the language of stones and flowers.

I learned the secrets of melancholy,  
told by cypresses, nettles and ivy;  
I knew the dream from lips of nard,  
sang serene songs with the irises.

In the old forest, filled with its blackness,  
all of them showed me the souls they have;  
the pines, drunk on aroma and sound;  
the old olives, burdened with knowledge;  
the dead poplars, nests for the ants;  
the moss, snowy with white violets.

All spoke tenderly to my heart  
trembling in threads of rustling silk  
where water involves motionless things,  
like a web of eternal harmony.

The roses there were sounding the lyre,  
oaks weaving the gold of legends,  
and amidst their virile sadness  
the junipers spoke of rustic fears.

I knew all the passion of woodland;  
rhythms of leaves, rhythms of stars.  
But tell me, oh cedars, if my heart  
will sleep in the arms of perfect light!

I know the lyre you prophesy, roses:  
fashioned of strings from my dead life.  
Tell me what pool I might leave it in,  
as former passions are left behind!

I know the mystery you sing of, cypress;  
I am your brother of night and pain;  
we hold inside us a tangle of nests,  
you of nightingales, I of sadness!

I know your endless enchantment, old olive tree,  
yielding us blood you extract from the Earth,  
like you, I extract with my feelings  
the sacred oil  
held by ideas!

You all overwhelm me with songs;  
I ask only for my uncertain one;  
none of you will quell the anxieties  
of this chaste fire  
that burns in my breast.

O laurel divine, with soul inaccessible,  
always so silent,  
filled with nobility!  
Pour in my ears your divine history,  
all your wisdom, profound and sincere!

Tree that produces fruits of the silence,  
maestro of kisses and mage of orchestras,  
formed from Daphne's roseate flesh  
with Apollo's potent sap in your veins!

O high priest of ancient knowledge!  
O solemn mute, closed to lament!  
All your forest brothers speak to me;  
only you, harsh one, scorn my song!

Perhaps, oh maestro of rhythm, you muse  
on the pointlessness of the poet's sad weeping.  
Perhaps your leaves, flecked by the moonlight,  
forgo all the illusions of spring.

The delicate tenderness of evening,  
that covered the path with black dew,  
holding out a vast canopy to night,  
came solemnly, pregnant with stars.



From Sevilla in Spain (1882)  
Christian Skredsvig (Norwegian, 1854 – 1924)  
*Artvee*

*From: Poema del cante jondo, 1921*

**The Little Ballad of the Three Rivers**  
*(Baladilla de los tres ríos)*

The Guadalquivir's stream  
runs past oranges and olives.  
The two rivers of Granada,  
fall to wheat-fields, out of snow.

Ay, Love, that goes,  
and never returns!

The Guadalquivir's stream  
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.  
Darro, 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!

From: Poema del cante jondo, 1921



Alcazar, Segovia, Spain (1836)  
David Roberts (Scottish, 1796-1864)  
*Artvee*

## Landscape (*Paisaje*)

The field  
of olives  
opens and closes,  
like a fan.  
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 Guitar (*La guitarra*)**

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.



Spanish Dance (1882)  
Ernst Josephson (Swedish, 1851 - 1906)  
*Artvee*

## The Footsteps of la Siguiriya (*El paso de la siguiriya*)

Through black butterflies  
goes a girl with dark hair  
joined to a white serpent  
of mistiness.

*Earth of light,  
Sky of Earth.*

She goes tied to the trembling  
of a rhythm that never arrives:  
she has a heart of silver  
and a dagger in her hand.

'Where do you go, Siguiriya  
with a mindless rhythm?  
What moon will gather up your  
grief of lime and oleander?

*Earth of light,  
Sky of Earth.*

*Note: La Siguiriya, is a gipsy song, a basic form of canto jondo, the 'deep song' of Andalusia. Its emotionally intense lyrics do not depend on rationality and are usually in four verse lines with assonant rhyme, and syllables 6-6-1 1-6.*

## Cellar Song (Cueva)

From the cellar issue  
great sobs.

(The purple  
above the red.)

The gypsy evokes  
distant countries.

(High towers and men  
of mystery.)

On his faltering voice  
his eyes travel.

(The black  
above the red.)

And the whitewashed cellar  
trembles in gold.

(The white  
above the red.)

## 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!



## Journey (*Camino*)

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 (La 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!

## Village (Pueblo: poema de la soleá)

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!



## Juan Breva

Juan Breva had  
the body of a giant  
and the voice of a young girl.  
Nothing was like his warbling.  
It was itself  
pain singing  
behind a smile.  
He evoked the lemons  
of Málaga, the sleepy one,  
and had in his weeping tones  
the brine of the ocean.  
Like Homer, he sang  
blind. His voice held  
something of sea with no light  
and an orange squeezed dry.

## **Singing Café (*Café cantante*)**

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.

## 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 tuberoses  
of the shore.

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

*From: Primeras canciones, 1922*

*Variation (Variación)*

The *remanso* of air  
under the branch of echo.

The *remanso* of water  
under a frond of stars.

The *remanso* of your mouth  
under a thicket of kisses.

*Note. A remanso is a still pool in a running stream.*



## **Remanso, Final Song (Remanso, Canción final)**

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.



## Captive (*Cautiva*)

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.

*From: Canciones, 1921-1924*

**Little Song of Seville (*Cancioncilla sevillana*)**

At the dawn of day  
in the orange grove.  
Little bees of gold  
searching for honey.

Where is the honey  
then?

It's in the flower of blue,  
Isabel.  
In the flower  
there, of rosemary.

(A little gold chair,  
for the Moor,  
A tinsel chair,  
for his spouse.)

At the dawn of day  
in the orange grove.



From Sevilla in Spain (1882)  
Christian Skredsvig (Norwegian, 1854 – 1924)  
*Artvee*

## **Adelina Walking By (*Adelina de paseo*)**

The sea has no oranges,  
Sevilla has no love.  
Dark-haired girl, what fiery light.  
Lend me your parasol.

It will give me green cheeks  
- juice of lime and lemon -  
Your words – little fishes –  
will swim all around us.

The sea has no oranges.  
Ay, love.  
Sevilla has no love!



Palm Sunday in Spain (1873)  
Jehan Georges Vibert (French, 1840 – 1902)  
*Artvee*

## Song of the Rider (*Canción del jinete*)

Córdoba.

Far away, and lonely.

Full moon, black pony,

olives against my saddle.

Though I know all the roadways

I'll never get to Córdoba.

Through the breezes, through the valley,

red moon, black pony.

Death is looking at me

from the towers of Córdoba.

Ay, how long the road is!

Ay, my brave pony!

Ay, death is waiting for me,

before I get to Córdoba.

Córdoba.

Far away, and lonely.

## **It's True (*Es verdad*)**

Ay, the pain it costs me  
to love you as I love you!

For love of you, the air, it hurts,  
and my heart,  
and my hat, they hurt me.

Who would buy it from me,  
this ribbon I am holding,  
and this sadness of cotton,  
white, for making handkerchiefs with?

Ay, the pain it costs me  
to love you as I love you!

## Tree, Tree (Arbolé, arbolé)

Sapling, sapling,  
Dry and green.

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.

Sapling, sapling,  
Dry and green.



## Prince (*Galán*)

Prince,  
little prince.

In your house they're burning thyme.

Whether you're going, whether you're coming,  
I will lock the door with a key.

With a key of pure silver.  
Tied up with a ribbon.

On the ribbon there's a message:  
My heart is far away.

Don't pace up and down my street.  
All that's allowed there is the wind!

Prince,  
little prince.  
In your house they're burning thyme.

## Venus

*(So, I saw you)*

The young girl dead  
in the seashell of the bed,  
naked of flowers and breezes  
rose in the light unending.

The world was left behind,  
lily of cotton and shadows,  
revealing in crystal panes  
the infinite transit's coming.

The young girl dead,  
ploughed love inside.  
Among the foaming sheets  
her hair was wasted.

## The Moon Wakes (*La luna asoma*)

When the moon sails out  
the bells fade into stillness  
and there emerge the pathways  
that can't be penetrated.

When the moon sails out  
the water hides earth's surface,  
the heart feels like an island  
in the infinite silence.

Nobody eats an orange  
under the moon's fullness.  
It is correct to eat, then,  
green and icy fruit.

When the moon sails out  
with a hundred identical faces,  
the coins made of silver  
sob in your pocket.

## Two Moons of Evening (*Dos lunas de tarde*)

(*For Laurita, friend of my sister*)

I

The Moon is dying, dying:  
but will be born again in the spring.

When on the brow of the poplars  
is curled the wind from the south.

When our hearts have given  
their harvest of sighing.

When the rooftops are wearing  
their little sombreros of weeds.

The moon is dying, dying:  
but will be reborn in the spring.

II

(*For Isabelita, my sister*)

The evening is chanting  
a *berceuse* to the oranges.

My little sister's chanting:  
the Earth is an orange.

The moon weeping cries:  
I want to be an orange.

You cannot be, my child,  
even if you were reddened.  
Not even if you turned lemon.  
What a shame that is!

*Note: A berceuse is a French cradle-song.*



## Second Anniversary (*Segundo aniversario*)

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!)



## Schematic Nocturne (*Nocturno esquemático*)

The fennel, a serpent, and rushes.  
Aroma, a sign, and penumbra.  
Air, earth, and solitariness.

(The ladder lifts up to the moon.)

## Lucía Martínez

Lucía Martínez.

Shadowy in red silk.

Your thighs, like the evening,

go from light to shadow.

The hidden veins of jet

darken your magnolias.

Here I am, Lucía Martínez.

I come to devour your mouth

and drag you off by the hair

into the dawn of conches.

Because I want to, because I can.

Shadowy in red silk.



## Farewell (*Despedida*)

If I should die,  
leave the balcony open.

The child is eating an orange.  
(From my balcony, I see him.)

The reaper is reaping the barley.  
(From my balcony, I hear him.)

If I should die,  
leave the balcony open.



**Little Song of First Desire**  
**(*Cancioncilla del primer deseo*)**

In the green morning  
I wanted to be a heart.  
Heart.

And in the ripe evening  
I wanted to be a nightingale.  
Nightingale.

(Soul,  
go the colour of oranges.  
Soul  
go the colour of love.)

In the living morning  
I wanted to be me.  
Heart.

And at evening's fall  
I wanted to be my voice.  
Nightingale.

Soul  
go the colour of oranges.  
Soul,  
go the colour of love!

## **Prelude (*Preludio*)**

(From Amor: with wings and arrows)

The poplar groves are going,  
but leave us their reflection.

The poplar groves are going,  
but leave us the breeze.

The breeze is shrouded  
full length below the heavens.

But it has left there, floating,  
its echoes on the rivers.

The world of the glow-worms  
has pierced my memories.

And the tiniest of hearts  
buds from my fingertips.

**Song of the Barren Orange Tree**  
**(*Canción del Naranjo seco*)**

Woodcutter.

Cut out my shadow.

Free me from the torture  
of seeing myself fruitless.

Why was I born among mirrors?

The daylight revolves around me.

And the night herself repeats me  
in all her constellations.

I want to live not seeing self.

I shall dream the husks and insects  
change inside my dreaming  
into my birds and foliage.

Woodcutter.

Cut out my shadow.

Free me from the torture  
of seeing myself fruitless.

## Serenade (*Serenata*)

*(Homage to Lope de Vega)*

By the river banks  
the night is moistening 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.

## Sonnet (*Soneto*)

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.

*From: Poemas sueltos (Uncollected poems)*

**Every Song (*Cada canción*)**

Every song  
is the remains  
of love.

Every light  
the remains  
of time.  
A knot  
of time.

And every sigh  
the remains  
of a cry.

## Earth (*Terra*)

We travel  
over a mirror  
without silver,  
over a crystal  
without cloud.  
If the lilies were to grow  
upside down,  
is the roses were to grow  
upside down,  
if all the roots  
were to face the stars  
and the dead not shut  
their eyes,  
we would be like swans.





**Berceuse for a Mirror Sleeping**  
*(Berceuse al Espejo dormido)*

Sleep.  
Do not fear the gaze  
that wanders.  
Sleep.

Not the butterfly  
or the word  
or the furtive ray  
from the keyhole  
will hurt you.  
Sleep.

As my heart  
so, you,  
mirror of mine.  
Garden where love  
awaits me.

Sleep without a care,  
but wake  
when the last one dies  
the kiss on my lips.

## Ode to Salvador Dalí (*Oda a Salvador Dalí*)

A rose in the high garden that you desire.  
A wheel in the pure syntax of steel.  
The mountain stripped of impressionist mist.  
Greys looking out from the last balustrades.

Modern painters in their blank studios,  
Sever the square root's sterilized flower.  
In the Seine's flood an iceberg of marble  
freezes the windows and scatters the ivy.

Man treads the paved streets firmly.  
Crystals hide from reflections' magic.  
Government has closed the perfume shops.  
The machine beats out its binary rhythm.

An absence of forests, screens and brows  
Wanders the roof-tiles of ancient houses.  
The air polishes its prism on the sea  
and the horizon looms like a vast aqueduct.

Marines ignorant of wine and half-light,  
decapitate sirens on seas of lead.  
Night, black statue of prudence, holds  
the moon's round mirror in her hand.

A desire for form and limit conquers us.  
Here comes the man who sees with a yellow ruler.  
Venus is a white still life  
and the butterfly collectors flee.

Cadaqués, the fulcrum of water and hill,  
lifts flights of steps and hides seashells.  
Wooden flutes pacify the air.  
An old god of the woods gives children fruit.

Her fishermen slumber, dreamless, on sand.  
On the deep, a rose serves as their compass.  
The virgin horizon of wounded handkerchiefs,  
unites the vast crystals of fish and moon.

A hard diadem of white brigantines  
wreathes bitter brows and hair of sand.  
The sirens convince, but fail to beguile,  
and appear if we show a glass of fresh water.

O Salvador Dalí, of the olive voice!  
I don't praise your imperfect adolescent brush  
or your pigments that circle those of your age,  
I salute your yearning for bounded eternity.

Healthy soul, you live on fresh marble.  
You flee the dark wood of improbable forms.  
Your fantasy reaches as far as your hands,  
and you savor the sea's sonnet at your window.

The world holds dull half-light and disorder,  
in the foreground humanity frequents.  
But now the stars, concealing landscapes,  
mark out the perfect scheme of their courses.

The flow of time forms pools, gains order,  
in the measured forms of age upon age.  
And conquered Death, trembling, takes refuge  
in the straightened circle of the present moment.

Taking your palette, its wing holds a bullet-hole,  
you summon the light that revives the olive-tree.  
Broad light of Minerva, builder of scaffolding,  
with no room for dream and its inexact flower.

You summon the light that rests on the brow,  
not reaching the mouth or the heart of man.  
Light feared by the trailing vines of Bacchus,  
and the blind force driving the falling water.

You do well to place warning flags  
on the dark frontier that shines with night.  
As a painter you don't wish your forms softened  
by the shifting cotton of unforeseen clouds.

The fish in its bowl and the bird in its cage.  
You refuse to invent them in sea or in air.  
You stylize or copy once you have seen,  
with your honest eyes, their small agile bodies.

You love a matter defined and exact,  
where the lichen cannot set up its camp.  
You love architecture built on the absent,  
admitting the banner merely in jest.

The steel compass speaks its short flexible verse.  
Now unknown islands deny the sphere.  
The straight line speaks of its upward fight  
and learned crystals sing their geometry.

Yet the rose too in the garden where you live.  
Ever the rose, ever, our north and south!  
Calm, intense like an eyeless statue,  
blind to the underground struggle it causes.

Pure rose that frees from artifice, sketches,  
and opens for us the slight wings of a smile.  
(Pinned butterfly that muses in flight.)  
Rose of pure balance not seeking pain.  
Ever the rose!

O Salvador Dalí of the olive voice!  
I speak of what you and your paintings tell me.  
I don't praise your imperfect adolescent brush,  
but I sing the firm aim of your arrows.

I sing your sweet battle of Catalan lights,  
your love of what might be explained.  
I sing your heart astronomical, tender,  
a deck of French cards, and never wounded.

I sing longing for statues, sought without rest,  
your fear of emotions that wait in the street.  
I sing the tiny sea-siren who sings to you  
riding a bicycle of corals and conches.

But above all I sing a shared thought  
that joins us in the dark and golden hours.  
It is not Art, this light that blinds our eyes.  
Rather it is love, friendship, the clashing of swords.

Rather than the picture you patiently trace,  
it's the breast of Theresa, she of insomniac skin,  
the tight curls of Mathilde the ungrateful,  
our friendship a board-game brightly painted.

May the tracks of fingers in blood on gold  
stripe the heart of eternal Catalonia.  
May stars like fists without falcons shine on you,  
while your art and your life burst into flower.

Don't watch the water-clock with membranous wings,  
nor the harsh scythe of the allegories.  
Forever clothe and bare your brush in the air  
before the sea peopled with boats and sailors.

**Night-Song of the Andalusian Sailors**  
**(*Canto nocturno de los marineros andaluces*)**

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!



Merida, Spain  
John Varley (English, 1778-1842)  
*Artvee*



## Running (*Corriente*)

That which travels  
clouds itself.

The flowing water  
can see no stars.

That which travels  
forgets itself.

And that which halts itself  
dreams.

## Towards (*Hacia*)

Turn,  
Heart!  
Turn.

Through the woods of love  
you will see no one.  
You will pour out bright fountains.  
In the green  
you will find the immense rose  
of Always.

And you will say: 'Love! Love!  
without your wound  
being closed.

Turn,  
Heart!  
Turn.

## Return (*Recodo*)

I want to return to childhood  
and from childhood to the shadows.

Are you going, nightingale?  
Go!

I want to return to the shadows,  
and from the shadows to the flower.

Are you going, fragrance?  
Go!

I want to return to the flower  
and from the flower  
to my heart.

Are you going, love?  
Farewell!

(To my abandoned heart!)

## Flash of Light (Ráfaga)

She passes by, my girl.  
How prettily she goes by!  
With her little dress  
of muslin.  
And a captive  
butterfly.

Follow her, my boy, then  
up every byway!  
And if you see her weeping  
or weighing things up, then  
paint her heart over  
with a bit of purple  
and tell her not to weep if  
she was left single.

## Madrigals (*Madrigales*)

### I

Like concentric ripples  
over the water,  
so, in my heart  
your words.

Like a bird that strikes  
against the wind,  
so, on my lips  
your kisses.

Like exposed fountains  
opposing the evening,  
so, my dark eyes  
over your flesh.

### II

I am caught  
in your circles,  
concentric.  
Like Saturn  
I wear  
the rings  
of my dream.  
I am not ruined by setting  
nor do I rise myself.

## The Garden (*El Jardín*)

Never born, never!  
But could come into bud.

Every second it  
is deepened and renewed.

Every second opens  
new distinct pathways.

This way! That way!  
Go my multiplying bodies.

Traversing the villages  
or sleeping in the sea.

Everything is open! There are  
locks for the keys.  
But the sun and moon  
lose us and mislead us.  
And beneath our feet  
the roadways are confused.

Here I'll contemplate  
all I could have been.  
God or beggar,  
water or ancient pearl.

My many pathways  
lightly tinted  
make a vast rose  
round my body.

Like a map, but impossible,  
the garden of the possible.  
Every second it  
is deepened and renewed.

Never born, never!  
But could come into bud.



**Print of the Garden II**  
*(Estampas del jardín II)*

The Moon-widow  
who could forget her?  
Dreaming that Earth  
might be crystal.

Furious and pallid  
wishing the sea to sleep  
combing her long hair  
with cries of coral.

Her tresses of glass  
who could forget them?  
In her breast the hundred  
lips of a fountain.

Spears of giant  
surges guard her  
by the still waves  
of sea-flats.

But the Moon, Moon  
when will she return?  
The curtain of wind  
trembles without ceasing.



The Moon-widow  
who could forget her?  
Dreaming that Earth  
might be crystal.



## Song of the Boy with Seven Hearts (*Canción del muchacho de siete corazones*)

Seven hearts

I hold.

But mine does not encounter them.

In the high mountains, mother,  
the wind and I ran into each other.  
Seven young girls with long fingers  
carried me on their mirrors.

I have sung through the world  
with my mouth of seven petals.  
My galleys of amaranth  
have gone without ropes or oars.

I have lived in the lands  
of others, My secrets  
round my throat,  
without my realising it, were open!

In the high mountains, mother,  
(my heart above the echoes  
in the album of a star)  
the wind and I ran into each other.

Seven hearts

I hold.

But mine does not encounter them.

## **The Dune (*Duna*)**

On the wide sand-dune  
of ancient light  
I found myself confused  
without a sky or road.

The moribund North  
had quenched its stars.  
The shipwrecked skies  
rippled slowly.

Through the sea of light  
where do I go? Whom do I seek?  
Here the reflection wails  
of veiled moons.

Ay! Let my cool sliver  
of solid timber  
return me to my balcony  
and my living birds!

The garden will follow  
shifting its borders  
on the rough back  
of a grounded silence.

## Encounter (*Encuentro*)

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.



## Two Laws (*Normas*)

### 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 (*Soneto*)

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 sign of laws forced  
on the neck of the stiff branch  
and the endless aching dahlias.

*From: Gypsy Ballads  
(Romancero Gitano), 1924-1927*

**Romance de la Luna, Luna**

The moon comes to the forge,  
in her creamy-white petticoat.  
The child stares, stares.  
The child is staring at her.  
In the breeze, stirred,  
the moon stirs her arms  
shows, pure, voluptuous,  
her breasts of hard tin.

'Away, Luna, Luna, Luna.  
If the gypsies come here,  
they'll take your heart for  
necklaces and white rings.'  
'Child, let me dance now.  
When the gypsies come here,  
they'll find you on the anvil,  
with your little eyes closed.'  
'Away, Luna, Luna, Luna,  
because I hear their horses.'  
'Child, go, but do not tread  
on my starched whiteness.'



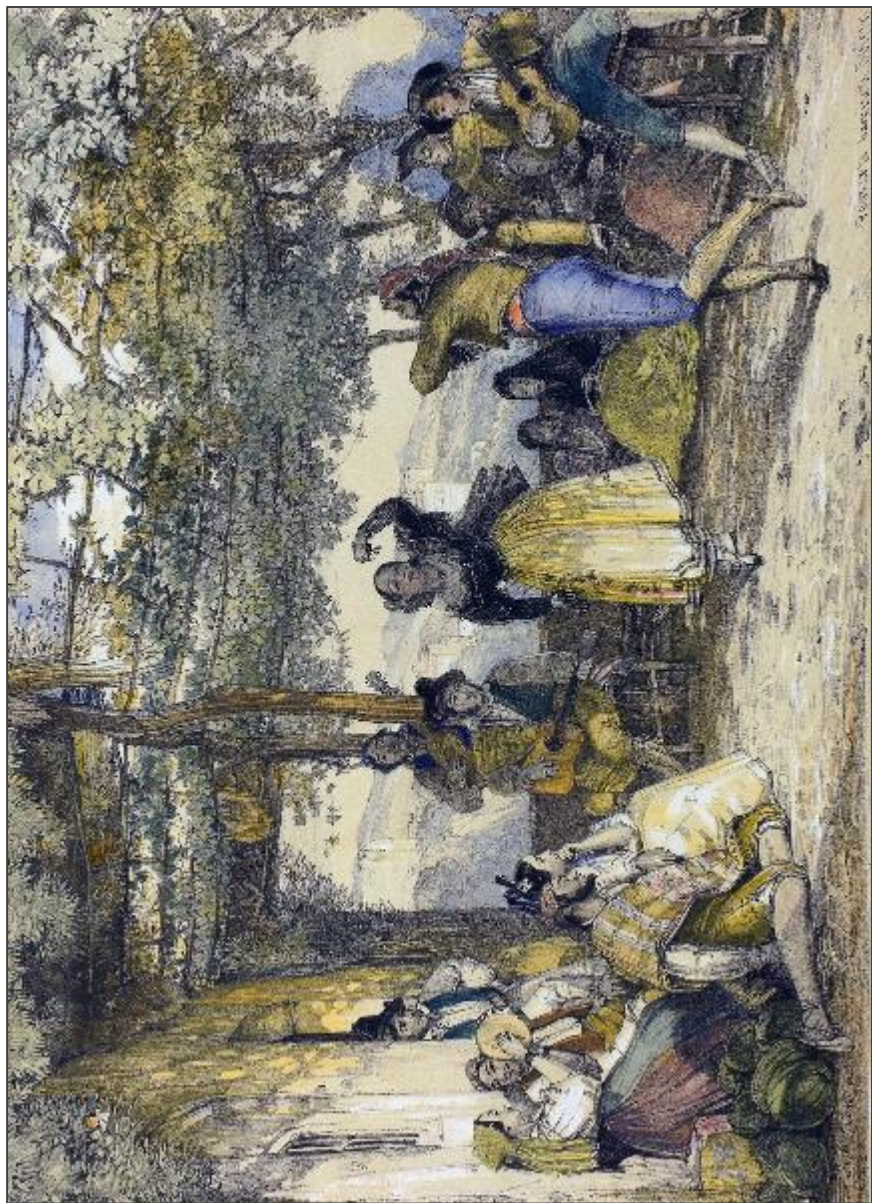
The riders are coming nearer  
beating on the plain, drumming.  
Inside the forge, the child  
has both his eyes closed.

Through the olive trees they come,  
bronze, and dream, the gypsies,  
their heads held upright,  
their eyes half-open.

How the owl is calling.  
Ay, it calls in the branches!  
Through the sky goes the moon,  
gripping a child's fingers.

In the forge the gypsies  
are shouting and weeping.  
The breeze guards, guards.  
The breeze guards it.

From: Gypsy Ballads (Romancero Gitano), 1924-1927



Spanish Peasants Dancing the Bolero (1836)

John Frederick Lewis (English, 1805-1876)

Artvee

## Preciosa and the Breeze (*Preciosa y el aire*)

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 (*Reyerta*)

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.

## Romance Sonámbulo

Green, as I love you, greenly.  
Green the wind, and green the branches.  
The dark ship on the sea  
and the horse on the mountain.  
With her waist that's made of shadow  
dreaming on the high veranda,  
green the flesh, and green the tresses,  
with eyes of frozen silver.  
Green, as I love you, greenly.  
Beneath the moon of the gypsies  
silent things are looking at her  
things she cannot see.

Green, as I love you, greenly.  
Great stars of white hoarfrost  
come with the fish of shadow  
opening the road of morning.  
The fig tree's rubbing on the dawn wind  
with the rasping of its branches,  
and the mountain thieving-cat-like  
bristles with its sour agaves.  
Who is coming? And from where...?  
She waits on the high veranda,  
green the flesh and green the tresses,  
dreaming of the bitter ocean.



'Brother, friend, I want to barter  
your house for my stallion,  
sell my saddle for your mirror,  
change my dagger for your blanket.

Brother mine, I come here bleeding  
from the mountain pass of Cabra.'

'If I could, my young friend,  
then maybe we'd strike a bargain,  
but I am no longer I,  
nor is this house, of mine, mine.'

'Brother, friend, I want to die now,  
in the fitness of my own bed,  
made of iron, if it can be,  
with its sheets of finest cambric.

Can you see the wound I carry  
from my throat to my heart?'

'Three hundred red roses  
your white shirt now carries.  
Your blood stinks and oozes,  
all around your scarlet sashes.

But I am no longer I,  
nor is this house of mine, mine.'

'Let me then, at least, climb up there,  
up towards the high verandas.

Let me climb, let me climb there,  
up towards the green verandas.

High verandas of the moonlight,  
where I hear the sound of waters.'

Now they climb, the two companions,  
up there to the high veranda,  
letting fall a trail of blood drops,  
letting fall a trail of tears.

On the morning rooftops,  
trembled, the small tin lanterns.  
A thousand tambourines of crystal  
wounded the light of daybreak.

Green, as I love you, greenly.  
Green the wind, and green the branches.  
They climbed up, the two companions.  
In the mouth, the dark breezes  
left there a strange flavour,  
of gall, and mint, and sweet-basil.  
'Brother, friend! Where is she, tell me,  
where is she, your bitter beauty?  
How often, she waited for you!  
How often, she would have waited,  
cool the face, and dark the tresses,  
on this green veranda!'

Over the cistern's surface  
the gypsy girl was rocking.  
Green the flesh is, green the tresses,  
with eyes of frozen silver.  
An ice-ray made of moonlight  
holding her above the water.

How intimate the night became,  
like a little, hidden plaza.  
Drunken Civil Guards were beating,  
beating, beating on the door frame.  
Green, as I love you, greenly.  
Green the wind, and green the branches.  
The dark ship on the sea,  
and the horse on the mountain.

*Note: Cabra is south-east of Córdoba, and north of Málaga, in the mountains of Andalusia. Lorca said 'If you ask me why I wrote "A thousand tambourines of crystal, wounded the light of daybreak – Mil panderos di cristal, herían la madrugada" I will tell you that I saw them in the hands of trees and angels, but I cannot say more: I cannot explain their meaning. And that is how it should be. Through poetry a man more quickly reaches the cutting edge that the philosopher and the mathematician silently turn away from.'*

## The Gypsy Nun (*La monja gitana*)

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.



## The Unfaithful Wife (*La casada infiel*)

So, I took her to the river  
thinking she was virgin,  
but it seems she had a husband.

It was the night of Saint Iago,  
and it almost was a duty.

The lamps went out,  
the crickets lit up.

By the last street corners  
I touched her sleeping breasts,  
and they suddenly had opened  
like the hyacinth petals.

The starch  
of her slip crackled  
in my ears like silk fragments  
ripped apart by ten daggers.

The tree crowns  
free of silver light are larger,  
and a horizon, of dogs, howls  
far away from the river.

Past the hawthorns,  
the reeds, and the brambles,  
below her dome of hair  
I made a hollow in the sand.  
I took off my tie.  
She took off a garment.  
I my belt with my revolver.  
She four bodices.

Creamy tuberose  
or shells are not as smooth as  
her skin was, or, in the moonlight,  
crystals shining brilliantly.

Her thighs slipped from me  
like fish that are startled,  
one half full of fire,  
one half full of coldness.  
That night I galloped  
on the best of roadways,  
on a mare of nacre,  
without stirrups, without bridle.  
As a man I cannot tell you  
the things she said to me.  
The light of understanding  
has made me most discreet.  
Smeared with sand and kisses,  
I took her from the river.  
The blades of the lilies  
were fighting with the air.

I behaved as what I am,  
as a true gypsy.  
I gave her a sewing basket,  
big, with straw-coloured satin.  
I did not want to love her,  
for though she had a husband  
she said she was a virgin  
when I took her to the river.



A road near Seville, Spain  
John Frederick Lewis (English, 1805-1876)  
*Artvee*



**Ballad of the Black Sorrow**  
***(Romance de la pena negra)***

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 myself.'  
'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.

○ sorrow of the gypsies!

Sorrow, pure and always lonely.

○ sorrow of the dark river-bed  
and the far dawn!

## Saint Michael (*San Miguel*)

(*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.



Alhambra, Spain (1856)  
Carl Friedrich Heinrich Werner (German, 1808-1894)  
*Artvee*

## Saint Gabriel (*San Gabriel*)

(*Seville*)

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 almonds  
quiver in his little voice.  
Now Saint Gabriel climbed  
a ladder through the air.  
The stars in the night  
turned to immortelles.



**Romance of the Spanish Civil Guard**  
**(*Romance de la Guardia Civil española*)**

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.

O city of the gypsies!  
Banners on street-corners.  
The moon and the pumpkin  
with preserved cherries.  
O 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.

○ city of the gypsies!  
Banners on street-corners.  
Quench your green lamps  
the worthies are coming.  
○ 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.

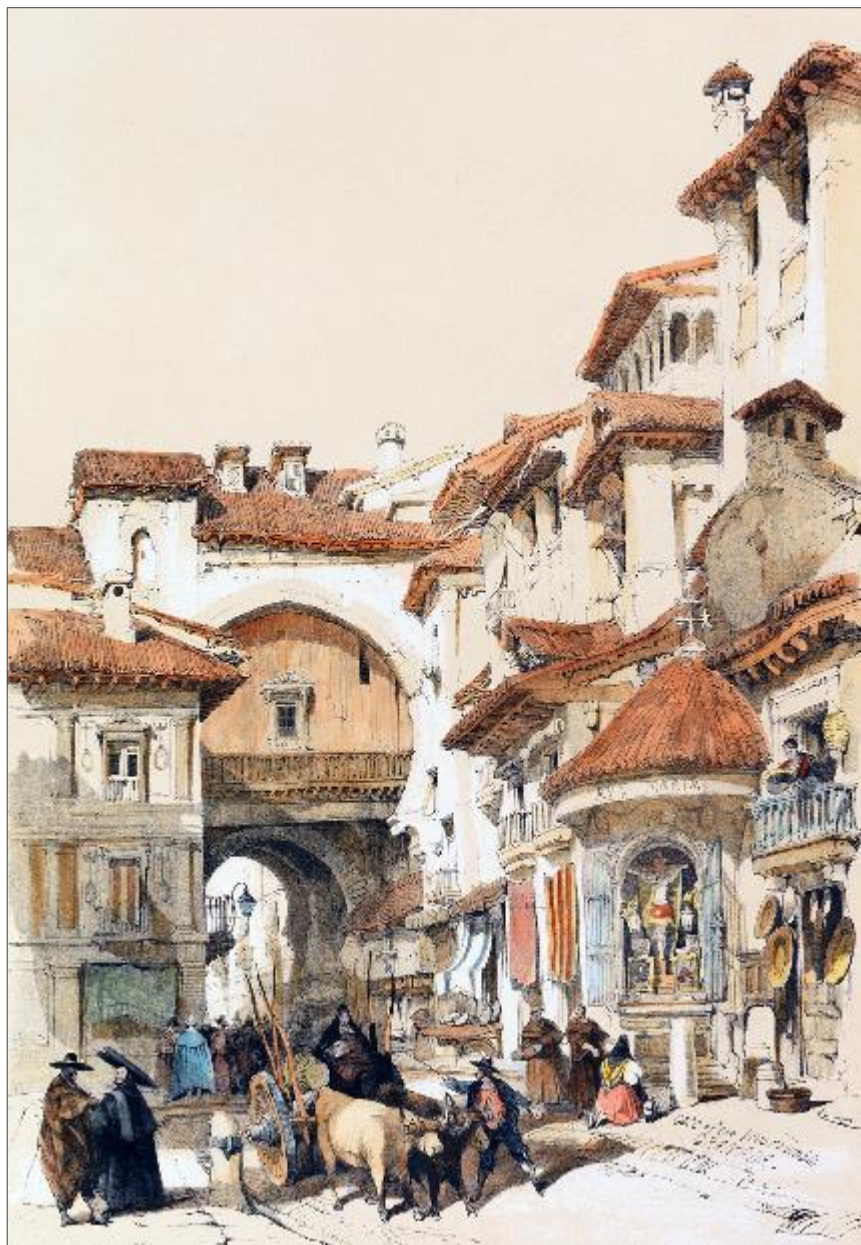
A flight of intense shrieks  
rose from the weathercocks.  
The sabers chopped at the breezes  
that the hooves trampled.  
Along the streets of shadow  
old gypsy women ran,  
with the drowsy horses,  
and the jars of coins.  
Through the steep streets  
sinister cloaks climb,  
leaving behind them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



Sketches in Spain (1837)  
David Roberts (Scottish, 1796-1864)  
*Artvee*

## **Thamar and Amnon (*Thamar y Amnón*)**

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 bleating.  
The earth offered itself  
full of scarred wounds,  
or shuddering with the fierce  
searing 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-garments.  
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.

Dark-skinned men 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.

*From: Poet in New York*  
*(Poeta en Nueva York), 1929-1930*

**The Dawn (*La aurora*)**

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 tuberoses.

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.



**Double Poem of Lake Eden**  
***(Poema doble del lago Edén)***

'Our cattle graze, the wind breathes.'

*Garcilaso*

It was my ancient voice  
ignorant of thick bitter juices.  
I sense it lapping my feet  
beneath the fragile wet ferns.

Ay, ancient voice of my love,  
ay, voice of my truth,  
ay, voice of my open flank,  
when all the roses flowed from my tongue  
and grass knew nothing of horses' impassive teeth!

Here are you drinking my blood,  
drinking my tedious childhood mood,  
while in the wind my eyes are bludgeoned  
by aluminium and drunken voices.

Let me pass the gates  
where Eve eats ants  
and Adam seeds dazzled fish.  
Let me return, manikins with horns,  
to the grove where I stretch  
and leap with joy.

I know a rite so secret  
it requires an old rusty pin  
and I know the horror of open eyes  
on a plate's concrete surface.

But I want neither world nor dream, nor divine voice,  
I want my freedom, my human love  
in the darkest corner of breeze that no one wants.  
My human love!

Those hounds of the sea chase each other  
and the wind spies on careless tree trunks.  
O ancient voice, burn with your tongue  
this voice of tin and talc!

I long to weep because I want to,  
as the children cry in the last row,  
because I'm not man, nor poet, nor leaf,  
but only a wounded pulse circling the things of the other side.

I want to cry out speaking my name,  
rose, child and fir-tree beside this lake,  
to speak my truth as a man of blood  
slay in myself the tricks and turns of the word.

No, no. I'm not asking, I, desire,  
voice, my freedom that laps my hands.  
In the labyrinth of screens, it's my nakedness receives  
the moon of punishment and the ash-drowned clock.

Thus, I was speaking.

Thus, I was speaking when Saturn stopped the trains,  
when the fog and Dream and Death were seeking me.

Seeking me

where the cows, with tiny pages' feet, bellow

and where my body floats between opposing fulcrums.



## Death

What effort!  
What effort the horse exerts  
To be a dog!  
What effort the dog to become a swallow!  
What effort the swallow to become a bee!  
What effort the bee to become a horse!  
And the horse,  
what a sharp shaft it steals from the rose!  
what grey rosiness lifts from its lips!  
And the rose,  
what a flock of lights and cries  
caught in the living sap of its stem!  
And the sap,  
what thorns it dreams in its vigil!  
And the tiny daggers  
what moon, and no stable, what nakedness,  
skin eternal and reddened, they go seeking!  
And I, in the eaves,  
what a burning seraph I seek and am!  
But the arch of plaster,  
how vast, invisible, how minute,  
without effort!



## Ode to Walt Whitman

By the East River and the Bronx  
boys sang, stripped to the waist,  
along with the wheels, oil, leather and hammers.  
Ninety thousand miners working silver from rock  
and the children drawing stairways and perspectives.

But none of them slumbered,  
none of them wished to be river,  
none loved the vast leaves,  
none the blue tongue of the shore.

By East River and the Queensboro  
boys battled with Industry,  
and Jews sold the river faun  
the rose of circumcision  
and the sky poured, through bridges and rooftops,  
herds of bison driven by the wind.

But none would stop,  
none of them longed to be cloud,  
none searched for ferns  
or the tambourine's yellow circuit.

When the moon sails out  
pulleys will turn to trouble the sky;  
a boundary of needles will fence in memory  
and coffins will carry off those who don't work.

From: Poet in New York (Poeta en Nueva York ), 1929-1930

New York of mud,  
New York of wire and death.  
What angel lies hidden in your cheek?  
What perfect voice will speak the truth of wheat?  
Who the terrible dream of your stained anemones?



View of South Street, from Maiden Lane, New York City (ca. 1827)

William James Bennett (English, 1787–1844)

*Artvee*

Not for a single moment, Walt Whitman, lovely old man,  
have I ceased to see your beard filled with butterflies,  
nor your corduroy shoulders frayed by the moon,  
nor your thighs of virgin Apollo,  
nor your voice like a column of ash;  
ancient beautiful as the mist,

who moaned as a bird does  
its sex pierced by a needle.  
Enemy of the satyr,  
enemy of the vine  
and lover of the body under rough cloth.

Not for a single moment, virile beauty  
who in mountains of coal, billboards, railroads,  
dreamed of being a river and slumbering like a river  
with that comrade who would set in your breast  
the small grief of an ignorant leopard.

Not for a single moment, Adam of blood, Male,  
man alone on the sea, Walt Whitman, lovely old man,  
because on penthouse roofs,  
and gathered together in bars,  
emerging in squads from the sewers,  
trembling between the legs of chauffeurs  
or spinning on dance-floors of absinthe,  
the *maricas*, Walt Whitman, point to you.

Him too! He's one! And they hurl themselves  
at your beard luminous and chaste,  
blonds from the north, blacks from the sands,  
multitudes with howls and gestures,  
like cats and like snakes,  
the *maricas*, Walt Whitman, *maricas*,  
disordered with tears, flesh for the whip,  
for the boot, or the tamer's bite.

Him too! He's one! Stained fingers  
point to the shore of your dream,  
when a friend eats your apple,  
with its slight tang of petrol,  
and the sun sings in the navels  
of the boys at play beneath bridges.

But you never sought scratched eyes,  
nor the darkest swamp where they drown the children,  
nor the frozen saliva,  
nor the curved wounds like a toad's belly  
that *maricas* bear, in cars and on terraces,  
while the moon whips them on terror's street-corners.

You sought a nakedness like a river.  
Bull and dream that would join the wheel to the seaweed,  
father of your agony, camellia of your death,  
and moan in the flames of your hidden equator.

For it is right that a man not seek his delight  
in the bloody jungle of approaching morning.  
The sky has shores where life is avoided  
and bodies that should not be echoed by dawn.

Agony, agony, dream, ferment and dream.  
This is the world, my friend, agony, agony.  
Bodies dissolve beneath city clocks,  
war passes weeping with a million grey rats,

the rich give their darlings  
little bright dying things,  
and life is not noble, or sacred, or good.

Man can, if he wishes, lead his desire  
through a vein of coral or a heavenly nude.  
Tomorrow loves will be stones and Time  
a breeze that comes slumbering through the branches.

That's why I don't raise my voice, old Walt Whitman,  
against the boy who inscribes  
the name of a girl on his pillow,  
nor the lad who dresses as a bride  
in the shadow of the wardrobe,  
nor the solitary men in clubs  
who drink with disgust prostitution's waters,  
nor against the men with the green glance  
who love men and burn their lips in silence.  
But yes, against you, city *maricas*,  
of tumescent flesh and unclean thought.  
Mothers of mud. Harpies. Unsleeping enemies  
of Love that bestows garlands of joy.

Against you forever, you who give boys

drops of foul death with bitter poison.

Against you forever,

*Fairies* of North America,

*Pájaros* of Havana,

*Jotos* of Mexico,

*Sarasas* of Cádiz,

*Apios* of Seville,

*Cancos* of Madrid,

*Floras* of Alicante,

*Adelaidas* of Portugal.

*Maricas* of all the world, murderers of doves!

Slaves to women. Their boudoir bitches.

Spread in public squares like fevered fans

or ambushed in stiff landscapes of hemlock.

No quarter! Death

flows from your eyes

and heaps grey flowers at the swamp's edge.

No quarter! Look out!!

Let the perplexed, the pure,

the classical, noted, the supplicants

close the gates of the bacchanal to you.

And you, lovely Walt Whitman, sleep on the banks of the Hudson  
with your beard towards the pole and your hands open.  
Bland clay or snow, your tongue is calling  
for comrades to guard your disembodied gazelle.

Sleep: nothing remains.

A dance of walls stirs the prairies  
and America drown itself in machines and lament.  
I long for a fierce wind that from deepest night  
shall blow the flowers and letters from the vault where you sleep  
and a dark-skinned boy to tell the whites and their gold  
that the kingdom of wheat has arrived.

## **The Poet Arrives in Havana** ***(El poeta llega a la Habana)***

When the moon's risen fully 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.



*From: Bodas de sangre: Blood Wedding: Act I: 1933*

**Lullaby of the Great Stallion**  
**(*Nana del caballo grande*)**

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.

*From: Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías, 1935*

**Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías**

*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,*



Street Scene in Granada on the Day of the Bullfight (1833)

John Frederick Lewis (English, 1805-1876)

*Yale Center for British Art*

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!

### *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 Roma  
gilded his head,  
while his laughter was a tuberosa  
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.

O white wall of Spain!  
O black bull of sorrow!  
O hardened blood of Ignacio!  
O 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!!

*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!

*The Soul Absent*

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

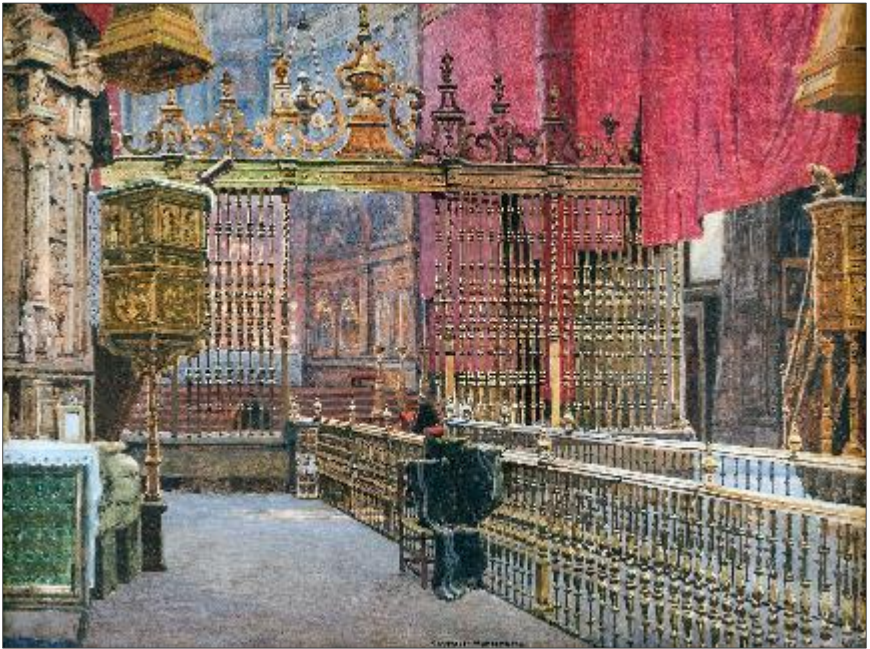
The spine of rock does not know you,  
nor the black satin where you are ruined,  
Your mute remembrance does not know you,  
because you have died forever.

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.



Interior Of The Cathedral Of Ávila (Spain)  
Heinrich Hermanns (German, 1862 - 1942)

*Artvee*

*From: Six Galician Poems  
(Seis poemas Gallegos), 1935*

**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!

*From: The Tamarit Divan (Diván del Tamarit), 1936*

**Ghazal of Unexpected Love  
(*Gacela del amor imprevisto*)**

No one understood the perfume  
of the shadow magnolia of your belly.  
No one knew you crushed completely  
a humming-bird of love between your teeth.

There slept a thousand little Persian horses  
in the moonlight plaza of your forehead,  
while, for four nights, I embraced there  
your waist, the enemy of snowfall.

Between the plaster and the jasmines,  
your gaze was a pale branch, seeding.  
I tried to give you, in my breastbone,  
the ivory letters that say *ever*.

*Ever, ever:* garden of my torture,  
your body, flies from me forever,  
the blood of your veins is in my mouth now,  
already light-free for my death.

**Ghazal of the Terrible Presence**  
***(Gacela de la terrible presencia)***

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.

## Ghazal of the Bitter Root (*Gacela de la raíz amarga*)

There's a bitter root  
and a world of a thousand terraces.  
Not even the smallest hand  
shatters the gate of waters.

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

Bitter.

Sore on the sole of the foot,  
on the inside of the face,  
and sore in the cool trunk  
of the freshly cut night.

Love, my enemy,  
bite on your bitter root!

## Ghazal of the Flight (*Gacela de la huida*)

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 new-born 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.

## Ghazal of Dark Death (*Gacela de la muerte oscura*)

I want to sleep the sleep of apples,  
far from the tumult of cemeteries.  
I want to sleep the sleep of that child  
who longed to cut out his heart at sea.

I don't wish to hear that the dead lose no blood;  
that the shattered mouth still begs for water.  
don't wish to know of torments granted by grass,  
nor of the moon with the serpent's mouth  
that goes to work before dawn.

I want to sleep for a while,  
a while, a minute, a century;  
as long as all know I am not dead;  
that in my lips is a golden manger;  
that I'm the slight friend of the West Wind;  
that I'm the immense shadow of tears.

Cover me, at dawn, with a veil  
since she'll hurl at me fistfuls of ants;  
and wet my shoes with harsh water  
so, her scorpion's sting will slide by.

For I want to sleep the sleep of apples  
learn a lament that will cleanse me of earth;  
for I want to live with that hidden child  
who longed to cut out his heart at sea.



**Casida of One Wounded by Water**  
*(Casida del herido por el agua)*

I want to descend the well,  
I want to climb the walls of Granada,  
To gaze at the heart graved  
By the dark stylus of waters.

The wounded child moaned  
With a crown of frost.  
Ponds, cisterns and fountains  
Raised their swords in the air.  
Ay! What fury of love, what a wounding edge,  
what nocturnal murmurs, what white deaths!  
What deserts of light went destroying  
the sand-dunes of dawn!  
The child was alone  
With the sleeping town in his throat.  
A fountain that rises from dream  
guarded him from thirsts of seaweed.  
The child and his agony face to face,  
Were two green entangled showers.  
The child stretched on the ground  
his agony bent on itself.

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

From: The Tamarit Divan (Diván del Tamarit ), 1936



View from the Alhambra, Spain (circa 1882)  
William Stanley Haseltine (American, 1835-1900)  
*Artvee*

## Casida of the Weeping (*Casida del llanto*)

I've closed my balcony;  
I don't want to hear the weeping,  
yet out beyond the grey walls  
nothing's heard but weeping.

There are very few angels singing,  
there are very few dogs barking,  
a thousand violins fit in the palm of my hand.

But the weeping's a dog, immense,  
the weeping's an angel, immense,  
the weeping's a violin, immense  
the tears have silenced the wind,  
and nothing is heard but weeping.

## Casida of the Branches (*Casida de los ramos*)

Through the trees of Tamarit  
have come the hounds of lead  
waiting for the branches to fall,  
waiting till they shatter themselves.

Tamarit has an apple tree  
with an apple on it that sobs.  
A nightingale gathers the sighs  
and a pheasant leads them off through the dust.

But the branches are happiness,  
the branches are like us.  
They don't think of rain, they sleep,  
as if they were trees, just like that.

Sitting, their knees in water,  
two valleys awaited the Fall.  
The twilight with elephantine step  
leant against trunks and branches.

Through the trees of Tamarit  
are many children with veiled faces  
waiting for my branches to fall,  
waiting till they shatter themselves.

**Casida of the Recumbent Woman**  
***(Casida de la mujer tendida)***

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.

## Casida of the Impossible Hand (*Casida de la mano imposible*)

I want no more than a hand,  
A wounded hand, if possible.  
I want no more than a hand,  
even if I spend a thousand nights with no bed.

It would be a pale lily of lime,  
a dove it would be, chained to my heart,  
the guard it would be, who on my last night  
would deny the moon entrance wholly.

I want no more than that hand  
for daily unction, the white sheet of my dying.  
I want no more than that hand  
to bear a wing of my death.

All the rest passes.  
Blush now without a name. Perpetual star.  
The rest is the other; sad breeze,  
While the hosts of leaves flee.

## Casida of the Rose (*Casida de la Rosa*)

The rose was  
not looking for the morning:  
on its branch, almost immortal,  
it looked for something other.

The rose was  
not looking for wisdom, or for shadow:  
the edge of flesh and dreaming,  
it looked for something other.

The rose was  
not looking for the rose, was  
unmoving in the heavens:  
it looked for something other.

**Casida of the Golden Girl**  
**(*Casida de la muchacha dorada*)**

The golden girl  
bathed in the water,  
and the water turned gold.

The weeds and branches  
in shadow surprised her,  
and the nightingale sang  
for the white girl.

And the bright night came,  
clouded dark silver,  
with barren mountains  
beneath the umber breeze.

The wet girl  
was white in the water  
and the water, blushed.

The dawn came without stain,  
with its cattle's thousand faces,  
stiff and shrouded there  
with frosty garlands.

The girl of tears  
bathed among tears,  
and the nightingale wept



with burning wings.  
The golden girl  
was a white heron  
and the water turned her to gold.



**Casida of the Dark Doves**  
**(*Casida de las palomas oscuras*)**

Through the laurel branches  
I saw two doves of darkness.  
The one it was the sun,  
the other one was lunar.  
I said: 'Little neighbours  
where is my tombstone?'  
'In my tail-feathers,' the sun said.  
'In my throat,' said the lunar.  
And I who was out walking  
with the earth wrapped round me,  
saw two eagles made of white snow,  
and a girl who was naked.  
And the one was the other,  
and the girl, she was neither.  
I said: 'Little eagles,  
where is my tombstone?'  
'In my tail-feathers,' the sun said.  
'In my throat,' said the lunar.  
Through the branches of laurel,  
I saw two doves, both naked.  
And the one was the other,  
and the two of them were neither.

***From: Sonnets of Dark Love  
(Sonetos del amor oscuro), 1936***

**Wounds of Love (*Llagas de amor*)**

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.

**Sonnet of the Wreath of Roses**  
**(*Soneto de la guirnalda de las rosas*)**

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**  
***(El poeta pide a su amor que le escriba)***

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.

**O Secret Voice of Hidden Love!**  
**(*Ay voz secreta del amor oscuro!*)**

○ secret voice of hidden love!  
○ bleating without wool! ○ wound!  
○ dry camellia, bitter needle!  
○ sea-less current, wall-less city!

○ night immense with sharpened profile,  
heavenly mountain, narrow valley!  
○ dog inside the heart, voice going,  
endless silence, full-blown iris!

Let me be, hot voice of icebergs,  
and do not ask me to vanish  
in weeds, where sky and flesh are fruitless.

Leave my hard ivory skull forever,  
have pity on me. Stop the torture!  
○ I am love! ○ I am nature!

**Sonnet of the Sweet Complaint**  
*(Soneto de la dulce queja)*

I'm afraid of losing 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.

## 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 whining  
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.



**The Beloved Sleeps on the Breast of the Poet**  
*(El amor duerme en el pecho de poeta)*

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 leaps 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!



Courting Spanish Style (1883)  
José García Ramos (Spanish, 1852-1912)  
Artvee

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## About the Translator

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