



*A photograph of Lorca,
taken in 1916, when he was eighteen.*

FREDERICO GARCIA LORCA

POEMA DEL CANTE
JONDO

POEM OF THE DEEP SONG

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[In the translation, the word **NOTE** indicates a particular crux of meaning that is explored in the Notes. Click on **NOTE** for an immediate transfer to the discussion, and then on **RETURN** to be taken back to the poem in question.]

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INTRODUCTION

Although not actually published until 1931, Lorca's *Poema del Cante Jondo* was in fact written a decade earlier, most of it during the later months of 1921. Lorca originally intended the publication of this sequence of poems to coincide with Spain's first amateur festival of *cante jondo* (a type of popular Andalusian music also known as flamenco), which he and the composer Manuel de Falla had organised in an attempt to celebrate its aesthetic value in the face of increasing commercial adulteration. Lorca himself recognised the distinctiveness of this kind of poetry. It was steeped in the cultural, emotional and physical atmosphere of Andalusia – in heat, blood, soil, love, longing, death. It valued compression and brevity – short, ballad-like verses that condensed momentous events of human experience into a few, resonant words. It was a poetry of suggestion rather than statement, implication rather than literalness. It evoked a world of intensities, often expressed through image, metaphor and symbol. In short, in both its music and its words, *cante jondo* offered a powerful distillation of those elemental issues (birth, love, time, death) by which our experience is defined.

There could be few better ways of crystallising the issues of translation raised by *cante jondo* than to scrutinise a single, celebrated poem and some of the renderings it has generated. *Canción de jinete* was written in 1924, little over two years after *Poema del Cante Jondo*. In it, Lorca evokes a physical and emotional landscape of distance and absence, of things unsaid and unexplained. An unknown rider contemplates his future journey towards Córdoba, a journey he is certain he will never complete:

Canción de jinete

*Córdoba.
Lejana y sola.*

*Jaca negra, luna grande,
y aceitunas en mi alforja.
Aunque sepa los caminos
yo nunca llegaré a Córdoba.*

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*Por el llano, por el viento,
jaca negra, luna roja.
La muerte me está mirando
desde las torres de Córdoba.*

*¡Ay qué camino tan largo!
¡Ay mi jaca valerosa!
¡Ay que la muerte me espera,
antes de llegar a Córdoba!*

*Córdoba.
Lejana y sola.*

The four versions below try to convey the haunting, enigmatic simplicity of this poem in different ways, and with varying degrees of success. Some of the issues they raise are best illustrated by marginal notes against each of the lines:

Rider's Song

Córdoba.

Far away and alone.

GOOD SENSE BUT ? RHYTHM

*Black pony, big moon,
and olives in my saddle-bag.
Although I know the roads
I'll never reach Córdoba.*

OVER-EMPHATIC MONOSYLLABIC STRESSES?
A PERSUASIVE RHYTHM HERE
O.K. BUT PERHAPS A LITTLE LAME?
RHYTHMICALLY DEFICIENT

*Through the plain, through the wind,
black pony, red moon.
Death is looking at me
from the towers of Córdoba.*

THROUGH THE PLAIN?
AGAIN, STRESS SEEMS TOO EMPHATIC
VERB COULD BE STONGER
A GOOD LINE

*Ay! How long the road!
Ay! My valiant pony!
Ay! That death should wait me
Before I reach Córdoba.*

AY?? + MELODRAMATIC EFFECTS
VALIANT? CONNOTATIONS OF WORD?
'SHOULD WAIT ME'? WAIT FOR, AWAIT?
ADD UNSTRESSED SYLLABLE AFTER VERB?

Córdoba.

Far away and alone.

GOOD SENSE BUT ? RHYTHM

(Stephen Spender and J.L. Gili, 1955)

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Rider's Song

*Córdoba,
distant and lonely.*

GOOD SENSE, BUT ? TROCHAIC ADJECTIVES

*Black pony, large moon,
in my saddlebag olives.
Well as I know the roads,
I shall never reach Córdoba.*

OVER-EMPHATIC STRESS?; 'LARGE' IS O.K.
WHY INVERT? RHYTHM IS DESTROYED
GOOD SENSE AND PRETTY EFFECTIVE RHYTHM
RHYTHMICALLY RATHER PROSAIC

*Over the plain, through the wind
black pony, red moon.
Death keeps a watch on me
from Córdoba's towers.*

DIFFERENT ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS ARE GOOD
AGAIN, STRESS SEEMS TOO EMPHATIC
EFFECTIVE VERB, BUT OMIT 'A'?
RHYTHM??

*Oh, such a long way to go!
And, oh, my spirited pony!
Ah, but death awaits me
before I ever reach Córdoba.*

DECLAMATORY, BUT LIMP IN EFFECT
LUDICROUS. WHY 'OH' IF PONY IS 'SPIRITED'?
SENSE IS GOOD. ? RHYTHM
?? RHYTHMIC STRESS

*Córdoba.
Distant and lonely.*

GOOD SENSE, BUT ? TROCHAIC ADJECTIVES

(Alan S. Trueblood) Penguin intro.

Song of the Rider

*Córdoba, Córdoba ,
far away and solitary.*

MORE SUGGESTIVE THAN 'RIDER'S SONG'

IS THE REPETITION JUSTIFIED?
IS 'SOLITARY' RIGHT? SENSE AND RHYTHM?

*Black pony, full moon
and olives in my saddle-bag.
Although I know the roads ahead
I'll never reach Córdoba.*

OVER-EMPHATIC STRESS?; 'FULL' IS GOOD
GOOD SENSE AND RHYTHM
GOOD SENSE AND RHYTHM
RHYTHM IS DEFICIENT

*Through the wind, through the plain,
black pony, red moon.
Death is watching me from
the towers of Córdoba.*

THROUGH THE PLAIN? NOUNS INVERTED?
STRESS SEEMS A LITTLE EMPHATIC
O.K. BUT ? PREPOSITIONAL ENDING
GOOD SENSE AND RHYTHM

*Ah, how long the road is!
Ah, my valiant pony!*

REASONABLY EFFECTIVE
CONNOTATIONS OF 'VALLIANT'?

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*Death is waiting for me
before I reach Córdoba.*

A LITTLE FLAT?
DEFICIENT RHYTHM

*Córdoba, Córdoba,
far away and solitary.*

AS ABOVE
AS ABOVE

(Merryn Williams, 1992)

Rider's Song

*Córdoba.
Far and lonely.*

OVER-COMPRESSED, RHYTHMICALLY?

*Black my pony, full the moon,
olives in my saddle-bags.
Well that I may know the way,
I'll never come to Córdoba.*

BALLAD-LIKE PHRASING. VERY GOOD
VERY EFFECTIVE, THOUGH WHY 'BAGS'?
?? NOT A NATURAL IDIOM
VERY EFFECTIVE

*Through the plain and through the wind,
black my pony, red the moon.
Death is looking out at me
from towers tall in Córdoba.*

GOOD RHYTHM; THROUGH THE PLAIN?
AS ABOVE, VERY GOOD
LOOKING OUT AT ME?
WHY ADD 'TALL'? UNNECESSARY

*For the road is so long
For my pony so brave
For death awaits me
Before I arrive in Córdoba.*

A GOOD RENDERING
'BRAVE' IS GOOD. BUT SENSE OF 'FOR'?
IS THE RHYTHM EFFECTIVE ENOUGH?
'ARRIVE IN' ?? AND RHYTHM ??

*Córdoba.
Far and all alone.*

PHRASING CHANGED. 'ALL ALONE' IS GOOD

(Michael Frank, 2001)

As the marginal comments above indicate, none of these four versions is without merit, and a number of lines capture successfully both the diction and the metrical accents of Lorca's traditional ballad. Particularly evocative are the ballad-like phrasing of 'black my pony, full the moon', the iambic rhythm of 'and olives in my saddle-bag', the monosyllabic simplicity of 'for the road is so long'. For all these and similar strengths, though, there are comparable weaknesses. A number of lines are

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rhythmically uncertain; in three versions, literal adherence to Lorca's repeated preposition *por el llano, por el viento* leads to the unidiomatic 'through the plain'; his verbs, too, (*sepa, llegaré/llegar, está mirando, espera*) seem to cause special problems of effective translation. Most of all, the third quatrain tests the skills of every translator: how can the exclamatory force of the original (*¡Ay... ¡Ay... ¡Ay...*) be sustained without descending into melodrama or limp utterance (*Alas... alas... alas*)?

The version below tries to capture the elemental, enigmatic force that runs throughout both *Poema del Cante Jondo* and this later ballad. For both, the language I have sought to deploy embodies a tension between restraint and resonance, simplicity and enigma. For Lorca, nothing is expressed that is not, at the same time, inexpressible. In so far as this translation conveys a small part of that tension in English, it will have more than fulfilled its purpose.

Rider's Song

*Córdoba.
Far off...alone.*

*Black my pony, full the moon,
olives in my saddle-bag.
However well I know the way,
I'll never come to Córdoba.*

*Cross the plain and through the wind,
black my pony, red the moon.
Death is gazing out at me
from the towers of Córdoba.*

*Oh how long a way to go,
oh how brave my pony is,
oh that death's expecting me
before I come to Córdoba.*

*Córdoba.
Far off...alone.*

Tim Chilcott
January 2007

CHRONOLOGY

- 1898 Federico García Lorca is born on 5 June in Fuente Vaqueros, an Andalusian village west of Granada, into an educated family of small landowners.
- 1909 moves with his family to Granada, and begins to show considerable talent as a musician, particularly at the piano.
- 1914 begins his first year at the University of Granada, though his subsequent university career is far from distinguished.
- 1918 his first book is published, a collection of prose pieces entitled *Impresiones y Paisajes* (Impressions and Landscapes), which meets with local acclaim but little commercial success.
- 1919 goes to the Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid, an educational institution modelled on Oxford and Cambridge, where he meets many of the major writers, critics and scholars of the day. Becomes close friends with the poet Rafael Alberti, the filmmaker Luis Buñuel, the composer Manuel de Falla, and especially the painter Salvador Dalí, with whom he later collaborates.
- 1920 his first play *El maleficio de la Mariposa* (The Butterfly's Evil Spell) is a disaster, and lasts only four performances.
- 1921 *Poema del Cante Jondo* (*Poem of the Deep Song*) is begun in August, with over half of the poems drafted between 11 and 21 November. A complete text, however, is not published until 1931.

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- 1927 a collection of poetry, *Canciones* (Songs), is published. His second play, *Mariana Pineda*, with stage settings by Dalí, opens to great acclaim in Barcelona.
- 1928 *Romancero gitano* (*The Gypsy Ballads*) is published to great acclaim. But his growing celebrity only exacerbates the tension between his public persona and his private self as a gay man. Has a passionate but abortive affair with Emilio Aladrén, a sculptor.
- 1929 leaves for New York with Fernando de los Ríos, an old family friend, and remains there for nine months. Witnesses the Wall Street crash. The volume of poems based on his experience of the city is published posthumously in 1940 as *Poeta en Nueva York* (*Poet in New York*).
- 1930 on his return to Spain, devotes himself increasingly to the theatre. The following year, begins to co-direct, and to act in, La Barraca, a government-sponsored student theatrical company that tours the country.
- 1933 *Bodas de sangre* (*Blood Wedding*) has an outstanding success in Spain and later in Argentina, which he visits.
- 1934 *Yerma* is written and produced. Composes his great elegy *Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías* (*Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías*), which is published the following year.
- 1935 composes the *Sonetos del Amor Oscuro* (Sonnets of Dark Love), which remain unpublished until 1984.
- 1936 *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (*The House of Bernarda Alba*).
outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. He is accused of being a Russian spy, and on the night of 18-19 August, is executed by a firing squad of nationalist partisans near the famous spring of Fuente Grande, not far from Granada. His body is buried in an unmarked grave.

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posthumous the Franco regime places a general ban on his work, which is not lifted until 1953, when a heavily censored *Obras Completas* (Complete Works) is published. Only after Franco's death in 1975 do the details of Lorca's life, death, and complete literary output become more widely known.

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BALADILLA DE LOS TRES RÍOS

A Salvador Quintero

El río Guadalquivir
va entre naranjos y olivos.
Los dos ríos de Granada
bajan de la nieve al trigo.

*¡Ay, amor
que se fue y no vino!*

El río Guadalquivir
tiene las barbas granates.
Los dos ríos de Granada,
uno llanto y otro sangre.

*¡Ay, amor
que se fue por el aire!*

Para los barcos de vela,
Sevilla tiene un camino;
por el agua de Granada
sólo reman los suspiros.

*¡Ay, amor
que se fue y no vino!*

Guadalquivir, alta torre
y viento en los naranjales.
Darro y Gentil, torrecillas
muertas sobre los estanques.

*¡Ay, amor
que se fue por el aire!*

¡Quién dirá que el agua lleva
un fuego fatuo de gritos!

*¡Ay, amor
que se fue y no vino!*

LITTLE BALLAD OF THE THREE RIVERS

For Salvador Quintero

The river Guadalquivir
flows through orange and olive trees.
The two rivers of Granada
fall from snow to wheat.

*Oh love
that left and did not return.*

The river Guadalquivir
has a crimson-coloured beard.
The two rivers of Granada:
one weeping and the other blood.

*Oh love
that left and did not return*

Seville now has a road
for sailing ships;
on the waters of Granada
nothing rows but sighs.

*Oh love
that left and did not return.*

Guadalquivir, high tower
and wind in the orange groves.
Darro and Genil, little towers
dead above the pools.

*Oh love
that left and did not return.*

Who would guess the water bears
A will-o'-the-wisp of cries!

*Oh love
that left and did not return*

Lleva azahar, lleva olivas,
Andalucía, a tus mares.

*¡Ay, amor
que se fue por el aire!*

RETURN

Take olives, Andalusia,
Take orange blossom to your seas.

*Oh love
that left and did not return.*

RETURN

POEMA DE LA SIGUIRIYA GITANA

A Carlos Morla Vicuña

PAISAJE

El campo
de olivos
se abre y se cierra
como un abanico.
Sobre el olivar
hay un cielo hundido
y una lluvia oscura
de luceros fríos.
Tiembla junco y penumbra
a la orilla del río.
Se riza el aire gris.
Los olivos
están cargados
de gritos.
Una bandada
de pájaros cautivos,
que mueven sus larguísimas
colas en lo sombrío.

RETURN

POEM OF THE GYPSY *SIGUIRIYA*

For Carlos Morla Vicuña

LANDSCAPE

The field
of olive trees
opens and closes
like a fan.
Above the olive grove,
a sunken sky
and a dark rain
of cold stars.
Bulrush and twilight tremble
at the river's edge.
The grey air ripples.
The olive trees
are weighed down
with cries.
A flock
of captive birds
that move their long long
tails amid the gloom.

RETURN

LA GUITARRA

Empieza el llanto
de la guitarra.
Se rompen las copas
de la madrugada.
Empieza el llanto
de la guitarra.
Es inútil
callarla.
Es imposible
callarla.
Llora monótona
como llora el agua,
como llora el viento
sobre la nevada.
Es imposible
callarla.
Llora por cosas
lejanas.
Arena del Sur caliente
que pide camelias blancas.
Llora flecha sin blanco,
la tarde sin mañana,
y el primer pájaro muerto
sobre la rama.
¡O guitarra!
Corazón malherido
por cinco espadas.

RETURN

THE GUITAR

The weeping
of the guitar begins.
The glasses of the early dawn
are smashed.
The weeping
of the guitar begins.
Useless
to silence it.
Impossible
to silence it.
It weeps monotonous,
the way that water weeps,
the way the wind weeps
over snowdrift.
Impossible
to silence it.
It weeps for things
far, far away.
Hot southern sands
that yearn for white camellias.
Weeps – like an arrow without target,
an evening without morning,
and the first dead bird
upon the branch.
Ah, guitar –
Heart deadly wounded
by five swords.

RETURN

EL GRITO

La elipse de un grito
va de monte
a monte.

Desde los olivos,
será un arco iris negro
sobre la noche azul.

¡Ay!

Como un arco de viola,
el grito ha hecho vibrar
largas cuerdas del viento.

¡Ay!

(Las gentes de las cuevas
asoman sus velones.)

¡Ay!

RETURN

THE CRY

The arc of a cry
curves from hill
to hill.

From the olive trees,
a black rainbow
over the blue night.

Ay!

Like a viola's bow,
the cry has made the long
strings of the wind vibrate.

Ay!

(The people of the caves
put their oil lamps out.)

Ay!

RETURN

EL SILENCIO

Oye, hijo mío, el silencio.
Es un silencio ondulado,
un silencio,
donde resbalan valles y ecos
y que inclina las frentes
hacia el suelo.

RETURN

THE SILENCE

Listen, my boy...the silence...
A rippling silence,
a silence
where valleys, echoes, slip,
that bends foreheads
down towards the ground.

RETURN

EL PASO DE LA SIGUIRIYA

Entre mariposas negras,
va una muchacha morena
junto a una blanca serpiente
de niebla.

*Tierra de luz,
cielo de tierra.*

Va encadenada al temblor
de un ritmo que nunca llega;
tiene el corazón de plata
y un puñal en la diestra.

¿Adónde vas, siguiiriya,
con un ritmo sin cabeza?
¿Qué luna recogerá
tu dolor de cal y adelfa?

*Tierra de luz,
cielo de tierra.*

RETURN

THE SIGUIRIYA'S STEPPING OUT

Among black butterflies
goes a dark-haired girl
beside a white snake
of mist.

*Earth of light,
sky of earth.*

Goes chained to the throbbing
of a rhythm that never comes;
she has a heart of silver,
and a dagger in her hand.

Where are you going, *siguiiriya*, **NOTE**
with such a mindless rhythm?
What moon will gather up
your pain of lime and oleander?

*Earth of light,
Sky of earth*

RETURN

DESPUÉS DE PASAR

Los niños miran
un punto lejano.

Los candiles se apagan.
Unas muchachas ciegas
preguntan a la luna,
y por el aire ascienden
espirales de llanto.

Las montañas miran
un punto lejano.

RETURN

AFTER PASSING BY

The children gaze
upon a far-off point.

The oil lamps are put out.
Some blind girls
ask questions of the moon,
and spirals of weeping
rise up through the air.

The mountains gaze
upon a far-off point.

RETURN

Y DESPUÉS

Los laberintos
que crea el tiempo,
se desvanecen.

(Sólo queda
el desierto.)

El corazón,
fuente del deseo,
se desvanece.

(Sólo queda
el desierto.)

La ilusión de la aurora
y los besos,
se desvanecen.

Sólo queda
el desierto.
Un ondulado
desierto.

RETURN

AND AFTERWARDS

The labyrinths
that time creates
vanish.

(Only the desert
remains.)

The heart,
fountain of desire,
vanishes.

(Only the desert
remains.)

The illusion of dawn
and kisses
vanish.

Only the desert
remains.
Rippling
desert.

RETURN

POEMA DE LA SOLEÁ

A Jorge Zalamea

[EVOCACIÓN]

Tierra seca,
tierra quieta
de noches
immensas.

(Viento en el olivar,
viento en la sierra.)

Tierra
vieja
del candil
y la pena.
Tierra
de las hondas cisternas
Tierra
de la muerte sin ojos
y las flechas.

(Viento por los caminos.
Brisa en las alamedas.)

RETURN

POEM OF THE SOLEÁ

For Jorge Zalamea

EVOCATION

Dry land,
still land
of immense
nights.

(Wind in the olive grove,
wind in the mountains.)

Age-old
land
of oil lamps
and sorrowing.
Land
of deep cisterns.
Land
of death without eyes
and of arrows.

(Wind along the roads.
Breeze in the poplar groves.)

RETURN

PUEBLO

Sobre el monte pelado,
un calvario.
Agua clara
y olivos centenarios.
Por las callejas
hombres embozados,
y en las torres
veletas girando.
Eternamente
girando.
¡Oh pueblo perdido
en la Andalucía del llanto!

RETURN

VILLAGE

On the barren hill,
a calvary.
Clear water
and hundred-year-old olive trees.
Through the narrow streets,
men muffled up;
and on the towers
spinning weather vanes.
Eternally
spinning.
Oh lost village,
in the Andalusia of tears.

RETURN

PUÑAL

El puñal
entra en el corazón
como la reja del arado
en el yermo.

No.
No me lo claves.
No.

El puñal,
como un rayo de sol,
incendia las terribles
hondonadas.

No.
No me lo claves.
No.

RETURN

DAGGER

The dagger
goes into the heart
like the ploughshare
into barren land.

No.
Don't plunge it in me.
No.

The dagger,
like a ray of sun,
sets fire
to terrible
ravines.

No.
Don't plunge it in me.
No.

RETURN

ENCRUCIJADA

Viento del Este,
un farol
y el puñal
en el corazón.
La calle
tiene un temblor
de cuerda
en tensión,
un temblor
de enorme moscardón.
Por todas partes
yo
veo el puñal
en el corazón.

RETURN

CROSSROADS

East wind,
a street-lamp
and the dagger
in the heart.
The street
quivers
like a string
pulled tight,
the quiver
of an enormous horsefly.
Everywhere
I
see the dagger
in the heart.

RETURN

¡AY!

El grito deja en el viento
una sombra de ciprés.

(Dejadme en este campo
llorando.)

Todo se ha roto en el mundo.
No queda más que el silencio.

(Dejadme en este campo
llorando.)

El horizonte sin luz
está mordido de hogueras.

(Ya os he dicho que me dejéis
en este campo
llorando.)

RETURN

AY!

The cry leaves a cypress
shadow on the wind.

(Leave me weeping
in this field.)

Everything has broken in the world.
Nothing remains but the silence.

(Leave me weeping
in this field.)

The moonless horizon
is bitten up by bonfires.

(I've told you already to leave me
here in this field,
weeping.)

RETURN

SORPRESA

Muerto se quedó en la calle
con un puñal en el pecho.
No lo conocía nadie.
¡Cómo temblaba el farol!
Madre.
¡Cómo temblaba el farolito
de la calle!
Era madrugada. Nadie
pudo asomarse a sus ojos
abiertos al duro aire.
Que muerto se quedó en la calle
que con un puñal en el pecho
y que no lo conocía nadie.

RETURN

SURPRISE

They left him dead in the street
with a dagger in his chest.
Nobody knew who he was.
How the street-lamp was shaking!
Mother.
How that little lamppost was shaking
in the street!
The crack of dawn. No-one
could look into his eyes
open to the hard night air.
And they left him dead in the street
with a dagger in his chest
and nobody knew who he was.

RETURN

LA SOLEÅ

Vestida con mantos negros
piensa que el mundo es chiquito
y el corazón es inmenso.

Vestida con mantos negros.

Piensa que el suspiro tierno
y el grito, desaparecen
en la corriente del viento.

Vestida con mantos negros.

Se dejó el balcón abierto
y al alba por el balcón
desembocó todo el cielo.

*¡Ay yayayayay,
que vestida con mantos negros!*

RETURN

THE SOLEÅ NOTE

Dressed in black cloaks
she thinks the world is tiny
and the heart immense.

Dressed in black cloaks.

She thinks the loving sigh
and the cry disappear
on the currents of the wind.

Dressed in black cloaks.

The balcony was left open
and at dawn the whole sky
flowed in through the balcony.

*Ay yayayayay,
Dressed in black cloaks.*

RETURN

CUEVA

De la cueva salen
largos sollozos.

(Lo cárdeno
sobre lo rojo.)

El gitano evoca
países remotos.

(Torres altas y hombres
misteriosos.)

En la voz entrecortada
van sus ojos.

(Lo negro
sobre lo rojo.)

Y la cueva encalada
tiembla en el oro.

(Lo blanco
sobre lo rojo.)

RETURN

CAVE

From the cave come
Long sobbings.

(The purple
over the red.)

The gypsy conjures up
far-off lands.

(High towers and men
of mystery.)

His eyes fix on
the faltering voice.

(The purple
over the red.)

And the whitewashed cave
trembles in the gold.

(The white
over the red.)

RETURN

ENCUENTRO

Ni tú ni yo estamos
en disposición
de encontrarnos.
Tú...por lo que ya sabes.
¡Yo la he querido tanto!
Sigue esa veredita.
En las manos
tengo los agujeros.
de los clavos.
¿No ves cómo me estoy
desangrando?
No mires nunca atrás,
vete despacio
y reza como yo
a San Cayetano,
que ni tú ni yo estamos
en disposición
de encontrarnos.

RETURN

MEETING

Neither you nor I
are ready
to meet each other.
You...you know why not.
I loved her so much!
Follow that narrow path.
I've got holes
in my hands
from the nails.
Can't you see how
I'm bleeding to death?
Don't ever look back,
just go on slowly
and pray like me
to San Cayetano,
for neither you nor I
are ready
to meet each other.

RETURN

ALBA

Campanas de Córdoba
en la madrugada.
Campanas de amanecer
en Granada.
Os sienten todas las muchachas
que lloran a la tierna
soleá enlutada.
Las muchachas
de Andalucía la alta
y la baja.
Las niñas de España,
de pie menudo
y temblorosas faldas,
que han llenado de cruces
la encrucijadas.
¡Oh campanas de Córdoba
en la madrugada,
y oh campanas de amanecer
en Granada!

RETURN

DAWN

Bells of Córdoba
at the break of day.
Bells of dawn
in Granada.
They hear you – all the girls
who cry for the tender,
grieving *soleá*. **NOTE**
The girls
of Andalusia,
both high and low.
The young girls of Spain,
with tiny feet
and trembling skirts,
who've filled the crossroads
with lights.
Oh bells of Córdoba
at the break of day,
and, oh, bells of dawn
in Granada!

RETURN

POEMA DE LA SAETA

A Francisco Iglesias

ARQUEROS

Los arqueros oscuros
a Sevilla se acercan.

Guadalquivir abierto.

Anchos sombreros grises,
largas capas lentas.

¡Ay, Guadalquivir!

Vienen de los remotos
países de la pena.

Guadalquivir abierto.

Y van a un laberinto.
Amor, cristal y piedra.

¡Ay, Guadalquivir!

RETURN

POEM OF THE SAETA **NOTE**

For Francisco Iglesias

ARCHERS

Dark archers
approach Seville.

Guadalquivir open to the sea..

Wide grey hats,
long, slow-moving capes.

Oh, Guadalquivir!

They come from far-off
countries of sorrow.

Guadalquivir open to the sea.

And they're entering a labyrinth.
Love, crystal and stone.

Oh, Guadalquivir!

RETURN

NOCHE

Cirio, candil,
farol y luciérnaga.

La constelación
de la saeta.

Ventanitas de oro
tiemblan,
y en la aurora se mecen
cruces superpuestas.

Cirio, candil,
farol y luciérnaga.

RETURN

NIGHT

Candle, oil lamp,
street-lamp and firefly.

The constellation
of the *saeta*. **NOTE**

Little golden windows
tremble,
and in the dawn, crosses
swaying, one upon the other.

Candle, oil lamp,
street-lamp and firefly.

RETURN

SEVILLA

Sevilla es una torre
llena de arqueros finos.

*Sevilla para herir.
Córdoba para morir.*

Una ciudad que acecha
largos ritmos,
y los enrosca
como laberintos.
Como tallos de parra
encendidos.

¡Sevilla para herir!

Bajo el arco del cielo,
sobre su llano limpio,
dispara la constante
saeta de su río.

¡Córdoba para morir!

Y loca de horizonte,
mezcla en su vino
lo amargo de Don Juan
y lo perfecto de Dionisio.

*Sevilla para herir.
¡Siempre Sevilla para herir!*

RETURN

SEVILLE

Seville is a tower
full of fine archers.

*Seville to wound.
Córdoba to die.*

A city that lies in wait
for long rhythms,
and it coils them up
like labyrinths.
Like grapevine stems
Ablaze.

Seville to wound!

Under the arc of sky,
over its clear, clean plain,
it shoots the constant
arrow of its river.

Córdoba to die!

And crazed by the horizon,
it mixes in its wine
Don Juan's bitterness
with Dionysius' perfection.

*Seville to wound.
Always Seville to wound!*

RETURN

PROCESIÓN

Por la calleja vienen
extraños unicornios.
¿De qué campo,
de qué bosque mitológico?
Más cerca,
ya parecen astónomos.
Fantásticos Merlines
y el Ecce Homo,
Durandarte encantado,
Orlando furioso.

RETURN

PROCESSION

Down the side street come
strange unicorns.
From what field,
what mythic wood?
Close up,
they seem astronomers.
Fantastic Merlins
and the Ecce Homo.
Enchanted Durandarte,
a furious Orlando.

RETURN

PASO

Virgen con miriñaque,
virgen de la Soledad,
abierta como un inmenso
tulipán.
En un barco de luces
vas
por la alta marea
de la ciudad,
entre saetas turbias
y estrellas de cristal.
Virgen con miriñaque,
tú vas
por el río de la calle,
¡hasta el mar!

RETURN

FLOAT

Virgin in crinoline,
Virgin of Solitude,
unfurl like an immense
tulip.
In a boat of light,
you float
on the high tide
of the city,
among blurred *saetas*
and crystal stars.
Virgin in crinoline,
you float
down that river of a street,
out to the sea!

RETURN

SAETA

Cristo moreno
pasa
de lirio de Judea
a clavel de España.

¡Miradlo por dónde viene!

De España.
Cielo limpio y oscuro,
tierra tostada,
y cauces donde corre
muy lenta el agua.
Cristo morena,
con las guedejas quemadas,
los pómulos salientes
y la pupilas blancas.

¡Miradlo por dónde va!

RETURN

SAETA

Dark-skinned Christ
changes
from lily of Judea
to carnation of Spain.

Look where he comes from!

From Spain.
Sky clear and dark,
scorched earth,
and riverbeds where water
runs ever so slowly.
Dark-skinned Christ,
with long, burnt hair,
high cheekbones,
and his pupils, white.

Look where he goes!

RETURN

BALCÓN

La Lola
canta saetas.
Los tereritos
la rodean,
y el barberillo,
desde su puerta,
sigue los ritmos
con la cabeza.
Entre la albahaca
y la hierbabuena,
la Lola canta
saetas.
La Lola aquella,
que se miraba
tanto en la alberca.

RETURN

BALCONY

Lola
is singing *saetas*.
Would-be bullfighters
circle round her,
and the little barber,
in his doorway,
follows the rhythm
with his head.
Among the basil
and the mint,
Lola is singing
saetas.
That Lola
who'd gaze upon herself
so often in the pool.

RETURN

MADRUGADA

Pero como el amor
los saeteros
están ciegos.

Sobre la noche verde,
las saetas
dejan rastros de lirio
caliente.

La quilla de la luna
rompe nubes moradas
y las aljabas
se llenan de roío.

¡Ay, pero como el amor
los saeteros
están ciegos!

RETURN

BEFORE DAWN

But like love
the archers
are blind.

Upon the green night,
arrows
leave traces of burning
lily.

The keel of the moon
rips through purple clouds
and the quivers
fill with dew.

Oh, but like love
the archers
are blind!

RETURN

GRÁFICO DE LA PETENERA

A Eugenio Montes

CAMPANA

(Bordón)

En la torre
amarilla,
dobla una campana.

Sobre el viento
amarillo,
se abren las campanadas.

En la torre
amarilla,
cesa la campana.

El viento con el polvo
hace proras de plata.

RETURN

PICTURE OF THE *PETENERA* NOTE

For Eugenio Montes

BELL

(Bass Bell)

In the yellow
tower,
a bell tolls..

Upon the yellow
wind,
the bell-notes peal.

In the yellow
tower,
the bell stops.

The wind and the dust
shape silver prows.

RETURN

CAMINO

Cien jinetes enlutados,
¿dónde irán,
por el cielo yacente
del naranjal?
Ni a Córdoba ni a Sevilla
llegarán.
Ni a Granada la que suspira
por el mar.
Esos caballos soñolientos
los llevarán,
al laberinto de las cruces
donde tiembla el cantar.
Con siete ayes clavados,
¿dónde irán
los cien jinetes andaluces
del naranjal?

RETURN

ROAD

A hundred riders in mourning,
where are they going
under the low-lying sky
of the orange grove?
Neither Córdoba nor Seville
will they ever reach.
Nor that Granada which sighs
for the sea.
Those drowsy horses
will carry them
to the labyrinth of crosses
where the song shudders so.
Seven sorrows piercing them, **NOTE**
where are they going,
the hundred Andalusian riders
of the orange grove?

RETURN

LAS SEIS CUERDAS

La guitarra
hace llorar a los sueños.
El sollozo de las almas
perdidas
se escapa por su boca
redonda.
Y como la tarántula
teje una gran estrella
para cazar suspiros,
que flotan en su negro
aljibe de madera.

RETURN

THE SIX STRINGS

The guitar
makes dreams weep.
The sobbing of lost
souls
breaks out through its round
mouth.
And like the tarantula,
it weaves a great star
to trap the sighs
that float inside its black
cistern of wood.

RETURN

DANZA

EN EL HUERTO DE LA PETENERA

En la noche del huerto,
seis gitanas
vestidas de blanco,
bailan.

En la noche del huerto,
coronadas
con rosas de papel
y biznagas.

En la noche del huerto,
sus dientes de nácar
escriben la sombra
quemada.

Y en la noche del huerto,
sus sombras se alargan
y llegan hasta el cielo
moradas.

RETURN

DANCE

IN THE GARDEN OF THE *PETENERA* NOTE

In the garden's night,
six gypsy girls,
dressed in white,
are dancing.

In the garden's night,
crowned
with paper roses
and jasmine.

In the garden's night,
their teeth – mother-of-pearl –
score the burnt
shadow.

And in the garden's night,
their shadows lengthen
and reach up to the sky,
all purple.

RETURN

MUERTE DE LA PETENERA

En la casa blanca muere
la perdición de los hombres.

*Cien jacas caracolean.
Sus jinetes están muertos.*

Bajo las estremecidas
estrellas de los velones,
su falda de moaré tiembla
entre sus muslos de cobre.

*Cien jacas caracolean.
Sus jinetes están muertos.*

Largas sombras afiladas
vienen del turbio horizonte,
y el bordón de una guitarra
se rompe.

*Cien jacas caracolean.
Sus jinetes están muertos.*

RETURN

DEATH OF THE *PETENERA* NOTE

In the white house,
mankind's perdition dies.

*A hundred ponies prance around.
Their riders are all dead.*

Beneath the trembling
stars of the oil lamps,
her skirt of moiré shimmies
between her copper thighs.

*A hundred ponies prance around.
Their riders are all dead.*

Long, sharpened shadows
advance from the blurred horizon,
and the bass string of a guitar
breaks.

*A hundred ponies prance around.
Their riders are all dead.*

RETURN

FALSETA

¡Ay, petenera gitana!
¡Yayay petenera!
Tu entierro no tuvo niñas
buenas.
Niñas que le dan a Cristo muerto
sus guedejas,
y llevan blancas mantillas
en las ferias.
Tu entierro fue de gente
siniestra.
Gente con el corazón
en la cabeza,
que te siguió llorando
por las callejas.
¡Ay, petenera gitana!
¡Yayay petenera!

RETURN

GUITAR FLOURISH

Oh gypsy *petenera!*
Oh *petenera!* **NOTE**
There were no good little girls
at your burial.
Little girls who give locks of hair
to a dead Christ,
who wear white lace scarves
on holidays.
Frightening people were
at your burial.
People with their hearts
in their heads,
who followed after you, weeping
through the narrow streets
Oh gypsy *petenera!*
Oh *petenera!*

RETURN

DE PROFUNDIS

Los cien enamorados
duermen para siempre
bajo la tierra seca.
Andalucía tiene
largos caminos rojos.
Córdoba, olivos verdes
donde poner cien cruces
que los recuerden.
Los cien enamorados
duermen para siempre.

RETURN

DE PROFUNDIS

Those hundred lovers
sleep forever
under the dry earth.
Andalusia has
long, red roads.
Córdoba, green olive trees
where a hundred crosses
will mark their memory.
Those hundred lovers
sleep forever.

RETURN

CLAMOR

En las torres
amarillas,
doblan las campanas.

Sobre los vientos
amarillos,
se abren las campanadas.

Por un camino va
la Muerte, coronada
de azahares marchitos.
Canta y canta
una canción
en su vihuela blanca.
y canta y canta y canta.

En las torres amarillas,
cesan las campanas.

El viento con el polvo
hacen proras de plata.

RETURN

DEATH KNELL

In the yellow
towers,
the bells toll.

Upon the yellow
winds,
the bell-notes peal.

Along a road goes
Death, crowned with
withered orange blossoms.
She sings and sings
a song
on her age-old white guitar
and sings and sings and sings.

In the yellow towers,
the bells stop.

The wind and the dust
shape silver prows.

RETURN

DOS MUCHACHAS

A Máximo Quijano

LA LOLA

Bajo el naranjo lava
pañales de algodón.
Tiene verdes los ojos
y violeta la voz.

¡Ay, amor,
bajo el naranjo en flor!

El agua de la acequia
iba llena de sol,
en el olivarito
cantaba un gorrión.

¡Ay, amor,
bajo el naranjo en flor!

Luego, cuando la Lola
gaste todo el jabón,
vendrán los torerillos.

¡Ay, amor,
bajo el naranjo en flor!

RETURN

TWO YOUNG GIRLS

For Máximo Quijano

LOLA

Under the orange tree, she
washes cotton nappies.
She has green eyes
and a violet voice.

Oh love,
under the orange tree in flower!

The water in the stream
flowed onward filled with sun;
in the little olive grove,
a sparrow sang.

Oh love,
under the orange tree in flower!

Later, when Lola
uses up all her soap,
the would-be bullfighters will come.

Oh love,
under the orange tree in flower!

RETURN

AMPARO

Amparo,
¡qué sola estás en tu casa
vestida de blanco!

(Ecuador entre el jazmín
y el nardo.)

Oyes los maravillosos
surtidores de tu patio,
y el débil trino amarillo
del canario.

Por la tarde ves temblar
los cipreses con los pájaros,
mientras bordas lentamente
letras sobre el cañamazo.

Amparo,
¡qué sola estás en tu casa
vestida de blanco!
Amparo,
¡y qué difícil decirte:
yo te amo!

RETURN

AMPARO

Amparo,
how lonely you are in your house,
dressed in white!

(Half-way between jasmine
and spikenard.)

You hear the marvellous
fountains in your courtyard,
and the frail yellow trilling
of the canary.

In the evening you see
the cypresses shake with birds,
as you slowly embroider
letters into the canvas.

Amparo,
how lonely you are in your house,
dressed in white!
And Amparo,
how hard to say:
I love you!

RETURN

VIÑETAS FLAMENCAS

*A Manuel Torres, 'Niño de Jerez',
que tiene tronco de Faraón*

RETRATO DE SILVERIO FRANCONETTI

Entre italiano
y flamenco,
¿cómo cantaría
aquel Silverio?
La densa miel de Italia,
con el limón nuestro,
iba en el hondo llanto
del siguiriyero.
Su grito fue terrible.
Los viejos
dicen que se erizaban
los cabellos,
y se abría el azogue
de los espejos.
Pasaba por los tonos
sin romperlos.
Y fue un creador
y un jardinero.
Un creador de glorietas
para el silencio.

Ahora su melodía
duerme con los ecos.
Definitiva y pura.
¡Con los últimos ecos!

RETURN

FLAMENCO SKETCHES

*For Manuel Torres, 'Jerez boy',
who has the body of a Pharaoh..*

PORTRAIT OF SILVERIO FRANCONETTI

Between Italian
and flamenco,
how did he sing,
that Silverio?
The thick honey of Italy,
mixed with our lemon,
sang out in the deep wail
of that *siguiriyero*. **NOTE**
His cry was terrible.
Old people say
it stood your hair
on end,
and made the mercury
in mirrors split.
He'd go up and down the scales
without a slip.
A creator
and a gardener.
A creator of pergolas
for silence.

Now his melody
sleeps with the echoes.
Absolute and pure,
with the final echoes.

RETURN

JUAN BREVA

Juan Breva tenía
cuerpo de gigante
y voz de niña.
Nada como su trino.
Era la misma
Pena cantando
detrás de una sonrisa.
Evoca los limonares
de Málaga la dromida,
y hay en su llanto dejos
de sal marina.
Como Homero cantó
ciego. Su voz tenía
algo de mar sin luz
y naranja exprimida.

RETURN

JUAN BREVA

Juan Breva had
a giant's body
and the voice of a girl.
His trill – like nothing else.
Pain itself
in song
behind a smile.
It conjures up the lemon groves
of sleepy Málaga,
and in his wail, some
aftertaste of sea salt.
Like Homer he sang
blind. His voice had
a sense of sea without a light
and oranges squeezed dry.

RETURN

CAFÉ CANTANTE

Lámparas de crystal
y espejos verdes.

Sobre el tablado oscuro,
la Parrala sostiene
una conversación
con la Muerte.
La llama,
no viene,
y la vuelve a llamar.
Las gentes
aspiran los sollozos.
Y en los espejos verdes,
largas colas de seda
se mueven.

RETURN

FLAMENCO CAFÉ

Crystal lamps
and green mirrors.

On the darkened stage,
Parrala holds
a conversation
with Death.
Calls her,
but she doesn't come.
Calls her again.
People
swallow their sobs.
And in the green mirrors,
long trains of silk
begin to sway.

RETURN

LAMENTACIÓN DE LA MUERTE

A Miguel Benítez

*Sobre el cielo negro,
culebrinas amarillas.*

Vine a este mundo con ojos
y me voy sin ellos.
¡Señor del mayor dolor!
Y luego,
un velón y una manta
en el suelo.

Quise llegar adonde
llegaron los buenos.
¡Y he llegado, Dios mío!...
Pero luego,
un velón y una manta
en el suelo.

Limoncito amarillo,
limonero.
Echad los limoncitos
al viento.
¡Ya lo sabéis!...Porque luego,
luego,
un velón y una manta
en el suelo.

*Sobre el cielo negro,
culebrinas amarillas.*

RETURN

DEATH'S LAMENTATION

For Miguel Benítez

*Across the black sky,
yellow forks of lightning.*

I came into this world with eyes
and I'll leave without them.
Oh Lord of greatest sorrow!
And in the end,
an oil lamp and a blanket
on the ground.

I tried to go where
good people go.
And I did, my God!...
But in the end,
an oil lamp and a blanket
on the ground.

Little yellow lemon,
lemon tree.
Cast the little lemons
to the wind.
Now you know...! For in the end,
the end,
an oil lamp and a blanket
on the ground.

*Across the black sky,
yellow forks of lightning.*

RETURN

CONJURO

La mano crispada
como una Medusa
ciega el ojo doliente
del candil.

As de bastos.
Tijeras en cruz.

Sobre el humo blanco
del incienso, tiene
algo de topo y
mariposa indecisa.

As de bastos.
Tijeras en cruz.

Aprieta un corazón
invisible, ¿la veis?
Un corazón
reflejado en el viento.

As de bastos.
Tijeras en cruz.

RETURN

EXORCISM

The twitching hand,
like some Medusa,
blinds the mournful eye
of the oil lamp.

Ace of clubs.
Scissors crossed.

Above the white smoke
of the incense, it looks like
something between a mole and
an undecided butterfly.

Ace of clubs.
Crossed scissors.

An unseen heart
is squeezed, see it?
A heart
reflected in the wind.

Ace of clubs.
Scissors crossed.

RETURN

MEMENTO

Cuando yo me muera,
enterradme con mi guitarra
bajo la arena.

Cuando yo me muera,
entre los naranjos
y la hierbabuena.

Cuando yo me muera,
enterradme si queréis
en una veleta.

¡Cuando yo me muera!

RETURN

MEMENTO

When I die,
bury me with my guitar
beneath the sand.

When I die,
among the orange trees
and the mint.

When I die,
bury me if you so you wish
inside a weathervane.

When I die!

RETURN

TRES CIUDADES

A Pilar Zubiaurre

MALAGUEÑA

La muerte
entra y sale
de la taberna.

Pasan caballos negros
y gente siniestra
por los hondos caminos
de la guitarra.

Y hay un olor a sal
y a sangre de hembra
en los nardos febriles
de la marina.

La muerte
entra y sale,
y sale y entra
la muerte
de la taberna.

RETURN

THREE CITIES

For Pilar Zubiaurre

MALAGUEÑA

Death
goes in and out
of the tavern.

Black horses
and sinister people
pass along the sunken roads
of the guitar.

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

Death
goes in and out;
out and into
the tavern goes
death.

RETURN

BARRIO DE CÓRDOBA

TÓPICO NOCTURNO

En la casa se defienden
De las estrellas.
La noche se derrumba.
Dentro, hay una niña muerta
Con una rosa encarnada
oculta en la cabellera.
Seis ruiseñores la lloran
en la reja.

Las gentes van suspirando
con las guitarras abiertas.

RETURN

CÓRDOBA NEIGHBOURHOOD

NOCTURNAL THEME

Inside the house, they shelter
from the stars.
Night tumbles down.
Inside, a dead young girl,
a crimson rose
hidden in her hair.
Six nightingales mourn for her
behind the bars.

People sigh and sigh
with open-mouthed guitars.

RETURN

BAILE

La Carmen está bailando
por las calles de Sevilla.
Tiene blancos los cabellos
y brillantes las pupilas.

¡Niñas,
corred las cortinas!

En su cabeza se enrosca
una serpiente amarilla,
y va soñando en el baile
con galanes de otros días.

¡Niñas,
corred las cortinas!

Las calles están desiertas
y en los fondos se adivinan
corazones andaluces
buscando viejas espinas.

¡Niñas,
corred las cortinas!

RETURN

DANCE

Carmen is dancing
through the streets of Seville.
White is her hair
and her eyes shining.

Girls,
close the curtains!

Round her head, a yellow
snake is coiling up,
and she dreams of dancing
with admirers from the days gone by.

Girls,
close the curtains!

The streets are empty.
But in the depths, a glimpse
of Andalusian hearts
in search of ancient thorns.

Girls,
close the curtains!

RETURN

SEIS CAPRICHOS

A Regino Sainz de la Maza

ADIVINANZA DE LA GUITARRA

En la redonda
encrucijada,
seis doncellas
bailan.
Tres de carne
y tres de plata.
Los sueños de ayer las buscan,
pero las tiene abrazadas
un Polifemo de oro.
¡La guitarra!

RETURN

SIX LITTLE WHIMS

For Regino Sainz de la Maza

RIDDLE OF THE GUITAR

At the round
crossroads,
six young girls
are dancing.
Three of flesh
and three of silver.
The dreams of yesterday search for them,
but a golden Polyphemus
holds them in his arms.
Guitar!

RETURN

CANDIL

¡Oh, qué grave medita
la llama del candil!

Como un faquir indio
mira su entraña de oro
y se eclipsa soñando
atmósferas sin viento.

Cigüeña incandescente
pica desde su nido
a las sombras macizas,
y se asoma temblando
a los ojos redondos
del gitano muerto.

RETURN

OIL LAMP

Oh, how gravely the flame
of the oil lamp ponders things.

Like an Indian fakir
it stares down at its golden bowels
and is eclipsed, dreaming of
windless atmospheres.

An white hot stork
pecks at massive shadows
from inside its nest,
and, trembling, goes up
to the round eyes
of the dead gypsy boy.

RETURN

CRÓTALO **NOTE**

Crótalo.
Crótalo.
Crótalo.
Escarabajo sonoro.

En la araña
de la mano
rizas al aire
cálido,
y te ahogas en tu trino
de palo.

Crótalo.
Crótalo.
Crótalo.
Escarabajo sonoro.

RETURN

RATTLING CASTANET

Castanet.
Castanet.
Castanet.
Rattling beetle.

In the spider
Of the hand,
You ripple the warm
Air,
And drown in your trill
Of wood.

Castanet.
Castanet.
Castanet.
Rattling beetle.

RETURN

CHUMBERA

Laoconte salvaje.

¡Qué bien estás
bajo la media luna!

Múltiple pelotari.

¡Qué bien estás
amenazando al viento!

Dafne y Atis,
saben de tu dolor.
Inexplicable.

RETURN

PRICKLY PEAR

Wild Laocoön.

How good you look
beneath the half-moon!

Multi-player of pelota.

How good you look,
threatening the wind!

Daphne and Attis
know of your pain.
Inexplicable.

RETURN

PITA

Pulpo petrificado.

Pones cinchas cenicientas
al vientre de los montes,
y muelas formidables
a los desfiladeros.

Pulpo petrificado.

RETURN

AGAVE

Petrified octopus.

You put ashen-coloured saddle straps
round the bellies of mountains,
and tremendous molars
in the gorges.

Petrified octopus.

RETURN

CRUZ

La cruz.
(Punto final
del camino.)

Se mira en la acequia
(Puntos suspensivos.)

RETURN

CROSS

The cross.
(Full stop
of the road.)

Reflected in the irrigation ditch.
(Dot, dot, dot.)

RETURN

ESCENA DEL TENIENTE CORONEL DE LA GUARDIA CIVIL

CUARTO DE BANDERAS

TENIENTE CORONEL: Yo soy el teniente coronel de la Guardia Civil.

SARGENTO: Sí.

TENIENTE CORONEL: Y no hay quien me desmienta.

SARGENTO: No.

TENIENTE CORONEL: Tengo tres estrellas y veinte cruces.

SARGENTO: Sí.

TENIENTE CORONEL: Me ha saludado el cardenal arzobispo de Toledo con sus veinticuatro borlas moradas.

SARGENTO: Sí.

TENIENTE CORONEL: Yo soy el teniente. Yo soy el teniente. Yo soy el teniente coronel de la Guardia Civil.

(Romeo y Julieta, celeste, blanco y oro, se abrazan sobre el jardín de tabaco de la caja de puros. El militar acaricia el cañón de un fusil lleno de sombra submarina.)

UNA VOZ (*Fuera*): Luna, luna, luna, luna,
del tiempo de la aceituna.
Cazorla enseña su torre
y Benamenjí la oculta.

Luna, luna, luna, luna,
Un gallo canta en la luna.
Señor alcalde, sus niñas
están mirando a la luna.

SCENE OF THE LIEUTENANT COLONEL OF THE CIVIL GUARD

GUARD ROOM

LT. COLONEL: I'm the Lieutenant Colonel of the Civil Guard.

SERGEANT: Yes, sir.

LT. COLONEL: And nobody contradicts me.

SERGEANT: No, sir.

LT. COLONEL: I've got three stars and twenty crosses.

SERGEANT: Yes, sir.

LT. COLONEL: The Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo greeted me with his twenty-four purple tassels.

SERGEANT: Yes, sir.

LT. COLONEL: I'm the Lieutenant. I'm the Lieutenant. I'm the Lieutenant General of the Civil Guard.

(Romeo and Juliet, under a blue, white and gold sky, embrace in the tobacco garden of the cigar box. The soldier strokes the barrel of a gun, full of underwater darkness.)

A VOICE (*off stage*) Moon, moon, moon, moon,
at olive-picking time.
Cazorla shows its tower
and Benamenjí hides it own.

Moon, moon, moon, moon.
A cockerel sings up on the moon.
Mr. Mayor, your little girls
Are looking at the moon.

TENIENTE CORONEL: ¿Qué pasa?

SARGENTO: ¡Un gitano!

(La mirada de mulo joven del gitano ensombrece y agiganta los ojirris del Teniente Coronel de la Guardia Civil.)

TENIENTE CORONEL: Yo soy el teniente coronel de la Guardia Civil.

GITANO: Sí.

TENIENTE CORONEL: ¿Tú quién eres?

GITANO: Un gitano.

TENIENTE CORONEL: ¿Y qué es un gitano?

GITANO: Cualquier cosa.

TENIENTE CORONEL: ¿Cómo te llamas?

GITANO: Eso.

TENIENTE CORONEL: ¿Qué dices?

GITANO: Gitano.

SARGENTO: Me lo encontré y lo he traído.

TENIENTE CORONEL: ¿Dónde estabas?

GITANO: En el puente de los ríos.

TENIENTE CORONEL: Pero ¿de qué ríos?

GITANO: De todos los ríos.

TENIENTE CORONEL: ¿Y qué hacías allí?

GITANO: Una torre de canela.

LT. COLONEL: What's going on?

SERGEANT: A gypsy!

(The mulish gaze of the young little gypsy makes the beady little eyes of the Lieutenant Colonel of the Civil Guard widen and darken.)

LT. COLONEL: I'm the Lieutenant Colonel of the Civil Guard.

GYPSY: Yes, sir.

LT. COLONEL: And who are you?

GYPSY: A gypsy.

LT. COLONEL: And what's a gypsy?

GYPSY: Anything you like.

LT. COLONEL: What's your name?

GYPSY: Just that.

LT. COLONEL: What did you say?

GYPSY: Gypsy.

SERGEANT: I found him and brought him here.

LT. COLONEL: Where were you?

GITANO: On the bridge over the rivers.

LT. COLONEL: But over what rivers?

GITANO: Over all of them.

LT. COLONEL: And what were you doing there?

GYPSY: Building a tower of cinnamon.

TENIENTE CORONEL: ¡Sargento!

SARGENTO: A la orden, mi teniente coronel de la Guardia Civil.

GITANO: He inventado unas alas para volar, y vuelo. Azufre y rosa en mis labios.

TENIENTE CORONEL: ¡Ay!

GITANO: Aunque no necesito alas, porque vuelo sin ellas. Nubes y anillos en mi sangre.

TENIENTE CORONEL: ¡Ayy!

GITANO: En enero tengo azahar.

TENIENTE CORONEL (*Retorciéndose*): ¡Ayyyyy!

GITANO: Y naranjas en la nieve.

TENIENTE CORONEL: ¡Ayyyyy! Pun, pin, pam. (*Cae muerto*).

(El alma de tabco y café con leche del Teniente Coronel de la Guardia Civil sale por la ventana.)

SARGENTO: ¡Socorro!

(En el patio del cuartel, cuatro guardais civiles apalean al gitano.)

RETURN

LT. COLONEL: Sergeant!

SERGEANT: At your command, Lieutenant Colonel of the Civil Guard, sir.

GYPSY: I've invented some wings for flying, and I fly all over. Sulphur and rose on my lips.

LT. COLONEL: What?

GYPSY: Though I don't need wings, because I can fly without them. Clouds and rings are in my blood.

LT. COLONEL: Whaaat?

GYPSY: In January, I've got orange blossoms.

LT. COLONEL (*wringing his hands*): Whaaaaat?

GYPSY: And oranges in the snow.

LT. COLONEL: Whaaaaat? Bim, bang, boom. (*Falls over dead.*)

(The tabacco and white coffee soul of the Lieutenant Colonel of the Civil Guard flies out of the window.)

SERGEANT: Help!

(In the barracks yard, four Civil Guards beat up the little gypsy.)

RETURN

CANCIÓN DEL GITANO APALEADO

Veinticuatro bofetadas.
Veinticinco bofetadas;
después, mi madre, a la noche,
me pondrá en papel de plata.

Guardia civil caminera,
dadme unos sorbitos de agua.
Agua con peces y barcos.
Agua, agua, agua, agua.

¡Ay, mandor de los civiles
que estás arriba en tu sala!
¡No habrá pañuelos de seda
para limpiarme la cara!

5 de julio, 1925

RETURN

SONG OF THE BEATEN GYPSY

Twenty-four times they punched me.
Twenty-five times in all;
later, when it's dark, my mother
will wrap me up in silver foil.

Civil Guard of the highways,
give me a sip of water.
Water with fish and boats.
Water, water, water, water.

Civil Guard commander,
you up there in your room!
There'll never be silk handkerchiefs
to tidy up my face!

5 July, 1925

RETURN

DIÁLOGO DEL AMARGO

CAMPO

UNA VOZ: Amargo.
Las adelfas de mi patio.
Corazón de almendra amarga.
Amargo.

(Llegan tres jóvenes con anchos sombreros.)

JOVEN 1.º: Vamos a llegar tarde.

JOVEN 2.º: La noche se nos echa encima.

JOVEN 1.º: ¿Y ése?

JOVEN 2.º: Viene detrás.

JOVEN 1.º *(En alta voz)*: ¡Amargo!

AMARGO *(Lejos)*: Ya voy.

JOVEN 2.º *(A voces)*: ¡Amargo!

AMARGO *(Con calma)*: ¡Ya voy!

(Pausa.)

JOVEN 1.º: ¡Qué hermosos olivares!

JOVEN 2.º: Sí.

(Largo silencio)

JOVEN 1.º: No me gusta andar de noche.

JOVEN 2.º: Ni a mí tampoco.

DIALOGUE OF AMARGO

COUNTRYSIDE

A VOICE: Amargo. **NOTE**
The oleanders in my courtyard.
Heart bitter as almonds.
Amargo.

(Three young men in wide-brimmed hats arrive.)

1st YOUTH: We're going to get there late.

2nd YOUTH: It's almost night.

1st YOUTH: What about him?

2nd YOUTH: He's coming.

1st YOUTH *(loudly)*: Amargo!

AMARGO *(far off)*: I'm coming.

2nd YOUTH *(shouting)*: Amargo!

AMARGO *(calmly)*: I'm coming.

(Pause)

1st YOUTH: What lovely olive groves.

2nd YOUTH: Yes.

(A long silence)

1st YOUTH: I don't like travelling at night.

2nd YOUTH: Neither do I.

JOVEN 1.º: La noche se hizo para dormir.

JOVEN 2.º: Es verdad.

*(Ranas y grillos hacen la glorieta del estío andaluz.
El Amargo camina con las manos en la cintura.)*

AMARGO: Ay yayayay.
Yo le pregunté a la Muerte.
Ay yayayay.

*(El grito de su canto pone un acento circunflejo
sobre el corazón de los que le han oído.)*

JOVEN 1º *(desde muy lejos)*: ¡Amargo!

JOVEN 2º *(casi perdido)*: ¡Amargooo!

(Silencio.)

*(El Amargo está solo en medio de la carretera. Entorna sus
grandes ojos verdes y se ciñe la chaqueta de pana alrededor
del talle. Altas montañas le rodean. Su gran reloj de plata le suena
oscuramente en el bolsillo a cada paso.)*

(Un jinete viene galopando por la carretera.)

JINETE *(parando el caballo)*: ¡Buenas noches!

AMARGO: A la paz de Dios.

JINETE: ¿Va usted a Granada?

AMARGO: A Granada voy.

JINETE: Pues vamos juntos.

AMARGO: Eso parece.

JINETE: ¿Por qué no monta en la grupa?

1st YOUTH: The night was made for sleeping.

2nd YOUTH: That's true.

*(Frogs and crickets make up this bower of Andalusian summertime.
Amargo walks by, his hands on his hips.)*

AMARGO: Ay yayayay.
I asked Death a question.
Ay yayayay.

*(The cry in his song puts a circumflex accent on the hearts
of his listeners.)*

1st YOUTH *(from far away)*: Amargo!

2nd YOUTH *(nearly lost)*: Amargooo!

(Silence.)

*(Amargo is alone in the middle of the road. Narrowing his
big green eyes, he fastens his corduroy jacket round
his waist. High mountains surround him. His large silver watch
ticks darkly in his pocket at every step.)*

(A rider comes galloping down the road.)

RIDER *(pulling up his horse)*: Good evening!

AMARGO: Peace be to God.

RIDER: You going to Granada?

AMARGO: Yes, Granada.

RIDER: We can go together.

AMARGO: Looks like that.

RIDER: Why don't you climb up behind?

AMARGO: Porque no me duelen los pies.

JINETE: Yo vengo de Málaga.

AMARGO: Bueno.

JINETE: Allí están mis hermanos.

AMARGO (*displícete*): ¿Cuántos?

JINETE: Son tres. Venden cuchillos. Ese es el negocio.

AMARGO: De salud les sirva.

JINETE: De plata y de oro.

AMARGO: Un cuchillo no tiene que ser más que cuchillo.

JINETE: Se equivoca.

AMARGO: Gracias.

JINETE: Los cuchillos de oro se van solos al corazón. Los de plata cortan el cuello como una brizna de hierba.

AMARGO: ¿No sirven para partir el pan?

JINETE: Los hombres parten el pan con las monos.

AMARGO: ¡Es verdad!

(El caballo se inquieta.)

JINETE: ¡Caballo!

AMARGO: Es la noche.

(El camino ondulante salomoniza la sombra del animal.)

JINETE: ¿Quieres un cuchillo?

AMARGO: Because my feet don't hurt.

RIDER: I've come from Málaga.

AMARGO: Good.

RIDER: My brothers are there.

AMARGO (*indifferent*): How many?

RIDER: There're three of them. They sell knives. That's their business.

AMARGO: May it bring them good health.

RIDER: Gold and silver ones.

AMARGO: A knife is a knife, nothing more.

RIDER: You're wrong.

AMARGO: Thank you.

RIDER: Gold knives go straight to the heart by themselves. Silver ones cut the throat as if it were a blade of grass.

AMARGO: Aren't they good for cutting bread?

RIDER: Men break bread with their hands.

AMARGO: That's true.

(The horse grows restless.)

RIDER: Whoa!

AMARGO: Must be the night.

(The animal's shadow winds over the rolling road.)

RIDER: You want a knife?

AMARGO: No.

JINETE: Mira que te lo regalo.

AMARGO: Pero yo no lo acepto.

JINETE: No tendrás otra ocasión.

AMARGO: ¿Quién sabe?

JINETE: Los otros cuchillos no sirven. Los otros cuchillos son blandos y se asustan de la sangre. Los que nosotros vendemos son fríos. ¿Entiendes? Entran buscando el sitio de más calor y allí se paran.

(El Amargo se calla. Su mano derecha se le enfría como si agarrase un pedazo de oro.)

JINETE: ¡Qué hermoso cuchillo!

AMARGO: ¿Vale mucho?

JINETE: Pero ¿no quieres éste?

(Saca un cuchillo de oro. La punta brilla como una llama de candil.)

AMARGO: He dicho que no.

JINETE: ¡Muchacho, súbete conmigo!

AMARGO: Todavía no estoy cansado.

(El caballo se suelta a espantar.)

JINETE *(tirando de la bridas)*: Pero ¡que caballo este!

AMARGO: Es lo oscuro.

(Pausa.)

JINETE: Como te iba diciendo, en Málaga están mis tres hermanos. ¡Qué manera de vender cuchillos! En la catedral compraron dos mil para adornar todos los altares y poner una corona a la torre. Muchos barcos

AMARGO: No.

RIDER: Look, I'll give it to you.

AMARGO: I won't accept it.

RIDER: You won't have another chance.

AMARGO: Who knows?

RIDER: Other knives aren't any good. Other knives are soft, and scared of blood. The ones we sell are cold. You understand? They go in looking for the hottest spot, and there they stop.

(Amargo falls silent. His right hand grows cold, as if he were clutching a piece of gold.)

RIDER: What a beautiful knife!

AMARGO: Is it worth a lot?

RIDER: But wouldn't you like this one?

(He pulls out a gold knife. Its point burns like the flame of an oil lamp.)

AMARGO: I told you, no.

RIDER: Climb up here with me, boy!

AMARGO: I'm still not tired.

(The horse starts to fright again.)

RIDER *(pulling on the reins)*: What a horse!

AMARGO: It's the dark.

(Pausa.)

RIDER: As I was telling you, my three brothers are in Málaga. What a way they have of selling knives! At the cathedral they bought two thousand to decorate all the altars and put a crown on the tower. Many a ship

escribieron en ellos sus nombres; los pescadores más humildes de la orilla del mar se alumbran de noche con el brillo que despiden sus hojas afiladas.

AMARGO: ¡Es una hermosura!

JINETE: ¿Quién lo puede negar?

(La noche se espesa como un vino de cien años. La serpiente gorda del Sur abre sus ojos en la madrugada, y hay en los durmientes un deseo infinito de arrojarse por el balcón a la magia perversa del perfume y la lejanía.)

AMARGO: Me parece que hemos perdido el camino.

JINETE *(parando el caballo)*: ¿Sí?

AMARGO: Con la conversación.

JINETE: ¿No son aquéllas las luces de Granada?

AMARGO: No sé. El mundo es muy grande.

JINETE: Y muy solo.

AMARGO: Como que está deshabitado.

JINETE: Tú lo estás diciendo.

AMARGO: ¡Me da una desesperanza! ¡Ay yayayay!

JINETE: Porque si llegas allí, ¿qué haces?

AMARGO: ¿Qué hago?

JINETE: Y si te estás en tu sitio, ¿para qué quieres estar?

AMARGO: ¿Para qué?

JINETE: Yo monto este caballo y vendo cuchillos, pero si no lo hiciera, ¿qué paaría?

wrote its name on them; the humblest fishermen along the seashore light up the night with the sparkle that their sharp blades give off.

AMARGO: What a beautiful thing!

RIDER: Who could deny that?

(The night grows as thick as a hundred-year-old wine. The fat serpent of the South opens its eyes in the hour before dawn, and sleepers feel an infinite desire to throw themselves off the balcony into the perverse magic of perfume and distance.)

AMARGO: I think we've lost the way.

RIDER *(stopping the horse)*: Have we?

AMARGO: While we were talking.

RIDER: Aren't those the lights of Granada?

AMARGO: I don't know. The world's so big.

RIDER: And so lonely.

AMARGO: As if no-one lived there.

RIDER: You've said it.

AMARGO: It makes me despair. Ay yayayay!

RIDER: So if you get there, what'll you do?

AMARGO: What'll I do?

RIDER: And if you are where you belong, why do you want to be there?

AMARGO: Why?

RIDER: I ride this horse all round and sell knives, but if I didn't, what would happen?

AMARGO: ¿Qué pasaría?

(Pausa.)

JINETE: Estamos llegando a Granada.

AMARGO: ¿Es posible?

JINETE: Mira cómo relumbran los miradores.

AMARGO: La encuentro un poco cambiada.

JINETE: Es que estás cansado.

AMARGO: Sí, ciertamente.

JINETE: Ahora no te negarás a montar conmigo.

AMARGO: Espera un poco.

JINETE: ¡Vamos, sube! Sube de prisa. Es necesario llegar antes de que amanezca ... Y toma este cuchillo. ¡Te lo regalo!

AMARGO: ¡Ay yayayay!

(El Jinete ayuda al Amargo. Los dos emprenden al camino de Granada. La sierra del fondo se cubre de cicutas y de ortigas.)

RETURN

AMARGO: What would happen?

(Pause.)

RIDER: We're almost in Granada.

AMARGO: Is that possible?

RIDER: Look how dazzling the balcony windows are.

AMARGO: I find it a little changed.

RIDER: It's just that you're tired.

AMARGO: Yes, of course.

RIDER: You won't refuse to ride with me now.

AMARGO: Wait a bit.

RIDER: Come on, jump up! Jump up fast! We've got to get there before day breaks ... And take this knife. I'm giving it to you!

AMARGO: Ay yayayay!

(The rider helps Amargo up. The two of them set off towards Granada. In the background, the mountains are covered with hemlock and nettles.)

RETURN

CANCIÓN DE LA MADRE DEL AMARGO

Lo llevan puesto en mi sábana
mis adelfas y mi palma.

Día veintisiete de agosto
con un cuchillito de oro.

La cruz. ¡Y vamos andando!
Era moreno y amargo.

Vecinas, dadme una jarra
de azófar con limonada.

La cruz. No llorad ninguna.
El Amargo está en la luna.

9 de julio, 1925

RETURN

SONG OF AMARGO'S MOTHER

They carry him upon my sheet,
my oleanders and my palm.

The twenty-seventh of August
with a tiny knife of gold.

The cross. So much for that!
He was dark-haired and bitter.

Neighbour ladies, bring me a brass
pitcher filled with lemonade.

The cross. Don't anybody weep.
Amargo now is in the moon.

9 July 1925

RETURN

NOTES

The notes below offer glosses on particular ‘knots’ of translation in *Poema del Cante Jondo*. Click on [RETURN](#) to be taken back to the text.

siguiriya the word is derived from *seguidilla*, a dance and piece of music in a fast triple rhythm, and also a poem of generally four lines used in popular songs. The gypsy *siguiriya* is one of the basic forms (if not the genuine, perfect prototype) of *cante jondo*, and is notable for its lyrical compression and emotional intensity. [RETURN](#)

soleá the word is a contraction of *soledad* (‘solitude’, ‘loneliness’), and denotes a song of three or four lines, usually sung in 3/4 or 3/8 time. [RETURN](#)

saeta a *saeta* is literally a ‘dart’ or an ‘arrow’, but more metaphorically refers to a spontaneous cry or song of devotion to Christ or the Virgin Mary. A musical prayer, it is always sung without guitar accompaniment. [RETURN](#)

petenera a melancholy, sentimental song, always accompanied by the guitar, and intended to be danced. [RETURN](#)

siguiriyero the singer of *siguiriya* (see above). [RETURN](#)

crótalo a play upon words. *Crótalo* is an old name for the castanet, but also means rattlesnake. There is an obvious similarity of sound between the two. [RETURN](#)

Amargo literally ‘the Bitter One’. Lorca elsewhere characterised this figure as a ‘centaur of death and hatred’, ‘an angel of death and despair’, that he saw as infecting himself and the whole of Andalusia. [RETURN](#)

FURTHER READING AND LINKS

The literature on Lorca is vast, and every year sees ever more material appearing. Clicking simply on his name in Google, for instance, currently (2007) yields nearly a million and three quarter references. The following list is therefore restricted to material focussing upon *Poem of the Deep Song* and/or upon translations of his work.

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Lorca's lecture of 1922 on the significance of 'deep song' is presented in Christopher Maurer (ed.), *Deep Song and Other Prose*. London: Marion Boyars, 1980.

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1999 [contains an invaluable section on translating Lorca, as well as sixteen different versions of a single poem].

Eisenberg, Daniel 'Lorca and Censorship: The Gay Artist Made Heterosexual', *Angélica* [Lucena, Spain], 2, 1991, 121-45 [an extensive and valuable discussion of the various kinds of censorship that Lorca's life and work have faced].

Internet links

<http://www.garcia-lorca.org> is the official website of the Lorca foundation, though it is currently available in Spanish only.

<http://granadainfo.com/lorca/index> presents a detailed chronology of Lorca's life, as well as much interesting material about Granada.

<http://redhibiscus05.blogspot.com/2006/09/lorca-trans-passing.html> discusses a translation of *Después de pasar*, from *Poema del Cante Jondo*; and Ralph Angel discusses the entire sequence of poems in 'Attempting to Live Inside Federico García Lorca's *Poema del Cante Jondo for a While*' (<http://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article.php?lab=Deep>Song).