

**Spanish Poems**  
**Translated into English**  
**A Dual-Language Anthology**

**Second Edition**

**Alan Steinle**

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## Table of Contents

An Introduction to the Art of Translating Formal Poetry ...	7
ANONYMOUS .....	11
Romance del rey Rodrigo .....	12
The Ballad of King Rodrigo .....	13
JORGE MANRIQUE (c. 1440-1479) .....	27
Coplas por la muerte de su padre .....	28
Verses on the Death of His Father .....	29
JUAN BOSCÁN DE ALMOGÁVER (c. 1487-1542) .....	57
«Como aquel que en soñar gusto recibe» .....	58
"Like one who finds his pleasures in his dreams" .....	59
GARCILASO DE LA VEGA (c. 1491-1536) .....	61
«Un rato se levanta mi esperanza» .....	62
"One moment, hope arises from the gloom" .....	63
FRAY LUIS DE LEÓN (c. 1527-1591) .....	65
Noche serena .....	66
Peaceful Night .....	67
Vida Retirada .....	74
A Life of Retirement .....	75
Oda a Francisco Salinas: Catedrático de música de la Universidad de Salamanca .....	82
Ode to Francisco Salinas: Professor of Music at the University of Salamanca .....	83
BALTASAR DEL ALCÁZAR (1530-1606) .....	87
Tres cosas .....	88
Three Things .....	89
SAN JUAN DE LA CRUZ (1542-1591) .....	93
Coplas del alma que pena por ver a Dios .....	94
Verses of the Soul that Aches to See God .....	95
Un no sé qué .....	100
The Mystery .....	101
LUIS DE GÓNGORA Y ARGOTE (1561-1627) .....	107
Alegoría de la brevedad de las cosas humanas .....	108
An Allegory on the Brevity of Human Things .....	109
«Al tramontar del sol, la ninfa mía» .....	112
The Nymph .....	113

LOPE DE VEGA CARPIO (1562-1635).....	115
«¿Qué tengo yo, que mi amistad procuras?» .....	116
Tomorrow! .....	117
JUAN DE ARGUIJO (1567-1622).....	119
La tempestad y la calma.....	120
The Calm After the Storm .....	121
FRANCISCO DE QUEVEDO (1580-1645).....	123
A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas .....	124
To Rome, Buried in its Ruins .....	125
SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ (c. 1648-1695).....	127
«En perseguirme, mundo, ¿qué intereses?» .....	128
"O world, you are afflicting me, but why?" .....	129
A su retrato .....	130
To Her Portrait.....	131
«Este amoroso tormento» .....	132
"This love torments me so!" .....	133
GERTRUDIS GÓMEZ DE AVELLANEDA (1814-1873)..	141
A la muerte del célebre poeta cubano don José María de Heredia.....	142
On the Death of the Famous Cuban Poet José María Heredia.....	143
JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ (1834-1886).....	151
de El gaucho Martín Fierro .....	152
from The Gaucho Martín Fierro .....	153
MANUEL GONZÁLEZ PRADA (1844-1918).....	161
«Los bienes y las glorias de la vida» .....	162
"The glories and rewards that we pursue".....	163
JOSÉ MARTÍ (1853-1895) .....	165
de Versos sencillos.....	166
from Simple Verses .....	167
RUBÉN DARÍO (1867-1916) .....	173
Sonatina: La princesa está triste .....	174
Sonatina: The Princess Is Sad .....	175
Versos de otoño .....	178
Autumn Verses .....	179
Lo fatal.....	180
The Unavoidable.....	181
La fuente .....	182

The Fount .....	183
Allá lejos .....	184
Memories of Childhood.....	185
¡Eheu! .....	186
Alas! .....	187
AMADO NERVO (1870-1919) .....	189
Éxtasis .....	190
The Miracle of Life .....	191
Brahma no piensa .....	192
Brahma Doesn't Think.....	193
Kalpa .....	194
Eternal Return .....	195
«Si tú me dices "¡ven!", lo dejo todo».....	196
"If you should tell me, 'Come!', I'd leave it all" .....	197
Gratia plena .....	198
Full of Grace.....	199
Su trenza.....	200
Her Braid.....	201
Escamoteo .....	202
Sleight of Hand.....	203
¿Qué más me da?.....	204
What Can They Offer Me? .....	205
¡Quién sabe por qué! .....	206
Who Knows Why! .....	207
Mi secreto .....	208
My Secret .....	209
El fantasma soy yo .....	210
I'm the Ghost .....	211
Bendición a Francia .....	212
Blessings for France .....	213
¡Cuántos desiertos interiores! .....	214
The Inner Desert.....	215
Lux perpetua.....	216
Perpetual Illumination .....	217
Metafísiques .....	218
Metaphysicians.....	219
Cuando Dios lo quiera.....	220
Whenever God Would Have It Be! .....	221
El celaje.....	222

The Cloudscape.....	223
No lo sé .....	224
A Dialogue with My Soul.....	225
En paz .....	226
At Peace .....	227
ATILIO GONZÁLEZ HERNÁNDEZ (b. 1944).....	229
Saludando a Platón.....	230
Greeting Plato .....	231

## **An Introduction to the Art of Translating Formal Poetry**

The first thing that I do when I am translating a poem is to make a literal, word-for-word translation (without rhyme or meter) into English, my target language.

Next, I must decide what meter and rhyme scheme to use in English. Sometimes I use the same rhyme scheme as in the original poem, but other times I change or simplify the rhyme scheme.

In my English translations, I usually use iambic meter, which is the most versatile meter in formal English poetry. Iambic meter simply means that every second syllable is stressed (although there can be exceptions). One iamb has one unstressed syllable ("u") followed by one stressed syllable ("S"): uS. A Greek-derived word is used to tell how many iambs are on one line. In the following examples, the stressed syllables are underlined.

**Iambic dimeter** means that there are 2 iambs: uSuS

Example: "their many laws"

**Iambic trimeter** means that there are 3 iambs: uSuSuS

Example: "before he went away"

**Iambic tetrameter** means that there are 4 iambs: uSuSuSuS

Example: "of Atlas, trembled overhead"

**Iambic pentameter** means that there are 5 iambs:  
uSuSuSuSuS

Example: "Have I offended you, though I'm just planning"

In addition to the meter and the rhyme scheme, other variables to consider when translating include the syntax, word choices, overall meaning, and the tone of the poem.

The syntax refers to the regular or irregular grammar and word order. The word order can be changed, or inverted, to make the meter or rhyme work. I try to avoid these inversions most of the time, but when another aspect of the poem takes precedence, I sometimes use them. Here is an example in which I inverted the word order to keep the meter intact:

"An object sweet of our desire!"

Normally, the adjective "sweet" would come before the noun "object" in English grammar: "a sweet object."

The tone of the poem is also important and can take precedence over other variables. One wouldn't want to write a serious translation of a humorous poem or a giddy translation of a sad poem.

Word choices influence the tone and meaning of the poem, so words should be selected carefully.

The overall meaning of the poem should not be neglected, although specific, local meanings sometimes have to be changed in order to adjust for other variables.

With all of these variables in mind, it is no surprise that the translator has to make compromises when translating a poem. The original poet almost certainly made compromises in order to fulfill the requirements of the meter and the rhyme scheme, so why should we be surprised when the translator has to make compromises? Translating is a creative and challenging endeavor, but it is not without its difficulties and pitfalls.

The most common short form of poetry in the Western tradition has been the sonnet. Generally, Spanish sonnets have 14 lines and 11 syllables per line. The first 8 lines are called the octave, and they almost always rhyme abba abba. The last 6 lines are called the sestet and they can rhyme in one of several different schemes: cdc dcd; ccd eed; cdc ede; cde cde, and so on.

When I translate Spanish poems into English, I often use fewer syllables per line in the English than occur in the Spanish poem since English words, on average, have fewer

syllables than their Spanish counterparts. Having fewer syllables in English thus allows me to avoid "filler" words in my translation. Therefore, while the Spanish sonnets have 11 syllables per line, I use 8 or 10 syllables per line in my English translations. (This means I use iambic tetrameter or iambic pentameter.) I sometimes use the rhyme scheme of the original sonnet, but sometimes I use a simpler—and easier to write—rhyme scheme.

All of my translations in this book have some kind of rhyme scheme, except for "The Gaucho Martín Fierro," which I translated into blank verse. Blank verse simply means that the lines are written with meter but without rhyme.

All of my translations in this book were written in iambic meter, except for two: "Three Things" was written in syllabic meter, which means I considered only the total number of syllables in each line but not the number and placement of the stressed syllables. "Sonatina: The Princess Is Sad" was written in anapestic tetrameter, which means there are 4 anapests per line. An anapest has 2 unstressed syllables and 1 stressed syllable: uuS. Each line of my translation more or less adheres to this pattern: uSuuSuuSuuS. The first unstressed syllable is usually removed in lines of anapests to make the lines easier to write.

Writing these translations has been a challenging and fun creative experience. While some of these translations seem more successful to me than others, I will let you decide which ones you like best. And who knows? Maybe you will attempt to translate a formal poem yourself someday.



## ANONYMOUS

The Goths were Germanic people who made their home near the Black Sea in the 3rd century CE. When the Roman Empire fell, they built kingdoms in Italy and Spain. The Visigoths (Latin for "western Goths") were those who settled in southwestern Europe and had a presence in Spain until 711 CE.

King Rodrigo was known as the last king of the Goths, although that was not strictly true. He ruled Hispania from 710 to 711 (or 712). His succession to the throne was in question, and his position was unstable. As soon as he had the throne, he amassed an army to go out against the Arabs and Berbers, who had been attacking southern Iberia. He infamously lost the Battle of Guadalete and was either killed in battle or died soon after in the surrounding hills. After that event, the Arabs were able to make inroads into the peninsula.

The following poem, "Romance del rey Rodrigo" ("The Ballad of King Rodrigo"), is about the final part of the king's life. According to legend, King Rodrigo seduced the daughter of Count Julian, and the count took revenge on the king and defeated him in battle. The poem was originally two separate poems, and these poems were eventually written down sometime during the 15th or 16th centuries.

## Romance del rey Rodrigo

Los vientos eran contrarios,  
la luna estaba crecida,  
los peces daban gemidos  
por el mal tiempo que hacía,

cuando el buen rey Don Rodrigo  
junto a la Cava dormía,  
dentro de una rica tienda  
de oro bien guarnecida.

Trescientas cuerdas de plata  
que la tienda sostenían;  
dentro había cien doncellas  
vestidas a maravilla:

las cincuenta están tañendo  
con muy extraña armonía;  
las cincuenta están cantando  
con muy dulce melodía.

Allí habló una doncella  
que Fortuna se decía:  
“Si duermes, rey Don Rodrigo,  
despierta por cortesía.

y verás tus malos hados,  
tu peor postrimería,  
y verás tus gentes muertas,  
y tu batalla rompida,

y tus villas y ciudades  
destruidas en un día,  
tus castillos, fortalezas,  
otro señor los regía.

## The Ballad of King Rodrigo

The howling winds were all opposed.  
The moon was full and bright.  
The fish bemoaned the weather of  
that fateful, stormy night.

The good King Don Rodrigo held  
La Cava, I've been told,  
inside a wealthy tent that was  
adorned with threads of gold.

Three hundred cords of silver held  
the tent above the ground.  
Inside, one hundred maidens wore  
their clothing to astound.

While fifty played with instruments  
a harmony divine,  
the other fifty sang, as one,  
each sweet and pleasing line.

But maiden Fortune said these words:  
"King Don Rodrigo, wake.  
If you are sleeping now, arise.  
Please listen for your sake.

"You'll see your evil destiny,  
your final dreadful end.  
You'll see your people lying dead,  
whom you could not defend.

"Within a day, he will destroy  
your towns, both far and wide.  
Your castles, forts, and tents will be  
by others occupied.

Si me pides quién lo ha hecho,  
yo muy bien te lo diría:  
ese conde Don Julián  
por amores de su hija;

porque se la deshonraste  
y más de ella no tenía  
juramento viene echando  
que te ha de costar la vida."

Despertó muy congojado  
con aquella voz que oía;  
con cara triste y penosa  
de esta suerte respondía:

"Mercedes a ti, Fortuna,  
de esta tu mensajería."  
Estando en esto ha llegado  
uno que nueva traía,  
como el conde Don Julián  
las tierras le destruía.

Apriesa pide el caballo  
y al encuentro le salía;  
los contrarios eran tantos  
que esfuerzo no le valía;  
que capitanes y gentes  
huye él que más podía.

Rodrigo deja sus tierras,  
y del real se salía;  
solo va el desventurado,  
que no lleva compañía.

El caballo de cansado  
ya mudar no se podía;  
camina por donde quiere,  
que ni le estorba la vía.

"If you ask me who will do this,  
I'll tell you something true:  
Don Julian, the Count, will come  
to do these things to you.

"He loves his daughter well, you see,  
and you put her to shame,  
so he has sworn an oath that will  
cost you your life and name."

Rodrigo woke in great distress  
from that voice he had heard.  
Though he was sad and filled with gloom,  
he spoke this very word:

"I'm thankful, Fortune, for your words,"  
but he would never stand,  
for at that moment Julian  
was ravaging the land.

Rodrigo shouted for his horse  
to meet the enemy.  
The soldiers there were countless, so  
his men were forced to flee.

Rodrigo left his country then  
to face his destiny.  
He went alone with just his horse.  
He took no company.

His horse was weary from the road.  
It wandered here and there.  
Rodrigo didn't guide, and though  
it strayed he didn't care.

El rey va tan desmayado,  
que sentido no tenía:  
muerto va de sed y hambre,  
que de verle era mancilla.

Iba tan tinto de sangre  
que una brasa parecía;  
las armas lleva abolladas,  
que eran de gran pedrería;  
la espada lleva hecha sierra  
de los golpes que de tenía;

el almete de abollado  
en la cabeza le hundía;  
la cara lleva hinchada  
del trabajo que sufría.

Subióse encima de un cerro  
el más alto que allí había;  
de allí mira su gente  
cómo iba de vencida;  
de allí mira sus banderas  
y estandartes que tenía,

cómo están todos pisados  
que la tierra los cubría.  
Mira por los capitanes  
que ninguno parecía;

mira el campo tinto en sangre,  
el cual arroyos corría.  
El triste de ver aquesto,  
gran mancilla en sí tenía;

llorando de los sus ojos,  
de esta manera decía:  
"Ayer era rey de España,  
y hoy no lo soy de una villa;

The king was so exhausted, and  
his light was growing dim.  
So weary from the lack of food—  
'Twas painful watching him.

His skin was colored red with blood,  
just like some burning coals.  
His weapons and his armor were  
replete with dents and holes.

His helmet, falling from his head,  
he couldn't yet unbend.  
His face was swollen with his grief.  
His sorrow knew no end.

He climbed the summit of a hill—  
the highest hill around.  
From there he saw his tattered flags  
all scattered on the ground.

The enemy had trampled them  
upon the filthy ground.  
He looked for all his captains there,  
but they could not be found.

He saw the field, so full of blood—  
the blood still slowly streamed.  
He was aggrieved to see it all.  
His guilt was great it seemed.

His eyes were wet with falling tears.  
He said this with a frown:  
"A day ago, I ruled all Spain.  
Today, not one small town.

ayer villas y castillos,  
hoy ninguno poseía;  
ayer tenía criados,  
y gente que me servía,

hoy no tengo una almena  
que pueda decir que es mía.  
¡Desdichada fue la hora,  
desdichado fue aquel día

en que nací y heredé  
la tan grande señoría,  
pues lo había de perder  
todo junto y en un día!

¡Oh, muerte! ¿por qué no vienes  
y llevas esta alma mía  
de aqueste cuerpo mezquino,  
pues te se agradecería?"

Después que el rey don Rodrigo  
a España perdido había,  
íbase desesperado  
huyendo de su desdicha;

solo va el desventurado,  
no quiere otra compañía  
que la del mal de la Muerte  
que en su seguimiento iba.

Métese por las montañas,  
las mas copesas que veía  
Topado ha con un pastor  
que su ganado traía;

díjole: "¿Dime, buen hombre,  
lo que preguntar quería,  
si hay por aquí monasterio  
o gente de clerecía,"

"A day ago, I held some forts.  
Today, I don't have one.  
A day ago, I had some aides  
to do my will and run.

"Today I don't have any place  
that I can call my own."  
Rodrigo said with all his strength,  
he said it with a groan:

"Accursed be my day of birth  
and when I first held sway,  
for my possessions were destroyed  
together in one day!

"O death! Why don't you take my soul  
and let my body go?  
Yes, let this wretched body be.  
For this I'd thank you so!"

But after King Rodrigo lost  
his land and rule in Spain,  
he fled from his misfortune there  
with great despair and pain.

Rodrigo went away alone,  
but something followed him.  
The pain of death pursued him still  
and made the daylight dim.

He went into the wilderness,  
so empty, high, and steep.  
He ran into a shepherd there  
who had a herd of sheep.

He said to him, "Tell me, good man,  
just what I want to know.  
Is there a monastery here?  
Please tell me it is so."

El pastor respondió luego  
que en balde lo buscaría,  
porque en todo aquel desierto  
sola una ermita había  
donde estaba un ermitaño,  
que hacía muy santa vida.

El rey fue alegre de esto  
por allí acabar su vida;  
pidió al hombre que le diese  
de comer, si algo tenía,

que las fuerzas de su cuerpo  
del todo desfallecían.  
el pastor sacó un zurrón  
en donde su pan traía;  
dióle de él y de un tasajo  
que acaso allí echado había;

el pan era muy moreno,  
al rey muy mal le sabía;  
las lágrimas se le salen,  
detener no las podía,

acordándose en su tiempo  
los manjares que comía.  
Después que hubo descansado  
por la ermita le pedía;

el pastor le enseñó luego  
por donde no erraría;  
el rey le dio una cadena,  
y un anillo que traía;  
joyas son de gran valor  
que el rey en mucho tenía.  
Comenzando a caminar,  
ya cerca el sol se ponía,  
a la ermita hubo llegado  
en muy alta serranía.

The shepherd said he'd search in vain  
unless his search began  
by following the shepherd's lead.  
There was a holy man.

The king was glad, for he had sought  
to end his life that day.  
He asked the shepherd for some food  
before he went away.

The shepherd gave a bag to him  
that had some bread and meat.  
The shepherd was not loath to share,  
so that the king could eat.

The bread was very dark and dry.  
The king could hardly eat.  
The tears began to fall again.  
He wanted something sweet.

He thought of all the things he'd had.  
He'd eaten just the best.  
He asked the shepherd for the way  
once he had had a rest.

The shepherd told him where to go,  
so he would know the way.  
The king gave him his chain and ring,  
and he set out that day.

He set off for the hermitage.  
He had a way to go.  
At last he reached the holy place.  
The sun was sinking low.

Encontrase al ermitaño  
más de cien años tenía.  
"El desdichado Rodrigo  
yo soy, que rey ser solía,

el que por yerros de amor  
tiene su alma perdida,  
por cuyos negros pecados  
toda España es destruida.

Por Dios te ruego, ermitaño,  
por Dios y Santa María,  
que me oigas en confesión  
porque finar me quería."

El ermitaño se espanta,  
y con lágrimas decía:  
"Confesar, confesarte,  
absolverte no podía,"

Estando en estas razones  
voz de los cielos se oía:  
"Absuélvelo, confesor,  
absuélvelo por tu vida  
y dale la penitencia  
en su sepultura misma."

Según le fue revelado  
por obra el rey lo ponía.  
Metióse en la sepultura  
que a par de la ermita había;

dentro duerme una culebra,  
mirarla espanto ponía:  
tres roscas daba a la tumba,  
siete cabezas tenía.

He found the hermit in his home.  
The man was hunched and old.  
"I am the sad Rodrigo, who  
was king with towns and gold.

"For sins of love, I lost my wealth  
and lost my rule of Spain.  
For blackest sins, I lost my soul,  
and nothing soothes my pain.

"I beg of you, for God's own sake,  
for Mary's sake as well,  
you hear me in confession, for  
I fear the gates of hell."

The hermit was afraid to act.  
He felt aggrieved within.  
"Though you confess your wicked deeds,  
I can't absolve your sin."

But suddenly they heard a voice:  
"Absolve him, on your life,  
and give him penance in his grave,  
so he'll be free of strife."

The king had heard the voice above  
and did what was revealed.  
He got into the nearest grave,  
for it was yet unsealed.

Inside the grave a serpent slept,  
which filled their hearts with dread.  
It coiled thrice around the grave  
and raised its seven heads.

"Ruega por mí el ermitaño  
porque acabe bien mi vida."  
El ermitaño lo esfuerza,  
con la losa lo cubría,

rogaba a Dios a su lado  
todas las horas del día.  
"¿Cómo te va, penitente,  
con tu fuerte compañía?"

"Ya me come, ya me come,  
por do más pecado había,  
en derecho al corazón,  
fuente de mi gran desdicha."

La campanicas del cielo  
sones hacen de alegría:  
las campanas de la tierra  
ellas solas se tañían;  
el alma del penitente  
para los cielos subía.

"Please pray that I will end my life  
the way we know is best."  
The hermit prayed and laid on him  
the stone so he could rest.

He prayed to God for many hours.  
"I'm praying for your sake.  
Dear penitent, how are you with  
that strong and dreadful snake?"

"He's eating me! He's eating me!  
He knew just where to start.  
The source of all my sin and woe  
was this, my faithless heart."

The bells of heaven pealed with joy.  
The bells of earth rang out.  
Rodrigo's soul to heaven rose  
because he died devout.



## **JORGE MANRIQUE (c. 1440-1479)**

Jorge Manrique was born in Paredes de Nava to an old and eminent family that held many prominent positions. He was both a soldier and a poet, and his motto was "Ni miento ni me arrepiento" ("I neither lie nor repent"). One of his uncles was a poet and playwright, and Jorge himself became known as one of the leading pre-Renaissance poets.

Jorge's father, Don Rodrigo Manrique, Count of Paredes de Nava, was one of the most powerful men at that time, near the end of the Spanish Middle Ages. He died of cancer at the age of 70 in 1476. Shortly after his father died, Jorge wrote his magnum opus, "Coplas por la muerte de su padre" ("Verses on the Death of His Father"). This 480-line poem deals mostly with the vanity of ambition and the shortness of life. The poem was published posthumously in 1480 and 1490, and, ironically, it brought both father and son a sort of lasting fame.

Since the 16th century, at least six musical versions of the poem have been made, and Lope de Vega (a prolific Spanish dramatist) believed that the poem "deserved to be written in gold letters." The poem has been glossed, quoted, and translated many times since its publication, and it is still a vital part of Spanish culture.

Jorge Manrique also wrote about 50 other pieces of poetry, including love poetry, comic poetry, and doctrinal poetry. He died in battle while fighting against the Marqués de Villena.

## Coplas por la muerte de su padre

I.

Recuerde el alma dormida,  
avive el seso y despierte  
contemplando  
cómo se pasa la vida,  
cómo se viene la muerte  
tan callando;  
cuán presto se va el placer,  
cómo después de acordado  
da dolor,  
cómo a nuestro parecer,  
cualquiera tiempo pasado  
fue mejor.

II.

Pues si vemos lo presente  
cómo en un punto se es ido  
y acabado,  
si juzgamos sabiamente,  
daremos lo no venido  
por pasado.  
No se engañe nadie, no,  
pensando que ha de durar  
lo que espera  
más que duró lo que vio,  
pues que todo ha de pasar  
por tal manera.

## Verses on the Death of His Father

I.

Arouse your sleeping soul,  
revive your brain, wake up  
and you will see  
how life goes by so fast,  
how death creeps up on us  
so quietly,  
how pleasures quickly fade,  
and when we think of them  
we feel malaise,  
how always it appears  
that former times comprised  
much better days.

II.

The present times will go  
within a second's tick,  
an hour's chimes,  
and if we judge with sense,  
the future will be seen  
like former times.  
So do not be deceived—  
don't think that future things  
will come to stay.  
Those things will not endure—  
they all must disappear  
the selfsame way.

III.

Nuestras vidas son los ríos  
que van a dar en la mar,  
    que es el morir:  
allí van los señoríos,  
derechos a se acabar  
    y consumir;  
allí los ríos caudales;  
allí los otros medianos  
    y más chicos,  
y llegados son iguales,  
los que viven por sus manos  
    y los ricos.

IV.

Dejo las invocaciones  
de los famosos poetas  
    y oradores;  
no curo de sus ficciones,  
que traen yerbas secretas  
    sus sabores.  
A Aquel sólo me encomiendo,  
Aquel sólo invoco yo  
    de verdad,  
que en este mundo viviendo,  
el mundo no conoció  
    su deidad.

V.

Este mundo es el camino  
para el otro, que es morada  
    sin pesar;  
mas cumple tener buen tino  
para andar esta jornada  
    sin errar.  
Partimos cuando nacemos,  
andamos mientras vivimos,  
    y llegamos  
al tiempo que fenecemos;  
así que, cuando morimos,  
    descansamos.

III.

Our lives are like the streams  
that flow into the sea  
and terminate.

That's where the manors go—  
they meet their end and they  
disintegrate.

Just as the rivers large,  
the medium and small  
go to the sea,  
we all arrive as one,  
as workers in the field  
or rich and free.

IV.

I will not here invoke  
the poets, speakers, all  
who entertain.

I don't care for their tales.  
They bring with them the scent  
of Mary Jane.

I give myself to Him,  
invoking only Him  
with verity.

He lived within the world.  
The world did not accept  
His deity.

V.

This world's the way we go  
to heaven's realm, a place  
without dismay.

We need to walk the path  
with sense and wisdom lest  
we go astray.

We set out when we're born,  
we walk the path of life,  
then we arrive.

We pass away from here  
and enter into rest,  
though still alive.

VI.

Este mundo bueno fue  
si bien usásemos dél,  
    como debemos,  
porque, según nuestra fe,  
es para ganar aquel  
    que atendemos.

Y aun aquel Hijo de Dios,  
para subirnos al cielo,  
    descendió  
a nacer acá entre nos  
y a vivir en este suelo  
    do murió.

VII.

Si fuese en nuestro poder  
tornar la cara hermosa  
    corporal,  
como podemos hacer  
el alma tan gloriosa  
    angelical,  
¡qué diligencia tan viva  
tuviéramos toda hora,  
    y tan presta  
en componer la cautiva,  
dejándonos la señora  
    descompuesta!

VIII.

Ved de cuán poco valor  
son las cosas tras que andamos  
    y corremos,  
que, en este mundo traidor,  
aun primero que muramos  
    las perdemos.  
De ellas deshace la edad,  
de ellas casos desastrados  
    que acaecen,  
de ellas, por su calidad,  
en los más altos estados  
    desfallecen.

VI.

This world is counted good  
if we have used it well,  
just as we ought.

According to our faith,  
we will obtain the world  
that we have sought.

The Son of God came down  
to do His work and raise  
us to His side.

Among us He was born,  
He lived upon the earth,  
and then He died.

VII.

If it were in our means  
to bring a lovely face  
to flesh again,  
as we can make a soul  
so glorious and like  
the angels' kin,  
with such great diligence  
would we attempt to place  
some fleshly clothes  
upon the humble slave  
and let his master go  
to decompose!

VIII.

The things that we pursue  
and chase with reckless speed  
have little worth.

In this unfaithful world,  
we lose some things before  
we leave the earth.

Some things decline through age,  
and some by chance descend  
into decay.

The quality of some  
departs its highest state  
and falls away.

IX.

Decidme, la hermosura,  
la gentil frescura y tez  
de la cara,

el color y la blancura,  
cuando viene la vejez,  
¿cuál se para?

Las mañas y ligereza  
y la fuerza corporal  
de juventud,  
todo se torna graveza  
cuando llega al arrabal  
de senectud.

X.

Pues la sangre de los godos,  
y el linaje, y la nobleza  
tan crecida,

¡por cuántas vías y modos  
se sume su gran alteza  
en esta vida!

Unos, por poco valer,  
¡por cuán bajos y abatidos  
que los tienen!

Y otros por no tener,  
con oficios no debidos  
se mantienen.

XI.

Los estados y riqueza,  
que nos dejen a deshora  
¿quién lo duda?

No les pidamos firmeza,  
pues que son de una señora  
que se muda,  
que bienes son de Fortuna,  
que revuelven con su rueda  
presurosa,

la cual no puede ser una,  
ni ser estable ni queda  
en una cosa.

IX.

Now tell me, in the end,  
how grace and freshness both  
depart the face.

When age descends on us,  
does pink or pallor leave  
its former place?

The body's strength entails  
the skillful lightness of  
the youthful age.

But flesh becomes a weight  
when, at the end, we reach  
the final stage.

X.

The strength of Gothic blood,  
their proud nobility  
and vaunted line—

by many ways and means,  
their great ascent in life  
would soon decline!

And some of little worth,  
how far down can descend  
their own repute!

And some maintain their lives  
with wretched jobs because  
they're destitute.

XI.

And who can doubt that wealth  
and status can depart  
at any time?

We don't expect that fate  
will favor us, for luck  
turns on a dime.

And Fortune's favors spin.  
They come and go upon  
her rapid wheel.

She has no constancy.  
We can't predict today  
what she will deal.

XII.

Pero digo que acompañen  
y lleguen hasta la huesa  
con su dueño:

por eso no nos engañen,  
pues se va la vida apriesa,  
como sueño.

Y los deleites de acá  
son, en que nos deleitamos,  
temporales,  
y los tormentos de allá,  
que por ellos esperamos,  
eternales.

XIII.

Los placeres y dulzores  
de esta vida trabajada  
que tenemos,  
¿qué son sino corredores,  
y la muerte la celada  
en que caemos?

No mirando a nuestro daño,  
corremos a rienda suelta  
sin parar;  
des que vemos el engaño  
y queremos dar la vuelta,  
no hay lugar.

XIV.

Esos reyes poderosos  
que vemos por escrituras  
ya pasadas,  
con casos tristes llorosos  
fueron sus buenas venturas  
trastornadas;  
así que no hay cosa fuerte,  
que a papas y emperadores  
y prelados,  
así los trata la Muerte  
como a los pobres pastores  
de ganados.

XII.

But all these things remain  
beside the one who takes  
    them to the grave.

But let's not be deceived,  
for life is but a dream  
    we cannot save.

And all the pleasures here  
that we enjoy soon end  
    by time's decree.

And all the torments there  
that we await endure  
    eternally.

XIII.

The pleasures and delights  
this weary world bestows  
    hold us in thrall.

They are but passageways,  
while death becomes the trap  
    in which we fall.

We do not stop to think  
of danger on the way—  
    we run apace.

And when we see the trick  
and want to turn around  
    there isn't space.

XIV.

The mighty kings of old,  
of which we read in books,  
    earned great renown.

By sad and gloomy fate,  
the fortunes that they made  
    turned upside down.

For popes and kings and lords,  
there is no worldly strength  
    that's ironclad.

And Death treats each of them  
the same way that it treats  
    a shepherd lad.

XV.

Dejemos a los troyanos,  
que sus males no los vimos,  
ni sus glorias;  
dejemos a los romanos,  
aunque oímos y leímos  
sus historias;  
no curemos de saber  
lo de aquel siglo pasado,  
qué fue de ello;  
vengamos a lo de ayer,  
que también es olvidado  
como aquello.

XVI.

¿Qué se hizo el rey don Juan?  
Los infantes de Aragón  
¿qué se hicieron?  
¿Qué fue de tanto galán?  
¿Qué fue de tanta invención  
como trajeron?  
Las justas y los torneos,  
paramentos, bordaduras,  
y cimeras,  
¿fueron sino devaneos?  
¿qué fueron sino verduras  
de las eras?

XVII.

¿Qué se hicieron las damas,  
sus tocados, sus vestidos,  
sus olores?  
¿Qué se hicieron las llamas  
de los fuegos encendidos  
de amadores?  
¿Qué se hizo aquel trovar,  
las músicas acordadas  
que tañían?  
¿Qué se hizo aquel danzar,  
aquellas ropas chapadas  
que traían?

XV.

Let's leave the Trojan deeds  
and not recount the wars  
they might have won.

Let's leave the Roman fame,  
although we read the tales  
that men have spun.

Forget the ages past.  
Don't open up the books  
that we all know.

Let's look at yesterday.  
It is forgotten just  
like long ago.

XVI.

What happened to King Juan,  
the sons of Aragon,  
those princely men?

What happened to the youths  
and all the things that they  
invented then?

The tournaments and games,  
the needlework, the crests  
the jousters wore:

Were they but vain pursuits?  
Were they but chaff upon  
the threshing floor?

XVII.

What happened to the girls,  
their pretty hats and robes,  
their lovely scents?

What happened to the sparks  
and all the ardent flames  
that love foments?

What happened to the sound  
of people playing from  
a music score?

What happened to the dance  
and all the pretty clothes  
the ladies wore?

XVIII.

Pues el otro heredero,  
don Enrique, ¡qué poderes  
alcanzaba!

¡Cuán blando, cuán halaguero  
el mundo con sus placeres  
se le daba!

Mas verás cuán enemigo,  
cuán contrario, cuán cruel  
se le mostró,  
habiéndole sido amigo,  
¡cuán poco duró con él  
lo que le dio!

XIX.

Las dádivas desmedidas,  
los edificios reales  
llenos de oro,  
las vajillas tan fabridas,  
los enriques y reales  
del tesoro,

los jaeces y caballos  
de su gente, y atavíos  
tan sobrados,  
¿dónde iremos a buscarlos?  
¿qué fueron sino rocíos  
de los prados?

XX.

Pues su hermano, el inocente  
que en su vida sucesor  
se llamó,  
¡qué corte tan excelente  
tuvo, y cuánto gran señor  
le siguió!

Mas como fuese mortal,  
metiólo la Muerte luego  
en su fragua,  
¡O juicio divinal!:  
cuando más ardía el fuego,  
echaste agua.

XVIII.

That Don Enrique, heir,  
what worldly power he  
    had quickly gained!  
The pleasures of the world,  
how fast and easily  
    they were attained!  
But you will see how mean,  
how ruthless and opposed  
    they proved to him.  
Though once the world was kind,  
how quickly all its gifts  
    fled on a whim!

XIX.

The boundless gifts of men,  
the royal palaces  
    so full of gold,  
the shiny cups and bowls,  
the golden coins and all  
    the wealth untold,  
the trappings of the steeds,  
the people's finery,  
    all unconcealed:  
Where can we find them now?  
What were they but the dew  
    in yonder field?

XX.

His brother, Innocent,  
who in his life was called  
    the rightful heir:  
He had a splendid court.  
His lords would follow him  
    near anywhere!  
But as a mortal man,  
soon Death threw him upon  
    his anvil block.  
Oh, godly justice, when  
you snuff out ardent flames  
    it's such a shock!

XXI.

Pues aquel gran condestable  
maestre que conocimos  
tan privado,  
no cumple que dél se hable,  
sino sólo que lo vimos  
degollado.

Sus infinitos tesoros,  
sus villas y sus lugares,  
su mandar,  
¿qué le fueron sino lloros?  
¿qué fueron sino pesares  
al dejar?

XXII.

Pues los otros dos hermanos,  
maestres tan prosperados  
como reyes,  
que a los grandes y medianos  
trajeron tan sojuzgados  
a sus leyes;  
aquella prosperidad  
que tan alta fue subida  
y ensalzada,  
¿qué fue sino claridad,  
que cuando más encendida  
fue matada?

XXIII.

Tantos duques excelentes,  
tantos marqueses y condes,  
y barones,  
como vimos tan potentes,  
di, Muerte, ¿dó los escondes  
y traspones?  
Y las sus claras hazañas  
que hicieron en las guerras  
y en las paces,  
cuando tú, cruda, te ensañas,  
con tu fuerza las at ierras  
y deshaces.

XXI.

And that great constable,  
he was a favorite  
    and highly skilled.  
We shouldn't say much more  
except to say that we  
    all saw him killed.  
His endless wealth and gold,  
his villages and towns  
    made him a chief.  
What were they but a loss  
when he departed with  
    regret and grief?

XXII.

Two other brothers ruled.  
Those masters prospered much,  
    like wealthy shahs.  
And all their subjects were  
required to obey  
    their many laws.  
And their prosperity  
shot up so fast just like  
    a branching sprout.  
What was it but a light  
that at its zenith was  
    put quickly out?

XXIII.

So many splendid dukes,  
so many lords and counts  
    in their array:  
We saw that they were strong.  
O Death, where have you hid  
    them all away?  
And all those wondrous deeds  
that they performed in wars  
    and during peace—  
when you become enraged,  
you throw them down and break  
    their body's lease.

XXIV.

Las huestes innumerables,  
los pendones y estandartes  
    y banderas,

los castillos impugnables,  
los muros y baluartes  
y barreras,  
la cava honda chapada,  
o cualquier otro reparo,  
¿qué aprovecha?  
cuando tú vienes airada,  
todo lo pasas de claro  
con tu flecha.

XXV.

Aquél de buenos abrigo,  
amado por virtuoso  
de la gente,  
el maestre don Rodrigo  
Manrique, tanto famoso  
y tan valiente,  
sus grandes hechos y claros  
no cumple que los alabe,  
pues los vieron,  
ni los quiero hacer caros,  
pues el mundo todo sabe  
cuáles fueron.

XXVI.

¡Qué amigo de sus amigos!  
¡Qué señor para criados  
y parientes!  
¡Qué enemigo de enemigos!  
¡Qué maestre de esforzados  
y valientes!  
¡Qué seso para discretos!  
¡Qué gracia para donosos!  
¡Qué razón!  
¡Qué benigno a los sujetos,  
y a los bravos y dañosos,  
un león!

XXIV.

The host of fighting men,  
the pennants, standards, flags,  
and emblems bright,  
the castles, barricades,  
the bulwarks made to stand  
against a fight,  
a deep and filthy moat,  
or any strong defense—  
what can it do?

When rage is in your mind,  
your arrows penetrate  
and pass right through.

XXV.

Now Don Rodrigo was  
much loved by people for  
his rectitude.

The master was renowned  
for courage, fighting nerve,  
and fortitude.

As for his acts and feats,  
it wouldn't be correct  
to harp on those.

I don't wish to enlarge  
his deeds, for what he did  
the whole world knows.

XXVI.

A friend he was to friends!  
A master to his kin  
and loyal aides!  
A foe to all his foes!  
A leader of the men  
with flashing blades!  
A brain with all the shrewd!  
A jester with the wags,  
and what a mind!  
He was a lion bold  
to foes, but to his own  
he was so kind!

XXVII.

En ventura Octaviano,  
Julio César en vencer  
y batallar,  
en la virtud, Africano,  
Aníbal en el saber  
y trabajar,  
en la bondad un Trajano,  
Tito en liberalidad  
con alegría,  
en su brazo, Aureliano  
Marco Atilio en la verdad  
que prometía.

XXVIII.

Antonio Pío en clemencia,  
Marco Aurelio en igualdad  
del semblante,  
Adriano en la elocuencia,  
Teodosio en humanidad  
y buen talante,  
Aurelio Alejandro fue  
en disciplina y rigor  
de la guerra,  
un Constantino en la fe,  
Camilo en el gran amor  
de su tierra.

XXIX.

No dejó grandes tesoros,  
ni alcanzó muchas riquezas,  
ni vajillas,  
mas hizo guerra a los moros,  
ganando sus fortalezas  
y sus villas;  
y en las lides que venció,  
muchos moros y caballos  
se perdieron,  
y en este oficio ganó  
las rentas y los vasallos  
que le dieron.

XXVII.

An Octavian in fortune,  
a Caesar in the battles  
    that he won,  
a Scipio in virtue,  
a Hannibal in lore and  
    work well done,  
a Trajan in his goodness,  
a Titus in largess  
    and joyful youth,  
an Aurelian in strength,  
an Atilius who kept  
    his word of truth.

XXVIII.

A Pius in clemency,  
an Aurelius in his life  
    of stoicism,  
a Hadrian in eloquence,  
a Theodosius in good will  
    and optimism,  
an Alexander in strictness,  
in discipline in war  
    and strength of hand,  
a Constantine in faith,  
a Camillus in his love  
    of native land.

XXIX.

He didn't leave great wealth.  
He didn't win a lot  
    of trophy plates.  
But he repelled the Moors  
and captured lands and towns  
    for potentates.  
In battles that he won,  
the Moors and horses fell  
    to him in war.  
And for his work they gave  
him income, vassals, and  
    a great deal more.

XXX.

Pues por su honra y estado  
en otros tiempos pasados  
¿cómo se hubo?

Quedando desamparado,  
con hermanos y criados  
se sostuvo.

Después que hechos famosos  
hizo en esta dicha guerra  
que hacía,  
hizo tratos tan honrosos,  
que le dieron aun más tierra  
que tenía.

XXXI.

Estas sus viejas historias,  
que con su brazo pintó  
en juventud,  
con otras nuevas victorias  
ahora las renovó  
en senectud.

Por su gran habilidad,  
por méritos y ancianía  
bien gastada,  
alcanzó la dignidad  
de la gran caballería  
de la Espada.

XXXII.

Y sus villas y sus tierras  
ocupadas de tiranos  
las halló,  
mas por cercos y por guerras  
y por fuerza de sus manos  
las cobró.

Pues nuestro rey natural  
si de las obras que obró  
fue servido,  
dígalo el de Portugal,  
y en Castilla quien siguió  
su partido.

XXX.

And how, in former times,  
did he defend his state  
    with strength and grace?

Though unprotected with  
his brothers and his aides,  
    he held his place.

And after all these feats  
of war, he was fulfilled  
    when he returned.

He made such righteous pacts  
that he was given more  
    than he had earned.

XXXI.

Such were his youthful deeds,  
and after writing them  
    he turned the page.

And he renewed them with  
some recent victories  
    in his old age.

By his great merits, by  
his time well spent, and by  
    ability,

he earned a knightly rank,  
the Order of the Sword,  
    with dignity.

XXXII.

He found his towns and lands  
usurped by tyrants' hands  
    and occupied.

By sieges and by wars,  
by power he restored  
    them to his side.

If work that he performed  
was good and served our true  
    and rightful king,

let men of Portugal,  
Castile, and elsewhere say  
    that very thing.

XXXIII.

Después de puesta la vida  
tantas veces por su ley  
al tablero,  
después de tan bien servida  
la corona de su rey  
verdadero;  
después de tanta hazaña  
a que no puede bastar  
cuenta cierta,  
en la su villa de Ocaña  
vino la Muerte a llamar  
a su puerta.

XXXIV.

diciendo: «Buen caballero,  
dejad el mundo engañoso  
y su halago;  
vuestro corazón de acero  
muestre su esfuerzo famoso  
en este trago;  
y pues de vida y salud  
hicisteis tan poca cuenta  
por la fama,  
esfuércese la virtud  
por sufrir esta afrenta  
que vos llama.

XXXV.

«No se os haga tan amarga  
la batalla temerosa  
que esperáis,  
pues otra vida más larga  
de fama tan gloriosa  
acá dejáis.  
Aunque esta vida de honor  
tampoco no es eternal  
ni verdadera,  
mas con todo es muy mejor  
que la otra temporal,  
perecedera.

XXXIII.

And after he had risked  
his life so many times  
    for justice' sake,  
and after serving well  
the crown of his true king,  
    no one can make  
a tally of his deeds,  
for if one counted them  
    there would be more.

In his Ocaña town,  
Don Death arrived to knock  
    upon his door.

XXXIV.

He said, "Distinguished knight,  
depart this world of fraud  
    and its delights,  
and with your heart of steel  
confront with strength and calm  
    your present plight.  
You scorned your life and health  
all on account of your  
    good deeds and fame.  
Take virtue's arm of strength.  
Endure this one affront  
    that calls your name.

XXXV.

"Do not feel bitter now.  
This battle comes with fear,  
    as you perceive.  
The other longer life  
of fame, so glory-filled,  
    is what you leave.  
Although that life of fame  
is not eternal, nor  
    is it the true,  
it's better than this life,  
the mortal one with which  
    you're almost through.

XXXVI.

«El vivir que es perdurable,  
no se gana con estados  
mundanales,  
ni con vida deleitable,  
en que moran los pecados  
infernales,  
mas los buenos religiosos  
ganánlo con oraciones  
y con lloros,  
los caballeros famosos  
con trabajos y aflicciones  
contra moros.

XXXVII.

Y pues vos, claro varón,  
tanta sangre derramasteis  
de paganos,  
esperad el galardón  
que en este mundo ganasteis  
por las manos.  
y con esta confianza  
y con la fe tan entera  
que tenéis,  
partid con buena esperanza,  
que esta otra vida tercera,  
ganaréis.»

XXXVIII.

«No gastemos tiempo ya  
en esta vida mezquina  
por tal modo,  
que mi voluntad está  
conforme con la divina  
para todo;  
y consiento en mi morir  
con voluntad placentera,  
clara y pura,  
que querer hombre vivir  
cuando Dios quiere que muera  
es locura.»

XXXVI.

"Eternal life is not  
attained with worldly goods  
or rich estates,  
nor with the pleasures that  
make up the hellish sins  
of reprobates.

The monks attain that life  
with prayers, honest tears,  
and passing woes.

The famous knights earn life  
with hard and painful work  
against their foes.

XXXVII.

"And since you, worthy knight,  
destroyed the armies of  
ungodly men,  
expect the good reward  
that you have earned and be  
assured within.

And with that confidence,  
and with so strong a faith,  
endure your pain.

Depart with solid hope.  
The third and better life  
you will attain."

XXXVIII.

"Let's not waste any time  
in this ignoble life  
to which men cling,  
for now my will is one  
with God's, and I consent  
to everything.

Agreeing to my death,  
I go with pleasant will  
and don't complain,  
for wishing still to live  
when God wants you to die  
would be insane."

XXXIX.

«Tú, que por nuestra maldad  
tomaste forma servil  
y bajo nombre,  
Tú, que en tu divinidad  
juntaste cosa tan vil  
como el hombre;  
Tú, que tan grandes tormentos  
sufriste sin resistencia  
en tu persona,  
no por mis merecimientos,  
mas por tu sola clemencia,  
me perdona.»

XL.

Así con tal entender,  
todos sentidos humanos  
conservados,  
cercado de su mujer,  
y de sus hijos y hermanos  
y criados,  
dio el alma a quien se la dio,  
el cual la ponga en el cielo  
en su gloria,  
y aunque la vida murió,  
nos dejó harto consuelo  
su memoria.

XXXIX.

"You took a lowly name  
and wore the humble flesh  
because we sinned.

You merged divinity  
with vile flesh to help  
us all transcend.

You suffered in Your flesh  
such torments and abuse  
and agony.

Not for my worthiness,  
but in your lenience,  
please pardon me."

XL.

And with that final plea,  
with all his faculties  
and still aware,  
surrounded by his wife,  
his siblings, children, aides,  
and others there,

he gave his soul to God  
that he might walk in bliss  
on streets of gold.

And though his soul is gone,  
by thinking of his life  
we are consoled.



## **JUAN BOSCÁN DE ALMOGÁVER (c. 1487-1542)**

Juan Boscán, a poet and translator, was born in Barcelona. He met and became friends with Garcilaso de la Vega at the court of Carlos V. Together they brought the forms, meters, and themes of Italian poetry to Spain. Although he was not as famous as Garcilaso, after Boscán died his widow collected and published his work.

## «Como aquel que en soñar gusto recibe»

Como aquel que en soñar gusto recibe,  
su gusto procediendo de locura,  
así el imaginar con su figura  
vanamente su gozo en mí concibe.

Otro bien en mí, triste, no se escribe,  
si no es aquel que en mi pensar procura;  
de cuanto ha sido hecho en mi ventura  
lo sólo imaginado es lo que vive.

Teme mi corazón de ir adelante,  
viendo estar su dolor puesto en celada;  
y así revuelve atrás en un instante

a contemplar su gloria ya pasada.  
¡Oh sombra de remedio inconstante,  
ser en mí lo mejor lo que no es nada!

## **"Like one who finds his pleasures in his dreams"**

Like one who finds his pleasures in his dreams,  
my joys are born in unreality.  
Thus does imagination form in me  
these fleeting pleasures like some empty schemes.

My sadness finds no other good, it seems,  
except what thinking takes as remedy.  
The only happiness that I can see  
is what my dreaming inner eye esteems.

My fearful heart is loath to go ahead,  
for pain is lying in an ambush there,  
and quickly it returns just to be fed

on glories of the past that were its share.  
These shadow joys that briefly fill my head  
are only smoke dispersing in the air!



## **GARCILASO DE LA VEGA (c. 1491-1536)**

Garcilaso de la Vega was born in Toledo to a noble family. For the majority of his life, he was in service to King Carlos V. He was critically injured while assisting the king in his invasion of France. He is known for bringing the Italian style of poetry to Spain, and this Italian influence included the *soneto*, *canción*, *versos sueltos*, and *octava rima*. He became famous as a model poet and soldier of the Renaissance.

## «Un rato se levanta mi esperanza»

Un rato se levanta mi esperanza;  
mas, cansada de haberse levantado,  
toma a caer, y deja, mal mi grado,  
libre el lugar a la desconfianza.

¿Quién sufrirá tan áspera mudanza  
del bien al mal? ¡Oh corazón cansado!  
Esfuerza en la miseria de tu estado;  
que tras fortuna suele haber bonanza.

Yo mismo emprenderé a fuerza de brazos  
romper un monte, que otro no rompiera,  
de mil inconvenientes muy espeso.

Muerte, prisión no pueden, ni embarazos,  
quitarme de ir a veros, como quiera,  
desnudo espíritu o hombre en carne y hueso.

## **"One moment, hope arises from the gloom"**

One moment, hope arises from the gloom,  
but when exhausted from this high estate,  
it falls to earth again by its own weight,  
and I succumb to doubt and ponder doom.

Yet, who can suffer willingly such shocks  
from good to bad? O weary heart that ails!  
You writhe in pain, but spread your tattered sails,  
for storms will calm and boats return to docks.

I'll undertake, with all my strength and will,  
to raze a mount as no one else has done,  
for countless problems here have densely grown.

But neither death nor prison has the skill  
to disallow my seeing you, dear one,  
as naked ghost or man of flesh and bone.



## FRAY LUIS DE LEÓN (c. 1527-1591)

Fray Luis de León was born in Belmonte, Castile. He was a Bible translator and a moralistic writer. He joined the Augustinians in 1544. An outstanding student in Salamanca, he accepted the chair of St. Thomas Aquinas in 1561. His enemies reported him during the Inquisition for his forbidden translations from the Bible and for criticizing the Vulgate, and he was arrested and imprisoned from 1572 to 1576. He is known for perfecting the use of the *lira* stanza, which he used in the following three poems.

## Noche serena

1.

Cuando contemplo el cielo  
de innumerables luces adornado,  
y miro hacia el suelo  
de noche rodeado,  
en sueño y en olvido sepultado,

2.

el amor y la pena  
despiertan en mi pecho un ansia ardiente;  
despiden larga vena  
los ojos hechos fuente;  
la lengua dice al fin con voz doliente:

3.

«Morada de grandeza,  
templo de claridad y hermosura,  
el alma, que a tu alteza  
nació, ¿qué desventura  
la tiene en esta cárcel baja, oscura?

4.

¿Qué mortal desatino  
de la verdad aleja así el sentido  
que de tu bien divino  
olvidado, perdido,  
sigue la vana sombra, el bien fingido?

5.

El hombre está entregado  
al sueño, de su suerte no cuidando;  
y con paso callado,  
el cielo, vueltas dando,  
las horas del vivir le va hurtando.

## Peaceful Night

1.

When I behold the sky,  
adorned with countless points of shining light,  
and view the earth nearby,  
surrounded by the night  
and buried in forgetfulness and blight,

2.

when love and sorrow meet,  
they wake a longing in my heart that mounts.  
My tears do not retreat.  
My eyes become two founts.  
At last with growing sorrow I pronounce:

3.

"O temple filled with light,  
abode where truth and beauty overflow,  
the soul, which at your height  
was born, what plan of woe  
has placed it in this darkened jail below?

4.

What mortal mistake  
obscures perception of the truth and right?  
Of wealth, it would partake—  
your wealth is true delight—  
but it pursues the shadows of the night.

5.

Each man is fast asleep  
and doesn't care about his final state.  
The stars move on their sweep  
with quick and silent gait,  
and life goes by and now it's getting late.

6.

!Ay!, !despertad mortales!  
Mirad con atención en vuestro daño.  
?Las almas inmortales,  
hechas a bien tamaño,  
podrán vivir de sombra y solo engaño?

7.

!Ay!, levantad los ojos  
a aquesta celestial eterna esfera:  
burlaréis los antojos  
de aquesta lisonjera  
vida, con cuanto teme y cuanto espera,

8.

¿Es más que un breve punto  
el bajo y torpe suelo, comparado  
a aqueste gran trasunto,  
do vive mejorado  
lo que es, lo que será y lo que ha pasado?

9.

¿Quien mira el gran concierto  
de aquestos resplandores eternos,  
su movimiento cierto  
sus pasos desiguales  
y en proporción concorde tan iguales:

10.

la luna cómo mueve  
la plateada rueda, y va en pos della  
la luz do el saber llueve,  
y la graciosa estrella  
de amor la sigue reluciente y bella;

6.

Awaken, mortal men!  
And heed the loss of all that you had known.  
Your souls, before their sin,  
were made for glory's throne.  
Can they abide on dross and lies alone?

7.

Lift up your feeble eyes  
to that celestial and eternal sphere!  
You'll scorn the worthless prize  
of praise that's insincere.  
Escape that life and both its hope and fear.

8.

The earth has little weight.  
It is a lowly orb within the sky,  
compared with heaven's state,  
that better life on high:  
the present, future, what has passed us by.

9.

Who sees the harmony  
of spherical and everlasting flames  
that drift around so free?  
Though they have different aims,  
the greatest concord fills their orbit frames.

10.

The moon revolves in air,  
a silver wheel that goes around the earth.  
And Mercury is there,  
and Venus too has worth,  
for all her shining beauty gives us mirth.

11.  
y cómo otro camino  
prosigue el sanguinoso Marte airado,  
y el Júpiter benigno,  
de bienes mil cercado,  
serena el cielo con su rayo amado;

12.  
-rodéase en la cumbre  
Saturno, padre de los siglos de oro;  
tras él la muchedumbre  
del reluciente coro  
su luz va repartiendo y su tesoro-:

13.  
¿Quién es el que esto mira  
y precia la bajeza de la tierra,  
y no gime y suspira  
y rompe lo que encierra  
el alma y destes bienes la destierra?

14.  
Aquí vive el contento,  
aquí reina la paz; aquí, asentado  
en rico y alto asiento,  
está el Amor sagrado,  
de glorias y deleites rodeado.

15.  
Inmensa hermosura  
aquí se muestra toda, y resplandece  
clarísima luz pura,  
que jamás anochece;  
eterna primavera aquí florece.

11.

Another planet takes  
his path around the sky—it's bloody Mars.  
And Jupiter soon makes  
his journey through the stars.  
The many goods that he provides are ours.

12.

Encircled all around  
is Saturn, father of the golden age.  
Behind him lights are found  
that turn the psalter page.  
This ancient starry choir takes the stage.

13.

And who can look on high  
and value lowly earth on which he dwells?  
Who doesn't moan and sigh  
and want to break these cells?  
Do goods from earth tempt souls to lowly hells?

14.

But here the soul's content,  
for here's the reign of peace, and here's a throne,  
a place of high ascent  
for holy love alone,  
and glories and delights are fully known.

15.

Its beauty takes your breath,  
and all's revealed to light and all things shine.  
There is no dark or death.  
Eternally benign  
is spring with blooming roses on the vine.

16.

¡Oh campos verdaderos!

¡Oh prados con verdad frescos y amenos!

¡Riquísimos mineros!

¡Oh deleitosos senos!

¡Repuestos valles, de mil bienes llenos!»

16.

Oh, true and lovely fields!

Oh, truthful meadows with the grass that waves!

Oh, what the soil yields!

Oh, what delightful caves!

Oh, living valleys no one ever paves!"

## Vida Retirada

1.

¡Qué descansada vida  
la del que huye el mundanal ruido,  
y sigue la escondida  
senda por donde han ido  
los pocos sabios que en el mundo han sido!

2.

Que no le enturbia el pecho  
de los soberbios grandes el estado,  
ni del dorado techo  
se admira, fabricado  
el sabio moro, en jaspes sustentado.

3.

No cura si la fama  
canta con voz su nombre pregonera,  
ni cura si encarama  
la lengua lisonjera  
lo que condena la verdad sincera.

4.

¿Qué presta a mi contento  
si soy del vano dedo señalado?  
¿si en busca de esta viento  
ando desalentado  
con ansias vivas, con mortal cuidado?

5.

¡Oh, monte! ¡oh, fuente! ¡oh, río!  
¡oh secreto seguro deleitoso!  
Roto casi el navío,  
a vuestra almo reposo,  
huyo de aqueste mar tempestuoso.

## A Life of Retirement

1.

Oh, what a life of rest  
has he who flees the constant worldly noise!  
Yes, he is greatly blessed  
who seeks the hidden joys  
upon the path that sages walk with poise!

2.

His heart does not desire  
the state of prideful men who are extolled;  
his eyes do not admire  
the shiny roofs of gold  
that Moors built and jasper columns hold.

3.

He doesn't care if fame  
should sing his praises in the public square;  
he doesn't want acclaim  
for what the truth would dare  
not praise but would admonish everywhere.

4.

What pleasure would it lend  
if someone pointed at me with his hand?  
This chasing after wind  
I do not understand,  
for I would lose my peace and self-command.

5.

Oh, mount! Oh, stream! Oh, brink!  
Oh, secret and delightful hiding place!  
The ship's about to sink,  
so I must soon retrace  
my path from stormy seas to your embrace.

6.

Un no rompido sueño,  
un día puro, alegre, libre quiero;  
no quiero ver el ceño  
vanamente severo  
de a quien la sangre ensalza o el dinero.

7.

Despiértente las aves  
con su cantar sabroso no aprendido,  
no los cuidados graves  
de que es siempre seguido  
quien al ajeno arbitrio está atenido.

8.

Vivir quiero conmigo,  
gozar quiero del bien que debo al cielo,  
a solas sin testigo,  
libre de amor, de celo,  
de odio, de esperanzas, de recelo.

9.

Del monte en la ladera  
por mi mano plantado tengo un huerto,  
que con la primavera  
de bella flor cubierto  
ya muestra en esperanza el fruto cierto.

10.

Y como codiciosa  
de ver y acrecentar su hermosura,  
desde la cumbre airosa  
una fontana pura  
hasta llegar corriendo se apresura.

6.

I want unbroken sleep;  
I want a day that's happy, pure, and free;  
I do not want to keep  
observing flattery  
of those with wealth obtained through piracy.

7.

Let me awaken to  
the sound of birds that sing with pleasant cheer;  
let my concerns be few;  
don't let me feel the fear  
of those who must to lords' commands adhere.

8.

I want to live alone,  
enjoying goods that I to heaven owe,  
without the overblown  
emotions that we know,  
like love and hate and passion's overflow.

9.

Upon the mountainside,  
I have a garden planted by my hand;  
spring flowers will provide  
a sign of fertile land,  
and fruits from lovely flowers will expand.

10.

A spring from mountain peaks  
will rush into my fertile garden bed;  
this fountain merely seeks  
to make my garden spread  
and be the source by which my garden's fed.

11.

Y luego sosegada  
el paso entre los árboles torciendo,  
el suelo de pasada  
de verdura vistiendo,  
y con diversas flores va esparciendo.

12.

El aire el huerto orea,  
y ofrece mil olores al sentido,  
los árboles menea  
con un manso ruido,  
que del oro y del cetro pone olvido.

13.

Ténganse su tesoro  
los que de un flaco leño se confían:  
no es mío ver el lloro  
de los que desconfían  
cuando el cierzo y el ábrego porfían.

14.

La combatida antena  
cruje, y en ciega noche el claro día  
se torna, al cielo suena  
confusa vocería,  
y la mar enriquecen a porfía.

15.

A mí un pobrecilla  
mesa de amable paz bien abastada  
me baste, y la vajilla  
de fino oro labrada  
sea de quien la mar no teme airada.

11.

It calmly flows around  
and winds its way among the pleasant trees;  
it soaks into the ground  
and clothes the plants it sees  
in green and makes the flowers bloom with ease.

12.

The air will dry the plot  
and waft aromas to the waiting nose;  
the rustling trees are caught  
within the breeze that flows,  
and one forgets the gold and royal clothes.

13.

Yes, let them have their gold,  
the ones who trust in ship and fragile mast;  
I don't care to behold  
them weep when hope is past,  
when counter winds compete and hold them fast.

14.

By gales the mast will crack  
as thunder crashes, and the sunny day  
becomes completely black;  
the sailors feel dismay  
as treasures quickly sink or float away.

15.

A table filled with peace  
and simple food is good enough for me;  
let riches, gold, increase,  
and fleeting property  
be for the ones who face the angry sea.

16.

Y mientras miserable-  
mente se están los otros abrasando  
con sed insaciable  
del no durable mando,  
tendido yo a la sombra esté cantando.

17.

A la sombra tendido,  
de hiedra y lauro eterno coronado,  
puesto el atento oído  
al son dulce acordado,  
del plectro sabiamente meneado.

16.

Let other people thirst  
for worldly power and the wealth they lack;  
the wealth they seek is cursed;  
their power's turning slack;  
I'm singing songs while lying on my back.

17.

While lying in the shade  
and wearing an eternal laurel crown,  
I listen unafraid  
to the delightful sound  
of music wafting up and all around.

**Oda a Francisco Salinas: Catedrático de música de la  
Universidad de Salamanca**

1.

El aire se serena  
y viste de hermosura y luz no usada,  
Salinas, cuando suena  
la música extremada  
por vuestra sabia mano gobernada.

2.

A cuyo son divino  
mi alma que en olvido está sumida  
torna a cobrar el tino  
y memoria perdida  
de su origen primera esclarecida.

3.

Y como se conoce,  
en suerte y pensamientos se mejora;  
el oro desconoce  
que el vulgo ciego adora,  
la belleza caduca engañadora.

4.

Traspasa el aire todo  
hasta llegar a la más alta esfera,  
y oye allí otro modo  
de no perecedera  
música, que es de todas la primera.

5.

Ve cómo el gran maestro,  
a aquesta inmensa cítara aplicado,  
con movimiento diestro  
produce el son sagrado,  
con que este eterno templo es sustentado.

## Ode to Francisco Salinas: Professor of Music at the University of Salamanca

1.

The air grows calm and still  
and puts on beauty and a light that's pure  
when great Salinas thrills  
us with the overture,  
evoking sounds with hands both skilled and sure.

2.

This music that's divine  
restores awareness to my soul within;  
this music is a sign  
that wakes my soul and then  
reminds it of its primal origin.

3.

And since it knows itself,  
its destiny and all its thoughts improve;  
the beauty of the pelf,  
of which the crowds approve,  
cannot my soul deceive or even move.

4.

It soars into the air,  
until arriving at the highest sphere;  
that place of light is where  
my soul delights to hear  
the sounds that were the foremost to appear.

5.

My soul observes the great  
and skillful master playing unrestrained  
a zither grand in weight;  
the sacred sounds obtained  
are those by which this temple is sustained.

6.

Y como está compuesta  
de números concordes, luego envía  
consonante respuesta,  
y entrambas a porfía  
mezclan una dulcísima armonía.

7.

Aquí la alma navega  
por un mar de dulzura, y finalmente  
en él así se anega,  
que ningún accidente  
extraño o peregrino oye o siente.

8.

¡Oh desmayo dichoso!  
¡oh muerte que das vida! ¡oh dulce olvido!  
¡durase en tu reposo  
sin ser restituido  
jamás a aqueste bajo y vil sentido!

9.

A este bien os llamo,  
gloria del apolíneo sacro coro,  
amigos a quien amo  
sobre todo tesoro,  
que todo lo demás es triste lloro.

10.

¡Oh! suene de continuo,  
Salinas, vuestro son en mis oídos,  
por quien al bien divino  
despiertan los sentidos,  
quedando a lo demás amortecidos.

6.

The music is composed  
of numbers played in perfect harmony;  
my soul is thus disposed  
to answer pleasantly  
and adds its own distinctive melody.

7.

My soul is bathed in sounds  
and sails into a sea of sweetness where  
the harmony resounds;  
my soul is unaware  
of any discord in the music there.

8.

Oh, what a joyful swoon!  
Oh death that offers life! Oh sweet forgetting!  
Just listen to this tune:  
The peace that it's begetting  
is far from mortal cares that are upsetting!

9.

Come to the glory of  
Apollo's sacred choir in the sky—  
dear friends I truly love  
far more than what men buy—  
for everything on earth just makes us cry.

10.

Forever let your sounds,  
Salinas, fill me with eternal good;  
your harmony surrounds,  
and nothing's understood  
except the things revealed by Fatherhood.



## **BALTASAR DEL ALCÁZAR (1530-1606)**

Baltasar del Alcázar, a soldier and poet, was born in Seville. His humorous poems could border on the indecent, and he never thought they deserved to be published, but one of his friends made a collection of his epigrams, sonnets, and other types of verse.

## Tres cosas

Tres cosas me tienen preso  
de amores el corazón,  
la bella Inés, el jamón,  
y berengenas con queso.

Esta Inés, amantes, es  
quien tuvo en mí tal poder,  
que me hizo aborrecer  
todo lo que no era Inés.

Trájome un año sin seso,  
hasta que en una ocasión  
me dio a merendar jamón  
y berengenas con queso.

Fue de Inés la primer palma;  
pero ya júzgase mal  
entre todos ellos cuál  
tiene más parte en mi alma.

En gusto, medida y peso  
no le hallo distinción:  
ya quiero Inés, ya jamón,  
ya berengenas con queso.

Alega Inés su beldad,  
el jamón que es de Aracena,  
el queso y la berenjena  
la española antigüedad.

Y está tan en fiel el peso,  
que, juzgado sin pasión,  
todo es uno, Inés, jamón  
y berengenas con queso.

## Three Things

I'm a prisoner to all these,  
and I'm as happy as a clam:  
the beautiful Agnes, smoked ham,  
and of course, the eggplants with cheese.

Agnes and I are such lovers,  
that I must say that I adore  
her, and I equally abhor  
her pretty peers and all others.

Agnes drove me mad with unease,  
until, one day, she cooked for me  
what I didn't ever foresee:  
my smoked ham and eggplants with cheese.

'Twas Agnes who first made me whole,  
but now I can't even decide,  
for they have all equally vied,  
and none has won over my soul.

In flavor, measure, and weight these  
I cannot differentiate,  
I love Agnes and ham—but wait—  
I also love eggplants with cheese.

Agnes has quite a pretty face,  
the ham has a flavor to please,  
but both the eggplants and the cheese  
come from a special Spanish place.

And everyone who judges sees  
that my passions are all the same,  
as one in my heart they became:  
Agnes, ham, and eggplants with cheese.

A lo menos este trato  
destos mis nuevos amores  
hará que Inés sus favores  
me los venda más barato.

Pues tendrá por contrapeso  
si no hiciere la razón,  
una lonja de jamón  
y berengenas con queso.

But at least in this, my concern,  
my passion for lovely flavors,  
Agnes will give me her favors  
and will be less inclined to spurn.

For if she ever disagrees,  
if reason doesn't change her mind,  
in my house, at least I can find  
some smoked ham and eggplants with cheese.



## **SAN JUAN DE LA CRUZ (1542-1591)**

San Juan de la Cruz was born in Fontiveros. He was a mystical poet and monastic reformer. He entered the Carmelite Order in 1563, studied at Salamanca University from 1564 to 1568, and became a superior at the Discalced Carmelite monastery at Duruelo. During nine months of imprisonment imposed by unreformed monks, he wrote three of his greatest poems. His poems mostly deal with the mystical union of the soul with God, elaborated through the metaphor of carnal love. He also wrote long commentaries on his poems.

## Coplas del alma que pena por ver a Dios

Vivo sin vivir en mí  
y de tal manera espero,  
que muero porque no muero.

1.

En mí yo no vivo ya,  
y sin Dios vivir no puedo;  
pues sin él y sin mí quedo,  
este vivir ¿qué será?  
Mil muertes se me hará,  
pues mi misma vida espero,  
muriendo porque no muero.

2.

Esta vida que yo vivo  
es privación de vivir;  
y así, es continuo morir  
hasta que viva contigo.  
Oye, mi Dios, lo que digo:  
que esta vida no la quiero,  
que muero porque no muero.

3.

Estando ausente de ti  
¿qué vida puedo tener,  
sino muerte padecer  
la mayor que nunca vi?  
Lástima tengo de mí,  
pues de suerte persevero,  
que muero, porque no muero.

## Verses of the Soul that Aches to See God

I live but have no life in me.  
I have some hope I can't deny.  
I'm dying for I do not die.

1.

My life no longer comes from me.  
Without you, God, my life is gone.  
Without you, I cannot go on.  
This life of mine, what can it be?  
A thousand deaths it seems to me.  
I'm longing for my life, and I  
am dying for I do not die.

2.

This life I've lived has hitherto  
deprived me of my living breath.  
It is a constant life of death.  
Until I live my life in you,  
my God, I'll say it all anew:  
This life of mine I will decry.  
I'm dying for I do not die.

3.

I still am absent from your side.  
What kind of life can I possess  
without a death of great distress  
and pain that I can scarce abide?  
With life I am dissatisfied.  
I still survive—I don't know why.  
I'm dying for I do not die.

4.

El pez que del agua sale  
aun de alivio no carece,  
que en la muerte que padece  
al fin la muerte le vale.  
¿Qué muerte habrá que se iguale  
a mi vivir lastimero,  
pues si más vivo más muero?

5.

Cuando me pienso aliviar  
de verte en el Sacramento,  
háceme más sentimiento  
el no te poder gozar;  
todo es para más penar  
por no verte como quiero,  
y muero porque no muero.

6.

Y si me gozo, Señor,  
con esperanza de verte,  
en ver que puedo perderte  
se me dobla mi dolor;  
viviendo en tanto pavor  
y esperando como espero,  
muérome porque no muero.

7.

¡Sácame de aquesta muerte,  
mi Dios, y dame la vida;  
no me tengas impedida  
en esto lazo tan fuerte;  
mira que peno por verte,  
y mi mal es tan entero,  
que muero porque no muero!

4.

The fish that's taken from the sea  
is not without some good relief.  
The death it suffers in its grief  
is not without utility.  
What death could prove as bad to me  
as this poor life I vilify?  
The more I live, the more I die.

5.

When I attempt to find relief  
by seeing in the Sacrament  
your presence, I am not content,  
for sorrow comes just like a thief,  
and I am met with greater grief.  
I cannot see you, though I try.  
I'm dying for I do not die.

6.

When starting to rejoice, my Lord,  
in hopes that I'll perceive your face,  
the thought of losing your embrace  
brings double sorrow as reward.  
I live in dread and can't afford  
the hope that I would justify.  
I'm dying for I do not die.

7.

Remove me from this deathly woe,  
my God, and let me live again!  
Don't keep me in this mortal skin,  
this snare that binds me here below.  
I long to see your face, you know.  
My pain is so complete that I  
am dying for I do not die.

8.

Lloraré mi muerte ya  
y lamentaré mi vida,  
en tanto que detenida  
por mis pecados está.  
¡Oh mi Dios!, ¿cuándo será  
cuando yo diga de vero:  
vivo ya porque no muero?

8.

I will cry out for death to come,  
and mourn this life that is prolonged  
for all my sins and those I've wronged.

Detention here is wearisome.

My God! When will these words become  
the truth that no one can deny?

I live because I do not die!

## Un no sé qué

Por toda la hermosura  
nunca me perderé,  
sino por un no sé qué  
que se alcanza por ventura.

1.

Sabor de bien que es finito,  
lo más que puedo llegar  
es cansar el apetito  
y estragar el paladar;  
y así, por toda dulzura  
nunca yo me perderé,  
sino por un no sé qué  
que se halla por ventura.

2.

El corazón generoso  
nunca cura de parar  
donde se puede pasar,  
sino en más dificultoso;  
nada le causa hartura,  
y sube tanto su fe,  
que gusta de un no sé qué  
que se halla por ventura.

3.

El que de amor adolece,  
del divino ser tocado,  
tiene el gusto tan trocado  
que a los gustos desfallece;  
como el que con calentura  
fastidia el manjar que ve,  
y apetece un no sé qué  
que se halla por ventura.

## The Mystery

I'll never lose myself  
for beauty or for pelf,  
but for the mystery,  
that's reached so joyfully.

1.

The taste of mortal foods  
can only lead to moods  
in which the hunger's cloyed  
and food is not enjoyed.  
Myself I will not lose  
for all the sweetened brews,  
but for the mystery,  
discovered joyfully.

2.

The generous of heart  
will quickly seek to part  
from easy satisfactions  
and turn to harder actions  
since nothing satisfies.  
So much their faith will rise,  
they taste the mystery,  
discovered joyfully.

3.

Who suffers for his love  
was touched by God above.  
His taste is so transformed  
that even food that's warmed  
has no appeal at all,  
but tastes like so much gall.  
He seeks the mystery,  
discovered joyfully.

4.

No os maravilléis de acuesto  
que el gusto se quede tal,  
porque es la causa del mal  
ajena de todo el resto;  
y así toda criatura  
enajenada se ve  
y gusta de un no sé qué  
que se halla por ventura.

5.

Que estando la voluntad  
de Divinidad tocada,  
no puede quedar pagada  
sino con Divinidad;  
mas, por ser tal su hermosura  
que sólo se ve por fe,  
gústala en un no sé qué  
que se halla por ventura.

6.

Pues, de tal enamorado,  
decidme si habréis dolor,  
pues que no tiene sabor  
entre todo lo criado;  
solo, sin forma y figura,  
sin hallar arrimo y pie,  
gustando allá un no sé qué  
que se halla por ventura.

7.

No penséis que el interior,  
que es de mucho más valía,  
halla gozo y alegría  
en lo que acá de sabor;  
mas sobre toda hermosura,  
y lo que es y sería y fue,  
gusta de allá un no sé qué  
que se halla por ventura.

4.

Don't be amazed at this:  
His tongue can feel no bliss.  
His sickness, for the best,  
is different from the rest.  
From others he retires,  
for he has one desire:  
to know the mystery,  
discovered joyfully.

5.

When one concedes command,  
one's led by God's own hand.  
One never is fulfilled  
except as God has willed.  
God's beauty finds reception  
when seen with faith's perception.  
It's in the mystery,  
discovered joyfully.

6.

For such a person, do  
you feel much pain or rue?  
To dullness he is fated  
among all those created.  
His craving has no goal  
on earth to make him whole.  
He craves the mystery,  
discovered joyfully.

7.

Don't think that one who lives  
the inner life would give  
a penny's meager worth  
for flavors on this earth.  
Above all beauty and  
the times that He has planned,  
he loves the mystery,  
discovered joyfully.

8.

Más emplea su cuidado,  
quien se quiere aventajar  
en lo que está por ganar  
que en lo que tiene ganado;  
y así, para más altura,  
yo siempre me inclinaré  
sobre todo a un no sé qué  
que se halla por ventura.

9.

Por lo que por el sentido  
puede acá comprenderse  
y todo lo que entenderse,  
aunque sea muy subido,  
ni por gracia y hermosura  
yo nunca me perderé,  
sino por un no sé qué  
que se halla por ventura.

8.

It takes more work and pain  
in trying to obtain  
a thing that one has not  
than keeping what one's got.  
To reach my highest goal  
I always tell my soul  
to bow to mystery,  
discovered joyfully.

9.

I'll never lose myself  
for beauty or for pelf,  
nor for what senses tell  
the mind they know so well,  
nor for the knowledge deep  
the mind would like to keep,  
but for the mystery,  
discovered joyfully.



## **LUIS DE GÓNGORA Y ARGOTE (1561-1627)**

Luis de Góngora y Argote was born in Córdoba and became a prebendary at Córdoba Cathedral. He was a baroque poet in the Golden Age of Spanish literature, and he is considered to be one of the greatest poets of the Spanish language.

However, the style of Góngora's poetry came to be labeled as "culturismo" or "gongorismo" by his detractors, who thought that his poetry was too hard to understand. Specifically, they didn't like his use of Latin words in Spanish poems, his overuse of invented and archaic words, his obscure allusions, and his nonstandard word order.

## Alegoría de la brevedad de las cosas humanas

Aprended, flores, en mí,  
lo que va de ayer a hoy,  
que ayer maravilla fui,  
y sombra mía aun no soy.

La Aurora ayer me dio cuna,  
la noche ataúd me dio;  
sin luz muriera, si no  
me la prestará la Luna.  
Pues de vosotros ninguna  
deja de acabar así,

Aprended, flores, en mí,  
lo que va de ayer a hoy,  
que ayer maravilla fui,  
y sombra mía aun no soy.

Consuelo dulce el clavel  
es a la breve edad mía,  
pues quien me concedió un día,  
dos apenas le dio a él.  
Efímeras de vergel,  
yo cárdena, él carmesí,

Aprended, flores, en mí,  
lo que va de ayer a hoy,  
que ayer maravilla fui,  
y sombra mía aun no soy.

Flor es el jazmín, si bella,  
no de las más vividores,  
pues dura pocas más horas  
que rayos tiene de estrella;  
si el ámbar florece, es ella  
la flor que él retiene en sí.

## An Allegory on the Brevity of Human Things

Dear flowers, learn from fate  
that wonders do not last.  
I once was someone great,  
but now I'm in the past.

Aurora gave a cot;  
the night, a quiet tomb.  
I died and I had not  
a light except the moon.  
Not one of you can keep  
from taking such a leap.

Dear flowers, learn from fate  
that wonders do not last.  
I once was someone great,  
but now I'm in the past.

A consolation small:  
Though I have but a day  
to live, carnations fall  
and also fade away.  
Ephemera we are—  
each flower, man, and star.

Dear flowers, learn from fate  
that wonders do not last.  
I once was someone great,  
but now I'm in the past.

If jasmine is the fairest,  
she's not the greatest vier.  
Her blossoms aren't the rarest,  
but they will soon expire.  
If amber lived an hour,  
it would be like this flower.

Aprended, flores, en mí,  
lo que va de ayer a hoy,  
que ayer maravilla fui,  
y sombra mía aun no soy.

Aunque el alhelí grosero  
en fragancia y en color,  
más día ve que otra flor,  
pues ve los de un mayo entero,  
morir maravilla quiero,  
y no vivir alhelí.

Aprended, flores, en mí,  
lo que va de ayer a hoy,  
que ayer maravilla fui,  
y sombra mía aun no soy.

A ninguna al fin mayores  
términos concede el Sol  
si no es al girasol,  
Matusalem de las flores;  
ojos son aduladores  
cuantas en él hojas vi.

Aprended, flores, en mí,  
lo que va de ayer a hoy,  
que ayer maravilla fui,  
y sombra mía aun no soy.

Dear flowers, learn from fate  
that wonders do not last.  
I once was someone great,  
but now I'm in the past.

Though wallflowers are crude  
in color and in scent,  
they last, with fortitude,  
the May they have been lent.  
I'd rather they would fade,  
these marvels in the glade.

Dear flowers, learn from fate  
that wonders do not last.  
I once was someone great,  
but now I'm in the past.

The Sun gave longer terms  
of life to the sunflowers.  
They tower over worms  
and last for countless hours.  
Methuselahs, indeed,  
but finally they recede.

Dear flowers, learn from fate  
that wonders do not last.  
I once was someone great,  
but now I'm in the past.

## «Al tramontar del sol, la ninfa mía»

Al tramontar del sol, la ninfa mía  
de flores despojando el verde llano,  
cuantas troncaba la hermosa mano  
tantas el blanco pie crecer hacía.

Ondeábale el viento que corría  
el oro fino con error galano,  
cual verde hoja de álamo lozano  
se mueve al rojo despuntar de día.

Mas luego que ciñó sus sienes bellas  
de los varios despojos de su falda,  
término puesto al oro y la nieve,

juraré que lució más su guirnalda  
con ser de flores, la otra ser de estrellas  
que la que ilustra el cielo en luces nueve.\*

## The Nymph

As morning sunlight first began to show,  
a nymph went out to tread the verdant plain.  
Although she plucked some flowers for a chain,  
her feet inspired many more to grow.

The air began to warm and winds to blow.  
They rippled through her shiny golden mane,  
as when the southern winds at dawn sustain  
the rustling of the foliage to and fro.

But when upon her head she placed the braid  
and formed a boundary of greenish bars  
between her hair of gold and face of white,

I swear her garland, though of flowers made,  
shone brighter than that other one of stars  
that decks the sky with seven points of light.\*

*\* The constellation known as Ariadne's Crown, Corona Borealis, or the Northern Crown.*



## **LOPE DE VEGA CARPIO (1562-1635)**

Lope de Vega Carpio was born in Madrid. He was a child prodigy and an ultra-prolific writer of plays, poems, novels, letters, and so on. Lope himself claimed that each of more than 100 of his plays had been written within a single day and that he had written over 1500 plays. (About 500 of his plays are still extant.) A veritable whirlwind, he married several times, had numerous affairs, and served in the Invincible Armada. These adventures and others were incorporated into his numerous writings.

## «¿Qué tengo yo, que mi amistad procuras?»

¿Qué tengo yo, que mi amistad procuras?  
¿Qué interés se te sigue, Jesús mío,  
que a mí puerta, cubierto de rocío,  
pasas las noches del invierno oscuras?

¡Oh, cuánto fueron mis entrañas duras  
pues no te abrí! ¡Qué extraño desvarío  
si de mi ingratitud el yelo frío  
secó las llagas de tus plantas puras!

¡Cuántas veces el ángel me decía:  
Alma, asómate agora a la ventana,  
verás con cuánto amor llamar porfía!

¡Y cuántas, hermosura soberana,  
"Mañana le abriremos" respondía,  
para lo mismo responder mañana!

## Tomorrow!

How could my friendship give my Lord delight?  
What would you gain from me that you pursue  
my soul while you are drenched in wintry dew  
outside my shut and bolted door tonight?

My hard and thankless heart was not contrite,  
and I did not unlock the door for you.  
How crazy that you still could not get through!  
Outside, your wounds had frozen, red on white.

So many times an angel said to me,  
"He's calling you and will not go away.  
Look out the window, now, and you will see!"

So many times did I, dear angel, say,  
"Tomorrow, he may enter, certainly,"  
a statement I repeated the next day!



## **JUAN DE ARGUIJO (1567-1622)**

Juan de Arguijo was born in Seville. He was a poet, a musician, and a patron of the arts. However, in his old age, having spent most of his money, he had to endure financial hardship. His approximately 60 sonnets were written on mythological, moralistic, historical, and other topics. In the 18th century, he became one of the models of Neoclassical writing.

## La tempestad y la calma

Yo vi del rojo sol la luz serena  
turbarse, y que en un punto desaparece  
su alegre faz, y en torno se oscurece  
el cielo con tiniebla de horror llena.

El austro proceloso airado suena,  
crece su furia, y la tormenta crece,  
y en los hombros de Atlante se estremece  
el alto Olimpo y con espanto truena;

mas luego vi romperse el negro velo  
deshecho en agua, y a su luz primera  
restituirse alegre el claro día,

y de nuevo resplandor ornado el cielo.  
Miré, y dije: ¿Quién sabe si le espera  
igual mudanza a la fortuna mía?

## The Calm After the Storm

I saw the sun glow calm and red,  
but suddenly its joyful face  
was clouded, and throughout that place  
the darkened sky inspired dread.

The gusty winds with anger fed  
the growing storm, which spread through space,  
and Mount Olympus, on the base  
of Atlas, trembled overhead.

But then the darkness was undone  
by sheets of water, and the light  
of heaven shone as clear as day.

As soon as I could see the sun,  
I said, "Who knows? My fortunes might  
soon be restored in just this way."



## **FRANCISCO DE QUEVEDO (1580-1645)**

Francisco de Quevedo was born in Madrid. He wrote satirical and moralistic poems and novels. He studied languages, philosophy, and theology. He was friends with Cervantes, but made many enemies along the way. In 1618, he was made a knight of the Order of Santiago. He barely escaped with his life after meddling in Italian affairs for the purpose of expanding Spanish influence in the Mediterranean. At the end of his life, repenting of his wild youth, he penned many religious works. He was an expert stylist and could use words adroitly for his ends.

## **A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas**

Buscas en Roma a Roma ¡oh peregrino!  
y en Roma misma a Roma no la hallas:  
cadáver son las que ostentó murallas,  
y, tumba de sí propio, el Aventino.

Yace, donde reinaba, el Palatino;  
y limadas del tiempo las medallas,  
más se muestran destrozo a las batallas  
de las edades, que blasón latino.

Sólo el Tíber quedó; cuya corriente,  
si ciudad la regó, ya sepultura  
la llora con funesto son doliente.

¡Oh Roma!, en tu grandeza, en tu hermosura  
huyó lo que era firme, y solamente  
lo fugitivo permanece y dura.

## **To Rome, Buried in its Ruins**

The pilgrim looks for Rome but finds just gloom.  
In Rome one cannot find the Roman halls.  
In utter ruins are her boasted walls.  
The Aventine supplies its own dark tomb.

The Palatine has fallen from its reign.  
The medals, worn away by use and time,  
appear to be a battle's dross and grime,  
insignias of Rome that bear a stain.

The Tiber is the only lasting sign.  
Its waters washed, but now they bury Rome.  
It mourns the Roman fall and her decline.

Oh Rome! Your glory lapsed and we bemoan  
the fact that greatness cannot be enshrined.  
The current stays, but stable things have flown.



## **SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ (c. 1648-1695)**

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz was born in Mexico City. She was a poet and playwright and has been called a proto-feminist. At 14, she was noticed for her intellectual brilliance and was invited to live at court. She decided to enter the Carmelite order in 1667 but returned to court due to the difficulty of the order. She joined a convent in 1669 in Mexico City, where she held open court and defended the education of women. Near the end of her life, she sold her 4,000-book library and other valuable possessions and gave the money to the poor. She dedicated her life to prayer and charity and died while nursing the sick during a plague.

**«En perseguirme, mundo, ¿qué interesas?»**

¿En perseguirme, mundo, qué interesas?  
¿En qué te ofendo, cuando sólo intento  
poner bellezas en mi entendimiento  
y no mi entendimiento en las bellezas?

Yo no estimo tesoros ni riquezas,  
y así, siempre me causa más contento  
poner riquezas en mi entendimiento  
que no mi entendimiento en las riquezas.

Yo no estimo hermosura que vencida  
es despojo civil de las edades  
ni riqueza me agrada fementida,

teniendo por mejor en mis verdades  
consumir vanidades de la vida  
que consumir la vida en vanidades.

**"O world, you are afflicting me, but why?"**

O world, you are afflicting me, but why?  
Have I offended you, though I'm just planning  
to put more beauty in my understanding,  
for beauty isn't only for the eye?

I don't chase after riches, wealth, or gold,  
and thus I have more peace than many men.  
I keep my mental riches safe within  
and don't pursue the treasures I behold.

I don't esteem the beauty that, when lost,  
became the plunder of the ages past.  
I don't amass false wealth at any cost.

In my own view, it's better to recast:  
All vanities should be consumed and tossed.  
A life consumed by vanities won't last.

## A su retrato

Este, que ves, engaño colorido,  
que del arte ostentando los primores,  
con falsos silogismos de colores  
es cauteloso engaño del sentido:

éste, en quien la lisonja ha pretendido  
excusar de los años los horrores,  
y venciendo del tiempo los rigores,  
triunfar de la vejez y del olvido,

es un vano artificio del cuidado,  
es una flor al viento delicada,  
es un resguardo inútil para el hado:

es una necia diligencia errada,  
es un afán caduco y, bien mirado,  
es cadáver, es polvo, es sombra, es nada.

## To Her Portrait

This colored portrait is a sham, though bright.  
It flaunts the artist's expertise and skills.  
Like truthless syllogisms, color fills  
the canvas with such shades that trick the sight.

The artist's flattery puts up a fight  
to overcome the tragedy that kills,  
and former cruelties that give us chills.  
He triumphs over age and fading light.

It is a futile artifice, a screen.  
It is a fragile flower in a squall.  
It is a flimsy wall that stands between.

It is a foolish diligence in thrall.  
It is a fading hope and, truly seen,  
it is a corpse, or dust, or nothing at all.

## «Este amoroso tormento»

Este amoroso tormento  
que en mi corazón se ve,  
sé que lo siento, y no sé  
la causa por que lo siento.

Siento una grave agonía  
por lograr un devaneo  
que empieza como deseo  
y para en melancolía.

Y cuando con más ternera  
mi infeliz estado lloro,  
sé que estoy triste e ignoro  
la causa de mi tristeza.

Siento un anhelo tirano  
por la ocasión a que aspiro  
y cuando cerca la miro  
yo misma aparto la mano.

Porque si acaso se ofrece  
después de tanto desvelo,  
la desazona el recelo  
o el susto la desvanece.

Y si alguna vez sin susto  
consigo tal posesión,  
cualquiera leve ocasión  
me malogra todo el gusto.

Siento mal del mismo bien  
con receloso temor,  
y me obliga el mismo amor  
tal vez a mostrar desdén.

**"This love torments me so!"**

This love torments me so!  
I know this ache is real,  
but why I often feel  
this ache, I do not know.

I feel a heady madness—  
I yearn to light a fire,  
but starting as desire,  
it ends at last as sadness.

When my compassion thaws,  
my gloomy state I mourn.  
I know I am forlorn  
but do not know the cause.

When longing takes command,  
I want love to appear,  
but when I see it near  
I just withdraw my hand.

If love's by chance proposed  
upon a sleepless night,  
the mood gives way to fright,  
and doubts are all opposed.

If ever, lacking fright,  
I reach a state of poise,  
the slightest thing annoys  
and spoils my delight.

From good things comes more pain  
and more suspicious fear.  
The love that is so near  
makes me express disdain.

Cualquier leve ocasión labra  
en mi pecho de manera  
que el que imposibles venciera  
se irrita de una palabra.

Con poca causa ofendida  
suelo en mitad de mi amor  
negar un leve favor  
a quien le diera la vida.

Ya sufrida, ya irritada,  
con contrarias penas lucho,  
que por él sufriré mucho  
y con él sufriré nada.

No sé en qué lógica cabe  
el que tal cuestión se pruebe,  
que por él lo grave es leve  
y con él lo leve es grave.

Sin bastantes fundamentos  
forman mis tristes cuidados,  
de conceptos engañados,  
un monte de sentimientos.

Y en aquel fiero conjunto  
hallo, cuando se derriba,  
que aquella máquina altiva  
sólo estribaba en un punto.

Tal vez el dolor me engaña,  
y presumo sin razón  
que no habrá satisfacción  
que pueda templar mi saña.

Y cuando a averiguar llego  
el agravio por que riño,  
es como espanto de niño  
que para en burlas y juego.

The slightest cause is all  
it takes to fluster me.  
A word could disagree  
and fill me up with gall.

When little things cause strife,  
my love is set adrift.  
I grudge the smallest gift  
to him who'd give his life.

I'm either cold or hot.  
With counter griefs I fight:  
For him, I'd ache all night.  
With him, I'd suffer naught.

Can logic calculate  
or prove how things will fall?  
To him, the great is small.  
With him, the small is great.

Without enough foundations,  
my grievous cares erect,  
from notions I elect,  
a mountain of sensations.

And in that wild mass  
I find, when it's destroyed,  
the feelings I enjoyed  
were based on fragile glass.

Perhaps the pain deceived  
and, falsely, I assumed  
my passion was foredoomed  
to never be relieved.

My heart, when injured, blames  
another for the slight.  
It's like a child's fright  
that ends in fun and games.

Y aunque el desengaño toco,  
con la misma pena lucho  
de ver que padezco mucho  
padeciendo por tan poco.

A vengarse se abalanza  
tal vez el alma ofendida  
y después arrepentida  
toma de mí otra venganza.

Y si al desdén satisfago  
es con tan ambiguo error  
que yo pienso que es rigor  
y se remata en halago.

Hasta el labio desatento  
suele equívoco tal vez,  
por usar de la altivez,  
encontrar el rendimiento.

Cuando por soñada culpa  
con más enojo me incito,  
yo le acrimino el delito  
y le busco la disculpa.

No huyo el mal ni busco el bien,  
porque en mi confuso error  
ni me asegura el amor  
ni me despecha el desdén.

En mi ciego devaneo,  
bien hallada con mi engaño,  
solicito el desengaño  
y no encontrarlo deseo.

Si alguno mis quejas oye,  
más a decirlas me obliga,  
porque me las contradiga,  
que no porque las apoye.

Although my dreams are brittle,  
in struggles I am caught.  
I suffer quite a lot  
for suffering so little.

My wounded soul repents  
for taking its revenge.  
Then, on a swinging hinge,  
it turns to me and vents.

When happy with a slight,  
I make an odd mistake:  
What seems to be an ache  
turns out to be delight.

My careless lips record  
the words by which I lapse.  
Through arrogance, perhaps,  
chagrin is my reward.

My dreams of guilt induce  
my wrath and, oftentimes,  
I censure all my crimes  
and search for an excuse.

I neither flee the bad,  
nor search for what is good.  
I love not as I should,  
nor with disdain am mad.

In blind delirium,  
I'm pleased to be deceived.  
Though truth should be received,  
I beg it not to come.

If someone hears my sighs,  
my feelings, now exposed,  
will only be opposed—  
he won't defend my cries.

Porque si con la pasión  
algo contra mi amor digo,  
es mi mayor enemigo  
quien me concede razón.

Y si acaso en mi provecho  
hallo la razón propicia,  
me embaraza la injusticia  
y ando cediendo el derecho.

Nunca hallo gusto cumplido,  
porque entre alivio y dolor  
hallo culpa en el amor  
y disculpa en el olvido.

Esto de mi pena dura  
es algo del dolor fiero  
y mucho más no refiero  
porque pasa de locura.

Si acaso me contradigo  
en este confuso error,  
aquel que tuviese amor  
entenderá lo que digo.

And if, in passion's blight,  
I claim my love's amiss,  
my greatest foe is this:  
the one who says I'm right.

And if I take delight,  
and reason is my friend,  
injustice, in the end,  
withdraws from me my right.

Fulfillment flees my net—  
I either ache or wilt,  
for love is only guilt,  
forgiveness, to forget.

This harsh and wild pain  
is like a savage grief.  
My words don't bring relief  
but make me sound insane.

Confusion rules my dealings.  
My moods all contradict.  
But lovers, I predict,  
will understand my feelings.



## GERTRUDIS GÓMEZ DE AVELLANEDA (1814-1873)

Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda was born in Cuba. She was a precocious child and began writing at an early age. When she was a teenager, one of her tutors was José María Heredia, who later became the subject of the following poem. As a poet, novelist, and playwright, she was one of the principal writers of the Romantic Era in Spanish America. As a poet, she could skillfully write in many different types of meters and rhythms. The subject matter of her poems included her homeland, love, nature, philosophy, and religion. She moved to Spain when she was 22 and lived there for most of the rest of her life. She died in Madrid.

José María Heredia (1803-1839) is the subject of the following poem by Avellaneda. He was born in Santiago, Cuba. As a youth, under the direction of his father, he began to translate Latin poems and French fables. He lived in various places, such as Florida, Caracas, New York, and Mexico because his father's work took them there. However, he was sentenced to perpetual exile from Cuba for his participation in a conspiracy aimed at liberating Cuba. His most famous poem, "Niagara" (1824), deals with that famous waterfall realistically, while including references to his idealized homeland and to his exile. He died in Mexico City.

## A la muerte del célebre poeta cubano don José María de Heredia

I.

Voz pavorosa en funeral lamento  
Desde los marcos de mi patria vuela  
A las playas de Iberia; tristemente  
En son confuso la dilata el viento;  
El dulce canto en mi garganta hiela,  
Y sombras de dolor viste a mi mente.  
¡Ay!, que esa voz doliente  
Con que su pena América denota  
Y en estas playas lanza el Océano,  
"Murió, pronuncia, el férvido patriota..."  
"Murió, repite, el trovador cubano;"  
Y un eco triste en lontananza gime:  
"¡Murió el cantor del Niágara sublime!"

II.

¿Y es verdad? ¿Y es verdad? ... ¿La muerte impía  
Apagar pudo con si, soplo helado  
El generoso corazón del vate  
Do tanto fuego de entusiasmo ardía?  
¿No ya en amor se enciende, ni agitado  
De la santa virtud al nombre late?...  
Bien cual cede el embate  
Del aquilón sañoso el roble erguido,  
Así en la fuerza de su edad lozana  
Fue por el fallo del destino herido...  
Astro eclipsado en su primer mañana,  
Sepúlтанle las sombras de la muerte,  
Y en luto Cuba su placer convierte.

## **On the Death of the Famous Cuban Poet José María Heredia**

I.

A voice of funeral lament  
wafts from my homeland to the shore  
of old Iberia. The wind  
distorts the voice as it is sent.  
My frozen throat can sing no more,  
and round me clouds of grief descend.  
Oh, let it end!  
America declares her pain,  
and on these shores the Sea intones,  
"The fervid patriot is slain!"  
An echo in the distance moans,  
"The one who praised Niagara's tide,  
the Cuban troubadour, has died!"

II.

Could it be true that death unjust  
extinguished with his icy breath  
that noble-hearted bard we know,  
who burned with passion's heat? Oh, must  
his love and zeal be quenched by death?  
His righteous virtue was laid low,  
as winds that blow  
with furor fell a solid tree.  
He fell to earth in youthful prime  
and was betrayed by destiny:  
a star eclipsed before its time.  
And joyful Cuba, with no warning,  
is suddenly reduced to mourning.

III.

¡Patria! ¡numen feliz! ¡nombre divino!  
¡Ídolo puro de las nobles almas!  
¡Objeto dulce de su eterno anhelo!  
Ya enmudeció tu cisne peregrino...  
¿Quién cantará tus brisas y tus palmas,  
Tu sol de fuego, tu brillante cielo?...  
Ostenta, sí, tu duelo,  
Que en ti rodó su venturosa cuna,  
Por ti clamaba en el destierro impío,  
Y hoy condena la pérfida fortuna  
A suelo extraño su cadáver frío,  
Do tus arroyos, ¡ay!, con su murmullo  
No darán a su sueño blando arrullo.

IV.

¡Silencio! De sus hados la fiereza  
No recordemos en la tumba helada  
Que lo defiende de la injusta suerte.  
Ya reclinó su lánguida cabeza  
—De genio y desventuras abrumada—  
En el inmóvil seno de la muerte.  
¿Qué importa al polvo inerte,  
Que torna a su elemento primitivo,  
Ser en este lugar o en otro hollado?  
¿Yace con él el pensamiento altivo?...  
Que el vulgo de los hombres asombrado  
Tiemble al azar la eternidad su vuelo;  
Mas la patria del genio está en el cielo.

III.

Our homeland! What a happy thought!  
An idol pure of noble souls!  
An object sweet of our desire!  
Your swan is mute, and he cannot  
be now the poet who extols  
your breezes, palms, and sun of fire!  
Your grief grows higher!  
In you was found his baby bed.  
To you he called from other lands.  
In exile now, his corpse is led  
into the grave by foreign hands.  
And now—alas!—your murmuring streams  
can't lull him as he sleeps and dreams.

IV.

Let's not remember at his grave  
(which guards him from outrageous fate)  
the fierceness of his destiny.  
Though troubles came and he was brave,  
he rests his head, in weakened state,  
upon death's bosom peacefully.  
The flesh we see  
becomes the dust we leave behind.  
What does it matter where it lies?  
Were haughty thoughts within his mind?  
Though some are shocked by his demise  
and quick flight to eternity,  
his homeland's heaven, verily.

V.

Allí jamás las tempestades braman,  
Ni roba al sol su luz la noche oscura,  
Ni se conoce de la tierra el lloro...  
Allí el amor y la virtud proclaman  
Espíritus vestidos de luz pura,  
Que cantan el Hosanna en arpas de oro,  
Allí el randal sonoro  
Sin cesar corre de aguas misteriosas,  
Para apagar la sed que enciende el alma  
—Sed que en sus fuentes pobres, cenagosas,  
Nunca este mundo satisface o calma.  
Allí jamás la gloria se mancilla,  
Y eterno el sol de la justicia brilla.

VI.

¿Y qué, al dejar la vida, deja el hombre?  
El amor inconstante; la esperanza.  
Engañosa visión que lo extravía;  
Tal vez los vanos ecos de un renombre,  
Que con desvelos y dolor alcanza;  
El mentido poder; la amistad fría.  
Y el venidero día  
—Cual el que espira, breve y pasajero—  
Al abismo corriendo del olvido...  
Y el placer, cual relámpago ligero.  
De tempestades y pavor seguido...  
Y mil proyectos que medita a solas,  
Fundados, ¡ay!, sobre agitadas olas.

V.

In heaven, storms don't mar the peace,  
nor is the sun eclipsed by night,  
nor does our mourning reach that sphere.  
But loving spirits never cease  
to sing hosannas in the light  
with golden harps and voices clear.  
And help is near,  
for living waters quench the thirst  
of everyone forevermore,  
but earthly waters must be cursed—  
they only briefly can restore.  
The sun of justice won't decline.  
Its rays of glory always shine.

VI.

What does a human leave behind?  
Inconstant love, illusive hope,  
deceptive vision, maybe fame—  
achieved through sweat, but still maligned—  
some power of restricted scope,  
a friend, but only one in name.  
The day we claim—  
a breath of air that does not last—  
is quickly running to the night,  
and pleasure, like a lightning blast,  
is quickly gone, replaced by fright.  
And countless plans made separately  
are built upon the shifting sea!

VII.

De verte ufano, en el umbral del mundo  
El ángel de la hermosa Poesía  
Te alzó en sus brazos y encendió tu mente,  
Y ora lanzas, Heredia, el barro inmundo  
Que tu sublime espíritu oprimía,  
Y en alas vuelas de tu genio ardiente,  
No más, no más lamente  
Destino tal nuestra ternura ciega.  
Ni la importuna queja al cielo suba....  
¡Murió!... A la tierra su despojo entrega  
Su espíritu al Señor, su gloria a Cuba.  
¡Que el genio, como el sol, llega a su ocaso  
Dejando un rastro fúlgido su paso!

VII.

The angel of delightful rhyme,  
on seeing you within the door,  
embraced your soul and took you higher.  
And now, Heredia, it's time  
to drop what you will use no more:  
your flesh of mud and moods of fire.  
As you expire,  
lay your regrets within His hands.  
Your body goes beneath the sod,  
your glory goes to Cuba, and  
your spirit now returns to God.  
You sun-like genius, leave us, yet  
leave trails of splendor as you set!



## JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ (1834-1886)

José Hernández was born in Buenos Aires. He was unable to finish his primary education due to illness, but he read extensively while living on his father's ranch. He wrote about Argentinian cowboy (*gaucho*) life. His most important work was his two-part epic of cowboy life. The first part (*El gaucho Martín Fierro—The Gaucho Martin Fierro*) was written in 1872, while the second part (*La vuelta de Martín Fierro—The Return of Martin Fierro*) was written in 1879. The two parts together amount to 2,316 lines of verse. The following selection is the first canto of the first part.

*de El gaucho Martín Fierro*

1.

Aquí me pongo a cantar  
al compás de la vigüela,  
que el hombre que lo desvela  
una pena extraordinaria,  
como la ave solitaria  
con el cantar se consuela.

2.

Pido a los Santos del Cielo  
que ayuden mi pensamiento,  
les pido en este momento  
que voy a cantar mi historia  
me refresquen la memoria,  
y aclaren mi entendimiento.

3.

Vengan Santos milagrosos,  
vengan todos en mi ayuda,  
que la lengua se me añuda  
y se me turba la vista;  
pido a mi Dios que me asista  
en esta ocasión tan ruda.

4.

Yo he visto muchos cantores,  
con famas bien obtenidas,  
y que después de alquiridas  
no las quieren sustentar-:  
parece que sin largar  
se cansaron en partidas.

from *The Gaucho Martín Fierro*

1.  
So here I start to sing  
in time with my guitar;  
the sorrow that I feel  
won't let me fall asleep;  
I'm like a lonely bird  
consoled by his own song.

2.  
I ask the saints above  
to help me with my thoughts;  
I ask them at this time,  
for I will sing my tale;  
I would remember all  
with clarity of mind.

3.  
O come, amazing saints,  
come down to help me here;  
my tongue is tied in knots;  
my vision is disturbed;  
I ask my God for help  
at such a trying time.

4.  
Some singers have I seen  
who earned a little fame;  
but after it was reached,  
they could not keep it well;  
they had no stamina,  
but wearied of the race.

5.

Mas ande otro criollo pasa  
Martín Fierro ha de pasar,  
nada lo hace recular  
ni las fantasmas lo espantan;  
y dende que todos cantan  
yo también quiero cantar.

6.

Cantando me he de morir,  
cantando me han de enterrar,  
y cantando he de llegar  
al pie del Eterno Padre-  
dende el vientre de mi madre  
vine a este mundo a cantar.

7.

Que no se trabe mi lengua  
ni me falte la palabra  
el cantar mi gloria labra  
y poniéndome a cantar,  
cantando me han de encontrar  
aunque la tierra se abra.

8.

Me siento en el plan de un bajo  
a cantar un argumento-  
como si soplara el viento  
hago tiritar los pastos-  
con oros, copas y bastos,  
juega allí mi pensamiento.

9.

Yo no soy cantor letrao,  
mas si me pongo a cantar  
no tengo cuándo acabar  
y me envejezco cantando;  
las coplas me van brotando  
como agua de manantial.

5.  
What Creoles like to do,  
I also want to do;  
I never will back down;  
the ghosts don't frighten me;  
since many like to sing,  
I also want to sing.

6.  
While singing, I will die,  
and then they'll bury me;  
while singing, I'll arrive  
before the throne of God;  
yes, from my mother's womb,  
I came to earth to sing.

7.  
O, let my tongue be loose,  
and let me find the words,  
for glory comes from song;  
and when I start to sing,  
they'll find me singing though  
the earth should open wide.

8.  
I'll sit upon the ground  
to sing my story's plot;  
just like the wind that blows,  
I'll make the grasses bend;  
I'll play my thoughts out loud  
just like I'm playing cards.

9.  
I'm not too smart with books,  
but when I start to sing,  
I don't know when to stop—  
I'll age with all my songs;  
the verses flow from me  
like water from a spring.

10.

Con la guitarra en la mano  
ni las moscas se me arriman,  
naides me pone el pie encima,  
y cuando el pecho se entona,  
hago gemir a la prima  
y llorar a la bordona.

11.

Yo soy toro en mi rodeo  
y toraso en rodeo ageno,  
siempre me tuve por güeno  
y si me quieren probar,  
salgan otros a cantar  
y veremos quién es menos.

12.

No me hago al lao de la güeya  
aunque vengan degollando,  
con los blandos yo soy blando  
y soy duro con los duros,  
y ninguno, en un apuro  
me ha visto andar titubiando.

13.

En el peligro ¡qué Cristos!  
el corazón se me enancha  
pues toda la tierra es cancha,  
y de esto naides se asombre,  
el que se tiene por hombre  
ande quiera hace pata ancha.

14.

Soy gaucho, y entiendanló  
como mi lengua lo esplica,  
para mí la tierra es chica  
y pudiera ser mayor,  
ni la víbora me pica  
ni quema mi frente el Sol.

10.

With my guitar in hand,  
not even flies come near,  
and no one steps on me;  
and when I bare my heart,  
I make the first string moan  
and make the sixth string cry.

11.

I am the bull out here—  
is there a better one?  
I feel my talent's good,  
so if you'd like a test,  
let others come and try,  
and let's see who will fall.

12.

I don't avoid a fight,  
although some throats are slit;  
with softies I am soft,  
with tough guys I am tough;  
and, in a bind, no one  
has seen me hesitate.

13.

When danger comes, oh man!  
My heart just starts to pound;  
the earth's a battlefield—  
no one should be amazed;  
if you think you're a man,  
then stand up for yourself.

14.

I am a gaucho—heed  
my explanation here:  
to me the earth is small—  
it could be bigger still;  
the snake does not bite me,  
nor does the sun burn me.

15.

Nací como nace el peje  
en el fondo de la mar,  
naides me puede quitar  
aquello que Dios me dio  
lo que al mundo truje yo  
del mundo lo he de llevar.

16.

Mi gloria es vivir tan libre  
como el pájaro del Cielo,  
no hago nido en este suelo  
ande hay tanto que sufrir;  
y naides me ha de seguir  
cuando yo remonto el vuelo.

17.

Yo no tengo en el amor  
quien me venga con querellas,  
como esas aves tan bellas  
que saltan de rama en rama-  
yo hago en el trébol mi cama,  
y me cubren las estrellas.

18.

Y sepan cuantos me escuchan  
de mis penas el relato  
que nunca peleó ni mato  
sino por necesidad;  
y que a tanta alversidá  
sólo me arrojó el mal trato.

19.

Y atiendan la relación  
que hace un gaucho perseguido  
que fue buen padre y marido  
empeñoso y diligente,  
y sin embargo la gente  
lo tiene por un bandido.

15.

I came into the world,  
a fish within the sea;  
no one can take away  
what God has given me;  
what I brought with me here  
I will take from the world.

16.

My glory is to live  
as free as any bird;  
I do not make my nest  
upon the troubled ground;  
and no one follows me  
when I ascend and soar.

17.

I do not have a love  
to quarrel with me here;  
just like those pretty birds,  
I hop from branch to branch;  
in clover is my bed;  
I'm covered by the stars.

18.

Tell those who listen to  
my tale of pain and woe  
that I don't fight or kill  
unless there is a need;  
and my adversity  
was caused by much abuse.

19.

And pay attention to  
this gaucho who's harassed;  
he was a spouse and dad,  
hard-working and upright,  
and yet the people think  
that he's a common crook.



## **MANUEL GONZÁLEZ PRADA (1844-1918)**

Manuel González Prada was born in Lima. He was influenced by German philosophers of the Enlightenment and by the positivists. He assailed racism, colonialism, and Church power. One of his quotations was "*Los viejos a la tumba, los jóvenes a la obra*" ("The old ones to the grave, the young ones to the work").

## «Los bienes y las glorias de la vida»

Los bienes y las glorias de la vida  
o nunca vienen o nos llegan tarde.  
Lucen de cerca, pasan de corrida,  
los bienes y las glorias de la vida.  
¡Triste del hombre que en la edad florida  
coger las flores del vivir aguarde!  
Los bienes y las glorias de la vida  
o nunca vienen o nos llegan tarde.

## **"The glories and rewards that we pursue"**

The glories and rewards that we pursue  
arrive too late for us or never come.  
They shine their light nearby, then bid adieu—  
the glories and rewards that we pursue.  
The man who waits to act will ever rue  
he failed to live life to the maximum!  
The glories and rewards that we pursue  
arrive too late for us or never come.



## **JOSÉ MARTÍ (1853-1895)**

José Martí was born in Havana, Cuba. When he was marked as a rebel, he was deported to Spain. He was able to go back to Cuba in 1878, but he continued his plans for revolution and was chosen as the revolution's supreme leader in 1895. He was killed soon thereafter. *Versos sencillos* (1891) is his collection of poems concerning nature and life. The following selection is the first poem of the collection.

## de *Versos sencillos*

Yo soy un hombre sincero  
De donde crece la palma,  
Y antes de morirme quiero  
Echar mis versos del alma.

Yo vengo de todas partes,  
Y hacia todas partes voy:  
Arte soy entre las artes,  
En los montes, monte soy.

Yo sé los nombres extraños  
De las yerbas y las flores,  
Y de mortales engaños,  
Y de sublimes dolores.

Yo he visto en la noche oscura  
Llover sobre mi cabeza  
Los rayos de lumbre pura  
De la divina belleza.

Alas nacer vi en los hombros  
De las mujeres hermosas:  
Y salir de los escombros,  
Volando las mariposas.

He visto vivir a un hombre  
Con el puñal al costado,  
Sin decir jamás el nombre  
De aquella que lo ha matado.

Rápida, como un reflejo,  
Dos veces vi el alma, dos:  
Cuando murió el pobre viejo,  
Cuando ella me dijo adiós.

from *Simple Verses*

I am an honest guy,  
from where the palm trees grow.  
I'll write, before I die,  
these verses from my soul.

I come from every part.  
To all the parts, I run.  
Among the arts, I'm art.  
In mountains, I am one.

I know the Latin names  
of flowers, grass, and thyme.  
I know the fatal games,  
and sorrows so sublime.

I've seen in darkest night,  
descending from the sky,  
the rays of brightest light,  
pure beauty from on high.

I saw some wings appear  
on pretty gals I've known,  
and from the rubbish tier,  
some butterflies have flown.

I've seen a man of shame.  
With dagger he is skilled,  
but he won't say the name  
of her by whom he's killed.

How fast they left my side!  
I saw two souls fly free:  
My father's, when he died,  
and mine when she left me.

Temblé una vez,—en la reja,  
A la entrada de la viña, —  
Cuando la bárbara abeja  
Picó en la frente a mi niña.

Gocé una vez, de tal suerte  
Que gocé cual nunca:—cuando  
La sentencie de mi muerte  
Leyó el alcaide llorando.

Oigo un suspiro, a través  
De las tierras y la mar,  
Y no es un suspiro,—es  
Que mi hijo va a despertar.

Si dicen que del joyero  
Tome la joya mejor,  
Tomo a un amigo sincero  
Y pongo a un lado el amor.

Yo he visto al águila herida  
Volar al azul sereno,  
Y morir en su guarida  
La víbora del veneno.

Yo sé bien que cuando el mundo  
Cede, lívido, al descanso,  
Sobre el silencio profundo  
Murmura el arroyo manso.

Yo he puesto la mano osada,  
De horror y júbilo yerta,  
Sobre la estrella apagada  
Que cayó frente a mi puerta.

Oculto en mi pecho bravo  
La pena que me lo hiere:  
El hijo de un pueblo esclavo  
Vive por él, calla y muere.

I trembled once to see,  
while standing in the yard,  
a wicked honey bee  
had stung my daughter hard.

I was so pleased that I  
this moment always kept:  
They sentenced me to die.  
The jailer read and wept.

I hear a sound nearby,  
all through the land and lake,  
but it is not a sigh:  
My son will soon awake.

A jeweler, in the end,  
will keep the greatest stone.  
I'll take an honest friend  
and leave the love alone.

I've seen an eagle fly,  
though wounded, through the air.  
I've see a serpent die  
within its secret lair.

I know our lives will cease,  
and rest comes afterward.  
Above the calm and peace,  
the gentle stream is heard.

I've put my daring hand  
upon a star that died.  
I saw it fall and land  
before my door, outside.

Within my angry chest,  
I hide the burning pain.  
A son of men oppressed,  
he's dying for their gain.

Todo es hermoso y constante,  
Todo es música y razón,  
Y todo, como el diamante,  
Antes que luz es carbón.

Yo sé que el necio se entierra  
Con gran lujo y con gran llanto,—  
Y que no hay fruta en la tierra  
Como la del camposanto.

Callo, y entiendo, y me quito  
La pompa del rimador:  
Cuelgo de un árbol marchito  
Mi muceta de doctor.

With beauty we are blessed,  
and all is right and just.  
A diamond must be stressed.  
Before it shines, it's dust

When fools have died, I know  
they're buried well, but then  
the sweetest fruit will grow  
upon the graves of men.

I quietly deny  
the rhymer's due reward.  
I hang on branches dry  
my doctor's mortarboard.



## RUBÉN DARÍO (1867-1916)

Rubén Darío was born in Nicaragua. At thirteen years of age, he had already become known as a "child poet." In his teens, he read widely in the Spanish classics and he also read many contemporary French authors, including Victor Hugo. In *Azul* (1888), he included mythological, fanciful, and supernatural elements in his poetry. He traveled widely after this book was published and met Verlaine and other symbolists. In Buenos Aires, he wrote for a newspaper and became known as one of the most important and influential poets of modernism. In *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905), he was especially concerned with the future of the Spanish American peoples and with his own aging and future death.

## Sonatina: La princesa está triste

La princesa está triste... ¿Qué tendrá la princesa?  
Los suspiros se escapan de su boca de fresa,  
que ha perdido la risa, que ha perdido el color.  
La princesa está pálida en su silla de oro,  
está mudo el teclado de su clave sonoro,  
y en un vaso, olvidada, se desmaya una flor.

El jardín puebla el triunfo de los pavos reales;  
parlanchina, la dueña dice cosas banales,  
y vestido de rojo piruetea el bufón.  
La princesa no ríe, la princesa no siente;  
la princesa persigue por el cielo de Oriente  
la libélula vaga de una vaga ilusión.

¿Piensa acaso en el príncipe de Golconda o de China,  
o en el que ha detenido su carroza argentina  
para ver de sus ojos la dulzura de luz?  
¿O en el rey de las islas de las rosas fragantes,  
o en el que es soberano de los claros diamantes,  
o en el dueño orgulloso de las perlas de Ormuz?

¡Ay! La pobre princesa de la boca de rosa  
quiere ser golondrina, quiere ser mariposa,  
tener alas ligeras, bajo el cielo volar,  
ir al sol por la escala luminosa de un rayo,  
saludar a los lirios con los versos de mayo  
o perderse en el viento sobre el trueno del mar.

Ya no quiere el palacio, ni la rueda de plata,  
ni el halcón encantado, ni el bufón escarlata,  
ni los cisnes unánimes en el lago de azur.  
Y están tristes las flores por la flor de la corte:  
los jazmines de Oriente, los nelumbos del Norte,  
de Occidente las dalias y las rosas del Sur.

## Sonatina: The Princess Is Sad

The princess is sad. Have her feelings gone south?  
Long sighs are escaping her strawberry mouth.  
Her laughter is gone. Her complexion is pale.  
The princess looks ill on her gold-covered chair,  
and mute is her harpsichord in the still air.  
A flower forgotten is starting to ail.

The peacocks are strutting across the green land.  
The chattering lady's trite words have been planned.  
The jester is spinning while wearing all red.  
The princess laughs not. She can't feel in the least.  
The princess pursues through the skies of the East  
a dragonfly, and by her dreams she is led.

Perhaps she is thinking of someone in Rome?  
Or maybe of one in a carriage from home  
who came to observe the great wonders of light?  
Perhaps it's the king of the fragrant rose isles?  
Perhaps it's the sovereign of diamonds in piles?  
Perhaps it's the owner of pearls that shine bright?

Alas! The poor princess with lips like a rose  
would change to a butterfly, donning new clothes.  
With delicate wings, she would fly through the lea,  
ascend to the sun on the slope of a ray  
and greet the fine lilies with verses of May  
or lose her sad self in the thunder at sea.

She doesn't want palace or distaff or thread  
or magical falcons or jesters in red  
or swans on the blue of a lake that's at rest.  
The flowers are sad for the flower at court:  
the jasmines of East and the lilies of North,  
the roses of South and the dahlias of West.

¡Pobrecita princesa de los ojos azules!  
Está presa en sus oros, está presa en sus tules,  
en la jaula de mármol del palacio real;  
el palacio soberbio que vigilan los guardas,  
que custodian cien negros con sus cien alabardas,  
un lebrél que no duerme y un dragón colosal.

¡Oh, quién fuera hipsipila que dejó la crisálida!  
(La princesa está triste, la princesa está pálida.)  
¡Oh visión adorada de oro, rosa y marfil!  
¡Quién volara a la tierra donde un príncipe existe  
(La princesa está pálida. La princesa está triste)  
más brillante que el alba, más hermoso que abril!

—Calla, calla, princesa —dice el hada madrina—;  
en caballo con alas hacia acá se encamina,  
en el cinto la espada y en la mano el azor,  
el feliz caballero que te adora sin verte,  
y que llega de lejos, vencedor de la Muerte,  
a encenderte los labios con un beso de amor.

Poor princess with mournful yet pretty blue eyes—  
imprisoned in gold and the tulle that she buys!  
The palace of royalty feels like a cage:  
the dominant palace with guards on their rounds  
and hundreds of servants protecting the grounds.  
A hound is awake and a dragon's enraged!

Oh, who would escape her cocoon like a jail?  
(The princess is sad, and the princess is pale.)  
Oh, vision of ivory, roses, and gold!  
Who'll fly to the land where a prince can be had?  
(The princess is pale, and the princess is sad.)  
He's brighter than dawn and he's fine to behold!

The fairy godmother says, "Princess, hush, hush!  
For soon to this place a winged stallion will rush.  
With a sword on his belt and a hawk on his glove,  
the knight who adores you but hasn't yet seen you  
has overcome Death, and he soon will be keen to  
enkindle your lips with the kiss of his love."

## Versos de otoño

Cuando mi pensamiento va hacia ti, se perfuma:  
tu mirar es tan dulce, que se torna profundo.  
Bajo tus pies desnudos aún hay blancor de espuma,  
y en tus labios compendias la alegría del mundo.

El amor pasajero tiene el encanto breve,  
y ofrece un igual término para el gozo y la pena.  
Hace una hora que un nombre grabé sobre la nieve;  
hace un minuto dije mi amor sobre la arena.

Las hojas amarillas caen en la alameda,  
en donde vagan tantas parejas amorosas.  
Y en la copa de Otoño un vago vino queda  
en que han de deshojarse, Primavera, tus rosas.

## Autumn Verses

I think of you, and all my thoughts turn sweet.  
One honeyed glance, and I return to this:  
A foamy whiteness lies beneath your feet.  
Your lips contain a universe of bliss.

A passing love's a spark that's briefly fanned.  
It brings an end to both our joy and woe.  
Of late, I wrote your name upon the sand.  
An hour past, I carved it in the snow.

The yellow leaves descend within the park,  
and many couples wander through the trees.  
The cup of Autumn holds a wine so dark.  
Spring's roses fall within, torn by the breeze.

## Lo fatal

Dichoso el árbol, que es apenas sensitivo,  
y más la piedra dura porque esa ya no siente,  
pues no hay dolor más grande que el dolor de ser vivo,  
ni mayor pesadumbre que la vida consciente.

Ser y no saber nada, y ser sin rumbo cierto,  
y el temor de haber sido y un futuro terror...  
Y el espanto seguro de estar mañana muerto,  
y sufrir por la vida y por la sombra y por

lo que no conocemos y apenas sospechamos,  
y la carne que tienta con sus frescos racimos,  
y la tumba que aguarda con sus fúnebres ramos,

¡y no saber adónde vamos,  
ni de dónde venimos!...

## The Unavoidable

The joyful tree is hardly sensitive,  
and happy is the stone that doesn't feel,  
but sorrow comes with these hard lives we live,  
and painful is awareness of the real.

We live with neither knowledge nor a guide,  
we live with apprehension of the past,  
we're fearful of approaching death inside,  
and suffer for a life that will not last.

We don't suspect a thing—we're so unknowing,  
temptations of the flesh are troublesome,  
the rush of age and death is never slowing,

and we don't know exactly where we're from,  
or, in the end, where we are going!....

## La fuente

Joven, te ofrezco el don de esta copa de plata  
para que un día puedas colmar la sed ardiente,  
la sed que con su fuego más que la muerte mata.  
Mas debes abrevarte tan sólo en una fuente,

otra agua que la suya tendrá que serte ingrata,  
busca su oculto origen en la gruta viviente  
donde la interna música de su cristal desata,  
junto al árbol que llora y la roca que siente.

Guíate el misterioso eco de su murmullo,  
asciende por los riscos ásperos del orgullo,  
baja por la constancia y desciende al abismo

cuya entrada sombría guardan siete panteras:  
son los Siete Pecados las siete bestias fieras.  
Llena la copa y bebe: la fuente está en ti mismo.

## The Fount

Dear youth, this silver cup I offer you,  
to quench the fiercest thirst you've ever known,  
for more than death can quench your thirst with dew,  
but you must drink from just one fount alone.

The other founts you find you must eschew.  
This fount is from a grotto still unknown,  
a cave of crystal music residue,  
beside the weeping tree and sensing stone.

Be guided by its soft echoic sound.  
Through cliffs of pride, it rises from the ground.  
The dark abyss will bring you to the brink.

For seven panthers guard where it begins:  
They are the wild beasts, the Seven Sins.  
The fount's in you, so fill the cup and drink.

## Allá lejos

Buey que vi en mi niñez echando vago un día  
bajo el nicaragüense sol de enciendes oros,  
en la hacienda fecunda, plena de la armonía  
del trópico; paloma de los bosques sonoros  
del viento, de las hachas, de pájaros y toros  
salvajes, yo os saludo, pues sois la vida mía.

Pesado buey, tú evocas la dulce madrugada  
que llamaba a la ordeña de la vaca lechera,  
cuando era mi existencia toda blanca y rosada,  
y tú, paloma arrolladora y montañera,  
significas en mi primavera pasada  
todo lo que hay en la divina Primavera.

## Memories of Childhood

In childhood, I saw an ox controlled  
beneath a Nicaraguan sun of gold,  
and it could plow the fertile fields with ease.  
A forest dove sang on the gentle breeze.  
The wild birds and native bulls were rife,  
and I salute you, for you are my life.

Dear ox, you still evoke the dawn and how  
the call would come to milk the dairy cow,  
when my existence was all clean and bright.  
Dear mountain dove, your soothing notes delight!  
You represent to me, from springtimes past,  
the promise of a Springtime that will last.

**¡Eheu!**

Aquí, junto al mar latino,  
digo la verdad:  
siento en roca, aceite y vino,  
yo mi antigüedad.

¡Oh, qué anciano soy, Dios santo,  
oh, qué anciano soy!  
¿De dónde viene mi canto?  
Y yo, ¿adónde voy?

El conocerme a mí mismo  
ya me va costando  
muchos momentos de abismo  
y el cómo y el cuándo.

Y esta claridad latina,  
¿de qué me sirvió  
a la entrada de la mina  
del yo y el no yo?

Nefelibata contento,  
creo interpretar  
las confidencias del viento,  
la tierra y el mar.

Unas vagas confidencias  
del ser y el no ser,  
y fragmentos de conciencias  
de ahora y de ayer.

Como en medio de un desierto  
me puse a clamar;  
y miré el sol como un muerto  
y me eché a llorar.

## Alas!

Right here, beside the Latin Sea,  
I speak the plainest truth:  
the rocks, the oil, the wine, for me,  
depict my lack of youth.

Oh, God! I am an ancient gent—  
so ancient, I allow!  
Whence come my songs, so confident?  
And where do I go now?

To know myself, to live to tell,  
has cost me, here again,  
so many moments down in hell,  
and both the how and when.

The Latin sun will always shine,  
but what if I should flee  
into the entrance of the mine  
of self that might not be?

A dreamer with my fragile mirth,  
I feel I understand  
the secrets of the wind, the earth,  
the sea, the storm, and sand.

The vaguest notions don't agree:  
to be, to be no more,  
and fragments of my memory  
of now and of before.

As in an empty desert place,  
I railed against the sky.  
And like one dead, I raised my face,  
and I began to cry.



## AMADO NERVO (1870-1919)

Amado Nervo was born in Tepic, the capital of the state of Nayarit, in Mexico. His studies to become a priest were cut short by financial necessity, and he began working as a journalist. In 1900, he was sent by the newspaper *El Imparcial* to report on the World's Fair in Paris. While in Paris, he spent time with Rubén Darío and met the woman he would marry, Ana Cecilia Luisa Daillez. In 1905, he became a Mexican diplomat, and he served in several countries. Besides poetry, he wrote newspaper articles, essays, novels, short stories, and criticism. Many of the following poems are from his book *La amada inmóvil: Versos a una muerta* (*The Still Beloved: Verses to a Dead Woman*). This book, published posthumously, contains poems written after the death of his wife of ten years.

## Éxtasis

Cada rosa gentil ayer nacida,  
cada aurora que apunta entre sonrojos,  
dejan mi alma en el éxtasis sumida...  
¡Nunca se cansan de mirar mis ojos  
el perpetuo milagro de la vida!

Años ha que contemplo las estrellas  
en las diáfanas noches españolas  
y las encuentro cada vez mas bellas.  
Años ha que en el mar, conmigo a solas,  
de las olas escucho las querellas,  
y aun me pasma el prodigio de las olas!

Cada vez hallo la Naturaleza  
más sobrenatural, más pura y santa,  
Para mí, en rededor, todo es belleza;  
y con la misma plenitud me encanta  
la boca de la madre cuando reza  
que la boca del niño cuando canta.

Quiero ser inmortal, con sed intensa,  
porque es maravilloso el panorama  
con que nos brinda la creación inmensa;  
porque cada lucero me reclama,  
diciéndome, al brillar: «Aquí se piensa,  
también aquí se lucha, aquí se ama».

## The Miracle of Life

Each gentle rose born yesterday,  
each dawn that blushes night away  
can leave my soul in ecstasy.  
The miracle of life, to me,  
will never be a dull cliché.

For years, I've seen the starry lights  
appear on cloudless Spanish nights,  
and more delightful have they grown.  
For years, I've spent my time alone  
and heard the ocean's roaring thunder,  
and still the waves inspire wonder!

And every time is Nature sure  
to be more holy, bright, and pure.  
I see great beauty all around.  
I love to listen to the sound  
of mothers when they pray discreetly  
and children when they sing so sweetly.

I want to be immortal and  
feel thirsty for the vistas grand  
that vast creation offers me,  
for every star that I can see  
cries out, while shining high above,  
"It's here you think and strive and love."

## **Brahma no piensa**

Brahma no piensa: pensar limita.  
Brahma no es bueno ni malo, pues  
las cualidades en su infinita  
substancia huelgan. Brahma es lo que es.

Brahma, en un éxtasis perenne, frío,  
su propia esencia mirando está.  
¡Si duerme, el Cosmos torna al vacío;  
mas si despierta renacerá!

## **Brahma Doesn't Think**

Brahma doesn't think a thought that's definite,  
since thinking limits. He's not good or evil, for  
those things are not essential in the infinite.  
Brahma is what he is—we can say no more.

Brahma, in eternal bliss that's unalloyed,  
is contemplating his own essence here and now.  
If Brahma sleeps, the Cosmos falls into the void,  
but if he wakes, the Cosmos is reborn somehow!

## Kalpa

*"¿Queréis que todo esto vuelva a empezar?"*

*"Sí," responden a coro.*

—*Nietzsche, Also Sprach Zarathustra*

En todas las eternidades  
que a nuestro mundo precedieron,  
¿cómo negar que ya existieron  
planetas con humanidades;

y hubo Homeros que describieron  
las primeras heroicidades,  
y hubo Shakespeares que ahondar supieron  
del alma en las profundidades?

Serpiente que muerdes tu cola,  
inflexible círculo, bola  
negra, que giras sin cesar,

refrán monótono del mismo  
canto, marea del abismo,  
¿sois cuento de nunca acabar?...

## Eternal Return

*"Do you want all of this to start over again?"*

*"Yes," they reply in chorus.*

*—Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

In all of the eternities  
that came before the world we know,  
how can you say it isn't so  
that planets held humanities,

that Homers told the histories  
of heroes born both high and low,  
and Shakespeares thought of each bon mot  
that they would put in comedies?

The snake that bites its winding tail,  
the cycle that will never fail,  
the ball whose spinning time extends,

the tiresome repeating song,  
the tide that keeps on going strong:  
Is this the tale that never ends?

**«Si tú me dices "¡ven!", lo dejo todo»**

Si tú me dices "¡ven!", lo dejo todo...  
No volveré siquiera la mirada  
para mirar a la mujer amada...  
Pero dímelo fuerte, de tal modo

que tu voz, como toque de llamada,  
vibre hasta el más íntimo recodo  
del ser, levante el alma de su lodo  
y hiera el corazón como una espada.

Si tú me dices "¡ven!", todo lo dejo.  
Llegaré a tu santuario casi viejo,  
y al fulgor de la luz crepuscular;

mas he de compensarte mi retardo,  
difundiéndome ¡Oh Cristo! ¡Como un nardo  
de perfume sutil, ante tu altar!

**"If you should tell me, 'Come!', I'd leave it all"**

If you should tell me, "Come!", I'd leave it all.  
I would not even look behind to trace  
the beauty of my dear beloved's face.  
But tell me with a loud and forceful call,

so that your voice rings like a phone, my Lord,  
and vibrates to the source of living blood,  
and elevates my soul from fleshly mud,  
and wounds the heart within me like a sword.

If you should tell me, "Come!", I'd leave it all.  
Though old, I'd reach your inner courts and fall  
before your presence in the twilight glow.

I would repay you for my long delay.  
Like nard, I would diffuse as perfume spray  
before your altar with a gentle flow.

## Gratia plena

Todo en ella encantaba, todo en ella atraía:  
su mirada, su gesto, su sonrisa, su andar...  
El ingenio de Francia de su boca fluía.  
Era llena de gracia, como el Avemaría;  
¡quien la vio no la pudo ya jamás olvidar!

Ingenua como el agua, diáfana como el día,  
rubia y nevada como Margarita sin par,  
al influjo de su alma celeste, amanecía...  
Era llena de gracia, como el Avemaría;  
¡quien la vio no la pudo ya jamás olvidar!

Cierta dulce y amable dignidad la investía  
de no sé qué prestigio lejano y singular.  
Más que muchas princesas, princesa parecía:  
era llena de gracia, como el Avemaría;  
¡quien la vio no la pudo ya jamás olvidar!

Yo gocé el privilegio de encontrarla en mi vía  
dolorosa; por ella tuvo fin mi anhelar,  
y cadencias arcanas halló mi poesía.  
Era llena de gracia, como el Avemaría;  
¡quien la vio no la pudo ya jamás olvidar!

¡Cuánto, cuánto la quise! Por diez años fue mía,  
pero flores tan bellas nunca pueden durar!  
Era llena de gracia, como el Avemaría,  
y a la fuente de gracia, de donde procedía,  
se volvió... como gota que se vuelve a la mar!

## Full of Grace

Whoever saw my dear would gravitate  
to her good looks, expressions, smile, gait.  
The wit of France flowed from her lips, of late.  
Like the Hail Mary, she was full of grace,  
and no one could forget her lovely face!

Naive like water, shining like the sun,  
a blonde like Margaret, but the peer of none.  
Her presence meant my day had just begun.  
Like the Hail Mary, she was full of grace,  
and no one could forget her lovely face!

She had a sweet and pleasant dignity,  
a royal bearing that we rarely see,  
for like a princess she appeared to be.  
Like the Hail Mary, she was full of grace,  
and no one could forget her lovely face!

I found her when my sorrow left me tired.  
She satisfied my yearning, quenched my fire.  
The rhythm of my lines ascended higher.  
Like the Hail Mary, she was full of grace,  
and no one could forget her lovely face!

How much I loved her—all those ten years past!  
But lovely flowers never seem to last!  
Like the Hail Mary, she was full of grace.  
She left the source of grace and ran her race,  
then she returned to her own native place!

## Su trenza

Bien venga, cuando viniere,  
la Muerte: su helada mano  
bendeciré si hiere...  
He de morir como muere  
un caballero cristiano.

Humilde, sin murmurar,  
¡oh Muerte! me he de inclinar  
cuando tu golpe me venza;  
...pero déjame besar,  
mientras expiro, su trenza!

¡La trenza que le corté  
y que, piadoso, guardé  
(impregnada todavía  
del sudor de su agonía)  
la tarde en que se me fue!

Su noble trenza de oro;  
amuleto ante quien oro,  
ídolos de locas preces,  
empapado por mi lloro  
tantas veces... tantas veces...

Deja que muriendo, pueda  
acariciar esa seda  
en que vive aún su olor:  
...¡Es todo lo que me queda  
de aquel infinito amor!

Cristo me ha de perdonar  
mi locura, al recordar  
otra trenza, en nardo llena,  
con que se dejó enjugar  
los pies por la Magdalena...

## Her Braid

O Death, come when you must!  
Your hand of cold blue tint  
I'll bless, though life is rent,  
for I must come to dust  
just like a Christian gent.

So quiet I will stay.  
O Death, you never miss!  
Your iron fist will lay  
me low, but let me kiss  
her braid upon that day!

This braid of hers I keep  
with me devotedly.  
In sweat it still is steeped,  
the scent of agony,  
when she abandoned me!

Her noble braid of gold,  
my idol through the years,  
an amulet to hold,  
now soaked with falling tears,  
for countless times untold.

Allow me, as I fade,  
to touch this silken dove.  
Her scent is in this braid,  
the only remnant of  
our everlasting love!

And Christ must pardon me,  
for he cannot forget  
that other tearful scene,  
when his own feet were wet  
by hairs of Magdalene.

## Escamoteo

Con tu desaparición  
es tal mi estupefacción,  
mi pasmo, que a veces creo  
que ha sido un escamoteo,  
una burla, una ilusión.

Que tal vez sueño despierto  
que muy pronto te veré,  
y que me dirás: «No es cierto,  
vida mía, no me he muerto;  
ya no llores... bésame!».

## Sleight of Hand

Your disappearance was so quick,  
that still it doesn't want to click.  
My shock's so great, my thoughts demand  
that it was only sleight of hand,  
illusion, or a parlor trick.

Perhaps I daydream of your death,  
and very soon I'll see you here.  
You'll say, "I still have life and breath!  
I haven't died. Wake up and clear  
your tearful eyes and kiss me, dear!"

## ¿Qué más me da?

¡Con ella, todo; sin ella, nada!  
¡Para qué viajes, cielos, paisajes!  
¡Qué importan soles en la jornada!  
Qué más me da  
la ciudad loca, la mar rizada,  
el valle plácido, la cima helada,  
¡si ya conmigo mi amor no está!  
Qué más me da...

Venecias, Romas, Vianas, Parises,  
bellos sin duda; pero copiados  
en sus celestes pupilas grises,  
¡en sus divinos ojos rasgados!  
Venecias, Romas, Vianas, Parises,  
qué más me da  
vuestra balumba febril y vana,  
si de mi brazo no va mi Ana,  
¡si ya conmigo mi amor no está!  
Qué más me da...

Un rinconcito que en cualquier parte me preste abrigo;  
un apartado refugio amigo  
donde pensar;  
un libro austero que me conforte;  
una esperanza que sea norte  
de mi penar,  
y un apacible morir sereno,  
mientras más pronto, más dulce y bueno:  
¡qué mejor cosa puedo anhelar!

## What Can They Offer Me?

She was my all. Without her, naught  
can please. What good are sky and lea?  
What good are suns that make us hot?  
What can they offer me?  
The peaceful vale, the frozen tor,  
the crazy town, the rippling sea:  
If she is here with me no more,  
what can they offer me?

Vienna, Paris, Venice, Rome  
are doubtless fair, but will they be  
reflected in her eyes of foam?  
What can they offer me?  
Just heaps of vanity and pride  
when my beloved's not with me.  
When Anna isn't by my side,  
what can they offer me?

Give me a place where I can stay,  
a friendly refuge far away,  
a spot to think, a warming fire,  
a book that comforts me with hope,  
that heals my mind and helps me cope  
with sorrow. After I retire,  
a death that's quiet and serene,  
that's sweet and calm and quick. I mean,  
what better thing can I desire?

## ¡Quién sabe por qué!

Perdí tu presencia,  
pero la hallaré,  
pues oculta ciencia  
dice a mi conciencia  
que en otra existencia  
te recobraré.

Tú fuiste en mi senda  
la única prenda  
que nunca busqué;  
llegaste a mi tienda  
con tu noble ofrenda,  
¡quién sabe por qué!

¡Ay! por cuánta y cuánta  
quimera he anhelado  
que jamás logré...  
y en cambio, a ti, santa,  
dulce bien amado,  
te encontré a mi lado,  
¡quién sabe por qué!

Viniste, me amaste;  
diez años llenaste  
mi vida de fe,  
de luz y de aroma;  
en mi alma arrullaste  
como una paloma,  
¡quién sabe por qué!

...Y un día te fuiste,  
¡ay triste! ¡ay triste!  
...pero te hallaré;  
pues oculta ciencia  
dice a mi conciencia  
que en otra existencia  
te recobraré.

## Who Knows Why!

I lost your presence, dear.  
I'll find it, never fear,  
for secret science tells  
your holy presence dwells  
upon a higher plane,  
which someday I'll attain.

While I was on my way,  
you just appeared one day.  
The only lover who  
I never sought, but you  
brought me your noble gift  
into my tent to lift  
my spirits to the sky.  
Who knows why!

Chimeras were my aim,  
which I could not attain.  
But then I found you here,  
my sweet, beloved dear.  
I found you at my side,  
my fine and holy bride.  
Who knows why!

You came and loved me, dear,  
for ten amazing years.  
You filled my life with light.  
Your faith lit up the night.  
You cooed to me, my love,  
just like a gentle dove.  
Who knows why!

And then, one day, you left.  
I'm gloomy and bereft,  
but secret science tells  
your holy presence dwells  
upon a higher plane,  
which someday I'll attain.

## Mi secreto

¿Mi secreto? ¡Es tan triste! Estoy perdido  
de amores por un ser desaparecido,  
por un alma liberta,  
que diez años fue mía, y que se ha ido...  
¿Mi secreto? Te lo diré al oído:  
¡Estoy enamorado de una muerta!

¿Comprendes -tú que buscas los visibles  
transportes, las reales, las tangibles  
caricias de la hembra, que se plasma  
a todos tus deseos invencibles-  
ese imposible de los imposibles,  
de adorar a un fantasma?

¡Pues tal mi vida es y tal ha sido y será!  
Si por mí solo ha latido  
su noble corazón, hoy mudo y yerto,  
¿he de mostrarme desagradecido  
y olvidarla, no más porque ha partido  
y dejarla, no más porque se ha muerto?

## My Secret

My secret's sad! I've lost my life,  
for I'm enamored with my wife.  
I've fallen for a soul that's free.  
For ten fine years, she lived with me.  
I'll tell my secret in your ear:  
I love a gal who disappeared!

But can you understand my state?  
I love a ghost who lived, of late.  
Can you who seek the physical,  
a woman's touch that's tangible,  
know how my heart could love the most  
and still adore a formless ghost?

Such will my life forever be!  
And if her heart beat just for me,  
that noble heart that now is stiff,  
must I be thankless for her gift?  
Should I forget her since she died,  
or leave the one who left my side?

## El fantasma soy yo

*Vivants, vous êtes des fantômes.*

*C'est nous qui sommes les vivants.*

*V. H.*

Mi alma es una princesa en su torre metida,  
con cinco ventanitas para mirar la vida.  
Es una triste diosa que el cuerpo aprisionó.  
Y tu alma, que desde antes de morirte volaba,  
es un ala magnífica, libre de toda traba...  
Tú no eres el fantasma: ¡el fantasma soy yo!

¡Qué entiendo de las cosas! Las cosas se me ofrecen,  
no como son de suyo, sino como aparecen  
a los cinco sentidos con que Dios limitó  
mi sensorio grosero, mi percepción menguada.  
Tú lo sabes hoy todo...; ¡yo en cambio, no sé nada!  
Tú no eres el fantasma: ¡el fantasma soy yo!

## I'm the Ghost

*Alive, you are the ghosts.*

*We are the living.*

—*Victor Hugo*

My soul's a princess in a mixed-up tower,  
for she perceives the world with little power.  
How sad the goddess that to flesh is tied,  
but you took flight before you even died.  
How great the wings that soar above the coast!  
You aren't the ghost, but rather I'm the ghost!

I do not know. I only sense what's near.  
You know the truth. I sense how things appear.  
To five small senses, I am still confined.  
That is the way the body was designed.  
But now you know it all. That's more than most!  
You aren't the ghost, but rather I'm the ghost!

## **Bendición a Francia**

¡Bendita seas, Francia, porque me diste amor!  
En tu París inmenso y cordial, encontré  
para mi cuerpo abrigo, para mi alma fulgor,  
para mis ideales el ambiente mejor  
...¡y además una dulce francesa que adoré!

Por esa mujer noble, tuyo es, Francia querida,  
mi reconocimiento; pues que, merced a ella,  
tuve todos los bienes: el gusto por la vida,  
la intimidad celeste, la ternura escondida,  
¡y la luz de la lámpara y la luz de la estrella!

Yo no sé qué demiurgo la sustrajo a mi anhelo  
tras una amputación repentina y cruel,  
y ya tú sola, Francia, puedes darme consuelo:  
con un refugio amigo para llorar mi duelo,  
tu maternal regazo para verter mi hiel,  
la sombra de algún árbol en tu florido suelo...  
¡y acaso, en tus colmenas, una gota de miel!

## Blessings for France

I bless you, France, for giving love to me!  
In your enchanting Paris, I soon found  
a coat for warmth, a light by which to see,  
for my ideals, a rich and fertile ground,  
a woman, too, quite unexpectedly!

For that sweet woman, France is recognized  
with gratitude for all that I received.  
My dear gave only good, and how I prized  
the tenderness and closeness we achieved!  
The light we shared was clear and undisguised!

What demiurge removed her from my life  
and filled my world with sudden grief and pain?  
Now only France can heal me of my strife.  
On your maternal lap, I can complain,  
and in your shelter, I can mourn my wife.  
I'll rest beneath the trees that fill your land,  
and maybe take some honey from your hand!

## ¡Cuántos desiertos interiores!

¡Cuántos desiertos interiores!  
Heme aquí joven, fuerte aún,  
y con mi heredad ya sin flores...  
Némesis sopló en mis alcores  
con bocanadas de simún.

De un gran querer, noble, fecundo,  
sólo una trenza me quedó...  
¡y un hueco más grande que el mundo!  
Obra fue todo de un segundo.  
¿Volveré a amar? ¡Pienso que no!

Sólo una vez se ama en la vida  
a una mujer como yo amé;  
y si la lloramos perdida  
queda el alma tan mal herida,  
que dice a todo: -«¡Para qué!».

Su muerte fue mi premoriencia,  
pues que su vida era razón  
de ser de toda mi existencia.  
Pensarla, es ya mi sola ciencia...  
¡Resignación! ¡resignación!

## The Inner Desert

Within me there's a desert vast,  
but here I am, still young and strong.  
On my estate, no flowers last,  
for Nemesis blew with a blast  
of dusty air and did me wrong!

Of that great fertile love, I own  
just one thing still—her lock of hair.  
A chasm in my heart has grown.  
An instant's work, and I'm alone.  
I'll love again? I do not dare!

One only loves one time in life  
a woman like my lovely wife,  
and though we weep for those who die,  
our soul's so wounded by the knife,  
it shouts to all a bitter "Why!"

For when she left, I felt I'd died.  
She was my reason to abide.  
My whole existence was for her.  
My thoughts she'll never cease to stir.  
How can I take this loss in stride!

## **Lux perpetua**

Si ha de ser condición de mi dicha el olvido  
de ti, quiero estar triste siempre (como he vivido).  
Prefiero la existencia más árida y doliente  
al innoble consuelo de olvidar a mi ausente.  
Por lo demás, ¡qué tengo sin ti de cosa propia,  
que me halague o sonría en esta clara inopia,  
ni qué luz en mis noches me quedará si pierdo  
también la lamparita cordial de tu recuerdo!

## **Perpetual Illumination**

If I have to forget you to be happy, then  
I'd rather always be as sad as I have been.  
I'd rather lead a life of sorrow as my due  
than take ignoble comfort from forgetting you.  
What do I have, without your presence, of my own,  
when, by my smile, my ignorance of you is shown?  
What light would still remain at night to comfort me  
if I should lose the warm lamp of your memory?

## Metafisiqueos

¡De qué sirve al triste la filosofía!  
Kant o Schopenhauer o Nietzsche o Bergson...  
¡Metafisiqueos! En tanto, Ana mía,  
te me has muerto, y yo no sé todavía  
dónde ha de buscarte mi pobre razón.

¡Metafisiqueos, pura teoría!  
Nadie sabe nada de nada: ¡mejor  
que esa pobre ciencia confusa y vacía,  
nos alumbra el alma como la luz del día,  
el secreto instinto del eterno amor!

No ha de haber abismo que ese amor no ahonde,  
y he de hallarte. ¿Dónde? ¡No me importa dónde!  
¿Cuándo? No me importa... ¡pero te hallaré!  
Si pregunto a un sabio, «¡Qué sé yo!», responde.  
Si pregunto a mi alma, me dice: «¡Yo sé!».

## Metaphysicians

A Nietzsche, Bergson, Kant, or Shopenhauer  
cannot console me at my saddest hour!  
The metaphysicians do not have that power.  
My Anna, you have died, and I don't know  
where I must look for you, or where to go.

All that those men can offer is a theory!  
They do not know the answer or the query.  
Much better than that sad futility?  
Instinctive love that lasts eternally  
and lights the soul like day so we can see!

It doesn't matter when I find you, dear.  
It doesn't matter if you're far or near.  
But I will find you—that, to me, is clear!  
Do wise men know for sure? They would say, "No."  
But when I ask my soul, it says, "I know!"

## **Cuando Dios lo quiera**

Santa florecita, celestial renuevo,  
que hiciste mi alma una primavera,  
y cuyo perfume para siempre llevo:  
¿Cuándo en mi camino te hallaré de nuevo?  
—¡Cuándo Dios lo quiera, cuándo Dios lo quiera!

—¡Qué abismo tan hondo! Qué brazo tan fuerte  
desunirnos pudo de tan cruel manera!  
Mas ¡qué importa! Todo lo salva la muerte  
y en otra ribera volveré yo a verte...  
¡En otra ribera... sí! Cuando Dios quiera!

Corazón herida, corazón doliente,  
mutilada entraña: si tan tuya era  
(carne de tu carne, mente de tu mente,  
hueso de tus huesos), necesariamente  
has de recobrarla... —¡Sí, cuando Dios quiera!

## **Whenever God Would Have It Be!**

O little flower, heaven's spray,  
who made my soul like spring for me,  
whose scent on me will always stay:  
When will I find you on my way?  
Whenever God would have it be!

What deep abyss or strong hand tore  
us into two so cruelly?  
No worries—death holds all in store.  
I'll see you on another shore...  
whenever God would have it be!

A heart and gut by pain defined:  
If such occurred to you, not me  
(and you were one in flesh and mind),  
your gal you would attempt to find...  
whenever God would have it be!

## El celaje

¿Adónde fuiste, Amor, adonde fuiste?  
Se extinguió del poniente el manso fuego,  
y tú, que me decías «hasta luego;  
volveré por la noche»... ¡no volviste!

¿En qué zarzas tu pie divino heriste?  
¿Qué muro cruel te ensordeció a mi ruego?  
¿Qué nieve supo congelar tu apego  
y a tu memoria hurtar mi imagen triste?

...Amor, ¡ya no vendrás! En vano, animoso,  
de mi balcón atalayando vivo  
el campo verde y el confín brumoso;

y me finge un celaje fugitivo  
nave de luz en que, al final reposo,  
va tu dulce fantasma pensativo.

## The Cloudscape

Where did you go, my love? Where did you go?  
The western flame has disappeared from sight.  
You said, "I'll see you later—by tonight!"  
Why didn't you return? I do not know!

What brambles pierced your foot, so blood would flow?  
What wall has blocked my pleas and barred my right?  
What snow has chilled your longing to unite  
and wiped away your memory of my woe?

My love, you never will return to me!  
Upon my lookout, straining there to see,  
I scan, in vain, the fields and mountain crest.

A passing sunlit cloud looks like a ship  
of light that's taking, at a rapid clip,  
your pensive spirit to its place of rest.

## No lo sé

Crepitan ya las velas en la ría;  
tú ¿por qué no te embarcas, alma mía?  
Porque Dios no lo quiere todavía.

-Mira: piadosamente las estrellas  
nos envían sus trémulas centellas...  
-¡Bien quisiera vestirme toda de ellas!

-Tu amiga, la más tierna, ya se fue.  
Los que te aman se van tras ella; ¿qué  
vas a hacer tú tan sola? -No lo sé.

## **A Dialogue with My Soul**

"The sails are crackling in the wind.  
Why don't you board the ship, my friend?"  
"God still does not let me ascend."

"The stars are shining through the night.  
The sparks they send are strong and bright."  
"I'd clothe myself with all that light!"

"Your friend has left, and more will go.  
What do you think you'll do here so  
alone and sad?" "I do not know."

## En paz

*Artifex vitae artifex sui*

Muy cerca de mi ocaso, yo te bendigo, Vida,  
porque nunca me diste ni esperanza fallida,  
ni trabajos injustos, ni pena inmerecida;

Porque veo al final de mi rudo camino  
que yo fui el arquitecto de mi propio destino;  
que si extraje la mieles o la hiel de las cosas,  
fue porque en ellas puse hiel o mieles sabrosas:  
cuando planté rosales coseché siempre rosas.

...Cierto, a mis lozanías va a seguir el invierno:  
¡mas tú no me dijiste que mayo fuese eterno!  
Hallé sin duda largas las noches de mis penas;  
mas no me prometiste tan sólo noches buenas;  
y en cambio tuve algunas santamente serenas...

Amé, fui amado, el sol acarició mi faz.  
¡Vida, nada me debes! ¡Vida, estamos en paz!

## At Peace

I bless you, Life, as twilight quickly nears,  
because you gave no hope that disappears,  
nor work unjust, nor undeservéd tears.

Now, from the end of rocky paths, I see  
that I designed my own fair destiny,  
for when in honey or in bile steeped,  
it meant that flavor on myself I'd heaped,  
and when I planted roses, those I reaped.

Although my strength will fall to winter's blast,  
you never said that spring would always last!  
Although I have endured some bitter nights,  
you did not promise only joyful heights,  
and, for my part, I've known some true delights.

I loved... was loved... light shone upon my lease.  
You owe me nothing, Life! We are at peace!



## **ATILIO GONZÁLEZ HERNÁNDEZ (b. 1944)**

Atilio González Hernández was born in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain) in 1944. He married Pepita Jiménez García and graduated with a degree in telecommunications engineering in 1969. He worked in Spain and retired in 2002. Since he retired, he has been involved in his many interests (family—he has four children and four grandchildren, sailing, religion, and philosophy) and hobbies (music, ham radio, and 3D printing).

In 2004, he sailed solo across the Atlantic Ocean and back. In 2013, he earned a B.A. in Philosophy from Birkbeck College of the University of London. In 2015, his wife died after 45 years of marriage. In 2016, he married Amparo Velázquez Guerra.

Apart from technical articles, he has written numerous essays on philosophy and other subjects, he has written a book of poems, and recently he has been writing articles for the daily *La Provincia* of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. You can find many of his writings at [SafeCreative.org](http://SafeCreative.org).

## Saludando a Platón

Nublado estoy a fil de madrugada  
olvidado del sol de mediodía.  
Camino decidido, mas sin guía  
que le ponga horizonte a la mirada.

Llevo el alma para la luz cerrada  
sin más tino que los hábitos del día,  
manteniendo sin tregua la porfía  
como Sísifo a su obra encadenada.

Yo no desisto, y mi corazón  
alerta espera a que la lenta tierra  
despliegue sus secretos como un fruto.

La boca de la cueva mi oración  
ha de escuchar, y como fértil parra  
donará su saber como tributo.

## Greeting Plato

I'm cloudy at the break of day,  
a stranger to the midday sun.  
I stride ahead, but have no one  
to set a goal upon my way.

I take my soul to light that's dim.  
I have no goals except the rote.  
Like Sisyphus, on hills remote  
I roll the stone with effort grim.

I don't give up—my heart is brave,  
alert to wait for the slow earth,  
as it unfolds a hidden shoot.

My prayer will ascend the cave  
and reach the light, which, in its mirth,  
drops wisdom like a ripened fruit.