Words That Weave a Reality Reborn: Performative Language and the Theory of Poetic Translation

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ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of a theoretical investigation of poetic translation and an application of theory in the form of an English translation of a historically significant Spanish poem. The theoretical portion of the thesis begins with a brief discussion of the nature of poetic discourse and continues with principles of poetic translatology drawn primarily from the scholarship of Dr. Barbara Folkart. The central concept in this section is Folkart's vision of poetically viable translation, which prioritizes the artistic dimension of transferring a poetic work into a new language. Folkart insists that translators should seek to re-create or re-enact the source-language text as an authentically poetic target-language text, rather than merely duplicating microstructural elements such as diction, denotative details, imagery, and metrical qualities. The discussion then turns to theories of performative language and explores specific types of performativity insofar as they can contribute to an understanding of poetic translation and provide conceptual guidance and inspiration for translators of poetic works. This section is followed by a poetic translation of the Spanish poem "A buen juez, mejor testigo" by José Zorrilla y Moral (1817–1893). The target-language poem was specifically intended to instantiate and reflect the principles set forth in the theoretical portion of the thesis.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Scholars and artists alike have affirmed that poetry is essentially untranslatable. The exact meaning of this assertion is conditioned by the exact meaning of the verb "to translate," but nonetheless—does not the mere existence of such an idea give cause for universal mourning, if not despair? Is the human race condemned to pass so many poetic masterpieces through a filter that dims or distorts every stanza, every line, every word in accordance with the reader's imperfect knowledge of the original language? Is a person's poetic destiny largely, and in many cases completely, dominated by the culture from which he or she received the spoken and written word? Is poetry a transcendent art form that speaks to universal and enduring facets of the human experience, or does it manifest—and perhaps contribute to—sociolinguistic isolation?

To say that poetry "cannot be translated" is, it would seem, to make a value judgment rather than an ontological argument, for in the practical realm, countless poems have indeed been translated, and furthermore, "translation is at the root of much poetry" (Reynolds 10). The issue, then, is whether a translation can survive as an independent poem and yet be attributed to the original author: Has the poem been *reborn*, with physiognomy altered but essence and poetic merit preserved? Has the poem been refashioned into an artifact that brings to readers of a new language or culture the same pulsations that captured the minds and hearts of those who read the original work?

Complete equivalency, understood in a scientific or linguistic sense, is out of the question: "The exact reproduction of the poetry of the original is strictly impossible" (Robinson 173). The task facing the translator is, in Barbara Folkart's terminology, to

achieve *poetically viable translation*. Though a dictionary would tell us that "viable" can mean something as prosaic as "capable of functioning," if we look to the etymological core of this word, we see the French *vie*, from the Latin *vita*. What we seek is a translation that sustains the *life* of the original poem without forfeiting its own, that resonates within the micro-cosmos[1] of the source text yet sings to the reader a new song, that reveals verbal images not merely replicated but "looked into and seen through…, visualized, internalized, and if necessary recreated" (Folkart 155).

[1] I use the term "micro-cosmos" instead of the more domesticated "microcosm" to emphasize the conceptual miniaturization of *kosmos* in the Greek sense of an ordered, internally harmonious system. In my lexicon, "micro-cosmos" is similar though not equivalent to what Lefevere calls a text's "universe of discourse" (passim).

II. Purpose and Scope

The objective of this monograph is twofold: First, I hope to make a modest contribution to the theory and practice of poetic translation by examining the work of an eminent translation scholar and exploring the intersection between existing poetic-translation scholarship and a branch of literary thought that, though not specific to poetic works, may be fertile ground for the labor of the translator. Second, I intend to instantiate my theoretical work by translating a historically significant poem that has never appeared in English translation.

My primary resource for scholarly expertise on poetic translation theory, and on the nature of poetry itself, is *Second Finding: A Poetics of Translation*, written by Dr. Barbara Folkart and published in 2007. Folkart is currently a professor in the University of Ottawa's School of Translation and Interpretation. She has been studying literature, language, and translation since the 1960s, has published in English and French, and is an author of original English-language poetry. Folkart's multilingual proficiency, cross-cultural professional background, and diverse academic formation contribute to the uncommon insight, authority, and erudition that I perceive in her work. Furthermore, her study of translation theory carries particular academic significance inasmuch as it is, in a sense, suffused with the "unwritten translation" performed by those who read a second language with extreme facility and competence: Folkart's scholarship draws heavily upon the writings of French theorists, including Antoine Berman, Jacques Lacan, Henri Meschonnic, and Maurice Pergnier. *The Art of Translating Poetry*, by Burton Raffel, served as a secondary and more practice-oriented resource. Raffel was a professor and well-known translator of literary and poetic works. I also consulted *Translating*

Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context, by André Lefevere.

The aspect of literary analysis and interpretation that I interweave into my study of poetic translatology is the concept of performative language, with emphasis on the performativity of poetic or prose narrative. This subcategory of performative-language theory has not acquired an official designation; in the interest of concision, I refer to it as *performative narratology*. It is essentially the idea that "language actively creates what it seems to merely describe" (Coats 88) and, furthermore, that the narrative manifestations of language that we call *story* do not "passively represent the world" but "actively construct it" (185). Performative narratology finds it origin in speech-act theory, which is closely associated with influential lectures given by the British philosopher J. L. Austin in 1955. However, Austin treats performativity primarily as a socially or politically situated phenomenon that lacks literary fecundity. Consequently, I rely primarily upon the expertise and insight that Dr. Angela Esterhammer has incorporated into her book entitled *Creating States: Studies in the Performative Language of John Milton and William Blake*. I am indebted to Esterhammer for her clear formulation of the difference between performativity as embedded within "societal discourse and power structures" and performativity as "the power of language to posit or create autonomously" (xv). She calls the former *sociopolitical* performativity and the latter *phenomenological* performativity, where the term "phenomenological" refers to the mode by which a poet or author proposes phenomena—the etymology of this word evokes *visual* rather than intellectual perception—whose existence is founded on something other than historical

reality (13). Within the poetic and literary experience, the phenomenological element is the more active of the two and is, therefore, the focus of my investigation.

The work that I chose for translation was written in Spanish, a language that I speak fluently and have studied extensively, and for which I maintain a deep emotional and cultural affinity. It is entitled “A buen juez, mejor testigo” and was composed by the Romantic poet José Zorrilla y Moral (1817–1893). In 714 lines of strongly metered and rhymed verse, the poem recounts a mysterious, impassioned legend that takes place in the city of Toledo during the sixteenth century. Zorrilla was crowned *poeta nacional* of Spain in 1889, and the immensely influential literary critic Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1856–1912) recognized “A buen juez, mejor testigo” as one of the greatest works in the long history of Spanish-language poetry.

III. POETIC TRANSLATOLOGY

What Is Poetry?

Before addressing the question of how a poem is to be translated, I should briefly examine the question of what a poem is. A comprehensive treatment of this topic is neither possible nor desirable within the constraints of the present work. Thus, I will limit myself to brief reflections on the fundamental nature of poetry and attend primarily to characteristics that have particular importance for the theory and practice of poetic translation.

Turco defines poetry as "the art of language" (4), and Folkart describes poetry as linguistic expression that "discards the templates of ordinary language" (61) and "taps into the unused potential of its linguistic raw material" (430) in order to draw the reader deeply into the raw intensity of lived reality—into the "the unsemiotized residue of experience" (61). Phonemes, morphemes, and lexemes in all their polyvalent richness—rhyme, meter, consonance, lineation, etymology, metonymy, intertextuality, metaphor—are for the poet what brushstrokes are for the painter or musical notes for the composer. Indeed, the poet descends to the crucible of language and emerges not merely as writer, orator, storyteller, or artist, but as *faber*—that is, "the creative agency, the making subject, to which the poem converges as to a virtual image" (Folkart 449). Poetry is a discursive realm in which the sounds, words, phrases, and visual forms of a language transcend their denotative functions and become instruments with which the *faber* "sunders the real from what we think we know of it, then gives it back to us new and strange, yet resonant with what we are in the world" (445).

Seen in this light, poetry is not something that can be produced by mapping the words and structures of one language onto the words and structures of another. That is to say, if translation is enclosed in the denotative realm and operates merely at the lexical and grammatical levels, it is not *poetic* translation; the target text, in other words, is not a poem. It may be a competent rendering of the source text, perhaps capturing not only semantic content but also some degree of the original's "illocutionary[2] power" (Lefevere 19). But it cannot attain full poetic viability if it lacks the unconventional yet aesthetically competent use of language and the image of a *faber*—the "deep coherency, convergence, [and] semiotic structuring" (Folkart 392) that elevated the original and marked it as an artifact worthy of translation.

Folkart's extensive reflections on the nature of the poetic text have seeded in my mind an alternative vision of what exactly poetry is. I propose it as a concise complement to the foregoing discussion and as a conceptualization that sheds light on the task of the translator and links the very essence of poetry to performative narratology. Folkart relates that when translating she seeks to "make world"; this curious phrase appears twice in *Second Finding*. I interpret "world" here as an *inhabitable micro-cosmos*, that is to say, a place where the reader can truly dwell—not physically, but intellectually, spiritually, emotionally. Elsewhere, Folkart speaks of the poet as "[turning] words back into world" (420) and of the translator as obliged to enter the "world behind and before the words" if

[2] My understanding of illocution is taken from Lefevere, i.e., language "used primarily for effect" (17) as opposed to language used primarily for conveying semantic information. This interpretation foregrounds the literary dimension of illocution but does not eliminate its connection to performative language as theorized by Austin and Searle.

she[3] is to successfully "reactivate the real that got metabolized into poetry" (182). The imperative of making world in the poetic text, the crucial role of "the Real constructed in and through the poem" (62), suggests that poetry is fundamentally *creative* discourse. Language can be directed to various ends; it can inform, persuade, inspire, specify, describe. *Poetry is language whose primary purpose is to create*, and the translator must remember that a translation is no less bound to this purpose than an original work.

The Difficulty of Poetic Translation

Translation in general is widely recognized as a challenging endeavor. Language that is carefully crafted for expressive, narrative, or informational purposes will inevitably lead the translator to the various semiotic fissures and chasms that separate one highly developed linguistic system from another. Robinson unequivocally states that "the exact reproduction of the poetry of the original is strictly impossible" (173). Raffel concurs: "Any translation, whether in verse or prose, is not the original which it translates," and furthermore, "the only method by which a reader can truly 're-create the poem' for himself is to learn to read the original" (120).

If poetry is indeed linguistic art that deliberately diverges from normative discourse and draws life from illocution and "deep semiotic structures" (Folkart 119), one could readily conclude that the poetic text is almost singularly refractory to translation. Folkart explains that the translation of poetry complicates the work of the translator

[3] In token of my intellectual debt to Dr. Folkart, I have adopted her practice of using a feminine pronoun when referring to a generic poet (or translator). This is her preference not because she has an "axe to grind," but because she happens to be a woman (450).

> in a particularly acute way, since the poetic text is a constellation of levels that converge against all odds to resonate more than synergistically. It is virtually impossible to reconstitute such a convergence in another language; as certain levels are prioritized, others will have to be jettisoned. (36)

In agreement with Raffel and Robinson, Folkart affirms the insuperable difficulty of capturing in a new language the full artistic and semiotic merit of the original work: "It takes a whole spectrum of translations … to even begin to approximate what the source poem was. And even then, the deficit is enormous, and irreversible" (57).

Above I compared the linguistic elements in a poem to the brushstrokes of the painter or the musical notes of the composer, and I believe that this conceptualization helps us to discern the true complexity of poetic translation: it sounds like a truism to say that nonfiction books and prose narratives can be transferred to a new language, but how does one translate a painting or a concerto? Somewhere between prose and the visual arts, or between speech and a symphony, we encounter the linguistic art of poetry, and it is here in this fey and fluid portion of the aesthetic spectrum that the translator must clothe the art of one language in the words of another.

According to T. S. Eliot, "Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood" (701). This deceptively succinct assertion offers crucial insight into the radiant core of poetic discourse, and it brings into full relief the nature of the difficulty that besets translations of poetry. The illuminating, penetrating, transforming power of a poem is not mediated by, or at least not confined within, the sometimes elusive question of what exactly the words "mean." The verbal images and musicality of linguistic

artwork transcend the realm of rational understanding; the reader can be captivated in the absence of comprehension, like the viewer who marvels at Caravaggio's masterpieces while knowing nothing of the colors concealed in a painted shadow.

For translators, Eliot's assertion implies a dual burden: First, the translator must not only read but also understand in order to translate well (Raffel 38). Second, she must harmonize this rational interpretation with the verbal brushstrokes of a new linguistic reality and thereby offer the reader a text that, though conceived in comprehension, is nonetheless born with the ability to communicate before it is comprehended. In Folkart's words, as translators we must be

> far more penetrating, far more precise than we were as readers, far more conscious of what gives rise to the truth-value of the image. We have a longer and much harder way to go, we have to move in far deeper than we did as readers, far deeper indeed than any literary critic or scholar ever does: past the affectivity of the image, past its truth-value, far, far deeper than denotation or semiotic values, all the way in to some sort of latent real that we can perceive, resonate with and reinvent in terms of our own Imaginary. (189)

The Mimetic Fallacy

One principle of poetic translatology emerges directly from the inherent and inescapable difficulty of transferring a fundamentally poetic text from one language to another. This is the principle of fidelity—or rather, the lack thereof. For both Folkart and Raffel, the pursuit of "fidelity" as it is typically understood is unnecessary and undesirable, and Lefevere places "language"—meaning the mere words and phrases of a

text—at the bottom of his hierarchy of literary translation (87). The nature of the poetic text is such that a lexically or denotatively faithful translation invariably becomes *un*faithful at the more important levels of tone, imagery, musicality, truth-value, and affectivity.

For Raffel, lexical fidelity in poetic translation is not (or at least *should not* be) expected, is impossible to attain, and is actually counterproductive; "exact linguistic equivalents are by definition nonexistent" (11), and "lexically accurate translations of a text tied to a melody cannot be properly sung, cannot be properly heard, cannot be properly understood or appreciated" (146). He exhorts us to view the work of the translator as an art that transcends the dichotomy of *fidelity* versus *taking liberties* (Raffel 37), and to accept the "impossibility of exact re-creation" and instead strive for poetically viable *approximation* (13). Since the target-language poem is not the source-language poem and can never be the chimerical "faithful translation" of the source-language poem, the translator must recognize that the only promising path is the one which leads to an approximation that *succeeds as a poem*—to a new poetic artifact that resembles the original "as a child resembles his parents" (37). The reader should sense the presence of a *faber* who has not enslaved herself to the details of the source text but rather has dwelt in its micro-cosmos, has breathed in its spirit, and has exhaled this spirit, pulsing with the warmth and movement of life, into a new linguistic and cultural environment.

Folkart is equally uncompromising on the issue of fidelity in poetic translation. She sees faithful—as in replicative—translation as fundamentally hostile to a playful,

innovative, "writerly"[4] approach that fosters the attainment of a poetically viable target-language text and leads the translator to "finer, or higher, or deeper levels of 'equivalence'" (437). The replicative mindset is insidious in that the accuracy of any replica is more easily evaluated at the superficial level of denotation, and thus the translator naturally tends to prioritize the transference of denotative structures. But good poetry always penetrates the denotative layer, and its most reactive elements—mood, music, prosody, connotation, emotional resonance—extend deep into the subsoil of language.

The Mimetic Fallacy is Folkart's terminology for the misguided notion that imitative, replicative, "faithful" translation will produce the type of fidelity that a translated poem *ought* to have. What begins as mimetic translation usually ends as an artifact that "tells us (something) about the original poem, rather than forcing us into the raw and radical experience of the poem" (Folkart 40). Mimesis as a principle or strategy for poetic translation is simply untenable, given that transferring poetic discourse into a new cultural-linguistic system is always an act of interpretation, intervention, adaptation, and appropriation. In seeking to merely imitate and replicate, the translator seeks the impossible; in prioritizing imitation and replication, the translator prioritizes that which is least likely to produce the *renaissance*, the creative rebirth, of the original work. A mimetic mindset or intention directs the translator's gaze to the denotative and linguistic microstructures of the text, but these microstructures are not the poem, and a target-language work that holds any hope of being a poetically viable re-presentation must

[4] Writerly translation, discussed in detail later in this monograph, is a recurrent theme in Dr. Folkart's scholarship. It can be briefly defined as translation that emphasizes the translator's role as *writer* of a "derived poem" rather than as *reader* of the original poem.

transcend and transform the (translated) microstructures of the source poem. Folkart's unremitting exhortation is that the translator of poetry produce poetry. And to do this, she recommends that the unit of translation be the poem itself:

> The statement that the entire poem must constitute the unit of translation boils down to saying that— rather than nit-picking her way left-to-right across the surface of the text—the translator must deal with an organic whole, substructures and all. She must treat image-fields, prosody, sound play, and the like as strands texted into a weave whose coherence derives from deep semiotic structures. (119)

Given the magnitude and intricacy of the translation task thus conceptualized, it is not surprising that most target-language poems are, in Folkart's estimation, of middling quality at best.[5] We must remember, though, that composing original poetry—especially when this poetry is of an excellence that merits translation—is by no means easily or quickly accomplished. If indeed the labor of the translator is fundamentally poetic rather than linguistic, it is reasonable to expect that her exertions will be comparable to those of the author.

Apart from the sheer cognitive and contemplative burden incurred by one who attempts to treat an entire poem as a unit of translation, this mentality is increasingly discordant with the dominant ethos of modern society. It is also discordant, to a lesser but not insignificant degree, with the interior disposition of so many translators whose minds and hearts have matured within this ethos. The accumulated weight of decades, if not

[5] It is interesting to note that the Latin verb *traducere*, which is the root of the Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese words for "to translate," has passed into English as "to traduce," i.e., to expose to shame through falsehood and misrepresentation. One is reminded of the Italian proverb: *traduttore, traditore*.

centuries, of empiricism, positivism, industrialism, and technological proliferation, combined with the more proximate influence of the spirit of STEM[6] in primary and secondary education, militates against a translative modality that renounces easily verifiable accuracy—that is, accuracy "at the level of small structures and short spans of meaning" (Folkart 437)—in favor of a deeper and more holistic accuracy in which the target-language text resonates with, re-presents, and re-enacts the source-language text. Translating thus becomes heuristic rather than replicative, and the source poem becomes not merely a unit of translation but a means of creation, a vessel of invention in the etymological sense of *invenire*, to come upon, to find, to discover:

> The aim of the translation process is to produce a free-standing text, to make a poem at all costs—the cost being, of course, "accuracy" (which is invariably conceived of in terms of denotation, not music). Such an approach will involve cutting the ties with the source text as ruthlessly as may be necessary…. This is where the poem becomes a unit of invention. (122)

Translating Far from the Grain

At this point, one might understandably inquire about the precise nature of a "faithful" or "accurate" translation. Are not fidelity and accuracy, according to the conventional interpretation of these concepts, unavoidable when the objective is to *translate* an existing poem rather than compose an entirely new one? Does the translator

[6] Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. The United States Department of Education explains that the "STEM community" is "collectively chart[ing] a course for the Nation's success." (U.S. Dept. of Education. "Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, including Computer Science." https://www.ed.gov/stem. Accessed 23 July 2020.)

truly have almost unlimited latitude in adapting the linguistic and semantic characteristics of the original to the poetic exigencies of a new language and culture? Is not a significant degree of perceptible resemblance necessary if readers are to receive a text as a legitimate translation of an existing text—especially since the latter is, presumably, the work in which they are primarily interested?

There are no simple, definitive answers to these questions, primarily because poetic translation exists on a continuum that does not admit of stark thresholds separating "accurate" from "inaccurate," "denotational" from "connotational," and so forth. Nevertheless, we must attempt to establish some form of demarcation that guides the practitioner toward a target-language text that is both a translation and a viable poem. Raffel readily assigns primacy to the aesthetic qualities of the target-language text but also recognizes that translators cannot pursue aesthetic success by "wantonly [rewriting] the original" (169). His counsel in this regard is that the translator "constantly be looking in both directions," that is, toward the source poem and toward "a replica which can have some chance of standing for itself as well as for the original on which it is based" (156). Though his analogy aptly captures the somewhat paradoxical nature of the translative undertaking, the task of looking always in both directions seems to me an awkward and disquieting one, and therefore not conducive to the composition of poetry. Folkart—who would surely question Raffel's use of the word "replica"—repeatedly employs a metaphor that I believe to be more helpful. She refers to the *grain* of the source text, the *graininess* of a translation, a rendering that is *close to the grain*. A poem's grain "resides in the linguistic micro-structures of its raw material (analogous to the grain of any other

material—film or wood or stone)" (Folkart 450), and it exists in a sort of dynamic tension with aesthetic qualities that emerge from it yet utterly transcend it.

I find the comparison between the grain of a poetic text and the grain of photographic film to be particularly illuminating and fruitful.[7] In one sense, the grain of a photograph *is* the image. What we perceive as grain is the visual manifestation of the light-sensitive molecular structures that allow a photographic negative to capture the lines, shapes, and tones drawn by incident light. If we eliminate the grain, we eliminate the film's light-sensitive elements, and no image can be formed. If we blend the grain into its surroundings, softening and diffusing it to the point of indistinction, the image—now blurred, divested of texture and detail—is fundamentally altered. In another sense, however, the grain is almost completely irrelevant to the image. It is an instrument, a mechanism, a carrier wave that the viewer instinctively filters out as accidental to the information, emotion, familiarity, elegance, grandeur, mystery, or micro-cosmic reality that the image conveys.

If one were to "translate" a photographic print into a painting or a sculpture, the film grain would be of no consequence. Though it is essential to the formation of the source image, and even adds a stylistic quality that is not always undesirable, the painter and the sculptor know that it cannot and ought not be transferred into the visual language of their respective artistic media. They are bound to their own "grain"—the strokes of the brush, the marks of the chisel—and to their own raw materials, and it is within these

[7] Throughout this discussion, any reference to a photographic image assumes the use of film. Digital photography has its own "grain" in the form of pixelation, but pixel-based image capture and reproduction does not effectively serve my analogical purposes.

liberating constraints that they undertake to re-express and re-actualize the poignancy, or beauty, or drama, or cultural significance of the original.

When applied to poetic translation, this analogy certainly has its limits; the words of a poem are far more integral to overall semiosis and emotional impact than is the grain of photographic film. Nevertheless, "good poetic translation of any kind, or from any language" does not have "anything to do with the translation of words" (Raffel 62), and I believe that the comparison can profitably inform the translator's frame of mind and serve as a qualitative metric by which the translator evaluates and refines her work. A poem, like a photographic image, cannot exist without its grain, that is, without words, phrases, syntactical structures, metrical arrangements, and so forth. But the poem in its totality, the poem as world, as textually mediated encounter with the real, is vastly more than the sum of its microstructures. And furthermore, these microstructures dissolve in the light that radiates from the union of mind and poetry—an alchemical reaction, in which the base elements of language enter the human heart and are transmuted into precious verse that perdures through centuries of linguistic evolution and sociocultural upheaval only to luminesce and scintillate and captivate as though only one fair moment had passed.

Gilgamesh, to where do you wander?
The life you seek you shall not find.
When the gods created Man,

Death for mankind they set aside,

Life in their own hands retaining.[8]

It is the image, not the grain—the alchemy, not the elements—that the translator must strive to re-create.

The Already-Said

One of the most foundational principles in Folkart's scholarship is the concept of the already-said; upon it is built not only her translative modality but also her vision of poetry itself. To prepare for a full discussion of the already-said, we will first examine a linguistic construct proposed by the French theorist Maurice Pergnier in his book *Les Fondements sociolinguistiques de la traduction*.

In Pergnier's model, human discourse exists on three levels: the *système*, the *idiome*, and the *parole*. The *système* is language abstracted away from the individual and existing in a state of virtually infinite capacity for expression; it is a vast semiotic network of "limitless generative potential" (Folkart 452) that "structures all the configurations—actualized or virtual—recognizable as well-formed manifestations of a given language" (3). A *parole*, in contrast, is language instantiated by an individual and bound to his or her time, place, and communicative intent. *Paroles* are utterances produced by human beings as they draw upon the resources of the *système*. The *idiome* functions as a sort of bridge between *système* and *parole* that operates not at the level of universalized potentiality, nor at the level of individualized actuality, but rather at the level of *socialized conventionality*. It is social language comprising "the repertory of

[8] The *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablet X. These lines are my modernization of an antiquated English translation.

already actualized forms that serve as patterns for future utterances" (xvi)—in Folkart's succinct phrase, "the words of the tribe." "Tribe" denotes the linguistic community, and I perceive importance in its mildly negative connotation of confining loyalty and insularity—for the *idiome* is precisely that from which poetry must break free.

Folkart's concept of the already-said is more or less coterminous with Pergnier's *idiome*, though her choice of words emphasizes language as that to which the members of a community have become accustomed and also, at least to some extent, desensitized. The already-said is not only that which *has been said* but also that which perhaps *ought not be said again*, if one's intent is to place the reader in vivifying, penetrating contact with both the singularity and resonance of truth.[9] The well-known effect produced by clichéd utterances serves as an extreme example of the flaccidity and opacity of the already-said, though the already-said casts a much larger shadow than cliché and darkens the poet's vision more subtly and therefore more insidiously: The "process of fossilization is an inevitable stage in the life of language…. The novel becomes the expected then degenerates into cliché," which is "merely a stigmatized subset of a much larger category, the already-said" (Folkart 3).

The limitations of the already-said, as well as its injurious effects on poetic discourse, are rooted in the nature of language itself. Words are not the reality that they describe; they are abstractified signifiers, and their connection to the underlying reality of the signified is always imperfect and sometimes tenuous. Furthermore, the natural evolution and devolution of language produces semiotic shift, constriction, and

[9] "Truth" in this context is to be interpreted according to Folkart's definition: "Truth in poetry would seem to be propositional content made available as direct experience, amplified into directly felt insight" (413); it is "an overarching reading of the world, a sense and unity and meaning constructed out of the raw materials of life" (416).

fossilization that can weaken or obscure the bond between the signifier and what I might call the *viscus*[10]—the heart, the living flesh, the vital essence—of the human experience. Even as they are coming into existence within the linguistic community, the words of the tribe are hobbled by abstraction and conventionalized interpretation, and the inevitable destiny of all language is to acquire an ever-deepening layer of the already-said that functions as "an abstract grid, a glossy veneer over the mess and murk of the real" (Folkart 420). We can consider, as an example, etymological divergence and compartmentalization. "Culture" is now primarily the artistic, intellectual, and folkloric manifestations of a social group, with little recognition of its origin in Latin *colere*—to tend, to cultivate, first the soil and then the mind, the spirit, the senses, the intellect. "To communicate" is to exchange information or perhaps merely to deliver information, rather than to make *communis*, to make common and shared, to share oneself and one's thoughts with another being. "Remorse" is a feeling of guilt for wrongs committed, and we forget the sensation of *remordere*, of that which *bites* the heart or the conscience again and again and again.

Language is the fundamental signifying system of the human species, the "factor of greater importance than any other" in personal and social life (Saussure 7), the all-encompassing communicative cosmos without which even mathematics, visual art, meditation, and other "non-linguistic" endeavors would be impossible. And yet, language tends inexorably to the depleted soil of the already-said, where diverse elements of

[10] This Latin word is typically seen in the plural (*viscera*), though I think that the singular form serves my purposes more effectively. I am also intrigued by the connection to the homograph *viscus*, which means "mistletoe" and (according to one dictionary) has a figurative association with seduction. Poetry can be seductive, especially when this word is interpreted etymologically and given a positive or at least neutral connotation.

discourse accumulate and lignify, forming a "shield against and substitute for world" (Folkart 383). The very words with which we form the most fecund, blood-red questions of life—who am I?, why am I alive?, where is happiness found?, what does it feel like to be loved?, what does it feel like to die?—are also a filter that dulls deep crimson into reddish-gray and blurs all possible answers into a tepid haze of conventionality and complacency. Language as screen (383), language as barrier (442), language as weak yet cumulative venom that gradually inoculates against the passion and mystery and *viscus* of human life—and poetry is the antidote:

> In order to *do justice to the world*, poets delve deeper … than ever before into the amorphous business of being.
>
> This they do by "making it new." Poetry is a counter-idiomatic practise, one that grates against the words of the tribe, its received ideas, and its verities—the already-said, the already-thought, the already-perceived…. The poet reverses the process of abstraction, reconstitutes some of the mess behind the lexicon, turns words back into world and tries to make sense of the raw new layers she has just uncovered. Poetry is "a second finding," to borrow Richard Wilbur's beautiful words, one which "loses all that it touches back to wonder."[11] (Folkart 420)

Perhaps this is the principal answer to a question that seems rarely to be asked—that is, Why does poetry exist? Transcending nations and cultures and continents, reaching back to the earliest civilizations and even predating written literature (Goody 78), poetry is

[11] All italics in quoted material are present in the original unless otherwise noted.

there, wherever the tribe and its words are to be found. It is language bestowing the means of its own renewal, and the intuited remedy for the intuited effects of linguistic senescence and the consequent atrophy of imaginative, expressive, and contemplative modes of existence. “The ultimate virtue of poetry, perhaps, is that it preserves us from desiccation and abstractification. Abstractification—the rote over-reliance on the already-conceptualized, the already-said, the doxa—leads us away from the real” (Folkart 442). Whether language desiccates through overuse, or turns in upon itself and begins to fracture the bonds that united signifier and signified, poetry is *counter-idiomatic* restoration that “[does] justice to the singularity of its occasion” (284) and seeks to “emancipate itself—and us—from the already-seen and the already-said” (138).

Thus far we have considered the already-said as it relates to language and to poetry in general. We will now examine the already-said insofar as it impinges on poetic translation. The foregoing discussion has situated poetry as language used in such a way as to counteract the degenerative tendencies of the *idiome*, but we must recall that some works elicit far more admiration, affection, and critical approbation than others. Poetry as a linguistic genre is “hugely intolerant of the already-said” (Folkart 5) and “thrives … on its own, productive counter-idiomaticity” (152). Thus, the degree to which a particular poem succeeds as poetry is strongly linked to its success in transcending the *idiome*, and if the goal is poetically viable translation, this criterion applies as much to a target-language text as it does to an original work.

The imperative to transcend the already-said, to “[break] through the wall of language” (Folkart 383), presents particular challenges for the translator. The original author must innovate with the raw materials of her language, and furthermore, her

counter-idiomatic innovation must remain within the sphere of that which is culturally acceptable and aesthetically productive. This is no easy task, and for translators, the difficulty is compounded by the competing demands of working innovatively in the target language while being faithful to the source text. Regardless of whether fidelity and accuracy have as their object the alchemy or the elements, regardless of whether microstructures, macrostructures, or the entire poem is treated as the unit of translation, the translator is at least partially confined within the semantic and illocutionary boundaries delineated by the original work. Consequently, she lacks the full liberty of thought and expression that facilitates and potentiates the quest for words that "play in the space between idiom and system,[12] tapping into the not-as-yet-conventionalized potential of 'possible language'" (Folkart 4).

The translator is restricted not only by the source text but also by prevailing attitudes surrounding translation itself. We find in both the theory and praxis of translation abiding notions or sentiments of *submission* to the original; it would seem that the translator is bound by the original's "authority" to reverentially relinquish creative agency and literary dynamism, so as to more perfectly achieve accurate and faithful preservation of the source text. For Folkart, this ethos is woefully incompatible with poetically viable translation, which is an unlikely result indeed when the translator "[cowers] in awe of The Original": "The poem taps into the unused potential of its linguistic raw material to forge its own, idiosyncratic signifiers…. Most practitioners,

[12] Here Folkart uses the anglicized versions of *idiome* and *système*. I consistently use the French terms, so as to avoid confusion between "idiom" in Pergnier's construct and the various dictionary meanings of the English word "idiom" (all of which do not adequately convey the idea of Pergnier's *idiome*).

though, conceive of translation as a way of replicating (their own limited version of) what's already there. The result is seldom, if ever, poetry" (430).

I suspect that in the context of European civilization, the translative ethos was consolidated, and perhaps also engendered, by the prevalence and importance of religious works—and above all the Bible—as objects of translation. Such attitudes are sensible when one is translating a sacred work whose author is renowned for sanctity and supernatural wisdom, and a fortiori when the words of the source text are reputed to have been directly inspired by an omniscient Being. But these attitudes are far less sensible, and can easily become counterproductive, when the object of translation is one of the countless poetic artifacts that cannot be acclaimed as anything more than the exquisite linguistic art of an ordinary mortal.

Deferential, duty-bound translation easily succumbs to the "law of the already-said" (Folkart 31). Though the source poem is composed in a different language and therefore does not directly draw from the translator's *idiome*, it nonetheless constitutes an already-said that is operative at the level of aesthetics and imagery and can be transferred into the target-language poem. More importantly, in my opinion, is the way in which conformance to the microstructures and the already-said of the original influences the translator's overall state of mind. When her preoccupation is to replicate, to preserve, to defer, to obey, the translator may naturally extend these attitudes to the language in which she seeks to craft the derived poem. The spirit of *invenire*—finding, discovery, invention—fades away, the prefabricated conveniences (61) of the target *idiome* infiltrate, conventionalities and ossifications begin to cloud the poetic vision, and finally the wall of language is constructed by the very hands whose vocation is to dismantle it.

> Little of the canonical discourse on translation has anything to do with the actual business of making text. Nothing in it has anything to do with the *pleasure* of making text. Where the readerly, reverential approach stresses duty, authority, the law of the already-said, writing operates on the pleasure principle. To translate as a writer is to pleasure in the act of making text, moving forward with wonder and infinite respect for the possibilities of your raw material. The writerly translator saves her reverence for the poem still to come. (30–31)

Writerly Translation

Every translator must be both a reader and a writer. One of these identities, however, will assume primacy when the act of *trans-lation*—of *carrying across* into a new semiotic cosmos—is truly underway. Folkart insists that in order to achieve poetically viable translation, in order to produce a target-language text that transcends the already-said and irradiates the reader with its singularity and inaugurality (295), the labor of the translator must be at its core the labor of a writer, a *faber*, a linguistic artisan. This is writerly translation.

The distinction between readerly and writerly translation reflects, and to some degree subsumes, other relevant dichotomies: observation vs. insight, analysis vs. intuition, replication vs. re-enactment, reformulation vs. re-creation, submission vs. liberation. By emphasizing translation as the work of a writer rather than a reader, Folkart suggests that the cross-linguistic fulfillment of the original poem is *not to be found in the original poem*, and especially not in its grain. No amount of research, examination, linguistic deconstruction, or reverential rumination can re-actualize the source text in the

target language. Though valuable as preparation and inspiration, these readerly activities must yield to the "dynamics of poetic performance" (13), that is, to a writerly outpouring of creative energy that "focuses, not on the source text but on the processes of making target text" (240). Such translation

> refuses to fixate on the original, categorically rejects the notion that the text-to-come, the text-in-the-making must set out to replicate the original, yet inevitably fall short of it…. There are no asymptotic bundles of unattainable features here. No apologies for the target text and its inadequacies. No reverences, no grovellings. (240)

Writerly translation extricates the translator from the potentially stultifying shadow of the original and its purportedly inevitable superiority. It is freedom—the freedom to contemplate world and then *create* world, and no law decrees that the new must be less beautiful, inspiring, passionate, intimate, thought-provoking, heroic, or invigorating than the old. It asks the question that is rarely spoken aloud but perhaps has been whispered into a silence heavy with the scent of books and punctuated only by the soft strokes of pen on paper: Can the translation be better than the original?

Translation of Difficult Works: Let Writer Aid Reader

Though writerly translation calls our attention first to the intellectual and psychological conditions in which the target-language text is begotten, an approach that emphasizes the translator as writer reflects back to the source text and influences the translator as reader. This occurs because writing, according to Folkart, is "driven by

intuition," and the intuition of a competent poet is "a more complex, more complete, more highly organized and finely tuned grasp of what makes a poem than anything a theorist can aspire to formalize" (13). The intuition of the translator-writer, then, is mobilized when she must confront the question, What will make this text a poem?, and it is cultivated and refined and sensitized through the act of writing. But the translator-reader can invoke this same intuition in her exploration of the original work, when she must confront the question, Of what is this poem made?

And this latter question is by no means a trivial one. It must be recognized that poetry, and modern poetry in particular, is difficult and sometimes almost impossible to "understand" in the way that one understands a novel or a newspaper article. Folkart uses the term "hermetic" to describe works or passages that are particularly resistant to intellectual comprehension. Though one of this word's dictionary definitions is "esoteric, cryptic," I am inclined to believe—especially given her tendency to incorporate scientific concepts into discussions of poetic discourse—that she employs "hermetic" essentially as engineers do, i.e., to describe an airtight closure. Hermetic poetry is sealed; the reader can't get in, and the poem can't get out. What is a translator to do in such cases? How can she carry the poem across into a new cultural-linguistic cosmos if it is locked away in its own semiotic world, sealed against analysis and comprehension? There is no perfect solution, and occasionally she can do little more than admit defeat, as Folkart does when attempting to translate a passage from Canto VI of Saint-John Perse's *Anabase*:

> I felt myself translating half-heartedly, even grudgingly, with the distressing sense that I had no real grasp of what the text was doing. The first approach, with such a

> hermetic passage, has to be desperately denotative—almost word-for-word. Failing to understand the semiosic processes at work, unsure of how the text actually generates its poetry, the translator has to cling to the denotations. (247)

Nonetheless, writerly translation is less susceptible to breakdowns of this nature, because it urges us not merely to analyze the poem but to *read*, to *savor* the poem with the intuition and instinct of a poet. As writers we *hear* how sounds and rhymes and prosody delight the mind and ignite emotion; sometimes the intellect must cede to the ear, which is blind to the letter of a language but wondrously attuned to its music. As writers we *feel* how words and syntax and images denote, connote, evoke, and create, and there is much to be gained by bringing this almost tactile sensibility to our reading of the source text: "The textures of a poem extend far below its surface, and offer writerly possibilities for the translator who has the talent to recognize and re-actualize them" (431). Folkart's use of the word "textures" is arresting in its etymological resonance: the English words "text" and "texture" both derive from the Latin *texere*, meaning to weave, and by extension, to intertwine, construct, compose. If it is the work of a skilled artisan, even the most hermetic poem is a text—a woven work, a collection of diverse elements intertwined into profound unity of purpose and appearance. And if it is a text, there must be some texture through which the writerly translator can feel and intuit her way into the poetry of the poem.

> I am not for one instant suggesting that ear, instinct, or intuition constitute a mystical-mushy savvy different from what analysis can get at, after the fact. Ultimately, the proactive, writerly forces work on the same material that

> retroactive analysis will later partially bring to light…. And there is no doubt in my mind that the writerly impulsion is enriched by whatever type of analysis it has been able to absorb: intuition must constantly be updated. What I am saying is that ear and instinct constitute a more direct, less mediated, more agissante, proactive and dynamic command of the material with which all artists work. (Folkart 14)

Writerly Translation and the Inhabited Text

In proposing writerly translation, Folkart is addressing not only the aesthetic and literary qualities of the target-language text but also its *presence*, that is, its success in manifesting a *faber* who exists in the world and crafts a poem that has "something to say—however obliquely—about being in the world" (Folkart 62). So central is the *faber* in Folkart's scholarship and her vision of poetic discourse that I propose the following addendum to my earlier exploration of what poetry is: beyond language as art, and not merely language as creation, a poem is an *inhabited text*. The Latin verb *habitare*, from which we have English "to inhabit," is a frequentative extension of *habere*: to have, hold, possess. I conceptualize the poetic artifact as a written work that, while it is coming into being, is possessed by the *faber*; she shares her being and weaves herself—*texere*, texts herself—into the poem, becoming inseparable from it (405). Then, as the work nears completion, the poem begins to possess the *faber*. She dwells therein and speaks, imbuing the text with a "sense of personhood" (400), a "distinguishing presence" (282) to which the poem converges and that is now "an artifact of the poem itself" (336). The writer is written, the composer composed, the artisan *arte facta*: made by her own art. Here lies

singular power to catalyze the imagination, power to make world and be remade by it. The nature of poetry is that of life both given and received, of mutual fecundity, creative reciprocity—the creature that gives birth to its creator.

For Folkart, the presence of the *faber* is an indispensable element of good poetry, and writerly translation is a paradigm in which translators seek to endow their target-language poems with this vitalizing presence. Readerly translation, with its retrospective, analytic fixation on the original, will favor a replicative rendering in which microstructural elements take precedence over the compositional techniques by which "the poetically competent translator scripts herself into the text she creates" (Folkart xv). The result of readerly translation is an uninhabited poem, a fundamentally anonymous work that cannot make world because it has no *author* and therefore no *authority*; both words derive from Latin *auctor*, meaning one who originates something and is answerable for its truth-value. The new poem lacks identity and authenticity, and no amount of linguistic, metrical, or intertextual "fidelity" can compensate for this loss.

Folkart's model, in contrast, privileges the translator-writer, insisting that she assert her rights as *auctor* and *faber*. Rather than "vainly running after what worked so splendidly" (22) in the inaugural and inherently unrepeatable event of the original poem, a writerly approach frees the translator to seek poetic viability by "appropriating both the source text and the target idiom, treating the multiple layers of the idiom as raw material that is *mine*—every last layer of it—mine to do with as I want" (22). Writerly translation seeks a derived poem that is "inhabited by a genuine presence" (158), and it prioritizes "the writing subject, the subject in and behind the text, *the subject who constructs herself in the act of writing*" (81).

On the Question of Target-Language Proficiency

Underlying all of the preceding discussions is the assumption that the translator can read and comprehend the source text. This assumption is problematic even at an ontological level, given that "comprehension" exists in infinite gradations, is highly variable even among native speakers, and is utterly incompatible with the sort of dichotomy that is implied when one asks, for example, "Do you understand French?" Furthermore, the intentional counter-idiomaticity of poetic discourse renders the concept of comprehension virtually undefinable when invoked as a means of assessing one's ability to accurately "determine" what a poem "is trying to say." Nevertheless, we know from practical experience that some individuals comprehend a particular language better than others, and we do no harm in seeking an (inevitably vague) "threshold region" that separates those who are capable of successful poetic translation from those who are not.

The assumption of target-language proficiency is problematic also at a strictly linguistic level: the reality of childhood, education, and social life—and perhaps the very nature of human cognition and perception—is such that an extreme minority of human beings can comprehend an acquired language as intuitively and thoroughly as they comprehend their received language.[13] This leads to the disconcerting conclusion that the translator, if we assume that she is translating *into* her received language, will almost never understand the source text as most native speakers do. Though perhaps not ideal, this situation actually presents no serious obstacle to excellent poetic translation, and Dr. Folkart's translatology helps us to understand why this is the case.

[13] Language-learning terminology is in flux and, in any case, never seems to satisfy. I find the terms "received" and "acquired" to most successfully capture the fundamental distinction between, respectively, one's first language, native language, home language, mother tongue, etc., and a non-native language, target language, second language, etc.

Raffel proposes fairly relaxed expectations for linguistic proficiency:

> The translator starts by knowing, or occasionally by learning, a language other than his own. One need not be bi- or tri- or multilingual in order to translate and translate well. One need not command a speaking knowledge of the language being translated from (and indeed there are some languages, like Latin and classical Greek, where a true speaking knowledge is impossible). (102–03)

The idea that one would begin a translation project by *learning* a language is, in my view, rather alarming, and as we will see anon, Folkart's comments on linguistic proficiency suggest that she would be similarly dismayed. The delicate affective nexus and deep linguistic resonances that characterize poetic discourse seem to demand the sort of extended study that allows a language to slowly percolate into one's psyche and form intimate bonds with what Folkart calls the *vécu*[14]—literally signifying *that which has been lived*, and referring to the vast and almost phantasmagoric collection of experiences, images, and emotions born of the writer's contact with the real.

Raffel's rather dismissive attitude toward speaking knowledge is also questionable. First, we can adduce the highly authoritative perspectives of the renowned French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who emphasizes language itself as an essentially vocal phenomenon. He identifies the spoken word as "a language's natural sphere of existence" (22); a language is anterior to its written form and is even obscured by it: "writing is not a garment, but a disguise" (29). These considerations are especially pertinent to the translation of poetry—which, though written, derives much of its power

[14] *Vécu* is the past participle of the French verb *vivre* ("to live").

from assonance, consonance, and rhythm and is, therefore, fundamentally sonic. To be experienced and contemplated and savored in its fullness, a poem must exist audibly, either in the mind or on the tongue. Consequently, competence in speaking and aurally comprehending a language, though not indispensable, will aid the translator in successfully assimilating and re-enacting the source poem. Some languages present great difficulties to anyone who wishes to develop spoken proficiency, but I find Raffel's examples to be somewhat unconvincing. Latin is still widely spoken and—perhaps more importantly—sung by teachers, students, and members of religious communities, and much knowledge of Ancient Greek phonology has survived. Pronunciation and idiomatic speech patterns as we currently know them presumably diverge from those of the language as spoken and heard by Ovid or Homer, but the same dilemma confronts the modern translator of Shakespeare, Dante, San Juan de la Cruz, Charles d'Orléans, and so many other medieval and early-modern poets.

With regard to the languages for which the pursuit of spoken proficiency is in fact impractical or even impossible, it could be argued that poetry composed in these languages is simply not compatible with poetically viable translation: A modern writer could compose a new poem that is *inspired by* the original work, and someone with sufficient linguistic expertise could accurately transfer denotations into a new language. But if the translator has no access to the melody and acoustic eloquence of the source poem, I see no way to produce a target-language text that sings as the original did. If we return to the analogy of the painter who translates a photograph, a poet's ability to "hear" the prosody and soundscapes of a source poem is comparable to the painter's ability to see color in the original image. Many other features—line, shape, texture, intensity,

etc.—are present and can be reproduced, but to the extent that perception of color is lacking, emotional effect and overall visual harmony are lost or fundamentally altered. Likewise, there is much in a source poem that the translator can capture by mobilizing her grammatical and lexical knowledge, but if she can *speak* the language of the source poem—appropriating its sounds and cadences as the vibrational manifestation of her thoughts, sensing and discerning the ripple and resonance of its music—the struggle against denotative, readerly, uninhabited translation is more likely to end in victory.

Folkart and Raffel coincide in affirming the importance of thorough comprehension. Though Raffel is not as emphatic as Folkart, he implies the need for a more visceral knowledge of the source language when he states that syntactical rules alone do not suffice:

> To understand truly requires more than merely mechanical application of "rules." The translator must first be able to decipher … the "true" meaning of what he is translating. That is, the translator must first understand, as fully as possible, his text. (38)

Folkart, citing an example of problematic translation occasioned by the translator's literal rather than idiomatic interpretation of the source text, has this to say:

> Clearly, when you are not even on top of the raw material, there is simply no way you can understand, let alone re-enact, what the writer—the faber—has done with that raw material. (311–12)

With regard to linguistic proficiency, the most prominent dimension of Folkart's scholarship is the importance of being "at home" in the source language (310), that is, to

feel in its presence comfort, security, and deep familiarity. When I am at home in a received language, I have the sensation of mutual belonging; I belong to the language, and it belongs to me. Indeed, I say even that the language *lives inside me*: if I excise the language, I irreparably impoverish my perception and expression of reality, and the language becomes as a grand symphony that, though still exceedingly fine, is less perfect for the loss of even the humblest of its musicians (cf. Saussure 13, 18).

When a translator has studied and explored and internalized a language to the point of feeling at home therein, she comprehends more intuitively, analyzes more accurately, and reacts more naturally to a source-language text. Beyond this, however, a translator who has attained deep familiarity and affective coexistence with an acquired language can more easily see beyond the grain of a source poem, because the grain is bound up with linguistic details that assume undue prominence when accentuated by the gloss of alterity. Microstructural details, idiomatic usages, and exotic sounds can distract the translator from the poem's true sonority and *viscus* and thereby conduce to a target-language text that lacks identity, convergence, and impulsion. The new poem may merely replicate in way that—perhaps intentionally—makes an exhibition of superficial foreignness rather than re-actualizing the coherent radicality, inaugurality, or musicality of the original. Referring to her "weaker" language, Folkart explains, with inimitable élan, that she naturally evades these effects because

> I am *at home* in French. I don't stumble along the surface of the text, exclaiming to myself all the while how quaint or fun or exotic the language is, with its cobble stones and storks and mansard roofs, how lovely it is to have a change of scenery,

> how nice it is to get away. French is a second home to me, whether I speak, read, or write it. (310)

When an acquired language begins to feel like a second home, the translator should be confident in confronting the sociocultural and linguistic difficulties that are likely to accompany any source poem that is worthy of translation.

Before concluding this section on linguistic proficiency, I will return briefly to the issue of why Folkart's scholarship, though it certainly advocates the pursuit of source-language fluency, demonstrates that excellent translation is not rendered impossible by the almost inevitable imperfections in one's comprehension of an acquired language. Quite simply, her entire vision of poetic translation is animated by the act of *writing poetry*, and this act is not predicated on or conditioned by the perfection with which the translator comprehends the original. Rather, the most influential elements are the skill, dedication, and mindset of the translator, "in whose hands even error [can become] a creative mechanism" (Folkart 430). Linguistic proficiency is desirable insofar as it aids the translator in attaining whatever type of accuracy or fidelity is called for, but it is *indispensable* insofar as it enables the translator to derive a good poem.

> At the end of the day, though, what counts is poetic, not linguistic, competence—the receptivity to resonate with the musical and visual and affective potential of the original, the talent to imprint rhythms and visuals and musics of one's own on the quiver extracted from the text. (146)

IV. Performative Narratology

The vague notion that language and story somehow *create* reality has for millennia reverberated subtly within human consciousness. Its history extends back to one of the most widely read and thoroughly studied works of literature in existence:

> In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. (Gen. 1.1–3)

The opening narrative of the Hebrew Bible has powerfully influenced the evolution of human thought and imagination, and at the core of this narrative "lies a vision of language which can create things from nothing" (Esterhammer 51).

Contemporary traces of this notion can be found—half-concealed, perhaps—in the thoughts and statements of those who drink deeply from the fount of literature. Barthes wrote that "narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative...: it is simply there, like life itself" (79). Blended with the Genesis account, his observation glows in the soft light of the surreal and almost invites us to wonder if narrative language somehow effectuated human life as we know it. For Tolkien, narrative—or more specifically, the particularly "unrealistic" form of narrative known as fantasy—is artistic "sub-creation" by which one can "actually assist in the effoliation and multiple enrichment of creation" (389). Coleridge speaks of the reader's "poetic faith" (145), but faith implies some form of *reality* to which the will assents in the

absence of sensory proof, and furthermore, the will "has so little to do with it…. If the storyteller is skilled, he simply invades us and takes over. There is little we can do to resist" (Gottschall 4). Are humans truly so helpless in the face of mere fiction, of mere invention, of that which is fundamentally *un*real? Is the narrative realm simply an imitation of, or a distraction from, what Tolkien calls the "Primary World," or does the psychological force of story point to a more *act*ual, a more performative, existence? What exactly did Hemingway mean when he laconically stated that the author of a novel "should create living people; people not characters" (153)?

Modern theories of performative language begin with the work of J. L. Austin. He was a philosopher, and the original formulation of performativity reflects this scholarly orientation: the linguistic performative was a solution to the philosophical difficulty posed by utterances that are incompatible with an analytical framework in which language describes reality by means of statements that can be evaluated as either true or false. True/false statements are categorized as constative utterances, from the Latin *constare*, meaning (among other things) to be established or decided. Performative utterances, on the other hand, constitute an action or instigate some type of change that affects the speaker, the addressee, or external conditions (Esterhammer 4). Examples are "I do," which creates a spouse where before there was only a fiancé(e); "I quit," which turns an employee into an ex-employee; "this meeting is adjourned," which accomplishes the adjournment; and "I apologize," which causes the apology to exist. Thus, in performative language, words have the power to *perform*, that is, to act in the world, to bring about real alteration, to collaborate in the construction of reality. However, Austin's concept of performativity, also known as speech-act theory, was linguistic and social in

nature; it did not address the creative capacity of narrative, and it operated in a philosophical and grammatical realm that largely precluded any meaningful connection with the literary and imaginative reality of ordinary people.

Austin's seminal work attracted the attention of various other scholars, and his theory gradually expanded and ramified into a state of fairly severe complexity (Esterhammer xiv–xv). Part of this evolution was a bifurcation in which performativity can be seen as applicable to individual statements within a text or to the text as a whole. When an entire text is perceived as a speech act, performative language begins to permeate into the realm of literary criticism, providing a theoretical framework that deepens our understanding of

> an author's ability to "create" reality through poetic or fictional utterance, independently of societal conventions but in accordance with literary conventions that ascribe creative (or visionary, or prophetic) authority to the speaking voice and elicit the reader's or hearer's assent. This type of utterance, and the corresponding interpretive approach, is here called the *phenomenological* performative, since its concern is the positing of phenomena whose existence is determined, not by historical reality, but by some other set of criteria. (Esterhammer 13)

Between Reality and Narrative: The Response of the Reader

> I will set down a tale as it was told to me by one who had it of his father, which latter had it of HIS father, this last having in like manner had it of HIS father—and so on, back and still back, three hundred years and more, the fathers transmitting it to the sons and so preserving it. It may be

> history, it may be only a legend, a tradition. It may have happened, it may not have happened: but it COULD have happened.
>
> Mark Twain, Prologue to *The Prince and the Pauper*

Theories of performative language have developed into a philosophical and linguistic labyrinth that I find ultimately unsatisfying, or at least unfinished, because they do not formulate a clear answer to the question that I consider the most urgent. The question to which I refer is that of countless wide-eyed children, often asked at the end of a fictional story but also at the beginning or anywhere in between: "Did this really happen?" Phenomenological performativity tells us that a poetic or narrative text can be a speech act that performs, that constructs reality, that creates autonomously. Does this mean that the child's question can be answered in the affirmative? I suspect that every proponent of speech-act theory would at least hesitate to do so.

How, then, do narrative texts create reality? What type of reality is this? And most importantly, how should readers—of any age—understand and react to the strangely *real* experiences and characters and events found in literary works that every library on earth classifies as "fiction"? What follows is the prelude to my proposal of phenomenological performativity interpreted as crafted language that, first, transcends the indeterminate distinction between reality and narrative, achieving thereby a generative power imparted by human psychology, and, second, harmonizes with Folkart's theorization of the *faber* in poetry and poetic translation.

What is a thing that "really happened"? Something that is really *happening* is more easily specified. The continuous verb form indicates that it is actively occurring, and therefore I can perceive it with my senses, which for the purposes of this discussion are the means by which human beings establish what does and does not belong to reality

as the term is generally understood.[15] But that which really *happened* is more elusive. The use of the preterite tense—which is the standard tense of poetic and literary narration, even for stories that take place in the future—implies a finished event that occurred in the past and does not continue into the present moment. Thus, the really-happened is not amenable to sensory perception. Such events have passed from the *sensorial* realm to the *memorial* realm. They exist as memories—as do the events that we read or hear in fictional narrative.

What, then, is the difference between a memory of the really-happened and a memory of a fictional event or character? If we suggest that there is no difference, various objections are easily raised, but if we assess them from a strictly theoretical standpoint, they are also easily neutralized. We can videotape a real event and watch the video later: but video can be doctored, edited, even generated by software. Real events leave effects that can be observed; I know that I cleaned the windows yesterday because they are clean: but someone else could have cleaned them. If multiple people have consistent memories of an event, it must have really happened: but other people might have faulty memories, or they might be lying. Real events are officially recorded and documented; I saw a story about the tornado in the newspaper this morning: but reporters are not infallible, and they often rely on what witnesses *remember* seeing or hearing.

Most other objections of this nature can be addressed in a similar way, and this leads us, I believe, to only one consistent and theoretically relevant difference between

[15] It is astonishing to consider how rapidly this exposition disintegrates if we cannot assume the validity of this unprovable starting point. If reality is different from what our senses perceive, how would we ever know? What is reality, if we cannot perceive it and know it? Fortunately, life goes on. Sextus Empiricus was writing about the hopeless unreliability of sensory perception eighteen centuries ago, and yet every criminal trial reminds us that the senses remain the universally recognized touchstone of the "really-happened."

memories of the really-happened and memories of fictional narrative: human beings instinctively *categorize* their own memories, and perhaps the most fundamental categories are "real" and "imaginary." I remember clearly that when I was in high school I spoke coldly to a girl of my acquaintance and hurt her feelings, and that she forgave me and eventually became my wife. This really happened, because I *remember* that I actually observed it with my senses, but the sense perceptions were transient and now I have only the memories. I also remember clearly that Mr. Rochester deceived Jane Eyre, and that she forgave him and eventually became his wife. This did not really happen, because I *remember* that it occurred as part of a fictional narrative, not as part of my personal sensory experience.

This distinction between the really-happened and fictionally-happened is intriguing, for two reasons. First, it suggests that reality in the "finished past"—that is, the past as expressed by the preterite tense—is a contingent, psychologically mediated dimension of the human experience; it is constructed and maintained in the human mind by means of memories that are attached to memories. Second, the validity of the distinction is inherently questionable because it depends upon an assumption that, though likely to be true in most cases, is not demonstrably true: namely, *the assumption that the fictional narrative never really happened*. Based on the stated criterion of reality, we can make the following statement: If I have personal sensory experience of something, it really happened. However, the inverse of this statement is not valid; I cannot affirm that something did *not* really happen simply because I do *not* have personal sensory experience thereof, otherwise all history becomes fiction. How do I know—truly know, with *certainty*—that Mr. Rochester and Jane Eyre did not exist? I cannot know it. Such a

conclusion is reasonable and probable based on the available evidence, but nothing more than that. It may have happened, it may not have happened: but it could have happened.

The Willing Transcension of Disbelief

The preceding discussion may initially appear to invoke the "willing suspension of disbelief" proposed by Coleridge; there is indeed a kinship between the two ideas, but there is also a crucial divergence. Coleridge incorporated this phrase into the following passage of the *Biographia Literaria*:

> In this idea originated the plan of the "Lyrical Ballads;" in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. (145)

When decontextualized, "willing suspension of disbelief" admits of broad interpretation, but Coleridge originally presented it as a response to supernatural or fantastical elements within a narrative. Such elements may preclude a favorable reception of the story if the reader does not believe in them; thus, suspension of disbelief—fostered by the writer, and undertaken by the reader—is a temporary condition conducing to greater enjoyment of a fictional text that surpasses the limits of observable or experiential reality.

This is why Coleridge associated suspension of disbelief with his own works but not with those of Wordsworth; the latter sought to "excite a feeling *analogous* to the

supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders *of the world before us*" (145; emphasis added). This constitutive connection with the supernatural is conveyed more explicitly later in the *Biographia Literaria*:

> Of all intellectual power, that of superiority to the fear of the invisible world is the most dazzling. Its influence is abundantly proved by the one circumstance, that it can bribe us into a voluntary submission of our better knowledge, into suspension of all our judgment derived from constant experience, and enable us to peruse with the liveliest interest the wildest tales of ghosts, wizards, genii, and secret talismans.... The poet does not require us to be awake and believe; he solicits us only to yield ourselves to a dream; and this too with our eyes open, and with our judgment *perdue* behind the curtain, ready to awaken us at the first motion of our will: and meantime, only, not to *dis*believe. (280–81)

For Coleridge, willing suspension of disbelief has little if any generative capacity. It appears to be almost as superficial, and as fleeting, as playful submission to a dream.

As indicated by the title of this subsection, I have appropriated the concept introduced by Coleridge and amended it according to my intentions: it is no longer the willing suspension of disbelief, but rather the willing transcension of disbelief. Readers can *transcend* the belief/disbelief dichotomy, recognizing it as distracting, poorly defined, and fundamentally unproductive on the basis of, first, the nebulous distinction between the really-happened and the fictionally-happened; second, the epistemological and intellectual limitations of the human condition, which compel us to acknowledge that

ostensibly imaginary narratives *could* have happened; and third, the fact that literary or poetic texts act in the world and create narrative reality that is universally and inextricably interwoven with objective, physical reality. This last point will be examined and developed in the next section.

The Diegetic Performative

Austin theorized the sociopolitical performative. Searle developed the sociopolitical performative into an understanding of language as locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. Benveniste proposed the declarative-jussive performative, which originates in the institutional authority of the speaker, and what could be described as the personal or subjective performative, which is bound to the autonomy of the speaking subject and his or her self-formulation achieved by actualizing language as *système* into language as *parole*. Esterhammer introduced the phenomenological performative as denoting language, especially literary or poetic language, that brings phenomena into being through speech acts that derive creative power from the will of the speaker and function independently of social conventions or institutional power structures. Finally, the discussion presented in the preceding section forms the theoretical basis for what I will call the diegetic performative, that is, language that exists within the self-contained world of a narrative text and creates reality through the *skill* of the writer and the *will* of the reader.

I will begin my elaboration of the diegetic performative by returning to the relationship between the already-happened and the fictionally-happened. I argued above that events of the finished past and events experienced through fictional narrative are,

within the realm of human psychology, separated by a subtle and rather subjective barrier built upon an unverifiable assumption.[16] My intention in arguing thus is not to deny objective reality, nor to suggest that fictional events are equivalent to events that occur in the physical universe, nor to confer upon narrative some sort of magical power by which a human being can write matter into existence. Rather, my intention is to demonstrate that a reader is entirely justified in responding to a narrative text *as though it really happened*, and further, that the effects of literary and poetic works upon the lives of individuals and societies can be *virtually indistinguishable* from the effects of "reality" as that term is conventionally understood. These two propositions are, I believe, the natural efflorescence of key principles emerging from scholarly exploration of the performative utterance—namely, that we have inherited from Judeo-Christian cosmogony and European philology a profound and primeval unity between human language and creative power; that statements can act in the world and produce meaningful alteration; that words, when activated by the dynamics of authority, intentionality, and acquiescence, can contribute to the construction of reality; and that performativity can operate autonomously at the level of a unified literary or poetic text.

Objective Reality and Narrative Reality

What exactly is this "reality" that performative texts construct? How can this term be used when common sense and scientific investigation insist that the people, events, and objects described in narrative works do not attain empirically measurable existence?

[16] It is worth noting that the barrier is also somewhat porous. We need only think of the times when we doubt our own memories: "Wait … did that really happen? Did I dream it? Did I imagine it, or read it somewhere?"

Is a story composed of *facts* or *fiction*? The answers to these questions lie in the equivocal nature of terms such as "reality" or "factual." The former can be defined as "that which exists in fact," and the latter can be defined as "having objective reality." Reality is factual, and factual events are those that occur in reality. The definitions are circular.

The word "reality" derives from the Latin *res* ("thing") by way of the adjective *realis*, which simply means "relating to things." This brief process of linguistic deconstruction reveals a fairly serious metaphysical impasse: if we delve into the core of "reality," we find vague signifiers that obfuscate rather than elucidate the meaning of the word. However, most people understand—philosophy and etymology notwithstanding—what reality is, as the concept pertains to daily life. This intuitive comprehension subsists not in the abstract nature of reality but rather in its *effects*:

- If I dream of walking off a cliff, I live. If I (really, actually, in fact) walk off a cliff, I die.
- If a novel describes a war in which my neighborhood is bombed, my house is unaffected. (Yet I feel as though I have experienced the terror and anguish of an event that did not happen….) If a war breaks out and my neighborhood is (really, actually, in fact) bombed, my house is destroyed.
- If a man writes a poem in which he travels through hell, purgatory, and heaven, I need not believe in such places. But in reading the poem I gain new and enlightening insight into great mysteries of the human experience. If I (personally, really, in fact) travel through hell, purgatory, and heaven, I gain new and enlightening insight into great mysteries of the human experience.

Thus, reality differs from narrative in its ability to affect us personally (and often negatively). However, this progression of examples is also intended to convey that the effects are not wholly disparate. Some of the *real* effects produced by *real* events are also produced by fictional events, and herein lies the radiant core of diegetic performativity. Words and statements can act in the world, and the narrative text can construct reality by virtue of its resonance and impulse in the psychological cosmos of the mind and the affective cosmos of the heart, and by virtue of the human will, which has the power to transcend disbelief. Fiction moves and transfigures and co-creates the human person, without whom there is no sensory perception, and without sensory perception, no coherent distinction between the real and the imaginary can be made. This is the point of convergence—this is the crucible where imagined reality and objective reality are heated and fused and unveiled before the world as *story*, that uniquely human phenomenon that has been captivating, delighting, inspiring, edifying, admonishing, and transforming all peoples in all places throughout the entire history of civilization: "simply there, like life itself."

The Factual, the Factitious, and the Faber

My treatment thus far has presented the diegetic performative as a quality that inheres in a fictional text and draws vigor from the centrality of human psychology, intentionality, and perception in the delineation of reality. However, common sense tells us that this quality is not present to an equal degree in all fictional or imaginary texts. We would not instinctively assign creative and performative power to a random assemblage of words, a series of utterly disjointed statements, or a rambling tale interspersed with

nonsense. Dreams, I believe, would also be excluded, though this is a more nuanced and thought-provoking example: we experience and remember dreams much as we experience and remember factual events; dreams involve events that *could* have happened; and dreams are sometimes so "real" that we must actively strive to deny their actuality and thereby convince ourselves that they did not physically occur and will not have physical consequences. What, then, is lacking in dreams, random compositions, nonsensical tales, and the like? What is the active element whose presence endows a text with diegetic performativity, and whose absence suppresses it? My answer to this question begins with a particularly curious pair of words that has emerged from the evolution of the English language. The first in this pair is "factual," and the second is "factitious."

As mentioned above, "factual" is intimately linked to "reality." These are perhaps the two most fundamental signifiers by which English-speaking individuals attempt to specify that which has physical, objective, sensorial existence. "Factual" is arrayed in opposition to "fictional," the former being a near synonym of "true" and the latter being akin to "false" or at least "fabricated, imaginary." The lives of individuals and societies utterly depend on factual information. Journalists are expected to report the *facts*. Historians study and collate and publish *facts*. Juries deal out life and death in accordance with the *facts*. How, then, can we explain the word "factitious"? It doesn't mean factual. It means almost the opposite: "artificially created or developed; contrived; fake."

The orthographic and phonetic resemblance between "factual" and "factitious" belies their highly divergent usage in modern English, but we can trace this resemblance back to a shared semantic core, and we will find crucial insight along the way. Both

words originate in the Latin *facere*: "to do," "to make," and various other related meanings. This predominantly transitive verb has filtered into the English-speaking psyche as a defining quality of reality and truth. Our word "fact" is simply the shortened past participle *factum*—done, made. But by what? By whom? What is the subject in this sentence? Who is the agent, the author, the artisan? Deep in our consciousness is a vision of reality as that which is done, made, performed, brought into being—but then "factitious" reminds us that *facere* is also the source of that which is contrived, artificial, fabricated. The distinction is melting away; antonyms are blending into synonyms. Factual or factitious? Made or fabricated? Fact or fiction? Deconstruction is disorienting but ephemeral, for it merely makes synthesis possible. At the heart of both words—both concepts, both dimensions of the human experience—is the mark of *qui facit*, of "the creative agency, the making subject" (Folkart 449). It is the mark of the *faber*, to whom the *factum*—the event, the action, the statement, the poem, the story, the novel—"converges as to a virtual image" (449).

Herein lies the essence of the diegetic performative. I referred earlier to the will of the reader, who can transcend disbelief and accept the world of the text as *distinct from* though *consubstantial with* the world of physical reality. But in order to consummate this union and evoke this response, the text must *be* a text, that is, a woven thing, a crafted artifact, an internally coherent and inhabited world that "has authenticity and authority" because it "extrapolates backwards to a writing subject, the faber scripted into it" (Folkart 151).

Performativity in the Translation of Poetry

I have now reached the terminus of my journey through performative language. My intent was to explore this branch of literary theory not as an independent entity but rather as a lens through which poetic translation could be partially re-envisioned, and as a tool that could assist the translator in a task that is widely and perhaps universally recognized as exceedingly difficult.

In the English-language works with which I am familiar, the role of performative language in the analysis, composition, and translation of poetry is not explicitly emphasized. Nevertheless, this role is a pivotal one, for poems are, in Folkart's words,

> essentially performative. Through their imagery, prosody, diction, and discursive tensions, they *enact* what they have to say: sound play, textures, rhythms, and images all contribute to making sense and generating insight. (59)

And the performative essence that permeates the poetic experience will naturally extend to the work of the translator and influence her attempt to surpass denotative, readerly translation:

> The performativity of the poem is an embodiment. The poetically viable translation, too, is an embodiment of the target-language subject in interaction with the source-language poem, a performativity that leaves the reader bouche bée[17]…. Embodied translators function as writers rather than readers. (81)

If the performative words of a poem *enact*, the words of a poetically viable translation must *re-enact*. The translator must penetrate beyond source-language denotations and activate the resources of the target language in order to mediate and engender reality as

[17] The French expression *être bouche bée* indicates that one is so astonished as to be left with mouth agape.

the original work did: “Denotative translation is fine for instrumental discourse. It is utterly unsuitable for the performative language of the poem” (61).

Folkart’s invocation of poetic performativity is forceful and harmonizes with her overall vision of poetic discourse. Nevertheless, speech-act theory per se is not a central topic in her translatology, and she incorporates performativity as a generalized notion that does not directly correspond to the more narrowly or precisely defined concepts explicated by Esterhammer. I see this as an opportunity to enrich the relationship between performativity and poetic translation by focusing on connections and implications that derive specifically from the phenomenological performative and the diegetic performative.

Phenomenological Performativity and Poetic Creation

Phenomenological performativity offers compelling resonance with Folkart’s insistence on a poem’s inaugurality. She presents inaugurality as fundamental to the nature of poetic discourse, and indeed, she refers to this quality in the first sentence of the first chapter of *Second Finding*:

> What I stress in this essay, and indeed throughout this entire collection of essays, is the newness of poetry, its inaugurality. The vocation of the poem is to break out of the already-said, to force its way through the wall of language and to put us into more or less unmediated contact with fragments of world. (1–2)

A grave obstacle, perhaps the foremost obstacle, that separates the translator from a poetically viable translation is the challenge of imparting inaugurality to a poem whose

existence is bound to words that are burdened by the morpheme *re*: repeat, replicate, re-enact, re-envision, re-create. Considering the nature of translation, I do not think that we can fully resolve this deep conceptual tension between the *new* the *renewed*, but phenomenological performativity enables us to confront it more productively and insightfully.

Phenomenological performativity is rooted in the will of a writing subject whose speech acts posit phenomena, and it draws attention to the "interdependence of language and reality and the way each of those terms performs the other" (Esterhammer 26). But there is also an existential connection between phenomenological performativity and inaugurality, given that this latter term is akin to creation ex nihilo: "the recurrent paradigm for the phenomenological performative, in speech-act theory and in visionary poetry, is divine creation by the word" (13). Esterhammer identifies phenomenological performativity with "the way poetry seems able to *bring a world into being* simply by positing it" (42; emphasis added), and she portrays this dimension of poetic utterance as conceptually descending from *supernatural* performativity, that is, from "the ideal performativity of divine language, epitomized in the Judeo-Christian tradition by God's act of speaking the universe into existence in the first chapter of Genesis" (42).

This connection with supernatural performativity suggests a model of inaugurality as it applies to the translator of poetic works. If the source poem has succeeded in "making world," the translator will understandably feel unable to remake the same world while remaining faithful to the poetic vocation of inaugurality. However, in Judeo-Christian cosmogony, creation occurs in rhythmical stages—"days" and "nights," in biblical language. This is an intriguing facet of the Genesis account, since an omnipotent

Being could easily create an entire world and a thousand more with only one word. It is almost as though the world was made one line or stanza at a time, with the performativity of divine language somehow bound to the performativity and rhythmical structure of poetic language. I propose that the translator seek not so much to remake the world of the original poem, but rather to add more days and nights to the unfolding of its creation. The microstructures and denotations of the source poem will guide and delimit and inspire, but they will not constrain, and they will not compel the translator to make the already-made or say the already-said. In one sense, the source poem is re-created; in another sense, it is simply *created*, insofar as the translator continues its performative genesis across linguistic and cultural boundaries. All that the translator thus fashions would be beautifully harmonious with the work of the original author, as befits the diverse yet interdependent elements of an ordered and living system, and yet it would share in the radical inaugurality of poetic creation ex nihilo.

Diegetic Performativity and the Moment of Unknowing

Human beings have a mysterious and ambivalent relationship with factuality. On the one hand, we express consistent overtones of disdain or suspicion in our interaction with the "unreal." Important things like criminal trials and scientific experiments attend only to facts. Crafted narratives, even when their purpose is merely to entertain, acquire some sort of special value when they are "based on a true story." Superstition is disparaged and condemned for defying the more factual explanations of observed phenomena. Those who don't learn from *history* are doomed to repeat it, since history is real, not imaginary. On the other hand, we have humanity's enduring, overwhelming,

pervasive thirst for fiction. Children's books, fairy tales, oral legends, sagas, mythology, novels, theater productions, films, television series, videogames, even a simple ghost story told around a campfire—one might almost conclude that we live *in* reality but live *for* the unreal, the imaginary, the supernatural.

The omnipresence and venerable status of story in the human experience are, I believe, deeply rooted in the diegetic performative; that is, in the capacity to *narrate a new reality* and thereby fuse the factual and the fictive into a substance that is far more psychologically energetic than its constituents. And this reaction only becomes more intense and dynamic as the narrative—however long or short it may be, however concrete or abstract, dramatic or meditative, realistic or surrealistic—assumes the qualities of poetic discourse. The language of poetry communicates and captivates symphonically: words and denotations pulse with rhythm, rise and fall in waves of emotive inaugurality, and weave in and out of melodies born of assonance or consonance or expressive lineation. Diegetic performativity attains unequaled potential in poetic works, and excellent poetry in turn depends upon this unique power to construct reality and breathe life into it. The translator who seeks to derive a poem that moves the world must simultaneously *write* a poem that *makes* world.

Diegetic performativity is a harmonious complement to foundational themes in Folkart's scholarship on poetic translation. Writerly translation and the presence of the *faber* both evoke the translator as a creative agent whose artistry and intentionality suffuse the poem and elicit the transcension of disbelief. There is a fruitful connection also between diegetic performativity and the importance of appropriation. Folkart insists that the translator appropriate the source poem, not in the negative sense that typically

accompanies this verb, but rather in the strict etymological sense: to make one's own (250–51). The original author, though still recognized as author, cannot inhabit the derived poem. She cannot impart deep semiotic coherency and symphonic fecundity to a text that was crafted by someone else. The translator must assume this role. The translator must appropriate—or we might say inherit, adopt, espouse, perpetuate—if the target-language text is to weave a narrative reality as the original did.

I will conclude by returning to a question that appeared earlier in this discussion of performative narratology. It was asked by a child, most likely one who had just heard the last words of a very fine and completely imaginary story.

"DID THIS REALLY HAPPEN?"

I would like to propose an answer. It is a simple answer, but also a splendid one, for concealed within it is the secret joy of those who delight in mystery and are not afraid to wonder.

"I DON'T KNOW."

Folkart explains that poetry is "one of the most stringent modes of knowing that exist. Everything about it is shaped by the search for insight, or even truth" (413). But poetry also helps us to not know, or rather, to *un*know: poetry invites us, perhaps compels us, to look again *in wonder* at a world weighed down or sedated or banalized by all the knowledge that we possess, or think we possess. Poetry catalyzes a loss of knowledge that leads not to ignorance but to renewal, and simultaneously its aesthetic nexus manifests and conveys the importance of knowledge that dies and resurrects rather than stagnates. The poem is the *moment* of unknowing—an evanescent darkness in which even the faintest and most forgotten treasures of life become radiant.

The translator of poetry must learn to unknow. She must unknow the world around us and also the world of the original poem, which contains so much that needs to be utterly reimagined before it is carried across into the derived poem.

> The translation of poetry should be a second finding, one which sunders the source poem from what we think we know about language, poetry, and the real, losing it back to wonder, in order that we may find it—and ourselves perhaps—anew. (Folkart 446)

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V. Poetic Translation of "A buen juez, mejor testigo," by José Zorrilla

What follows is my attempt to translate a Spanish poem in accordance with Dr. Folkart's principles. A few introductory and explanatory comments are in order.

It is evident that the translation is fairly "free," if that word is understood as describing a translation that deviates from linguistic microstructures and denotative details. I do not consider such deviations to be desirable per se; rather, they are desirable as a means of achieving poetically viable translation and as a pathway that leads to accuracy as Folkart envisions it: resonance, re-enactment, rebirth. The creative process by which I produced this translation is not easily summarized, since it is essentially a synthesis of the entire theoretical portion of this thesis. Nonetheless, I will emphasize one concept—almost an exhortation—that appears several times in Folkart's writing and that was particularly prominent in my mind as I confronted the task of translation: "see in and flesh out." I tried to *see into* the source poem, that is, to look through the linguistic and microstructural layers into its *viscus*, its core, its "meaning" at the emotional, aesthetic, and thematic levels. Then, I sought to give this core new poetic flesh—new rhythms, images, allusions, connotations—that would bring it to life for readers of a different era, culture, and language.

I should mention that decisions to deviate from the source text were not taken lightly, and in fact, I strove to maintain details and denotations whenever they could be harmoniously incorporated into my derived poem. Though time consuming and extremely laborious, this approach is, I believe, more in keeping with respect for the original work. It also helps the translator to stay on guard against omissions, insertions,

and modifications that are motivated more by convenience or creative license than by a quest for the poetically viable re-creation of the original poem.

I must also emphasize that my poetic translation is built upon a solid foundation of rigorous linguistic analysis and interpretation. The diction, grammatical structures, descriptions, narrative flow, and cultural allusions in Zorrilla's poem were the raw material with which I crafted my derived poem. Indeed, I did not write one line of my poetic text until I had completed a carefully researched, extremely precise, annotated prose translation. This prose translation is included as an appendix.

A buen juez, mejor testigo

Entre pardos nubarrones	Storm clouds gather,
pasando la blanca luna,	moon threads between,
con resplandor fugitivo,	slow breath of light
la baja tierra no alumbra.	is seen and unseen.
La brisa con frescas alas	Breeze does not whisper,
juguetona no murmura,	vane does not turn,
y las veletas no giran	only stillness the cross
entre la cruz y la cúpula.	and high tower discern.
Tal vez un pálido rayo	Storm clouds pass
la opaca atmósfera cruza,	that the veil may rise
y unas en otras las sombras	when a city in shadow
confundidas se dibujan.	has a flash in its eyes.
Las almenas de las torres	Soldiers of stone
un momento se columbran,	with lances in sight
como lanzas de soldados	stand guard on a castle
apostados en la altura.	in tenebrous light.
Reverberan los cristales	One flame from within
la trémula llama turbia,	trembles in pane
y un instante entre las rocas	unable to flee

rïela la fuente oculta.
Los álamos de la vega
parecen en la espesura
de fantasmas apiñados
medrosa y gigante turba;
y alguna vez desprendida
gotea pesada lluvia,
que no despierta a quien duerme,
ni a quien medita importuna.
Yace Toledo en el sueño
entre las sombras confusas,
y el Tajo a sus pies pasando
con pardas ondas lo arrulla.
El monótono murmullo
sonar perdido se escucha,
cual si por las hondas calles
hirviera del mar la espuma.
¡Qué dulce es dormir en calma
cuando a lo lejos susurran
los álamos que se mecen,
las aguas que se derrumban!
Se sueñan bellos fantasmas
que el sueño del triste endulzan,
y en tanto que sueña el triste,
no le aqueja su amargura.
Tan en calma y tan sombría
como la noche que enluta
la esquina en que desemboca
una callejuela oculta,
se ve de un hombre que aguarda
la vigilante figura,
y tan a la sombra vela
que entre las sombras se ofusca.
Frente por frente a sus ojos
un balcón a poca altura
deja escapar por los vidrios

from the fountain's disdain.
Ghosts in the meadow
with wings like leaves
emerge in great number
and the number deceives.
Thick rain now falls
amidst thundering roll
yet disturbs no sleep
nor the song of the soul.
Toledo reposes
in shadows and zeal;
what dreams will the waves
of the Tagus reveal?
Through moonlit streets
it murmurs and sighs,
great river that flows
and rages and dies.
How sweet the sleep
of those who listen
to poplars that sway
and waters that glisten.
How sweet the night
when phantoms are near
to hide sorrow and sadness
with alluring veneer.
And here in the darkness
cloaked by a night
that bathes an alley
in funereal light,
a watchful figure
seems to be waiting,
dissolving in shadow,
new shadow creating.
Directly before him
a balcony glows
with light that a candlelit

la luz que dentro le alumbra;
mas ni en el claro aposento,
ni en la callejuela oscura,
el silencio de la noche
rumor sospechoso turba.
Pasó así tan largo tiempo,
que pudiera haberse duda
de si es hombre, o solamente
mentida ilusión nocturna;
pero es hombre, y bien se ve,
porque con planta segura
ganando el centro a la calle
resuelto y audaz pregunta:
-¿Quién va? -y a corta distancia
el igual compás se escucha
de un caballo que sacude
las sonoras herraduras.
-¿Quién va? -repite, y cercana
otra voz menos robusta
responde: -Un hidalgo, ¡calle!
-y el paso el bulto apresura.
-Téngase el hidalgo -el hombre
replica, y la espada empuña.
-Ved más bien si me haréis calle
(repitieron con mesura)
que hasta hoy a nadie se tuvo
Ibán de Vargas y Acuña.
-Pase el Acuña y perdone
-dijo el mozo en faz de fuga,
pues teniéndose el embozo
sopla un silbato, y se oculta.
Paró el jinete a una puerta,
y con precaución difusa
salió una niña al balcón
que llama interior alumbra.
-¡Mi padre! -clamó en voz baja.

chamber bestows.
But no sound is heard,
no silence is lost
by light that from chamber
to alleyway crossed.
And the man only waits,
so perfectly still
that he might be an
apparition, until—
with confident step
and hilt near his hands
he walks into the street
and boldly demands:
“Who goes there? Respond!”
but the rhythmical clack
of an iron-shod horse
is all that comes back.
“Who goes there?” and this time
a voice can be heard:
“A gentleman,” it claims,
unabashed, undeterred.
“Draw rein!” and bare steel
gives weight to his word.
A measured response:
“You do well to make way—
for Ibán de Vargas
is loath to obey.”
“Forgive me, my lord,”
the man says in reply
and blows a small whistle
with fear in his eye.
The horseman approaches
and the balcony feels
the furtive steps
of maidenly heels.
“My father!” she whispers

Y el viejo en la cerradura
metió la llave pidiendo
a sus gentes que le acudan.
Un negro por ambas bridas
tomó la cabalgadura,
cerróse detrás la puerta
y quedó la calle muda.
En esto desde el balcón,
como quien tal acostumbra,
un mancebo por las rejas
de la calle se asegura.
Asió el brazo al que apostado
hizo cara a Ibán de Acuña,
y huyeron, en el embozo
velando la catadura.

- II -

Clara, apacible y serena
pasa la siguiente tarde,
y el sol tocando su ocaso
apaga su luz gigante:
se ve la imperial Toledo
dorada por los remates,
como una ciudad de grana
coronada de cristales.
El Tajo por entre rocas
sus anchos cimientos lame,
dibujando en las arenas
las ondas con que las bate.
Y la ciudad se retrata
en las ondas desiguales,
como en prenda de que el río
tan afanoso la bañe.
A la lejos en la vega
tiende galán por sus márgenes,

then ceases to talk
as the old man turns
his key in the lock.
An oaken gate swings,
a servant attends,
and outside the cold air
of silence descends
as a young man opens
the balcony door and
escapes—deftly, as though
he had done it before.
Then he and the sentry
who faced Ibán's might
covered their faces
and fled into the night.

- II -

A peaceful evening passes
and a radiant sun is setting
in the heart
of Castile.
Toledo lies in crimson grandeur
and her pinnacles are gleaming
golden gems
and regal.
Through great rocks the Tagus flows
and its waves are always writing
new secrets
in the sand.
The city glimmers in reflection
and the waves are ever lapping
as a pledge
to thirsty land.
The river weaves through the meadow
and in elegance is clothing

de sus álamos y huertos
el pintoresco ropaje,
y porque su altiva gala
más a los ojos halague,
la salpica con escombros
de castillos y de alcázares.
Un recuerdo es cada piedra
que toda una historia vale,
cada colina un secreto
de príncipes o galanes.
Aquí se bañó la hermosa
por quien dejó un rey culpable
amor, fama, reino y vida
en manos de musulmanes.
Allí recibió Galiana
a su receloso amante
en esa cuesta que entonces
era un plantel de azahares.
Allá por aquella torre,
que hicieron puerta los árabes,
subió el Cid sobre Babieca
con su gente y su estandarte.
Más lejos se ve el castillo
de San Servando o Cervantes,
donde nada se hizo nunca
y nada al presente se hace.
A este lado está la almena
por do sacó vigilante
el conde don Peranzules
al rey, que supo una tarde
fingir tan tenaz modorra,
que político y constante,
tuvo siempre el brazo quedo
las palmas al horadarle.
Allí está el circo romano,
gran cifra de un pueblo grande,

trees at water's
edge amassed.
On its banks lie castle stones
and its waves are ever polishing
these pearls
from the past.
Each ruined remnant tells a story
and each hill is yet concealing
tales of old
holding fast.
Here a lovely lady bathed
and a shameful king was lusting
ere he sparked
the Moors' advance.
There a Moorish princess waited
and through citrus blossoms walking
was the greatest
king of France.
El Cid rode by that tower
and above his horse were swaying
a standard
and a lance.
Farther off a castle rises
and empty chambers are decaying:
the knights left
its fate to chance.
Nearby a count succored a king
and his enemies were plotting
a dreadful
circumstance:
they resolved to pierce his palms
and the dauntless king was resting
calm and still
as in a trance.
There the Roman circus reposes,
emblem of an empire,

y aquí, la antigua basílica
de bizantinos pilares,
que oyó en el primer concilio
las palabras de los padres
que velaron por la Iglesia
perseguida o vacilante.
La sombra en este momento
tiende sus turbios cendales
por todas esas memorias
de las pasadas edades,
y del Cambrón y Visagra
los caminos desiguales,
camino a los toledanos
hacia las murallas abren.
Los labradores se acercan
al fuego de sus hogares,
cargados con sus aperos,
cansados de sus afanes.
Los ricos y sedentarios
se tornan con paso grave,
calado el ancho sombrero,
abrochados los gabanes,
y los clérigos y monjes
y los prelados y abades
sacudiendo el leve polvo
de capelos y sayales.
Quédase sólo un mancebo
de impetuosos ademanes,
que se pasea ocultando
entre la capa el semblante.
Los que pasan le contemplan
con decisión de evitarle,
y él contempla a los que pasan
como si a alguien aguardase.
Los tímidos aceleran
los pasos al divisarle,

and the basilica with pillars
of Byzantine design,
where bishops gathered long ago
to guide the Christian people
and fortify the Church
in times of weakness and of woe.
The present casts long shadows
and stretches silken robes
upon all these mists and memories
of a past that fades and glows,
and the great gates of the city,
with a new tale yet to tell,
frame rough-hewn roads trod by young
and old who in Toledo dwell.
Close to warm hearth,
weighed by their toil,
sit peasants who live
to bring life from the soil.
The rich and all types
of middle-class folk
gravely walk home
in hat and warm cloak.
Priests and religious
and prelates and abbots
shake dust from fine robes
and coarse woolen habits.
And one youthful man
of impetuous mien
walks and takes care
that his face not be seen.
All those who pass him
are discreetly evading
and he looks at them all
as though he is waiting
for someone or something
that weighs on his mind,

cual temiendo de seguro
que les proponga un combate;
y los valientes le miran
cual si sintieran dejarle
sin que libres sus estoques,
en riña sonora dancen.
Una mujer también sola
se viene el llano adelante,
la luz del rostro escondida
en tocas y tafetanes.
Mas en lo leve del paso
y en lo flexible del talle
puede, a través de los velos
una hermosa adivinarse.
Vase derecha al que aguarda
y él al encuentro le sale,
diciendo... cuanto se dicen
en las citas los amantes.
Mas ella, galanterías
dejando severa aparte,
así al mancebo interrumpe,
en voz decisiva y grave:
-Abreviemos de razones,
Diego Martínez; mi padre,
que un hombre ha entrado en su ausencia,
dentro mi aposento sabe;
y así, quien mancha mi honra
con la suya me la lave;
o dadme mano de esposo,
o libre de vos dejadme.
Miróla Diego Martínez
atentamente un instante,
y echando a un lado el embozo,
repuso palabras tales:
-Dentro de un mes, Inés mía,
parto a la guerra de Flandes;

for timid men shrink
from the menace they find
in a gaze that induces
brave men to regret
that they did not provoke him,
sword drawn, with a threat.
And one youthful woman,
exceedingly fair,
lustrous face sinking
in waves of veiled hair,
walks through the meadow,
elegant, sleek,
long dress concealing
an angelic physique.
The man who was waiting
approaches, embraces,
and speaks as do lovers
of all times and all places.
But harshly she dams
his amorous stream
with resolute voice
and dark eyes agleam:
“Diego Martínez,
let pleasantries cease,
my turbulent thoughts
won’t leave me in peace.
My father knows that
a man came to see me—
he will avenge! Choose now:
Marry or leave me!”
Diego watched her,
and for a moment he thought,
and then made a reply that
of these words was wrought:
“I must go to the war
in Flanders, Inés,

al año estaré de vuelta
y contigo en los altares.
Honra que yo te desluzca,
con honra mía se lave,
que por honra vuelven honra
hidalgos que en honra nacen.
-Júralo -exclamó la niña.
-Más que mi palabra vale
no te valdrá un juramento.
-Diego, la palabra es aire.
-¡Vive Dios que estás tenaz!
Dalo por jurado y baste.
-No me basta, que olvidar
puedes la palabra en Flandes.
-¡Voto a Dios!, ¿qué más pretendes?
-Que a los pies de aquella imagen
lo jures como cristiano
del santo Cristo delante.
Vaciló un poco Martínez;
mas, porfiando que jurase,
llevóle Inés hacia el templo
que en medio la vega yace.
Enclavado en un madero,
en duro y postrero trance,
ceñida la sien de espinas,
descolorido el semblante,
veíase allí un crucifijo
teñido de negra sangre,
a quien Toledo, devota,
acude hoy en sus azares.
Ante sus plantas divinas
llegaron ambos amantes,
y haciendo Inés que Martínez
los sagrados pies tocase,
preguntóle:
-Diego, ¿juras

I will return in a year
and marry you then.
If I stained your honor
I will cleanse it with mine,
when a gentleman takes honor,
he returns it in kind."
"Swear it!"
"Swear what?
Is my word not a pledge?"
"Words fade quickly."
"Inés, you do not relent!
Consider it sworn and with that be content."
"I am not content—
how easily a word is forgotten, or rent!"
"I vow it to God! You would not ask for more."
"I would! At the feet of that statue of Christ
you will kneel and swear it
to our Savior and Lord!"
He resists but Inés
perseveres and they march
to a shrine in the meadow
and pass through an arch
before reaching a cross
to which nails constrain
a man crowned with thorns
and dying in pain—
from this crucified Christ,
by pious hands made,
Toledo devoutly
seeks refuge and aid.
Both kneel and briefly
their youthful eyes meet
and she places his hand
on the blood-stained feet.
She asks him:
"Diego, do you swear to marry me

a tu vuelta desposarme?
Contestó el mozo:
-¡Sí, juro!
Y ambos del templo se salen.

- III -

Pasó un día y otro día,
un mes y otro mes pasó,
y un año pasado había;
mas de Flandes no volvía
Diego, que a Flandes partió.
Lloraba la bella Inés
su vuelta aguardando en vano;
oraba un mes y otro mes
del crucifijo a los pies
do puso el galán su mano.
Todas las tardes venía
después de traspuesto el sol,
y a Dios llorando pedía
la vuelta del español,
y el español no volvía.
Y siempre al anochecer,
sin dueña y sin escudero,
en un manto una mujer
el campo salía a ver
al alto del Miradero.
¡Ay del triste que consume
su existencia en esperar!
¡Ay del triste que presume
que el duelo con que él se abrume
al ausente ha de pesar!
La esperanza es de los cielos
precioso y funesto don,

when you have returned?"
The young man declares:
"I swear it!"

And as they departed,
one candle still burned.

- III -

Day followed day,
weeks became months,
and months were finally a year;
and the man who departed for war
in Toledo was yet to appear.
Inés was weeping,
vainly awaiting
his return as she sighed and kneeled—
offering her prayers to the Crucified
where Diego's oath was sealed.
Each day at dusk
she came to implore
her dark eyes with tears were blurred;
and of that man who departed for war,
nothing was seen or heard.
And each night she donned
a cloak of black wool
and ascended a flight of cold stone;
and high in the tower she stood like a shadow
and gazed at the meadow, alone.
How piteous is she
who is dying of hope
and to tears of despair is incited!
How piteous is she who sinks with the weight
of tears and despair unrequited!
Hope is a precious
and ill-fated gift

pues los amantes desvelos
cambian la esperanza en celos,
que abrasan el corazón.
Si es cierto lo que se espera,
es un consuelo en verdad;
pero siendo una quimera,
en tan frágil realidad
quien espera desespera.
Así Inés desesperaba
sin acabar de esperar,
y su tez se marchitaba,
y su llanto se secaba
para volver a brotar.
En vano a su confesor
pidió remedio o consejo
para aliviar su dolor;
que mal se cura el amor
con las palabras de un viejo.
En vano a Ibán acudía,
llorosa y desconsolada;
el padre no respondía,
que la lengua le tenía
su propia deshonra atada.
Y ambos maldicen su estrella,
callando el padre severo
y suspirando la bella,
porque nació mujer ella,
y el viejo nació altanero.
Dos años al fin pasaron
en esperar y gemir,
y las guerras acabaron,
y los de Flandes tornaron
a sus tierras a vivir.
Pasó un día y otro día,
un mes y otro mes pasó,
y el tercer año corría;

that the heavens offer to all;
and lovers are wont to make hope into pining
that drowns their poor hearts in gall.
Hope deeply consoles
when its petals unfold
and reveal sweet nectar of truth;
but chimerical hope is a beast of despair
that will pierce with a poisonous tooth.
Inés was thus losing
all hope without ceasing
to hope or recall what her love had once been;
her young face was withered and her tears dried up
so that they could burst forth again.
From a trusted priest
she sought counsel and aid
and some cure for the pain of a wounded heart.
But what solace can words of a tired old man
to the passions of youth impart?
To Ibán she appealed,
desolate, weeping,
and with ponderous silence her father replied.
His own dishonor was a knife in his flesh
and his tongue by bonds of dishonor was tied.
Both father and daughter
curse their misfortune,
he keeping silence, she sighing aloud,
for by fate’s decree she was born a woman
and he was born haughty and proud.
Two years of waiting
and moaning have passed,
and the war in Flanders has come to an end,
and from that low-lying land in the north,
horsemen and bowmen and pikemen descend.
Day followed day,
weeks became months,
and the months a third year of longing became;

Diego a Flandes se partió,
mas de Flandes no volvía.
Era una tarde serena;
doraba el sol de Occidente
del Tajo la vega amena,
y apoyada en una almena
miraba Inés la corriente.
Iban las tranquilas olas
las riberas azotando
bajo las murallas solas,
musgo, espigas y amapolas
ligeramente doblando.
Algún olmo que escondido
creció entre la yerba blanda,
sobre las aguas tendido
se reflejaba perdido
en su cristalina banda.
Y algún ruiseñor colgado
entre su fresca espesura
daba al aire embalsamado
su cántico regalado
desde la enramada oscura.
Y algún pez con cien colores,
tornasolada la escama,
saltaba a besar las flores
que exhalan gratos olores
a las puntas de una rama.
Y allá en el trémulo fondo
el torreón se dibuja
como el contorno redondo
del hueco sombrío y hondo
que habita nocturna bruja.
Así la niña lloraba
el rigor de su fortuna,
y así la tarde pasaba
y al horizonte trepaba

nothing was known of Diego Martínez
and his pitiless absence was ever the same.
One day in the tower
Inés was beholding
smooth water flowing and sun gilding the land,
serene was the evening and the waves of the Tagus
once again wrote secret words in the sand.
The moss and the stems
of delicate flowers
placidly swayed at the water's request,
and the walls of the city cast lonely shadows
where grass in premature darkness was dressed.
The lush, golden meadow
concealed an elm tree
that silently stood where river met land;
its branches and leaves were ever dissolving
in the rippling texture of that crystalline band.
And the elm tree concealed
a nightingale
sweet singing in air with balsam perfumed;
from a wreath of dark foliage the trilling resounded
as if some flower of music had bloomed.
A small group of fish,
their scales iridescent,
jumped amidst flowers that hung by the shore;
like rainbows in motion they played in the shallows
and flaunted the many fine colors they wore.
And there in the tremulous
depth of the Tagus
the tenebrous twin of the tower is drawn;
it gapes and broods like the home of a witch
who awakens when all hope of daylight is gone.
And there was Inés,
bemoaning, lamenting
the inclement fate that held her in thrall;
twilight was fading, the moon was ascending,

la consoladora luna.
A lo lejos, por el llano,
en confuso remolino,
vio de hombres tropel lejano
que en pardo polvo liviano
dejan envuelto el camino.
Bajó Inés del torreón,
y, llegando recelosa
a las puertas del Cambrón,
sintió latir, zozobrosa,
más inquieto el corazón.
Tan galán como altanero,
dejó ver la escasa luz
por bajo el arco primero
un hidalgo caballero
en un caballo andaluz.
Jubón negro acuchillado,
banda azul, lazo en la hombrera,
y sin pluma al diestro lado
el sombrero derribado
tocando con la gorguera.
Bombacho gris guarnecido,
bota de ante, espuela de oro,
hierro al cinto suspendido,
y a una cadena, prendido,
agudo cuchillo moro.
Vienen tras este jinete,
sobre potros jerezanos,
de lanceros hasta siete,
y en la adarga y coselete
diez peones castellanos.
Asióse a su estribo Inés,
gritando: -¿Diego, eres tú?
Y él, viéndola de través,
dijo: -¡Voto a Belcebú,
que no me acuerdo quién es!

darkness of night was beginning to fall.
And then, in the distance,
upon the great plain,
a whirling cloud of pale dust rose
and fell—a mass of horses and men
advances, approaches the tower, and slows.
Inés descends,
suspicious of hope,
distrustful, afraid, unwilling—a door!
was closed, it would open, to nothing, she knew—
yet her heart beats faster than it did before.
Gallant and haughty,
half-seen in weak light,
a horseman of ominous stature draws near;
he seems a gentleman, noble, perhaps,
and his steed was strong, and dark, and austere.
His black doublet was slashed,
he wore a blue band,
on his shoulder a ribbon was carefully tied;
his hat came down to his armor-clad neck
and had no feather to adorn its right side.
He had fine gray trousers,
buckskin boots, golden spurs,
and the steel that marks a warrior’s life:
a sword, still keen, was hung from his belt
and attached to a chain was a Moorish knife.
And behind this fey figure
on slender bay horses
ride seventeen men from war-torn lands.
Ten have hard leathern shields slung backwards,
and the rest hold lances in war-torn hands.
Inés seized a stirrup,
and searched with her gaze—
could that cold countenance really be his?
“Diego, is it you?” And he looked down, and said,
“I swear I do not know who she is.”

Dio la triste un alarido
tal respuesta al escuchar,
y a poco perdió el sentido,
sin que más voz ni gemido
volviera en tierra a exhalar.
Frunciendo ambas a dos cejas,
encomendóla a su gente
diciendo: -¡Malditas viejas
que a las mozas malamente
enloquecen con consejas!
Y aplicando el capitán
a su potro las espuelas,
el rostro a Toledo dan,
y a trote cruzando van
las oscuras callejuelas.

- IV -

Así por sus altos fines
dispone y permite el cielo
que puedan mudar al hombre
fortuna, poder y tiempo.
A Flandes partió Martínez
de soldado aventurero,
y por su suerte y hazañas
allí capitán le hicieron.
Según alzaba en honores,
alzábase en pensamientos,
y tanto ayudó en la guerra
con su valor y altos hechos,
que el mismo rey a su vuelta
le armó en Madrid caballero,
tomándole a su servicio
por capitán de lanceros.
Y otro no fue que Martínez,
quien a poco entró en Toledo,

To Inés this response
was unspeakable pain
and a great lamentation pierced the night sky.
Without a word or a tear, she fainted and fell
and the man heard her lamentation echo and die.
He furrowed his brow
and entrusted Inés
to his men as he said with a look of disdain:
“Curse the old women who give treacherous counsel
and wickedly drive young ladies insane!”
The captain applied
his spurs to his horse
and all entered Toledo at a comfortable pace.
One by one they crossed narrow streets,
dark, narrow streets, and one dark, narrow face.

- IV -

Heaven ordains and allows,
for ends that are lofty, perhaps sublime,
that a man can be utterly changed
by success, power, and the passage of time.
Martínez left for Flanders merely
to fight in the war and be paid,
but because of his luck and prowess
in battle a captain he was made.
As he was ascending in honors
his pride began to swell,
and with great renown for mighty deeds
he fought so bravely and well
that when he returned the king himself
found him and made him a knight,
and formed a group of men armed with lances
who under his orders would fight.
And this very man, Diego Martínez,
set out for Toledo the following day;

tan orgulloso y ufano
cual salió humilde y pequeño,
ni es otro a quien se dirige,
cobrado el conocimiento,
la amorosa Inés de Vargas,
que vive por él muriendo.
Mas él, que, olvidando todo,
olvidó su nombre mesmo,
puesto que Diego Martínez
es el capitán don Diego,
ni se ablanda a sus caricias,
ni cura de sus lamentos;
diciendo que son locuras
de gente de poco seso;
que ni él prometió casarse
ni pensó jamás en ello.
¡Tanto mudan a los hombres
fortuna, poder y tiempo!
En vano porfiaba Inés
con amenazas y ruegos;
cuanto más ella importuna,
está Martínez severo.
Abrazada a sus rodillas,
enmarañado el cabello,
la hermosa niña lloraba
prosternada por el suelo.
Mas todo empeño es inútil,
porque el capitán don Diego
no ha de ser Diego Martínez,
como lo era en otro tiempo.
Y así llamando a su gente,
de amor y piedad ajeno,
mandóles que a Inés llevaran
de grado o de valimiento.
Mas ella, antes que la asieran,
cesando un punto en su duelo,

he rode into the city as prideful and vain
as he was small and humble when riding away.
And to this same man, Inés—ever faithful,
and recovered enough to weakly draw breath—
directs her entreaties, though he is the one
who has fashioned her life into living death.
But this very man who forgets as he pleases
has forgotten the lowly name he was trapped in;
he departed for war Diego Martínez
but now he is don Diego, the captain!
To the great don Diego her love is as nothing;
he hears her laments and is callous and cruel.
For him they are only the pitiable follies
of a headstrong, half-witted, heartbroken fool!
He declares that no promise of marriage was offered;
to the mere thought of such he was deeply averse.
Success, power, the passage of time—
how greatly they can change a man for the worse!
Vainly Inés was persevering
with pleading, beseeching, and even with threats;
but the more she importunes and implores,
the more harshly his erstwhile love he forgets.
Sinking beneath the weight of dishonor,
the lovely young woman clings to his knees;
her long dark hair is wound in confusion,
her torrents of tears are pitiful pleas.
But all her effort elicits no change
nor diverts him from the path he has taken,
for Captain don Diego simply is not
Diego Martínez: a name forsaken!
And finally this man, with his heart of stone,
could endure no more: “She cannot stay!”
He called to his servants: “Escort her out.
If she will not leave—drag her away!”
But as they approached, she buried her grief,
and wiped away a tear;

así habló, el rostro lloroso
hacia Martínez volviendo:
-Contigo se fue mi honra,
conmigo tu juramento;
pues buenas prendas son ambas,
en buen fiel las pesaremos.
Y la faz descolorida
en la mantilla envolviendo,
a pasos desatentados
salióse del aposento.

- V -

Era entonces de Toledo
por el rey gobernador
el justiciero y valiente
don Pedro Ruiz de Alarcón.
Muchos años por su patria
el buen viejo peleó;
cercenado tiene un brazo,
mas entero el corazón.
La mesa tiene delante,
los jueces en derredor,
los corchetes a la puerta
y en la derecha el bastón.
Está, como presidente
del tribunal superior,
entre un dosel y una alfombra,
reclinado en un sillón,
escuchando con paciencia
la casi asmática voz
con que un tétrico escribano
solfea una apelación.
Los asistentes bostezan
al murmullo arrullador;
los jueces, medio dormidos,

to Diego she turned, and with smoldering voice,
she spoke so that all could hear:
"My honor departed in your possession,
and your oath was left in mine;
these two fine pledges will be weighed in the balance
and we will see what justice finds."
And as she rose to leave the room
she put on a veil of delicate lace;
with unsteady steps she walked to the door—
the veil encircled her pallid face.

- V -

In those days Toledo was governed
by a man whom the king could trust;
his name was don Pedro de Alarcón
and he was valiant, and strict, and just.
For his native land this worthy old man
had fought bravely, and truly, and long;
a fell wound he suffered—one arm was severed,
but his heart was still youthful and strong.
A great oaken table before him extends
and off to the side the bailiffs stand;
the stately judges are arrayed around him
and the governor's staff is in his right hand.
He presides at the highest court in Toledo
and imparts a lordly air;
with canopy above and fine rug below
he reclines in a lordly chair.
A melancholy scribe reads an appeal
that echoes in the room and sedates—
his asthmatic voice is monotony itself
yet don Pedro patiently listens and waits.
Those present in court are yawning and dozing.
Even the eyelids of judges must fall
when besieged by the lulling voice of a scribe

hacen pliegues al ropón;
los escribanos repasan
sus pergaminos al sol;
los corchetes a una moza
guiñan en un corredor,
y abajo, en Zocodover,
gritan en discorde son
los que en el mercado venden
lo vendido y el valor.

Una mujer en tal punto,
en faz de gran aflicción,
rojos de llorar los ojos,
ronca de gemir la voz,
suelto el cabello y el manto,
tomó plaza en el salón
diciendo a gritos: -Justicia,
jueces; justicia, señor!
Y a los pies se arroja, humilde,
de don Pedro de Alarcón,
en tanto que los curiosos
se agitan al derredor.
Alzóla cortés don Pedro
calmando la confusión
y el tumultuoso murmullo
que esta escena ocasionó,
diciendo:
-Mujer, ¿qué quieres?
-Quiero justicia, señor.
-¿De qué?
-De una prenda hurtada.
-¿Qué prenda?
-Mi corazón.
-¿Tú le diste?
-Le presté.
-¿Y no te le han vuelto?

who speaks in a large and dimly lit hall.
The notaries stand near the windows
and review their parchments in tenuous light;
bailiffs walk in the corridor
and look for some fire of love to ignite.
And down in the market square is heard
a continuous, cacophonous sound;
the cycle of buying and selling continues
until something better is found.

At this moment a woman appears,
by deep affliction her face is torn,
she has the weak voice of those who wail
and the sad, red eyes of those who mourn.
With long dark cloak and long dark hair,
and showing some sign of life restored,
she stands in the hall and her words resound:
“Justice, magistrates! Justice, my lord!”
With due humility she casts herself
at the feet of don Pedro de Alarcón.
A tumult of curious voices ascends
and the court into utter confusion is thrown.
Don Pedro calls for order in the hall
and kindly helps the woman to stand.
The murmurs and exclamations subside
as he holds aloft his hand
and says:
“Woman, please—what do you want?”
“I want justice, my lord.”
“Justice, I see. And what grievance—” he starts
but she cries out, “A pledge has been stolen, my lord!”
“A pledge? What pledge has been stolen?”
“My heart.”
“Did you give it away?”
“I gave it in loan.”
“And it has not been returned?”

-No.
-Tienes testigos?
-Ninguno.
-¿Y promesa?
-¡Sí, por Dios!
Que al partirse de Toledo
un juramento empeñó.
-¿Quién es él?
-Diego Martínez.
-¿Noble?
-Y capitán, señor.
-Presentadme al capitán,
que cumplirá si juró.
Quedó en silencio la sala,
y a poco en el corredor
se oyó de botas y espuelas
el acompasado son.
Un portero, levantando
el tapiz, en alta voz
dijo: -El capitán don Diego.
Y entró luego en el salón
Diego Martínez, los ojos
llenos de orgullo y furor.
-¿Sois el capitán don Diego
-díjole don Pedro- vos?
Contestó, altivo y sereno,
Diego Martínez:
-Yo soy.
-¿Conocéis a esa muchacha?
-Ha tres años, salvo error.
-¿Hicísteisla juramento
de ser su marido?
-No.
-¿Juráis no haberlo jurado?
-Sí juro.
-Pues id con Dios.

"No."
"Do you have witnesses, then?"
"Not one," she owned.
"And a promise?"
"Yes! God heard his oath—
before he left Toledo,
he swore!"
"Of whom do you speak?"
"Diego Martínez."
"A gentleman?"
"And a captain, my lord."
"I will speak to this captain," don Pedro declared,
"and if he swore, he will keep his word."
The expectant crowd falls silent,
the judges discreetly confer,
and soon the corridor echoes
with rhythm of boot and spur.
Some words are exchanged at the entrance;
the murmurs and whispers resume;
a porter announces: "Diego Martínez!"
And the captain walks into the room.
His eyes are pride and fury,
his stride is steady and slow,
he stops and the governor's questions begin:
"Are you the captain don Diego?"
"I am," he replied,
with a haughty voice
and a face of tranquil repose.
"Do you know this woman?" don Pedro inquired.
"I believe that I *knew* her—three years ago."
"Did you swear an oath
to marry her?"
"No."
"And do you swear that nothing was sworn?"
"I do."
"Go then, and God be with you."

-¡Miente! -clamó Inés, llorando
de despecho y de rubor.
-Mujer, ¡piensa lo que dices!
-Digo que miente: juró.
-¿Tienes testigos?
-Ninguno.
-Capitán, idos con Dios,
y dispensad que, acusado,
dudara de vuestro honor.
Tornó Martínez la espalda
con brusca satisfacción,
e Inés, que le vio partirse,
resuelta y firme gritó:
-Llamadle, tengo un testigo.
Llamadle otra vez, señor.
Volvió el capitán don Diego,
sentóse Ruiz de Alarcón,
la multitud aquietóse
y la de Vargas siguió:
-Tengo un testigo a quien nunca
faltó verdad ni razón.
-¿Quién?
-Un hombre que de lejos
nuestras palabras oyó,
mirándonos desde arriba.
-¿Estaba en algún balcón?
-No, que estaba en un suplicio
donde ha tiempo que expiró.
-¿Luego es muerto?
-No, que vive.
-Estáis loca, ¡vive Dios!
¿Quién fue?
-El Cristo de la Vega
a cuya faz perjuró.

"He lies!" shouts Inés, driven to tears
by her anger and his derision.
"Woman, think about what you are saying!"
"I say that he lies—the oath was given!"
"Do you have witnesses?"
"Not one."
"Go then, Captain, with God's protection.
And forgive us for doubting your honor
on account of this accusation."
With abrupt satisfaction Diego turned
and said nothing as he began to walk out;
Inés watched him leave, and waited, and finally
with voice of steel began to shout:
"Call him back! I have a witness.
Stop him. Call him back, my lord."
The captain turned, the governor sat down,
and no one else uttered a word.
And in the silence of that dimly lit hall
the voice of a faithful woman was heard:
"I have a witness who speaks only truth
and in whom error has never been found."
"Who is this witness?"
"A man in the distance—
he watched from above,
and heard every sound."
"Was he standing in a balcony?"
"He was hanging in torment,
and long ago in torment he died."
"Then he is dead?"
"No, he lives. He is more alive than you and I."
"You are mad!"
"I am not, my lord."
"*Who was the witness?*"
"Christ in the Meadow,
to whom the captain falsely swore."

Pusiéronse en pie los jueces
al nombre del Redentor,
escuchando con asombro
tan excelsa apelación.
Reinó un profundo silencio
de sorpresa y de pavor,
y Diego bajó los ojos
de vergüenza y confusión.
Un instante con los jueces
don Pedro en secreto habló,
y levantóse diciendo
con respetuosa voz:
-La ley es ley para todos;
tu testigo es el mejor;
mas para tales testigos
no hay más tribunal que Dios.
Haremos... lo que sepamos;
escribano: al caer el sol,
al Cristo que está en la vega
tomaréis declaración.

- VI -

Es una tarde serena,
cuya luz tornasolada
del purpurino horizonte
blandamente se derrama.
Plácido aroma las flores,
sus hojas plegando exhalan,
y el céfiro entre perfumes
mece las trémulas alas.
Brillan abajo en el valle
con suave rumor las aguas,
y las aves, en la orilla,
despidiendo al día cantan.
Allá por el Miradero,

As one the judges arose
when they heard the Redeemer's name pronounced,
and in astonishment they listened
as this singular appeal was announced.
Throughout the hall reigned silence
of fear and great surprise,
and don Diego, sensing defeat,
was ashamed and lowered his eyes.
Don Pedro briefly conferred with the judges
and then to his place of honor repaired;
at length he stood and turned to the crowd
and with a respectful voice declared:
"The law of this land applies to all;
your witness in truth surpasses all else;
but for such witnesses as yours,
the only judge is God Himself.
We mortals, then, will simply do
that which we know so well:
we will hear testimony, before night falls,
from the Christ who in the meadow dwells."

- VI -

An evening serene
light iridescent
horizon of violet
red rises the crescent.
A tranquil aroma
swayed flower exhales
sweet gentle wind
lithe leaf assails.
Low polished waters
sweet sound away
birds on the bank
sing dirge for the day.
From town by tower

por el Cambrón y Visagra,
confuso tropel de gente
del Tajo a la vega baja.
Vienen delante don Pedro
de Alarcón, lbán de Vargas,
su hija Inés, los escribanos,
los corchetes y los guardias;
y detrás monjes, hidalgos,
mozas, chicos y canalla.
Otra turba de curiosos
en la vega les aguarda,
cada cual comentariando
el caso según le cuadra.
Entre ellos está Martínez
en apostura bizarra,
calzadas espuelas de oro,
valona de encaje blanca,
bigote a la borgoñesa,
melena desmelenada,
el sombrero guarnecido
con cuatro lazos de plata,
un pie delante del otro,
y el puño en el de la espada.
Los plebeyos de reojo
le miran de entre las capas:
los chicos, al uniforme,
y las mozas, a la cara.
Llegado el gobernador
y gente que le acompaña,
entraron todos al claustro
que iglesia y patio separa.
Encendieron ante el Cristo
cuatro cirios y una lámpara,
y de hinojos un momento
le rezaron en voz baja.

through gate they surge
and down toward river
to meadow converge.
In front don Pedro,
Ibán, Inés,
scribes, bailiffs,
guards process.
Children and the lowly come last
and those that habit and veil possess.
Curious folk
in meadow await
and curious facts
factitious debate.
Diego is there
in dashing disgrace
golden spurs
white collar of lace
foreign mustache
disheveled hair shows
beneath hat adorned
with four silver bows.
Commoners look
with dissembled gaze
at fine face fine clothes
fine part that he plays.
One foot in front, the other behind,
and a sword for this man who returns honor in kind.
The governor has arrived
with Inés and Ibán
and the others who
into this drama are drawn.
Before Christ in his passion
the throng was arrayed;
they lit candles and kneeled
and silently prayed.

Está el Cristo de la Vega
la cruz en tierra posada,
los pies alzados del suelo
poco menos de una vara;
hacia la severa imagen
un notario se adelanta,
de modo que con el rostro
al pecho santo llegaba.
A un lado tiene a Martínez;
a otro lado, a Inés de Vargas;
detrás, el gobernador
con sus jueces y sus guardias.
Después de leer dos veces
la acusación entablada,
el notario a Jesucristo
así demandó en voz alta:
-*Jesús, Hijo de María,*
ante nos esta mañana
citado como testigo
por boca de Inés de Vargas,
¿juráis ser cierto que un día
a vuestras divinas plantas
juró a Inés Diego Martínez
por su mujer desposarla?

Asida a un *brazo* desnudo
una *mano* atarazada
vino a posar en los autos
la seca y hendida palma,
y allá en los aires «¡Sí juro!»,
clamó una voz más que humana.
Alzó la turba medrosa
la vista a la imagen santa...
Los labios tenía abiertos
y una mano desclavada.

Christ of the Meadow is there, affixed
to that cross esteemed as of infinite worth.
His bloodstained feet are nailed in place
not more than a yard from the earth.
A notary approaches this image of agony
at don Pedro's solemn request.
And there he stands, his reverent face
at the height of the sacred chest.
Soon he is joined by a man and a woman:
Diego, to his left; Inés, to his right;
behind them the governor silently waits
amidst dark-robed judges in candlelight.
Twice the notary carefully read
the accusation that had been made.
And then he questioned Christ Himself
with his voice respectfully raised:
"Jesus, Son of Mary,
this woman, Inés de Vargas,
before us all, this very day,
named you as a witness.
Do you swear it to be true
that here at your feet—wounded, divine—
Diego Martínez swore to Inés
that he would take her as his wife?"

The notary holds the official court record
and to it a hand draws near;
it slowly turns, and the cloven palm rests
where the names "Inés" and "Diego" appear.
"I swear it!" The voice was not of this world
and inspired all present to love and to fear.
The crowd looked up at that crucified man,
that sacred face by anguish assailed,
and the image was not what it once had been:
the lips were unclosed, and one hand was unnailed.

Conclusión

Las vanidades del mundo
renunció allí mismo Inés,
y espantado de sí propio,
Diego Martínez también.
Los escribanos, temblando,
dieron de esta escena fe,
firmando como testigos
cuantos hubieron poder.
Fundóse un aniversario
y una capilla con él,
y don Pedro de Alarcón
el altar ordenó hacer,
donde hasta el tiempo que corre,
y en cada año una vez,
con la mano desclavada
el crucifijo se ve.

Conclusion

Inés at that moment chose God for her spouse
and resolved to renounce all worldly cares.
And Diego also, appalled at his sins,
devoted his life to penance and prayer.
The scribes with trembling hand attested
the prodigy that had occurred,
and as many as could sign their names
bore witness to the voice they heard.
A chapel was built, a feast day proclaimed,
throughout Toledo the miracle was known;
and the chapel's altar was a lavish gift
of the governor don Pedro de Alarcón.
And in this chapel, one day a year,
the wondrous tale is fervently told,
and the crucifix, with hand unnailed,
is displayed for all to behold.

VI. Appendix: Annotated Literal Translation of "A buen juez, mejor testigo"

Entre pardos nubarrones	Among brownish-gray storm clouds
pasando la blanca luna,	passing the white moon [moon passing among clouds],
con resplandor fugitivo,	with fugitive gleam,
la baja tierra no alumbra.	[the moon] does not illuminate the low earth.
La brisa con frescas alas	The breeze with fresh wings
juguetona no murmura,	playful [the breeze] it does not whisper,
y las veletas no giran	and the weathervanes do not spin/turn
entre la cruz y la cúpula.	between the cross and the dome/cupola/turret.
Tal vez un pálido rayo	Perhaps a pallid ray
la opaca atmósfera cruza,	crosses the opaque atmosphere,
y unas en otras las sombras	and among themselves the shadows
confundidas se dibujan.	confused are outlined/take shape.
Las almenas de las torres	The battlements of the towers
un momento se columbran,	one moment emerge/are glimpsed/discerned,
como lanzas de soldados	like lances/spears of soldiers
apostados en la altura.	posted/stationed on high.
Reverberan los cristales	The glass (windows) glitter/sparkle/twinkle
la trémula llama turbia,	(with) the flickering/trembling, blurry/misty flame,
y un instante entre las rocas	and one moment among the rocks
rïela la fuente oculta.	laughs at it the hidden fount/spring.
Los álamos de la vega	The poplars of the meadow {1}
parecen en la espesura	appear in the thickness
de fantasmas apiñados	of (as?) huddled/clustered ghosts
medrosa y gigante turba;	(a) fearful/fainthearted and giant mob/crowd;
y alguna vez desprendida	and once (set off? let loose?)
gotea pesada lluvia,	heavy rain drips,
que no despierta a quien duerme,	which doesn't awaken those who sleep,
ni a quien medita importuna.	nor disturbs those who meditate.
Yace Toledo en el sueño	Toledo lies in sleep
entre las sombras confusas,	among the confused shadows
y el Tajo a sus pies pasando	and the Tagus river passing at her feet
con pardas ondas lo arrulla.	whispers (sweetly/soothingly) to it with brownish-gray waves.
El monótono murmullo	The monotonous murmur
sonar perdido se escucha,	is heard sounding lost,
cual si por las hondas calles	as if through the deep streets
hirviera del mar la espuma.	the foam of the sea were bubbling/churning {2}.
¡Qué dulce es dormir en calma	How sweet it is to sleep in calm
cuando a lo lejos susurran	when in the distance whisper/sigh/rustle
los álamos que se mecen,	the poplars that sway
las aguas que se derrumban!	the waters that are shattered/toppled!
Se sueñan bellos fantasmas	Beautiful ghosts are dreamed
que el sueño del triste endulzan,	that sweeten/soften the sleep of the sad/dismal (person?),
y en tanto que sueña el triste,	and while the sad one sleeps,
no le aqueja su amargura.	his/their bitterness does not afflict him.
Tan en calma y tan sombría	As calmly and as dark/dismal [la figura]
como la noche que enluta	as the night that casts a pall over/darkens
la esquina en que desemboca	the street corner at which terminates
una callejuela oculta,	a hidden alley/narrow street,

se ve de un hombre que aguarda
la vigilante figura,
y tan a la sombra vela
que entre las sombras se ofusca.
Frente por frente a sus ojos
un balcón a poca altura
deja escapar por los vidrios
la luz que dentro le alumbra;
mas ni en el claro aposento,
ni en la callejuela oscura,
el silencio de la noche
rumor sospechoso turba.
Pasó así tan largo tiempo,
que pudiera haberse duda
de si es hombre, o solamente
mentida ilusión nocturna;
pero es hombre, y bien se ve,
porque con planta segura
ganando el centro a la calle
resuelto y audaz pregunta:
-¿Quién va? -y a corta distancia
el igual compás se escucha
de un caballo que sacude
las sonoras herraduras.
-¿Quién va? -repite, y cercana
otra voz menos robusta
responde: -Un hidalgo, ¡calle!
-y el paso el bulto apresura.
-Téngase el hidalgo -el hombre
replica, y la espada empuña.
-Ved más bien si me haréis calle
(repitieron con mesura)
que hasta hoy a nadie se tuvo
Ibán de Vargas y Acuña.
-Pase el Acuña y perdone
-dijo el mozo en faz de fuga,
pues teniéndose el embozo
sopla un silbato, y se oculta.
Paró el jinete a una puerta,
y con precaución difusa
salió una niña al balcón
que llama interior alumbra.
-¡Mi padre! -clamó en voz baja.
Y el viejo en la cerradura
metió la llave pidiendo
a sus gentes que le acudan.
Un negro por ambas bridas
tomó la cabalgadura,
cerróse detrás la puerta
y quedó la calle muda.
En esto desde el balcón,
como quien tal acostumbra,

[la figura] has the appearance of a man who is waiting
the vigilant/watching/watchful figure,
and so much in shadow he keeps watch
that among the shadows he goes in and out of sight.
Directly in front of his eyes
a low balcony
lets escape through its windows
the light that illuminates it within;
but neither in the bright chamber,
nor in the dark alley,
the silence/quietness of the night
suspicious noise/murmuring disturbs.
So much time passed in this way,
that there could have been doubt
as to whether it was a man, or only
a deceiving nocturnal illusion;
but it is a man, and he is seen well/easily,
because with sure stride/step
gaining/reaching the center of the street
resolved/determined and bold he asks:
-Who goes there? -and at a short distance
the steady/regular/constant meter/rhythm is heard
of a horse that shakes/beats/strikes
its sonorous/resounding horseshoes.
-Who goes there? -he repeats, and nearby
another voice less strong/robust
responds: -A (low-ranking) nobleman, be quiet!
-and the vague bodily form quickened its pace.
-Let the nobleman stay where he is -the man
replies, and he takes up/seizes his sword.
-You would do well to make way for me
(they repeated {3} with moderation/restraint)
for to this day [Ibán] stopped for no one
Ibán de Vargas y Acuña.
-Pass, Acuña, and forgive me
-said the young man, with a countenance of flight/escape,
then holding down his wide face-covering collar
he blows a whistle, and disappears.
The horseman stopped at a door,
and with vague precaution
a girl went out to the balcony
that the interior flame illuminated.
-My father! -she shouted in a low voice.
And the old man into the lock
placed/inserted the key asking
his servants to attend to him/help him.
A black man by both bridles
took the horse (took his “mount”),
the door closed behind him
and the street was left silent.
Just at this moment from the balcony,
as one who is much accustomed (to doing this),

un mancebo por las rejas
de la calle se asegura.
Asió el brazo al que apostado
hizo cara a Ibán de Acuña,
y huyeron, en el embozo
velando la catadura.

a youth (moving) through the bars/railing
of the street puts himself in safety.
He seized the arm of the one who having been posted
stood up to Ibán de Acuña,
and they fled, in their wide collars
hiding their faces.

- II -

Clara, apacible y serena
pasa la siguiente tarde,
y el sol tocando su ocaso
apaga su luz gigante:
se ve la imperial Toledo
dorada por los remates,
como una ciudad de grana
coronada de cristales.
El Tajo por entre rocas
sus anchos cimientos lame,
dibujando en las arenas
las ondas con que las bate.
Y la ciudad se retrata
en las ondas desiguales,
como en prenda de que el río
tan afanoso la bañe.
A la lejos en la vega
tiende galán por sus márgenes,
de sus álamos y huertos
el pintoresco ropaje,
y porque su altiva gala
más a los ojos halague,
la salpica con escombros
de castillos y de alcázares.
Un recuerdo es cada piedra
que toda una historia vale,
cada colina un secreto
de príncipes o galanes.
Aquí se bañó la hermosa
por quien dejó un rey culpable
amor, fama, reino y vida
en manos de musulmanes.
Allí recibió Galiana
a su receloso amante
en esa cuesta que entonces
era un plantel de azahares.
Allá por aquella torre,
que hicieron puerta los árabes,
subió el Cid sobre Babieca
con su gente y su estandarte.
Más lejos se ve el castillo
de San Servando o Cervantes,
donde nada se hizo nunca

Clear, peaceful, and serene
the following afternoon passes,
and the sun touching its western point/lowest point
puts out/extinguishes its giant light:
the imperial city of Toledo is seen
golden in its pinnacles/highest points,
like a city of cochineal (deep red)
crowned with crystal.
The Tagus among rocks
laps against/licks its wide foundations,
drawing in the sands
the waves with which it batters/pounds them (the sands?).
And the city is portrayed/retreats
in/into the irregular/erratic waves,
as if as a pledge that the river
would so unfailingly bathe/wash it.
In the distance in the meadow
(the river?) elegantly makes its way through the strips of land,
of its poplars and gardens
the picturesque clothing,
and so that its haughty/proud display (of finery/grace)
would more visibly flatter/give more delight to the eyes,
(the river?) splatters it (the vega?) with rubble
of castles and of palaces/fortresses.
Every stone is a memory
that is worth quite a story,
every hill a secret
of princes or gallant young men.
Here bathed the beautiful one
on account of whom a guilty/blameworthy king left
love, fame, kingdom, and life
in the hands of Muslims {4}.
There Galiana received
her suspicious/distrustful lover
on that slope which at that time
was a nursery of citrus blossoms.
There near that tower,
that the Arabs made a gate,
El Cid ascended upon Babieca [his horse]
with his men and his standard.
Farther away the castle is seen
of San Servando {5} or Cervantes,
where nothing was ever done

y nada al presente se hace.
A este lado está la almena
por do sacó vigilante
el conde don Peranzules
al rey, que supo una tarde
fingir tan tenaz modorra,
que político y constante,
tuvo siempre el brazo quedo
las palmas al horadarle.
Allí está el circo romano,
gran cifra de un pueblo grande,
y aquí, la antigua basílica
de bizantinos pilares,
que oyó en el primer concilio
las palabras de los padres
que velaron por la Iglesia
perseguida o vacilante.
La sombra en este momento
tiende sus turbios cendales
por todas esas memorias
de las pasadas edades,
y del Cambrón y Visagra
los caminos desiguales,
camino a los toledanos
hacia las murallas abren.
Los labradores se acercan
al fuego de sus hogares,
cargados con sus aperos,
cansados de sus afanes.
Los ricos y sedentarios
se tornan con paso grave,
calado el ancho sombrero,
abrochados los gabanes,
y los clérigos y monjes
y los prelados y abades
sacudiendo el leve polvo
de capelos y sayales.
Quédase sólo un mancebo
de impetuosos ademanes,
que se pasea ocultando
entre la capa el semblante.
Los que pasan le contemplan
con decisión de evitarle,
y él contempla a los que pasan
como si a alguien aguardase.
Los tímidos aceleran
los pasos al divisarle,
cual temiendo de seguro
que les proponga un combate;
y los valientes le miran
cual si sintieran dejarle
sin que libres sus estoques,

and nothing at present is done
On this side is the merlon/crenel {6}
through which [the] vigilant [count] took out/got out
the count don Peranzules [subject of clause]
the king [object], who one afternoon/evening knew how
to feign such a tenacious sleepiness,
that polite/reserved and constant/patient (in suffering),
he always held his arm still
as they bored a hole in his palms {7}.
There is the Roman circus,
great emblem of a great people,
and there, the ancient basilica
of byzantine pillars,
which heard in the first council
the words of the fathers
that watched over/safeguarded the Church
persecuted or doubtful/hesitant [describing the Church].
The shadow in this moment
stretches forth its misty sendals {8}
around all these memories
of past ages,
and of the Cambron and the Visagra {9}
the uneven/irregular roads,
on their way to the inhabitants of Toledo
open toward the city walls.
The laborers draw near to
the fire in their hearth,
loaded with their farm implements,
tired from their labors.
The rich and the sedentary
return with grave/solemn step/pace,
their wide sombreros pulled down,
their overcoats fastened,
and the clerics and monks
and the prelates and abbots
shaking the little bit of dust
from their hats {10} and woolen robes.
There remains only a young man
of impetuous expressions/gestures/manners,
who walks hiding
his countenance among his cloak/cape.
Those who pass gaze at/study him
determined to avoid him,
and he gazes at/studies those who pass
as though he were waiting for someone.
The timid people quicken
their steps when they catch sight of him,
as if truly/really fearing
that he would propose combat to them {11};
and the brave people look at him
as if they were sorry to leave him
without, swords drawn,

en riña sonora dancen.	dancing in a resounding brawl.
Una mujer también sola	A woman also alone
se viene el llano adelante,	comes/approaches, the plain in front (of her), {12}
la luz del rostro escondida	the light of her face hidden
en tocas y tafetanes.	in her wimple and taffeta.
Mas en lo leve del paso	But in the lightness/delicateness of her step
y en lo flexible del talle	and in the flexibility (litheness?) of her waist/figure
puede, a través de los velos	through her veils can
una hermosa adivinarse.	a beautiful woman be guessed/predicted.
Vase derecha al que aguarda	She goes [emphasizing leaving] directly to the one that waits
y él al encuentro le sale,	and he goes out to meet her
diciendo... cuanto se dicen	saying … all those things that say to one another
en las citas los amantes.	lovers in their meetings.
Mas ella, galanterías	But she, gallantries/urbanities
dejando severa aparte,	severely/harshly leaving aside,
así al mancebo interrumpe,	in this way interrupts the young man,
en voz decisiva y grave:	with a decisive and grave voice:
-Abreviemos de razones,	Let us cut short/abridge our discourse/formalities,
Diego Martínez; mi padre,	Diego Martínez; my father
que un hombre ha entrado en su ausencia,	[knows] that a man entered in his absence
dentro mi aposento sabe;	within my chamber knows;
y así, quien mancha mi honra	and thus, he who stains my honor
con la suya me la lave;	with his own (honor) will cleanse me of it (the stain) {13};
o dadme mano de esposo,	either give me your hand as husband,
o libre de vos dejadme.	or leave me free of you.
Miróla Diego Martínez	Diego Martínez looked at her
atentamente un instante,	attentively for a moment,
y echando a un lado el embozo,	and casting to one side his wide collar,
repuso palabras tales:	responded with such words as these:
-Dentro de un mes, Inés mía,	-Within one month, my Inés,
parto a la guerra de Flandes;	I leave for the war in Flanders;
al año estaré de vuelta	one year after that I will be back
y contigo en los altares.	and with you at the altar.
Honra que yo te desluzca,	Whatever honor of yours I may spoil/tarnish,
con honra mía se lave,	let it be cleansed with my honor,
que por honra vuelven honra	for on account of honor [they] return honor {14}
hidalgos que en honra nacen.	noblemen who are born in honor.
-Júralo -exclamó la niña.	-Swear it -the girl exclaimed.
-Más que mi palabra vale	-[An oath will not be worth more
no te valdrá un juramento.	to you than my word].
-Diego, la palabra es aire.	-Diego, a/your word is air.
-¡Vive Dios que estás tenaz!	-As God lives, you are persistent!
Dalo por jurado y baste.	Consider it sworn and let that be enough.
-No me basta, que olvidar	-For me it's not enough, for [you could] forget
puedes la palabra en Flandes.	your word in Flanders.
-¡Voto a Dios!, ¿qué más pretendes?	-I vow it to God!, what more do you (diligently) seek (to obtain)?
-Que a los pies de aquella imagen	-That at the feet of that image/statue
lo jures como cristiano	you swear it as a Christian
del santo Cristo delante.	in front of the holy Christ.
Vaciló un poco Martínez;	Martínez hesitated slightly;
mas, porfiando que jurase,	but, insisting that he swear it,
llevóle Inés hacia el templo	Inés led him to the temple/church building

que en medio la vega yace.
Enclavado en un madero,
en duro y postrero trance,
ceñida la sien de espinas,
descolorido el semblante,
veíase allí un crucifijo
teñido de negra sangre,
a quien Toledo, devota,
acude hoy en sus azares.
Ante sus plantas divinas
llegaron ambos amantes,
y haciendo Inés que Martínez
los sagrados pies tocase,
preguntóle:
-Diego, ¿juras
a tu vuelta desposarme?
Contestó el mozo:
-¡Sí, juro!
Y ambos del templo se salen.

- III -

Pasó un día y otro día,
un mes y otro mes pasó,
y un año pasado había;
mas de Flandes no volvía
Diego, que a Flandes partió.
Lloraba la bella Inés
su vuelta aguardando en vano;
oraba un mes y otro mes
del crucifijo a los pies
do puso el galán su mano.
Todas las tardes venía
después de traspuesto el sol,
y a Dios llorando pedía
la vuelta del español,
y el español no volvía.
Y siempre al anochecer,
sin dueña y sin escudero,
en un manto una mujer
el campo salía a ver
al alto del Miradero.
¡Ay del triste que consume
su existencia en esperar!
¡Ay del triste que presume
que el duelo con que él se abrume
al ausente ha de pesar!
La esperanza es de los cielos
precioso y funesto don,
pues los amantes desvelos
cambian la esperanza en celos,
que abrasan el corazón.

that lies in (the center of) the meadow.
Nailed onto a timber,
in harsh and final dying moment {15},
temples girded with spines,
countenance faded,
was seen there a crucifix
dyed in (stained with?) black blood,
to whom Toledo, with devotion,
today turns to in its vicissitudes/times of affliction.
Before its divine feet
both lovers arrived,
and Inés making Martínez
touch the sacred feet,
asked him:
-Diego, do you swear
to marry me upon your return?
The young man answered:
-Yes, I swear it!
And both leave/walk out of the temple/church building.

A day passed and another day,
a month and another month passed,
and a year had passed;
but from Flanders was not returning {16}
Diego, who for Flanders departed.
The beautiful Inés was weeping
vainly awaiting his return;
during a month and another month she prayed
at the feet of the crucified
where the (gallant) young man placed his hand.
Every afternoon/evening she came
after the setting of the sun,
and weeping she asked of God
the return of the Spanish man,
and the Spanish man was not returning.
And always at nightfall,
without mistress/governess {17} and without attendant {18},
in a cloak a woman
went out to the field to see (if he was coming?)
in the high place of the Miradero {19}.
Alas for the sad one who wastes away
his/her existence in waiting!
Alas for the sad one who assumes
that the sorrow/mourning with which he/she is overwhelmed
must weigh upon the absent one!
Hope is from heaven
a precious and fateful/tragic gift,
for the exertions of lovers {20}
change hope into jealousy {21},
which burns the heart.

Si es cierto lo que se espera,
es un consuelo en verdad;
pero siendo una quimera,
en tan frágil realidad
quien espera desespera.
Así Inés desesperaba
sin acabar de esperar,
y su tez se marchitaba,
y su llanto se secaba
para volver a brotar.
En vano a su confesor
pidió remedio o consejo
para aliviar su dolor;
que mal se cura el amor
con las palabras de un viejo.
En vano a Ibán acudía,
llorosa y desconsolada;
el padre no respondía,
que la lengua le tenía
su propia deshonra atada.
Y ambos maldicen su estrella,
callando el padre severo
y suspirando la bella,
porque nació mujer ella,
y el viejo nació altanero.
Dos años al fin pasaron
en esperar y gemir,
y las guerras acabaron,
y los de Flandes tornaron
a sus tierras a vivir.
Pasó un día y otro día,
un mes y otro mes pasó,
y el tercer año corría;
Diego a Flandes se partió,
mas de Flandes no volvía.
Era una tarde serena;
doraba el sol de Occidente
del Tajo la vega amena,
y apoyada en una almena
miraba Inés la corriente.
Iban las tranquilas olas
las riberas azotando
bajo las murallas solas,
musgo, espigas y amapolas
ligeramente doblando.
Algún olmo que escondido
creció entre la yerba blanda,
sobre las aguas tendido
se reflejaba perdido
en su cristalina banda.
Y algún ruiseñor colgado
entre su fresca espesura

If what one hopes for is true,
it is truly a consolation;
but if it is a chimera,
[he/she who hopes
in such a fragile reality despairs].
In this way Inés was despairing
without ceasing to hope, {22}
and her complexion was withering,
and her weeping was drying up
in order to burst forth/break out again. {23}
In vain her confessor
she asked for remedy or advice
to alleviate her pain;
for love is poorly healed/treated
with the words of an old man.
In vain she turned to Ibán, {24}
tearful and heartbroken;
the father did not respond,
for [his own dishonor held
his tongue tied].
And both curse their star, {25}
the severe father keeping quiet
and the beautiful girl sighing,
because she was born a woman,
and the old man was born arrogant.
Finally two years passed
in waiting and groaning,
and the wars came to an end,
and those in Flanders returned
to live in their (home)lands.
A day passed and another day,
a month and another month passed,
and the third year was passing;
Diego departed for Flanders,
but from Flanders he was not returning.
It was a serene evening;
the western sun was gilding/making golden
the pleasant meadow of the Tagus,
and leaning upon a merlon
Inés was looking at the flowing water.
The tranquil waves went on
lashing against the banks
under the lonely city walls,
moss, (plant) sprigs/spikes, and poppies
softly bending [waves bending the plants].
A few elm trees that hidden
grew among the soft grass,
laid out upon the waters
they were reflected, lost
in its crystalline band.
And one or two nightingales hanging
among their fresh thick vegetation

daba al aire embalsamado
su cántico regalado
desde la enramada oscura.
Y algún pez con cien colores,
tornasolada la escama,
saltaba a besar las flores
que exhalan gratos olores
a las puntas de una rama.
Y allá en el trémulo fondo
el torreón se dibuja
como el contorno redondo
del hueco sombrío y hondo
que habita nocturna bruja.
Así la niña lloraba
el rigor de su fortuna,
y así la tarde pasaba
y al horizonte trepaba
la consoladora luna.
A lo lejos, por el llano,
en confuso remolino,
vio de hombres tropel lejano
que en pardo polvo liviano
dejan envuelto el camino.
Bajó Inés del torreón,
y, llegando recelosa
a las puertas del Cambrón,
sintió latir, zozobrosa,
más inquieto el corazón.
Tan galán como altanero,
dejó ver la escasa luz
por bajo el arco primero
un hidalgo caballero
en un caballo andaluz.
Jubón negro acuchillado,
banda azul, lazo en la hombrera,
y sin pluma al diestro lado
el sombrero derribado
tocando con la gorguera.
Bombacho gris guarnecido,
bota de ante, espuela de oro,
hierro al cinto suspendido,
y a una cadena, prendido,
agudo cuchillo moro.
Vienen tras este jinete,
sobre potros jerezanos,
de lanceros hasta siete,
y en la adarga y coselete
diez peones castellanos.
Asióse a su estribo Inés,
gritando: -¿Diego, eres tú?
Y él, viéndola de través,
dijo: -¡Voto a Belcebú,

were giving to the perfumed/aromatic air
their sweet/delicate/pleasant {26} canticle
from among the dark canopy of foliage.
And one or two fish with a hundred colors,
their scales iridescent,
were jumping to kiss the flowers
that exhale/exude pleasant scents
at the ends of a branch.
And there in the tremulous/rippling depth
the tower was drawn
like the round outline
of the gloomy and deep hollow
where dwells the nocturnal witch.
Thus the girl was weeping about
the severity of her fortune [as in luck],
and thus the evening was passing
and (to) the horizon was climbing
the consoling moon.
In the distance, somewhere in the plain,
in a confused whirl (of activity),
she saw a distant mob {27} of men
who in a light/subtle/shifting brownish-gray dust
leave the road shrouded/cloaked [in the dust].
Inés went down from the tower,
and, arriving distrustful/afraid
at the doors of the Cambrón,
felt beating, anxiously/distressed [describing Inés],
her heart (which was) more agitated/excited.
Both gallant and arrogant/haughty,
the scarce light let [el hidalgo] be seen
(passing) beneath the first arch
a noble gentleman
on an Andalusian horse.
Black doublet slashed (by a knife),
blue band, bow {28} on his epaulet,
and without a feather on the right side
his turned-down hat
touching [the piece of armor near his neck].
Gray trousers {29} adorned,
buckskin boot, spur of gold,
sword {30} suspended from his belt,
and to a chain attached
a sharp-pointed Moorish knife.
Coming after this horseman,
upon colts/horses from Jerez de la Frontera,
of lancers there were as many as seven,
and with/in leather shield and light armor
[were] ten Castilian infantrymen.
Inés seized/took hold of his stirrup,
crying out: -Diego, is it you? {31}
And he, seeing her at a diagonal angle,
said: -I vow in the name of Beelzebub

que no me acuerdo quién es!
Dio la triste un alarido
tal respuesta al escuchar,
y a poco perdió el sentido,
sin que más voz ni gemido
volviera en tierra a exhalar.
Frunciendo ambas a dos cejas,
encomendóla a su gente
diciendo: -¡Malditas viejas
que a las mozas malamente
enloquecen con consejas!
Y aplicando el capitán
a su potro las espuelas,
el rostro a Toledo dan,
y a trote cruzando van
las oscuras callejuelas.

- IV -

Así por sus altos fines
dispone y permite el cielo
que puedan mudar al hombre
fortuna, poder y tiempo.
A Flandes partió Martínez
de soldado aventurero,
y por su suerte y hazañas
allí capitán le hicieron.
Según alzaba en honores,
alzábase en pensamientos,
y tanto ayudó en la guerra
con su valor y altos hechos,
que el mismo rey a su vuelta
le armó en Madrid caballero,
tomándole a su servicio
por capitán de lanceros.
Y otro no fue que Martínez,
quien a poco entró en Toledo,
tan orgulloso y ufano
cual salió humilde y pequeño,
ni es otro a quien se dirige,
cobrado el conocimiento,
la amorosa Inés de Vargas,
que vive por él muriendo.
Mas él, que, olvidando todo,
olvidó su nombre mesmo,
puesto que Diego Martínez
es el capitán don Diego,
ni se ablanda a sus caricias,
ni cura de sus lamentos;
diciendo que son locuras
de gente de poco seso;
que ni él prometió casarse

that I do not remember who she is/you are!
The sorrowful woman let out a cry/shriek
upon hearing such a response,
and shortly thereafter she lost consciousness/fainted
[without uttering another
word or groan].
Knitting his brow,
he entrusted her to his men
saying: -Cursed old women
[who in an evil way
make young ladies mad with their old-fashioned tall tales/fables]!
And the captain applying
his spurs to his colt/horse,
they enter Toledo,
and at a trot they go gradually crossing
the dark, narrow streets.

Thus on account of its lofty ends
heaven decrees and permits
[that fortune, power, and time can
change a man].
For Flanders Martínez departed
as a soldier of fortune,
and on account of his luck and his great deeds/exploits
there they made him a captain.
As he rose up in honors {32},
he was raising himself up in thoughts,
and he helped so much in the war
with his valor and his noble deeds,
that the king himself upon his return
knighted him in Madrid,
taking him into his service
as a captain of lancers.
And it was no other than Martínez,
who shortly thereafter entered Toledo,
as proud and vainglorious
as (he was) humble and small (when) he left,
neither is it another person whom [Inés] addresses
having regained consciousness,
the loving/full-of-love Inés de Vargas,
who lives dying for him.
But he, who, forgetting everything,
forgot his own name,
given that Diego Martínez
is the captain don Diego,
neither softens to her demonstrations of affection
nor cares about/attends to her laments;
saying that they are crazy things
of people with poor judgment/little intelligence;
that he didn't promise to marry her

ni pensó jamás en ello.
¡Tanto mudan a los hombres
fortuna, poder y tiempo!
En vano porfiaba Inés
con amenazas y ruegos;
cuanto más ella importuna,
está Martínez severo.
Abrazada a sus rodillas,
enmarañado el cabello,
la hermosa niña lloraba
prosternada por el suelo.
Mas todo empeño es inútil,
porque el capitán don Diego
no ha de ser Diego Martínez,
como lo era en otro tiempo.
Y así llamando a su gente,
de amor y piedad ajeno,
mandóles que a Inés llevaran
de grado o de valimiento.
Mas ella, antes que la asieran,
cesando un punto en su duelo,
así habló, el rostro lloroso
hacia Martínez volviendo:
-Contigo se fue mi honra,
conmigo tu juramento;
pues buenas prendas son ambas,
en buen fiel las pesaremos.
Y la faz descolorida
en la mantilla envolviendo,
a pasos desatentados
salióse del aposento.

and never thought about doing so.
[How much fortune, power, and time
change men/human beings!]
Vainly Inés was persevering/insisting
with threats and beseeching/pleading;
the more she bothers him with her request,
the more he is severe.
Clutching his knees,
her hair disheveled/tangled,
the beautiful girl was weeping
prostrate upon the floor.
But all effort is useless,
because the captain don Diego
must not be Diego Martínez,
as he was in another time.
And thus calling to his men,
indifferent/oblivious to love and pity,
he ordered them to carry away Inés
with her willingness or by force.
But she, before they seized her,
ceasing for one moment her mourning/grief,
thus spoke, [turning her tearful face
toward Martínez]:
-With you my honor left [it went with you],
with me your oath [you left your oath with me];
well, both are good security/assurance {33},
and we'll weigh them in the balance {34}.
And her faded/pallid face
wrapping up in her mantilla,
with distracted/confused steps
she went out of the chamber.

- V -

Era entonces de Toledo
por el rey gobernador
el justiciero y valiente
don Pedro Ruiz de Alarcón.
Muchos años por su patria
el buen viejo peleó;
cercenado tiene un brazo,
mas entero el corazón.
La mesa tiene delante,
los jueces en derredor,
los corchetes a la puerta
y en la derecha el bastón.
Está, como presidente
del tribunal superior,
entre un dosel y una alfombra,
reclinado en un sillón,
escuchando con paciencia
la casi asmática voz

[In Toledo at that time
the governor for the king was
don Pedro Ruiz de Alarcón,
a brave man of severe/strict justice]. {35}
Many years for his homeland
the good old man fought;
he had one arm severed,
but his heart was whole/intact.
He has the table in front of him,
the judges around him,
the bailiffs at the door
and the ceremonial staff (of authority) in his right hand.
He is, as president
of the high/supreme court,
between a canopy and a rug,
reclining in an armchair,
listening with patience to
the almost asthmatic voice

con que un tétrico escribano
solfea una apelación.
Los asistentes bostezan
al murmullo arrullador;
los jueces, medio dormidos,
hacen pliegues al ropón;
los escribanos repasan
sus pergaminos al sol;
los corchetes a una moza
guiñan en un corredor,
y abajo, en Zocodover,
gritan en discorde son
los que en el mercado venden
lo vendido y el valor.

Una mujer en tal punto,
en faz de gran aflicción,
rojos de llorar los ojos,
ronca de gemir la voz,
suelto el cabello y el manto,
tomó plaza en el salón
diciendo a gritos: -Justicia,
jueces; justicia, señor!
Y a los pies se arroja, humilde,
de don Pedro de Alarcón,
en tanto que los curiosos
se agitan al derredor.
Alzóla cortés don Pedro
calmando la confusión
y el tumultuoso murmullo
que esta escena ocasionó,
diciendo:
-Mujer, ¿qué quieres?
-Quiero justicia, señor.
-¿De qué?
-De una prenda hurtada.
-¿Qué prenda?
-Mi corazón.
-¿Tú le diste?
-Le presté.
-¿Y no te le han vuelto?
-No.
-Tienes testigos?
-Ninguno.
-¿Y promesa?
-¡Sí, por Dios!
Que al partirse de Toledo
un juramento empeñó.
-¿Quién es él?
-Diego Martínez.
-¿Noble?
-Y capitán, señor.

with which a grave/gloomy/melancholy scribe
[reads an appeal in a droning, monotonous voice].
The people who are present yawn
at the lulling/soporific murmur;
the judges, half asleep,
make folds in their long robes;
the scribes review
their parchments in the sunlight;
the bailiffs at a young woman
wink in a hallway,
and below, in the market square of Toledo,
shout with discordant sound
those who in the market sell
the sold and the value. {36}

At that moment a woman,
with the appearance of great affliction,
her eyes red with weeping,
her voice hoarse with groaning,
her hair let down and her cloak loose/untied,
took her place in the hall
saying at the top of her voice: -Justice,
judges; justice, sir!
And at the feet she humbly threw herself
of don Pedro de Alarcón,
while the curious people
around her got worked up.
Don Pedro politely raised her up
calming the confusion
and the tumultuous murmuring/whispering
that this scene caused,
saying:
-Woman, what do you want?
-I want justice, sir.
-For what?
-For a token/pledge stolen.
-What token?
-My heart.
-Did you give it?
-I lent it.
-And they have not returned it to you?
-No.
-Do you have witnesses?
-Not one.
-And a promise?
-Yes, by God!
For when he departed from Toledo
he gave an oath.
-Who is he?
-Diego Martínez.
-Noble?
-And a captain, sir.

-Presentadme al capitán,
que cumplirá si juró.
Quedó en silencio la sala,
y a poco en el corredor
se oyó de botas y espuelas
el acompasado son.
Un portero, levantando
el tapiz, en alta voz
dijo: -El capitán don Diego.
Y entró luego en el salón
Diego Martínez, los ojos
llenos de orgullo y furor.
-¿Sois el capitán don Diego
-díjole don Pedro- vos?
Contestó, altivo y sereno,
Diego Martínez:
-Yo soy.
-¿Conocéis a esa muchacha?
-Ha tres años, salvo error.
-¿Hicísteisla juramento
de ser su marido?
-No.
-¿Juráis no haberlo jurado?
-Sí juro.
-Pues id con Dios.
-¡Miente! -clamó Inés, llorando
de despecho y de rubor.
-Mujer, ¡piensa lo que dices!
-Digo que miente: juró.
-¿Tienes testigos?
-Ninguno.
-Capitán, idos con Dios,
y dispensad que, acusado,
dudara de vuestro honor.
Tornó Martínez la espalda
con brusca satisfacción,
e Inés, que le vio partirse,
resuelta y firme gritó:
-Llamadle, tengo un testigo.
Llamadle otra vez, señor.
Volvió el capitán don Diego,
sentóse Ruiz de Alarcón,
la multitud aquietóse
y la de Vargas siguió:
-Tengo un testigo a quien nunca
faltó verdad ni razón.
-¿Quién?
-Un hombre que de lejos
nuestras palabras oyó,
mirándonos desde arriba.
-¿Estaba en algún balcón?
-No, que estaba en un suplicio

-Introduce me to the captain,
for he will fulfill if he swore.
The hall was left in silence
and soon in the hallway
was heard of boots and spurs
the rhythmic sound.
A porter, lifting
the tapestry, in a loud voice
said: -The captain don Diego.
And then entered into the hall
Diego Martínez, his eyes
full of pride and fury.
-Are you the captain don Diego?
-don Pedro said to him -you?
[Diego] answered, haughty and serene,
Diego Martínez:
-I am he.
-Do you know this girl?
-Since three years ago, if I'm not mistaken.
-Did you make her an oath
that you would be her husband?
-No.
-Do you swear that you did not swear it?
-Yes, I swear.
-Well then, go and God be with you.
-Hi lies! -shouted Inés, sobbing
from spite and shame/distress.
-Woman, think about what you're saying!
-I say that he lies: he swore.
-Do you have witness?
-Not one.
-Captain, depart, God be with you,
and forgive that, (you/your honor having been) accused,
I doubted your honor.
Martínez turned his back
with brusque satisfaction,
and Inés, who watched him leave,
determined and firm shouted:
-Call him, I have a witness.
Call him back, sir.
The captain don Diego turned,
Ruiz de Alarcón sat down,
the multitude became calm
and the woman named Vargas continued:
-I have a witness who never
lacked truth or has been wrong.
-Who?
-A man who from afar
heard our words,
looking at us from above.
-Was he on some sort of balcony?
-No, rather he was in torment

donde ha tiempo que expiró.
-¿Luego es muerto?
-No, que vive.
-Estáis loca, ¡vive Dios!
¿Quién fue?
-El Cristo de la Vega
a cuya faz perjuró.

Pusiéronse en pie los jueces
al nombre del Redentor,
escuchando con asombro
tan excelsa apelación.
Reinó un profundo silencio
de sorpresa y de pavor,
y Diego bajó los ojos
de vergüenza y confusión.
Un instante con los jueces
don Pedro en secreto habló,
y levantóse diciendo
con respetuosa voz:
-La ley es ley para todos;
tu testigo es el mejor;
mas para tales testigos
no hay más tribunal que Dios.
Haremos... lo que sepamos;
escribano: al caer el sol,
al Cristo que está en la vega
tomaréis declaración.

- VI -

Es una tarde serena,
cuya luz tornasolada
del purpurino horizonte
blandamente se derrama.
Plácido aroma las flores,
sus hojas plegando exhalan,
y el céfiro entre perfumes
mece las trémulas alas.
Brillan abajo en el valle
con suave rumor las aguas,
y las aves, en la orilla,
despidiendo al día cantan.
Allá por el Miradero,
por el Cambrón y Visagra,
confuso tropel de gente
del Tajo a la vega baja.
Vienen delante don Pedro
de Alarcón, lbán de Vargas,
su hija Inés, los escribanos,
los corchetes y los guardias;
y detrás monjes, hidalgos,

in which quite some time ago he expired.
-Then he is dead?
-No indeed, he lives.
-You're crazy, as God lives!
Who was it?
-The Christ of the meadow
to whose face he falsely swore.

The judges rose to their feet
upon (hearing) the name of the Redeemer,
listening with amazement
to such a singular appeal.
A profound silence reigned
of surprise and great fear,
and Diego lowered his eyes
in shame and confusion {37}.
[For a moment don Pedro spoke
in secret/confidence with the judges],
and he rose up saying
with a respectful voice:
-The law is law for everyone;
your witness is the best one;
but for such witnesses
there is no tribunal/judge other than God.
We will do… that which we know (how to do);
scribe: when the sun sets,
from the Crist who is in the meadow
you will hear testimony.

It is a serene evening,
whose iridescent light
from the purple horizon
is softly poured out.
Placid/pleasant aroma the flowers,
their folding leaves exhale,
and the gentle wind among sweet scents
makes the tremulous wings sway.
[The waters] shine in the valley
with soft murmur the waters,
and the birds, on the bank,
sing good-bye to the day.
There near the Miradero,
near the Cambrón and the Visagra,
a confused/jumbled group of people
goes down to the meadow of the Tagus.
Coming in front are don Pedro
de Alarcón, Ibán de Vargas,
his daughter Inés, the scribes,
the bailiffs, and the guards;
and behind are monks/religious, noblemen,

mozas, chicos y canalla.
Otra turba de curiosos
en la vega les aguarda,
cada cual comentariando
el caso según le cuadra.
Entre ellos está Martínez
en apostura bizarra,
calzadas espuelas de oro,
valona de encaje blanca,
bigote a la borgoñesa,
melena desmelenada,
el sombrero guarnecido
con cuatro lazos de plata,
un pie delante del otro,
y el puño en el de la espada.
Los plebeyos de reojo
le miran de entre las capas:
los chicos, al uniforme,
y las mozas, a la cara.
Llegado el gobernador
y gente que le acompaña,
entraron todos al claustro
que iglesia y patio separa.
Encendieron ante el Cristo
cuatro cirios y una lámpara,
y de hinojos un momento
le rezaron en voz baja.

Está el Cristo de la Vega
la cruz en tierra posada,
los pies alzados del suelo
poco menos de una vara;
hacia la severa imagen
un notario se adelanta,
de modo que con el rostro
al pecho santo llegaba.
A un lado tiene a Martínez;
a otro lado, a Inés de Vargas;
detrás, el gobernador
con sus jueces y sus guardias.
Después de leer dos veces
la acusación entablada,
el notario a Jesucristo
así demandó en voz alta:
-Jesús, Hijo de María,
ante nos esta mañana
citado como testigo
por boca de Inés de Vargas,
¿juráis ser cierto que un día
a vuestras divinas plantas
juró a Inés Diego Martínez
por su mujer desposarla?

young women, boys and girls, and lowly folk.
Another crowd of curious people
awaits them in the meadow,
each one commenting on
the case according to his/her interpretation/ideas.
Among them is Martínez
with dashing/splendid bearing/gracefulness,
spurs of gold {38},
large collar {39}, white and made of lace,
mustache in the Burgundian style,
long hair/mane disarranged,
the hat decorated/adorned
with four silver bows,
one foot in front of the other,
and his fist on the hilt of his sword.
The commoners out of the corners of their eyes
look at him from among their capes/cloaks:
the children, at his uniform,
and the young ladies, at his face.
The governor having arrived
and people who accompany him,
all entered into the cloister
that separates the church from the courtyard.
They lit before the Christ
four candles and a lamp,
and on bended knee for a moment
they prayed to him with low voices.

The Christ of the Meadow is there
the cross resting upon the ground,
the feet raised above the floor
only a few feet/less than a yard;
toward the severe statue
a notary moves forward,
such that his face
was drawing near to the holy chest.
At one side he has Martínez;
on the other side, Inés de Vargas;
behind, the governor
with his judges and his guards.
After reading twice
the established accusation,
the notary [thus questioned] Jesus Christ
in a loud voice:
-Jesus, Son of Mary,
before us this morning
summoned as a witness
by the mouth of Inés de Vargas,
do you swear that you are certain that one day
at your divine feet
Diego Martínez swore to Inés
that he would take her as his wife?

Asida a un *brazo* desnudo	Joined to a naked arm
una *mano* atarazada	a wounded hand
vino a posar en los autos	came to place upon the court records/proceedings
la seca y hendida palma,	its dry and cloven palm,
y allá en los aires «¡Sí juro!»,	and there in the air "I do swear it!"
clamó una voz más que humana.	cried out a more than human voice.
Alzó la turba medrosa	The fearful/fainthearted crowd raised
la vista a la imagen santa...	its eyes to the holy image…
Los labios tenía abiertos	Its lips were open
y una mano desclavada.	and one hand was unnailed.
Conclusión	
Las vanidades del mundo	The vanities of the world
renunció allí mismo Inés,	Inés renounced right there,
y espantado de sí propio,	and appalled at his own actions,
Diego Martínez también.	Diego Martínez did the same.
Los escribanos, temblando,	The scribes, trembling,
dieron de esta escena fe,	testified/bore witness to this scene,
firmando como testigos	[all who were able to sign their names
cuantos hubieron poder.	signed as witnesses].
Fundóse un aniversario	A commemoration was established
y una capilla con él,	and with it a chapel,
y don Pedro de Alarcón	and don Pedro de Alarcón
el altar ordenó hacer,	ordered the building of the altar,
donde hasta el tiempo que corre,	where until the present day,
y en cada año una vez,	and one time each year,
con la mano desclavada	with the hand unnailed
el crucifijo se ve.	the crucifix is seen.

1 *vega* = "area of low-lying fertile land," not necessarily an open meadow
2 *hervir*: "*3. intr. Dicho del mar: Ponerse sumamente agitado, haciendo mucho ruido y espuma*"
3 Third-person plural doesn't make sense here. Maybe this intransitive meaning is intended: "*intr. Venir a la boca el sabor de lo que se ha comido o bebido*."
4 This refers to the legend of Florinda la Cava and the Visigothic king Roderic.
5 The Castle of San Servando was a medieval monastery and castle in Toledo. It was also called "San Servando," and this name developed into other names including San Cervantes.
6 A merlon is the vertical structure in a battlement. The space between two merlons is a crenel.
7 This refers to a legend in which a king remained steadfast and brave even as an enemy tortured him (or threatened to torture him) by drilling holes through his palms.
8 sendal = "a fine, rich silk material, chiefly used to make ceremonial robes and banners"
9 These are two important city gates in Toledo.
10 In antiquated language *capelo* can mean simply "hat," but the modern meaning is specifically the red cardinal's hat.
11 Perhaps "pick a fight" would be a close equivalent in idiomatic English.
12 Maybe "comes straight across the plain" would be a better translation.

13 The purpose of the subjunctive in *me la lave* is not clear to me. Perhaps it conveys something like "let him with his own (honor) cleanse me of it," almost like a threat.
14 Though not common nowadays, *volver* can have the same meaning as *devolver*. "Restore" might be better than "return."
15 *trance* = "*momento crítico y decisivo por el que pasa alguien*" and "*último estado o tiempo de la vida, próximo a la muerte*"
16 The use of the imperfect here is expressive and sometimes not easily translated into English.
17 *dueña*: "*4. m. desus. Ayo, preceptor*"
18 *escudero*: "*4. m. Hombre que antiguamente se ocupaba de asistir y atender a un señor o persona distinguida*"
19 The *Miradero* is a high point where the *vega* is easily seen.
20 The dictionary says that *desvelos* is only a noun, but here it seems to be an adjective describing *amantes*. Perhaps *amantes* (which can be an adjective) describes *desvelos*, but in any case, I suspect that the intended meaning is the exertions/sleepless nights of those who pine for a lover.
21 This is jealousy in the more old-fashioned sense: "*Interés extremado y activo que alguien siente por una causa o por una persona*."
22 The play on *esperar*/*desesperar* is lost in English: hope/despair.
23 Maybe something like "only that it might burst forth again" would more accurately capture the intended meaning.
24 Again note the use of the imperfect here.
25 I believe this means "cursed their bad luck."
26 regalado: "*1. adj. Suave o delicado*"; "*2. adj. Placentero, deleitoso*"
27 "Mob" doesn't quite capture the idea of *tropel*: "*muchedumbre que se mueve en desorden ruidoso*."
28 *lazo*: "*3. m. Emblema del que forma parte una cinta doblada de manera conveniente y reglamentada*"
29 *pantalón bombacho* = "*pantalón ancho cuyas perneras, por su parte inferior, se ajustan a la pierna por encima del tobillo quedando abombadas*"
30 *Hierro* might refer to some other piece of iron weaponry.
31 Here she uses informal *tú* address; earlier she addressed him with the archaic honorific (*vos* plus second person plural).
32 The RAE dictionary indicates that this verb is always transitive, though the meaning here appears to be intransitive as in *subir*.
33 Perhaps the best word here is "collateral" in the sense of "something pledged as security for repayment of a loan": *prenda*: "*1. f. cosa mueble que se sujeta especialmente a la seguridad o cumplimiento de una obligación*."
34 In other words, we'll take my honor and your oath before a judge.
35 *justiciero* = "*que observa y hace observar estrictamente la justicia*"
36 *Lo vendido y el valor* appears to be a set phrase or a play on words.
37 In Spanish *confusión* retains notes of embarrassment, defeat (cf. Latin *confundere*).
38 The word *calzadas* appears to be the adjective *calzado* describing the spurs. Perhaps there is some connection to this meaning: "*4. adj. Heráld. Dicho de un escudo: Dividido por dos líneas que parten de los ángulos superiores del jefe y se encuentran en la punta, en contraposición a cortinado.*"
39 *valona*: "*6. f. Cuello grande y vuelto sobre la espalda, hombros y pecho, que se usó especialmente en los siglos XVI y XVII*"