

## FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA

SPAIN (1898–1936)

LANGUAGE: SPANISH

### LA GUITARRA

Empieza el llanto  
de la guitarra.  
Se rompen las copas de la madrugada.  
Empieza el llanto de la guitarra.  
Es inútil callarla.  
Es imposible callarla.  
Llora monótona  
como llora el agua,  
como llora el viento  
sobre la nevada.  
Es imposible callarla.  
Llora por cosas  
lejanas.  
Arena del Sur caliente  
que pide camelias blancas.  
Llora flecha sin blanco,  
la tarde sin mañana,  
y el primer pájaro muerto  
sobre la rama.  
¡O guitarra!  
Corazón malherido  
por cinco espadas.



Federico García Lorca is probably Spain's most famous poet and playwright. He was particularly inspired by the landscape and folklore of the Spanish countryside. Before he ever wrote poetry, García Lorca was a classical pianist. Music continued to play a role in his life as a poet. He often imitated the styles and rhythms of Spanish ballads and flamenco music. The first play he wrote, about an impossible love between a cockroach and a butterfly, was laughed off the stage. But over time he was recognized as a major figure in Spanish literature. He was assassinated in 1936 at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War for his liberal views. His writing was banned and then heavily censored in Spain until after the death of the fascist dictator Francisco Franco in 1975.

TRANSLATOR'S GLOSSARY		
WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
agua (n.)	a transparent liquid that is the basis of the fluids of living organisms	water
arena (n.)	a loose granular substance, typically pale yellowish brown, which forms a major constituent of beaches, riverbeds, the seabed, and deserts	sand, gravel
blancas (adj.)	the color of milk or fresh snow, due to the reflection of most wavelengths of visible light; the opposite of black	white, colorless, bleached, pale, pearly
blanco (n.)	a mark or point at which someone fires or aims	target, mark, bull's-eye, goal, objective, desire
caliente (adj.)	having a high degree of heat or a high temperature	hot, burning, heated, sizzling, scalding, scorching, steaming
callarla (v. + art.)	to cause something to become silent	to silence it, to silence her, to quiet it, to quiet her, to hush it, to hush her
camelias (n.)	evergreen eastern Asian shrubs related to the tea plant, grown for their showy flowers and shiny leaves	camellias
cinco (adj.)	a cardinal number equivalent to the sum of two and three; one more than four, or half of ten	five
como (conj.)	used in comparisons to refer to the extent or degree of something	as, like, just as, while, even as
copas (n.)	drinking glasses with a foot and a stem	goblets, chalices, glasses, cups, beakers
corazón (n.)	the organ regarded as the center of a person's thoughts and emotions, especially love or compassion	heart, love, soul, sentiment, ardor
cosas (n.)	objects that one need not, cannot, or does not wish to give a specific name to	things, belongings, stuff, possessions, objects, matters
de (prep.)	expressing the relationship between a part and a whole	of

WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
del (prep. + art.)	expressing the relationship between a particular part and a whole	of the
el (m. art.)	denoting one person or thing already mentioned	the
empieza (v.)	from the verb <i>empezar</i> —to come into being; begin or be reckoned from a particular point in time or space	starts, begins, initiates
es (v.)	from the verb <i>ser</i> —to be	it is, this is, that is
espadas (n.)	weapons with long metal blades and hilts with hand guards, used for thrusting or striking	swords, sabers, rapiers
flecha (n.)	a shaft sharpened at the front and with feathers or vanes at the back, shot from a bow	arrow
guitarra (n.)	a stringed musical instrument with a fretted fingerboard and six or twelve strings, played by plucking or strumming with the fingers or a plectrum	guitar
imposible (adj.)	not able to occur, exist, or be done	impossible, preposterous, unimaginable, hopeless, absurd
inútil (adj.)	not fulfilling or not expected to achieve the intended purpose or desired outcome	useless, futile, to no avail, pointless, fruitless, no good
la, las (f. art., singular / plural)	denoting one or more people or things already mentioned	the
lejanas (adj.)	far away in space or time	distant, far away, far off, far-flung, outlying
llanto (n.)	the shedding of tears	cry, howl, weeping, crying, sobbing, bewailing, bawl
llora (v.)	from the verb <i>llorar</i> —to shed tears	weeps, sheds tears, cries, she/it sobs, she/it cries, she/it wails
madrugada (n.)	the first appearance of light in the sky before sunrise	dawn, daybreak, early morning, dawning, sunrise, sun up, crack of dawn, first light
malherido (adj.)	harmed, damaged, or impaired	wounded, injured, hurt, pained

WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
mañana (n.)	the day after today; time to come	tomorrow, hereafter, future, destiny
monótona (adv.)	in a dull, tedious, and repetitious way; lacking in variety and interest	monotonously, repetitively, dully, tediously, drearily, flatly, mind-numbingly, mechanically
muerto (adj.)	no longer alive	dead, expired, departed, no more, lifeless
nevada (n.)	a fall of atmospheric water vapor frozen into ice crystals and forming a white layer on the ground	snowfall, blizzard, flurry, snow flurry
o (exclamation)	a lament or emotional statement of grief, awe, excitement, or surprise	oh
pájaro (n.)	a warm-blooded egg-laying vertebrate distinguished by the possession of feathers, wings, and a beak and (typically) by being able to fly	bird, fowl
pide (v.)	from the verb <i>pedir</i> —to request or have an intense feeling of longing for something, typically something that one has lost or has been separated from	yearns for, covets, longs for, asks for, hungers for, thirsts for, requests, calls for, craves, demands
por (prep.)	with the object or purpose of; identifying the agent performing an action	for, by, as a result of, by way of, by means of
primer (adj.)	coming before all others in time or order	first, initial, primary
que (conj.)	used to introduce a new clause	that, which
rama (n.)	the part of a tree that grows out from the trunk or from a bough	branch, bough, offshoot, tree branch
se rompen (v.)	from the verb <i>romperse</i> —to separate or cause to separate into pieces as a result of a blow, shock, or strain	break, crack, shatter, fracture, fragment, demolish, fall to bits, fall to pieces, are broken
sin (prep.)	in the absence of	without, in the absence of, deprived of, in need of, lacking, devoid of, minus
sobre (prep.)	physically in contact with and supported by a surface	on, touching the, supported by, upon

WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
sur (n.)	the southern part of the world or of a specified country, region, or town	south
tarde (n.)	the end of the day, either from noon to evening or from about 6:00 p.m. to bedtime	afternoon, evening, end of day, close of day, twilight, nightfall, dusk, sundown
viento (n.)	the perceptible natural movement of the air, especially in the form of a current of air blowing from a particular direction	wind, current of air, air, breeze, gust, draft, zephyr
y (conj.)	in addition to	and, along with, together with, plus

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## PHRASE BY PHRASE

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Llora flecha sin blanco, \_\_\_\_\_

la tarde sin mañana, \_\_\_\_\_

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¡O guitarra! \_\_\_\_\_

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## REFLECTING AND FINDING MEANING

Group Member Names:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Pick a scribe for the group, and work together to answer the questions.

What are the best parts of this translation, and why do you think they are good?

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What elements of the original poem did you lose in the translation? What did you manage to keep?

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Did you achieve something new with your translation, and if so, does it make sense in the poem or not?

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