

SPAIN IN OUR HEARTS



ESPAÑA EN EL CORAZÓN

Pablo Neruda

PABLO NERUDA

SPAIN IN OUR HEARTS:
HYMN TO THE GLORIES OF
THE PEOPLE AT WAR

ESPAÑA EN EL CORAZÓN:
HIMNO A LAS GLORIAS DEL
PUEBLO EN LA GUERRA

Translated by Donald D. Walsh



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PREFACE:
"My Book on Spain" by Pablo Neruda

Time passed. We were beginning to lose the war. The poets sided with the Spanish people: Federico had been murdered in Granada. Miguel Hernández had been transformed from a goatherd into a fighting word. In soldier's uniform, he read his poems on the front lines. Manuel Altolaguirre kept his printing presses going. He set one up on the eastern front, near Gerona, in an old monastery. My book *España en el corazón* was printed there in a unique way. I believe few books, in the extraordinary history of so many books, have had such a curious birth and fate.

The soldiers at the front learned to set type. But there was no paper. They found an old mill and decided to make it there. A strange mixture was concocted, between one falling bomb and the next, in the middle of the fighting. They threw everything they could get their hands on into the mill, from an enemy flag to a Moorish soldier's bloodstained tunic. And in spite of the unusual materials used and the total inexperience of its manufacturers, the paper turned out to be very beautiful. The few copies of that book still in existence produce astonishment at its typography and at its mysteriously manufactured pages. Years later I saw a copy in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., displayed in a showcase as one of the rarest books of our time.

My book had just been printed and bound when the Republic's defeat was suddenly upon us. Hundreds of thousands of refugees glutted the roads leading out of Spain. It was the exodus, the most painful event in the history of that country.

Among those lines of people going into exile were the survivors of the eastern front, and with them Manuel Altolaguirre

and the soldiers who had made the paper and printed *España en el corazón*. My book was the pride of these men who had worked to bring out my poetry in the face of death. I learned that many carried copies of the book in their sacks, instead of their own food and clothing. With those sacks over their shoulders, they set out on the long march to France.

The endless column walking to exile was bombed hundreds of times. Soldiers fell and the books were spilled on the highway. Others continued their interminable flight. On the other side of the border, the Spaniards who reached exile met with brutal treatment. The last copies of this impassioned book that was born and perished in the midst of fierce fighting were immolated in a bonfire.

Miguel Hernández sought refuge in the Chilean Embassy, which during the war had granted asylum to four thousand Franco followers. Carlos Morla Lynch, the ambassador, claimed to be his friend but denied the great poet his protection. A few days after, he was arrested and thrown into prison. He died of tuberculosis in jail three years later. The nightingale could not survive in captivity.

My consular duties had come to an end. Because I had taken part in the defense of the Spanish Republic, the Chilean government decided to remove me from my post.

from Neruda's Memoirs (1974), translated by Hardie St. Martin

INVOCATION

To begin, pause over the pure
and cleft rose, pause over the source
of sky and air and earth; the will of a song
with explosions, the desire
of an immense song, of a metal that will gather
war and naked blood.

Spain, water glass, not diadem,
but yes crushed stone, militant tenderness
of wheat, hide and burning animal.

Tomorrow, today, in your steps
a silence, an astonishment of hopes
like a major air: a light, a moon,
a worn-out moon, a moon from hand to hand,
from bell to bell!

Natal mother, fist
of hardened oats,
dry
and bloody planet of heroes!
Who? by roads, who,
who, who? in shadows, in blood, who?
in a flash, who,

BOMBARDMENT

who? Ashes

fall, fall,

iron

and stone and death and weeping and flames,

who, who, mother, who, where?

CURSE

Furrowed motherland, I swear that in your ashes
you will be born like a flower of eternal water,
I swear that from your mouth of thirst will come to the air
the petals of bread, the spilt
inaugurated flower. Cursed,
cursed, cursed be those who with ax and serpent
came to your earthly arena, cursed those
who waited for this day to open the door
of the dwelling to the Moor and the bandit:
What have you achieved? Bring, bring the lamp,
see the soaked earth, see the blackened little bone
eaten by the flames, the garment
of murdered Spain.

SPAIN POOR THROUGH THE FAULT OF THE RICH

Cursed be those who one day
did not look, cursed cursed blind,
those who offered the solemn fatherland
not bread but tears, cursed
sullied uniforms and cassocks
of sour, stinking dogs of cave and grave.
Poverty was throughout Spain

like horses filled with smoke,
like stones fallen from the
spring of misfortune,
grainlands still
unopened, secret storehouses
of blue and tin, ovaries, doors, closed
arches, depths
that tried to give birth, all was guarded
by triangular guards with guns,
by sad-rat-colored priests,
by lackeys of the huge-rumped king.
Tough Spain, land of apple orchards and pines,
your idle lords ordered you:
Do not sow the land, do not give birth to mines,
do not breed cows, but contemplate
the tombs, visit each year
the monument of Columbus the sailor, neigh
speeches with monkeys come from America,
equal in "social position" and in putrefaction.
Do not build schools, do not break open earth's
crust with plows, do not fill the granaries
with abundance of wheat: pray, beasts, pray,
for a god with a rump as huge as the king's rump
awaits you: "There you will have soup, my brethren."

TRADITION

In the nights of Spain, through the old gardens,
tradition, covered with dead snot,
spouting pus and pestilence, strolled
with its tail in the fog, ghostly and fantastic,
dressed in asthma and bloody hollow frock coats,
and its face with sunken staring eyes

was green slugs eating graves,
and its toothless mouth each night bit
the unborn flower, the secret mineral,
and it passed with its crown of green thistles
sowing vague deadmen's bones and daggers.

MADRID (1936)

*Madrid, alone and solemn, July surprised you with your joy
of humble honeycomb: bright was your street,
bright was your dream.*

*A black vomit
of generals, a wave
of rabid cassocks
poured between your knees
their swampy waters, their rivers of spittle.*

*With eyes still wounded by sleep,
with guns and stones, Madrid, newly wounded,
you defended yourself. You ran
though the streets
leaving trails of your holy blood,
rallying and calling with an oceanic voice,
with a face changed forever
by the light of blood, like an avenging
mountain, like a whistling
star of knives.*

*When into the dark barracks, when into the sacristies
of treason your burning sword entered,
there was only silence of dawn, there was
only your passage of flags,
and an honorable drop of blood in your smile.*

I EXPLAIN A FEW THINGS

You will ask: And where are the lilacs?
And the metaphysical blanket of poppies?
And the rain that often struck
your words filling them
with holes and birds?

I am going to tell you all that is happening to me.

I lived in a quarter
of Madrid, with bells,
with clocks, with trees.

From there one could see
the lean face of Spain
like an ocean of leather.

My house was called
the house of flowers, because it was bursting
everywhere with geraniums: it was
a fine house
with dogs and children.

Raúl, do you remember?
Do you remember, Rafael?

Federico,* do you remember
under the ground,
do you remember my house with balconies where
June light smothered flowers in your mouth?

Brother, brother!

Everything
was great shouting, salty goods,
heaps of throbbing bread,

*Federico was García Lorca.—D.D.W.

markets of my Argüelles quarter with its statue
like a pale inkwell among the haddock:
the olive oil reached the ladles,
a deep throbbing
of feet and hands filled the streets,
meters, liters, sharp
essence of life,
 fish piled up,
pattern of roofs with cold sun on which
the vane grows weary,
frenzied fine ivory of the potatoes,
tomatoes stretching to the sea.

And one morning all was aflame
and one morning the fires
came out of the earth
devouring people,
and from then on fire,
gunpowder from then on,
and from then on blood.

Bandits with airplanes and with Moors,
bandits with rings and duchesses,
bandits with black-robed friars blessing
came through the air to kill children,
and through the streets the blood of the children
ran simply, like children's blood.

Jackals that the jackal would spurn,
stones that the dry thistle would bite spitting,
vipers that vipers would abhor!

Facing you I have seen the blood
of Spain rise up

to drown you in a single wave
of pride and knives!

Treacherous

generals:

look at my dead house,

look at broken Spain:

but from each dead house comes burning metal

instead of flowers,

but from each hollow of Spain

Spain comes forth,

but from each dead child comes a gun with eyes,

but from each crime are born bullets

that will one day seek out in you

where the heart lies.

You will ask: why does your poetry
not speak to us of sleep, of the leaves,
of the great volcanoes of your native land?

Come and see the blood in the streets,
come and see
the blood in the streets,
come and see the blood
in the streets!

SONG FOR THE MOTHERS OF SLAIN MILITIAMEN

They have not died! They are in the midst
of the gunpowder,
standing, like burning wicks.
Their pure shadows have gathered
in the copper-colored meadowland
like a curtain of armored wind,

like a barricade the color of fury,
like the invisible heart of heaven itself.

Mothers! They are standing in the wheat,
tall as the depth of noon,
dominating the great plains!
They are a black-voiced bell stroke
that across the bodies murdered by steel
is ringing out victory.

Sisters like the fallen

dust, shattered
hearts,
have faith in your dead!
They are not only roots
beneath the bloodstained stones,
not only do their poor demolished bones
definitively till the soil,
but their mouths still bite dry powder
and attack like iron oceans, and still
their upraised fists deny death.

Because from so many bodies an invisible life
rises up. Mothers, banners, sons!
A single body as alive as life:
a face of broken eyes keeps vigil in the darkness
with a sword filled with earthly hopes!

Put aside
your mantles of mourning, join all
your tears until you make them metal:
for there we strike by day and by night,
there we kick by day and by night,
there we spit by day and by night
until the doors of hatred fall!

WHAT SPAIN WAS LIKE

*Spain was tense and lean, a daily
drum of opaque sound,
plainland and eagle's nest, silence
of scourged inclemency.*

*How, even to weeping, even to the soul,
I love your hard earth, your humble bread,
your humble people, how even to the deep seat
of my existence there is the lost flower of your wrinkled
villages, motionless in time,
and your mineral countrysides
extended in moon and age
and devoured by an empty god.*

*All your structures, your animal
isolation next to your intelligence
surrounded by the abstract stones of silence,
your bitter wine, your smooth
wine, your violent
and delicate vineyards.*

*Ancestral stone, pure among the regions
of the world, Spain crossed
by bloods and metals, blue and victorious,
proletarian of petals and bullets, uniquely
alive and somnolent and resounding.*

Huélamo, Carrascosa,
Alpedrete, Buitrago,
Palencia, Arganda, Galve,
Galapagar, Villalba.*

*These are names of Spanish towns and villages.—D.D.W.

*Peñarrubia, Cedrillas,
Alcocer, Tamurejo,
Aguadulce, Pedrera,
Fuente Palmera, Colmenar, Sepúlveda.*

*Carcabuey, Fuencaliente,
Linares, Solana del Pino,
Carcelén, Alatox,
Mahora, Valdeganda.*

*Yeste, Riopar, Segorbe,
Orihuela, Montalbo,
Alcaraz, Caravaca,
Almendralejo, Castejón de Monegros.*

*Palma del Río, Peralta,
Granadella, Quintana
de la Serena, Atienza, Barahona,
Navalmoral, Oropesa.*

*Alborea, Monóvar,
Almansa, San Benito,
Moratalla, Montesa,
Torre Baja, Aldemuz.*

*Cevico Navero, Cevico de la Torre,
Albalate de las Nogueras,
Jabaloyas, Teruel,
Camporrobles, la Alberca.*

*Pozo Amargo, Candeleda,
Pedroñeras, Campillo de Altobuey,
Loranca de Tajuña, Puebla de la Mujer Muerta,
Torre la Cárcel, Játiva, Alcoy.*

*Pueblo de Obando, Villar del Rey,
Beloraga, Brihuega,
Cetina, Villacañas, Palomas,
Navalcán, Henarejos, Albatana.*

*Torredonjimeno, Trasparga,
Agramón, Crevillente,
Poveda de la Sierra, Pedernoso,
Alcolea de Cinca, Matallanos.*

*Ventosa del Rio, Alba de Tormes,
Horcajo Medianero, Piedrahita,
Minglanilla, Navamorcuende, Navalperal,
Navalcarnero, Navalmorales, Jorquera.*

*Argora, Torremocha, Argecilla,
Ojos Negros, Salvacañete, Utiel,
Laguna Seca, Cañamares, Salorino,
Aldea Quemada, Pesquera de Duero.*

*Fuenteovejuna, Alpedrete,
Torrejón, Benaguacil,
Valverde de Júcar, Vallanca,
Hiendelaencina, Robledo de Chavela.*

*Miñogalindo, Ossa de Montiel,
Méntrida, Valdepeñas, Titaguas,
Almodóvar, Gestaldar, Valdemoro,
Almoradiel, Orgaz.*

ARRIVAL IN MADRID OF THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE

One morning in a cold month,
an agonizing month, stained by mud and smoke,
a month without knees, a sad month of siege and misfortune,
when through the wet windows of my house
 the African jackals could be heard
howling with rifles and teeth covered with blood, then,
when we had no more hope than a dream of powder,
 when we already thought
that the world was filled only with devouring monsters
 and furies,
then, breaking the frost of the cold Madrid month,
 in the fog
of the dawn
I saw with these eyes that I have, with this heart
 that looks,
I saw arrive the clear, the masterful fighters
of the thin and hard and mellow and ardent stone brigade.

It was the anguished time when women
wore absence like a frightful coal,
and Spanish death, more acrid and sharper than other deaths,
filled fields up to then honored by wheat.

Through the streets the broken blood of man joined
the water that emerges from the ruined hearts of homes:
the bones of the shattered children, the heartrending
black-clad silence of the mothers, the eyes
forever shut of the defenseless,
were like sadness and loss, were like a spit-upon garden,
were faith and flower forever murdered.

Comrades,
then

I saw you,
and my eyes are even now filled with pride
because through the misty morning I saw you reach
 the pure brow of Castile
silent and firm
like bells before dawn,
filled with solemnity and blue-eyed, come from far,
 far away,
come from your corners, from your lost fatherlands,
 from your dreams,
covered with burning gentleness and guns
to defend the Spanish city in which besieged liberty
could fall and die bitten by the beasts.

Brothers, from now on
let your pureness and your strength, your solemn story
be known by children and by men, by women and by old men,
let it reach all men without hope, let it go down to the mines
 corroded by sulphuric air,
let it mount the inhuman stairways of the slave,
let all the stars, let all the flowers of Castile
 and of the world
write your name and your bitter struggle
and your victory strong and earthen as a red oak.
Because you have revived with your sacrifice
lost faith, absent heart, trust in the earth,
and through your abundance, through your nobility, through
 your dead,
as if through a valley of harsh bloody rocks,
flows an immense river with doves of steel and of hope.

BATTLE OF THE JARAMA RIVER*

Between the earth and the drowned platinum
of olive orchards and Spanish dead,
Jarama, pure dagger, you have resisted
the wave of the cruel.

There, from Madrid, came men
with hearts made golden by gunpowder,
like a loaf of ashes and resistance,
there they came.

Jarama, you were between iron and smoke
like a branch of fallen crystal,
like a long line of medals
for the victorious.

Neither caverns of burning substance,
nor angry explosive flights,
nor artillery of turbid darkness
controlled your waters.

The bloodthirsty drank
your waters, face up they drank water:
Spanish water and olive fields
filled them with oblivion.

For a second of water and time the river bed
of the blood of Moors and traitors
throbbed in your light like the fish
of a bitter fountain.

*In February 1937 the Republican army, aided by the International Brigade, repulsed a Nationalist attack at the Jarama River near Madrid and thereby kept open the road to Valencia and Catalonia.—D.D.W.

The bitter wheat of your people was
all bristling with metal and bones,
formidable and germinal like the noble
land that they defended.

Jarama, to speak of your regions
of splendor and dominion, my mouth is not
adequate, and my hand is pale:
there rest your dead.

There rest your mournful sky,
your flinty peace, your starry stream,
and the eternal eyes of your people
watch over your shores.

ALMERÍA*

A bowl for the bishop, a crushed and bitter bowl,
a bowl with remnants of iron, with ashes, with tears,
a sunken bowl, with sobs and fallen walls,
a bowl for the bishop, a bowl of Almería blood.

A bowl for the banker, a bowl with cheeks
of children from the happy South, a bowl
with explosions, with wild waters and ruins and fright,
a bowl with split axles and trampled heads,
a black bowl, a bowl of Almería blood.

Each morning, each turbid morning of your lives
you will have it steaming and burning at your tables:

*In February 1937 hundreds of Republican civilians, fleeing from Málaga toward Almería, were overtaken by Nationalist planes and tanks. The men and boys were executed in the presence of their wives and mothers.—D.D.W.

so as not to see it, not to digest it so many times:
you will push it aside a bit between the bread and the grapes,
this bowl of silent blood
that will be there each morning, each
morning.

A bowl for the Colonel and the Colonel's wife
at a garrison party, at each party,
above the oaths and the spittle, with the wine light of early
morning
so that you may see it trembling and cold upon the world.

Yes, a bowl for all of you, richmen here and there,
monstrous ambassadors, ministers, table companions,
ladies with cozy tea parties and chairs:
a bowl shattered, overflowing, dirty with the blood of the poor,
for each morning, for each week, forever and ever,
a bowl of Almería blood, facing you, forever.

OFFENDED LANDS

*Regions submerged
in interminable martyrdom, through the unending
silence, pulses
of bee and exterminated rock,
you lands that instead of wheat and clover
bring signs of dried blood and crime:
abundant Galicia, pure as rain,
made salty forever by tears:
Extremadura, on whose august shore
of sky and aluminum, black as a bullet
hole, betrayed and wounded and shattered:*

*Badajoz without memory, among her dead sons
she lies watching a sky that remembers:*

*Málaga plowed by death
and pursued among the cliffs
until the maddened mothers
beat upon the rock with their newborn sons.
Furor, flight of mourning
and death and anger,
until the tears and grief now gathered,
until the words and the fainting and the anger
are only a pile of bones in a road
and a stone buried by the dust.*

*It is so much, so many
tombs, so much martyrdom, so much
galloping of beasts in the star!
Nothing, not even victory
will erase the terrible hollow of the blood:
nothing, neither the sea, nor the passage
of sand and time, nor the geranium flaming
upon the grave.*

SANJURJO* IN HELL

Tied up, reeking, roped
to his betraying airplane, to his betrayals,
the betrayed betrayer burns.

Like phosphorus his kidneys burn
and his sinister betraying soldier's
mouth melts in curses,

*General José Sanjurjo, 1872-1936, an early and leading plotter against the Republic.—D.D.W.

piloted through the eternal flames,
guided and burnt by airplanes,
burnt from betrayal to betrayal.

MOLA* IN HELL

The turbid Mola mule is dragged
from cliff to eternal cliff
and as the shipwrecked man goes from wave to wave,
destroyed by brimstone and horn,
boiled in lime and gall and deceit,
already expected in hell,
the infernal mulatto goes, the Mola mule
definitively turbid and tender,
with flames on his tail and his rump.

GENERAL FRANCO IN HELL

*Evil one, neither fire nor hot vinegar
in a nest of volcanic witches, nor devouring ice,
nor the putrid turtle that barking and weeping with the
voice of a dead woman scratches your belly
seeking a wedding ring and the toy of a slaughtered child,
will be for you anything but a dark demolished
door.*

Indeed.

*From one hell to another, what difference? In the howling
of your legions, in the holy milk
of the mothers of Spain, in the milk and the bosoms trampled*

*General Emilio Mola, 1887-1937, commander of the Nationalist northern army, killed in an airplane accident.—D.D.W.

*along the roads, there is one more village, one more silence,
a broken door.*

*Here you are. Wretched eyelid, dung
of sinister sepulchral hens, heavy sputum, figure
of treason that blood will not erase. Who, who are you,
oh miserable leaf of salt, oh dog of the earth,
oh ill-born pallor of shadow.*

*The flame retreats without ash,
the salty thirst of hell, the circles
of grief turn pale.*

*Cursed one, may only humans
pursue you, within the absolute fire of things may
you not be consumed, not be lost
in the scale of time, may you not be pierced by the burning glass
or the fierce foam.*

*Alone, alone, for the tears
all gathered, for an eternity of dead hands
and rotted eyes, alone in a cave
of your hell, eating silent pus and blood
though a cursed and lonely eternity.*

*You do not deserve to sleep
even though it be with your eyes fastened with pins:*

*you have to be
awake, General, eternally awake
among the putrefaction of the new mothers,
machine-gunned in the autumn. All and all the sad children
cut to pieces,
rigid, they hang, awaiting in your hell
that day of cold festivity: your arrival.*

*Children blackened by explosions,
red fragments of brain, corridors filled*

*with gentle intestines, they all await you, all in the
very posture
of crossing the street, of kicking the ball,
of swallowing a fruit, of smiling, or being born.*

*Smiling. There are smiles
now demolished by blood
that wait with scattered exterminated teeth,
and masks of muddled matter, hollow faces
of perpetual gunpowder, and the nameless
ghosts, the dark
hidden ones, those who never left
their beds of rubble. They all wait for you
to spend the night. They fill the corridors
like decayed seaweed.*

*They are ours, they were our
flesh, our health, our
bustling peace, our ocean
of air and lungs. Through
them the dry earth flowered. Now, beyond the earth,
turned into destroyed
substance, murdered matter, dead flour,
they await you in your hell.*

*Since acute terror or sorrow waste away,
neither terror nor sorrow await you. May you be alone
and accursed,
alone and awake among all the dead,
and let blood fall upon you like rain,
and let a dying river of severed eyes
slide and flow over you staring at you endlessly.*

SONG ABOUT SOME RUINS

This that was created and tamed,
this that was moistened, used, seen,
lies—poor kerchief—among the waves
of earth and black brimstone.

Like bud or breast
they raise themselves to the sky, like the flower that rises
from the destroyed bone, so the shapes
of the world appeared. Oh eyelids,
oh columns, oh ladders.

Oh deep substances
annexed and pure: how long until you are bells!
how long until you are clocks! Aluminum
of blue proportions, cement
stuck to human dreams!

The dust gathers,
the gum, the mud, the objects grow
and the walls rise up
like arbors of dark human flesh.

Inside there in white, in copper,
in fire, in abandonment, the papers grew,
the abominable weeping, the prescriptions
taken at night to the drugstore while
someone with a fever,
the dry temple of the mind, the door
that man has built
never to open it.

Everything has gone and fallen
suddenly withered.

Wounded tools, nocturnal
cloths, dirty foam, urine just then
spilt, cheeks, glass, wool,
camphor, circles of thread and leather, all,

all through a wheel returned to dust,
to the disorganized dream of the metals,
all the perfume, all the fascination,
all united in nothing, all fallen
never to be born.

Celestial thirst, doves
with a waist of wheat: epochs
of pollen and branch: see how
the wood is shattered
until it reaches mourning: there are no roots
for man: all scarcely rests
upon a tremor of rain.

See how the guitar
has rotted in the mouth of the fragrant bride:
see how the words that built so much
now are extermination: upon the lime and among the shattered
marble, look
at the trace—now moss-covered—of the sob.

THE VICTORY OF THE ARMS OF THE PEOPLE

*But, like earth's memory, like the stony
splendor of metal and silence,
is your victory, people, fatherland, and grain.*

*Your riddled banner advances
like your breast above the scars
of time and earth.*

THE UNIONS AT THE FRONT

*Where are the miners, where are
the rope makers, the leather
curers, those who cast the nets?
Where are they?*

*Where are those who used to sing at the top
of the building, spitting and swearing
upon the lofty cement?*

*Where are the railroadmen
dedicated and nocturnal?
Where is the supplier's union?*

*With a rifle, with a rifle. Among the
dark throbbing of the plainland,
looking out over the debris.*

*Aiming the bullet at the harsh
enemy as at the thorns,
as at the vipers, that's it.*

*By day and by night, in the sad
ash of dawn, in the virtue
of the scorched noon.*

TRIUMPH

*Solemn is the triumph of the people,
at its great victorious passage
the eyeless potato and the heavenly
grape glitter in the earth.*

LANDSCAPE AFTER A BATTLE

Bitten space, troop crushed
against the grain, broken
horseshoes, frozen between frost and stones,
harsh moon.

Moon of a wounded mare, charred,
wrapped in exhausted thorns, menacing, sunken
metal or bone, absence, bitter cloth,
smoke of gravediggers.

Behind the acrid halo of saltpeter,
from substance to substance, from water to water,
swift as threshed wheat,
burned and eaten.

Accidental crust softly soft,
black ash absent and scattered,
now only echoing cold, abominable
materials of rain.

May my knees keep it hidden
more than this fugitive territory,
may my eyelids grasp it until they can name and wound,
may my blood keep this taste of shadow
so that there will be no forgetting.

ANTITANKERS

Branches all of classic mother-of-pearl, halos
of sea and sky, wind of laurels
for you, oaken heroes,

antitankers.

You have been in the night mouth
of war
the angels of fire, the fearsome ones,
the pure sons of the earth.

That's how you were, planted
in the fields, dark, like seeds, lying
waiting. And before the hurricaned iron, at the chest
of the monster,
you launched not just a pale bit of explosive
but your deep steaming heart,
a lash as destructive and blue as gunpowder.
You rose up,
noble, heavenly against the mountains
of cruelty, naked sons
of earth and glory.

Once you saw
only the olive branch, only the nets
filled with scales and silver: you gathered
the instruments, the wood, the iron
of the harvests and the building:
in your hands flourished the beautiful
forest pomegranate or the morning
onion, and suddenly
you are here laden with lightning,
clutching glory, bursting
with furious powers,
alone and harsh facing the darkness.

Liberty sought you out in the mines,
and begged for peace for your ploughs:
Liberty rose weeping
along the roads, shouted in the corridors

of the houses: in the countryside
her voice passed between orange and wind
calling for ripe-hearted men, and you came,
and here you are, the chosen
sons of victory, many times fallen, your hands
many times blotted out, broken the most hidden bones,
 your mouths
stilled, pounded
to destruction your silence:
but you surged up suddenly, in the midst
of the whirlwind, again, others, all
your unfathomable, your burning
race of hearts and roots.

MADRID (1937)

*At this hour I remember everything and everyone,
vigorously, sunkenly in
the regions that—sound and feather—
striking a little, exist
beyond the earth, but on the earth. Today
a new winter begins.*

*There is in that city,
where lies what I love,
there is no bread, no light: a cold windowpane falls
upon dry geraniums. By night black dreams
opened by howitzers, like bloody oxen:
no one in the dawn of the ramparts
but a broken cart: now moss, now silence of ages,
instead of swallows, on the burned houses,
drained of blood, empty, their doors open to the sky:
now the market begins to open its poor emeralds,
and the oranges, the fish,*

*brought each day across the blood,
offer themselves to the hands of the sister and the widow.
City of mourning, undermined, wounded,
broken, beaten, bullet-riddled, covered
with blood and broken glass, city without night, all
night and silence and explosions and heroes,
now a new winter more naked and more alone,
now without flour, without steps, with your moon
of soldiers.*

Everything, everyone.

Poor sun, our lost

*blood, terrible heart
shaken and mourned. Tears like heavy bullets
have fallen on your dark earth sounding
like falling doves, a hand that death
closes forever, blood of each day
and each night and each week and each
month. Without speaking of you, heroes asleep
and awake, without speaking of you who make the water
and the earth
tremble with your glorious purpose,
at this hour I listen to the weather on a street,
someone speaks to me, winter
comes again to the hotels
where I have lived,
everything is city that I listen to and distance
surrounded by fire as if by a spume
of vipers assaulted by a
water of hell.*

*For more than a year now
the masked ones have been touching your human shore
and dying at the contact of your electric blood:
sacks of Moors, sacks of traitors
have rolled at your feet of stone: neither smoke nor death
have conquered your burning walls.*

Then,

*what's happening, then? Yes, they are the exterminators,
they are the devourers: they spy on you, white city,
the bishop of turbid scruff, the fecal and feudal
young masters, the general in whose hand
jingle thirty coins: against your walls are
a circle of women, dripping and devout,
a squadron of putrid ambassadors,
and a sad vomit of military dogs.*

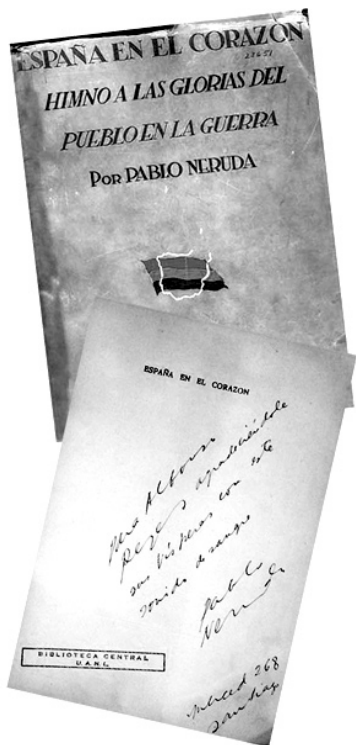
*Praise to you, praise in cloud, in sunray,
in health, in swords,
bleeding front whose thread of blood
echoes on the deeply wounded stones,
a slipping away of harsh sweetness,
bright cradle armed with lightning,
fortress substance, air of blood
from which bees are born.*

*Today you who live, Juan,
today you who watch, Pedro, who conceive, sleep, eat:
today in the lightless night on guard without sleep
and without rest,
alone on the cement, across the gashed earth,
from the blackened wire, to the South, in the middle, all
around,
without sky, without mystery,
men like a collar of cordons defend
the city surrounded by flames: Madrid hardened
by an astral blow, by the shock of fire:
earth and vigil in the deep silence
of victory: shaken
like a broken rose, surrounded
by infinite laurel!*

your ordered light reaches poor forgotten
men, your sharp star
sinks its raucous rays into death
and establishes the new eyes of hope.



An associate of the Mujeres Libres (Free Women) of Spain.



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“You will ask: why does your poetry
not speak to us of sleep, of the leaves,
of the great volcanoes of your native land?”

Come and see the blood in the streets,
come and see
the blood in the streets,
come and see the blood
in the streets!”

