

SELECTED POETRY OF
Francisco de Quevedo

EDITED & TRANSLATED BY Christopher Johnson

A BILINGUAL EDITION



SELECTED POETRY OF FRANCISCO DE QUEVEDO

SELECTED POETRY OF
Francisco de Quevedo

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY Christopher Johnson

A BILINGUAL EDITION

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS *Chicago & London*

CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON is associate professor of comparative literature and member of the faculty of the literature concentration at Harvard University. In addition to his contributions to numerous scholarly journals, he is the author of the forthcoming book *Hyperboles: The Rhetoric of Excess in Baroque Literature and Thought* (2010).

The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 60637
The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London
© 2009 by The University of Chicago
All rights reserved. Published 2009
Printed in the United States of America

18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09 1 2 3 4 5

ISBN-13: 978-0-226-69889-2 (cloth)

ISBN-10: 0-226-69889-0 (cloth)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

Quevedo, Francisco de, 1580–1645

[Poems. English & Spanish. Selections]

Selected poetry of Francisco de Quevedo : a bilingual edition / edited and translated by Christopher Johnson.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index

ISBN-13: 978-0-226-69889-2 (hardcover : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-226-69889-0 (hardcover : alk. paper)

I. Johnson, Christopher, 1964– II. Title.

PQ6423.E5 2009

861'.3—dc22

2008036821

⊗ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

Para Madhu

Contents

List of Illustrations xi Acknowledgments xiii Introduction 1

METAPHYSICAL POEMS

- 1 Representase la brevedad de lo que se vive y cuán nada parece lo que se vivió / Describing the brevity of life and how past life seems to be nothing / SONNET 30
- 2 Significase la propia brevedad de la vida, sin pensar, y con padecer, saltada de la muerte / Expressing the essential brevity of life, unexpectedly, miserably assaulted by death / SONNET 32
- 3 El escarmiento / The warning / SILVA 34

POEMS FROM CHRISTIAN HERACLITUS

- 4 “Un nuevo corazón, un hombre nuevo” / “A new heart, Lord, a new man” / SONNET 46
- 5 “Trabajos dulces, dulces penas mías” / “My sweet labors, my sweet pains”
PSALM 48

- 6 Enseña cómo todas las cosas avisan de la muerte / He teaches how everything warns of death / SONNET 50
- 7 Conoce las fuerzas del tiempo y el ser ejecutivo cobrador de la muerte / He acquaints himself with the forces of time and death's debt collector SONNET 52

MORAL POEMS

- 8 Desde La Torre / From La Torre / SONNET 56
- 9 Don Francisco de Quevedo / Don Francisco de Quevedo SONNET 58
- 10 A una mina / To a mine / SILVA 60
- 11 El reloj de arena / The hourglass / SILVA 66
- 12 Juicio moral de los cometas / Moral verdict on comets QUINTILLAS 70

LYRIC POEMS ON DIVERSE SUBJECTS

- 13 Túmulo de la mariposa / The butterfly's tomb / SEXTILLA 74
- 14 A una fuente / To a spring / SILVA 78
- 15 Al pincel / To the paintbrush / SILVA 80

ELEGIES AND EPITAPHS

- 16 A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas / To Rome entombed in its ruins SONNET 94
- 17 Memoria inmortal de Don Pedro Girón, Duque de Osuna, muerto en la prisión / Immortal memory of Don Pedro Girón, Duke of Osuna, dead in prison / SONNET 96
- 18 Inscripción en el túmulo de Don Pedro Girón, Duque de Osuna, Virrey y Capitán General de las dos Sicilias / Inscription on the tomb of Don Pedro Girón, Duke of Osuna, Viceroy and Captain General of the Two Sicilies / SONNET 98
- 19 Túmulo a Colón habla un pedazo de la nave en que descubrió el nuevo mundo / At Christopher Columbus's tomb, a piece of the ship that discovered the New World speaks / SONNET 100

LOVE POEMS

- 20 Compara con el Etna las propiedades de su amor / He compares aspects of his love with Etna / SONNET 104
- 21 Exageraciones de su fuego, de su llanto, de sus suspiros y de sus penas / Exaggerations of his fire, grief, sighs, and pains / SONNET 106
- 22 Describe a Leandro fluctuante en el mar / He describes Leander floating in the sea / SONNET 108
- 23 Encareciendo las adversidades de los Troyanos, exagera más la hermosura de Aminta / Exaggerating the adversities of the Trojans, he exaggerates more Aminta's beauty / SONNET 110
- 24 A una dama bizca y hermosa / To a cross-eyed, beautiful lady
SONNET 112
- 25 Soneto amoroso definiendo el Amor / An amorous sonnet defining Love / SONNET 114
- 26 Himno a las estrellas / Hymn to the stars / SILVA 116
- 27 Un galán preso y desterrado y ausente de su dama, lamentándose de su desdicha / A gallant lover, imprisoned, exiled and absent from his lady, lamenting his misfortune / ROMANCE 122

SONGS TO LISI

- 28 Retrato no vulgar de Lisi / Not an ordinary portrait of Lisi
SONNET 128
- 29 Comunicación de amor invisible por los ojos / Invisible love communicated through the eyes / SONNET 130
- 30 Afectos varios de su corazón fluctuando en las ondas de los cabellos de Lisi / Diverse feelings in his heart, floating on the waves of Lisi's hair
SONNET 132
- 31 Comparación elegante de Hércules con sus penas, y del "Non Plus Ultra" de sus columnas, que desmintió el rey Católico / An elegant comparison of Hercules with his woes and of the "Non Plus Ultra" of his pillars, which the Catholic King discredited / SONNET 134
- 32 Amor constante más allá de la muerte / Love constant beyond death
SONNET 136

- 33 Perservera en la exageración de su afecto amoroso y en el exceso de su padecer / He persists in exaggerating his amorous feelings and the excess of his suffering / SONNET 138

SATIRIC AND BURLESQUE POEMS

- 34 A un hombre de gran nariz / To a man with a big nose / SONNET 142
- 35 Mujer puntiaguda con enaguas / A pointy woman with petticoats
SONNET 144
- 36 Desnuda a la mujer de la mayor parte ajena que la compone / He undresses a woman of the great artifice that comprises her
SONNET 146
- 37 Bebe vino precioso con mosquitos dentro / He drinks fine wine with mosquitoes in it / SONNET 148
- 38 Búrlase del camaleón, moralizando satíricamente su naturaleza / Mocking the chameleon and satirically moralizing its nature / SONNET 150
- 39 Desengaño de las mujeres / Disillusionment with women
SONNET 152
- 40 “La voz del ojo, que llamamos pedo” / “The eye’s voice we call a fart”
SONNET 154
- 41 “Poderoso caballero es don Dinero” / “A mighty knight is Don Dinero”
LETRILLA 156
- 42 Refiere su nacimiento y las propiedades que le comunicó / He refers to his birth and the characteristics it conveyed to him
ROMANCE 162
- 43 Testamento de Don Quijote / Don Quixote’s Last Will and Testament
ROMANCE 172
- 44 “Ya sueltan, Juanilla, presos” / “Now, Juanilla, captives”
ROMANCE 182
- 45 Contra D. Luis de Góngora y su poesía / Against Góngora and his poetry / SONNET 186
- 46 Contra Góngora / Against Góngora / SONNET 188

Notes 191 Selected Bibliography 219

Index of Titles and First Lines 223

Illustrations

- Johannes Van Noordt, *Francisco de Quevedo* 28
Peter Paul Rubens, *Heraclitus, Greek Philosopher* 44
Theodore de Bry, *The Gold Mines at Potosi, in Bolivia* 54
Diego de Velázquez, *Francisco de Quevedo* 72
El Greco, *Portrait of Jorge Manuel, or “The Painter”* 92
Theodore de Bry, *Christopher Columbus Crossing the Ocean on His Caravelle* 102
Anon., engraving from Francisco de Quevedo, *El Parnasso español y musas castellanas* 126
José de Ribera, *Old Usurer* 140

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Ken Krabbenhoft, whose knowledge and encouragement, to say nothing of his invaluable comments on my early attempts to give Quevedo an English voice, were instrumental in propelling these translations forward. Similarly, I owe Richard Sieburth a world of thanks for his keen eye and ear, and his timely, Poundian reminders that “less is more.” Whether in La Plaza de Santa Ana or Boylston Hall, Mary Gaylord has provided enormous inspiration, while Luis Girón-Negrón, Jonathan Skinner, Carlos Martinez, and Juan Silva helped me find a way through more than a few of the thornier thickets of Quevedo’s verse. The comments and suggestions by the anonymous readers at the University of Chicago Press were also immensely helpful. Whatever treasons, infelicities, or errors remaining in these translations are mine alone.

Introduction

“Like Joyce, like Goethe, like Shakespeare, like Dante—like no other writer—Francisco de Quevedo is less a man than a vast and complex literature.”¹ As Jorge Luis Borges suggests here, it is difficult to exaggerate Francisco Gómez de Quevedo y Villegas’s place in Spanish literature. If Quevedo does not yet belong to world literature, muses Borges, this is because history has found no symbol in his works memorable enough to “capture the popular imagination.” At the end of this introduction I will urge that this need not be the case, though for the moment I would note that Quevedo (1580–1645), who wrote various commentaries and dedicatory epistles, was keenly aware of how fickle literary tastes could be. Like Borges, Quevedo believed that only the poet who confronted his own belatedness and debts to the past could hope to survive the vagaries of taste.

1. Jorge Luis Borges, “Quevedo,” in *Other Inquisitions, 1937–1952*, trans. Ruth L. C. Simms (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), 36–42; “Quevedo,” in *Quevedo*, ed. Gonzalo Sobejano (Madrid: Taurus Ediciones, 1978), 23–28.

Borges replaces the man with his words, but more recent critics have attended to the historical and cultural contexts that helped shape the man and his poetry. They remind us just how indebted Quevedo's nimble, often phantasmatic poetic personae are to real events, material circumstances, and social changes. Nearsighted, lame in one leg, valiant when circumstances called for it (early biographers tell a story of a duel won after a cad slapped a lady), and with a heart, as one of his poems puts it, that "is the kingdom of fear," Quevedo is truly a creature of the Spanish baroque, its court, culture, and the spirit of disillusionment (*desengaño*) informing it. He participates in most of the turbulent cultural, political, philosophic, and literary currents that characterize *Siglo de Oro* Spain at the beginning of its decline. More to the point, he vividly represents these currents in his poetry as it shifts between the colloquial and the erudite, the obscene and the sacred. Legend—and often his own writing—casts him as a dandy, a ruthless courtier, a dedicated reformer, a Neo-Platonic lover, a misogynist, a Neo-Stoic philosopher, a Catholic theologian, a merciless satirist, an ardent patriot, a spy for the French, an anti-Semite, and an imprisoned martyr. And while Pablo Jauralde Pou's recent, definitive biography has proven invaluable in helping *quevedistas* juggle these many roles, it also underscores the fact that the contradictions riddling Quevedo's life and work continue, necessarily, to be the starting points of any approach to the poet.

Life and Contexts

Quevedo was born in 1580 to parents from the landed gentry who were in the service of the king and queen. He studied various subjects at the University of Alcalá de Henares and then the University of Valladolid, though he left school in 1602, before gaining a degree, to attend the court in Madrid. Here he encountered a society in crisis and a culture obsessed by its own ills. As the historian José Antonio Maravall describes baroque Spain:

it is possible to attribute determining characteristics of the epoch—in this case, its baroque character—to theology, to painting, the warring arts, physics, economy, politics, and so on. It is in this way that the crisis economy, monetary upheavals, credit, economic wars, and (along with this) the strengthening of seigniorial agrarian landholdings and the growing impoverishment of the masses foster a feeling of being threatened and of instability in one's personal and social life, a feeling that is held in control by the imposing forces of repression that underlie the dramatic gesticulation of the baroque human being and permit us the use of the name.²

In the course of his career, Quevedo dedicated a great deal of verse to marking the crises of this society, even as he transformed them into inimitable art. His late, satiric ballad, “The Easy Life,” begins: “My mother delayed / in giving birth to me, / so I arrive when the world / is already quite worn and old.”³ But with just as much fervor, he could present himself as an ardent if blinkered apologist for his country: “For we ought to awake and enjoy a portion of the *otium* that we earn by showing what Spain is, and what it has always been, and at the same time that Spain, governed by our King Philip III, never has been so glorious in letters and arms as today.”⁴

Unlike Garcilaso and Cervantes who fought in Spain's wars, Quevedo was a man solely of *letras*. With this said, the world of letters he traversed was enormously varied. As Borges puts it: “To disperse Quevedo into irreconcilable figurations of novelist, poet, theologian, Stoic sufferer, and casual pasquinader is a vain undertaking if we do not firmly unite

2. José Antonio Maravall, *Culture of the Baroque: Analysis of a Historical Structure*, trans. Terry Cochran (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 6.

3. “Tardóse en parirme / mi madre, pues vengo / cuando ya está el mundo / muy casado y viejo.” From “La vida poltrona” [#773], in Francisco de Quevedo, *Poesía original completa*, ed. José Manuel Blecua (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1996), lines 1–4.

4. “Ia, pues es razón que despertemos i logremos parte del ozio que alcansamos en mostrar lo que es España, i lo que a sido siempre i juntamente que nunca tan glorioso triumpho de letras i armas como oi, gobernada por don Philipe III nuestro señor.” From *España defendida*, quoted in *Quevedo in Perspective*, ed. James Iffland (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 1982), 253.

all these glimpses. To my mind Quevedo was innumerable like a tree, but no less homogeneous.”⁵ Thus the great variety of Quevedo’s writing—which includes a picaresque novel, a mock epic poem, numerous political tracts, philosophical and religious treatises, passionate love poetry, and satiric *romances*—suggests that his courtly existence was a kind of cover or useful “appearance” beneath which the real, unitary Quevedo thrived. And yet much of his writing argues that *aparencia* is the essence of human existence.

Quevedo’s mastery of different genres corresponds to his mutable career as a thinker and courtier. His poem, “Mocking the chameleon and satirically moralizing its nature” (poem 38), emblemizes how humanity’s protean nature fails to foster in him the kind of metaphysical optimism that the great Florentine philosopher Pico della Mirandola celebrates in his famous “Oration of the Dignity of Man” where, describing the brightest of Renaissance ideals, he asks: “Who would not admire this our chameleon?” For Quevedo chameleon man was tainted by sin, “inflated” by his own ambitions, and compromised by political and economic exigencies. Thus while his writerly ambitions were unbounded, and though a great deal of his poetry circulated in manuscript, such that some of his ballads and satires became quite popular in seventeenth-century Spain, like many Renaissance poets, Quevedo did not publish the vast majority of his poetry during his lifetime. Indeed, it was as a prose writer that he, beginning with the picaresque novel *El Buscón* [The Sharper] (1603), the satiric, dream vision *El sueño del Juicio Final* [The Dream of the Last Judgment] (1605), and the encyclopedic, political treatise *España defendida* [Spain Defended] (1609), won the greatest fame (and infamy). As a young man, he corresponded with the most eminent Neo-Stoic philosopher in the late Renaissance, Justus Lipsius, whose translations of

5. “Desbandar a Quevedo en irreconciliables figuraciones de novelista, de poeta, de teólogo, de sufridor estoico y de eventual pasquinador, es empeño baldío si no adunamos luego con firmeza todas esas vislumbres. Quevedo a mi entender, fue innumerable como un árbol, pero no menos homogéneo.” Jorge Luis Borges, “Menoscabo y grandeza de Quevedo,” in *Inquisiciones* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Proa, 1925), 40.

Seneca and influential treatise *On Constancy* urged adherence to the ideals of tranquility and perseverance in the face of ever-changing, hostile world. Thus inspired, Quevedo became the eloquent, ardent champion of marrying Neo-Stoicism and Counter-Reformation Christianity in early seventeenth-century Spain. Nonetheless, the gap between theory and practice that he experienced in his own life was often dramatic. Discussing the Stoic principle of *apatheia*, or the letting go of harmful feelings, Quevedo confesses: “I do not have Stoic self-sufficiency, but I have love for the Stoics. Their doctrine has aided me as a guide in my doubts, as consolation in my labors, as defense in persecutions, which have occupied so much of my life. I have made their doctrine my continuous study: I do not know if it has found in me a good student.”⁶

As for his poetry, he contributed some twenty poems of various genres, including “A mighty knight is Don Dinero” (poem 41), to the important anthology *Primera parte de Flores de poetas ilustres de España* (1605)—the same year the first part of *Don Quixote* appeared. The solemn, pathos-laden sequence of poems titled *Heráclito cristiano* followed in 1613. There, in the dedicatory letter to his aunt, Quevedo tells how this collection of psalms marks a turning point in his life: “You who have heard what I have sung and what desire, passion or nature has dictated to me, listen now, with a purer ear, to what true feeling and repentance of all the many things I have done make me say. For I grieve because knowledge and conscience thus dictate to me, and I sang those other things because thus my youth persuaded me.”⁷ The first poem in the sequence, “Un nuevo corazón, un hombre nuevo” (poem 4), begins:

6. “Yo no tengo suficiencia de estoico, mas tengo afición a los estoicos. Ha me asistido su doctrina por guía en las dudas, por consuelo en las trabajos, por defensa en las persecuciones, que tanta parte han poseído de mi vida. Yo he tenido su doctrina por estudio continuo; no sé si ella ha tenido en mí buen estudiante.” Quoted in Pablo Jauralde Pou, *Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645)* (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1999), 287–88.

7. “Tú que me has oído lo que he cantado y lo que me dictó el apetito, la pasión o la naturaleza, oye ahora, con oído más puro, lo que me hace decir el sentimiento verdadero y arrepentimiento de todo lo demás que he hecho: que esto lloro porque así me lo dicta el conocimiento y la consciencia, y esas otras cosas canté porque me lo persuadió así la edad.” Quoted in Jauralde Pou, *Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645)*, 294.

Un nuevo corazón, un hombre nuevo
ha menester, Señor, el Alma mía:
desnúdame de mí, que ser podría
que a tu piedad pagase lo que debo.

*A new heart, Lord, a new man
my soul requires: undress me
of myself, that I might be
what I owe your piety.*

How such “piety” can also be inflected with terrible doubt is felt in another sonnet’s (poem 7) concluding tercet:

Cualquier instante de la vida humana
es nueva ejecución, con que me advierte
cuán frágil es, cuán mísera, cuán vana.

*Each moment liquidates this life
anew, warning me how vain, how
fragile, how impoverished, it is.*

Meanwhile, Quevedo’s life as a courtier was a jumble of compromises made with power, compromises that also enabled his fitful efforts as a political and, occasionally, religious reformer. In other words, for all the bitter lessons to be gathered from his writings (“with such widespread mutability / even jesters endure / the risk of falling”), Quevedo undertook, whether as a subtle panegyrist or as a fierce propagandist, all the flattery his position and the fame of his pen demanded.⁸

A period abroad marked the zenith of Quevedo’s political fortunes. He served as the Duke of Osuna’s secretary, aide, and sometime ambassador while Osuna was viceroy in Sicily from 1613 to 1615, and later in

8. “en la común mudanza / hasta a bufones alcanza / el riesgo de la caída.” From *Cómo ha de ser privado* (1.306–08).

Naples from 1616 to 1618. However, the Duke fell into disfavor in 1619, and Quevedo fell with him, notwithstanding that relations had already begun to chill between the two men. Ever ambivalent, Quevedo initially kept his distance from the disgraced Osuna, but later marked the duke's death by dedicating several sonnets to him, including "Immortal memory of Don Pedro Girón, Duke of Osuna, dead in prison" (poem 17) and "Inscription on the tomb of Don Pedro Girón, Duke of Osuna, Viceroy and Captain General of the Two Sicilies" (poem 18). In this respect, one might compare his various, often conflicted representations of the powerful and life at court with that of Velázquez, who was starting to make his name in Madrid in the same period by painting heroic portraits of the king and also sympathetic ones of jesters and beggars. Indeed, the perspectival ambiguities of Velázquez's "Las Meninas" may be said to emblemize Quevedo's shifting stances as a courtier, critic, and panegyrist.⁹

Returning to Madrid, Quevedo wrote the *Política de Dios*, a witty, reactionary attack on the culture of corruption at court and a learned plea for the new king, Philip IV, to seize decisively the reigns of power. Lacking a patron, he assiduously worked to hitch his star to the Conde Duque de Olivares, who had become Philip IV's *privado*, or chief minister. "Each man," the historian J. H. Elliott observes, "in his own way, helped to make, and unmake the other." And while a "combination of opportunism and idealism" motivates Quevedo, his dependence on the whims of Olivares illustrates "the dilemma of the intellectual in the world of politics."¹⁰ For instance, he strategically dedicates to Olivares the *Política* (which Borges dismisses as "a long and intricate sophism"), even as he vividly represents the precarious state of the Spanish monarchy:

A king who sleeps and lets himself sleep carelessly around those who attend him is a dream, for death does not want him as a brother, and denies its parentage. He has a debt with perdition and Hell. To reign is to stand

9. See Michel Foucault's famous discussion of this painting in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

10. J. H. Elliott, "Quevedo and the Count-Duke of Olivares," in Iffland, ed., *Quevedo in Perspective*, 227–50.

watch; who sleeps does not reign. A king who closes his eyes gives the guard of his sheep to wolves, and the minister who guards sleep loses his conscience and honor. And these two things hastily bring penance in the form of the desolation and ruin of kingdoms.¹¹

Against the backdrop of such warnings and despite the threat posed by the emergence of Cardinal Richelieu in France, by 1625 Olivares's reform program was thriving. In this atmosphere Quevedo composed two of his most famous longer poems. The "Sermón estoico de censura moral" refines his outrage at the greed and folly of the voyages of navigation with a bevy of classical allusions and some of his most intricate prosody. It has also been read as an erudite challenge to the perceived frivolity of Luis de Góngora's famous long poems published in 1612, the *Soledades* and *Fábula de Polifemo y Galatea*. Alternately, the "Epístola satírica y censoria contra las costumbres presentes de los castellanos" is a vivid, highly topical poem urging the new government to curb vice and take measures to help renovate the Spanish spirit. Its opening tercets show Quevedo's moral persona at its boldest:

No he de callar, por más que con el dedo,
ya tocando la boca o ya la frente,
silencio avises o amenaces miedo.

¿No ha de haber un espíritu valiente?;
¿Siempre se ha de sentir lo que se dice?;
¿nunca se ha de decir lo que se siente?

Hoy, sin miedo que, libre, escandalice,
puede hablar el ingenio, asegurado
de que mayor poder le atemorice.

11. "Rey que duerme y se echa a dormir descuidado con los que le asisten es sueño, que la muerte no le quiere por hermano, y la niega el parentesco; deudo tiene con la perdición y el infierno. Reinar es velar, quien duerme no reina; rey que cierra los ojos da la guarda de sus ovejas a los lobos, y el ministro que guarda el sueño y piérdele la conciencia y la honra; y estas dos cosas traen apresurada su penitencia en la ruina y desolación de los reinos." Quoted in Jauralde Pou, *Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645)*, 408.

En otros siglos pudo ser pecado
severo estudio y la verdad desnuda,
y romper el silencio el bien hablado.

*I must not stay silent, no matter that,
with a finger touching the lips or brow,
you advise silence or make terrible threats.*

*Is there no need for a valiant spirit?
Must always be felt what is said?
Must never be said what is felt?*

*Assured that a greater power will
terrorize it, nowadays there's no fear,
and wit can freely, loosely, talk.*

*In other centuries exacting study,
naked truth, and eloquence that
refuses to stay silent, could be a sin.*

Protected by the new government, Quevedo oversaw the publication of several of his most renowned prose satires during this period. Because of the success and content of these publications, however, he increasingly had to parry critics and mollify censors—the latter often tried and sometimes succeeded in putting his works on the Index of Prohibited Books. This did not stop him though from involving himself in subsequent years in various religious and political controversies, particularly the one concerning whether Teresa of Avila should be co-patron saint of Spain. Ardently defending the sole claim of St. James (Teresa was canonized in 1622), he composed the acerbic *Memorial por el Patronato de Santiago*, which opposes Teresa because she was only recently deceased, that is, on grounds of tradition, and seemingly because she was a woman. Since Olivares, or at least his mother, was devoted to Teresa, this learned bit of untimely agitprop earned Quevedo a brief exile to his small estate at La Torre de Juan Abad in La Mancha.

However, with the devaluation of the currency in 1628, the government again needed Quevedo's pen. Once again in good graces, he

wrote the lively, occasional poem “Fiesta de toros literal y alegórica” and he revised and had performed his comedy *Cómo ha de ser privado*, a witty mirror of his own experience at court and recent historical events. In 1631 he published an edition of Fray Luis de León’s poetry in which he also sets down some of his most valuable reflections on poetry:

[León’s] diction is grand, proper, and beautiful, with such chaste facility that it does not lose authority by being base nor become peregrine by seeking the abstruse. All his style, with studied majesty, is decorous with the magnificence of his thoughts, which are discovered neither outside the body of the speech nor obscurely hidden; better yet, nor are they lost in the affected confusion of figures and the inundation of foreign words. A clear way of speaking makes manageable the abstractions of ideas, and gives light to the hidden and blind aspects of concepts.¹²

In this way, León is made into a model for Quevedo’s own literary tastes as well as another authority with which to cudgel Góngora and *gongoristas*.

Disillusioned with the pace of reform, even as he polemicized against France and the Jews, Quevedo by 1632 was distancing himself from Olivares and instead burying himself in his Neo-Stoic writings. In 1634 he married a widow, doña Esperanza de Mendoza. The marriage did not last long, though; Quevedo soon returned to Madrid alone and doña Esperanza died several months afterward. While the manuscript evidence shows that he was working on amorous verse in this period, just before his marriage he also wrote an intriguing letter to the Countess of Olivares

12. “La dicción es grande, propia y hermosa, con facilidad de tal casta, que ni se desautoriza con lo vulgar ni se hace perigrina con lo improprio. Todo su estilo, con majestad estudiada, es decente a lo magnífico de la sentencia, que ni ambiciosa se descubre fuera del cuerpo de la oración ni tenebrosa se esconde, mejor diré que se pierde en la confusión afectada de figuras y en la inundación de palabras forasteras. La locución esclarecida hace tratables los retiramientos de las ideas, y da luz a lo escondido y ciego de los conceptos.” Quoted in Jauralde Pou, *Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645)*, 588.

about the kind of woman he would like to marry.¹³ For all its playfulness, the letter paints a stark self-portrait of the poet and his prejudices:

I would desire, firstly that she be noble, virtuous, and intelligent, for if ignorant she will not know how to converse nor use the first two attributes. I would like parity in terms of rank. As for virtue, let her have been a married woman and not from a convent, neither saintly nor religious; her hymns must be about her obligation to her husband. And if she should happen to be intelligent, with professorial vices, I would prefer her more ignorant, for it is easier to suffer that which one does not know than endure that which one presumes.

I want her to be neither ugly nor beautiful: these extremes reconcile into a pleasant appearance, a mean that makes prettiness desirable and surely shows charm. Ugly is not company but fright. Beautiful is not a gift but worry. But if it must be one of these two, I prefer beautiful, not ugly. Because it is better to have worry than fear, and to have to keep watch than to have someone to flee from . . .

I do not want her to be a child nor an old woman, which are the cradle and the coffin, since I have already forgotten lullabies and I have still not learned prayers for the dead. Give me a mature woman. And I will be quite content if she is a serving woman . . .

I would give thanks to God if she were deaf and a stutterer, qualities that perturb conversations and make visits difficult . . .¹⁴

13. Jauralde Pou, *Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645)*, 632.

14. “Desearé, primeramente que sea noble, y virtuosa y entendida, porque necia no sabrá conversar ni usar estas dos cosas. En la nobleza quiero la igualdad. La virtud, que sea de mujer casada y no de ermitaño, ni de beata ni religiosa: su coro y su oratorio ha de ser su obligación y su marido. Y si hubiere de ser entendida, con resabios de catedrático, más la quiero necia, que es más fácil sufrir lo que uno no sabe que padecer lo que presume.

“No la quiero fea ni hermosa: estos extremos ponen en paz un semblante agradable, medio que hace bienquisto lo lindo y muestra seguro lo donairoso. Fea, no es compañía sino susto. Hermosa, no es regalo sino cuidado. Mas si hubiere de ser una de las dos cosas, la quiere hermosa, no fea; porque es mejor tener cuidado que miedo, y tener que guardar que de quien huir.

“No la quiero niña ni vieja, que son cuna y ataúd, porque ya se me han olvidado los

On the heels of his wedding, Quevedo composed *La cuna y la sepultura* (1634), a Neo-Stoic treatise written in the curt Senecan style, but whose dark, almost nihilistic perspective recalls the themes explored in *Heráclito cristiano*. And though soon thereafter he writes the more optimistic *De los remedios de cualquier Fortuna*, in an epistle written about the same time, his demons seem to get the better of him:

today I tally fifty-two years, and in these years I tally so many other burials of mine. My infancy died irrevocably; my childhood died, my adolescence died, my youth died, and also my time as a man. For how can I call life an old age that is a sepulchre, when I myself am the burial of the five deceased persons that I have lived. Why, then, should I live as a sepulchre of my own death and not desire to put an end to being the burial of my own life? Strength has deserted me—my feet confess it, so too trembling hands. The color of my hair has fled and my beard has dressed itself in ashes; the eyes, unable to receive light, see night. Ransacked by the years my mouth cannot dispose of food nor govern the voice. Veins, to warm themselves, need a fever. Wrinkles have disfigured my features and my skin looks deformed with the image of the skull that shines through it. No thing gives me more horror than the mirror in which I look; the more faithfully it represents me, the more fiercely I am frightened. How, then, shall I love what I fear? How shall I desire what I flee? How shall I abhor death, which liberates me from what I abhor and makes me abhorrent?¹⁵

arrullos y aún no he aprendido los responsos. Bástame mujer hecha. Y estaré muy contenta que sea moza.

“Daría muchas gracias a Dios si fuese sorda y tartamuda, partes que amohinan las conversaciones y dificultan las visitas.” Quoted in Jauralde Pou, *Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645)*, 636–37.

15. “hoy cuento yo cincuenta y dos años, y en ellos cuento otros tantos entierros míos. Mi infancia murió irrevocablemente; murió mi niñez, murió mi juventud, murió mi mocedad; ya también falleció mi edad varonil. Pues, ¿cómo llamo vida una vejez que es sepulcro, donde yo propio soy entierro de cinco difuntos que he vivido? ¿Por qué, pues, desearé vivir sepultura de mi propia muerte y no desearé acabar de ser entierro de mi misma vida? Hanme desamparado las fuerzas, confíésanlo los pies, temblando las manos; huyóse el color de cabello y vistióse de ceniza la barba; los ojos, inhábiles para recibir la luz, miran noche; saqueada de los años la boca, ni puede disponer los alimentos ni gobernar la voz; las venas para calentarse, necesitan de la fiebre; las rugas

Jauralde Pou suggests that Quevedo in this last decade of his life was trying to fashion a new, more solemn identity for himself—an image repeatedly undercut by the appearances of pirated editions of his satirical works.¹⁶ The delightfully festive treatise, *La hora de todos y la Fortuna con seso*, was thus left unpublished, while he defended in print the ritual of the *auto de fe* and offered to the world the anti-Semitic, ideologically driven treatise *Execración por la fe*, which for good measure also manages to criticize Olivares. As for his verse, he polished the “Poema heroico de las necedades y locuras de Orlando,” which, while never completed, at 214 octaves is his longest poem. A parody of Ariosto’s immensely popular epic, it is also a response of sorts to Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*, which Quevedo parodies still more directly in “Don Quixote’s Last Will and Testament” (poem 43).

In the decade’s last years Quevedo resided mostly in La Torre. There he wrote a draft of *Marco Bruto*, a treatise covering a smorgasbord of topics, but based loosely on Plutarch’s account—a dangerous narrative in any case given his precarious political position and the war with France. Still, it was without warning or obvious cause that Quevedo was arrested on a December night in 1639. Imprisoned in León for more than three and a half years, the poet was initially treated like a common criminal. Recounting how he was even forced to cauterize his running sores, he describes himself as suffering “like a beast” and “without human commerce” for the first two years. He survived only through the interventions of friends, like the Duke of Medinaceli, who provided him with material assistance, as well as books, pen, and paper. Hence Quevedo wrote various ballads while in prison, including the extremely moving “Llorando está Manzanares.” For his own spiritual comfort he composed *Providencia de Dios*, arguably his most rigorous theological treatise. Im-

han desamoldado las facciones; y el pellejo se ve disforme con el dibujo de la calavera, que por él se trasluce. Ninguna cosa me da más horror que el espejo en que me miro; cuanto fielmente me representa, más fieramente me espanta. ¿Cómo, pues, amaré lo que temo? ¿Cómo desearé lo que huyo? ¿Cómo aborreceré la muerte, que me libra de lo que aborrezco y me hace aborrecible?” Quoted in Jauralde Pou, *Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645)*, 701.

16. Jauralde Pou, *Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645)*, 682, 720–26.

bued with the same Christian, Stoic tranquility is a letter written from prison in imitation of Seneca's letters to Lucilius:

Feel afflicted, my solitude, in this long exile. Though it is true that here we are alone, the prisoner and the jail, nonetheless, if you count me alive, in me I have company and never have I seen myself more accompanied than now that I am without another. I arrange for myself the hours of the day and I allow my understanding to converse with divine providence; my will, with sovereign justice; memory, with moral lessons. Books reason with me—their words I hear with the eyes. This assistance is learned, not barren. Never but now was I all myself and for myself. Prison is better and dearer rescue for me than it is an incarceration, in so far as time is worth more than entertainment. They shut me up in a stable; but, despite the turn of the key, I am free. They detain in me a body, which old age halts before the guards can.¹⁷

No evidence was ever given against him. Nothing incriminating was found in his papers. Nor was he made to confess. The government later declared only that he was imprisoned “for a serious reason.” Historians agree that someone close to Olivares or the King probably denounced him. The charges that were eventually drawn up stated that he wrote systematically against the government and that “he maintained obscure relations with the French.” Yet the accusation of spying has never been substantiated, nor has Quevedo's authorship of the so-called *Memorial*

17. “Affígete en este destierro largo, mi soledad. Es verdad que aquí estamos solos el preso y la cárcel; mas, si me cuentas por vivo, en mí tengo compañía y nunca me vi más acompañado que ahora que estoy sin otro. Doyme todas las horas y tengo conversación con la divina providencia, el entendimiento; con la soberana justicia, la voluntad; con los escarmientos, la memoria; razonan conmigo los libros, cuyas palabras oigo con los ojos. Esta asistencia es de academia, no de yermo; nunca sino ahora fui todo mío y para mí. Mayor y más preciosa rescata en mí la prisión que encarcela, cuanto vale más el tiempo que el divertimento. Tiénneme cerrado en una cuadra; mas, a pesar de las vueltas de la llave, estoy libre; detiéndeme un cuerpo, a quien paró antes la vejez que las guardas.” Quoted in Jauralde Pou, *Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645)*, 793. However, James O. Crosby challenges the authenticity of this letter. See *Nuevas cartas de la última prisión de Quevedo* (Madrid: Tamesis, 2005), 58–61.

("Católica, sacra y real Majestad"), a poem inserted into the King's napkin that warned of Olivares's perfidy and corruption. In any case, Olivares fell from power in January of 1643, and Quevedo was released from jail (though strangely he had to wait until June for his liberty).

In his last years, despite ill health the poet avidly pursued his old interests. Well received by the new court in Madrid, he finished his last great work, *La caída para levantarse de San Pablo*, in whose life Quevedo saw numerous parallels with his own. Returning to La Torre in 1644, he suffered greatly from the cold and solitude of the winter; his bitter state of mind finds memorable lyric expression in "The warning" (poem 3). Meanwhile, with the aid of a younger friend, José Gonzáles de Salas, he began to prepare his complete *Obras en verso*. His last letters are filled with health complaints, bad news about the wars, but also, tellingly, court gossip. And though his health improved somewhat that spring, he decided to make his will, in which he requested to be buried in Madrid, in the church of Santo Domingo de Real. Quevedo died on September 8, 1645 in the convent of Villanueva (near La Torre). But exactly where his remains now lie is unknown.

Tensions of Wit, Ideology, and Style

The first thing a reader of these translations may notice is Quevedo's penchant for straddling the high and low. Equally comfortable with the role of preacher or comedian, he sometimes assumes the mantle of an Old Testament prophet in the manner of Jeremiah, other times he revels in bawdy jokes and the language of beggars and prostitutes. It will also quickly become evident that to savor Quevedo's wit, laughter, passions, and formal excellence is occasionally to have to hold one's nose in the face of some rather noisome beliefs. More slippery still is the conceptual tension between Quevedo's constant critique of artifice and pretension, and his own sophisticated, mannerist means of making this critique. Like Lipsius, Quevedo tried to Christianize Stoicism, yet his verse only fitfully reflects the tranquility that such a marriage promised. And whether one

agrees or not with the great critic, Dámaso Alonso, that in Quevedo's poetry "an anguish like our own is found," his fascination with the many specters of death, with physical, political, and spiritual decline, indicates the kind of melancholy that Renaissance thinkers like Marsilio Ficino and painters like Albrecht Dürer associated with artistic genius.¹⁸

And like most baroque melancholics, whether or not their melancholy was real or feigned, Quevedo embraces the role of the ardent lover: "I do not know what I am saying, although I feel what I want to say, for I never trumpeted love with my tongue without the interior of my soul being burdened."¹⁹ Of course the Petrarchan tradition demanded the fictive stance of the inflamed, injured lover and the supremely beautiful, utterly disdainful beloved. But by the advent of the seventeenth century in Spain, Italy, and, to a lesser extent, England, an undercurrent of irony was also expected. Quevedo's Petrarchism can be extremely ambivalent; indeed, as George Mariscal has shown, it can be profitably regarded as the foil for his contradictory sense of self. Indebted to the Neo-Platonic tradition and Silver Latin elegiac poetry as well, it is extremely learned and for the most part abstracted from any living, breathing beloved. In this sense, the sequence *Canta sola a Lisi* functions, to borrow from Roland Greene's study of Petrarchan sonnet sequences, as a complex "fiction."²⁰ We know precious little about Quevedo's actual amorous affairs, but his love poetry to Lisi, with its hyperbolic extremes and penchant for paradox, leaves little doubt about the earnestness with which he saw the decay of the body and the promise of eternity. Yet in the same breath, sonnets such as "Love constant beyond death" (poem 32) and "He describes Leander floating in the sea" (poem 22) also trumpet the triumph of art over nature. Alternately, Quevedo's chameleon nature, or at least that of his poetic persona, clamors for attention when one compares his

18. Dámaso Alonso, "La angustia de Quevedo," in Sobejano, ed., *Quevedo*, 17–22.

19. "No sé lo que digo, aunque siento lo que quiero decir; porque jamás blasoné del amor con la lengua que no tuviese muy lastimado lo interior del ánimo." Cited in José Manuel Blecua, Introducción to Quevedo, *Poesía original completa*, ed. Blecua, xviii.

20. See Roland Greene, *Post-Petrarchism: Origins and Innovations of the Western Lyric Sequence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

attitude to love and women in the *Lisi* poems with satiric sonnets such as “He undresses a woman of the great artifice which comprises her” (poem 36). The former poems are founded on a Neo-Platonic vision inflected with Stoic colors, but the latter almost neurotically obsess over deceit, vanity, cuckoldry, syphilis, sexual frustration, and December and May romances.

Quevedo’s poetry is extremely rich in mythological and topical allusions. Classical divinities crowd many poems, while contemporary events, habits, mores, and forms of speech fill others. And if these tendencies seem contrary, it is worth noting that Quevedo, like most late Renaissance poets, treats the classical legacy as part of his immediate cultural milieu, while, conversely, contemporary life in Imperial Spain has for him and his fellow writers an outsized significance that transcends the historical moment. Unlike Góngora, Quevedo proves largely uninterested in nature or the pastoral life *per se*; instead, like his Imperial Roman predecessors and anticipating later poets like Baudelaire, he fancies himself a city poet. As Gonzalo Sobejano, following Schiller, puts it, Quevedo’s approach is sentimental rather than naive.²¹ But sentimentality includes irony, and there was no sharper, more mordant pen in the baroque than Quevedo’s. As readers of his *Sueños* will attest, his favorite target is hypocrisy in all its forms, as practiced by the mighty and the powerless alike. Skewering hypocrisy, moreover, speaks to the baroque obsession with the notion that the gap between appearance and reality is unbridgeable.

With his ruthless scrutiny of corruption and pretension in the face of individual and imperial decline, Quevedo is the preeminent practitioner of the eminently baroque art of disillusionment. If Don Quixote needs an entire novel to travel from the illusions and deceits (*engaños*) of knight errantry to his deathbed realizations (*desengaños*), then Quevedo often experiences the same process in the course of a sonnet’s fourteen lines, as in “He acquaints himself with the forces of time and death’s debt collector” (poem 7). Or in a less personal, more political vein, a similar journey occurs in the larger lyric spaces of “To a mine” (poem 10) and “The

21. Gonzalo Sobejano, Prológo to Sobejano, ed., *Quevedo*, 9–14.

hourglass” (poem 11). Charles the Fifth appropriated the motto *Non Plus Ultra* (no further), which was associated with Hercules and warned sailors not to venture beyond the Straits of Gibraltar, to make it read *Plus Ultra* in the light of Spain’s New World conquests. But Quevedo inverts this rhetoric in poems such as “At Christopher Columbus’s tomb, a piece of wood speaks from the ship that discovered the New World” (poem 19) and “He compares aspects of his love with Etna” (poem 20) to chart the limits of human subjectivity. Likewise, many of his moral and satiric poems lament the disappearance of old customs and mores, the emergence of new fashions in dress, the advent of a capitalist economy, the folly of bullfighting, and so on. And yet, as James Iffland and Ignacio Arellano Ayuso have observed, he often erases, wittingly or not, the lines between ethically motivated satire and the purely grotesque. Of the latter, Iffland comments: “what ultimately seems to be the motivating factor behind the [grotesque] portrait is a desire to wound, to ridicule, while at the same time offering a display of wit and ability to create a graphic portrait.”²² It is no accident that Quevedo has often been compared to Hieronymus Bosch, whose paintings he knew well. Alternately, the Quevedian grotesque can be an unvarnished celebration of what Mikhail Bakhtin calls the “material body principle,” that is “a triumphant, festive principle . . . a ‘banquet for all the world.’”²³

The dialectic of *engaño* and *desengaño*, for all its moral and philosophical pretensions, remains a form of aesthetic play closely related to the baroque penchant for juxtaposing, then collapsing, extremes. No wonder Borges claims that Quevedo’s greatest achievement is not thematic but stylistic: “An enhanced verbal palate, wisely governed by an austere distrust of language’s efficacy, constitutes the essence of Quevedo. No one has traveled through the empire of the Spanish language like him, stopping with equal decorum at its hovels and castles. All the words of Spanish are his and he, contemplating them, has known how to hear

22. James Iffland, *Quevedo and the Grotesque* (London: Tamesis Books, 1978), 77–78.

23. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968), 19.

them and to recreate them for all time.”²⁴ Integral to this “essence” is a mastery of various styles, linguistic registers, and an ability to use the poetic conceit (*concepto*) such that, in the words of Samuel Johnson writing on the English metaphysical poets, “the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together.”²⁵ More generously, Quevedo’s contemporary, Baltasar Gracián, defines the conceit as “an act of the understanding that expresses the correspondences found between objects.”²⁶ And because these objects, ideas, or events are most fertile when they are most dissimilar, such an act is able to discover unnoticed relations and meanings, even while producing novel beauties. In this sense it is comparable to a flash of lightning, or what Walter Benjamin reading Baudelaire calls a “shock.” Regarding Quevedo’s skill with the conceit, his friend and first editor González de Salas is unequivocal: “The wealth of thought and enriching conceits in his poetry is achieved so easily that, to my mind, there exists no other author, neither ancient nor modern, that competes with it. Great is the variety of arguments and subjects that exercises his pen; and whoever does not recognize in them this rare and superior fecundity, must have an extremely confused brain for judging.”²⁷ In short, Quevedo’s poetic conceits, hallmarks of the style that came to be called *conceptismo*, are invitations to think and make judgments, to adopt new perspectives on a world that one previously thought one had understood.

24. “Una realzada gustación verbal, sabiamente regida por una austera desconfianza sobre la eficacia del idioma, constituye la esencia de Quevedo. Nadie como él ha recorrido el imperio de la lengua española y con igual decoro ha parado en sus chozas y en sus alcázares. Todas las voces del castellano son suyas y él, en mirándolas, ha sabido sentir las y recrearlas ya para siempre.” Borges, “Menoscabo y grandeza de Quevedo,” 43.

25. Samuel Johnson, “Life of Cowley,” in *Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Frank Brady and W. K. Wimsatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 348.

26. Baltasar Gracián, *Agudeza y arte de ingenio*, 2 vols., ed. Evaristo Correa Calderón (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 2001), 1:55.

27. “La abundancia . . . del pensar y enriquecer de conceptos sus poesías alcanzó tan felizmente, que, a mi entender, no existe escritor antiguo ni moderno que en ella le compita. Mucha es la variedad de argumentos y asuntos en que ejerció su pluma, y quien en ellos no reconociere esta fecundidad superior y rara, muy turbado ha de tener el órgano del juicio.” Quoted in Francisco de Quevedo, *Obra poética*, 4 vols., ed. José Manuel Blecua (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1985), 1:92.

Other rhetorical figures playing essential roles in Quevedo's poetry are antithesis, apostrophe, parallelism, hyperbaton, and hyperbole. González de Salas underscores two additional strategies, which may sometimes make a twenty-first-century reader's task more difficult:

His puns and allusions are so frequent and multiplied, that in a single verse, and even in a single word, it is certain that a great number of them will be lost without it being noticed. And although it would have been a prolix task to annotate them, I would have done so with less resistance if I had not suspected that presumptuous experts would be offended if some time by chance they were told of a bit of wit that they had already noticed, not taking into account the many times that such wit went over their heads.²⁸

Fortunately, such semantic density is not always the rule, as Quevedo also prides himself on calling a thing directly by its proper name, no matter how indecently such names might sound to some ears. Indeed, the chief cause for his bitter dislike of Góngora and his *culto* (i.e., highly Latinate, allusive, periphrastic) style—aside from not wanting to share the spotlight with his rival—was his conviction that poetry should not obfuscate and that it should appeal to the intelligence rather than merely cultivating aesthetic pleasure. As José Manuel Blecua puts it, “Quevedian expression is always intensive, not suggestive, as in Góngora.”²⁹ Still, to what extent the raunchiness of a poem like “Against Góngora and his poetry” (poem 45) is redeemed by its concentrated wit must be left to each reader to decide.

28. “Los *equivocos* . . . y las *alusiones* tuyas son tan frecuentes, y multiplicados aquéllos y éstas, así en un solo verso y aun en una palabra, que es bien infalible que mucho número, sin advertirse, se haya de perder; y aunque fuera diligencia prolija el notarlos, la ejecutara yo con menos resistencia si no recelara que los advertidos presuntuosos sucediera ofenderse si alguna vez por aventura se les avisara de agudeza que hubieran ya percibido, sin tomar en recompensa las que, sin sentirse, muchas veces se les pasaran.” Quoted in Quevedo, *Obra poética*, ed. Blecua, 1.94.

29. “la expresión quevedesca es siempre intensificadora, no sugeridora, como en Góngora.” Quoted in Quevedo, *Poesía original completa*, ed. Blecua, xxviii.

Surveying the many poetic genres Quevedo cultivated, Borges writes: “The scope of Quevedo’s poetical work is vast. It includes pensive sonnets, which reveal a prefiguring of Wordsworth; opaque and rasping severities; brusque theological magic . . . Gongorisms inserted to show that he could play that game too; pleasant Italian urbanities . . . variations of Persius, Seneca, Juvenal, the Scriptures, and Joachim du Bellay; Latinate concisions; coarse jokes; curious jests; lugubrious commentaries on annihilation and chaos.”³⁰ Before his death Quevedo began to organize his collected poetry according to the schema suggested by the nine muses; but it was actually González de Salas who edited and published in 1648 *El Parnaso español, monte en dos cumbres dividido, con las nuevas Musas*. This first edition, for all its neat generic divisions and editorial rigor—González de Salas also provides titles for the poems, which are used in all modern editions and so in this selection as well—still did not contain all of Quevedo’s poetry. This lack was remedied only by his nephew who published, in 1670, *Las tres Musas últimas castellanas*. In the twentieth century, checking all the poems for authenticity and manuscript variants, Blecuá produced a new edition of the complete poetry. Breaking though with the tradition of publishing the poems according to the rubrics provided by the nine muses, he divides the poetry into more accessible thematic groups, such as metaphysical, amorous, and moral poems. The ordering of this volume follows Blecuá’s example.

Quevedo employs myriad stanzaic forms and meters. The endnotes will provide some information in this regard, but I would like to touch briefly here on two last aspects of his poetics: his use of the *silva* and the formal variety of his satiric verse. Alternating freely between lines of seven and eleven feet in varying rhyme schemes, the *silva* is arguably the Spanish baroque’s most emblematic verse form. Góngora employs it to magnificent effect in his *Soledades* as does the first great poet of the Americas, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, in her *Primero sueño* where it becomes the vehicle for daring philosophical speculations. Literally a “forest,” the *silva*, as its relatively loose prosody suggests, had connotations of

30. Borges, “Quevedo,” 41.

wildness and lent itself, like the essay, to improvisatory thought. Reacting again to Góngora, Quevedo makes the *silva* the preferred form for some of his most elaborate, meditative poems, such as “To a mine” (poem 10) and the sublime “Hymn to the stars” (poem 26).

As for his satiric impulse, it proves remarkably pliant, taking shape in sonnets, *romances* (ballads), *jácaras* (ballads about underworld figures), and *letrillas* (lighthearted poems having octosyllabic lines in short stanzas with a refrain). And while some of these poems are inspired by the venerable examples of Juvenal, Martial, Plautus, and Terence, González de Salas also insists that Quevedo’s satires are pointedly of the moment: “He sings jocose poems, or what the author labeled burlesques, that is, humorous descriptions, charming events, and satiric censures of blameworthy customs, whose style is completely tempered by jokes and verities.”³¹ In balancing such “burlas” and “veras,” Quevedo offers as vivid if distorted a portrait of daily life as any Renaissance poet. Exploiting for all they are worth the effects of alliteration, cacophony, isocolon, anaphora, diminutives, augmentatives, neologisms, and rhyme, he paints the mores and excesses of Spanish society with unrivaled vividness and poetic energy. His chief weapon, however, remains metaphor, which, Lía Schwartz Lerner observes, “is the figure that permits the impossible, the anomalous to be said.”³² Thus armed, Quevedo exhaustively derides the medical, legal, culinary, and sartorial professions—largely in defense of what he perceives as vanishing aristocratic values. Embracing like many of his contemporaries the ideology of *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood), his anti-Semitic satires depict a society turned against itself by prejudice and fear. His obsession about feminine vanity and greed produces a broad if warped tableau of Spanish women: old ones, rich ones, thin ones, fat ones, courtesans, streetwalkers, gypsies, witches, dwarves, and drunkards. His descriptions of marriage as a trap for fools

31. “Canta poesías jocosas, que llamó burlescas el autor, esto es, descripciones graciosas, sucesos de donaire y censuras satíricas de culpables costumbres, cuyo estilo es todo templado de burlas, y de veras.” Quoted in Quevedo, *Obra poética*, ed. Blecua, 1.131.

32. Lía Schwartz Lerner, *Metáfora y sátira en la obra de Quevedo* (Madrid: Taurus Ediciones, 1986), 187.

and cuckolds yield detailed portraits of domestic life. Likewise, excoriating homosexuality requires a wealth of jargon and references to contemporary events.

Reception and Translation

Since the seventeenth century, Quevedo's most enduring legacy has been his satiric wit. His *romances* and *letrillas* "were sung in all the squares and back roads of Spain,"³³ but his metaphysical and moral verse had to wait for the efforts of Jorge Guillén, Borges, Neruda, Blecua, James Crosby, Juan Goytisolo, and other twentieth-century *quevedistas* to reach the acme of their fame. This selection of poems seeks to translate all aspects of Quevedo's wit, but especially those more timeless varieties that, for example, readers of John Donne still savor in his verse. And while Quevedo and Donne in fact share many traits—brilliant wit, a fertile ambivalence toward the Petrarchan tradition, the cultivation of both profane and sacred verse, an outsized ego—it is the vivid immediacy of their voices that continues to win them so many readers in their respective tongues. That "direct sensuous apprehension of thought" that T. S. Eliot finds in English metaphysical poetry perfectly characterizes Quevedo's verse, though I suspect that for Eliot the Spaniard's fitful melancholy and occasional obscenity might have been at times a bit too "sensuous" and "direct."

If Eliot smoothed the way for a twentieth-century Donne, then Borges has prepared the way, continues to prepare the way, for a twenty-first-century, English-speaking Quevedo. In addition to championing Quevedo in various essays, in one of his most ingenious, vertiginous stories, "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," he suggests that translating Quevedo is a metaphysical necessity. There, after describing the discovery of an encyclopedia in which an alternate, self-contained world replete with its own history, language, theology, and so forth, is meticulously, verisimilarly described, Borges recounts how that world proves incompat-

33. In Quevedo, *Poesía original completa*, ed. Blecua, xxiv.

ible with our own such that by the end of the story, the narrator, filled with sublime dread, can only add in a postscript: “The world will become Tlön. I pay no attention to all this and go on revising . . . an uncertain Quevedian translation (which I do not intend to publish) of Browne’s *Urn Burial*.”³⁴ The reference here is to Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682) who, in the exquisite treatise that Borges’s narrator is translating, asks: “who hath the Oracle of his ashes, or whether they are to be scattered?”

Translating Quevedo is to continue his own tasks as translator. Not only does he render Martial, Epictetus, Anacreon, and Seneca into Spanish, but also in his metaphysical, moral, and amorous verse he frequently paraphrases and occasionally borrows lines directly from Propertius, Petrarch, Martial, and others. I have taken some small liberties in these translations, mostly in the satiric poetry where Quevedo’s allusive wit often poses enormous lexical challenges. Readers are accordingly encouraged to consult the endnotes where significant deviations from the Spanish are explained. Yet mainly I try to render the poems as faithfully as possible, though now and again at the expense of a regular meter’s pace. Brevity rather than bombast—originally the padding that Elizabethan actors stuffed into their costumes—has been my aim. Accordingly, with a few exceptions I have sacrificed Quevedo’s end-rhymes.³⁵ To my mind, trying to save the rhyme in English would have derailed the course of Quevedo’s syntax and dulled the acuity and force of his conceits—and these are the aspects of his verse that, I hope, will win him an English reader’s devotion. In attending to the audacious intricacy of Quevedo’s conceits, I pursue less obvious forms of euphony such as internal and feminine rhyme, broken rhyme, near rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and

34. Jorge Luis Borges, “Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius,” in *Labyrinths*, trans. James E. Irby (New York: New Directions, 1964), 18.

35. Carl W. Cobb’s *Poems of Love and Strife, Death and Life: A Representative Anthology of Quevedo’s Lyric Poetry* (1991), David Gitlitz’s, *Francisco de Quevedo: Songs of Love and Death and in Between* (1980), and, with considerably happier results, Willis Barnstone’s translations of twenty-four sonnets by Quevedo, in his *Six Masters of the Spanish Sonnet* (1993), all choose to end-rhyme. However, in his often inspired, always exacting 2006 translation of the entire *Lisi* cycle, D. Gareth Walters also eschews end-rhymes, deciding instead to follow the example of Mark Musa translating Petrarch.

consonance to capture some of the original's music. In this way, a cardinal difference between Spanish and English poetry is maintained, even as I draw on the tradition of English blank verse. In short, my aim has been to convey in a contemporary American verse idiom as much of the poet's meaning and wordplay as possible.

William Carlos Williams writes in his introduction to his 1954 translation (done with his mother!) of Quevedo's *The Dog and the Fever*: "He knew the whole gamut of his world, and used his knowledge against cads and numbskulls in or out of power."³⁶ But if Quevedo's literary afterlife in Anglophone countries rests primarily on his talents as a prose satirist, then in the poetry of Lorca, Vallejo, Neruda, and other twentieth-century poets writing in Spanish, Quevedo's amorous, popular, and metaphysical verse continues to echo. As Neruda puts it, "never in our language has the word managed to amass such unbounded explosiveness."³⁷ I have tried to make palpable some of this explosiveness in these pages.

Finally, to return to Borges's caveat: "Quevedo, I believe, is inferior to no one, but he has not found a symbol that captures the popular imagination."³⁸ Yet perhaps we have already become *quevedistas* despite ourselves and despite this lack. In the Spanish daily newspaper, *El País*, a recent article recounts how an enterprising company has hit upon the idea of transforming the ashes of the deceased into diamonds that the living might forever be able to admire the beauty of the dead. As if anticipating this, the tercets of Quevedo's most famous poem, "Love constant beyond death," read:

Alma a quien todo un dios prisión ha sido,
venas que humor a tanto fuego han dado,
medulas que han gloriosamente ardido,

36. William Carlos Williams, Introduction to Francisco de Quevedo, *The Dog and the Fever*, trans. William Carlos Williams and Raquel Hélène Williams (Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press, 1954), 11.

37. Pablo Neruda, "Viaje al corazón de Quevedo," in *Viajes* (Santiago: Editorial Nascimento, 1955), 34.

38. Borges, "Quevedo," 36.

su cuerpo dejará, no su cuidado;
serán ceniza, mas tendrá sentido;
polvo serán, mas polvo enamorado.

*Soul, long imprisoned by a god;
veins, fuel you gave to the blaze;
marrow, gloriously you burned.*

*It will leave its body, not its cares;
they will be ashes, but still will feel;
dust they will be, but dust in love.*

Has the poetry of “ashes” ever been more diamondlike?





Johannes Van Noordt, *Francisco de Quevedo*. Engraving, early seventeenth century.

METAPHYSICAL POEMS

I

Representase la brevedad de lo que se vive y cuán
nada parece lo que se vivió

“¡Ah de la vida!” . . . ¿Nadie me responde?
¡Aquí de los antaños que he vivido!
La Fortuna mis tiempos ha mordido;
las Horas mi locura las esconde.

¡Que sin poder saber cómo ni adónde
la salud y la edad se hayan huido!
Falta la vida, asiste lo vivido,
y no hay calamidad que no me ronde.

Ayer se fue; mañana no ha llegado;
hoy se está yendo sin parar un punto:
soy un fue, y un será, y un es cansado.

En el hoy y mañana y ayer, junto
pañales y mortaja, y he quedado
presentes sucesiones de difunto.

I

Describing the brevity of life and how past life seems to be nothing

“Is any life home?” Nobody answers?
Help, here are the years I have lived!
Fortune has gnawed away my days;
madness absconded with my hours.

Powerless to know how or where
my health and years have fled.
Missing is life, existence remains;
and everywhere calamity awaits.

Yesterday’s gone, tomorrow’s late,
today wastes not an instant leaving:
I am a was, a will be, a weary is.

Today, tomorrow, and yesterday
I sew shroud to swaddling clothes,
And so succeed my dead self again.

Signifícase la propia brevedad de la vida, sin pensar,
y con padecer, salteada de la muerte

¡Fue sueño ayer; mañana será tierra!
Poco antes, nada; y poco después, humo!
¡Y destino ambiciones, y presumo
apenas punto al cerco que me cierra!

Breve combate de importuna guerra,
en mi defensa, soy peligro sumo;
y mientras con mis armas me consumo,
menos me hospeda el cuerpo, que me entierra.

Ya no es ayer; mañana no ha llegado;
hoy pasa, y es, y fue, con movimiento
que a la muerte me lleva despeñado.

Azadas son la hora y el momento
que, a jornal de mi pena y mi cuidado,
cavan en mi vivir mi monumento.

Expressing the essential brevity of life, unexpectedly,
miserably assaulted by death

A dream yesterday, tomorrow dust;
nothing just before, smoke just after.
Though ambitious, I'm barely a point
on the circle closing about me.

A brief battle in importunate war,
in my defense, I'm danger itself;
and while my weapons destroy me
my body, once my host, buries me.

Yesterday's gone, tomorrow's late
today passes, is, was, dragging
me precipitously toward death.

The hours and seconds are spades,
by pain and grief well paid, digging
my grave in the midst of my days.

El escarmiento

¡Oh tú, que, inadvertido, peregrinas 1
 de osado monte cumbres desdeñosas,
 que igualmente vecinas
 tienen a las estrellas sospechosas,
 o ya confuso vayas,
 buscando el cielo, que robustas hayas
 te esconden en las hojas,
 o la alma aprisionada de congojas
 alivies y consueles,
 o con el vario pensamiento vuelas, 10
 delante desta peña tosca y dura,
 que, de naturaleza aborrecida
 invidia de aquel prado la hermosura,
 detén el paso y tu camino olvida,
 y el duro intento que te arrastra deja,
 mientras vivo escarmiento te aconseja!

En la que oscura ves, cueva espantosa,
 sepulcro de los tiempos que han pasado,
 mi espíritu reposa,
 dentro en mi propio cuerpo sepultado, 20
 pues mis bienes perdidos
 sólo han dejado en mí fuego y gemidos,
 vitorias de aquel ceño,
 que, con la muerte, me libró del sueño
 de bienes de la tierra,
 y gozo blanda paz tras dura guerra,
 hurtado para siempre a la grandeza,
 al envidioso polvo cortesano,
 al inicuo poder de la riqueza,

The warning

O you, who wander carelessly 1
 through bold mountains with scornful summits,
 who likewise neighbor
 circumspect stars;
 or if you go confusedly
 seeking Heaven, hid from you
 by the leaves of thriving beeches;
 or if you console and solace
 your soul imprisoned by distress;
 or with different thoughts 10
 fly from this unforgiving peak,
 by nature abhorred
 and envying the meadow's beauty:
 halt your step and forget your path,
 and forego the grim goal driving you,
 while a living lesson councils you.

In the dark you see, a terrible cave,
 a tomb of times past,
 there my spirit reposes,
 entombed within my body, 20
 for with my goods lost,
 alone my fury and groans were left me,
 trophies of jealousy's glare;
 but with death I am freed
 from dreaming of earthly goods,
 and after grim war I enjoy tranquil peace,
 stolen forever from greatness,
 from courtly, envious dust,
 from wealth's iniquitous power,

al lisonjero adulator tirano. 30
¡Dichoso yo, que fuera deste abismo,
vivo, me soy sepulcro de mí mismo!

Estas mojadas, nunca enjutas, ropas,
estas no escarmentadas y deshechas
velas, proas y popas,
estos hierros molestos, estas flechas,
estos lazos y redes
que me visten de miedo las paredes,
lamentables despojos,
desprecio del naufragio de mis ojos, 40
recuerdos despreciados,
son, para más dolor, bienes pasados.
Fue tiempo que me vio quien hoy me llora,
burlar de la verdad y de escarmiento,
y ya, quiérello Dios, llegó la hora
que debo mi discurso a mi tormento.
Ved cómo y cuán en breve el gusto acaba,
pues suspira por mí quien me envidiaba.

Aun a la muerte vine por rodeos;
que se hace de rogar, o da sus veces 50
a mis propios deseos;
mas, ya que son mis desengaños jueces,
aquí, solo conmigo,
la angosta senda de los sabios sigo,
donde gloriosamente
desprecio la ambición de lo presente.
No lloro lo pasado,
ni lo que ha de venir me da cuidado;
y mi loca esperanza, siempre verde,
que sobre el pensamiento voló ufana, 60
de puro vieja aquí su color pierde,

from the flattering, tyrannical sycophant.
Lucky me! Beyond this abyss,
I live, I am my own sepulchre!

30

These wet clothes, never wrung,
these destroyed sails, prows,
and keels, which failed to warn,
these ropes and nets on the walls,
glancing so terrifyingly at me,
lamentable spoils,
scorning the shipwrecked in my eyes,
these souvenirs scorned,
are, to my greater grief, lost goods.
Who saw me long ago mock the truth
and warnings, now sees me weep,
and now, if God wills, the hour has come,
when reason must tally my torments.
See how and when brief pleasures end,
for those who envied me, now sigh for me.

40

Roundabout I came even to death,
which has to be coaxed, which takes
its turns with my desires:
since now my lost illusions are judges,
here, alone with myself
I follow the narrow path of wisdom,
where gloriously
I scorn present ambition.
I do not mourn the past,
nor does what will come worry me;
and my crazy hope, always green,
which flew eagerly above thought,
here old and feeble loses its color,

50

60

y blanca puede estar de puro cana.
Aquí, del primer hombre despojado,
descanso ya de andar de mí cargado.

Estos que han de beber, fresnos hojosos,
la roja sangre de la dura guerra;
estos olmos hermosos,
a quien esposa vid abraza y cierra,
de la sed de los días
guardan con sombras las corrientes frías; 70
y en esta dura sierra,
los agradecimientos de la tierra,
con mi labor cansada,
me entretienen la vida fatigada.
Orfeo del aire el ruiseñor parece,
y ramillete músico el jilguero;
consuelo aquél en su dolor me ofrece;
éste, a mi mal, se muestra lisonjero;
duermo, por cama, en este suelo duro,
si menos blando sueño, más seguro. 80

No solicito el mar con remo y vela,
ni temo al Turco la ambición armada;
no en larga centinela
al sueño inobediente, con pagada
sangre y salud vendida,
soy, por un pobre sueldo, mi homicida;
ni a Fortuna me entrego,
con la codicia y la esperanza ciego,
por cavar, diligente,
los peligros precisos del Oriente; 90
no de mi gula amenazada vive
la fénix en Arabia, temerosa,

turned white as an old man's hair.
Here, a relic of the first man,
I rest now from shirking my burden.

These ash trees that must drink
the red blood of harsh war;
these beautiful oaks,
whom the vine weds and embraces,
forstalling thirsty days,
protecting cold currents with shade,
and in these harsh mountains
the fruits of the earth,
fatigued by my labor:

70

all these soothe my weary life.
An Orfeo aloft the nightingale seems;
the warbler a musical bouquet;
the former's sorrow gives me counsel,
the latter tries to flatter my misfortune.
I sleep, this hard ground as my bed,
where dreams are less gentle, but safer.

I do not court the sea with sail and oar,
nor do I fear the Turk's armed ambition;
I am not—in the long night watch,
disloyal to sleep, with blood
paid for and health sold—
for a meager wage, my murderer;
nor do I deliver myself to fortune
with greed and blinkered hope,
diligently to dig
the precious dangers of the East.

80

Unthreatened by my belly,
the Arabian Phoenix fears not,

90

ni a ultraje de mis leños apercibe
el mar su inobediencia peligrosa:
vivo como hombre que viviendo muero,
por desembarazar el día postrero.

Llenos de paz serena mis sentidos,
y la corte del alma sosegada,
sujetos y vencidos
apetitos de ley desordenada, 100
por límite a mis penas
aguardo que desate de mis venas
la muerte prevenida
la alma, que anudada está en la vida,
disimulando horrores
a esta prisión de miedos y dolores,
a este polvo soberbio y presumido,
ambiciosa ceniza, sepultura
portátil, que conmigo la he traído,
sin dejarme contar hora segura. 110
Nací muriendo y he vivido ciego,
y nunca al cabo de mi muerte llego.

Tú, pues, ¡oh caminante!, que me escuchas,
si pretendes salir con la victoria
del monstruo con quien luchas,
harás que se adelante tu memoria
a recibir la muerte,
que, oscura y muda, viene a deshacerte.
No hagas de otro caso,
pues se huye la vida paso a paso, 120
y, en mentidos placeres,
muriendo naces y viviendo mueres.
Cánsate ya, ¡oh mortal!, de fatigarte

nor does the sea admonish the dangerous
disobedience of my outrageous planks:
I live like a man, who dies living
to unload himself of his final day.

My senses plush with serene peace,
and the court of my soul tranquil;
desires ruled by disorder
now subjected and defeated;
to reach the limit of my pains 100
I expect my death foretold
to free from my veins
the soul that is
knotted up in life,
concealing horrors,
from this prison of fears and sorrows,
from this haughty, conceited dust,
ambitious ash, portable tomb,
which I have carried with me,
never telling me that certain hour. 110
I was born dying and have lived blindly,
and I shall never reach my death's end.

You, wanderer, may you heed me,
if you hope for victory over
the monster with whom you strive;
make your memory ready
to receive death,
which darkly, silently, comes to undo you.
Pay no heed to anything else,
for life flees step by step; 120
and in lying pleasures
you are born dying and die living.
Rest now, o mortal, from wearying

en adquirir riquezas y tesoro;
que últimamente el tiempo ha de heredarte,
y al fin te dejarán la plata y oro.
Vive para ti sólo, si pudieres;
pues sólo para ti, si mueres, mueres.

yourself in getting wealth and treasure,
for ultimately time shall inherit you,
and in the end silver and gold will leave you.
Live for yourself alone, if you can,
for when you die, you die alone!



“ . . . and my eyes found no place / to rest save on death’s souvenirs” (poem 6). Peter Paul Rubens, *Heraclitus, Greek Philosopher*. Oil on canvas, 181 × 63 cm. Museo del Prado, Madrid. Photograph © Erich Lessing / Art Resource, New York. Used by permission of Art Resource, New York.

POEMS FROM *CHRISTIAN HERACLITUS*

“Un nuevo corazón, un hombre nuevo”

Un nuevo corazón, un hombre nuevo
ha menester, Señor, el Alma mía:
desnúdame de mí, que ser podría
que a tu piedad pagase lo que debo.

Dudosos pies por ciega noche llevo,
que ya he llegado a aborrecer el día,
y temo que he de hallar la muerte fría
envuelta en (bien que dulce) mortal cebo.

Tu imagen soy, tu hacienda propia he sido,
y si no es tu interés en mí, no creo
que otra cosa defiende mi partido.

Haz lo que pide el verme cual me veo,
no lo que pido yo, que de perdido,
aún no fío mi salud a mi deseo.

“A new heart, Lord, a new man”

A new heart, Lord, a new man
my soul requires: undress me
of myself, that I might be
what I owe your piety.

My doubting feet walk the blind nights,
for I have come to abhor the day,
and I fear I'll find cold death
wrapped in sweet, lethal bait.

Your image I am, your own estate I
have been; if not for your stake in me,
nothing, I think, would have taken my side.

Do with me what seeing my plight
demands, not what I demand; lost,
my hopes distrust even my desires.

“Trabajos dulces, dulces penas mías”

Trabajos dulces, dulces penas mías; 1
 pasadas alegrías
 que atormentáis ahora mi memoria,
 dulce en un tiempo, sí, mas breve gloria,
 gozada en años y perdida en días;
 tarde y sin fruto derramados llantos,
 si sois castigo de los cielos santos,
 con vosotros me alegre y me enriquezco,
 porque sé de mí mismo que os merezco,
 y me consuelo más que me lastimo; 10
 mas, si regalos sois, más os estimo,
 mirando que en el suelo
 sin merecerlo, me regala el cielo.
 Perdí mi libertad, mi bien con ella:
 no dejó en todo el cielo alguna estrella
 que no solicitase,
 entre llantos, la voz de mi querella:
 ¡tanto sentí mirar que me dejase!
 Mas ya, ved mi dolor, me he consolado
 de ver mi bien perdido, 20
 y, en parte, de perderle me he holgado,
 por interés de haberle conocido.

“My sweet labors, my sweet pains”

My sweet labors, my sweet pains, 1
 my past happiness,
 how now you torment my memory;
 sweet once, yes, but a brief bliss
 enjoyed for years and lost in days;
 tears spilt belatedly, fruitlessly,
 if you are Heaven's punishment,
 I rejoice and by you I am enriched,
 and since I know in my heart I merit you,
 I find more solace than regret; 10
 but, if you are gifts, I esteem you more,
 seeing how, without earning it,
 Heaven regales me on earth.
 I lost my liberty and with it, my felicity:
 in all the heavens not a single star exists
 that the voice of my laments
 did not invoke amid tears;
 so keenly I felt your leaving!
 But already— see my sorrow—
 I have consoled myself for losing my felicity; 20
 and, in part, I delight in having lost it,
 for the sake of knowing sorrow.

Enseña cómo todas las cosas avisan de la muerte

Miré los muros de la patria mía,
si un tiempo fuertes, ya desmoronados,
de la carrera de la edad cansados,
por quien caduca ya su valentía.

Salíme al campo, vi que el sol bebía
los arroyos del yelo desatados,
y del monte quejosos los ganados,
que con sombras hurtó su luz al día.

Entré en mi casa; vi que, amancillada,
de anciana habitación era despojos;
mi báculo, más corvo y menos fuerte;

vencida de la edad sentí mi espada.
Y no hallé cosa en que poner los ojos
que no fuese recuerdo de la muerte.

He teaches how everything warns of death

I gazed upon my country's walls
strong once, but crumbling now;
wearied by the race of years,
which has wasted all their valor.

Walking the fields, I saw the sun
drink streams of dissolving ice,
and sheep plaintive that the peak
had stolen the day with shadows.

Coming home, I saw the old rooms,
stained by age, were time's spoils;
my staff less strong, and more bent;

I felt my sword, conquered by years,
and my eyes found no place
to rest save on death's souvenirs.

Conoce las fuerzas del tiempo y el ser ejecutivo cobrador de la muerte

¡Cómo de entre mis manos te resbalas!
¡Oh, cómo te deslizas, edad mía!
¡Qué mudos pasos traes, oh muerte fría,
pues con callado pie todo lo igualas!

Feroz, de tierra el débil muro escalas,
en quien lozana juventud se fía;
mas ya mi corazón del postrer día
atiende el vuelo, sin mirar las alas.

¡Oh condición mortal! ¡Oh dura suerte!
¡Que no puedo querer vivir mañana
sin la pensión de procurar mi muerte!

Cualquier instante de la vida humana
es nueva ejecución, con que me advierte
cuán frágil es, cuán mísera, cuán vana.

He acquaints himself with the forces of time and
death's debt collector

How you slip between my fingers!
O life, how you slide swiftly by!
Cold death, what muted steps you take;
you level all things with silent feet.

Ferocious, you scale the weak walls,
where brave youth fixes its trust;
but already my heart, heedless
of wings, awaits my last day's flight.

O mortality! O cruel fate!
I disdain to live another day
without laboring to win my death.

Each moment liquidates human life
anew, warning me how vain, how
fragile, how impoverished, it is.

III
 INDI, QVA ARTE AVRVM EX
 MONTIBVS ERVANT.



POTOSI montanis, aurisodinis omnium ditissimis per omnem Indiã, aurum Indi hac arte effodiunt, qua in nostris serè regionibus itidem factitant. Nã ex rupibus excindenda omnia sunt. Operarios in duos ordines dispecunt. Quorum hi de die laborantes, noctu quiescunt: illi noctu operis vacantes, interdum dormiunt. Quamuis nec diurnam nec nocturnam cali facem videãt, sed vniuersim succensu cereis opus habeant. Cum vltra 150.orgias infra terram sese demittant. Nec tamen ista tam immensa sodinarum profunditas impedit, quò minus omne effossum as suis doris foras efferre cogantur. Quem in usum scalas adhibent, ita structas parat atq, vt bina sibi semper cõiuncta habeant. Scale vero ex intortis boum cornis confecta sunt, qua transuersis radiis ligneis suffirmantur ita, vt ternis viris semper ex ordine descensus vno latere, altero verò totidem ascensus sit. Cumq, in ascensus labore vtraq, manu scalas corripere cogantur, ideo, qui illorum primus est, ceruicem ardentem de pollice reliquat unum gestat. Porro, quia metra ascensus nimis longa est, iccirco in media via surrecta quadã scamna sunt, quibus onera sua quadam tenus deponere possunt.

“ . . with huge lowly shovels, / you bleed luminous metals / from the mountain’s veins” (poem 10). Theodore de Bry, *The Gold Mines at Potosi, in Bolivia*. Copperplate engraving. Photograph © Snark / Art Resource, New York. Used by permission of Art Resource, New York.

MORAL POEMS

Desde La Torre

Retirado en la paz de estos desiertos,
con pocos, pero doctos, libros juntos,
vivo en conversación con los difuntos
y eschucho con mis ojos a los muertos.

Si no siempre entendidos, siempre abiertos,
o enmiendan, o fecundan mis asuntos;
y en músicos callados contrapuntos
al sueño de la vida hablan despiertos.

Las grandes almas que la muerte ausenta,
de injurias de los años, vengadora,
libra, ¡oh gran don Iosef!, docta la emprenta.

En fuga irrevocable huye la hora;
pero aquélla el mejor cálculo cuenta
que en la lección y estudios nos mejora.

From La Torre

Withdrawn to this solitary place,
With a few but learned books,
I live conversing with the dead,
listening to them with my eyes.

Open always, if not always understood,
they amend, they enrich my affairs:
in rhythms of contrapuntal silence,
awakened, they speak to the dream of life.

O Don José, for those great souls
absconded by death, the learned
press avenges time's slanders.

In irrevocable flight the hour flees;
but it can be counted fortunate
when we better ourselves by reading.

Don Francisco de Quevedo

¡Malhaya aquel humano que primero
halló en el ancho mar la fiera muerte,
y el que enseñó a su espalda oncosa y fuerte
a que sufriese el peso de un madero!

¡Malhaya el que, forzado del dinero,
el nunca arado mar surcó, de suerte
que en sepultura natural convierte
el imperio cerúleo, húmedo y fiero!

¡Malhaya el que por ver doradas cunas,
do nace al mundo Febo radiante,
del ganado de Próteo es el sustento;

y el mercader que tienta mil fortunas,
del mar fiando el oro y el diamante,
fiando el mar de tanto vario viento!

Don Francisco de Quevedo

Damn that first human who
found fierce death on the broad sea,
who taught its mighty, wavy
back to suffer a bark's fatal weight.

Damn him who, strapped for cash,
tilled the unplowed sea until
the fierce, azure, liquid empire
became our native sepulchre.

Damn him who, to see the golden crib
where Phoebus rises, becomes
fodder for Proteus and his herds;

and the merchant, who touches a thousand
fortunes, who trusts gold and diamonds
to the sea, who trusts mutable winds.

A una mina

Diste crédito a un pino, 1
 a quien del ocio rudo, avara mano
 trajo del monte al agua, peregrino,
 ¡oh Leiva, de la dulce paz tirano!
 Viste, amigo, tu vida
 por tu codicia a tanto mal rendida.
 Arrojóte violento
 adonde quiso el albedrio del viento.
 ¿Qué condición del Euro y Noto inoras?
 ¿Qué mudanzas no sabes de las horas? 10
 Vives, y no sé bien si despreciado
 del agua, o perdonado.
 ¡Cuántas veces los peces que el mar cierra
 y tuviste en la tierra
 por sustento, en la nave mal segura,
 les llegaste a temer por sepultura!
 ¿Qué tierra tan extraña
 no te obligó a besar del mar la saña?
 ¿Cuál alarbe, cuál scita, turco o moro,
 mientras al viento y agua obedecías, 20
 por señor no temías?
 Mucho te debe el oro
 si, después que saliste,
 pobre reliquia, del naufragio triste,
 en vez de descansar del mar seguro,
 a tu codicia hidrópica obediente,
 con villano azadón, del cerro duro
 sangras las venas del metal luciente.

To a mine

You put your trust in a tree, 1
 a pilgrim, hauled by a greedy hand,
 from the mountain's rough leisure,
 to the sea, O Livia,
 tyrant over gentle peace!
 You saw, my friend,
 greed reduce your life to ruins.
 You were hurled violently wherever
 the will of the wind desired.
 What moods of Boreas confound you? 10
 What whims of time surprise you?
 You live, but I hardly know
 if you're despised or delivered by the sea.
 How many times have the fish
 that fill the sea, and feed you on land,
 seemed like terrible sepulchres
 on that fragile ship!
 What strange land has the sea's
 fury not made you kiss?
 What Arab, Moor, Scythian, or Turk, 20
 did you not fear as lord,
 while you obeyed wind and wave?
 Gold owes you a great deal,
 if, poor relic, after escaping
 shipwreck's sorrows,
 rather than resting safely on land,
 you obey hydropic greed;
 with huge, lowly shovels,
 you bleed luminous metals
 from the mountain's veins. 30

¿Por qué permites que trabajo infame
sudor tuyo derrame? 30

Deja oficio bestial que inclina al suelo
ojos nacidos para ver el cielo.

¿Qué te han hecho, mortal, de estas montañas
las escondidas y ásperas entrañas?

¿Qué fatigas la tierra?

Deja en paz los secretos de la sierra
a quien defiende apenas su hondura.

¿No ves que a un mismo tiempo estás abriendo
al metal puerta, a ti la sepultura?

¿Piensa[s] (y es un engaño vergonzoso) 40
que le hurtas riqueza al indio suelo?

¿Oro llamas al que es dulce desvelo
y peligro precioso,
rubia tierra, pobreza disfrazada
y ponzoña dorada?

¡Ay!, no llesves contigo
metal de la quietud siempre enemigo;
que aun la Naturaleza, viendo que era
tan contrario a la santa paz primera,
por ingrato y dañoso a quien le estima, 50
y por más esconderte sus lugares,
los montes le echó encima;
sus caminos borró con altos mares.

Doy que a tu patria vuelves al instante
que el Occidente dejas saqueado,
y que dél vas triunfante;
doy que el mar sosegado

Why do you let such vile
labor spill your sweat?
Leave this bestial task,
which turns earthward
eyes born to see the stars.
What, mortal, have the mountain's
rugged, hidden entrails done to you?
Why traverse the earth?
Leave its secrets in peace—
its depths have no defense. 40
Don't you see, when you
open the door for metals,
you open your tomb as well?
Do you think—what shameful deceit—
you plunder wealth from indian soil?
You call "gold" what is sweet
sleeplessness, precious
danger, blond dirt,
costumed poverty,
and golden poison. 50

Forsake that metal,
eternal enemy of tranquility;
for Nature, seeing how it
harmed that first, sacred peace—
a noxious ingrate to those who prize it—
threw mountains over it,
to better hide her places,
and erased its tracks with high seas.

Say you return home this instant,
that you've looted the Indies, 60
that you leave triumphantly;
say the tranquil sea groans

debajo del precioso peso gime
 cuando sus fuerzas líquidas oprime
 la soberbia y el peso del dinero; 60
 doy que te sirva el viento lisonjero,
 si su furor recelas;
 doy que respete al cáñamo y las velas;
 y, porque tu camino esté más cierto
 (bien que imposible sea),
 doy que te salga a recibir el puerto
 cuando tu pobre casa ya se vea.
 Rico, dime si acaso,
 en tus montones de oro
 tropezará la muerte o tendrá el paso; 70
 si añidirá a tu vida tu tesoro
 un año, un més, un día, un hora, un punto.
 No es poderoso a tanto el mundo junto.
 Pues si este don tan pobre te es negado,
 ¿de qué esperanzas vives arrastrado?
 Deja (no caves más) el metal fiero;
 ve que sacas consuelo a tu heredero;
 ve que buscas riquezas, si se advierte,
 para premiar deseos de tu muerte.
 Sacas, ¡ay!, un tirano de tu sueño; 80
 un polvo que después será tu dueño,
 y en cada grano sacas dos millones
 de envidiosos, cuidados y ladrones.
 Déjale, ¡oh Leiva!, si es que te aconsejas
 con la santa verdad honesta y pura,
 pues él te ha de dejar si no le dejas,
 o te lo ha de quitar la muerte dura.

beneath the precious weight,
as pride and ponderous sums
oppress its liquid powers;
say, granted you fear its fury,
a flattering wind serves you;
say rope and sail respect you;
so that your road becomes more certain
(impossible as that may be), 70
say the port sallies out to meet you
as soon as you spot your poor house;
rich man, tell me by chance
will death trip or lose a step
on your mountains of gold?
Will your treasure add to your life,
a year,
a month,
a day,
an hour, 80
an instant?
There's not world enough for that.
And if this poor boon is denied,
what hopes, wretch, will sustain you?
Leave—dig no more!—the beastly metal;
see, you extract solace for your heir;
see, you seek wealth—be warned—
to sate those wishing your death.
You extract a tyrant over sleep!
Dust which soon will be your boss; 90
in each grain you extract
two million, thieving,
jealous, careworn men.
Leave it be, O Livia, heed
the honest, pure, holy truth:
it must leave you, if you don't leave it,
or cruel death will take it from you.

II

El reloj de arena

¿Qué tienes que contar, reloj molesto, 1
en un soplo de vida desdichada
que se pasa tan presto;
en un camino que es una jornada,
breve y estrecha, de éste al otro polo,
siendo jornada que es un paso solo?
Que, si son mis trabajos y mis penas,
no alcanzarás allá, si capaz vaso
fueses de las arenas
en donde el alto mar detiene el paso. 10
Deja pasar las horas sin sentirlas,
que no quiero medirlas,
ni que me notifiques de esa suerte
los términos forzosos de la muerte.
No me hagas más guerra;
déjame, y nombre de piadoso cobra,
que harto tiempo me sobra
para dormir debajo de la tierra.

Pero si acaso por oficio tienes 20
el contarme la vida,
presto descansarás, que los cuidados
mal acondicionados,
que alimenta lloroso
el corazón cuitado y lastimoso,
y la llama atrevida
que Amor, ¡triste de mí!, arde en mis venas

II

The hourglass

Nagging clock, 1
what tale do you tell,
in a gust of miserable life
precipitously passing,
on this road, short and narrow,
a day's march from pole to pole,
a day that's barely a step?
For, such are my labors and pains,
you could never catch up,
though you held all the sands 10
of that ample glass where
the high seas halt their march.
Let the hours pass uncounted;
I do not wish them marked;
nor would I hear death's
sentence told in this way.
War no more against me,
leave me be, win a name for piety;
I have plenty of time
to sleep beneath the earth. 20

But if by chance your task
is to tell me life's tale,
soon you may cease, for the cares,
which I bear so poorly,
which feed tearfully
my pitiful, timid heart,
and the bold flame,
which love, to my chagrin,
burns in these veins

(menos de sangre que de fuego llenas),
no sólo me apresura
la muerte, pero abréviame el camino;
pues, con pie doloroso,
mísero peregrino,
doy cercos a la negra sepultura.
Bien sé que soy aliento fugitivo;
ya sé, ya temo, ya también espero
que he de ser polvo, como tú, si muero,
y que soy vidrio, como tú, si vivo.

30

(filled with fire more than blood),
not only hurries my death,
but shortens my road;
for I, melancholic pilgrim,
circle, with mournful steps,
the dark sepulchre.
I know well I am fugitive breath;
already I know, already I fear,
already too I hope
that if I die, I must be dust like you,
that I am glass, if I live, like you.

Juicio moral de los cometas

Ningún cometa es culpado,
 ni hay signo de mala ley,
 pues para morir penado,
 la envidia basta al privado
 y el cuidado sobra al rey. 1

De las cosas inferiores
 siempre poco caso hicieron
 los celestes resplandores;
 y mueren porque nacieron
 todos los emperadores. 10

Sin prodigios ni planetas
 he visto mucho desastres,
 y, sin estrellas, profetas:
 mueren reyes sin cometas,
 y mueren con ellas sastres.

De tierra se creen extraños
 los príncipes deste suelo,
 sin mirar que los más años
 aborta también el cielo
 cometas por los picaños. 20

El cometa que más brava
 muestra crinada cabeza,
 rey, para tu vida esclava,
 es la desorden que empieza
 el mal que el médico acaba.

Moral verdict on comets

No comet is culpable, 1
 nor has misfortune signs;
 for to die tormented,
 envy's enough for ministers,
 and worry's plenty for kings.

The resplendent lights
 never give any heed
 to sublunary things;
 because each was born,
 every emperor will die. 10

Without planets or prodigies,
 I've seen many disasters;
 without stars, many prophets:
 kings die without comets
 and tailors die with them.

The princes of this land
 deny they're made of earth,
 and they fail to see how
 most years the heavens
 abort comets for beggars too. 20

The most furious comet,
 king, to show its hairy head
 to your slavish highness,
 is the chaotic life that starts
 the ill the doctor hastens.



Diego de Velázquez, *Francisco de Quevedo* (1559–60). Oil on canvas. Photograph: Fotografía Digital Madrid, S.L. Courtesy of Archivo Oronoz, Madrid.

LYRIC POEMS ON DIVERSE SUBJECTS

Túmulo de la mariposa

Yace pintado amante,
de amores de la luz, muerta de amores,
mariposa elegante,
que vistió rosas y voló con flores,
y codicioso el fuego de sus galas
ardió dos primaveras en sus alas.

I

El aliño del prado
y la curiosidad de primavera
aquí se han acabado,
y el galán breve de la cuarta esfera,
que, con dudoso y divertido vuelo,
las lumbres quiso amartelar del cielo.

10

Clementes hospedaron
a duras salamandras llamas vivas;
su vida perdonaron,
y fueron rigurosas, como esquivas,
con el galán idólatra que quiso
morir como Faetón, siendo Narciso.

No renacer hermosa,
parto de la ceniza y de la muerte,
como fénix gloriosa,
que su linaje entre las llamas vierte,
quien no sabe de amor y de terneza
lo llamará desdicha, y es fineza.

20

The butterfly's tomb

Here lies a painted lover,
 who died of love, love of light,
 elegant butterfly who
 adorned roses, flew with flowers;
 jealous of its revels, fire ignited
 twice April's ardor in its wings.

1

Here meet their end,
 the meadow's jewel,
 the marvel of springtime,
 the fourth sphere's fleeting beau,
 who with cautious, coy flight,
 tried to woo torches in the sky.

10

Hospitable, living flames,
 home to stoic salamanders,
 spared their lives,
 were aloof but severe
 with that idolatrous beau, a Narcissus
 who strove to die like Phaeton.

Not to be a reborn beauty,
 but to spring from death and ash,
 like the glorious phoenix
 whose line is forged in flames.
 He who knows no love or tenderness
 will call it woe, but it is bliss.

20

Su tumba fue su amada;
hermosa, sí, pero temprana y breve;
ciega y enamorada,
mucho al amor y poco al tiempo debe;
y pues en sus amores se deshace,
escribáse: *Aquí goza, donde yace.*

30

Its tomb was its beloved;
lovely, yes, but fleetingly so;
blind and enamored,
much to love it owes, little to time;
and because it was by loving undone,
engrave: *it lies in bliss where it died.*

30

A una fuente

¡Qué alegre que recibes 1
 con toda tu corriente
 al sol, en cuya luz bulles y vives,
 hija de antiguo bosque, sacra fuente!
 ¡Ay, cómo de sus rubios rayos frías
 tu secreto caudal, tus aguas frías!
 Blasonas confiada en el verano,
 y hace bravatas al hibierno cano;
 no le maltrates, porque en tal camino
 ha de volver, aunque se va enojado, 10
 y mira que tu nuevo sol dorado
 también se ha de volver como se vino.
 De paso va por ti la primavera
 y el hibierno; ley es de la alta esfera:
 huéspedes son; no son habitadores
 en ti los meses que revuelve el cielo.
 Seca con el calor, amas el yelo,
 y presa con el yelo, los calores.
 Confieso que su lumbre te desata
 de cárcel transparente, 20
 que es cristal suelto y pareció de plata;
 pero temo que, ardiente,
 viene más a beberte que a librate,
 y más debes quejarte
 del que empobrece tu corriente clara,
 que no del yelo, que, piadoso, viendo
 que te fatigas de ir siempre corriendo,
 porque descanses, te congela y para.

To a spring

How happily you greet 1
 the sun with your current,
 in whose light you bubble to life,
 ah, sacred spring,
 daughter of the ancient forest!
 How you entrust your hidden trove,
 your cold waters, to its blond rays!
 You blazon forth, sure of summer,
 and bluster bravely at hoary winter;
 but don't mistreat him; by that road, 10
 for all his fury, he must return,
 for see, your new gilded sun
 must return the way it came.
 Winter and spring pass fleetingly
 through you; so nature decrees;
 the vagabond months, marked by
 the sky, are merely your guests.
 Parched by heat, you love the ice,
 prisoner of ice, you love the heat.
 Sure, the sun's brilliance 20
 breaks your transparent jail,
 made of liquid crystal and seeming silver.
 But I fear that, burning,
 it comes less to liberate
 than to imbibe you,
 and that you should decry
 what impoverishes your clear current,
 more than the pious ice,
 which, seeing you weary of ever flowing,
 freezes your motion, 30
 so you might rest.

Al pincel

Tú, si en cuerpo pequeño, 1
eres, pincel, competidor valiente
de la Naturaleza,
hácete el Arte dueño
de cuanto crece y siente.
Tuya es la gala, el precio y la belleza;
tú enmiendas de la muerte
la invidia, y restituyes ingenioso
cuanto borra cruel. Eres tan fuerte,
eres tan poderoso, 10
que en desprecio del Tiempo y de sus leyes,
y de la antigüedad ciega y oscura,
del seno de la edad más apartada
restituyes los príncipes y reyes,
la ilustre majestad y la hermosura
que huyó de la memoria sepultada.

Por ti, por tus conciertos
comunican los vivos con los muertos;
y a lo que fue en el día,
a quien para volver niega la Hora 20
camino y paso, eres pies y guía,
con que la ley del mundo se mejora.
Por ti el breve presente,
que aun ve apenas la espalda del pasado,
que huye de la vida arrebatado,
le comunica y trata frente a frente.

To the paintbrush

You, paintbrush, 1
 despite your tiny body,
 are nature's valiant rival;
 art makes you master
 of all that grows and feels.
 Yours is the glory, the beauty,
 and the prize; death's envy
 you remedy and wittily restore
 what it cruelly removes.

You are so strong, so mighty, 10
 that disdaining time's laws,
 and the shadows of antiquity,
 you restore, from ages long past,
 princes, kings, and queens,
 illustrious majesty and beauty,
 which, buried, flees from memory.

Through you, arranged by you,
 the living converse with the dead;
 and what once existed,
 for whoever would bring it back, 20
 denying the hours
 and the paths of time,
 you are the feet, the guide,
 by which the world's law bends.
 Through you, the brief present,
 which barely glimpses
 the back of the past,
 which flees from fleeting life,
 now greets it face to face.

Los Césares se fueron
a no volver; los reyes y monarcas
el postrer paso irrevocable dieron;
y, siendo ya desprecio de las Parcas, 30
en manos de Protógenes y Apeles,
con nuevo parto de ingeniosa vida,
segundos padres fueron los pinceles.
¿Qué ciudad tan remota y escondida
dividen altos mares,
que, por merced, pincel, de tus colores,
no le miren los ojos,
gozando su hermosura en sus despojos?
Que en todos los lugares
son, con sólo mirar, habitadores. 40
Y los golfos temidos,
que hacen oír al cielo sus bramidos,
sin estrella navegan,
y a todas partes sin tormenta llegan.

Tú dispensas las leguas y jornadas,
pues todas las provincias apartadas,
con blando movimiento
en sus círculos breves,
las camina la vista en un momento;
y tú solo te atreves 50
a engañar los mortales de manera,
que, del lienzo y la tabla lisonjera,
aguardan los sentidos que les quitas,
cuando hermosas cautelas acreditas.
Viose más de una vez Naturaleza
de animar lo pintado cudiciosa;
confesóse invidiosa
de ti, docto pincel, que la enseñaste,

The Caesars are gone 30
never to return; kings and monarchs
have taken their last, irrevocable step;
and though disdained by the fates,
in the hands of Protogenes and Apelles,
ingenious brushes restored their lives,
becoming their second fathers.
What city so hidden and remote,
separated by the sea,
thanks to you, paintbrush, and your colors,
can the eyes not see, 40
delighting in the beauty of their spoils?
For in every locale, only by looking,
people appear.
And the feared waves,
whose roaring the heavens hear,
are sailed without a star,
and crossed without a storm.

You forgive leagues and journeys,
as sight travels along the gentle
motion of your tiny circles 50
to the most distant
provinces in a moment;
and you alone dare
to deceive mortals, so that
the senses warily watch
the canvas and flattering panel,
which disarms them, as you
make prudent, beautiful scenes.
Nature found itself more than once
greedy to lend life to the paint; 60
it confessed it was jealous
of you, learned brush, wanting

en sutil lino estrecho,
cómo hiciera mejor lo que había hecho. 60
Tú solo despreciaste
los conciertos del año y su gobierno,
y las leyes del día,
pues las flores de abril das en hibierno,
y en mayo, con la nieve blanca y fría,
los montes encaneces.

Ya se vio muchas veces,
¡oh pincel poderoso!, en docta mano
mentir almas los lienzos de Ticiano.
Entre sus dedos vimos 70
nacer segunda vez, y más hermosa,
aquella sin igual gallarda Rosa,
que tantas veces de la fama oímos.
Dos le hizo de una,
y dobló lisonjero su cuidado
al que, fiado en bárbara fortuna,
traía, por diadema, media luna
del cielo, a quien ofende coronado.

Contigo Urbino y Ángel tales fueron,
que hasta sus pensamientos engendraron, 80
pues, cuando los pintaron,
vida y alma les dieron.
Y el famoso español que no hablaba,
por dar su voz al lienzo que pintaba.
Por ti Richi ha podido,
docto, cuanto ingenioso,
en el rostro de Lícida hermoso,
con el naípe nacido,
criar en sus cabellos

to learn, on a fine stretched canvas,
how to improve what it had made.
You alone disdain
the rhythms and rules of the seasons,
and the laws of time,
as you furnish April's flowers in winter
and age the mountains in May,
with the white and cold of snow.

70

Already many times, O mighty brush,
by Titian's learned hand, we have seen
a canvas feign men's souls.
Between his fingers we saw
born again, and more beautifully,
that peerless, elegant Rosa,
whose fame everyone knew.
From one he made two,
and doubled the sweet sorrow
for him, who trusting barbaric fortune,
wore, as the crowning blow,
the horns of the half moon.

80

Raphael and Michelangelo
through you were such,
they fathered even their thoughts,
for when they painted,
they gave them life and soul.
For you the famous Spaniard went mute
to lend his voice to what he painted.
Through you Richi was able,
as witty as he was learned,
to frame Licida's thin, beautiful face,
born nature's miniature,
with gold in her hair,

90

oro, y estrellas en sus ojos bellos; 90
en sus mejillas, flores,
primavera y jardín de los amores;
y en su boca, las perlas,
riendo de quien piensa merecerlas.
Así que fue su mano,
con trenzas, ojos, dientes y mejillas,
Indias, cielo y verano,
escondiendo aun más altas maravillas,
o de envidioso de ellas
o de piedad del que llegase a vellas. 100

Por ti el lienzo suspira
y sin sentidos mira.
Tú sabes sacar risa, miedo y llanto
de la ruda madera, y puedes tanto,
que cercas de ira negra las entrañas
de Aquiles, y amenazas con sus manos
de nuevo a los troyanos,
que, sin peligro y con ingenio, engañas.
Vemos por ti en Lucrecia 110
la desesperación, que el honor precia;
de su sangre cubierto
el pecho, sin dolor alguno abierto.
Por ti el que ausente de su bien se aleja
lleva (;oh piedad inmensa!) lo que deja.
En ti se deposita
lo que la ausencia y lo que el tiempo quita.

Ya fue tiempo que hablaste,
y fuiste a los egipcios lengua muda.
Tú también enseñaste,
en la primera edad, sencilla y ruda, 120
alta filosofía

and to put stars in her lovely eyes;
on her cheeks, flowers,
a garden, a whole Spring of love;
and in her mouth, pearls,
mocking whomever thinks he deserves them.

Thus was his hand, 100
with tresses, eyes, teeth, and cheeks,
Heaven, summer, and the Indies;
hiding still greater marvels,
whether from jealousy or piety
that one might see them.

Through you the canvas sighs
and, though lacking sight, sees.
You know how to extract laughter,
fear, and grief from coarse wood;
you can even fill the belly
of Achilles with black anger, 110
and with his hands threaten again Trojans,
whom you trick with wit without peril.
We see through you the despair
of Lucrece, who prizes honor;
her breast covered in blood,
the cause of her woe hidden.
Through you her distant, absent husband
still bears the good he left behind.
In you is kept safe, by God's grace,
what absence and time remove. 120

Ages ago you spoke and were
for Egyptians a mute tongue.
You also taught lofty philosophy
in that ancient time,
so simple and rude,

en doctos hieroglíficos oscuros;
y los misterios puros
de ti la religión ciega aprendía.
Y tanto osaste (bien que fue dichoso
atrevimiento el tuyo, y religioso)
que de aquel Ser, que sin principio empieza
todas las cosas a que presta vida,
siendo sólo capaz de su grandeza,
sin que fuera de sí tenga medida;
de Aquel que siendo padre
de único parto con fecunda mente,
sin que en sustancia división le cuadre,
expirando igualmente
de amor correspondido,
el espíritu ardiente procedido:
de éste, pues, te atreviste
a examinar hurtada semejanza,
que de la devoción santa aprendiste.

130

Tú animas la esperanza
y con sombra la alientas,
cuando lo que ella busca representas.
Y a la fe verdadera,
que mueve al cielo las veloces plantas,
la vista le adelantas
de los que cree y espera.
Con imágenes santas,
la caridad sus actos ejercita
en la deidad que tu artificio imita.

140

A ti deben los ojos
poder gozar mezclados

150

with obscure, learned hieroglyphs;
and blind religion
learned from you pure mysteries.
You dared so much (though yours
was a happy, pious audacity),
130
that even concerning that Being,
who without beginning begins
all things, lending them life,
his peerless grandeur
needing no outside help;
concerning Him,
who fathered with his fecund mind,
the singular creation, not letting
substance suffer division,
expiring equally
140
from a corresponding love
while thriving as burning spirit;
you dared, given all this,
to explore the secret sympathies
you learned from holy devotion.

You animate hope
and with shadows make it breathe,
when you depict what it seeks.
And with the one, true faith,
which moves Heaven's swift spheres,
150
you quicken the sight,
of those who believe and hope.
Spurred by holy images,
God shows charity in his deeds,
which your artistry imitates.

To you the eyes owe
the power to enjoy present

los que presentes son, y los pasados.
Tuya la gloria es y los despojos,
pues, breve punta, en los colores crías
cuanto el sol en el suelo,
y cuanto en él los días,
y cuanto en ellos trae y lleva el cielo.

and past things joined together.
Yours is the glory, yours the spoils,
for, in brief, you cultivate
as many colors as the sun on the earth,
as many passing days,
as Heaven gives and takes away.

160



“Through you the canvas sighs / and, though lacking sight, sees” (poem 15). El Greco, *Portrait of Jorge Manuel*, or “The Painter.” Oil on canvas. Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville, Spain. Photograph © Scala / Art Resource, New York. Used by permission of Art Resource, New York.

ELEGIES AND EPITAPHS

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.

Solo el Tibre 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 entombed in its ruins

O Pilgrim! you seek Rome in Rome,
but in Rome itself you cannot find Rome:
a cadaver are the walls Rome boasted,
and the Aventine Hill its own tomb.

It lies where the Palatine ruled
and, filed down by time, its medals
appear more ruined by battles
with time than a Roman shield.

Only the Tiber remains, whose current
watered the city; now it mourns her,
a sepulchre, with dark, dolorous sounds.

O Rome, in your greatness and beauty,
you fled what was solid; and alone
what flees lasts permanently!

Memoria inmortal de Don Pedro Girón, Duque de Osuna, muerto en la prisión

Faltar pudo su patria al grande Osuna,
pero no a su defensa sus hazañas;
diéronle muerte y cárcel las Españas,
de quien él hizo esclava la Fortuna.

Lloraron sus invidias una a una
con las propias naciones las extrañas;
su tumba son de Flandes las campañas,
y su epitafio la sangrienta luna.

En sus exequias encendió al Vesubio
Parténope, y Trinacria al Mongibelo;
el llanto militar creció en diluvio.

Dióle el mejor lugar Marte en su cielo;
la Mosa, el Rhin, el Tajo y el Danubio
murmuran con dolor su desconsuelo.

Immortal memory of Don Pedro Girón, Duke of
Osuna, dead in prison

His country may have failed the great Osuna,
but never did his deeds in his defense,
Spain gave him death and prison,
though he made Fortune her slave.

Foreign lands, and his own,
wept tears of envy, one by one;
his tomb was the fields of Flanders,
his epitaph the blood-red moon.

For his funeral Naples ignited
Vesuvius, Sicily Etna;
and martial grief became a flood.

Mars gave him the best place in heaven;
the Mosel, Rhine, Tagus, and Danube
murmur their grief inconsolably.

Inscripción en el túmulo de Don Pedro Girón,
Duque de Osuna, Virrey y Capitán General de las
dos Sicilias

De la Asia fue terror, de Europa espanto,
y de la África rayo fulminante;
los golfos y los puertos de Levante
con sangre calentó, creció con llanto.

Su nombre solo fue vitoria en cuanto
reina la luna en el mayor turbante;
pacificó motines en Brabante:
que su grandeza sola pudo tanto.

Divorcio fue del mar y de Venecia,
su desposorio dirimiendo el peso
de naves, que temblaron Chipre y Grecia.

¡Y a tanto vencedor venció un proceso!
De su desdicha su valor se precia:
¡murió en prisión, y muerto estuvo preso!

Inscription on the tomb of Don Pedro Girón,
Duke of Osuna, Viceroy and Captain General of
the Two Sicilies

He was Asia's terror, Europe's fear,
and Africa's fulminating thunder;
he warmed levantine seas and ports
with blood, swelling them with tears.

His name alone spelled victory,
where the moon on the turban flutters;
he quelled rebellions in Flanders:
for his might alone could do this.

He divorced Venice and the sea;
his betrothal annulled the knot of ships
making Greece and Cyprus tremble.

Such a victor vanquished by a trial!
His valor by misfortune proved:
he died in jail, imprisoned by death.

Túmulo a Colón habla un pedazo de la nave en que descubrió el nuevo mundo

Imperio tuve un tiempo, pasajero,
sobre las ondas de la mar salada;
del viento fui movida y respetada
y senda abrí al Antártico hemisfero.

Soy con larga vejez tosco madero;
fui haya, y de mis hojas adornada,
del mismo que alas hice en mi jornada,
lenguas para cantar hice primero.

Acompaño esta tumba tristemente,
y aunque son de Colón estos despojos,
su nombre callo, venerable y santo,

de miedo que, de lástima, la gente
tanta agua ha de verter con tiernos ojos,
que al mar nos vuelva a entrambos con el llanto.

At Christopher Columbus's tomb, a piece of the ship
that discovered the New World speaks

Once I had an empire, fleeting,
on the waves of the salty sea;
revered by the blowing winds,
I paved a path to the antipodes.

I am wood coarsened by years;
once a beech, adorned by leaves,
from these I made wings for sailing,
but first I made tongues to sing.

Mournfully, I accompany this tomb,
and though the Captain's remains
lie here, his holy, given name

I will not say, from pity, from fear
that tender eyes will shed so much water,
that grief will wash us both again to sea.



“Once I had an empire, fleeting, / on the waves of the salty sea” (poem 19). Theodore de Bry, *Christopher Columbus Crossing the Ocean on His Caravelle*. Copperplate engraving. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Photograph © Snark / Art Resource, New York. Used by permission of Art Resource, New York.

LOVE POEMS

Compara con el Etna las propiedades de su amor

Ostentas, de prodigios coronado,
sepulcro fulminante, monte aleve,
las hazañas del fuego y de la nieve,
y el incendio en los yelos hospedado.

Arde el hibierno en llamas erizado,
y el fuego lluvias y granizos bebe;
truenas, si gimes; si respiras, llueve
en cenizas tu cuerpo derramado.

Si yo no fuera a tanto mal nacido,
no tuvieras, ¡oh Etna!, semejante:
fueras hermoso monstruo sin segundo.

Mas como en alta nieve ardo encendido,
soy Encélado vivo y Etna amante,
y ardiente imitación de ti en el mundo.

He compares aspects of his love with Etna

Crowned with marvels, you boast,
fulminating sepulchre, traitorous peak,
of great deeds of fire and snow,
of a blazing pyre lodging in ice.

The winter burns bristling in flame,
the fire imbibes the rain and hail;
you groan, there's thunder; you breathe,
it rains your body scattered in ash.

If I had been born to less misfortune,
you, my Etna, would have no equal:
you'd be a beautiful, peerless monster.

But since my ardor blazes in lofty snow,
I am Enceladus reborn, Etna's lover,
your burning likeness in the world.

Exageraciones de su fuego, de su llanto, de sus suspiros y de sus penas

Si el abismo, en diluvios desatado,
hubiera todo el fuego consumido,
el que enjuga mis venas, mantenido
de mi sangre, le hubiera restaurado.

Si el día, por Faetón descaminado,
hubiera todo el mar y aguas bebido,
con el piadoso llanto que he vertido,
las hubieran mis ojos renovado.

Si las legiones todas de los vientos
guardar Ulises en prisión pudiera,
mis suspiros sin fin otros formarían.

Si del infierno todos los tormentos,
con su música, Orfeo suspendiera,
otros mis penas nuevos inventarían.

Exaggerations of his fire, grief, sighs,
and pains

If the abyss, unleashed by floods,
consumed all the world's fire,
the flame fueling my veins, fed
by my blood, could have restored it.

If the day, by Phaeton led astray,
drank all the earth's waters,
my eyes, with their pious tears
they spilt, could have renewed them.

If Ulysses kept all the gusty
legions imprisoned, my endless sighs
could have forged replacements.

If Orfeo, with his sweet music,
soothed all of Hell's torments,
my pains could have found new ones.

Describe a Leandro fluctuante en el mar

Flota de cuantos rayos y centellas,
en puntas de oro, el ciego Amor derrama,
nada Leandro; y cuanto el Ponto brama
con olas, tanto gime por vencellas.

Maligna luz multiplicó en estrellas
y grande incendio sigue pobre llama:
en la cuna de Venus, quien bien ama,
no debió recelarse de perdellas.

Vela y remeros es, nave sedienta;
mas no le aprovechó, pues, desatado,
Noto los campos líquidos violenta.

Ni volver puede, ni pasar a nado;
si llora, crece el mar y la tormenta:
que hasta poder llorar le fue vedado.

He describes Leander floating in the sea

Lightning flashes then floats as blind
Love spills, where Leander swims,
arrows tipped in gold; each wave Pontus
bellows, Leander groans to vanquish.

A malign light multiplied into stars,
and a huge blaze stalks a measly flame;
he who loves in Venus's cradle,
should not have feared losing them.

Thirsty ship, his sail and oars
are to no avail; the North wind
unleashed, ravishes liquid fields.

He cannot return, or swim back;
when he weeps, sea and storm grow:
no wonder weeping was denied him.

Encareciendo las adversidades de los Troyanos, exagera más la hermosura de Aminta

Ver relucir, en llamas encendido,
el muro que a Neptuno fue cuidado;
caliente y rojo con la sangre el prado,
y el monte resonar con el gemido;

a Xanto en cuerpos y armas impedido,
y en héroes, como en peñas, quebrantado;
a Héctor en las ruedas amarrado
y, en su desprecio, a Aquiles presumido;

los robos licenciosos, los tiranos,
la máquina de engaños y armas llena,
que escuadras duras y enemigos vierte,

no lloraran, Aminta, los troyanos,
si, en lugar de la griega hermosa Helena,
Paris te viera, causa de su muerte.

Exaggerating the adversities of the Trojans, he
exaggerates more Aminta's beauty

To see, shining in scarlet flames,
the walls beloved by Poseidon;
the field steaming red with blood,
the mountain resounding with groans;

Xanthus damned with corpses, swords,
shields, and heroes broken like rocks;
Hector, all tangled in the wheels,
and haughty Achilles disdain;

the unbridled pillage, the tyrants,
the well-armed machine of deceit
spilling out hordes of pitiless foes,

would not have made the Trojans weep,
Aminta, if, instead of Helen, that fatal,
Grecian beauty, Paris had seen you.

A una dama bizca y hermosa

Si a una parte miraran solamente
vuestros ojos, ¿cuál parte no abrasaran?
Y si a diversas partes no miraran,
se helaran el ocaso o el Oriente.

El mirar zambo y zurdo es delincuente;
vuestras luces izquierdas lo declaran,
pues con mira engañosa nos disparan
facinorosa luz, dulce y ardiente.

Lo que no miran ven, y son despojos
suyos cuantos los ven, y su conquista
da a l'alma tantos premios como enojos.

¿Qué ley, pues, mover pudo al mal jurista
a que, siendo monarcas los dos ojos,
los llamase vizcondes de la vista?

To a cross-eyed, beautiful lady

Were your eyes to gaze on just
one place, it would be cinders.
If they didn't gaze hither and thither,
the West would freeze, or the East.

Your lame, stuttering glance convicts
your criminal eyes of sinister deeds;
with deceitful sight, they shoot us
with sweet, fascinating, burning light.

What they do not gaze upon, they see;
what they see is their spoils, and their
conquest angers and pleases the soul.

What law, then, moved a wicked judge
to declare them, the eyes being monarchs,
mere counts of the countenance?

Soneto amoroso definiendo el Amor

Es yelo abrasador, es fuego helado,
es herida que duele y no se siente,
es un soñado bien, un mal presente,
es un breve descanso muy cansado;

es un descuido que nos da cuidado,
un cobarde, con nombre de valiente,
un andar solitario entre la gente,
un amar solamente ser amado;

es una libertad encarcelada,
que dura hasta el postrero parasismo;
enfermedad que crece si es curada.

Éste es el niño Amor, éste es su abismo.
¡Mirad cuál amistad tendrá con nada
el que en todo es contrario de sí mismo!

An amorous sonnet defining Love

It's sizzling ice and frozen fire,
a painful wound no one feels,
a boon desired, a bane possessed,
a brief respite that greatly wearies;

it's carelessness creating cares,
a coward with a brave man's name,
a solitary stroll amid a crowd,
a love wanting only to be loved.

it's a liberty imprisoned
surviving until the last gasp;
a sickness that thrives when cured.

This is the cherub Love, this his abyss.
See what amity he'd have with nothing,
contradicting himself in all things.

Himno a las estrellas

A vosotras, estrellas,
 alza el vuelo mi pluma temerosa,
 del piélago de luz ricas centellas;
 lumbres que enciende triste y dolorosa
 a las exequias del difunto día,
 güérfana de su luz, la noche fría;

I

ejército de oro,
 que, por campañas de zafir marchando,
 guardáis el trono del eterno coro
 con diversas escuadras militando;
 Argos divino de cristal y fuego,
 por cuyos ojos vela el mundo ciego;

IO

señas esclarecidas
 que, con llama parlera y elocuente,
 por el mudo silencio repartidas,
 a la sombra servís de voz ardiente;
 pompa que da la noche a sus vestidos;
 letras de luz, misterios encendidos;

de la tiniebla triste
 preciosas joyas, y del sueño helado
 galas, que en competencia del sol viste;
 espías del amante recatado;
 fuentes de luz para animar el suelo,
 flores lucientes del jardín del cielo;

20

Hymn to the stars

Toward you, oh stars, 1
 precious sparks from a sea of light,
 my timid plume rises in flight;
 mournful torches lit at the day's
 last rites, by your orphaned
 light, the frigid night;

troops of gold,
 marching through sapphire fields,
 guarding God's eternal throne,
 warring with motley armies; 10
 divine Argos of crystal and fire,
 whose eyes watch the blind world;

transparent signs,
 spread across the dumb silence,
 eloquent, loquacious flames,
 in the gloom your burning voice redeems;
 splendor lending the night its garb,
 letters of light, kindled mysteries;

from mournful twilight,
 precious jewels; from frigid dreams, 20
 finery to rival the sun's;
 a discreet lover's spies,
 fountains of light to quicken the ground,
 luminous flowers in heaven's garden;

vosotras, de la luna
familia relumbrante, ninfas claras,
cuyos pasos arrastran la Fortuna,
con cuyos movimientos muda caras,
arbitros de la paz y de la guerra;
que, en ausencia del sol, regís la tierra;

30

vosotras, de la suerte
dispensadoras, luces tutelares
que dais la vida, que acercáis la muerte,
mudando de semblante, de lugares;
llamas, que habláis con doctos movimientos,
cuyos trémulos rayos son acentos;

vosotras, que, enojadas
a la sed de los surcos y sembrados
la bebida negáis, o ya abrasadas
dais en ceniza el pasto a los ganados,
y si miráis benignas y clementes,
el cielo es labrador para las gentes;

40

vosotras, cuyas leyes
guarda observante el tiempo en toda parte,
amenazas de príncipes y reyes,
si os aborta Saturno, Jove o Marte;
ya fijas vais, o ya llevéis delante
por lúbricos caminos greña errante,

si amasteis en la vida
y ya en el firmamento estáis clavadas,
pues la pena de amor nunca se olvida,
y aun suspiráis en signos transformadas,
con Amarilis, ninfa la más bella,
estrellas, ordenad que tenga estrella.

50

you, resplendent kin
to the moon, pellucid nymphs,
whose steps shape Fortune,
whose motions alter expressions;
arbiters of peace and war,
in the sun's absence, you rule the earth; 30

you, dispensing
fate, tutelary lights
granting life, summoning death,
changing faces and places;
flames, you speak with learned gestures;
your quivering rays with perfect accents.

you, outraged now,
refuse to slake the thirst
of fruit and furrow, or you leave
the herds a mere fodder of ashes; 40
but when you gaze benignly,
the heavens labor for the farmer.

you, whose laws time
always scrupulously obeys,
threatening prince and kings,
should the gods abort you;
you take fixed paths, or wander
on slippery roads with disheveled hair.

If in life you loved,
but now are fixed in the sky, 50
with Amaryllis, the loveliest nymph,
and if now your sighs are transformed signs,
for one never forgets love's pain,
oh stars, decree a star for me.

Si entre vosotras una
miró sobre su parto y nacimiento
y della se encargó desde la cuna,
dispensando su acción, su movimiento,
pedidla, estrellas, a cualquier que sea,
que la incline siquiera a que me vea.

60

Yo, en tanto, desatado
en humo, rico aliento de Pancaya,
haré que, peregrino y abrasado,
en busca vuestra por los aires vaya;
recataré del sol la lira mía
y empezaré a cantar muriendo el día.

Las tenebrosas aves,
que el silencio embarazan con gemido,
volando torpes y cantando graves,
más agüeros que tonos al oído,
para adular mis ansias y mis penas,
ya mis musas serán, ya mis sirenas.

70

If one among you
was witness to her birth
and coddled her from the cradle,
guiding her deeds,
beseech her, stars, whoever you may be,
that she at least look upon me.

60

While I, unwound as smoke,
Arabian incense's exquisite breath,
will fare far, a burning pilgrim,
in search of you in the wind;
rescuing my lyre from the sun,
I will start singing when the day is done.

The shadowy birds,
shattering the silence with their cries,
flying slowly, gravely singing,
more omens than songs to hear,
flattering my fears and sorrows,
will be my muses, and my sirens.

70

Un galán preso y desterrado y ausente de su dama,
lamentándose de su desdicha

Cuando está recién nacido 1
y alegre gorjea el año,
y en sus niñeces las flores
previenen dosel al campo;

cuando en hombros de los montes,
para vestir a los prados
trae anticipada abril
la recámara de mayo;

cuando extendiéndose el sol,
que encogieron los nublados, 10
tiene mayor vida el día,
más jurisdicción sus rayos;

cuando la fuente que sirve
a rústica sed de vaso
más clara y más elocuente
se comunica a los ramos,

*yo solo, Floris, preso y desterrado,
con pena y llanto, sin el dueño mio,
borro la primavera, turbo el río,
enciendo el monte y entristezco el prado.* 20

A gallant lover, imprisoned, exiled and absent from
his lady, lamenting his misfortune

When the year is newly born 1
and warbles happily,
and infant flowers bloom,
making canopies for the fields;

when anticipating April,
bears the antechamber of May
from the mountains' shoulders,
to adorn the meadows;

when the sun climbs higher,
and shrivels the clouds, 10
the day has a longer life,
and sunshine a larger realm;

when the stream, which thirsty
shepherds take for a glass,
grows clearer, more eloquent,
and converses with boughs,

I alone, my love,
banished and captive,
with sorrow and tears,
without my lord, 20
darken the spring,
muddy the stream,
fire the mountain,
and sadden the meadow.

Ahora que se remozan
los montes de nieve blancos,
y apunta el bozo a los riscos
que mostró diciembre canos;

ya que, reinas de las flores,
las rosas están armando
su trono rēal de espinas,
guarda del verde palacio,

mal hablados, como libres,
mormuran arroyos claros
el desaliño de enero
y las locuras de marzo;

30

cuando mira el labrador
de esmeraldas sus trabajos
y en verde felpa de Ceres
las promesas de sus granos,

*yo solo, Floris, preso y desterrado,
con pena y llanto, sin el dueño mio,
borro la primavera, turbo el río,
enciendo el monte y entristezco el prado.*

40

Now as snowy peaks
revel like wayward youth,
and down replaces winter's
white hair on their crags,

Now as the rose, the queen
of flowers, arms its
royal throne with thorns,
to guard her green palace,

30

And ill-spoken streams
murmur like restive slaves
of January's neglect
and the folly of March;

When the farmer of emeralds
regards his labors,
seeing in Ceres's green
carpet the promise of seeds,

40

*I alone, my love,
banished and captive,
with sorrow and tears,
without my lord,
darken the spring,
muddy the stream,
fire the mountain,
and sadden the meadow.*



“In curly storms of wavy gold, / in gulfs of limpid, burning light . . .” (poem 30).
Anon., engraving from the frontispiece of Francisco de Quevedo, *El Parnasso español y musas castellanas* (Madrid: Pablo de Val, 1659); Typ 660.60.722, Houghton Library, Harvard University. Photograph: Houghton Library, Harvard University. Used by permission of the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, Houghton Library, Harvard College Library.

SONGS TO LISI

Retrato no vulgar de Lisi

Crespas hebras, sin ley desenlazadas,
que un tiempo tuvo entre las manos Midas;
en nieve estrellas negras encendidas,
y cortésmente en paz de ella guardadas.

Rosas a abril y mayo anticipadas,
de la injuria del tiempo defendidas;
auroras en la risa amanecidas,
con avaricia del clavel guardadas.

Vivos planetas de animado cielo,
por quien a ser monarca Lisi aspira,
de libertades, que en sus luces ata.

Esfera es racional, que ilustra el suelo,
en donde reina Amor cuanto ella mira,
y en donde vive Amor cuanto ella mata.

Not an ordinary portrait of Lisi

Curly threads, lawlessly untied,
which Midas held once in his hands:
black stars smouldering in snow,
which guards them courteously.

Roses awaited by April and May,
from time's insults protected;
sunrises awakened in a smile,
a carnation guards them avidly;

Brilliant planets in a living sky,
through which Lisi hopes to rule the wills
of those she binds with her lights.

The sphere is lucid, which illumines the ground,
where Love reigns so far as she gazes,
and where Love lives so far as she kills.

Comunicación de amor invisible por los ojos

Si mis párpados, Lisi, labios fueran,
besos fueran los rayos visuales
de mis ojos, que al sol miran caudales
águilas, y besaran más que vieran.

Tus bellezas, hidrópicos, bebieran,
y cristales, sedientos de cristales;
de luces y de incendios celestiales,
alimentando su morir, vivieran.

De invisible comercio mantenidos,
y desnudos de cuerpo los favores,
gozaran mis potencias y sentidos;

mudos se requebraran los ardores;
pudieran, apartados, verse unidos,
y en público, secretos, los amores.

Invisible love communicated through the eyes

If my eyelids, Lisi, were lips,
kisses like visual beams would come
from my eyes, which like eagles gazing
sunward, would kiss more than they see.

Hydropic, they would quaff your beauties
and, thirsty for crystals, your crystals;
from lights and celestial fires,
they would live, feeding their dying.

Sustained by invisible commerce,
and stripped of their body, such favors
my powers and senses would enjoy;

silently they would fan ardors;
and they could, apart, see themselves
joined publicly in secret passion.

Afectos varios de su corazón fluctuando en las ondas de los cabellos de Lisi

En crespa tempestad del oro undoso,
nada golfos de luz ardiente y pura
mi corazón, sediento de hermosura,
si el cabello dezlazas generoso.

Leandro, en mar de fuego proceloso,
su amor ostenta, su vivir apura;
Ícaro, en senda de oro mal segura,
arde sus alas para morir glorioso.

Con pretensión de fénix, encendidas
sus esperanzas, que difuntas lloro,
intenta que su muerte engendre vidas.

Avaro y rico y pobre, en el tesoro,
el castigo y la hambre imita a Midas,
Tántalo en fugitiva fuente de oro.

Diverse feelings in his heart, floating on the waves
of Lisi's hair

In curly storms of wavy gold,
in gulfs of limpid, burning light,
my heart swims, thirsting for beauty,
when you loosen your bountiful hair.

Leander, in tempestuous seas of fire,
parades his love, hurries his life;
Icarus, on treacherous golden paths,
burns his wings to die bravely.

An aspiring phoenix, its hopes
ignited, and whose death I mourn,
tries to beget lives by dying.

Greedy, rich, and poor, it imitates
Midas in wealth, hunger, and woe,
Tantalus, with his fleeing fount of gold.

Comparación elegante de Hércules con sus penas, y
del “Non Plus Ultra” de sus columnas, que desmintió
el rey Católico

Si el cuerpo reluciente que en Oeta
se desnudó, en ceniza desatado
Hércules, y de celos fulminado
(así lo quiso Amor), murió cometa,

le volviera a habitar aquella inquieta
alma, que dejó el mundo descansado
de monstruos y portentos, y el osado
brazo armaran la clava y la saeta,

sólo en mi corazón hallara fieras,
que todos sus trabajos renovaran,
leones y centauros y quimeras.

El *Non Plus Ultra* suyo restuararan
sus dos columnas, si en tus dos esferas,
Lisi, el fin de las luces señalaran.

An elegant comparison of Hercules with his woes
and of the “Non Plus Ultra” of his pillars, which the
Catholic King discredited

If the shining body, which undressed
itself on Oeta’s peak, which reduced
Hercules to ashes, who blitzed by jealousy
(so Love wished it), died like a comet,

should return to dwell in that restless
soul, which left the world cleansed
of portents and monsters, and the club
and spear graced anew his daring arm,

in my heart alone he would find beasts,
lions, centaurs, and chimeras,
which would renew all his labors.

He would restore the two pillars
of *Non Plus Ultra*, if your two spheres,
Lisi, would mark the limits of starlight.

Amor constante más allá de la muerte

Cerrar podrá mis ojos la postrera
sombra que me llevare el blanco día,
y podrá desatar esta alma mía
hora a su afán ansioso lisonjera;

mas no, de esotra parte, en la ribera
dejará la memoria, en donde ardía:
nadar sabe mi llama la agua fría,
y perder respeto a ley severa.

Alma a quien todo un dios prisión ha sido,
venas que humor a tanto fuego han dado,
medulas que han gloriosamente ardido,

su cuerpo dejará, no su cuidado;
serán ceniza, mas tendrá sentido;
polvo serán, mas polvo enamorado.

Love constant beyond death

The last shadow a cloudless day
may cast on me could close my eyes;
and this, my soul, may be freed by
an hour eager to flatter its ardor:

but on that far shore it will not
forsake the memory where it burned;
my flame can swim frigid water
and will flaunt so cruel a law.

Soul, long imprisoned by a god,
veins, fuel you gave to the blaze,
marrow, gloriously you burned;

it will leave its body, not its cares;
they will be ashes, but still will feel;
dust they will be, but dust in love.

Perservera en la exageración de su afecto amoroso y
en el exceso de su padecer

En los claustros de l'alma la herida
yace callada; mas consume, hambrienta,
la vida, que en mis venas alimenta
llama por las medulas extendida.

Bebe el ardor, hidrúpica, mi vida,
que ya, ceniza amante y macilenta,
cadáver del incendio hermoso, ostenta
su luz en humo y noche fallecida.

La gente esquivo y me es horror el día;
dilato en largas voces negro llanto,
que a sordo mar mi ardiente pena envía.

A los suspiros di la voz del canto;
la confusión inunda l'alma mía;
mi corazón es reino del espanto.

He persists in exaggerating his amorous feelings and
the excess of his suffering

In the cloisters of the soul the wound
lies silent, but hungrily consumes
the life in my veins feeding the flame
spread throughout my marrow.

Ardor drinks my dropsical life,
which, now a pallid ash in love,
a corpse of the pretty pyre, vaunts
its light buried in smoke and night.

People I shun and the day brings horror;
I prolong loud woes with dark tears
sent by my burning pain to a deaf sea.

I surrendered my song for sighs;
confusion floods my soul;
my heart is the kingdom of fear.



“Mother, I kneel before gold, / my lover and beloved . . .” (poem 41). José de Ribera, *Old Usurer*. Oil on canvas. Museo del Prado, Madrid. Photograph © Scala / Art Resource, New York. Used by permission of Art Resource, New York.

SATIRIC AND BURLESQUE POEMS

A un hombre de gran nariz

Érase un hombre a una nariz pegado,
érase una nariz superlativa,
érase una alquitara medio viva,
érase un peje espada mal barbado;

era un reloj de sol mal encarado,
érase un elefante boca arriba,
érase una nariz sayón y escriba,
un Ovidio Nasón mal narigado.

Érase el espolón de una galera,
érase una pirámide de Egipto,
los doce tribus de narices era;

érase un naricísimo infinito,
frisón archinariz, caratulera,
sabañón garrafal, morado y frito.

To a man with a big nose

There was a man stuck to a nose,
a superlative nose,
a bubbling beaker,
a badly bearded swordfish;

a crooked sundial,
an elephant's trunk,
a judge and jury nose,
a snuffing Ovidius Nosus.

a galley's battering ram,
an Egyptian pyramid,
a twelve-tribe nose;

an infinite schnoz, a hypernose,
a clown's mask, a supersized
coldsore, fried eggplant nose.

Mujer puntiaguda con enaguas

Si eres campana, ¿dónde está el badajo?;
si pirámide andante, vete a Egipto;
si peonza al revés, trae sobreescrito;
si pan de azúcar, en Motril te encajo.

Si chapitel, ¿qué haces acá abajo?
Si de diciplinante mal contrito
eres el cucurucho y el delito,
llámente los cipreses arrendajo.

Si eres punzón ¿por qué el estuche dejas?
Si cubilete, saca el testimonio;
si eres corozza, encájate en las viejas.

Si büida visión de San Antonio,
llámate doña Embudo con guedejas;
si mujer, da esas faldas al demonio.

A pointy woman with petticoats

If you're a bell, where's the clapper?
If a walking pyramid, get thee to Egypt;
If an overturned top, find a label;
If a Hershey's kiss, you need some foil.

If a turret, why are you down here?
If an unrepentant penitent's,
then you're his hood and his crime;
you're a mockingbird in a cypress tree.

If you're a plunger, where's the toilet?
If a goblet, then let's have a toast;
If a dunce cap, then clothe the stupid.

If a pointy vision of Saint Anthony,
your name is Lady Funnel with a mane;
If a woman, go to Hell with these petticoats.

Desnuda a la mujer de la mayor parte ajena que la compone

Si no duerme su cara con Filena,
ni con sus dientes come, y su vestido
las tres partes le hurta a su marido,
y la cuarta el afeite le cercena;

si entera con él come y con él cena,
mas debajo del lecho mal cumplido,
todo su bulto esconde, reducido
a chapinzanco y moño por almena,

¿por qué te espantas, Fabio, que, abrazado
a su mujer, la busque y la pregone,
si, desnuda, se halla descasado?

Si cuentas por mujer lo que compone
a la mujer, no acuestes a tu lado
la mujer, sino el fardo que se pone.

He undresses a woman of the great artifice that
comprises her

If she sleeps without her face,
eats without her teeth and steals most
of herself from her mate with clothes,
and lets cosmetics remove the rest;

if she seems all there when they dine,
but beneath unconsummated sheets,
her bulk is shrunken and hidden,
a parapet of corsets and wigheels,

why fear, my friend, if embracing
your wife, she cannot be found,
if, naked, she seems annulled?

If you think a woman's but her parts,
then no woman lies beside you,
but simply a sack to be stuffed.

Bebe vino precioso con mosquitos dentro

Tudescos moscos de los sorbos finos,
caspa de las azumbres más sabrosas,
que porque el fuego tiene mariposas,
queréis que el mosto tenga marivinos;

aves luquetes, átomos mezquinos,
motas borrachas, pájaras vinosas,
pelusas de los vinos invidiosas,
abejas de la miel de los tocinos;

liendres de la vendimia, yo os admito
en mi gazzate, pues tenéis por sogá
al nieto de la vid, licor bendito.

Tomá en el trago hacia mi nuez la boga;
que, bebiéndoos a todos, me desquito
del vino que bebistes y os ahoga.

He drinks fine wine with mosquitoes in it

Teutonic flies of savory sips,
dandruff for the tastiest quarts:
since every flame has it moths,
you think new wine needs winitoes.

winged lemons, greedy atoms,
drunken motes, boozy birds,
the wine's jealous fuzz,
like bees buzzing for mead,

You, lice of the vines, welcome to my
windpipe where the grape's child,
blessed juice, will be your noose.

Row with a gulp toward my throat;
for, drinking you down, I get back
the wine you drank, and you drown.

Búrlase del camaleón, moralizando satíricamente
su naturaleza

Dígote pretendiente y cortesano,
llámeme Plinio el nombre que quisiere;
pues quien del viento alimentarte viere,
el nombre que te doy tendrá por llano.

Fuelle vivo en botarga de gusano,
glotón de soplos, que tu piel adquiere;
mamón de la provincia, pues se infiere
que son tus pechos vara y escribano.

Si del aire vivieras, almorzaras
respuestas de ministros y señores;
consultas y decretos resollaras;

fueran tu bodegón aduladores,
las tontas vendederas de sus caras,
sastres, indianos, dueñas y habladores.

Mocking the chameleon and satirically moralizing its nature

I call you a courtier and a suitor,
no matter what Pliny dubs you;
for whoever sees you feed on airs,
will think these your plainest names.

Living bellows in a worm's suit,
glutton of narcs who stick to your skin;
wet nurse of the province, whose
breasts are taken for judge and scribe.

If you can live off air, you may lunch
on words of lords and ministers, you may
inflate yourself with advice and decrees;

your feast would be flatterers,
the silly women selling their faces,
tailors, indians, landladies, and gossips.

Desengaño de las mujeres

Puto es el hombre que de putas fía,
y puto el que sus gustos apetece;
puto es el estipendio que se ofrece
en pago de su puta compañía.

Puto es el gusto, y puta la alegría
que el rato putaril nos encarece;
y yo diré que es puto a quien parece
que no sois puta vos, señora mía.

Mas llámenme a mí puto enamorado,
si al cabo para puta no os dejare;
y como puto muera yo quemado,

si de otras tales putas me pagare;
porque las putas graves son costosas,
las putillas viles, afrentosas.

Disillusionment with women

A man is a queer slut who trusts sluts;
he is a slut who savors his tastes;
sluttish is the sum he offers
to pay for his sluttish company.

Slutty is the desire, slutty the joy,
with which the beslutted rat tempts us;
and I would even say he's a slut
who thinks, my dear lady, you are not.

But let them call me a slut in love
if I finally don't leave your slutty ways,
and like a macho slut may I die by fire

if I take pleasure in other such sluts.
since the haughty sluts are pricey,
and common sluts, a dirty shame.

“La voz del ojo, que llamamos pedo”

La voz del ojo, que llamamos pedo
(ruiseñor de los putos), detenida,
da muerte a la salud más presumida,
y el propio Preste Juan le tiene miedo.

Mas pronunciada con el labio acedo
y con pujo sonoro despedida,
con pullas y con risa da la vida,
y con puf y con asco, siendo quedo.

Cágome en el blasón de los monarcas
que se precian, cercados de tudescos,
de dar la vida y dispensar las Parcas.

Pues en el tribunal de sus gregüescos,
con aflojar y comprimir las arcas,
cualquier culo lo hace con dos cuescos.

“The eye’s voice we call a fart”

The eye’s voice we call a fart
(nightingale of sodomites), if
detained, kills the healthiest
and scares the wealthiest.

But if pronounced with a vile lip
and with a sonorous, farewell push,
with curses and jests, with a soft,
disgusting puff, it gives life.

I shit on the blazons of kings,
who fancy, guarded by Germans,
they grant life and dispense fate;

for in the tribunal of its trousers,
easing and squeezing the chambers,
any asshole does so with two farts.

“Poderoso caballero es don Dinero”

Poderoso caballero I
es don Dinero.

Madre, yo al oro me humillo;
 él is mi amante y mi amado,
 pues, de puro enamorado,
 de contino anda amarillo;
 que pues, doblón o sencillo,
 hace todo cuanto quiero,
poderoso caballero
es don Dinero. 10

Nace en las Indias honrado,
 donde el mundo le acompaña;
 viene a morir en España,
 y es en Génova enterrado.
 Y pues quien le trae al lado
 es hermoso, aunque sea fiero,
poderoso caballero
es don Dinero.

Es galán y es como un oro,
 tiene quebrado el color, 20
 persona de gran valor,
 tan cristiano como moro.
 Pues que da y quita el decoro
 y quebranta cualquier fuero,
poderoso caballero
es don Dinero.

“A mighty knight is Don Dinero”

A mighty knight 1
is Don Dinero.

Mother, I kneel before gold,
 my lover and beloved;
 and knowing I adore him,
 he turns melancholic yellow.
 Because he follows his every lust
 whether doubloon or dust,
a mighty knight
is Don Dinero. 10

Well-born in the Indies,
 and welcomed by the world,
 he comes to Spain to die,
 although Genoa buries him.
 Because the beastly are beautiful
 wherever he proves plentiful,
a mighty knight
is Don Dinero.

He is so gallant, and like
 a gold coin, fashionably pale; 20
 as a man of great means,
 nobody asks his creed.
 Since there's no law he doesn't break,
 and respect he gives and takes,
a mighty knight is
Don Dinero.

Son sus padres principales,
y es de nobles descendiente,
porque en las venas de Oriente
todas las sangres son reales; 30
y pues es quien hace iguales,
al duque y al ganadero,
poderoso caballero
es don Dinero.

Mas ¿a quién no maravilla
ver en su gloria sin tasa
que es lo menos de su casa
doña Blanca de Castilla?
Pero, pues da al bajo silla
y al cobarde hace guerrero, 40
poderoso caballero
es don Dinero.

Sus escudos de armas nobles
son siempre tan principales,
que sin sus escudos reales
no hay escudos de armas dobles;
y pues a los mismos robles
da codicia su minero,
poderoso caballero
es don Dinero. 50

Por importar en los tratos
y dar tan buenos consejos,
en las casas de los viejos
gatos le guardan de gatos.
Y pues él rompe recatos
y ablanda al juez más severo,
poderoso caballero
es don Dinero.

His parents are princely;
they descend from nobility:
for in the veins of the East
all the bloodlines run blue. 30
Because shepherds and kings
he puts on the same footing,
a mighty knight
is Don Dinero.

And who doesn't marvel
to see the endless glory
of his most distant relation,
the Countess of Penny?
But since he comforts the poor,
and spurs cowards to war, 40
a mighty knight
is Don Dinero.

Nothing is nobler than
a coat of arms on a coin;
for lacking silver shields
no swords will be forged.
Since even the miner is envied
by trees plowing the sea,
a mighty knight
is Don Dinero. 50

For contracts to be valid,
and for council to count,
he is saved from thieves
by the safes of misers.
Since he destroys all modesty
but always buys clemency,
a mighty knight
is Don Dinero.

Y es tanta su majestad
(aunque son sus duelos hartos),
que con haberle hecho cuartos,
no pierde su autoridad;
pero, pues da calidad
al noble y al pordiosero,
poderoso caballero
es don Dinero. 60

Nunca vi damas ingratas
a su gusto y afición;
que a las caras de un doblón
hacen sus caras baratas;
y pues las hace bravatas
desde una bolsa de cuero,
poderoso caballero
es don Dinero. 70

Más valen en cualquier tierra
(¡mirad si es harto sagaz!)
sus escudos en la paz
que rodelas en la guerra.
Y pues al pobre le entierra
y hace propio al forastero,
poderoso caballero
es don Dinero. 80

And though his pains are great,
his majesty is greater, 60
for even drawn and quartered,
he retains his value.
And because he bestows glamour
on both nobles and beggars,
a mighty knight
is Don Dinero.

I never saw ladies ungrateful
for his favors and affection;
when they see a doubloon's face,
they cheaply paint their own. 70
Because he makes them strut and worse,
while still hidden in a purse,
a mighty knight
is Don Dinero.

Everywhere on earth—
I bet you I'm right—
his shillings are worth more
in peace than shields in war.
Because he kills the pauper
and makes welcome the stranger, 80
a mighty knight
is Don Dinero.

Refiere su nacimiento y las propiedades que le comunicó

“Parióme adrede mi Madre,
¡ojalá no me pariera!,
aunque estaba, cuando me hizo,
de gorja Naturaleza. 1

“Dos maravedís de Luna
alumbraban a la tierra,
que, por ser yo el que nacía,
no quiso que un cuarto fuera.

“Nací tarde, porque el sol
tuvo de verme vergüenza, 10
en una noche templada,
entre clara y entre yema.

“Un miércoles con un martes
tuvieron grande revuelta,
sobre que ninguno quiso
que en sus términos naciera.

“Nací debajo de Libra,
tan inclinado a las pesas,
que todo mi amor le fundo
en las madres vendederas. 20

“Diome el León su cuartana,
diome el Escorpión su lengua,
Virgo, el deseo de hallarle,
y el Carnero su paciencia.

He refers to his birth and the characteristics it conveyed to him

“My mother bore me maliciously;
I wish I had never been born!
although, when it made me,
Nature was throwing a party. 1

Two quarters of the moon
illuminated the earth:
for, because it was my birth,
it would not spend a dollar.

With the sun ashamed
to see me, I was born late, 10
on a mild night, between
moon-white and sun-yoke.

Wednesday battled long
and hard with Tuesday,
for neither wanted me
born on their watch.

I was born beneath Libra,
my desires in the balance;
for I weigh all my love like
mothers selling daughters. 20

Leo gave me quartan fever,
Scorpio its stinging tongue,
Virgo the desire to find her,
and Aries its great patience.

“Murieron luego mis padres;
Dios en el cielo los tenga,
porque no vuelvan acá,
y a engendrar más hijos vuelvan.

“Tal ventura desde entonces
me dejaron los planetas, 30
que puede servir de tinta,
según ha sido de negra,

“Porque es tan feliz mi suerte,
que no hay cosa mala o buena,
que, aunque la piense de tajo,
al revés no me suceda.

“De estériles soy remedio,
pues, con mandarme su hacienda,
les dará el cielo mil hijos
por quitarme las herencias. 40

“Y para que vean los ciegos,
pónganme a mí a la vergüenza;
y para que cieguen todos,
llévenme en coche o litera.

“Como a imagen de milagros
me sacan por las aldeas:
si quieren Sol, abrigado,
y desnudo, porque llueva.

“Cuando alguno me convida
no es a banquetes ni a fiestas, 50
sino a los misacantanos,
para que yo les ofrezca.

Then my parents passed away;
may God keep them in heaven,
may they never return here
to beget more children.

From that moment the planets
left me such bad fortune, 30
it could fill in for ink,
as black as it has been.

Since my fate is so blessed,
neither good nor bad exists;
I think my pen and sword
are sharp, but they cut nothing.

I remedy men's sterility
when I'm named in their wills:
Heaven gives them a thousand
sons to quit my inheritance. 40

So the blind might see,
my shame's publicly displayed;
so everybody goes blind,
I'm carried in coaches or litters.

Like the images of saints
I'm paraded through towns:
covered up, if they want sun,
stripped naked, to make it rain.

When someone invites me,
it is not to parties or feasts, 50
but to a priest's first mass,
where he receives my gifts.

“De noche soy parecido
a todos cuantos esperan
para molerlos a palos,
y así, inocente, me pegan.

“Aguarda hasta que yo pase,
si ha de caerse, una teja;
aciértanme las pedradas:
las curas sólo me yerran.

60

“Si a alguno pido prestado,
me responde tan a secas
que, en vez de prestarme a mí,
me hace prestar paciencia.

“No hay necio que no me hable,
ni vieja que no me quiera,
ni pobre que no me pida,
ni rico que no me ofenda.

“No hay camino que no yerre,
ni juego donde no pierda,
ni amigo que no me engañe,
ni enemigo que no tenga.

70

“Agua me falta en el mar,
y la hallo en las tabernas,
que mis contentos y el vino
son aguados dondequiera.

“Dejo de tomar oficio,
porque sé por cosa cierta
que, en siendo yo calcetero,
andarán todos en piernas.

80

At night I'm taken for a crook,
by folks with sticks hoping
to waylay thieves; and though
I'm guiltless, they beat me.

If a roof tile is ready
to fall, it waits until I pass;
in me stones find their target:
priests alone miss their mark.

60

If I ask someone for a loan,
they answer me so slowly,
that rather than lending money,
they make me borrow patience.

No fool ignores me,
no crone doesn't desire me,
no beggar doesn't entreat me,
no rich man doesn't insult me.

There's no road that goes right,
not a game I don't lose,
no friend doesn't deceive me,
no enemy I don't have.

70

Sailing the sea I lack water,
yet I find plenty in taverns,
since my pleasures and wine
are everywhere diluted.

I've foresworn all vocations,
for it's a certain wager,
that if I were a hosier
all legs would go naked.

80

“Si estudiara medicina,
aunque es socorrida ciencia,
porque no curara yo,
no hubiera persona enferma.

“Quise casarme estotro año,
por sosegar mi conciencia,
y dábanme un dote al diablo
con un mujer muy fea.

“Si intentara ser cornudo
por comer de mi cabeza,
según soy de desgraciado,
diera mi mujer en buena.

90

“Siempre fue mi vecindad
mal casados que vocean,
herradores que madrugan,
herreros que me desvelan.

“Si yo camino con fieltro,
se abrasa en fuego la tierra;
y en llevando guardasol,
está ya de Dios que lleva.

100

“Si hablo a alguna mujer
y la digo mil ternezas,
o me pide, o me despide,
que en mí es una cosa mesma.

“En mí lo picado es roto;
ahorro cualquier limpieza;
cualquiera bostezo es hambre,
cualquiera color, vergüenza.

If I studied medicine,
though it's a saving-science,
because I would be the healer,
nobody would get sick.

Last year I wanted to marry,
to soothe my conscience;
they gave me a devil's dowry
along with a hideous wife.

If I tried to be a cuckold,
and feast from my horns,
filled up with my disgrace,
my wife would stay faithful.

90

My neighbors have always been
choleric couples who argued,
farriers who rose at dawn,
and blacksmiths who never slept.

If I wear an overcoat,
the earth is scorched by fire;
when I carry a parasol,
God decrees it will rain.

100

If I speak to a woman,
and say a thousand sweet things,
she either soaks or spurns me,
which for me is all the same.

With me a hole is a tear;
any selflessness, stinginess;
any yawn means hunger;
any complexion, shame.

“Fuera un hábito en mi pecho
remiendo sin resistencia,
y peor que besamanos
en mí cualquiera encomienda.

110

“Para que no estén en casa
los que nunca salen della,
buscarlos yo sólo basta,
pues con eso estarán fuera.

“Si alguno quiere morirse
sin ponzoña o pestilencia,
proponga hacerme algún bien,
y no vivirá hora y media.

120

“Y a tanto vino a llegar
la adversidad de mi Estrella,
que me inclinó que adoras
con mi humildad tu soberbia.

“Y viendo que mi desgracia
no dio lugar a que fuera,
como otros, tu pretendiente,
vine a ser tu pretenmuela.

“Bien sé que apenas soy algo;
mas tú, de puro discreta,
viéndome con tantas faltas,
que estoy preñado sospechas.”

130

Aquesto Fabio cantaba
a los balcones y rejas
de Aminta, que aun de olvidar
le han dicho que no se acuerda.

A badge on my breast
is a patch ready to rip, 110
and any privilege I win
compels still lower bows.

For those folks to be out
who never leave home,
I need only come calling,
for them to be gone.

If someone wishes to die
without poison or plague
let him do me some good:
he won't live for two hours. 120

The adversity of my Star
has reached such extremes,
I'm doomed to watch you adore
your pride with my humility.

And since my disgrace
did not yield, like others,
to become your suitor,
I became your sucker.

I know I'm nearly nothing;
but you, pure discretion, 130
see me with so many faults,
I'm pregnant with suspicions."

All this Fabio sang toward
the balcony of Aminta,
who did not even remember,
it is said, to forget him.

Testamento de Don Quijote

De un molimiento de güesos, 1
a puros palos y piedras,
Don Quijote de la Mancha
yace doliente y sin fuerzas.

Tendido sobre un pavés,
cubierto con su rodela,
sacando como tortuga
de entre conchas la cabeza;

con voz roída y chillando,
viendo el escribano cerca, 10
ansí, por falta de dientes,
habló con él entre muelas:

“Escribid, buen caballero,
que en Dios en quietud mantenga,
el testamento que fago
por voluntad postrimera.

“Y en lo de ‘su entero juicio,’
que ponéis a usanza vuesa,
basta poner ‘decentado,’
cuando entero no le tenga.” 20

“A la tierra mando el cuerpo;
coma mi cuerpo la tierra,
qué, según está de flaco,
hay para un bocado apenas.”

Don Quixote's Last Will and Testament

After a fine bone-grinding
with just sticks and stones,
Don Quixote de la Mancha
lies prone, a sack of groans. 1

Stretched upon a shield,
breastplate become bedspread,
from out of his shell, like
a turtle, he sticks forth his head;

With a screeching voice,
seeing the scribe newly come, 10
for lack of teeth, he gnaws
these words with his gums:

“Write, good Sir Knight,
—may God give you peace
since this is my final wish—
this testament I bequeath.”

“And the phrase ‘in sound mind,’
which in wills is often found,
replace with ‘hard of hearing,’
because mine remains unsound.” 20

“I leave my bones to the earth,
may it feast upon my body:
barely a mouthful I’ll provide,
for I’m supremely skinny.”

“En la vaina de mi espada
mando que llevado sea
mi cuerpo, que es ataúd
capaz para su flaqueza.”

“Que embalsamado me lleven
a reposar a la iglesia,
y que sobre mi sepulcro
escriban esto en la piedra:

30

“Aquí yace Don Quijote,
el que en provincias diversas
los tuertos vengó, y los bizcos,
a puro vivir a ciegas.”

“A Sancho mando las islas
que gané con tanta guerra:
con que, si no queda rico,
aislado, a lo menos, queda.”

40

“Ítem, al buen Rocinante
(dejo los prados y selvas
que crió el Señor del cielo
para alimentar las bestias)”

“mándole mala ventura,
y mala vejez con ella,
y duelos en qué pensar,
en vez de piensos y yerba.”

“Mando que al moro encantado
que me maltrató en la venta,
los puñetes que me dio
al momento se le vuelvan.”

50

“I will my body be borne
in my sword’s old sheath:
a fitting coffin it will be
for a man as thin as a sheet.”

“Once embalmed carry me
to church for my repose; 30
and write on my tombstone
the words that I’ve composed:

“Here lies Don Quixote who
righted wrongs in many provinces,
double-crossing the cross-eyed,
always blind to commonsense.”

“Having won them in battle,
I leave to Sancho those Isles,
where, if he never gets rich,
he can at least enjoy exile.” 40

“Item: to faithful Rocinante
(I leave the fields and forests,
which the Lord of Heaven
made to feed hungry beasts).”

“I leave him evil fortune,
as well as bleak old age,
and pains in spades to chew,
instead of grass and sage.”

“I leave the enchanted Moor,
who abused me at the inn, 50
the punches he once lent me:
it’s high time I returned them.”

“Mando a los mozos de las mulas
volver las coces soberbias
que me dieron por descargo
de espaldas y de conciencia.”

“De los palos que me han dado,
a mi linda Dulcinea,
para que gaste el invierno,
mando cien cargas de leña.”

60

“Mi espada mando a una escarpia,
pero desnuda la tenga,
sin que a vestirla otro alguno,
si no es orín, se atreva.”

“Mi lanza mando a una escoba,
para que puedan con ella
echar arañas del techo,
cual si de San Jorge fuera.”

“Peto, gola y espaldar,
manopla y media visera,
lo vinculo en Quijotico,
mayorazgo de mi hacienda.”

70

“Y lo demás de los bienes
que en este mundo se quedan,
lo dejo para obras pías
de rescate de princesas.”

“Mando que, en lugar de misas,
justas, batallas y guerras
me digan, pues saben todos
que son mis misas aquestas.”

80

“I leave the muleteers
the proud kicks they gave me:
I restore them to relieve
my conscience and my body.”

“To my pretty Dulcinea,
from all the paddling I’ve withstood,
should she feel the winter’s cold,
I leave a hundred cords of wood.”

60

“My sword I leave to a hook;
but let it remain there
naked, dressed by no one else,
save by rust, if it dares.”

“My lance I leave as a broom,
so that someone may scourge
the spiders on the ceiling,
as if he were Saint George.”

“A breastplate, gorget, gauntlet,
half a visor, and a backplate
I leave to Quixote junior,
the successor to my estate.”

70

“All the other worldly goods
making up my bequest
I leave to charities which
rescue damsels in distress.”

“I will, instead of Masses,
that jousts, battles, and wars
be said, for these, everyone
knows, are masses to me.”

80

“Dejo por testamentarios
a don Belianís de Grecia,
al Caballero del Febo,
a Esplandián el de las Xergas.”

Allí fabló Sancho Panza,
bien oiréis lo que dijera,
con tono duro y de espacio,
y la voz de cuatro suelas:

“No es razón, buen señor mío,
que, cuando vais a dar cuenta
al Señor que vos crió,
digáis sandeces tan fieras.”

90

“Sancho es, señor, quien vos habla,
que está a vuesa cabecera,
llorando a cántaros, triste,
un turbión de lluvia y piedra.”

“Dejad por testamentarios
al cura que vos confiesa,
al regidor Per Antón
y al cabrero Gil Panzueca.”

100

“Y dejaos de Esplandiones,
pues tanta inquietud nos cuestan,
y llamad a un religioso
que os ayude en esta brega.”

“Bien dices (le respondió
Don Quijote con voz tierna):
ve a la Peña Pobre, y dile
a Beltenebros que venga.”

“I leave as my only witnesses
Don Belianis of distant Greece,
The Knight of Phœbus, and
Esplandian of famous feats.”

Then Sancho Panza declaimed
(listen closely to what he says)
with a slow, severe tone,
and a voice as thick as clay:

“It is not proper, my good master,
when you are settling accounts
with the Lord who created you
such crazy nonsense to spout.”

90

“It’s Sancho, Lord, who’s talking
who by your bedside remains,
sadly weeping buckets,
squalls of rocks and rain.”

“Choose as witnesses, the priest
who confesses you, Master
Hayseed the alderman,
and the goatherd Gil Blisters.”

100

“And leave off with Esplandians
(they’ve cost us too much trouble)
and call a holy man who might
help you now in your struggle.”

“Well said (Don Quixote
replied with a voice so tender);
go to the Rock of Pain and tell
Beltenbros to come hither.”

En esto la Extremaunción
asomó ya por la puerta;
pero él, que vio al sacerdote
con sobrepelliz y vela,

110

dijo que era el sabio proprio
del encanto de Niquea;
y levantó el buen hidalgo,
por haberle, la cabeza.

Mas, viendo que ya le faltan
juicio, vida, vista y lengua,
el escribano se fue
y el cura se salió afuera.

120

With this the Last Rites appeared
at the door, but when dear
Don Quixote saw the priest,
with surplice and candle near,

110

He saw in him the very Magus
who once bewitched Amadís;
And so our good Hidalgo raised
himself to speak his last piece.

But seeing he had already lost
his mind, life, sight, and speech,
the scribe left, and the priest
went elsewhere to preach.

120

“Ya sueltan, Juanilla, presos”

Ya sueltan, Juanilla, presos 1
 las cárceles y las nalgas;
 ya están compuestos de puntos
 el canto llano y las calzas.

Alguaciles y alfileres
 prenden todo cuanto agarran;
 levántanse solamente
 los testimonios y faldas.

Los necios y las cortinas 10
 se corren en nuestra España;
 el doblón y los traidores
 son los que tienen dos caras.

Los jubones y las cruces
 y las guerras tienen mangas;
 y tan sólo tienen cielos
 los ángeles y las camas.

Tienen cámaras agora 20
 los culos y posadas;
 y tienen nueces sin cuento
 los nogales y gargantas.

Los melones y estrñidos
 suelen siempre estar con calas;
 el limbo y los ojos, con niñas;
 el hombre y cabrón, con barbas.

“Now, Juanilla, captives”

Now, Juanilla, prisons 1
 and asses free captives;
 pants and shackles are worn,
 confessions and ballads sung.

Constables and pins
 fasten all that they can;
 while honesty and dresses
 reach new, all-time lows.

In Spain these days, 10
 fools and curtains blush;
 only doubloons and
 traitors have straight faces.

Crosses and bodices
 and armies have arms;
 and heaven is found
 in bed and with angels.

Assholes and hostels
 have vacant rooms,
 and necks and orchards
 have plenty of apples. 20

Constipated poets
 always have their paper;
 eyes and limbo, pupils;
 cuckolds and goats, beards.

Las putas y los caballos
son los que más se cabalgan;
los diablos y los deseos
son los que a todos engañan.

Los árboles y justicias
son los que tienen las varas;
los ricos y los que mueren
son los que en el mundo mandan.

30

Desdichas y maldiciones
solamente agora alcanzan;
y ya los que quieren sólo,
y no los que deben, pagan.

El pan y los pies sustentan;
higos y tiempo se pasan;
corren monedas y ríos;
músicos y potras cantan.

40

El codo y la lezna son
agudos, que es cosa brava;
y las llaves y los reyes
tienen de contino guardas.

Whores and horses
like most to be mounted;
demons and desires
leave everybody deceived.

Trees have their branches,
and judges their gavels; 30
in this world, the rich and
the dying give the orders.

Now only slanders
and curses hit their mark;
and only those who wish,
not those who should, pay.

Bread and hope sustain;
figs and time pass;
money and rivers flow;
minstrels and scrotums sing. 40

What a crazy thing:
the awl and tongue are sharp;
and keys and kings
are constantly guarded.

Contra D. Luis de Góngora y su poesía

Este cíclope, no siciliano,
del microcosmo sí, orbe postrero;
esta antípoda faz, cuyo hemisfero
zona divide en término italiano;

este círculo vivo en todo plano;
este que, siendo solamente cero,
le multiplica y parte por entero
todo buen abaquista veneciano;

el minoculo sí, mas ciego vulto;
el resquicio barbado de melenas;
esta cima del vicio y del insulto;

éste, en quien hoy los pedos son sirenas,
éste es el culo, en Góngora y en culto,
que un bujarrón le conociera apenas.

Against Góngora and his poetry

This faux Sicilian cyclops,
a microcosmic, posterior orb;
an antipodal face, a hemisphere:
half Sodom, half Gommorah;

this circle lives in plain view;
and, since it's nothing but a zero,
it's multiplied and divided by
every dainty Venetian merchant.

a monocle worn by a blind eye,
a hole as hairy as a horse's mane;
a peak of provocative vice.

this, where farts sing like sirens,
this is the crack of Góngora's cult
where even bungholers blanch.

Contra Góngora

¿Qué captas, noturnal, en tus canciones,
Góngora bobo, con crepusculallas,
si cuando anhelas más garcibolallas
las reptilizas más y subterpones?

Microcosmote Dios de inquiridiones,
y quieres te investiguen por medallas
como priscos, estigmas o antiguallas,
por desitinerar vates tirones.

Tu forasteridad es tan eximia,
que te ha de detractar el que te rumia,
pues ructas viscerable cacoquimia,

farmacofolorando como numia,
si estomacabundancia das tan nimia,
metamorphoseando el arcadumia.

Against Góngora

Benighted, silly Góngora what do you
 insinuate with your songs' crepuscularities?
 For the more you rise to Garcilarities
 the more you debase and reptilize them.

Microcomical God of enchiridions,
 you wish to be scrutinized like
 ancient medals, stigmas, or fossils
 to discombobulate rookie *vates*.

Your outlandishness is so extremist
 that when ruminated you are cursed,
 as you belch visceral excrementry,

laxocacofixating like nobiz,
 your bellybundance spews so bountily,
 metamorphiposing the acadiz.

Notes

*Si no siempre entendidos, siempre abiertos, / o enmiendan,
o fecundan mis asuntos.*

These notes aim to give the poems some historical context, identify important literary precedents, gloss mythological allusions, explain potentially obscure cultural references, and adumbrate somewhat major themes and currents of reception. Brief interpretations of difficult passages are also occasionally included. Lexical cruxes are annotated with the help of Sebastián de Covarrubias's 1611 *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (hereafter, *Cov.*), the *Diccionario de Autoridades*, published in six volumes from 1726 to 1739 (hereafter, *Aut.*), and María Inés Chamorro's *Tesoro de villanos* (Barcelona: Editorial Herder, 2002), a dictionary of late Renaissance slang (*germanía*) and idioms (hereafter, *Tes.*). Finally, these notes will indicate those infrequent places where the English translation significantly diverges from the original.

All Spanish versions of the poems are from José Manuel Blecua's standard edition of Quevedo's *Obra poética* (hereafter, *OP*). The numbers in square brackets at the end of each title (as well as references to other poems not included in my selection) correspond to this edition. In translating and glossing

these poems, my debts to other *quevedistas* are too great and too many to be acknowledged always in the notes themselves. With this said, in addition to the various annotations and *disertaciones* that Quevedo's friend and editor, José Gonzáles de Salas, included in the 1648 *El Parnaso español*, I have mined Blecuá's *Poemas escogidos* (hereafter, *BE*), Pablo Jauralde Pou's *Antología poética* (hereafter, *AP*), and James O. Crosby's *Poesía varia* (hereafter, *PV*) for their invaluable annotations to individual poems. For full references and further reading, see the selected bibliography.

Whenever references to line numbers in the English differ from the Spanish text, the English line numbers are given in square brackets as well.

- 1 Representase la brevedad de lo que se vive y cuán nada parece lo que se vivió / Describing the brevity of life and how past life appears to be nothing / SONNET [#2]:

Notwithstanding the existential mood some critics have discovered here, this famous sonnet deftly exploits the traditional structure of the Spanish sonnet, with its two quatrains followed by two tercets (the rhyme pattern is usually abba/abba/cdc/dcd). And while it explores the Neo-Stoic theme of *cotidie morimur* [daily we die], there is very little consolation from Stoic philosophy, or for that matter Christianity. Its diction borrows from the colloquial refrain “fue, es, y será” (it was, it is, and it will be). González de Salas notes that Quevedo is preoccupied here by death, old age, and sickness as *pensiones*, or labors that must be undertaken or debts to be paid.

LINES 1–2: “¡Ah de la vida!” plays on the colloquial expression used when calling on somebody's home (“Ah de la casa!”). Likewise, “¡Aquí de los años . . . !” plays upon “¡Aquí de la justicia!” (*PV*), or “Help! Police!” For an illuminating discussion of these lines and the literary traditions that Quevedo is renovating, see Julián Olivares, “‘Soy un fue, un sera y un cansado’: Text and Context,” *Hispanic Review* 63, no. 3 (1995): 387–410.

LINE 11: As Quevedo transforms the verb *estar* into different nouns, the “present” is reduced to something less than a “point.”

- 2 Significase la propia brevedad de la vida, sin pensar, y con padecer, salteada de la muerte / Expressing the essential brevity of life, unexpectedly, miserably assaulted by death / SONNET [#3]:

Offering a fascinating but grim take on the duality of mind and body—an obsessive concern in early seventeenth-century literature, philosophy, and theology—this sonnet echoes the Stoic themes of life as combat and as fleeting. Indeed, Seneca's *Moral Epistles* directly inform the poem: “Time's

velocity is infinite, which is still more evident in retrospect. For anyone who only directs his sight on the present misses it; so unnoticeably does the fleeting moment slide by . . . everything falls in the same depths” [In-finita est velocitas temporis, quae magis apparet respicientibus. Nam ad praesentia intentos fallit; adeo praecipit, fugae transitus lenis est . . . Omnia in idem profundum cadunt] (49.2–3). There may also be allusions to the Book of Job, as well as to Góngora’s famous sonnet, “Mientras por competir con tu cabello,” which ends “en tierra, en humo, en polvo, en sombra, en nada” [in earth, in smoke, in dust, in shadow, in nothing].

LINES 3–4: These verses present great difficulties; a more literal translation would be: “But I stick to ambitions and I barely guess the point/moment on the circle/siege that closes about me.” Compare with Seneca’s *Moral Epistles*: “A moment it is in which we live, and even briefer than a moment” [Punctum est quod vivimus et adhuc puncto minus] (49.2).

3 El escarmiento / The warning / SILVA [#12]:

Escarmiento can also mean “lesson.” Thus Quevedo relies on the venerable Augustinian metaphor of life as a path (*via*), as he explores the topical subject of the perils of navigation, which here are connected with the specific historical threat of the Turks. The relatively loose structure of the *silva* (an emblematically baroque strophic form of unfixed length, which alternates between lines of seven and eleven syllables and which uses various rhyme schemes) allows Quevedo subtly to represent different emotions in the course of the poem—a range not usually possible within the briefer sonnet form. Aldrete writes in his prologue to *Las tres Musas últimas castellanicas* that “having returned to Torre de Juan Abad after his last imprisonment in León, and before taking himself to Villanueva de los Infantes to cure the abscesses, which since prison he had on his chest, he composed the first song [i.e., ‘El escarmiento’] which is printed in this book in which he predicts his death, publishes his disillusionment [*desengaño*] and leaves texts for all posterity. It could serve as the inscription on his sepulchre.” But Jauralde Pou (*AP*) notes that a version of the poem was already circulating in 1620; he also sees the influence of Fray Luis de León in the *silva*.

LINE 23: A *ceño* is a “frown” or “glare”; “a severe and surly manner of looking by lowering the eyelids. This *ceño* is made by the discontented and the envious, and those who are not pleased to be seen” (*Cov.*).

LINE 46 [45]: Here *discurso* signifies also “judicious reason, noble thought” (*AP*).

LINE 65 [64]: Lances were made from the wood of the ash tree.

LINE 74 [73]: *entretener*, in addition to having the current meaning of “to entertain,” can mean “to dilate time” or “make something less noticeable or bothersome, or make it that it happens with less work, or with some pleasure” (*Aut.*).

LINE 75 [74]: Orpheus was a mythical figure in ancient Greek culture and was regarded as the greatest poet before Homer. The so-called *Orphic Hymns* were named after him, though actually these were Hellenistic and written beginning around 300 BCE. There are numerous myths associated with Orpheus; here Quevedo refers to the episode in which, after his wife (Eurydice) dies from a snakebite, Orpheus descends to Hades and persuades Pluto with the sweetness of his music to restore her life. (His plea, however, is only granted if he does not look back until she reaches the limits of Hades. But he looks back and is doomed to wander the world without her.)

LINE 76 [75]: A *jilguero* can be the acanthis, linnet, or finch. I have taken the liberty for the sake of euphony of calling it a “warbler.”

LINE 83 [82]: A *centinela* is literally a “spark,” but here it is a metonymy for the fire of the nightwatch.

LINE 93: *leños* was a common metaphor for ships, which I have rendered here via the metonymy “planks.”

LINE 110: *hora segura* is a metaphor for death (*PV*); *contar* suggests that the tomb is being figured as an hourglass (see *El reloj de arena*, poem 11).

LINE 115: *monstro con quien luchas* refers to the unphilosophical life.

LINES 127–28: Jauralde Pou (*AP*) cites Seneca’s *Epigram XVII* as the intertext: “Live for yourself alone, for you die alone with yourself” [Uni vive tibi, nam morire tibi].

4 “Un nuevo corazón, un hombre nuevo” / “A new heart, Lord, a new man”
SONNET [#13]:

This is the first poem in the 1613 sequence *Christian Heraclitus*, which marked a decisive spiritual turning point for Quevedo (see Introduction). Quevedo broke this collection apart when he decided in his last years to organize his verse according to the schema suggested by the nine muses. In addition to revising the poems, he also discarded the generic title of “psalm” that he had attached to each poem. There is also a parallel between this sonnet and a letter Quevedo wrote to Don Antonio de Mendoza: “Strip me, Lord, of these prisons” [Desnúdame, Señor, de estas prisiones]. Crosby (*PV*) compares the poet’s feeling of errancy to Dante’s at the beginning of the *Inferno*. Along with that of Democritus, the laughing philosopher,

the figure of Heraclitus, the weeping philosopher, was emblematic in late Renaissance culture. The Spanish text here is manuscript version B in Blecua (*OP*).

LINE 3: *desnúdame de mí* vividly distills Quevedo's struggle to reconcile his Christianity and Neo-Stoicism.

LINE 9: Besides meaning an "estate," *hacienda* can denote "the goods, possessions, and wealth that someone has" (*Cov.*).

5 "Trabajos dulces, dulces penas mías" / "My sweet labors, my sweet pains"
PSALM [#22]:

The opening verses recall Garcilaso's celebrated sonnet 10: "¡Oh dulces prendas por mi mal halladas, / dulces y alegres cuando Dios quería, / juntas estáis en la memoria mía / y con ella en mi muerte conjuradas!" Originally this poem was titled "Psalm 10" in *Heráclito cristiano*. The Spanish text here is manuscript version B in Blecua (*OP*).

LINE 14: *bien* has the sense of the Latin *bonum*.

6 Enseña cómo todas las cosas avisan de la muerte / He teaches how everything warns of death / SONNET [#29]:

One of Quevedo's most celebrated and studied poems, it is typical of the baroque penchant of blurring the boundaries between self and world, as it moves from the political to the natural to the personal realm. It echoes sentiments in Seneca's *Moral Epistles*: "And wherever I turn, everywhere I see the signs of my senescence" [Quocumque me verti, argumenta senectutis meae video] (12.1). Likewise: "I owe to my suburban villa that wherever I turned to, my old age became visible" [Debeo hoc suburbano meo, quod mihi senectus mea, quocumque adverteram, apparuit] (12.4). Despite this overwhelming sense of decay, the poem manages to convey a vertiginous sense of motion, which is fueled by the active verbs. A significantly different version first appeared in *Heráclito cristiano* as Psalm 17. This version is the one published in *El Parnaso español*.

LINE 1: *patria* can mean both "nation" and one's "town" or "locale" (as in "patria chica"). Blecua surmises that *patria* refers to Madrid, which had recently torn down its walls and gates (*PE*).

LINE 7: Crosby suggests that *monte* refers to a "plot of land covered by trees or plants" (*PV*), though it seems that a mountain's shadow would be better suited to stealing the day with shadows than would a copse of trees.

LINE 10: *despojos* are the "spoils of war." Fernando de Herrera in his highly influential *Anotaciones* (1580), a commentary on Garcilaso's poetry, uses

the word to refer to the “spoils” that one poet acquires by reading and studying another.

LINE 14: This recalls Ovid’s *Tristia*: “Wherever I gaze there is nothing save the image (or ghost) of death” [quocumque aspexi, nihil est nisi mortis imago] (1.11.24).

- 7 Conoce las fuerzas del tiempo y el ser ejecutivo cobrador de la muerte / He acquaints himself with the forces of time and death’s debt collector / SONNET [#31]:

A further variation on the trauma of time, this sonnet first appeared in *Heráclito cristiano* as Psalm 19. The version here is the one Quevedo revised for *El Parnaso español*. Horace’s *Odes* may be an intertext: “Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas / regumque turris” [Pale death impartially knocks with its foot on the huts of peasants as on the towers of kings] (1.4.13–14).

LINE 2: *edad* has the connotation of the Latin *aetas*.

LINE 5: “scale weak walls” depends on the common literary metaphor of “walls” for a “body.”

LINES 10–11: The meaning is literally: “How I could not want to live tomorrow without the labor of procuring my death.” A *pensión* can also mean a “tax,” “fee,” or “payment” (from the Latin *pensio*); it sometimes can signify a “spiritual right . . . to receive a certain portion of the fruits of the mass or blessing [*Beneficio*]” while one is still alive (*Aut.*).

LINE 13: *ejecución* (and *ejecutivo* in the title) has the sense of something done completely, or irrevocably (*AP*). It may also have the more literal sense of “a sale of goods.”

- 8 Desde La Torre / From La Torre / SONNET [#131]:

Jauralde Pou in his biography of Quevedo surmises that this poem, with its marvelous conceptual tensions between silence and music, death and life, was written after 1634 and the death of Quevedo’s wife. González de Salas writes: “Some years before his last imprisonment he sent me this excellent sonnet from la Torre.” Thus the “Don Josef” in line 11 is González de Salas. La Torre de Juan Abad was a small town in the southern part of La Mancha, where Quevedo had a house and property, and where, as his troubles at court grew increasingly frequent and severe, he found a refuge of sorts. He thus remakes the topoi of the *beatus ille* and a *locus amoenus* as places of scholarship and study. This is in stark contrast with the hyperbolic pastoralism of Góngora. Again Seneca’s *Moral Epistles* provide inspiration: “My

speech is mostly with books” [Cum libellis mihi plurimus sermo est] (67.2). Crosby (*PV*) compares the gesture of giving inanimate, artistic objects a voice with *Al pincel* (poem 15), lines 7–9; 17–18.

LINE 1: *desiertos* here exaggerates the isolated nature of the town, around which olive trees and wheat grew.

LINE 13: *calculo cuento* refers to the Roman custom of using a white or black *calculus*, a small pebble, to mark, respectively, a good or bad day.

9 Don Francisco de Quevedo / Don Francisco de Quevedo / SONNET [#134]:

This sonnet was written before 1627–28. Compare it with *A una mina* (poem 10).

LINE 1: *Malhaya* is a corrupt form of *mal haya*, or “may there be ill (toward) . . .”

LINES 9–10: *Phoebus* is an epithet for Apollo, and literally means “bright” or “pure.” Proteus is a minor Greek divinity of the sea and a servant of Poseidon; he had the gift of prophecy, and though he often took the form of an old man, he also had the ability to shift shape. See Homer’s depiction of him in the *Odyssey*, book 4.

10 A una mina / To a mine / SILVA [#136]:

As de Bry’s engraving of the infernal silver mines located within *Cerro rico* in Potosí (now Bolivia) reminds us, the extraction of precious metals from the New World came at enormous human cost. In the sixteenth century, Bartolomé de las Casas defended the cause of the indigenous peoples at the Spanish court and in various texts. While he had only moderate success in ameliorating their conditions, the growth of the “black-legend” that long tainted the view of Spain in Europe’s eyes can in part be attributed to him. For its part Quevedo’s *silva* is more concerned with the moral consequences of greed and luxury on Spanish society. It was written before 1611 and published in the *Segunda parte de las Flores de poetas ilustres*. In addition to being a “mine,” a *mina* was an ancient Greek coin. Quevedo’s propopeia changes its object, though, in the last strophe where he directs his words not to the *mina* but to a “rich man.” Again, Quevedo Neo-Stoically pleads for “quietud” [tranquility].

LINE 2: Here I have followed M. del Carmen Rocha and Enrique Moreno Castillo’s emendation of Blecua’s text A (“a quien del ocio dura avaro mano”), which creates the improbable image of a “hand” that is both “leisurely” and “greedy.” See Moreno Castillo’s “Anotaciones a la silva ‘A una mina,’ de Francisco de Quevedo,” *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 54, no. 2 (2006): 571–90.

LINE 4: *Leiva* is a fictional name for the “friend” and the poem’s addressee, i.e., the mine.

LINE 42 [47]: *desvelo* can also mean “vigilance,” “worry,” “anxiety.”

11 El reloj de arena / The hourglass [#139]:

This poem first appeared in the *Segunda parte de las Flores de poetas ilustres de España* (1611). Like many of his baroque contemporaries, Quevedo was fascinated by clocks and other time-keeping devices. See also *Reloj de campanilla* [#140], *El reloj de sol* [#141], and, in a satiric vein, the wonderful sonnet, *Fragilidad de la vida, representada en el mísero donaire y moralidad de un candil y reloj juntamente* [#552]. In the Renaissance, the hourglass was a reliable means of measuring time at sea; sometimes it appeared on pirate flags as a sign to potential victims that their time was up. Hourglasses were also common images on coffins in early modern England. In praising the poem’s beauty, Crosby (*PV*) points to the analogous image of *polvo* in “Love constant beyond death” (poem 30).

LINE 1: *contar* can mean both to count and to narrate.

LINE 4: Here *jornada* is a “road that can be walked in a day.”

LINE 10: This is a typically Quevedean conflation of space and time.

LINE 36: For all its brilliance, the final conceit describing a metamorphosis of sand/dust into glass offers no greater security for the speaker.

12 Juicio moral de los cometas / Moral verdict on comets / QUINTILLAS [#148]:

A foe of all forms of superstition and charlatanry, Quevedo marks here a fundamental epistemological tension in the baroque between an astrological worldview and more rationalist, astronomical one. (He also enjoyed mocking alchemists.) Intriguingly, he uses *quintillas* (a popular verse form that has stanzas of five lines rhyming in consonance according to various patterns) to skewer popular beliefs about comets, which were commonly treated as prodigies or augurs of doom. The themes of this poem are also explored in the satirical *La presunción vana de los cometas* [#525]. A more conventional Renaissance take on the effects of comets is epitomized by Calpurnia’s lines in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*: “When beggars die there are no comets seen; / The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes” (2.2.30–31).

LINES 24–25: Quevedo’s pen often targeted the quackery of doctors. See, for example, *Médico que para un mal que no quita, receta muchos* [#544] or *The Dream of Hell* in the *Sueños*.

- 13 Túmulo de la mariposa / The butterfly's tomb / SEXTILLA [#200]:
 Written perhaps as early as 1603, this *sextilla* (a traditional Spanish stanza form with six lines of eight syllables or less) plays on the baroque fascination with metamorphosis, which was partly inspired by a revival of interest in Ovid.
 LINE 6: In addition to meaning "springtime," *primavera* is also a kind of fabric (*tela*) with many colors (*PV*).
 LINE 10: A *galán* was a finely dressed ladies man, whose stature was well proportioned and motions graceful, and who had what Castiglione called *sprezzatura*. The *cuarta esfera* is the sphere of fire. Ptolemaic and much Renaissance cosmology conceived of the cosmos as consisting of five concentric spheres: at the center was the earth, and then, moving outward, spheres of water, air, fire, and ether. Blecua (*PE*) glosses this line as alluding to Phaeton (see line 18), the son of Helios, who crashed his father's chariot bearing the sun into the earth.
 LINE 14: Salamanders were thought to be impervious to fire; see Pliny's *Natural History* (10.86).
 LINE 21: The phoenix was a mythological, Egyptian bird, which was said to be unique and live for 500 years, after which it killed itself in a burning pyre. From the ashes would arise a young phoenix and the cycle would repeat itself.
 LINE 30: *gozar* means "to enjoy," "to delight," sometimes with a transitive, sexual connotation. I have tried to capture this with the Elizabethan "to die," which refers to what the French call *le petit mort*.
- 14 A una fuente / To a spring / SILVA [#203]:
 Written before 1611, this relatively brief *silva* manages to cast a long shadow on the pastoral, which, beginning with Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana* (ca. 1559), Cervantes's *Galatea* (1585), and continuing through Góngora's *Soleadas* (1612), was a favorite genre in the Spanish Renaissance.
- 15 Al pincel / To the paintbrush / SILVA [#205]:
 While this *silva* might be read as Quevedo's Counter-Reformation response to Protestant iconoclasm, it is worth noting that the poet in his time at court and in Italy was surrounded by royal and aristocratic collections of art, to say nothing of the art and architecture of public buildings and churches. He had, for example, access to many of Hieronymus Bosch's paintings that belonged to Philip II; indeed, Quevedo appears to owe Bosch a great deal in the *Sueños*. A nearer contemporary, Titian (1486–1576), was em-

ployed late in his life as a portrait painter by Philip II of Spain. Exploiting here the Horatian commonplace of *ut pictura poesis*, Quevedo makes poetry-painting the means of answering the ancient question: *ubi sunt qui ante nos fuerent?* [where are those who went before us?].

LINE 6 [7]: *precio* here is a “prize” or a “value” (*AP*).

LINE 31 [34]: Protogenes and Apelles were arguably the two most famous painters in classical Greece.

LINE 54 [58]: *cautelās* are “prudent acts” (*PV*).

LINE 72 [76]: Of *Rosa*, Crosby writes: “Quevedo alludes to a portrait by Titian, now lost, of a very beautiful woman called Rosa, or Rossa (that is ‘Russian,’ on account of her origin), and sometimes Roxolana or Rosa Solimana (because she was a ‘favorite of the Turk,’ that is, the Sultan, as Lope de Vega writes in *La Dorotea*, 3.4)” (*PV*). See Frederick de Armas, “Lope de Vega and Titian,” *Comparative Literature* 30, no. 4 (1978): 338–52.

LINES 74–78 [78–82]: I have taken a small liberty here to make the conceit more explicit. “In painting the favorite [Titian] made two from one, but he duplicated also the *cares* [*cuidados*] or preoccupations of the Sultan, whom the beloved deceived putting horns on him [i.e., *traía por diadema media luna*]” (*AP*).

LINES 83–84 [88–89]: This refers to Juan Fernández Navarrete (1526–1579), a Spanish painter known for his depiction of religious themes.

LINE 85 [90]: Giovanni Battista Ricci (1545–1620), an Italian painter.

LINE 88 [92–93]: There are various meanings in play here. A *naipe* is a “playing-card,” but the phrase *como un naipe* means “that something is very thin and dry; and one also says this of things which are very weak and slack from having been handled a great deal” (*Aut.*). Jauralde Pou notes that large portraits were often painted based on very tiny portraits on cards (*AP*).

LINE 133 [138–39]: There is a pun on *cuadre*, as *cuadrar* is “to frame something” but also “to agree with and adapt to the understanding, and thus we say: ‘For me it doesn’t fit [*cuadra*] what you say”” (*Cov.*).

LINE 134 [140]: *expirando* can mean both “dying” and, literally, “breathing-out.” It anticipates *alientas* in line 141 [146].

LINE 136 [142]: The stanza becomes still more allusive and abstract with *procedido*, from the verb *proceder*: “Speaking of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, it signifies that the Eternal Father produces the Divine word, engendering it with his understanding, from which it proceeds [*procède*]; and loving one another the Father and the Son, they produce the Holy Spirit, which comes from [*procède*] them both” (*Aut.*).

LINE 144 [150]: *planta* can mean “floor;” “story,” and thus invokes the common architectural metaphor of the cosmos as a *fábrica* or “grand edifice.” There is also another potential meaning here, for *planta* is the name “in painting for the place that any edifice occupies and fills up in the landscape” (*Aut.*).

16 A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas / To Rome entombed in its ruins / SONNET [#213]:

The most immediate model for this sonnet is Joachim du Bellay’s sequence of poems *Les antiquités de Rome* (1558). See especially the third sonnet in the sequence, “Nouveau venu, qui cherches Rome en Rome.” But Quevedo’s sonnet is more than an exercise in literary imitation; he visited Rome at least once when he was serving in Italy, and the themes of decay and evanescence riddle much of his verse.

LINES 4–5: The Aventine and Palatine are two of Rome’s legendary seven hills.

LINE 6: A *medalla* is “the effigy of the emperor, king, prince or noble who has merited having his figure and name stamped in metal” (*Cov.*).

LINE 8: Literally, a *blasón latino* would be a “Latin blazon”; a blazon is a lyric genre where a woman’s physical attributes are methodically praised or, occasionally, mocked. Petrarch revived the form in the early Renaissance.

17 Memoria inmortal de Don Pedro Girón, Duque de Osuna, muerto en la prisión / Immortal memory of Don Pedro Girón, Duke of Osuna, dead in prison / SONNET [#223]:

An audacious, arrogant, talented figure, Osuna fought valiantly in Flanders and later led different fleets against the Turks and pirates. He fell from power in 1620, after an unsuccessful conspiracy against Venice and the ascension of Philip IV. He died in prison on September 25, 1624. Implicit throughout the poem is the contrast between the duke’s small physical stature and his gigantic deeds. Other poems dedicated to Osuna are #243, #244, #289, as well as #242 (poem 18). Jauralde Pou, in *Francisco de Quevedo*, surmises that these poems were written in 1625, but that they may have been revised later when Quevedo’s disillusionment with Olivares was increasing. He also celebrates how in these panegyrics “baroque hyperbole allies itself with mythological allusion” to celebrate Osuna’s military prowess.

LINE 3: A characteristic confusion of cause and effect, or what rhetoricians call a *histeron proteron*.

LINES 7–8: In “Quevedo,” Borges observes that “the splendid efficacy” of these lines “is felt before the interpretation and does not depend upon it.” Likewise, “as for ‘the bloody Moon,’ it is perhaps better not to know that it is the symbol of the Turks, eclipsed by certain of Don Pedro Téllez Girón’s piracies.”

LINES 9 and 10: Both *Vesubius* and *Mongibello* (the ancient name for Etna) are volcanoes.

- 18 Inscrición en el tmulo de Don Pedro Girn, Duque de Osuna, Virrey y Capitn General de las dos Sicilias / Inscription on the tomb of Don Pedro Girn, Duke of Osuna, Viceroy and Captain General of the Two Sicilies / SONNET [#242]:

By “two Sicilies” Quevedo means Naples, where Osuna was viceroy from 1616 to 1620, and Sicily proper, where he was viceroy from 1610 to 1616. Jauralde Pou opines that the sonnet probably only circulated well after Osuna’s death (*AP*).

LINE 6: There may be pun on *turbante*, which means “turban,” and *turbar*, meaning to “alter,” “surprise”; “interrupt,” or “make turbulent.”

LINE 9: Osuna opposed the Venetians with his fleet in the Adriatic.

LINE 10: *desposorio* is a promise of matrimony; thus his “betrothal” is with the sea. This, in turn, threatens the Turkish fleet threatening Greece and Cyprus. Bleuca notes: “Quevedo also alludes to the well-known festival on Assumption Day, in which each *doge* on the high seas, throws a ring of gold in the water from the prow of the *Bucintoro* [the large, ornate ship that would transport the Venetian *doge*], and says, in the midst of the benedictions: ‘Deposamus te, mare, in signum veri perpetuique dominii’ [We wed thee, sea, in token of true and perpetual lordship] (*PE*).

- 19 Tmulo a Coln habla un pedazo de la nave en que descubri el nuevo mundo / At Christopher Columbus’s tomb, a piece of the ship that discovered the New World speaks / SONNET [#266]:

Christopher Columbus (Genoa, 1451–Valladolid, 1506) came to Spain in 1485 to persuade the royal couple Ferdinand and Isabella to finance his project for a westward journey to the Orient. He eventually made four voyages to the Americas. But, as his own writings make quite clear, he became increasingly disillusioned with his treatment by Spain, even as he never surrendered his belief that he had actually landed in Asia.

LINE 4: I have rendered *Antrtico hemisfero* as “the Antipodes”; the voyage past Cape Horn was eventually made by Magellan.

- 20 Compara con el Etna las propiedades de su amor / He compares aspects of his love with Etna / SONNET [#293]:

In Greek mythology, the Sicilian volcano Etna is where Zeus buried the rebellious giants Typhon and Enceladus, who were among those trying to overthrow the Olympian gods. One of these gods, the great smith Hephaestus, set up his forge and workshop within the volcano.

- 21 Exageraciones de su fuego, de su llanto, de sus suspiros y de sus penas / Exaggerations of his fire, grief, sighs, and pains / SONNET [#299]:

This sonnet seems to show the influence of recent translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, with its belated, ironic perspective on classical myth characteristic of much Silver Latin literature. Also, the fusion here of Petrarchan elements and ancient mythology marks many of Quevedo's amorous poems. Lía Schwartz, in "Versiones de Orfeo en la poesía amorosa de Quevedo," *Filología* 26 (1993): 205–21, describes how "Quevedo constructs in this poem the emotional state of a frustrated lover, who finds solace in the sadness from the beloved's absence, according to the dialectic of amorous suffering characteristic of Petrarchan discourse." But, she adds, it may be possible "that the lover's suffering never finds respite, that is, that the lover cannot be identified with Orpheus."

LINE 3: *el* probably refers both to the fire of love and the god Cupid.

LINE 13: *Orpheus* (see note to poem 3, line 75).

- 22 Describe a Leandro fluctuante en el mar / He describes Leander floating in the sea / SONNET [#311]:

As Christopher Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" attests, the story of these unfortunate lovers was a favorite topic in Renaissance poetry. I have taken some liberties with the first quatrain given the complexities of the Spanish syntax.

LINE 4: González de Salas sees an imitation of Virgil here (perhaps of the *Aeneid*, 1.129).

LINES 5–8: A stanza rich with ambiguities: *Maligna luz* may refer to Hero's lamp, which the priestess of Venus would light each night to serve as a beacon for her lover who swam across the Hellespont for their trysts; *estrellas* may refer both to the stars reflected in the water and the eyes of the beloved; *grande incendio* could refer to the lightning in the first quatrain and to Leander's passion; *pobre llama* points to Leander, but also to Hero's lamp now obscured by the storm; *la cuna de Venus* alludes to the sea, where the goddess of love was born.

LINE 9: *Vela* means "candle" as well as "sail."

- 23 Encareciendo las adversidades de los Troyanos, exagera más la hermosura de Aminta / Exaggerating the adversities of the Trojans, he exaggerates more Aminta's beauty / SONNET [#312]:

Quevedo probably read Homer in a Latin translation (either that of Divus or Spondanus). Aminta, like Lisi in other poems, is a fictional name meant to imitate Petrarch's Laura. This sonnet might be compared to the satirical sonnet, *Pinta el "Aquí fue Troya" de la hermosura* [#551].

LINE 2: *muro* refers to the walls of Troy.

LINE 4: The Xanthus, also called the Scamander, was one of the two main rivers on the Trojan plain.

LINE 7: This alludes to the *Iliad* (book 22).

- 24 A una dama bizca y hermosa / To a cross-eyed, beautiful lady / SONNET [#315]:

A gentle parody of the Neo-Platonic amorous tradition that stressed sight and the eyes as the physical means by which the lover's soul would elevate itself, this poem might well have been placed by Blecua in the section of satiric poetry. Compare this with *Comunicación de amor invisible por los ojos* (poem 29).

LINE 4: *ocaso* means "sunset" or a "setting" (of any star or planet); it can also signify "west"; "decadence," "decline," and "end."

LINE 5: *zambo* is "knock-kneed"; *zurdo* is "left-handed."

LINE 7: A *mira* is the "sight" of a gun or crossbow. The Latin verb *fascinare* means to bewitch, or to cast an evil eye.

- 25 Soneto amoroso definiendo el Amor / An amorous sonnet defining Love SONNET [#375]:

Crosby (*PV*) compares this with Quevedo's *Osar, temer, amar y aborrecerse* [#367] and suggests it may be a response to a poem by Lope de Vega. In formal terms, its parataxis nicely complements the satiric "To a man with a big nose" (poem 33).

LINE 3: *soñado* in contemporary Spanish could mean "divine" or "heavenly."

LINE 12: *el niño Amor* is Cupid.

- 26 Himno a las estrellas / Hymn to the stars / SILVA [#401]:

The most likely model for this sublime, if unconventional, sestina-like *silva* is Marino's "Le Stelle." Jauralde Pou (*AP*) detects traces of "two 'nocturnal' poets" whose work Quevedo edited: Fray Luis de León and Francisco de la Torre. There are also several intertextual echoes of Góngora (as Quevedo

tries to take back the *silva* from his rival). Most notably, the last stanza recalls the *Polifemo*: “infame turba de nocturnas aves / gimiendo tristes y volando graves” [11.39–40]. When not embracing classical mythology to represent celestial things, the poem portrays an essentially Ptolemaic cosmology. Formally, Quevedo uses various rhetorical figures of repetition to create the stirring if melancholy resolution. There are different manuscript versions of the poem, which was written sometime after 1613.

LINE 2: In addition to the figurative meanings associated with the “flight of the poet,” *pluma* has the literal meaning of the feather of a bird used for a pen.

LINE 11: *Argos* is a Greek divinity, also called *Panoptes*, or “the all-seeing” since he had a hundred eyes.

LINE 50: *clavadas* refers to what were in the Ptolemaic system called the “fixed stars.” In Greek and Roman mythology, stars were often named after famous lovers.

LINE 53 [51]: Amaryllis is a shepherdess in Theocritus’s *Idylls* and Virgil’s *Eclogues*. The name derives from the Greek word “to sparkle.”

LINE 62: *Pancayo* was a province of Arabia, often cited by poets as where myrrh, incense, and other perfumes originated.

LINE 68: *embarazan* literally means “they impede”; but to capture some of Quevedo’s music I chose “shattering” to go with “shadowy” in line 67.

- 27 Un galán preso y desterrado y ausente de su dama, lamentándose de su desdicha / A gallant lover, imprisoned, exiled and absent from his lady, lamenting his misfortune / ROMANCE [#439]:

The *romance* or ballad is the simplest and most popular traditional verse form in Spanish poetry. It normally consists of octosyllabic lines in which only the even ones assonate. Romances date from the early fifteenth century. In the sixteenth century, it became fashionable to publish collections of romances. In these poets sang of nearly every aspect, high and low, of Spanish life. Here Quevedo remakes the traditional pastoral setting of the romance. For the sake of rhythm, I have extended the four-line refrain to eight lines.

LINE 8: A *recámara* is a “dressing room,” or “antechamber.” Figuratively, it can mean “caution” or “reserve.”

LINE 19 [21]: *borrar* is “to destroy, obscure what is written or painted on paper, canvas, wood or other material . . . and by allusion the evil deed that obscures the better one that may be found in a man” (*Cov.*). Quevedo is thus perhaps alluding to his own efforts as a poet.

LINE 21 [25]: *remozar* is “to rejuvenate”; it puns here on *mozo*, a “boy” or “young man.”

LINE 23 [27]: *apuntar* means “to begin to bud or show”; *bozo* is the down (on the upper lip).

28 Retrato no vulgar de Lisi / Not an ordinary portrait of Lisi / SONNET [#443]:

This is the first poem in my selection from the sequence González de Salas titled *Canta sola a Lisi*. Introducing the *Musa Erato* in *El Parnaso español*, Salas writes: “Of great fame is the memory, from two or three centuries previous, of the illustrious and elegant poet amongst the Tuscans, Francesco Petrarca . . . I confess, then, in considering the discourse on love, which can be gathered from the poems in this section [i.e., the poems to Lisi], and which I have given the form it has now, that I became persuaded that our poet greatly desired that this love of his should resemble what we have seen in Petrarch. If there were leisure to compare in detail the sonnets contained here with those verses in the *Rime* by the Tuscan poet, without doubt a great similarity would be found, for in this expression of his feelings Don Francisco wanted to imitate him.” Drawing upon and remaking the standard stock of Petrarchan metaphors, Quevedo, here and in the other poems in the sequence, renews it with elements borrowed from classical myth and his Neo-Stoic insights on the fragility and mutability of existence. The painterly aspects of this sonnet might be compared with *Al pincel* (poem 15).

LINE 1: Hair that was not bound or put in a bun was considered erotic.

LINE 2: Her hair, that is, has the color of gold.

LINE 4: In other words, the contrast of her black eyes surrounded by white skin does not cause consternation in the viewer.

LINE 5: “Roses” here refer to her cheeks.

LINE 8: González de Salas interprets the image as suggesting that her “mouth was small.” Lips and teeth have the color of carnations.

29 Comunicación de amor invisible por los ojos / Invisible love communicated through the eyes / SONNET [#448]:

This sonnet, with its mannered Neo-Platonic, Petrarchan, but also mystical play on the eyes and seeing, might be profitably compared with John Donne’s “The Ecstasy.” Here Quevedo inverts the usual mind-body hierarchy and muses upon eyelids that kiss the sun (i.e., Lisi) with a constancy matched by “royal eagles,” creatures thought to be able to look upon the sun without averting their eyes. The tenuous, subjunctive, purely linguistic quality of this desire—note the string of subjunctives (*fueran . . . fueran . . .*

besarán . . . vieran)—is further heightened in the concluding lines as the poet's *mudos . . . ardores* paradoxically strive to publish themselves.

LINE 4: To gloss *águila* Blecua cites Covarrubias: "The poets feign it to be the warrior of Jupiter, who delivers the lightning bolts . . . as a consequence, according to some authors, amongst all the birds, it alone is not wounded by lightning, and it can gaze directly at the rays of the sun."

30 Afectos varios de su corazón fluctuando en las ondas de los cabellos de Lisi / Diverse feelings in his heart, floating on the waves of Lisi's hair / SONNET [#449]:

This is one of Quevedo's most celebrated love sonnets. Remarkably, as González de Salas notes, all the mythical figures in the poem are metonyms for the poet's heart. In his commentary accompanying his translation of this poem, D. Gareth Walters underscores the sonnet's shift from "folly and aspiration" to "frustration and punishment." Analyzing this sonnet in "La 'agudeza' en algunos sonetos de Quevedo" (in *Francisco de Quevedo*, ed. Gonzalo Sobejano), Alexander Parker adumbrates the pleasures of the Quevedean conceit: "The experience on which this sonnet is based could not be simpler: the poet gazes at the beloved untying her hair. This immediately is transformed via four *conceits*: 1) being loosened, the hair is a gulf or a sea, and being wavy it is a sea with choppy waves that threaten the swimmer with death; 2) being golden it is real gold, that is, a coveted treasure, and also 3) the sunlight and the space traversed by its rays; 4) being the rays of the sun, it is fire that burns and kills. And the hair is all of this, but not successively, rather simultaneously; this is expressed by means of catachresis: *cresta tempestad, oro undoso, golfos de luz, mar de fuego, senda de oro*. These *conceits* are not boasts of an exuberant imagination; instead they are essential elements in the ideal reconstruction and valorization of what the poet had experienced. . . . The tortured poet fluctuates between the promise of glory and the safety of the void. He has in hand beauty's treasure, but the fugitive fountain of gold escapes him, leaving him poor and hungry. The war made by passion and reason is man's tormented condition."

LINE 1: The use of *cresta* here recalls the opening line of *Retrato no vulgar de Lisi* (poem 28). Crosby (*PV*) suggests that the conditional quality of the first quatrain is clarified if one reads backward, from line 4 to 1.

LINE 5: *Leander* (see poem 21).

LINE 13: *Midas* was a mythical Phrygian king whose wish, granted by Dionysius and much to the King's later regret, was that whatever he touched would turn to gold.

LINE 14: Quevedo seems to conflate two versions of the myth. In the first, *Tantalus* was the son of Zeus and a nymph. For divulging secrets told to him by his father, he was condemned to be punished in Hades with an unslakable thirst even as he was placed in the middle of a lake whose waters were always receding from him. Over his head hung branches of fruit eluding his grasp, but also an enormous rock perpetually threatening to crush him. In the second version, *Tantalus* was blamed and then punished for stealing a dog made out of gold by Hephaestus.

- 31 Comparación elegante de Hércules con sus penas, y del “Non Plus Ultra” de sus columnas, que desmintió el rey Católico / An elegant comparison of Hercules with his woes and of the “Non Plus Ultra” of his pillars, which the Catholic King discredited [#452]:

The Greek hero Hercules was the son of Zeus and Alcmena, a mortal woman. Driven mad by a jealous Hera, he killed his two children. In penance for the deed, he was instructed by the oracle to accomplish twelve seemingly impossible tasks, including the slaughter of the Nemean lion and the cleaning of the Augean stables. Renaissance humanists conceived of the motto *Non plus ultra* (“no further”) as attached to the pillars of Hercules at Gibraltar, thus marking the limits of the Mediterranean and warning sailors of the folly of going farther. See Dante’s moving description of Ulysses’ disavowal of this warning in the *Inferno* (Canto 26) as he pursues his last “folle volo” [mad flight]. In the sixteenth century, Charles V adopted the motto *Plus ultra* as declaring the limitless quality of his newly acquired empire in the New and Old Worlds as well as his own personal ambition.

LINE 1 [2]: Mount Oeta was the scene of the funeral pyre on which Hercules immolated himself before his admission to Olympus.

- 32 Amor constante más allá de la muerte / Love constant beyond death / SONNET [#472]:

With its unrivaled rhythms and vivid images, its laconic hyperboles and very baroque play with antitheses, this is probably Quevedo’s most famous sonnet. The great Spanish critic, Dámaso Alonso, opines that it is “surely Quevedo’s best, probably the best of Spanish literature.” Alonso’s student, Lázaro Carreter, sharpens this claim, calling the tercets, “the most terrifying [*estremecedoros*] verses in Spanish poetry.” Neruda also found this sonnet unrivaled. Critics have tended either to read it as the exaltation of love or of the stubborn soul’s pathos in the face of the specter of death. Possible models include Petrarch’s “Amor, che ‘ncende il cor d’ardente zelo”

(*Rime sparse*, 182), Camões's "Si el fuego que me enciende, consumido," Herrera's "Llevar me puede bien la suerte mía," as well as the Latin elegies of Tibullus and Propertius. Notwithstanding these potential debts, the imagery and conceits are ones that Quevedo reworks in many other places in his *obra*.

LINE 6: Lázaro Carreter argues that the subject of *dejará* is "la muerte" [death]; I agree, though, with those who see *Alma* [soul] as the subject.

LINE 7: *la agua fría* belongs to Lethe, the mythological river of forgetfulness.

LINE 9: *todo un dios* refers to Cupid.

LINE 10: The Spanish refers to a *humor*, or one of the four humors constituting human physiology in the Renaissance. Amorous *furor* was characterized by heat and moisture; thus the speaker may be said to "fuel" his humor.

LINE 11: *medulas* in modern Spanish is written *médulas*. Jauralde Pou (*AP*) notes in his version of the poem that the prosody asks for a stress on the first syllable of the line.

LINE 14: In "Quevedo," Borges suggests Propertius, *Elegies* 1.19 as a possible source. In "Menoscabo y grandeza de Quevedo," before quoting the two tercets, he suggests that "the reproductive bliss" [*el goce genésico*] in the poem "is a testament of the eternity in which we live."

- 33 Perservera en la exageración de su afecto amoroso y en el exceso de su padecer / He persists in exaggerating his amorous feelings and the excess of his suffering [#485]:

This is one of Quevedo's most eloquent sonnets exploring the lover's psychology. The trope of interiority opening the poem neatly secularizes and privatizes a communal, religious space. As in the previous sonnet, Quevedo plays upon late Renaissance notions of melancholy.

LINE 1: *claustros* nicely parallels Donne's line from "The Canonization," where the speaker declares: "we'll build in sonnets pretty rooms."

- 34 A un hombre de gran nariz / To a man with a big nose / SONNET [#513]:

I have chosen to alter the length of the original's lines in order to capture something of the swiftness of the satire. In *Quevedo and the Grotesque*, James Iffland calls this sonnet a "fusion of incompatibles." He adds that, "our attention is meant to be focused at least as much on the genius who is displaying his wares of wit as on the nose being described." He also compares the method here with *Desengaño de las mujeres* (poem 39). For his part, González de Salas appeals to tradition to justify Quevedo's mockery: "The Greek epigrammatists equivocated a great deal on the topic of

big noses; and in this way they frequently wearied, with more than a little wit, those people with big noses.” My translation of this and Quevedo’s other satiric poems is indebted to Ignacio Arellano’s annotations in *Poesía satírica burlesca de Quevedo*. There are various manuscript versions of this sonnet.

LINE 3: An *alquitara* might have been used by an alchemist. See *Pinta el engaño de los alquimistas* [#83].

LINE 7: A *sayón* was an executioner who wore a long tunic (*sayo*); thus this is an anti-Semitic allusion to the Jews and the charge that they killed Christ. Jews were also traditionally scribes, thus *escriba*. The same prejudicial note is struck in line 11. See Maurice Molho, “Una cosmogonía antisemita: ‘Érase un hombre a una nariz pegado’” (in *Quevedo in Perspective*).

LINE 8: *Ovidio Nasón* is a play on the Roman poet’s full name, Publius Ovidius Naso (whose last name probably was due to a well-endowed ancestor).

LINE 13: *frisón* refers to Frisian horse, but here it is an adjective meaning “fat,” “big,” or “splendid.”

LINE 14: I have transformed into an eggplant Quevedo’s *garrafal*, a morello cherry, which is larger than most cherries and mostly used for cooking.

35 Mujer puntiaguda con enaguas / A pointy woman with petticoats / SONNET [#516]:

Alexander Parker has shown how this sonnet exemplifies Quevedo’s mastery of the baroque conceit with its ability to create *discordia concors*; see “La buscona piramidal: Aspectos del conceptismo de Quevedo” (in *Francisco de Quevedo*, ed. Gonzalo Sobejano). Here we begin to see the misogynistic flipside of Quevedo’s idealizing, amorous verse.

LINE 4: The anachronism in my translation was too tempting to refuse, as the Spanish refers to a particular kind of sweet in a conical shape made in Motril, a town near Granada.

LINE 8: Jauralde Pou (*AV*) explains the wordplay: a cypress tree was also called a “copión” (or what we might call a “copy-cat”); an *arrendajo* or mockingbird thus becomes synonymous with a cypress, which, moreover, has a conical shape.

LINE 9: I have changed the tool, which refers to a particular kind of “hole punch.” Quevedo’s line literally reads: “If you are a hole punch, why did you leave the tool-box?” I hope his penchant elsewhere for the scatological makes this bit of translator treason seem less onerous.

LINE 7–8: Arellano notes that the *cucurucho* is related to the *coroza* in line 11. Again, Quevedo makes effect precede cause.

- LINE 11: Comparable to our dunce cap, a *coroza* is a “certain kind of pointed hood or hat, made of *papier-mâché*, which is put on the head as punishment and . . . painted on it [are] different figures corresponding to the crime of the delinquent. These are commonly Jews, heretics, sorcerers, con men, bigamists . . . and informants. It is an infamous and insulting token” (*Aut.*).
- 36 Desnuda a la mujer de la mayor parte ajena que la compone / He undresses a woman of the great artifice that comprises her / SONNET [#522]:
 Arellano comments in *Poesía satírico burlesca de Quevedo*: “The theme of made up, pompous, and artificial women is an obsession in Quevedo’s writings; it is one of the bases for his caricature of women.”
 LINE 1: *Filena* is another of Quevedo’s names for his female poetic protagonists; *fila* can also mean “face” (*Cov.*).
 LINE 4: *afeite* is the “adornment that women, denying nature, put on the face, hands, and breasts to make them appear white and red though they be black and discolored” (*Cov.*).
 LINE 4: *cercenar* is “to sever, cut off.”
 LINE 8: I have tried to find a substitute for *chapinzanco y moño por almena*; *chapinzanco* is Quevedo’s neologism compounding *chapín* (a kind of cork-soled clog, which was a couple of inches high and put over normal a shoe to avoid contact with mud) and *zanco* (stilt). A *moño* is a hair bun, while *almena* refers to a castle’s battlements.
 LINE 9: *Fabio* is a traditional, fictive name in moral poetry and satiric epigrams.
 LINE 14: A *fardo* is “a big bundle of clothes, very tightly packed and tied, in order to be carried from one place to another” (*Aut.*).
- 37 Bebe vino precioso con mosquitos dentro / He drinks fine wine with mosquitoes in it / SONNET [#531]:
 Crosby (*PV*) observes that before refrigeration and bottling, mosquitoes were known to spawn in wine.
 LINE 1: *moscos*: *mosca* may also mean “to be drunk”; a *moscón* was synonymous with a *pícaro* (*Cov.*).
 LINE 4: *maravinos* is Quevedo’s neologism, which I have rendered as “winitoes.”
 LINE 5: *luquetes* are slices of lemon or orange added to wine.
 LINE 8: I could find no exact rendering for *la miel de los tocinos*, which Crosby (*PV*) describes as “the wine that was removed or separated from fatty salt

pork (formerly wine was used to conserve and cook meat); or the wine one used to drink in quantity with salted, white pork." Arellano only admits the last possibility.

LINE 9: *liendre* is the "nit" or egg of a louse.

38 Búrlase del camaleón, moralizando satíricamente su naturaleza / Mocking the chameleon and satirically moralizing its nature / SONNET [#564]:

Covarrubias's remarkable entry on the chameleon reads: "I saw this tiny animal [*animalejo*] in Valencia . . . it had the same shape one sees in paintings. It is a well-known thing that its particular nature is to sustain itself from air and to change its color to what is at hand, except red and black, which it does not imitate. . . . The chameleon is a symbol of an astute, discrete, and wise man, who easily accommodates himself to the taste and appearance of the person with whom he deals in order to deceive him. It signifies also the flatterer and sycophant, for if you cry, he cries, and if you laugh, he lies, and if at noon you say that it is nighttime, he will say to you, 'so it is,' because he sees the stars." Covarrubias cites Pliny's *Natural History* (8.33, 28.8) as his main authority.

LINE 5: A *botarga* is "a common name nowadays for a ridiculous costume which serves as a disguise and is a single piece of clothing in which one first puts the legs and then next the arms. . . . It marries various contrasting colors together in order to cause laughter in those who see it" (*Aut.*).

LINE 12: *bodegón* literally means "a house of meals"; but it often denoted an "inn" (*Tes.*).

39 Desengaño de las mujeres / Disillusionment with women / SONNET [#600]:

One of Quevedo's most outrageous poems, it manages to skewer the male and female libido alike. The poem turns on the amphibology of *puto*, which in seventeenth-century slang generally denotes a male homosexual, but here plays on the licentiousness of female prostitutes, *putas*. I have chosen to render *puto* as "slut" partly for the sake of euphony but also because this word has been in use in English slang and literature since the early fifteenth century, while in current American slang it can refer to men as well.

LINE 1: *puta*, Crosby notes (*PV*), "is not limited to prostitutes, but pertains to any voracious woman, who asks or expects to receive material favors from her lovers."

LINE 2: In addition to "taste," *gusto* retains the Latin sense of *voluptas* and *appetitus* (*Aut.*).

LINE 6: *putaril* is Quevedo's neologism (*PV*).

LINE 11: Homosexuals were often tortured or executed by fire.

LINE 12: *me pagare* here means “would please me” (*PV*).

- 40 “La voz del ojo, que llamamos pedo” / “The eye’s voice we call a fart” / SONNET [#610]:

This sonnet is a wonderful example of what Mikhail Bakhtin celebrates in his reading of Rabelais as the carnivalesque or the “material bodily principle” that fuels “grotesque realism.” This sonnet was first published only in 1932. In the manuscript the sonnet is preceded by this epigraph from the *Greek Anthology* (11.395):

I. Nicarchus

Te crepitus perdit, nimium si ventre retentes.

Te propere emissus servat item crepitus.

Si crepitus servare potest et perdere, nunquid

Terrificis crepitus regibus aequa potest?

W. R. Paton’s translation, in *The Greek Anthology*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970–83), reads: “A fart which cannot find an outlet kills many a man; a fart also saves, sending forth its lispings music. Therefore if a fart saves, and on the other hand it kills, a fart has the same power as kings.”

LINE 2: A wonderful antithesis between the nightingale, symbol of lyric poetry, and the scatological. A *puto* is a “sodomite” or “smelly man” (*Tes.*); or, “the man who commits the nefarious sin” (*Aut.*).

LINE 4: *Preste Juan* is the apocryphal Christian King who was said to reside either in Asia or Africa (usually Ethiopia); his name was a byword for great wealth and power.

LINE 5: *acedo* can also mean “acerbic” as well as “distasteful”; “we call *acedo* a man who is harsh and surly” (*Cov.*).

LINE 7: *pulla* is “humorous talk, even somewhat obscene, which commonly travelers use when they encounter peasants who are working the fields, especially during the harvest of wheat or grapes” (*Cov.*).

LINE 13: *arcas* are “what they call the empty spaces in an animal beneath the ribs” (*Aut.*).

- 41 “Poderoso caballero es don Dinero” / “A mighty knight is Don Dinero”
LETRILLA [#660]:

There are various versions of this poem; I have translated the one that appeared in the anthology, *Primera parte de Flores de poetas ilustres de España* (1605). This *letrilla* was already popular in Quevedo’s time and there is

even a 1968 recording of it by the Spanish singer Paco Ibáñez. Jauralde Pou (*AP*) notes that the poem conserves the traditional formula of having a young woman confiding in her mother. I have kept some of the rhyme in an effort to keep the musical qualities of the *letrilla* alive.

LINE 4: Blecua notes that one of the symptoms of the lover is yellowness in the face. He also quotes Fray Luis de León: “Yellowness in the face, thinness in the body, and palpitations of the heart give evidence of love” (*PE*).

LINE 14: *Genoa* is a reference to the financial control that Genoese bankers had over the finances of the Spanish crown. Precious metals brought back from the Indies thus were quickly transferred abroad.

LINE 38: *doña Blanca de Castilla* plays on the coin called a “blanca,” which had little value.

LINES 43–46: I have not been able to find a satisfying equivalent for the word-play on *escudos de armas nobles* (coats of arms), *escudos reales* (“the coats of arms of the King’ but it alludes to the *escudo* as a coin minted with the coat of arms of the King, and to the *real* as another old coin” [*PV*]), *escudos de armas dobles* (which Crosby again explains: “the *escudo* is worth half of a doubloon, such that a ‘double escudo’ was a doubloon. And the coat of arms of the Kings of Spain had some duplicated images, such as the head of the eagle . . .”), and the primary meaning of *escudo* (“shield”). *Roble*, in addition to meaning “oak tree,” is a “strong person of great resistance” (*Tes.*).

LINE 52: *gatos le guardan de gatos* also proved untranslatable; the former refers to bags made of cat skin used to guard money from thieves (*gatos*) or what we might call “cat burglars.”

LINES 77–78: Again Quevedo’s wordplay on *escudos*, here with *rodela*s (“shields”), defies English translation (see note to lines 43–46).

LINE 80: *hace proprio al forastero* literally means “to make the foreigner feel at home.”

42 Refiere su nacimiento y las propiedades que le comunicó / He refers to his birth and the characteristics it conveyed to him / ROMANCE [#696]:

For all its comic hyperbole, this fictional, mocking self-portrait of a man confronting the forces of hostile fortune has serious parallels in much of Quevedo’s unpublished and published writings. Composed before 1627, this *romance* appeared for the first time in the *Sueños*. Other self-referential, deprecating poems include: *Concertáme esas medidas* [#642], *Refiere él mismo sus defectos* [#775], and the very late *Describe el Manzanares cuando concurren el verano a bañarse a él* [#770].

- LINE 4: *gorja* means “neck” (especially of a bird). But *estar de gorja* is an idiom meaning “to be festive” (*PV*).
- LINES 5–8: Glossing seventeenth-century Spanish currency (and therefore also the conceit), Crosby notes that, “two maravedis were worth a half a cuarto” (*PV*); both coins were usually made of copper.
- LINES 11–12: The Spanish plays with the idiom *en la yema* [yolk] *del invierno*, or “in the dead of winter.”
- LINES 13–16: *miércoles* is etymologically related to the god *Mercury*, whereas *martes* is derived from the god *Mars*. Thus there is also an astrological struggle here to avoid having influence over the speaker.
- LINE 17: Born on the 17th of September, Quevedo was a “Libra.”
- LINE 18: *pesas* are counterweights used, as Quevedo alludes here, for the weighing of precious metals on a balance scale.
- LINE 20: That is, into prostitution, because they presumably lack a dowry.
- LINE 23: *Virgo* also connotes “virginity” (*PV*).
- LINE 24: *Carnero*, as well as referring to *Aries*, also means “ram,” a traditional symbol of patience (*PV*).
- LINES 35–36: Crosby’s note (*PV*) explains the impossibility of saving all the conceits here; *de tajo* is “the cut made on a bird’s feather so it can be used for writing”; a *tajo* is also the point or tip of a sword, as well as a move in fencing. Literally, *al réves* means “backward,” but it is also a “metaphor for any misfortune, disgrace, or setback.” Thus while *la* is the object of the sentence, I have chosen to make the image more concrete, given the web of specific allusions.
- LINES 51–52: Congregants would bring gifts to the *misacantanos*, or the first mass led by a novice priest.
- LINES 89–92: The idea is that as a cuckold, he would be able to enjoy the presents and money that his wife’s lover gave to her (*PV*). I have taken a liberty here of making explicit the implicit horn of plenty (*cornucopia*).
- LINES 102–3: Literally *pide o me despide* means “she asks me for something or dismisses me.”
- LINE 105: Quevedo also invokes here the appearance of the *pícaro*, the “scoundrel” or “sharper” who was a central figure in late Renaissance Spanish literature and who Quevedo marvelously portrays in his picaresque novel, *El Buscón* (1626).
- LINE 106: *limpieza* in addition to meaning cleanliness, can signify the “the integrity and unselfishness [*desinterés*] with which one behaves in some business” (*Aut.*). With Crosby (*PV*), I read *ahorro* or “savings” as a litotes.

LINE 109: A *caballero de hábito* is, “he who wears on the chest an insignia of some order of knighthood, which commonly is called *hábitos*” (*Cov.*).

LINE 112: An *encomienda* is here a “position that comes with income to the benefit of the individual, such as those in the military ranks” (*PV*). The *besamanos* or the “kissing of the hands” was a traditional act of fealty.

LINES 127–28: I have not been able to come up with an exact equivalent for Quevedo’s wordplay and neologism. A *pretendiente* is a “pretender” or less generously a “climber” or “toady”; while *pretenmuela* is Quevedo’s invention playing, Crosby explains, on the “on the scant esteem for the gums [*muelas*] in comparison with the teeth.”

LINE 131: *faltas* are not only character faults but also the “suppression of a woman’s menstruation during pregnancy” (*PV*).

LINE 133: The name Fabio was often used for fictional, foolish lovers.

43 Testamento de Don Quijote / Don Quixote’s Last Will and Testament
QUINTILLAS [#733]:

Cervantes’s novel, the first part of which appeared in 1605, was an enormous success in Spain. It also spawned numerous imitations, most notoriously Avellaneda’s, which provoked Cervantes at length in the second part of the novel published in 1615. According to Jauralde Pou in *Francisco de Quevedo*, however, Quevedo did not even read the first part of the novel until sometime toward 1620. Still, he knew the same literary tradition of chivalric romances, best exemplified by *Amadis de Gaula* (~1508). The proper names littering this poem, such as Don Belianis, Beltenbros, and Esplandian are from this tradition as well as from Cervantes’s novel. The poem is thus a satire of a satire. It might also be compared to François Villon’s “Le grand testament” (ca. 1461). I have tried to imitate the rhyme pattern of the *romance*.

LINE 5: A *pavés* was a large shield that covered the entire body.

LINES 112–13: *el sabio propio / del encanto de Niquea*. I have chosen to translate this by referring to Cervantes’s principal target, the chivalric romance, *Amadis de Gaula*. But Quevedo may be alluding to a sequel, *Amadis de Grecia* by Feliciano de Silva, who does not appear in Cervantes’s novel. In 1622, the Count of Villamediana wrote a play titled *La Gloria de Niquea* where this event is featured.

44 “Ya sueltan, Juanilla, presos” / “Now, Juanilla, captives” / ROMANCE [#776]:
In *Francisco de Quevedo*, Jauralde Pou comments that this *romance* was written around 1628; he calls it “one of Quevedo’s most popularized,” and observes

that it is a fine “example of Quevedo’s festive poetry in his more easy-going years. The joke contains the satire, which aims not at concrete deeds, but towards types and customs, more as an exercise in a genre than a historical diatribe.” Because the poem consists of a sequence of equivocations on the meanings of Spanish words, the translation is necessarily loose in places. The notes point to some of the semantic richness, ambiguity fueling Quevedo’s wit.

LINE 4: *canto llano* is a “plain song” or “confession”; *calzas*, in addition to meaning “pants” or “breeches,” is slang for “the chains that were put around prisoners feet” [*grillos*] (*Aut.*). *Componer* can mean “to compose verse” and “to lie” (*Cov.*).

LINES 7–8: I have tried to find an equivalent for Quevedo’s wordplay here, which depends on the idiom *levantar un testimonio*, “to embellish a testimony,” or “to make a dubious proof seem true,” as well as *levantar*, the physical act of elevating or raising something, such as a skirt, *falda*.

LINE 13: a *jubón* is a kind of undershirt, but as slang it may refer to “the lashes that were given on the back by the Law” (*Aut.*).

LINE 14: *mangas* literally means “sleeves,” but a *manga* can be a “body of troops” (*Cov.*); while *hazar mangas* is slang for “to deceive” or “rob” (*Tes.*).

LINE 15: *cielos*, as well as meaning “skies” and “heaven,” here also means “bedspread” (“because the sky covers the earth and the other elements, by similitude we call *sky* [*cielo*] what covers a bed” [*Cov.*]).

LINES 19–20: *nuez de garganta* is the “Adam’s apple.”

LINES 21–22: These lines resist English translation. A literal rendering of them would be: “Melons and the constipated always have their slices/suppositories (*calas*).”

LINE 23: *niñas* are both the “irises” of the eyes and related to *niñería* and *niñada*, both signifying deeds fit for a child.

LINE 24: *cabrón* is both a “male goat” and a “cuckold.” “Llamar a uno *cabrón*, en todo tiempo y entre todas naciones es afrentarle” (*Cov.*).

LINE 40: a *potra* is “a type of disease that grows on the testicles and the scrotum” (*Cov.*).

LINES 41–42: *lezna* (or *alesna*) is an “awl” such as shoemakers used. But “[a]l que es muy vivo y presto decimos que es agudo como una alesna” [of a person who is very lively and quick we say that he is sharp like an awl] (*Cov.*), a phrase that nicely sums up Quevedo’s own wit. Likewise, the phrase “dar del codo” is “to warn secretly someone nearby of something” (*Cov.*). A *cosa brava* is a “silly thing and beyond reason” (*Cov.*).

45 Contra D. Luis de Góngora y su poesía / Against Góngora and His Poetry
SONNET [#832]:

This is one of a series of poems mocking Góngora and his style, wherein, to lampoon his rival, Quevedo employs the full arsenal of his wit and repeats most of the prejudices of his day, especially those against Jews and homosexuals. Tellingly, it is said that Quevedo purchased the house in Madrid where Góngora was living simply to put him out on the street. See also *Receta para hacer Soledades en un día* [#825], the anti-Semitic (though Góngora was not Jewish) *Yo te untaré mis obras con tocino* [#829], as well as sonnets #830, #831, #833–37, and #838, which is also translated in this volume.

LINE 1: *siciliano: ano* means “anus.” The Italians were stereotyped in the epoch for their homosexuality.

LINE 4: *divide en terminos italianos* plays on the phrase *en buenos terminos*, which refers to a euphemism or periphrasis.

LINE 9: *vulto* is a Latinism meaning “face.”

46 Contra Góngora / Against Góngora / SONNET [#838]:

This poem continues to attract and defy commentaries. To translate it is to try to find equivalents for Quevedo’s mockery of Góngora’s Latinate diction. To experience what so incensed Quevedo, see John Dent-Young’s valiant translation, *Selected Poems of Luis de Góngora* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). Again, my translation is indebted to Arellano’s annotations in *Poesía satírico burlesca de Quevedo*.

LINES 3–4: Arellano notes that Quevedo is invidiously comparing Góngora with Garcilaso de la Vega (1501–1536), even as he mocks Góngora’s poem, “Cuidad gloriosa, cuyo excelso muro.” There is also play on the high-flying swan (*garza*) and the creeping reptile; thus Quevedo’s neologism, *reptilizas*.

LINE 5: *inquiridiones* is less a reference to the treatise by Epictetus than a play on the Greek word for “a manual or book of doctrinal maxims.” It thus mocks Góngora’s didacticism.

LINE 6: *medallas* (see note to line 6, poem 16).

LINE 7: *prisco* has the Latin connotation of *priscus* or “ancient.”

LINE 9: *eximia* derives from the Latin *eximius* or “exceptional.”

LINES 12–14: There is still no agreement among *quevedistas* as to the specific meaning of *numia*. And though neologisms riddle the entire tercet, their general meaning is clear enough.

Selected Bibliography

Listed below are the principal Spanish editions of Quevedo's poetry, as well as editions of his prose works and some English translations. In the Secondary Works, readers will find critical studies of Quevedo's verse from a variety of perspectives. These include close readings as well as works that situate the poetry within larger biographical and historical contexts. Included also are a handful of exemplary books that describe the intellectual and literary cultures of early modern Spain and Europe.

EDITIONS OF QUEVEDO'S WORKS, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

El Parnaso español, monte en dos cumbres dividido, con las nuevas Musas. Edited by José Antonio González de Salas. Madrid, 1648.

Las tres Musas últimas castellanas. Edited by Pedro Aldrete Quevedo y Villegas. Madrid, 1670.

Obra poética. Edited by José Manuel Blecua. 4 vols. 2nd ed. Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1985.

Poesía original completa. Edited by José Manuel Blecua. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1996.

- Poemas escogidos*. Edited by José Manuel Blecua. Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1972.
- Sueños y discursos*. Edited by Felipe C. R. Maldonado. Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1972.
- Poesía varia*. Edited by James O. Crosby. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 1981.
- Poesía moral*. Edited by Alfonso Rey. Madrid: Editorial Támesis, 1992.
- La musa Clío del Parnaso español de Quevedo*. Edited by Ignacio Arellano Ayuso and Victoriano Roncero. Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 2001.
- Antología poética*. Edited by Pablo Jauralde Pou. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2002.
- Poesía satírico burlesca de Quevedo: Estudio y anotación filológica de los sonetos*. Edited by Ignacio Arellano Ayuso. Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2003.
- Obras completas en prosa*. Edited by Alfonso Rey et al. Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 2003-.

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF QUEVEDO

- The Dog and the Fever*. Translated by William Carlos Williams and Raquel Hélène Williams. Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press, 1954.
- Poems to Lisi*. Translated and introduction by D. Gareth Walters. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2006.
- Dreams*. Translated by Wallace Woolsey. Woodbury, NY: Barron's Educational Series, 1976.

SECONDARY WORKS

- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Hélène Iswolsky. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. "Menoscabo y grandeza de Quevedo." In *Inquisiciones*, 39-45. Buenos Aires: Editorial Proa, 1925.
- . "Quevedo." In *Other Inquisitions, 1937-1952*, translated by Ruth L. C. Simms, 36-42. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965.
- . "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." In *Labyrinths*, translated by James E. Irby. New York: New Directions, 1964.
- Elliott, J. H. "Quevedo and the Count-Duke of Olivares." In *Spain and Its World, 1500-1700*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Ettinghausen, Henry. *Francisco de Quevedo and the Neostoic Movement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972.

- Greene, Roland. *Post-Petrarchism: Origins and Innovations of the Western Lyric Sequence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Gutiérrez, Carlos M. *La espada, el rayo y la pluma: Quevedo y los campos literario y de poder*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2005.
- Hoover, Elaine. *John Donne and Francisco de Quevedo: Poets of Love and Death*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978.
- Iffland, James. *Quevedo and the Grotesque*. London: Tamesis Books, 1978.
- Iffland, James, ed. *Quevedo in Perspective*. Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 1982.
- Jauralde Pou, Pablo. *Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645)*. Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1999.
- Lerner, Lía Schwartz. *Metáfora y sátira en la obra de Quevedo*. Madrid: Taurus, 1986.
- Mariscal, George. *Contradictory Subjects: Quevedo, Cervantes, and Seventeenth-Century Spanish Culture*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991.
- Maravall, José Antonio. *Culture of the Baroque: Analysis of a Historical Structure*. Translated by Terry Cochran. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- Navarrete, Ignacio. *Orphans of Petrarch: Poetry and Theory in the Spanish Renaissance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Olivares, Julián. *The Love Poetry of Francisco de Quevedo: An Aesthetic and Existential Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Padrón, Ricardo. *The Spacious Word: Cartography, Literature, and Empire in Early Modern Spain*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Pagden, Anthony. *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France, c. 1500–c. 1850*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Rey, Alfonso. *Quevedo y la poesía moral española*. Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1995.
- Smith, Paul Julian. *Quevedo on Parnassus: Allusive Context and Literary Theory in the Love-Lyric*. London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1987.
- . *Writing in the Margin: Spanish Literature of the Golden Age*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- Sobejano, Gonzalo, ed. *Quevedo*. Madrid: Taurus Ediciones, 1978.
- Vélez-Sainz, Julio. *El Parnaso español: Canon, mecenazgo y propaganda en la poesía del Siglo de Oro*. Madrid: Visor Libros, 2006.
- Walters, D. Gareth. *Francisco de Quevedo, Love Poet*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1985.

Index of Titles and First Lines

- A dream yesterday, tomorrow dust, 33
- “A gallant lover, imprisoned, exiled
and absent from his lady, lamenting
his misfortune,” 123
- A man is a queer slut who trusts sluts,
153
- “A mighty knight is Don Dinero,” 157
- “A new heart, Lord, a new man,” 47
- “A pointy woman with petticoats,” 145
- “A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas,” 94
- “A un hombre de gran nariz,” 142
- “A una dama bizca y hermosa,” 112
- “A una fuente,” 78
- “A una mina,” 60
- A vosotras, estrellas, 116
- “Afectos varios de su corazón fluctuando
en las ondas de los cabellos de
Lisi,” 132
- After a fine bone-grinding, 173
- “Against Góngora,” 189
- “Against Góngora and his poetry,” 187
- Ah de la vida . . . Nadie me responde,
30
- “Al pincel,” 80
- “Amor constante más allá de la
muerte,” 136
- “An amorous sonnet defining Love,” 115
- “An elegant comparison of Hercules
with his woes and of the ‘Non
Plus Ultra’ of his pillars, which the
Catholic King discredited,” 135
- Any life home? Nobody answers, 31
- “At Christopher Columbus’s tomb, a
piece of the ship that discovered
the New World speaks,” 101
- “Bebe vino precioso con mosquitos
dentro,” 148

- Benighted, silly Góngora what do
you, 189
- “Búrlase del camaleón, moralizando
satíricamente su naturaleza,” 150
- Buscas en Roma a Roma, oh per-
egrine, 94
- Cerrar podrá mis ojos la postrera, 136
- Cómo de entre mis manos te resba-
las, 52
- “Compara con el Etna las proprie-
dades de su amor,” 104
- “Comparación elegante de Hércules
con sus penas, y del ‘Non Plus Ul-
tra’ de sus columnas, que desmintió
el rey Católico,” 134
- “Comunicación de amor invisible por
los ojos,” 130
- “Conoce las fuerzas del tiempo y el ser
ejecutivo cobrador de la muerte,” 52
- “Contra D. Luis de Góngora y su
poesía,” 186
- “Contra Góngora,” 188
- Crespas hebras, sin ley desenlazadas, 128
- Crowned with marvels, you boast, 105
- Cuando está recién nacido, 122
- Curly threads, lawlessly untied, 129
- Damn that first human who, 59
- De la Asia fue terror, de Europa
espanto, 98
- De un molimiento de güesos, 172
- “Describe a Leandro fluctuante en el
mar,” 108
- “Describing the brevity of life and how
past life seems to be nothing,” 31
- “Desde La Torre,” 56
- “Desengaño de las mujeres,” 152
- “Desnuda a la mujer de la mayor parte
ajena que la compone,” 146
- Dígote pretendiente y cortesano, 150
- “Disillusionment with women,” 153
- Diste crédito a un pino, 60
- “Diverse feelings in his heart, floating
on the waves of Lisi’s hair,” 133
- “Don Francisco de Quevedo,” 58, 59
- “Don Quixote’s Last Will and Testa-
ment,” 173
- “El escarmiento,” 34
- “El reloj de arena,” 66
- En crespa tempestad del oro undoso, 132
- En los claustros de l’alma la herida, 138
- “Encareciendo las adversidades de los
Trojanos, exagera más la hermo-
sura de Aminta,” 110
- “Enseña cómo todas las cosas avisan
de la muerte,” 50
- Érase un hombre a una nariz pegado,
142
- Es yelo abrasador, es fuego helado, 114
- Este ciclope, no siciliano, 186
- “Exageraciones de su fuego, de su
llanto, de sus suspiros y de sus
penas,” 106
- “Exaggerating the adversities of the
Trojans, he exaggerates more
Aminta’s beauty,” 111
- “Exaggerations of his fire, grief, sighs,
and pains,” 107
- “Expressing the essential brevity itself
of life, unexpectedly, miserably
assaulted by death,” 33
- Faltar pudo su patria al grande
Osuna, 96
- Flota de cuantos rayos y centellas, 108
- “From La Torre,” 57
- Fue sueño ayer; mañana sera tierra, 32
- “He acquaints himself with the forces of
time and death’s debt collector,” 53

- “He compares aspects of his love with Etna,” 105
- “He describes Leander floating in the sea,” 109
- “He drinks fine wine with mosquitoes in it,” 149
- “He persists in exaggerating his amorous feelings and the excess of his suffering,” 139
- “He refers to his birth and the characteristics it conveyed to him,” 163
- “He teaches how everything warns of death,” 51
- “He undresses a woman of the great artifice that comprises her,” 147
- He was Asia’s terror, Europe’s fear, 99
- Here lies a painted lover, 75
- “Himno a las estrellas,” 116
- His country may have failed the great Osuna, 97
- How happily you greet, 79
- How you slip between my fingers, 53
- “Hymn to the stars,” 117
- I call you a courtier and a suitor, 151
- I gazed upon my country’s walls, 51
- If my eyelids, Lisi, were lips, 131
- If she sleeps without her face, 147
- If the abyss, unleashed by floods, 107
- If the shining body, which undressed, 135
- If you’re a bell, where’s the clapper, 145
- “Immortal memory of Don Pedro Girón, Duke of Osuna, dead in prison,” 97
- Imperio tuve un tiempo, pasajero, 100
- In curly storms of wavy gold, 133
- In the cloisters of the soul the wound, 139
- “Inscripción en el túmulo de Don Pedro Girón, Duque de Osuna, Virrey y Capitán General de las dos Sicilias,” 98
- “Inscription on the Tomb of Don Pedro Girón, Duke of Osuna, Viceroy and Captain General of the Two Sicilies,” 99
- “Invisible love communicated through the eyes,” 131
- It’s sizzling ice and frozen fire, 115
- “Juicio moral de los cometas,” 70
- “La voz del ojo, que llamamos pedo,” 154
- Lightning flashes then floats as blind, 109
- “Love constant beyond death,” 137
- Malhaya aquel humano que primero, 58
- “Memoria inmortal de Don Pedro Girón, Duque de Osuna, muerto en la prisión,” 96
- Miré los muros de la patria mía, 50
- “Mocking the chameleon and satirically moralizing its nature,” 151
- “Moral verdict on comets,” 71
- “Mujer puntiaguda con enaguas,” 144
- My mother bore me maliciously, 163
- “My sweet labors, my sweet pains,” 49
- Nagging clock, 67
- Ningún cometa es culpado, 70
- No comet is culpable, 71
- “Not an ordinary portrait of Lisi,” 129
- “Now, Juanilla, captives,” 183
- O Pilgrim! you seek Rome in Rome, 95
- O you, who wander carelessly, 35
- Oh tú, que, inadvertido, peregrinas, 34

- Once I had an empire, fleeting, 101
 Ostentas, de prodigios coronado, 104
- Parió adrede mi Madre, 162
 “Perservera en la exageración de su afecto amoroso y en el exceso de su padecer,” 138
 “Poderoso caballero es don Dinero,” 156
 Puto es el hombre que de putas fía, 152
- Qué alegre que recibes, 78
 Qué captas, noturnal, en tus canciones, 188
 Qué tienes que contar reloj molesto, 66
- “Refiere su nacimiento y las propiedades que le comunicó,” 162
 “Representase la brevedad de lo que se vive y cuán nada parece lo que se vivió,” 30
 Retirado en la paz de estos desiertos, 56
 “Retrato no vulgar de Lisi,” 128
- Si a una parte miraran solamente, 112
 Si el abismo, en diluvios desatado, 106
 Si el cuerpo reluciente que en Oeta, 134
 Si eres campana, dónde está el badajo, 144
 Si mis párpados, Lisi, labios fueran, 130
 Si no duerme su cara con Filena, 146
 “Significase la propia brevedad de la vida, sin pensar, y con padecer, salteada de la muerte,” 32
 “Soneto amoroso definiendo el Amor,” 114
- “Testamento de Don Quijote,” 172
 Teutonic flies of savory sips, 149
- “The butterfly’s tomb,” 75
 “The eye’s voice we call a fart,” 155
 “The hourglass,” 67
 The last shadow a cloudless day, 137
 “The warning,” 35
 There was a man stuck to a nose, 143
 This faux Sicilian cyclops, 187
 “To a cross-eyed, beautiful lady,” 113
 “To a man with a big nose,” 143
 “To a mine,” 61
 “To a spring,” 79
 “To Rome entombed in its ruins,” 95
 To see, shining in scarlet flames, 111
 “To the paintbrush,” 81
 Toward you, oh stars, 117
 “Trabajos dulces, dulces penas mías,” 48
 Tú, si en cuerpo pequeño, 80
 Tudescos moscos de los sorbos finos, 148
 “Túmulo a Colón habla un pedazo de la nave en que descubrió el nuevo mundo,” 100
 “Túmulo de la mariposa,” 74
- “Un galán preso y desterrado y ausente de su dama, lamentándose de su desdicha,” 122
 “Un nuevo corazón, un hombre nuevo,” 46
- Ver relucir, en llamas encendido, 110
- Were your eyes to gaze on just, 113
 When the year is newly born, 123
 Withdrawn to this solitary place, 57
- “Ya sueltan, Juanilla, presos,” 182
 Yace pintado amante, 74
 You, paintbrush, 81
 You put your trust in a tree, 61

"Francisco de Quevedo is considered today the major poet of the Spanish baroque, even surpassing in popularity the works of Góngora. In this outstanding selection by Christopher Johnson, we are treated to the many registers found in the Spanish poet. I very much appreciate the loving care that has gone into these renderings, since they reveal the pessimism, the lyrical beauty, the burlesque vulgarities, the majestic complexities, and the daunting wordplays found in the original."

FREDERICK DE ARMAS, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

"This is a thoughtful introduction to a major baroque poet little known to English readers, one whom Borges called the greatest artificer in all of Hispanic letters. Christopher Johnson's attentive selection and translation hit the high and low notes in Quevedo's register, from scurrilous to near sublime, from 'love that reaches beyond death' to stoical sonnets about time, which 'neither stumbles nor returns.'"

CHRISTOPHER MAURER, BOSTON UNIVERSITY

"In translations that capture the startling metaphors, contrived symmetries, and disarming directness of the original texts, Christopher Johnson offers fresh access in English to a selection of Quevedo's finest poems. His insight-filled introduction and notes guide the modern reader skillfully through the complexity and diversity of Spanish baroque poetry. This volume promises a new life in translation to some of the most emotionally and intellectually intense poems ever written in Spanish."

MARY MALCOLM GAYLORD, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

The University of Chicago Press

WWW.PRESS.UCHICAGO.EDU

ISBN-13: 978-0-226-69889-2

ISBN-10: 0-226-69889-0



9 780226 698892



9 0000