

Give your arm to Mrs. Cloud
 If you're afraid of the wolf
 The wolf with the blue blue mouth
 With long long teeth
 To eat up grandmother nature

Mr. Sky scrape off your swallow
 Mrs. Cloud put out your anemone

The voices unite over the bird
 Larger than the tree of creation
 Lovelier than a current of air between two stars

Dad el brazo a la Señora Nube
 Si tenéis miedo del lobo
 El lobo de la boca azul azul
 Del diente largo largo
 Para devorar a la abuela naturaleza

Señor Cielo rasque su golondrina
 Señora Nube apague sus anémonas

Las voces se juntan sobre el pájaro
 Más grande que el árbol de la creación
 Más hermoso que una corriente de aire entre dos astros

H. R. HAYS

Federico García Lorca

Spain, 1898–1936

Lorca was steeped both in the folk tradition of his country and in the brilliant baroque poetry of Spain's Golden Age. In form and language he blended the two currents into a unique and harmonious whole. Most widely known for his dramatic gypsy ballads, Lorca also wrote some fine dramas, an excellent book of poetry on New York City, and many lovely lyrics that suggest the popular *coplas*. The American poet, Robert Bly, who translated many of Lorca's poems into English, wrote: "In Lorca you see desire still flying, hurtling through the air, like a tornado, putting new leaves on every tree it touches, writing as if he belonged to Cretan civilization . . . a desire for intensity as immense as Dickens' characters' desire for food." In some of his later poetry Lorca "adopted old Arab poetic forms to help entangle that union of desire and darkness, which ancient Arabs loved so much."³⁷

In spite of all this, Lorca clung tenaciously to his erotic-dramatic child's dream of the world. In one of his early poems, some children ask why he is leaving the square in which they are playing, and he answers them in these characteristic lines, also translated by Robert Bly:

My heart of silk
 is filled with lights,
 with lost bells,
 with lilies and bees.
 I will go very far,
 farther than those mountains,
 farther than the oceans,
 way up near the stars,
 to ask Christ the Lord
 to give back to me
 the soul I had as a child,
 matured by fairy tales,
 with its hat of feathers
 and its wooden sword.

Bly then adds: "There is no other poet like him in the history of poetry. Everyone who reads a poem of Lorca's falls in love with him and has a secret friend."³⁸

At the outbreak of Spain's civil war, Lorca returned home from Madrid to his Granada, where he was a "small glory," as he said, but an impromptu firing squad rustled him out of the house in the middle of the night and killed him. The reasons for the action have never been made clear,

37. Robert Bly (ed.), *Selected Poems, Lorca and Jiménez* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 102.

38. *Ibid.*, 104.

for Lorca was not a political activist by any stretch of the imagination. Thus martyred, he immediately became a beacon on both sides of the Atlantic, and his influence was strongly reflected in many of the poets who followed him. Rubén Darío had carried the influence of Spanish America over to Spain; Lorca now repaid the debt and brought Spain back to the New World.

My Child Went to the Sea

My child went to the sea
To count the waves and shells,
But at Seville's wide river,
She stopped and looked for me.

Five spotless ships were rocking
Between the flowers and bells,
Their oars were in the water,
Their keels riding in the swells.

Who sees inside the dazzling
Gold tower of Seville?
Five hidden voices answered,
Five rounded rings they fill.

The sky mounted the river
From shore to shining shore,
And in the russet twilight
Rocked five rings, not one more.

Mi niña se fue a la mar

Mi niña se fue a la mar,
a contar olas y chinas,
pero se encontró, de pronto,
con el río de Sevilla.

Entre adelfas y campanas
con los remos en el agua
cinco barcos se mecían,
y las velas en la brisa.

¿Quién mira dentro la torre
enjaezada, de Sevilla?
Cinco voces contestaban
redondas como sortijas.

El cielo monta gallardo
al río, de orilla a orilla,
en el aire sonrosado,
cinco anillos se mecían.

JOHN A. CROW

Consultation

Blue passion-flower!
Anvil of butterflies.
Do you thrive
On the slime of hours?

(Oh, childish poet,
Smash your time-piece!)

Clear blue star,
Navel of the dawn.
Do you thrive
On the shadow's foam?

(Oh, childish poet,
Smash your time-piece!)

Blue-tinted heart,
Lamp of my bedroom.
Do you beat well
Without my rhythmic blood?

(Oh, childish poet,
Smash your time-piece!)

I understand you and leave myself
Stored away in the wardrobe
Exposed to the insects of time.
Their metallic drops
Will not be heard in the calm
Of my bedroom.

Consulta

¡Pasionaria azul!
Yunque de mariposas.
¿Vives bien en el limo
de las horas?

(¡Oh, poeta infantil,
quiebra tu reloj!)

Clara estrella azul,
ombligo de la aurora.
¿Vives bien en la espuma
de la sombra?

(¡Oh, poeta infantil,
quiebra tu reloj!)

Corazón azulado,
lámpara de mi alcoba.
¿Lates bien sin mi sangre
filarmónica?

(¡Oh, poeta infantil,
quiebra tu reloj!)

Os comprendo y me dejo
arrumbado en la cómoda
al insecto del tiempo.
Sus metálicas gotas
no se oirán en la calma
de mi alcoba.

I shall sleep quietly
Just as you sleep,
Oh, stars and passion-flowers,
For at last, the butterfly,
Will flit on the hour
That flows
While from my body there springs
A rose.

JOHN A. CROW

Juan Ramón Jiménez

In the infinite white,
snow, spikenard and salt,
he lost his fantasy.

The color white, is walking,
over a silent carpet
of the feathers of a dove.

Eyeless, without gesture,
motionless it dreams,
but trembles inside.

In the infinite white,
what a pure, deep wound
was left by his dream!

In the infinite white.
Snow. Spikenard. Salt.

JOHN A. CROW

Ballad of a Sleepwalker

Green, how I love you, green!
Green wind, green branch and tree.
The horse that climbs the mountain,
And the ship that sails the sea.
As she dreams against the railing
The shadow upon her lies,
Green skin, and hair of green,
Cold silver are her eyes.
Under the gypsy moon,
Green, how I love you, green!
The world is watching her now,
The world that she has not seen.

Green, how I love you, green!
Great stars of frost soon gone,
And a fish-like shadow that hovers
Opened by the road of dawn.
The fig tree scrapes at the wind
With the sandpaper of its arms,
The mountain, an angry bobcat,
Bristles at those alarms!
But who will come? And from where?
Green flesh, hair green and free,
She leans on the grated railing
And dreams of the bitter sea.

Me dormiré tranquilo
como dormís vosotras
pasionarias y estrellas,
que al fin, la mariposa,
volará en la corriente
de las horas
mientras nace en mi tronco
la rosa.

Juan Ramón Jiménez

En el blanco infinito,
nieve, nardo y salina,
perdió su fantasía.

El color blanco, anda,
sobre una muda alfombra
de plumas de paloma.

Sin ojos ni ademán
inmóvil sufre un sueño.
Pero tiembla por dentro.

En el blanco infinito,
¡qué pura y larga herida
dejó su fantasía!

En el blanco infinito.
Nieve. Nardo. Salina.

Romance sonámbulo

Verde que te quiero verde.
Verde viento. Verdes ramas.
El barco sobre la mar
y el caballo en la montaña.
Con la sombra en la cintura
ella sueña en su baranda,
verde carne, pelo verde,
con ojos de fría plata.
Verde que te quiero verde.
Bajo la luna gitana,
las cosas la están mirando
y ella no puede mirarlas.

Verde que te quiero verde.
Grandes estrellas de escarcha
vienen con el pez de sombra
que abre el camino del alba.
La higuera frota su viento
con la lija de sus ramas,
y el monte, gato garduño,
eriza sus pitas agrias.
Pero ¿quién vendrá? ¿Y por dónde...?
Ella sigue en su baranda,
verde carne, pelo verde,
soñando en la mar amarga.

"Old man, I want an exchange:
 For your house my stallion,
 For your mirror my saddle,
 For your blanket my dagger.
 Old man, I come spurting blood
 From the mountain passes of Cabra."
 "Young friend, believe me, if I could,
 The deal would quickly be made,
 But I hardly know who I am,
 And my house is not mine to trade."
 "Old man, I would like to die
 With dignity in my own bed
 Of cast iron, if that could be,
 With white Holland sheets outspread.
 What a wound they slashed in my chest!
 Can't you see how much it has bled?"
 "Three hundred scarlet roses
 Stain your white shirt with blood,
 It has the odor of salt,
 Your sash cannot stanch its flood.
 But I hardly know who I am,
 In my own house I'm not understood."
 "Well, let me at least climb up
 To that lofty green balustrade,
 Let me climb, let me climb up
 To the refuge green shadows have made,
 Where bannisters of scattered moonlight
 On the tumbling water are played."

The two men kept climbing upward
 Till near the green railing they stood.
 Leaving a trail of their tears
 Marked by a trail of blood.
 Little tin lanterns are trembling,
 On the tile rooftops they blow.
 A thousand crystal tambourines
 Wound the dawn with lights that glow.

Green, how I love you, green!
 Green wind, Green tree and tall.
 The two men keep climbing upward.
 The long wind that lashes the wall
 Leaves an acrid taste on the lips
 Of basil, of mint, and of gall.
 Old man, where is she, tell me?
 Where has your bitter child gone?
 How many times she has waited!
 How many times waited alone!
 Fresh face and jet black hair
 On that green verandah till dawn!

The gypsy girl is rocking;
 On the water's face she cries.
 Green flesh and hair of green,
 Cold silver are her eyes.
 A frozen sliver of moon
 Holds her over the pool once more,
 The night becomes warm and friendly
 As a small town plaza store.
 Drunken Civil Guards are knocking,

—Compadre, quiero cambiar
 mi caballo por su casa,
 mi montura por su espejo,
 mi cuchillo por su manta.
 Compadre, vengo sangrando,
 desde los puertos de Cabra.
 —Si yo pudiera, mocito,
 este trato se cerraba.
 Pero yo ya no soy yo,
 ni mi casa es ya mi casa.
 —Compadre, quiero morir
 decentemente en mi cama.
 De acero, si puede ser,
 con las sábanas de Holanda.
 ¿No ves la herida que tengo
 desde el pecho a la garganta?
 —Trescientas rosas morenas
 lleva tu pechera blanca.
 Tu sangre rezuma y huele
 alrededor de tu faja.
 Pero yo ya no soy yo,
 ni mi casa es ya mi casa.
 —Dejadme subir al menos
 hasta las altas barandas;
 ¡dejadme subir!, ¡dejadme
 hasta las verdes barandas.
 Barandales de la luna
 por donde retumba el agua.

Ya suben los dos compadres
 hacia las altas barandas.
 Dejando un rastro de sangre.
 Dejando un rastro de lágrimas.
 Temblaban en los tejados
 farolillos de hojalata.
 Mil panderos de cristal
 herían la madrugada.

Verde que te quiero verde,
 verde viento, verdes ramas.
 Los dos compadres subieron.
 El largo viento dejaba
 en la boca un raro gusto
 de hiel, de menta y de albahaca.
 ¡Compadre! ¿Dónde está, dime,
 dónde está tu niña amarga?
 ¡Cuántas veces te esperó!
 ¡Cuántas veces te esperara,
 cara fresca, negro pelo,
 en esta verde baranda!

Sobre el rostro del aljibe
 se mecía la gitana.
 Verde carne, pelo verde,
 con ojos de fría plata.
 Un carámbano de luna
 la sostiene sobre el agua.
 La noche se puso íntima
 como una pequeña plaza.
 Guardias civiles borrachos

Knocking loudly against the door.
 Green, how I love you, green!
 Green wind. Green branch and tree.
 The horse that climbs the mountain,
 And the ship that sails the sea.³⁹

JOHN A. CROW

Amparo

Amparo,
 how alone you are in your house
 all dressed in white!
 (Halfway between the jasmine
 and the spikenard.)

You listen to the marvelous
 gushing of water in your patio,
 and the faint yellow trills
 of the canary.
 In the afternoon you see
 the cypresses tremble with birds,
 while you slowly embroider
 letters on the canvas cloth.

Amparo,
 how alone you are in your house,
 all dressed in white!
 Amparo,
 how hard it is to say:
 I love you!

JOHN A. CROW

The Gypsy and the Wind

Playing her parchment moon
 Preciosa comes
 along a watery path
 of laurels and crystal lights.
 The starless silence, fleeing
 from her rhythmic tambourine,
 falls where the sea whips and sings,
 his night filled with silvery swarms.
 High atop the mountain peaks
 the sentinels are sleeping;
 they guard the tall white towers
 of the English consulate.
 And gypsies of the water
 for their pleasure erect
 little castles of conch shells
 and arbors of greening pine.
 Playing her parchment moon

en la puerta golpeaban.
 Verde que te quiero verde.
 Verde viento. Verdes ramas.
 El barco sobre la mar.
 Y el caballo en la montaña.

Amparo

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

(Ecuador entre el jazmín
 y el nardo.)

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

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

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

Preciosa y el aire

Su luna de pergamino
 Preciosa tocando viene
 por un anfibio sendero
 de cristales y laureles.
 El silencio sin estrellas,
 huyendo del sonsonete,
 cae donde el mar bate y canta
 su noche llena de peces.
 En los picos de la sierra
 los carabineros duermen
 guardando las blancas torres
 donde viven los ingleses.
 Y los gitanos del agua
 levantan por distraerse,
 glorietas de caracolas
 y ramas de pino verde.
 Su luna de pergamino

39. In this poem the young smuggler is fatally wounded by the Spanish Civil Guards, and as he staggers back to die of his wounds, the gypsy girl who loves him commits suicide by drowning herself in the cistern. Lorca's gypsies represent the primitive, spontaneous life urge, and the civil guards are the repressive force of civilization.

Preciosa comes.

The wind sees her and rises,
the wind that never slumbers.
Naked Saint Christopher swells,
watching the girl as he plays
with tongues of celestial bells
on an invisible bagpipe.

Gypsy, let me lift your skirt
and have a look at you.
Open in my ancient fingers
the blue rose of your womb.

Preciosa throws the tambourine
and runs away in terror.
But the virile wind pursues her
with his breath and burning sword.

The sea darkens and roars,
while the olive trees turn pale.
The flutes of darkness sound,
and a muted gong of the snow.

Preciosa, run, Preciosa!
Or the green wind will catch you!
Preciosa, run, Preciosa!
And look how fast he comes!
A satyr of low-born stars
with their long and glistening tongues.

Preciosa, filled with fear,
now makes her way to that house
beyond the tall green pines
where the English consul lives.

Alarmed by her anguished cries,
three riflemen come running,
their black capes tightly drawn,
and berets down over their brow.

The Englishman gives the gypsy
a glass of tepid milk
and a shot of Holland gin
which Preciosa does not drink.

And while she tells them, weeping,
of her strange adventure,
the wind furiously gnashes
against the slate roof tiles.

KATHARINE E. STRATHDEE

The Guitar

The weeping of the guitar
begins.
The goblets of dawn
are shattered.
The weeping of the guitar
begins.
It is useless
to stop it.

Preciosa tocando viene.

Al verla se ha levantado
el viento que nunca duerme.
San Cristobalón desnudo,
lleno de lenguas celestes,
mira a la niña tocando
una dulce gaita ausente.

—Niña, deja que levante
tu vestido para verte.
Abre en mis dedos antiguos
la rosa azul de tu vientre.

Preciosa tira el pandero
y corre sin detenerse.
El viento-hombrón la persigue
con una espada caliente.

Frunce su rumor el mar.
Los olivos palidecen.
Cantan las flautas de umbría
y el liso gong de la nieve.

¡Preciosa, corre, Preciosa,
que te coge el viento verde!
¡Preciosa, corre, Preciosa!
¡Míralo por donde viene!
Sátiro de estrellas bajas
con sus lenguas relucientes.

Preciosa, llena de miedo,
entra en la casa que tiene,
más arriba de los pinos,
el cónsul de los ingleses.

Asustados por los gritos
tres carbineros vienen,
sus negras capas ceñidas
y los gorros en las sienes.

El inglés da a la gitana
un vaso de tibia leche
y una copa de ginebra
que Preciosa no la bebe.

Y mientras cuenta, llorando,
su aventura a aquella gente,
en las tejas de pizarra
el viento, furioso, muerde.

La guitarra

Empieza el llanto
de la guitarra.
Se rompen las copas
de la madrugada.
Empieza el llanto
de la guitarra.
Es inútil
callarla.

It is impossible
to stop it.
It weeps monotonously
like the cry of water,
like the cry of the wind
on the fallen snow.
It is impossible
to stop it.
It weeps for things
that are far away.
Sands of the burning South
begging for white camelias.
It weeps arrow without target,
afternoon without morning,
and the first dead bird
on the branch.
Oh, guitar!
Heart pierced
by five sharp swords.

JOHN A. CROW

Nocturne of Emptiness

*To see that all has gone,
To see the emptiness, the clothes,
Give me your glove of moonlight, O my love!
Give me your other glove, lost in the grass.*

Wind can root out snails
Dead in the elephant's hide
Inflate the frozen worms
From the tips of light or the apples.

Indifferent, faces drift
Under the lessened murmur of the grass
And in the corner, in the frog's little breast
Confusion of heart and mandolin.

In the great deserted square
The cow's head, newly severed, bawls,
And the forms that sought the trail of the snake
Were crystal, fixed and rigid.

*To see that all has gone,
Give me your silent emptiness, my love!
Where the sky gathers in silence its abandoned cabins,
To see that all has gone.*

Tomorrow's emptiness is singing here
with yesterday's upon my hands
Two toads of ashes, two rumors
Of my appearance, trickling, boiling over.

Within my love for your flesh,
What silence of trains, turned upside down!
What sprouting mummified limbs!
What heaven void of outlet!
O love, what heaven!

*To see that all has gone,
To see the emptiness of cloud and river,*

Es imposible
callarla.
Llora monótona
como llora el agua,
como llora el viento
sobre la nevada.
Es imposible
callarla.
Llora por cosas
lejanas.
Arena del Sur caliente
que pide camelias blancas.
Llora flecha sin blanco,
la tarde sin mañana,
y el primer pájaro muerto
sobre la rama.
¡Oh, guitarra!
Corazón malherido
por cinco espadas.

Nocturno del hueco

*Para ver que todo se ha ido,
Para ver los huecos y los vestidos,
¡dame tu guante de luna,
tu otro guante perdido en la hierba,
amor mío!*

Puede el aire arrancar los caracoles
muertos sobre la piel del elefante
y soplar los gusanos ateridos
de las yemas de luz o de las manzanas.

Los rostros bogan impasibles
bajo el diminuto griterio de las hierbas
y en el rincón o en el pechito de la rana
turbio de corazón y mandolina.

En la gran plaza desierta
mugía la bovina cabeza recién cortada
y eran duro cristal definitivo
las formas que buscaban el giro de la sierpe.

*Para ver que todo se ha ido,
dame tu mudo hueco ¡amor mío!
Donde el cielo agrupa en silencio sus cabañas abandonadas,
Para ver que todo se ha ido.*

Aquí cantan los huecos de mañana
con los huecos de ayer sobre mis manos
dos sapos de ceniza, dos rumores
de mi apariencia que mana y borbotea

(Dentro de ti amor por tu carne
¡qué silencio de trenes boca arriba!
¡cuánto brazo de momia florecido!
¡qué cielo sin salida! ¡amor! ¡qué cielo!)

*Para ver que todo se ha ido,
para ver los huecos de nubes y ríos,*

*Give me your laurel branches, O my love,
To see that all has gone.*

Stone in the water, voice in the wind,
Edges of love escaping the bloody trunk.
Enough to touch the pulse-beat of our love
For flowers to break in bloom for other children.

Pure emptiness for me revolving, for you in the dawn
Keeping the trace of bloody branches
Some plaster profile, calmly sketching
The immediate surprise of the pointilliste moon
Watching the solid forms that seek their void
Mistaken dogs, half-eaten apples.

When in my bed I count the murmurs of linen
You have come, my love, to cover over my shelter.
The hollow of an ant can fill the wind,
But you go crying lost across my eyes.

No, not across my eyes. Today you show
Four ashen rivers in your arms,
In the rough barracks where the captive moon
Devours a sailor before the children's eyes.

*To see that all has gone.
O obstinate departed love!
Yield not your emptiness.
Let mine be lost on air!
To see that all has gone.⁴⁰*

*dame tus ramos de laurel, amor,
para ver que todo se ha ido.*

Es la piedra en el agua y es la voz en el aire
bordes de amor que escapan de su tronco sangrante.
Basta tocar el pulso de nuestro amor
para que broten flores sobre otros niños

Ruedan los huecos puros por mí, por ti, en el alba
conservando las huellas de las ramas de sangre
y algún perfil de yeso, que tranquilo dibuja
instantánea sorpresa de luna apuntillada.
Mira formas concretas que buscan su vacío
perros equivocados y manzanas mordidas.

Cuando cuento en la cama los rumores del hilo
has venido, amor mío, a cubrir mi tejado.
El hueco de una hormiga puede llenar el aire,
pero tú vas gimiendo sin norte por mis ojos.

No, por mis ojos no, que ahora me enseñas
cuatro ríos ceñidos en tu brazo,
En la dura barraca donde la luna prisionera
devora a un marinero delante de los niños.

*Para ver que todo se ha ido
¡Amor inexpugnable, amor huido!
No, no me des tu hueco.
¡que ya va por el aire el mío!
Para ver que todo se ha ido.*

ROLFE HUMPHRIES

César Vallejo

Peru, 1895–1938

Vallejo, well known for his Communist affiliation, was a poet of mixed blood who throughout his brief life was barely able to keep body and soul together with his journalistic writings; he died in poverty in Paris, at the age of forty-three. Vallejo's poetry explodes from his tortured inner consciousness in an almost total disregard for established literary elegance. His poems have been compared to German expressionism, but they also embody elements of Peruvian indigenism.

Vallejo traveled in Russia, a country he greatly admired; he chanted a paean to the Spanish Republicans destined to defeat in Spain's bitter civil war, and he was a defender of the humble masses and of leftist causes generally. His involvement with human suffering was obsessive and overwhelming. Vallejo was the outstanding initiator in his group in Peru, and after his death his reputation grew until he became known as one of the finest poets of his generation. His attitude may be aptly characterized by his famous statement: "The day I was born, God was sick."

Robert Bly, who has translated many of Vallejo's poems, characterizes his first book *Los heraldosnegros* (*The Black Messengers*) as "a staggering book, sensual, prophetic, affectionate, wild. It has a kind of compassion for God, and compassion for death . . . and it moves with incredible leaps of imagination. I think it is the greatest single collection of poems I have ever read."⁴¹

40. This poem is from Lorca's *The Poet in New York*, written mainly in 1929–1930, during the poet's long stay in the city, but not published until 1940. Robert Bly calls it "the greatest book ever written about New York," but Roy Campbell, a contemporary poet of equal stature, characterizes it as "slightly mephitic." I lived at the same place as Lorca during most of his time in New York and frequently accompanied him on his jaunts about the city. My own impression is that in this book Lorca is out of his element and thus tends to overwrite in a kind of high-pitched frenzy. Even so, it contains flashes of fine poetry.

41. Robert Bly (ed.), *Neruda and Vallejo: Selected Poems* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 170.