

Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías By Federico García Lorca

1

The Goring and the Death

At five in the afternoon

At the stroke of five

The boy brought the white sheet

at five o'clock

A basket of lime all ready

at five o'clock

The rest was death and only death

at five o'clock

Wind carried off the cotton balls

at five o'clock

Rust scattered chrome and glass

at five o'clock

The dove and the leopard fought

at five o'clock

And a thigh with a desolate horn in it

at five o'clock

The bass strings began to thrum

at five o'clock

The bells of arsenic and smoke

at five o'clock

On the corners crowds of silence
at five o'clock
The bull alone with lifted heart
at five o'clock
When the icy sweat began to flow
at five o'clock
when iodine filled the bullring
at five o'clock
and death laid eggs in the wound
at five o'clock
At five o'clock
At the stroke of five

The bed is a coffin on wheels
at five o'clock
Bones and flutes sing in his ear
at five o'clock
The bull roared from his brow
at five o'clock
The room was a death rainbow
at five o'clock
The gangrene began from afar
at five o'clock
Trumpet of a lily in his green groin
at five o'clock
The wounds burned like suns

at five o'clock
and the mob broke the windows
at five o'clock
At five o'clock
Ay what terrible fives
It was five on all the clocks
In the afternoon shadows

2

The Spilled Blood

I don't want to look

Tell the moon to come
I don't want to behold
Ignacio's blood in the ring

I don't want to look

The moon shines clear
horse of quiet clouds
the gray bullring of dreams
with willows by the gates

I don't want to look
My memory is burning
Tell the jasmine flowers
so small and so white

I don't want to look

Cow of the old world
licked its sad tongue
over a snoutful of blood
spilled in the ring
and the bulls of Guisando
half dead and half stone
roared like two centuries
tired of treading the dirt

No

I don't want to look

Ignacio mounts the steps
with his death on his back
He was searching for dawn
but day wasn't dawning
He searches for his strong face
and gets lost in a dream
He searched for his fine body
and found his spilled blood
Don't tell me to look
I won't watch the blood
run slower and slower
the blood that glistens
on the rows and spills
on the leather and corduroy
of the thirsting crowd—
Who shouts at me to look
Don't tell me to look

His eyes didn't close
as the horns came near
but the terrible mothers
raised up their heads
And over the herds
the secret voices flew
shouting to the bulls in heaven
herders of pale fog

No prince in Seville
could rival him—
no sword like his sword
no heart so true
Like a river of lions
his prodigious strength
Like a marble torso
his etched poise
A hint of Andalusian Rome
gilded his head
and his laughter was a white nard
of salt and wit
How grand the bullfighter
as he moved in the ring
Such a man of the sierra
How sweet with the wheat
How hard with the spurs
How tender with the dew
How splendid at the fair
How fierce with the last
banderillas of the dusk

But now he sleeps
Now the moss and grass
open the flower of his skull
with their steady fingers
His blood comes singing
over marshlands and fields
slipping on the frozen horns

wavering soulless in the fog
stumbling on a thousand hoofs
like a long dark sad tongue
and pooling and dying
beside the Guadalquivir
river of the stars

O white wall of Spain
O black bull of sorrow
Or Ignacio's hard blood
O nightingale of his veins

No
I don't want to look
For no cup will hold it
no swallows will sip it
nor can it be cooled
by a shimmering frost
Nor can flood of lilies
or crystal or song
coat it in silver

No
I don't want to look

3

The Body Lies Here

The stone is a forehead of grieving dreams
with no curling water or icy cypresses
The stone is a shoulder for carrying time
and trees of tears and ribbons and planets

I have seen the gray rain chase the waves
that lift their gentle and riddled arms
so as not to be hunted by the heavy stone
that wastes the body and soaks up no
blood

For the stone takes the seeds and the
clouds
and the lark-skeletons and shadow-
wolves
but it gives no sound no glass and no fire
only the bullrings and some have no walls

Here on the stone lies noble Ignacio
It's over And what now Look at his body
Death has painted him with pale sulfurs
and cast him the head of a dark minotaur

It's over Rain leaks in through his mouth
Air in a frenzy flees his sagging chest
and Love—soaked in tears of snow—
warms up with the best of the herds

What did they say Silence and a stench
rest. Here is a body that lifts away
in the bright shape once a nightingale
and we watch it fill with infinite holes

Who rumples the shroud He does not speak truth
Here no one sings or cries in a corner
or digs in his spurs or scares the snake
Here all I want is a pair of round eyes
for watching this body that will not rest

Here I want to see the men with hard voices
the men who tame horses and master rivers
the men who rattle their skeletons and sing
with their mouths full of sunshine and flint

Here I want to see them looking at the stone
Looking at this body with its broken reins
I want them to show me the door that leads out
for this captain who is lashed to his death

I want them to teach me to cry like a river
with sweet mist and deep riverbanks
for bearing away his body Let it be lost
and never hear the deep bray of the bulls

Let it be lost on the round bullring of the moon
that poses as a girl and a suffering bull
Let it be lost in the songless night of the fish
and in the white thicket of frozen smoke

Let them not hide his face under handkerchiefs
that teach him to bear the death he holds
Go Ignacio Do not hear the hot roar
Sleep Fly Rest Even the sea dies

4

The Soul Is Gone

The bull doesn't know you or the fig tree
or the horses or the ants in your house
nor does the little boy or the afternoon
because you have died now forever

The spine of the stone doesn't know you
nor the black satin in which you lie wasted
Your untold memories don't know you
because you have died now forever

And the autumn will come with seashells
and misty grapes and gathering hills
but no one will want to look in your eyes
because you have died now forever

Because you have died now forever
like all other dead men on this earth
like all the dead men who lie forgotten
in a heap of annihilated dogs

No one knows you But I sing for you
I sing for your chiseled face and your grace
and the great seasoned age of your knowledge
your craving for death the savor of its mouth
and the sadness in your valiant joy

A long time will pass before another
Andalusian is born—if ever he is born—
so lucid and so rich in daring
I sing of his elegance with weeping words
and I remember a sad wind among the olives