

Classic Poetry Series

Frederico Garcia Lorca

- poems -

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Ballad of the Moon

translated by Will Kirkland

The moon came into the forge
in her bustle of flowering nard.
The little boy stares at her, stares.
The boy is staring hard.
In the shaken air
the moon moves her arms,
and shows lubricious and pure,
her breasts of hard tin.
"Moon, moon, moon, run!
If the gypsies come,
they will use your heart
to make white necklaces and rings."
"Let me dance, my little one.
When the gypsies come,
they'll find you on the anvil
with your lively eyes closed tight.
"Moon, moon, moon, run!
I can feel their horses come."
"Let me be, my little one,
don't step on me, all starched and white!"

Closer comes the the horseman,
drumming on the plain.
The boy is in the forge;
his eyes are closed.
Through the olive grove
come the gypsies, dream and bronze,
their heads held high,
their hooded eyes.

Oh, how the night owl calls,
calling, calling from its tree!
The moon is climbing through the sky
with the child by the hand.

They are crying in the forge,
all the gypsies, shouting, crying.
The air is viewing all, views all.
The air is at the viewing.

Frederico Garcia Lorca

Before the Dawn

But like love
the archers
are blind

Upon the green night,
the piercing saetas
leave traces of warm
lily.

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

Ay, but like love
the archers

are blind!

Frederico Garcia Lorca

Ditty of First Desire

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

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

(Soul,
turn orange-colored.
Soul,
turn the color of love.)

In the vivid morning
I wanted to be myself.
A heart.

And at the evening's end
I wanted to be my voice.
A nightingale.

Soul,
turn orange-colored.
Soul,
turn the color of love.

Frederico Garcia Lorca

El Balcón

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Frederico Garcia Lorca

Fare Well

If I die,
leave the balcony open.

The little boy is eating oranges.
(From my balcony I can see him.)

The reaper is harvesting the wheat.
(From my balcony I can hear him.)

If I die,
leave the balcony open!

Frederico Garcia Lorca

Gacela of the Dark Death

I want to sleep the dream of the apples,
to withdraw from the tumult of cemeteries.
I want to sleep the dream of that child
who wanted to cut his heart on the high seas.

I don't want to hear again that the dead do not lose their blood,
that the putrid mouth goes on asking for water.
I don't want to learn of the tortures of the grass,
nor of the moon with a serpent's mouth
that labors before dawn.

I want to sleep awhile,
awhile, a minute, a century;
but all must know that I have not died;
that there is a stable of gold in my lips;
that I am the small friend of the West wing;
that I am the intense shadows of my tears.

Cover me at dawn with a veil,
because dawn will throw fistfuls of ants at me,
and wet with hard water my shoes
so that the pincers of the scorpion slide.

For I want to sleep the dream of the apples,
to learn a lament that will cleanse me to earth;
for I want to live with that dark child
who wanted to cut his heart on the high seas.

Frederico Garcia Lorca

Gacela of the Dead Child

Each afternoon in Granada,
each afternoon, a child dies.
Each afternoon the water sits down
and chats with its companions.

The dead wear mossy wings.
The cloudy wind and the clear wind
are two pheasants in flight through the towers,
and the day is a wounded boy.

Not a flicker of lark was left in the air
when I met you in the caverns of wine.
Not the crumb of a cloud was left in the ground
when you were drowned in the river.

A giant of water fell down over the hills,
and the valley was tumbling with lilies and dogs.
In my hands' violet shadow, your body,
dead on the bank, was an angel of coldness.

Frederico Garcia Lorca

Gacela of Unforseen Love

No one understood the perfume
of the dark magnolia of your womb.
Nobody knew that you tormented
a hummingbird of love between your teeth.

A thousand Persian little horses fell asleep
in the plaza with moon of your forehead,
while through four nights I embraced
your waist, enemy of the snow.

Between plaster and jasmins, your glance
was a pale branch of seeds.
I sought in my heart to give you
the ivory letters that say "siempre",

"siempre", "siempre" : garden of my agony,
your body elusive always,
that blood of your veins in my mouth,
your mouth already lightless for my death.

Frederico Garcia Lorca

Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías

1. Cogida and death

At five in the afternoon.
It was exactly five in the afternoon.
A boy brought the white sheet
at five in the afternoon.
A frail of lime ready prepared
at five in the afternoon.
The rest was death, and death alone.

The wind carried away the cottonwool
at five in the afternoon.
And the oxide scattered crystal and nickel
at five in the afternoon.
Now the dove and the leopard wrestle
at five in the afternoon.
And a thigh with a desolated horn
at five in the afternoon.
The bass-string struck up
at five in the afternoon.
Arsenic bells and smoke
at five in the afternoon.
Groups of silence in the corners
at five in the afternoon.
And the bull alone with a high heart!
At five in the afternoon.
When the sweat of snow was coming
at five in the afternoon,
when the bull ring was covered with iodine
at five in the afternoon.
Death laid eggs in the wound
at five in the afternoon.
At five in the afternoon.
At five o'clock in the afternoon.

A coffin on wheels is his bed
at five in the afternoon.
Bones and flutes resound in his ears
at five in the afternoon.
Now the bull was bellowing through his forehead
at five in the afternoon.
The room was iridescent with agony
at five in the afternoon.
In the distance the gangrene now comes
at five in the afternoon.
Horn of the lily through green groins
at five in the afternoon.
The wounds were burning like suns
at five in the afternoon.
At five in the afternoon.
Ah, that fatal five in the afternoon!
It was five by all the clocks!

It was five in the shade of the afternoon!

2. The Spilled Blood

I will not see it!

Tell the moon to come,
for I do not want to see the blood
of Ignacio on the sand.

I will not see it!

The moon wide open.
Horse of still clouds,
and the grey bull ring of dreams
with willows in the barreras.

I will not see it!

Let my memory kindle!
Warm the jasmines
of such minute whiteness!

I will not see it!

The cow of the ancient world
passed her sad tongue
over a snout of blood
spilled on the sand,
and the bulls of Guisando,
partly death and partly stone,
bellowed like two centuries
sated with threading the earth.
No.

I will not see it!

Ignacio goes up the tiers
with all his death on his shoulders.
He sought for the dawn
but the dawn was no more.
He seeks for his confident profile
and the dream bewilders him
He sought for his beautiful body
and encountered his opened blood
Do not ask me to see it!
I do not want to hear it spurt
each time with less strength:
that spurt that illuminates
the tiers of seats, and spills
over the corduroy and the leather
of a thirsty multitude.
Who shouts that I should come near!

Do not ask me to see it!

His eyes did not close
when he saw the horns near,
but the terrible mothers
lifted their heads.
And across the ranches,
an air of secret voices rose,
shouting to celestial bulls,
herdsmen of pale mist.
There was no prince in Sevilla
who could compare to him,
nor sword like his sword
nor heart so true.
Like a river of lions
was his marvellous strength,
and like a marble torso
his firm drawn moderation.
The air of Andalusian Rome
gilded his head
where his smile was a spikenard
of wit and intelligence.
What a great torero in the ring!
What a good peasant in the sierra!
How gentle with the sheaves!
How hard with the spurs!
How tender with the dew!
How dazzling the fiesta!
How tremendous with the final
banderillas of darkness!

But now he sleeps without end.
Now the moss and the grass
open with sure fingers
the flower of his skull.
And now his blood comes out singing;
singing along marshes and meadows,
sliden on frozen horns,
faltering soulles in the mist
stumbling over a thousand hoofs
like a long, dark, sad tongue,
to form a pool of agony
close to the starry Guadalquivir.
Oh, white wall of Spain!
Oh, black bull of sorrow!
Oh, hard blood of Ignacio!
Oh, nightingale of his veins!
No.
I will not see it!
No chalice can contain it,
no swallows can drink it,
no frost of light can cool it,

nor song nor deluge of white lilies,
no glass can cover mitt with silver.
No.
I will not see it!

3. The Laid Out Body

Stone is a forehead where dreames grieve
without curving waters and frozen cypresses.
Stone is a shoulder on which to bear Time
with trees formed of tears and ribbons and planets.

I have seen grey showers move towards the waves
raising their tender riddle arms,
to avoid being caught by lying stone
which loosens their limbs without soaking their blood.

For stone gathers seed and clouds,
skeleton larks and wolves of penumbra:
but yields not sounds nor crystals nor fire,
only bull rings and bull rings and more bull rings without walls.

Now, Ignacio the well born lies on the stone.
All is finished. What is happening! Contemplate his face:
death has covered him with pale sulphur
and has place on him the head of dark minotaur.

All is finished. The rain penetrates his mouth.
The air, as if mad, leaves his sunken chest,
and Love, soaked through with tears of snow,
warms itself on the peak of the herd.

What is they saying? A stenching silence settles down.
We are here with a body laid out which fades away,
with a pure shape which had nightingales
and we see it being filled with depthless holes.

Who creases the shroud? What he says is not true!
Nobody sings here, nobody weeps in the corner,
nobody pricks the spurs, nor terrifies the serpent.
Here I want nothing else but the round eyes
to see his body without a chance of rest.

Here I want to see those men of hard voice.
Those that break horses and dominate rivers;
those men of sonorous skeleton who sing
with a mouth full of sun and flint.

Here I want to see them. Before the stone.
Before this body with broken reins.
I want to know from them the way out
for this captain stripped down by death.

I want them to show me a lament like a river
which will have sweet mists and deep shores,
to take the body of Ignacio where it loses itself
without hearing the double planting of the bulls.

Loses itself in the round bull ring of the moon
which feigns in its youth a sad quiet bull,
loses itself in the night without song of fishes
and in the white thicket of frozen smoke.

I don't want to cover his face with handkerchiefs
that he may get used to the death he carries.
Go, Ignacio, feel not the hot bellowing
Sleep, fly, rest: even the sea dies!

4. Absent Soul

The bull does not know you, nor the fig tree,
nor the horses, nor the ants in your own house.
The child and the afternoon do not know you
because you have died forever.

The shoulder of the stone does not know you
nor the black silk, where you are shuttered.
Your silent memory does not know you
because you have died forever

The autumn will come with small white snails,
misty grapes and clustered hills,
but no one will look into your eyes
because you have died forever.

Because you have died for ever,
like all the dead of the earth,
like all the dead who are forgotten
in a heap of lifeless dogs.

Nobody knows you. No. But I sing of you.
For posterity I sing of your profile and grace.
Of the signal maturity of your understanding.
Of your appetite for death and the taste of its mouth.
Of the sadness of your once valiant gaiety.

It will be a long time, if ever, before there is born
an Andalusian so true, so rich in adventure.
I sing of his elegance with words that groan,
and I remember a sad breeze through the olive trees.

Frederico Garcia Lorca

Landscape of a Pissing Multitude

The men kept to themselves:
they were waiting for the swiftness of the last cyclists.
The women kept to themselves:
they were expecting the death of a boy on a Japanese schooner.
They all kept to themselves-
dreaming of the open beaks of dying birds,
the sharp parasol that punctures
a recently flattened toad,
beneath silence with a thousand ears
and tiny mouths of water
in the canyons that resist
the violent attack on the moon.
The boy on the schooner was crying and hearts were breaking
in anguish for the witness and vigilance of all things,
and because of the sky blue ground of black footprints,
obscure names, saliva, and chrome radios were still crying.
It doesn't matter if the boy grows silent when stuck with the last pin,
or if the breeze is defeated in cupped cotton flowers,
because there is a world of death whose perpetual sailors will appear in the arches and
freeze you from behind the trees.
It's useless to look for the bend
where night loses its way
and to wait in ambush for a silence that has no
torn clothes, no shells, and no tears,
because even the tiny banquet of a spider
is enough to upset the entire equilibrium of the sky.
There is no cure for the moaning from a Japanese schooner,
nor for those shadowy people who stumble on the curbs.
The countryside bites its own tail in order to gather a bunch of roots
and a ball of yarn looks anxiously in the grass for unrealized longitude.
The Moon! The police. The foghorns of the ocean liners!
Facades of urine, of smoke, anemones, rubber gloves.
Everything is shattered in the night
that spread its legs on the terraces.
Everything is shatter in the tepid faucets
of a terrible silent fountain.
Oh, crowds! Loose women! Soldiers!
We will have to journey through the eyes of idiots,
open country where the docile cobras, coiled like wire, hiss,
landscapes full of graves that yield the freshest apples,
so that uncontrollable light will arrive
to frighten the rich behind their magnifying glasses-
the odor of a single corpse from the double source of lily and rat-
and so that fire will consume those crowds still able to piss around a moan
or on the crystals in which each inimitable wave is understood.

Frederico Garcia Lorca

Landscape of a Vomiting Multitude

The fat lady came out first,
tearing out roots and moistening drumskins.
The fat lady
who turns dying octopuses inside out.
The fat lady, the moon's antagonist,
was running through the streets and deserted buildings
and leaving tiny skulls of pigeons in the corners
and stirring up the furies of the last centuries' feasts
and summoning the demon of bread through the sky's clean-swept hills
and filtering a longing for light into subterranean tunnels.
The graveyards, yes the graveyards
and the sorrow of the kitchens buried in sand,
the dead, pheasants and apples of another era,
pushing it into our throat.

There were murmuring from the jungle of vomit
with the empty women, with hot wax children,
with fermented trees and tireless waiters
who serve platters of salt beneath harps of saliva.
There's no other way, my son, vomit! There's no other way.
It's not the vomit of hussars on the breasts of their whores,
nor the vomit of cats that inadvertently swallowed frogs,
but the dead who scratch with clay hands
on flint gates where clouds and desserts decay.

The fat lady came first
with the crowds from the ships, taverns, and parks.
Vomit was delicately shaking its drums
among a few little girls of blood
who were begging the moon for protection.
Who could imagine my sadness?
The look on my face was mine, but now isn't me,
the naked look on my face, trembling for alcohol
and launching incredible ships
through the anemones of the piers.
I protect myself with this look
that flows from waves where no dawn would go,
I, poet without arms, lost
in the vomiting multitude,
with no effusive horse to shear
the thick moss from my temples.

The fat lady went first
and the crowds kept looking for pharmacies
where the bitter tropics could be found.
Only when a flag went up and the first dogs arrived
did the entire city rush to the railings of the boardwalk.

Frederico Garcia Lorca

Little Viennese Waltz

In Vienna there are ten little girls,
a shoulder for death to cry on,
and a forest of dried pigeons.
There is a fragment of tomorrow
in the museum of winter frost.
There is a thousand-windowed dance hall.

Ay, ay, ay, ay!
Take this close-mouthed waltz.

Little waltz, little waltz, little waltz,
of itself of death, and of brandy
that dips its tail in the sea.

I love you, I love you, I love you,
with the armchair and the book of death,
down the melancholy hallway,
in the iris's darkened garret,

Ay, ay, ay, ay!
Take this broken-waisted waltz.

In Vienna there are four mirrors
in which your mouth and the echoes play.
There is a death for piano
that paints little boys blue.
There are beggars on the roof.
There are fresh garlands of tears.

Ay, ay, ay, ay!
Take this waltz that dies in my arms.

Because I love you, I love you, my love,
in the attic where the children play,
dreaming ancient lights of Hungary
through the noise, the balmy afternoon,
seeing sheep and irises of snow
through the dark silence of your forehead

Ay, ay, ay, ay!
Take this " I will always love you" waltz

In Vienna I will dance with you
in a costume with
a river's head.
See how the hyacinths line my banks!
I will leave my mouth between your legs,
my soul in a photographs and lilies,
and in the dark wake of your footsteps,
my love, my love, I will have to leave
violin and grave, the waltzing ribbons

Frederico Garcia Lorca

Romance Sonambulo

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Frederico Garcia Lorca

Saturday Paseo: Adelina

Oranges
do not grow in the sea
neither is there love in Sevilla.
You in Dark and the I the sun that's hot,
loan me your parasol.

I'll wear my jealous reflection,
juice of lemon and lime-
and your words,
your sinful little words-
will swim around awhile.

Oranges
do not grow in the sea,
Ay, love!
And there is no love in Sevilla!

Frederico Garcia Lorca

Serenata

The night soaks itself
along the shore of the river
and in Lolita's breasts
the branches die of love.

The branches die of love.

Naked the night sings
above the bridges of March.
Lolita bathes her body
with salt water and roses.

The branches die of love.

The night of anise and silver
shines over the rooftops.
Silver of streams and mirrors
Anise of your white thighs.

The branches die of love.

Frederico Garcia Lorca

The Faithless Wife

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Frederico Garcia Lorca

The Little Mute Boy

The little boy was looking for his voice.
(The King of the crickets had it.)
In a drop of water
the little boy was looking for his voice.

I do not want it for speaking with;
I will make a ring of it
so that he may wear my silence
on his little finger.

In a drop of water
the little boy was looking for his voice.

(The captive voice, far away.
Put on a cricket' clothes.)

Frederico Garcia Lorca

Weeping

Weeping,
I go down the street
Grotesque, without solution
With the sadness of Cyrano
And Quixote.

Redeeming
Infinite impossibilities
With the rhythm of the clock.

Frederico Garcia Lorca