

Rosalía de Castro

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César Vallejo: *Selected Poems*

Selected Poems

Rosalía de Castro

Edited and translated by
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de *A mi madre* (1863)

I

Ya pasó la estación de los calores,
y lleno el rostro de áspera fiereza,
sobre los restos de las mustias flores,
asoma el crudo invierno su cabeza.

Pero el azul del claro firmamento
tiende sus alas de color sombrío,
cuál en torno de un casto pensamiento
sus alas tiende un pensamiento impío.

Y gime el bosque, y el torrente brama,
y la hoja seca, en lodo convertida,
dale llorosa al céfiro a quien ama
la postrera y doliente despedida.

II

Errantes, fugitivas, misteriosas,
tienden las nubes presuroso el vuelo,
no como un tiempo, cándidas y hermosas,
sí llenas de amargura y desconsuelo.

Más allá . . . más allá . . . siempre adelante,
prosiguen sin descanso su carrera,
bañado en llanto el pálido semblante
con que riegan el bosque y la pradera.

Que enojada la mar donde se miran
y oscurecido el sol que las amó,
sólo saben decir cuando suspiran:
«Todo para nosotras acabó.»

from *To My Mother* (1863)

I

The hot season now over,
rough, fierce, harsh-faced winter
lifts its head above what's left
of the withered flowers.

Now the blue of a clear sky
spreads its wings of dismal hue,
like an impious thought
over a chaste mind.

And the wood groans, and the torrent roars,
and the dry leaf, turned to mush,
gives its beloved zephyr
a last and grieving goodbye.

II

Wandering, fugitive, mysterious,
the clouds take their swift flight,
not, as once, artless and fair,
but laden with spite and grief.

Further on . . . further on . . . , always forward,
tirelessly they pursue their course,
their pale visage bathed in those tears
that drench the wood and the meadow.

How angry the sea where they're mirrored,
and darkened the sun that loved them,
they can only say while sighing:
'For us things are ended.'

III

Suelto el ropaje y la melena al viento,
cual se agrupan en torno de la luna . . .
locas en incesante movimiento,
remedan el vaivén de la fortuna.

Pasan, vuelven y corren desatadas,
hijas del aire en forma caprichosa,
al viento de la noche abandonadas
en la profunda oscuridad medrosa.

Tal en mi triste corazón inquietas,
mis locas esperanzas se agitaron,
y a un débil hilo de placer sujetas,
locas . . . , locas también se quebrantaron.

IV

Ya toda luz se oscureció en el cielo,
cubriendose de luto las estrellas,
y de luto también se cubrió el suelo,
entre brisas, gemidos y querellas.

Todo en profunda noche adormecido,
sólo el rumor del huracán se siente,
y se parece su áspero silbido
al silbido feroz de una serpiente.

¡Cuán tenebrosa noche se presenta! . . .
Mas al abrigo de amoroso techo,
grato es pensar que la horrida tormenta
no ha de agitar la colcha de mi lecho.

III

Clothes and hair loose to the wind,
as they gather around the moon;
crazy in incessant movement
they mimic fortune's to-and-fro.

They pass, return and race unbound,
the air's children in fickle form,
abandoned to the wind of night
in the deep and awesome dark.

So, in my sorrowing heart, restless
and wild expectations stirred,
and held by pleasure's feeble thread,
wild . . . , wild, they also broke.

IV

Now all light grew dark in the sky,
enveloping the stars in mourning,
and mourning, too, covered the earth,
among breezes, groans and gripes.

All things in deep night's drowsiness,
only the whirlwind's blast is heard,
and its rasping whistle mimics
a serpent's vicious hiss.

What a dismal night comes on!
But under the shelter of a loving roof,
it's pleasant to think the horrid storm
will never stir my bed's counterpane.

V

Mas . . . ¿qué estridente y mágico alarido
la ronca voz de la tormenta trae?
Triste . . . vago . . . constante y dolorido,
cual fuego ardiente, en mis entrañas cae.

Cae y ahuyenta de mi lecho el sueño . . .
¡Ah! ¿Cómo he de dormir? . . . Locura fuera,
fuerza locura y temerario empeño
que con gemidos tales me durmiera.

¡Ah! ¿Cómo he de dormir? Ese lamento,
ese grito de angustia que percibo,
esa expresión de amargo sufrimiento
no pertenece al mundo en que yo vivo.

VI

Donde el ciprés erguido se levanta,
allá en lejana habitación sombría,
que al más osado de la tierra espanta,
sola duerme la dulce madre mía.

Más helado es su lecho que la nieve,
más negro y hondo que caverna oscura,
y el euro altivo que sus antros mueve,
sacia su furia en él, con saña dura.

¡Ah!, de dolientes sauces rodeada,
de dura hierba y ásperas ortigas,
¡cuál serás, madre, en tu dormir turbada
por vaporosas sombras enemigas!

V

But . . . what a strident and magical howl
the storm's raucous voice brings?
Sad . . . vague . . . constant and aggrieved,
it falls, burning like fire, inside me.

It falls and chases sleep far from my bed . . .
Ah! How could I sleep? . . . It would be madness,
madness and foolhardy to attempt
going to sleep amid such shrieks.

How, indeed, could I sleep? That lament,
that shout of anguish I perceive,
that expression of bitter distress
does not belong to the world I live in.

VI

Where the erect cypress rises,
in a distant, dark room
that awes the boldest on the earth,
solitary, my gentle mother sleeps.

Her bed is icier than snow,
blacker and deeper than a dark cave,
the haughty breath that stirs its hollows
slakes its wrath with wanton rage.

Ah! Surrounded by gloomy willows,
by rough nettles and hard grass,
what vague, hostile shadows,
Mother, may trouble your rest?

VII

¿Y yo tranquila, he de gozar en tanto
de blando sueño y lecho cariñoso,
mientras herida de mortal espanto
moras en el profundo tenebroso?

¿Llegará a tanto el insensible olvido? . . .
¿La ingratitud del hombre a tanto alcanza,
que entre uno y otro lazo desunido
ceda siempre al vaivén de la mudanza?

¡Odioso y torpe proceder de un hijo
a quien la dulce madre en su agonía,
con besos y caricias le bendijo
olvidando el dolor por que moría!

VIII

Nunca permita Dios que yo te olvide,
mi santa, mi amorosa compañera;
nunca permita Dios que yo te olvide,
aunque por tanto recordarte muera.

Venga hacia mí tu imagen tan amada
y hábleme al alma en su lenguaje mudo,
ya en la serena noche y reposada,
ya en la que es parte del invierno crudo.

Y que en tu aislado apartamiento fiero,
tan ajeno del hombre y su locura,
velen me llanto y mi dolor primero
al lado de tu humilde sepultura.

VII

And must I calmly enjoy
an easy sleep and a loving bed,
while you, struck by death's fright,
dwell in the dark's depth?

Will oblivion reach that far?
Is man's ingratitude so great,
it always yields, as bonds slacken,
to the to-and-fro of change?

A child's base and odious deed,
whom the dear mother, in her throes,
blest with kisses and caresses,
forgetful of the pain she died in!

VIII

God forbid I should forget you,
my saint, my loving companion;
God forbid I should forget you,
though I should die, remembering you!

Let your dear image come to me
and speak to my soul in its mute tongue,
or in a serene and restful night,
or in a harsh night winter brings.

And in your wild, forlorn isolation,
alien to man and his folly,
let my weeping and my sorrow
keep vigil at your humble grave.