

Garcia Lorca Becomes His Own Poem

Verde que te quiero verde

Grandes estrellas de escarcha

Vienen con el pez de sombra

Que abre el camino del alba

Green, how I would love you green

Giant stars of frost

Come with the shadow fish of darkness

That open the way to the dawn

--Garcia Lorca, "Ballad of the Sleepwalker"

The red cross on the Sergeant's lapel,
was a vein in a bull's neck, quivering.

The sound of the Civil Guards' rifles,
staggered, blue steel genuflections.

He winced in the headlights, extended his hands
to fend off the bullets--*pajaro, joto, maricon*.

Four in the morning, in a shallow pit
On the road between Viznar and Alfacar

along side Dioscoro Galindo Gonzales

a lame school teacher,

and two anarchist bullfighters,

a bucket of quick lime as an afterthought.

The Guards picked up their spent cartridges,

flicked their cigarettes at the grave.

Sparks flew as they spit and walked away.

It's a shallow grave to swim out of, Federico,

White faced and streaked vermilion.

But after the Civil War, in nineteen thirty eight

in the Tavern of Antonio El Camborio,

when the doors were locked and closed, after hours,

and the smoke and the absinthe clouded the windows,

The guitarist Manuel Velez played a Carcelera,

a Llanto, the lament of one unjustly imprisoned.

Pastora Pavon, "La Nina De Las Peines,"

"The Girl Of the Combs" sang *Ay Carmela*, how it's said

the gypsies pulled Lorca from the shallows

before the quick lime burned his pale skin clean.

His body paltry and undone, the brevity of bone.

They lay him on a cooling board,
washed him with spikenard oil and jasmine,

They placed chips of turquoise on his eyes.
In their passion-gardens they wove necklaces
of dried marigolds and tiny apples.
sewed his songs shut in the mouths of lizards
under green moonlight, and braided shadows into his hair.
They scattered breadcrumbs and flower seeds,
called the birds, to flutter around his eyes.
They buried him standing upright, in their fashion,
where the willows “grow on the tongues of rivers,”
down by the cottonwoods, so his bones would settle
under the remote pitch of the starlight,
his green and point blank moon.

pajaro, joto, maricon: pejoratives for homosexual