

Preliminary Examination in Spanish
The Sonnet in the Spanish Golden Age

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Introduction

The sonnet was one of the hallmark poetic forms of the early modern period. Its roots in Spanish lie in the Italianate Petrarchan tradition of love poems, but, over time, it expanded into an extraordinary range of other genres and themes. Reflecting the breadth and diversity of the tradition, this anthology features thirty sonnets by eleven authors (men and women, canonical and lesser-known, from Spain and the Americas). Subjects explored include romantic love, religious devotion, political ambition, imperial expansion, and urban life, all intertwined with reflection on the nature of writing itself and the possibilities—and challenges—of poetic expression.

Recommended background reading (further specific reading is provided for each author, but the below are a good starting point for understanding the poetry of this period)

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- Terry, Arthur, *Seventeenth-Century Spanish Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993)
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Abbreviations

Auts = *Diccionario de autoridades* (1726–1739) (<https://apps2.rae.es/DA.html>)

Cov. = Sebastián de Covarrubias Horozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana* (1611) (<https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/del-origen-y-principio-de-la-lengua-castellana-o-romance-que-oy-se-va-en-espana-compuesto-por-el-0/html/>)

GCST = Grant & Cutler Spanish Texts (now Grant & Cutler Critical Guides to Spanish & Latin American Texts and Films): a series of books which contain commentaries and introductions to canonical Spanish texts, designed for university students

RAE = Diccionario de la Real Academia Española, <https://www.rae.es>

UP = University Press

Garcilaso de la Vega (Spain, c.1501–1536)



Fig. 1: *Obras de Garcilaso de la Vega con anotaciones de Fernando de Herrera* (Seville, 1580). Source: [Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes](https://www.bibliotecavirtualmiguelde Cervantes.org/)

Garcilaso's short life was seen by his early readers to be the epitome of the Renaissance masculine ideal of arms and letters, 'tomando ora [ahora] la espada, ora la pluma' as he wrote in his third eclogue. Born into an aristocratic family in Toledo, Garcilaso spent much of his life away from Spain in the service of Charles V (1500-1558) as soldier, courtier and ambassador during the period in which Spanish hegemony both in Europe and in its overseas empire was expanded and consolidated, participating in military campaigns against the Ottoman Turks and other European powers until he was mortally wounded in an incursion into southern France. Influential commentators such as Fernando de Herrera (fig. 1) co-opted Garcilaso's poetry, too, as an act of imperial service, elevating Spanish to the expressive heights of Greek and Latin, just as the classical poets had done for the Roman empire. The reality is more complex. Garcilaso's relationship with the court was sometimes uneasy – his brother was implicated in the revolt of the *comuneros* in the 1520s, and Garcilaso himself was briefly exiled to the

Danube in the 1530s – and his poetry was circulated privately during his lifetime, only coming to broader attention with the posthumous publication of *Las obras de Boscán y algunas de Garcilaso de la Vega* in 1543.

Garcilaso is now known as one of the foremost 'new poets' of sixteenth-century Europe. These ambitious literary innovators used foreign, unfamiliar language and forms, usually adapted from the Latin and Italian traditions, to explore the new social, psychological and political experiences of their period, often through the language of unrequited love. Together with his friend Juan Boscán (c. 1490-1542), he is the first to establish the Petrarchan sonnet as a Spanish poetic form. Many of his love poems were initially thought to arise from a supposed romance with a Portuguese noblewoman, Isabel Freire, but critics now recognise that most of the corpus resists such a biographical reading. Rafael Lapesa demonstrated that Garcilaso's style does evolve over time, initially working within the late medieval Spanish tradition of courtly love poetry, the *cancioneros*, before incorporating Italian and classical influences following his stays in Naples, but these different currents often coexist. As Mary Gaylord puts it, 'although often startling in their movement between the stark conceits and insistent redundancy of *cancionero* codes and the copious imagery of Latin and Italian material, [Garcilaso's sonnets] nonetheless achieve unprecedented collaboration among these traditions'.

1. 'Escrito 'stá en mi alma vuestro gesto' (Sonnet v)¹

Combining the themes of desire, imagination, and their textual representation, this sonnet acts as a primer for the reader of Garcilaso's poetry. Drawing on the language of spiritualised devotion to the beloved from the *cancionero* tradition, it also presents a more philosophical reflection on the relationship between perception and desire. Through these twin strands, the text raises a crucial question: to what extent is the poet's predicament about love itself, and to what extent is it a construction in the service of poetic creation?

Escrito 'stá en mi alma vuestro gesto²
y cuanto yo escribir de vos deseo:
vos sola lo escribistes; yo lo leo,
tan solo, que aun de vos me guardo en esto.³
En esto 'stoy y estaré siempre puesto,⁴ 5
que aunque no cabe en mí cuanto en vos veo,
de tanto bien lo que no entiendo creo,
tomando ya la fe por presupuesto.
Yo no nascí sino para quereros;
mi alma os ha cortado a su medida; 10
por hábito del alma misma os quiero;⁵
Cuanto tengo confieso yo deberos;
por vos nací, por vos tengo la vida,
por vos he de morir y por vos muero.⁶

2. 'En tanto que de rosa y d'azucena' (Sonnet xxiii)

This sonnet develops the classical topos of *carpe diem* ('seize the day'), in which a virginal woman is counselled to enjoy her beauty before it is ravished by age. The quatrains set out her beauty in Petrarchan terms, before the tercets introduce a temporal dimension through allusion to the changing seasons. Which raises the question: in what ways does the poet stand to gain from the woman's youth, if he is so concerned about its loss?

¹ Poems are taken from Garcilaso de la Vega, *Obra poética y textos en prosa*, ed. Bienvenido Morros (Barcelona: Crítica, 2007).

² **gesto** = rostro

³ According to the Aristotelian theory of perception, the *phantasy*, or imagination, only produces images of objects in their absence (*phantasma*); it cannot do so while they are present. Furthermore, Aristotle argues that our desire for anything not present to the senses must be mediated by an image of the desired object (*De anima* III.3-11). For another reflection on the role of phantasy in mediating the object of desire, see sonnet 28 in this collection.

⁴ 'La repetición de *en esto* al principio de este verso y al final del anterior se llama anadiplosis' (Herrera).

⁵ **hábito** is ambiguous here, and could refer to the item of clothing worn by monks or be read in the sense of 'custom', 'behaviour'. It has also been suggested that the poem can be read as a transposition of the monk's religious devotion (marked by allusions to the scriptorium (ll.1-4), contemplation (ll.5-8), and the habit (l.11)) onto the experience of erotic desire.

⁶ This repetition of the same phrase at the beginning of successive clauses is called anaphora. Here, it serves to emphasise the paradoxical notion that the love for his beloved gives the poet both life and death.

En tanto que de rosa y d'azucena⁷
se muestra la color en vuestro gesto,⁸
y que vuestro mirar ardiente, honesto,
con clara luz la tempestad serena;
Y en tanto que'l cabello, que'n la vena 5
del oro s'escogió, con vuelo presto
por el hermoso cuello blanco, enhiesto,⁹
el viento mueve, esparce y desordena:
coged de vuestra alegre primavera 10
el dulce fruto, antes que'l tiempo airado¹⁰
cubra de nieve la hermosa cumbre.¹¹
marchitará la rosa el viento helado,
todo lo mudará la edad ligera
por no hacer mudanza en su costumbre.¹²

3. 'A Dafne ya los brazos le crecían' (Sonnet xiii)

This sonnet dramatises a classical myth famously rendered in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (book 1, lines 452-524) and featured in many works of art, in which the enamoured god Apollo pursues the unenamoured nymph Daphne, who is transformed into a laurel tree to escape his assault. Laurel then becomes the symbol of Apollo, the sun god and god of poetry, and by extension of poets, who are often figured wearing laurel wreaths. In contrast to Ovid, Daphne's viewpoint is entirely eliminated here, and the moment of her metamorphosis is transformed through the first-person verb 'vi' into an ekphrasis: a literary description of a work of art. But who is the viewer?

A Dafne ya los brazos le crecían
y en luengos ramos vueltos se mostraban;¹³
en verdes hojas vi que se tornaban
los cabellos qu'el oro escurecían:¹⁴

⁷ The rose and the lily, representing the colours red and white, were the canonical markers of female beauty in this period, representing sensuality (red) and honesty or purity (white). **En tanto que**: the comparator conveys the Renaissance Neo-platonic understanding of human beauty as a reflection of the natural world.

⁸ **gesto** = rostro. The Petrarchan woman is never portrayed as a complete person, but rather as a series of body parts, each according to a prescribed metaphor.

⁹ **enhiesto**: from 'enhestar', 'to raise on end'.

¹⁰ **coged ... el dulce fruto**: the key marker of the *carpe diem* topos, an allusion to Ausonius' poem 'De Rosis Nascentibus', v.49 ('collige, virgo, rosas') and to Bernardo Tasso's *Gli amori*, fol. 65 'cogliete, o giovenette, il vago fiore / dei vostri più dolci anni'; **airado**: 'enojado',

¹¹ **cumbre** a reference both to the snow-capped mountain-top and to the ageing women's whitening hair.

¹² **su costumbre**: i.e. 'de la edad'. The only unchanging thing about age is that it changes everything.

¹³ **en luengos ramos vueltos**: 'convertidos en largos ramos'.

¹⁴ The comparison of the beloved's blonde hair to gold is a commonplace of Petrarchan love poetry. A hyperbole here describes Daphne's hair as so bright it makes gold look dark by comparison. The *descriptio*

de áspera corteza se cubrían
los tiernos miembros que aun bullendo 'staban;¹⁵
los blancos pies en tierra se hincaban
y en torcidas raíces se volvían.
Aquel que fue la causa de tal daño,¹⁶
a fuerza de llorar, crecer hacía
este árbol, que con lágrimas regaba.
¡Oh miserable estado, oh mal tamaño,
que con llorarla crezca cada día
la causa y la razón por que lloraba!

5

10

4. 'A Boscán desde la Goleta' (Sonnet xxxiii)¹⁷

The poem is one of what Richard Helgerson has termed the 'Tunis cycle' of Garcilaso's poems, written around the time he was participating in Charles V's defeat of the Moorish corsair Kheir-ed-Din in northern Africa in 1535. Goleta was a modern fortress near the ruins of ancient Carthage. The first word of the poem shows that it is framed as an epistolary sonnet, a missive from the lovesick poet to his faraway friend Boscán.

Boscán, las armas y el furor de Marte,¹⁸
que, con su propia fuerza el africano
suelo regando, hacen que el romano
imperio reverdezca en esta parte,
han reducido a la memoria el arte¹⁹
y el antiguo valor italiano,
por cuya fuerza y valerosa mano
África se aterró de parte a parte.²⁰
Aquí donde el romano encendimiento,

5

puellae or formulaic head-toe description of a woman's beauty is another Petrarchan motif, although here the body parts (arms, hair, limbs, feet) appear only as they change into something else.

¹⁵ The verb 'bullir' seems to correspond to the Latin 'trepidare', trembling or quivering.

¹⁶ 'Aquel' refers to Apollo, who makes the tree grow with his tears.

¹⁷ The title first appears in the 1569 edition of Garcilaso. This poem is not included in the first, 1543 edition of Garcilaso's poems.

¹⁸ There is an allusion here to the opening of the most canonical Latin epic, Virgil's *Aeneid*, arma virumque cano [I sing of arms and of the man], or, in a well-known alternative version going back to the Roman commentator Servius, 'horrentia Martis / arma virumque cano' [I sing of the bristling arms of Mars and of the man]. The man in question is Aeneas, the mythical founder of the city of Rome.

¹⁹ Reducir is a *cultismo*, a word originating in Latin (or occasionally Greek or other languages) which is not in common usage and is used for poetic effect. This example is a *cultismo semántico*, where a word is used not with its everyday meaning (in this period, to convince or to subdue) but with its original etymological Latin meaning, *reducere*, to bring or lead back.

²⁰ Here, not 'to terrorise' but 'to level to the ground', recalling the systematic destruction of the city of Carthage which ended the Punic Wars between the Carthaginian and Roman empires.

donde el fuego y la llama licenciosa²¹
solo el nombre dejaron a Cartago,
vuelve y revuelve amor mi pensamiento,
hiere y enciende el alma temerosa,
y en llanto y en ceniza me deshago.

10

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²¹ The 'licentious flame' refers to Dido, queen of Carthage, and her doomed love for Aeneas, in book four of the *Aeneid*. When Aeneas abandons her, she commits suicide, and on her funeral pyre curses her lover and his descendants, thus foreshadowing the later Punic Wars and the eventual devastation of the city she had founded.

The composition of poetry in Spanish in the early Americas dates back to the wars of conquest and continues unabated throughout the colonial period. Terrazas is the first Spanish poet whose name has survived to us to have been born in the viceroyalty of New Spain (i.e. an individual of [white] Spanish descent born in the Americas, known as a creole or *criollo*), a vast administrative territory comprising Mesoamerica with its capital in the viceregal court of Mexico City. His father was a conquistador who had fought alongside Hernán Cortés, and Terrazas seems to have spent his life in Mexico City. He soon acquired fame as a writer which brought him both accolades and trouble. Five of his sonnets feature in the manuscript anthology *Flores de varia poesía*, compiled in Mexico in 1577 but soon making its way to Spain, and his poetry was known to Peninsular authors such as Miguel de Cervantes, who wrote in *La Galatea* (1585), ‘Terrazas, tiene | el nombre acá y allá tan conocido’, suggesting a poetic reputation which had spread to both sides of the Atlantic. Not all of his literary output was so uncontroversial: a *pasquin* (a satirical composition, often attacking a particular individual and affixed anonymously to a prominent urban landmark) and a theatrical piece landed him in prison in 1574 together with his friend and fellow poet Fernán González de Eslava (c. 1534-1601), and he also intervened in a polemical poetic debate, whose context remains murky, about the relationship between the Law of Moses (i.e. the Jewish Law of the Old Testament) and the Law of Christ.

As with many colonial American (and indeed Spanish) authors of this period, Terrazas’s works were not printed during his lifetime, and more of them are missing than those that survive. The extant works comprise ten sonnets, a love letter in verse, the theological poems mentioned above, and fragments of a narrative epic poem on Cortés, *Nuevo mundo y conquista*. Those that survive show a man of wide culture, familiar with Latin verse and contemporary innovations in Italian poetry, and able to utilise and parody the conventions of Petrarchan and Neo-Platonic love to create surprising and sometimes provocative effects.

The comparison of the human body to a building goes back to classical antiquity. Petrarch, in his *canzone* ‘Tacer non posso’, compared the beloved Laura’s body to a beautiful prison for her soul made of precious materials. The notion that the human body is God’s masterpiece and that contemplation of its beauty can lead to an ascent towards contemplation of the higher beauty of the Creator is a key tenet of Renaissance Neo-Platonic thought. The Petrarchan *descriptio puellae*, however, usually contemplated a woman’s body from head to waist before jumping decorously to the feet. But here the poet is fixated on what lies in between...

¡Ay, basas de marfil, vivo edificio²
 obrado del artífice del cielo,
 columnas de alabastro que en el suelo³
 nos dais del bien supremo claro indicio!⁴
 ¡Hermosos chapiteles y artificio⁵ 5
 del arco que aún de mí me pone celo!
 ¡Altar donde el tirano dios mozuelo⁶
 hiciera de sí mismo sacrificio!
 ¡Ay, puerta de la gloria de Cupido,
 y guarda de la flor más estimada⁷ 10
 de cuantas en el mundo son ni han sido!
 Sepamos hasta cuándo estáis cerrada
 y el cristalino cielo es defendido
 a quien jamás gustó fruto vedado.

The Petrarchan dream poem, often used as an outlet for erotic wish fulfilment not realisable in the waking world of impossible love objects, here turns into a vividly imagined nightmare.

Soñé que de una Peña me arrojaba
 quien mi querer⁸ sujeto a sí tenía,

¹ Poems are taken from Raquel Chang-Rodríguez, ed., *“Aquí, ninfas del Sur, venid ligeras”: voces poéticas virreinales* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2008).

² *basa* = ‘El asiento de la columna’ (Cov.)

³ cf. the Biblical Song of Songs, which praises the bride’s legs as (in Fray Luis de León’s sixteenth-century translation) ‘columnas de mármol, fundadas sobre basas de oro fino’.

⁴ *bien supremo*: according to St Augustine, ‘The highest good, than which there is no higher, is God [...] All other good things are only from Him, not of Him’.

⁵ *chapitel*: ‘el remate de la torre alta, en forma de pirámide [...] cubre la cabeza y altura de la torre’ (Cov.)

⁶ *tirano dios mozuelo*: Cupid, who is often depicted as a mischievous boy.

⁷ *guarda*: here, probably meaning keyhole (Cov., *guardas*).

⁸ *querer* = voluntad. The hyperbaton (disrupted word order) in the first two lines means that the significance of the first line changes completely when the reader gets to the subject in line two, ‘quien’ (i.e. the beloved).

y casi ya en la boca me cogía
una fiera, que abajo me esperaba.
Yo, con temor, buscando procuraba 5
de dónde con las manos me tendría,
y el filo de una espada la una asía⁹
y en una yerbezuela la otra hincaba.
La yerba, a más andar, la iba arrancando;
la espada, a mí la mano deshaciendo, 10
yo, más sus vivos filos apretando.
¡Oh, mísero de mí, qué mal me entiendo,
pues huelgo¹⁰ verme estar despedazando
de miedo de acabar mi mal¹¹ muriendo!

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Írigo Madrigal, Luis, 'Sobre el soneto de Terrazas "¡Ay, basas de marfil, vivo edificio!"', *Anales de Literatura Hispanoamericana* (25), 1996, 105-122

⁹ **asir** = agarrar.

¹⁰ **holgar** = 'alegrarse de una cosa' (RAE).

¹¹ 'mal' can refer to any kind of trouble or illness, but is often used in love poetry to signify the *mal de amor*, love sickness.

Francisco de **Aldana** (Naples, 1537 – Morocco, 1578)



Fig. 1: view of Florence, in Hartmann Schedel, *Nuremberg Chronicle* (= *Liber chronicarum*), 1493, fol. 87.

Francisco de Aldana was one of the leading lights of the second generation of Spanish Renaissance poets. Born in 1537, probably in Naples, where his father served as captain in the forces of the viceroy Pedro de Toledo, he was brought up in the cultured world of Renaissance Italy. Like Garcilaso, and others (e.g. Cetina, Acuña), Aldana was a soldier-poet. After early years in Naples, and then a lengthy formative period at the humanist court of Cosimo de' Medici in Florence, he participated in military campaigns in Flanders, France, and North Africa. He relocated to Spain in 1576, and his last years were spent in the service of Philip II's nephew, King Sebastian of Portugal. In 1578, whilst leading the infantry in Sebastian's expedition in North Africa, he was killed, together with Sebastian and large numbers of Portuguese nobles, at the Battle of Alcazarquivir (Ksar el-Kebir) in Morocco.

Long neglected in later centuries, 'el divino capitán' was held in the highest regard by Golden Age writers of the stature of Cervantes, Lope, and Quevedo. Shaped by his immersion in the culture of Renaissance Italy, specifically Florence, Aldana's poetry betrays the influence not only of Petrarchism but also of Neoplatonic philosophy. Aldana's most famous poem, the 451-line epistle entitled 'Carta para Arias Montano sobre la contemplación de Dios y los requisitos della', is a 'profound and moving meditation on friendship as a pathway to Divine contemplation' (Weiss, 'Renaissance Poetry', p. 172). Aldana's other poems range from sonnets on love (and other subjects) to longer pieces on religious themes, classical mythology, warfare, and earlier Italian and Spanish works. As with Garcilaso, his poetry appeared only posthumously; Aldana's poems were collected by his brother, Cosme, and published more than a decade after his death in two parts dedicated to Philip II (Milan, 1589; Madrid, 1591).

7. '¿Cuál es la causa, mi Damón, que estando...?'¹

Aldana's most famous sonnet, this snatch of dialogue between two lovers is striking for its explicit references to reciprocated physical love (post-coital tristesse?), play with established dynamics (notably, female/male and body/soul), and the image of the sponge soaked with water in the second tercet.

'¿Cuál es la causa, mi Damón, que estando
en la lucha de amor juntos, trabados
con lenguas, brazos, pies, y encadenados
cual vid entre el jazmín se va enredando,²
y que el vital aliento ambos tomando
5 en nuestros labios, de chupar cansados,
en medio a tanto bien somos forzados
llorar y sospirar de cuando en cuando?'
'Amor, mi Filis bella, que allá dentro
10 nuestras almas juntó, quiere en su Fragua
los cuerpos ajuntar también tan fuerte
que no pudiendo, como esponja el agua,
pasar del alma al dulce amado centro,
llora el velo mortal su avara suerte.'³

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¹ The poem is taken from Francisco de Aldana, *Poesías castellanas completas*, ed. José Lara Garrido, Letras Hispánicas, 223 (Madrid: Cátedra, 2000).

² **vid/jazmín**: 'vine' and 'jasmine' intertwined, a simile for the lovers' entangled bodies and limbs.

³ **velo mortal**: the body as the soul's 'mortal veil'; water soaks into the sponge, but the body cannot fuse with the lover's soul, giving rise to another form of unfulfilled desire.

Fernando de **Herrera** (Spain, 1534–1597)

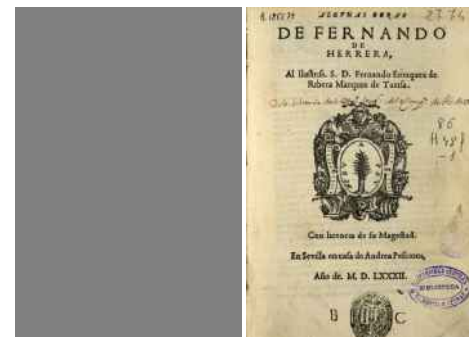


Fig. 1: 'Fernando de Herrera el Divino', in Francisco Pacheco, *El libro de descripción de verdaderos retratos de ilustres y memorables varones*, Seville, 1599.

Fig. 2: Fernando de Herrera, *Algunas obras* (Seville: Andrea Pescioni, 1582)

Born into a humble yet respectable family in 1534, Fernando de Herrera, who also came to be known as 'el Divino', spent all his life in the Andalusian city of Seville. He did not attend university, but he received a strong humanist education and, in taking minor orders (by 1566), secured a modest income. Resisting offers of higher station, he dedicated himself to study, developing a reputation as a scholar, linguist, and something of a polymath. In 'Seville's golden age of letters', he rose to prominence as a leading member of the city's literary and artistic circles, becoming most associated with the learned academy initially led by the humanist Juan de Mal Lara (other members included Francisco Pacheco, uncle to the painter of the same name, and Francisco de Medina).¹ Mal Lara's circle often met at the palace of their noble patron, the Count of Gelves, whose wife, Leonor, is held to have been the muse for Herrera's own love lyric.

One of the most influential writers of the second half of the sixteenth century, Herrera is famous both as a literary critic and as a poet in his own right. Following a 1574 study by El Brocense, Herrera's edition of and commentary on Garcilaso, the mammoth 691-page *Anotaciones* (1580), further cemented Garcilaso's status as a classic. It also sets out Herrera's own theory of poetry, and poetic language, providing an important stepping-stone to Góngora's elitist and aristocratic verse. Like other poets of the period, Herrera wrote in a variety of forms, and on a variety of subjects, but his songbook of love poems to 'Luz' (elsewhere, e.g. 'Lumbre', 'Estrella'), in imitation of Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, has best stood the test of time. Unusually, a volume of his poems—*Algunas obras* (Seville, 1582)—was printed in his own life, soon after the death of his patrons (an expanded volume was published in 1619, also in Seville, under the direction of Pacheco, the painter). Herrera wrote less poetry after the appearance of the 1582 volume, and his collection of endlessly revised papers disappeared on his death in 1597.

¹ Jonathan Brown, 'A Community of Scholars', in his *Images and Ideas in Seventeenth-Century Spanish Painting* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978), pp. 21–43 (at p. 25).

8. 'Osé y temí, mas pudo la osadía'²

The opening poem of *Algunas obras*, this prefatory sonnet sets the tone for Herrera's songbook. Drawing on conventions of courtly devotion (ascent, servitude), it establishes the theme of *osadía*, contrasting the daring of youth with the wisdom of experience. The poetic voice recognises the error of their younger ways, but can they choose a different path?

Osé y temí, mas pudo la osadía
tanto que desprecié el temor cobarde;
subí a do el fuego más me enciende y arde
cuanto más la esperanza se desvía.³

Gasté en error la edad florida mía, 5
ahora veo el daño, pero tarde,
que ya mal puede ser que el seso guarde
a quien se entrega ciego a su porfía.⁴

Tal vez pruebo —mas, ¿qué me vale?— alzar me 10
del grave peso que mi cuello oprime,
aunque falta a la poca fuerza el hecho.

Sigo al fin mi furor, porque mudarme
no es honra ya, ni justo que se estime
tan mal de quien tan bien rindió su pecho.

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² The poem is taken from Herrera, *Poesía castellana original completa*, ed. Cristóbal Cuevas, Letras Hispánicas, 219 (Madrid: Cátedra, 1997).

³ **subí a do el fuego más me enciende**: the notion of daring ascent towards fire recalls the classical tales of Icarus and Phaethon, Renaissance shorthand for the folly of (youthful) overambition.

⁴ **porfía**: 'Una instancia y ahínco en defender alguno su opinión o constancia en continuar alguna pretensión' (Cov.).

Valencia, Felipe, 'The Apollonian and Orphic Masculinity of Fernando de Herrera's *Algunas obras* (1582)', in his *The Melancholy Void: Lyric and Masculinity in the Age of Góngora* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021), pp. 87–123



Fig. 1: Velázquez (attrib.), *Luis de Góngora*, 1622 (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts)

Fig. 2: title-page of the Chacón MS (Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Ms. Res 45, p. 1)

Born in Córdoba, Góngora was the eldest son of the cultured Francisco de Argote and the classier Leonor de Góngora, from whom Luis took his surname. In 1576, a bachelor uncle paid for him to enter the University of Salamanca to study canon law, but Luis developed a reputation for frivolity and left Salamanca without a degree. He nevertheless inherited his uncle's position at Córdoba cathedral in 1585, frequently travelling north on cathedral business thereafter. In 1603, he visited Valladolid (home to the court in 1601–6), where his poetry attracted notice from grandee patrons close to Philip III's all-powerful *valido*, the duke of Lerma. In 1617, Lerma secured Góngora a post as royal chaplain. Góngora settled in Madrid in the hope of further preferment, but Lerma soon fell, and the poet's principal patrons were eliminated. Góngora spent the rest of his life in penury as a *pretendiente*, lodged not far from Lope de Vega. He hatched a plan to raise cash by selling his collected poems to a publisher. However, work was cut short by a stroke in 1625, and he died two years later, back in his family home in Córdoba.

A lifelong experimenter, Góngora composed in most poetic forms, high and low. His early work includes beautifully crafted sonnets and sentimental or humorous ballads. His fellow Andalusian Pedro de Espinosa drew heavily from Góngora, and the younger Quevedo (less so, Lope), in his influential anthology, *Flores de poetas ilustres de España* (1605). Changing gear in the early 1610s, Góngora honed a self-consciously erudite and challenging style characterised by highly wrought Latinisms, learned conceits, daring metaphors, cryptic allusions to mythology, and dense rhetoric. His major poems (the *Polifemo* and *Soledades*) unleashed a firestorm of polemic, shaping the course of poetry for decades. Góngora influenced not only admirers such as Calderón and Sor Juana (see below, n.27), but even detractors like Lope and Quevedo. Having fallen into disrepute in the eighteenth century, he was resuscitated by the French symbolists and the poets of Spain's Generation of 1927, so called in homage to the tercentenary of Góngora's death.

9. '¡Oh claro honor del líquido elemento!' (*Sonetos amorosos* XCIII, 1582)¹

A fine example of the Renaissance doctrine of imitation—notably, in its dialogue with Bernardo Tasso's sonnet 'O puro, o dulce, o fiumicel d'argento'—, this poem engages with the Orphic conceit that a river might carry a reflection of the beloved's face or the echo of their name down to the sea (see, for example, Garcilaso, *Égloga* III. 246–47).

¡Oh claro honor del líquido elemento!,²
 dulce arroyuelo de corriente plata,
 cuya agua entre la hierba se dilata
 con regalado son, con paso lento,
 pues la por quien helar y arder me siento, 5
 mientras en ti se mira, Amor retrata
 de su rostro la nieve y la escarlata
 en tu tranquilo y blando movimiento,
 vete como te vas, no dejes floja 10
 la undosa rienda al cristalino freno
 con que gobiernas tu veloz corriente,
 que no es bien que confusamente acoja
 tanta belleza en su profundo seno
 el gran señor del húmido tridente.³

10. 'Mientras por competir con tu cabello' (*Sonetos varios* LXVI, 1582)

An overt tribute to Garcilaso, this sonnet imitates the *carpe diem* theme and structure of Garcilaso's Sonnet XXIII 'En tanto que de rosa y de azucena' (above, no. 2 in this anthology), but pushes the envelope through hyperbole, *agudeza*, play with symmetry, and the final inflection into *desengaño*.

Mientras por competir con tu cabello
 oro bruñido al sol relumbra en vano,
 mientras con menosprecio en medio el llano
 mira tu blanca frente el lilio bello,
 mientras a cada labio, por cogello, 5
 siguen más ojos que al clavel temprano,
 y mientras triunfa con desdén lozano
 del luciente cristal tu gentil cuello,

¹ Headings and dates for the four Góngora sonnets are taken from the Chacón MS, prepared by the poet's friend Antonio Chacón Ponce de León for the Count-Duke of Olivares and completed in December 1628.

² l. 5 of Tasso's sonnet reads 'O primo honor del liquido elemento'; compare, also, l. 12 of Tasso's poem, which begins 'Ferma il tuo corso...' [Stop your flow...], with Góngora's *volta* in l. 9, 'vete como te vas'.

³ el gran señor del húmido tridente: Neptune, his traditional attribute being the trident, i.e. the sea.

goza cuello, cabello, labio y frente,⁴
antes que lo que fue en tu edad dorada 10
oro, lilio, clavel, cristal luciente
no sólo en plata o viola troncada
se vuelva, mas tú y ello juntamente
en tierra, en humo, en polvo, en sombra, en nada.

11. 'Grandes, más que elefantes y que abadas' (*Sonetos satíricos* CCXXIII, 1588)

A glittering burlesque of the evils of the court, this sonnet develops a series of paradoxical, surreal images based on flashing puns. It drives, through its accumulation of laddish wordplay and jibes, towards the punch in the final line.

Grandes, más que elefantes y que abadas,
títulos liberales como rocas,
gentiles hombres sólo de sus bocas,
illustri cavaglier, llaves doradas;⁵
hábitos—capas, digo, remendadas—, 5
damas de haz y envés, viudas sin tocas,
carrozas de ocho bestias (y aun son pocas,
con las que tiran y que son tiradas);⁶
catarriberas, ánimas en pena,
con Bártulos y Abades la milicia, 10
y los derechos con espada y daga;⁷
casas y pechos, todo a la malicia;
lodos con perejil y hierbabuena:
esto es la Corte. ¡Buena pro les haga!⁸

12. 'Menos solicitó veloz saeta' (*Sonetos morales* LIV, 29 de agosto de 1623. *De la brevedad engañosa de la vida*)

Much later, and dated to the day, this sonnet engages in moral introspection on the nature of human life, fleeting and deceptive. It is addressed to Góngora's poetic *alter ego*, Licio,

⁴ **goza**: the imperative is a hallmark of the *carpe diem* tradition (see Horace, *Odes*, 1.11.8); a different approach to the subject is found in Góngora's ballad '¡Que se nos va la Pascua, mozas!', also from 1582.

⁵ *gentilhombres de la boca* and *caballeros de la llave dorada* were 'gentlemen of the royal chamber' (Cov.).

⁶ **hábitos**: the uniform of knights decorated with the prestigious cross of e.g. the order of Santiago. **sin toca**: 'en cabeza loca, poco dura toca' (Correas); the *toca* or headscarf was the emblem of the matron or married woman. **carrozas**: 'four-horse coaches'; **ocho** thus underlines the animalistic nature of the passengers inside.

⁷ **catarriberas**: 'retrievers' (dogs, in hunting), i.e. *pretendientes*, hangers-on waiting for preferment. **Bártulos y Abades**: Bartolus of Saxoferrato and the Abbot of Palermo (Panormitanus), authorities on civil and canon law; soldiers become embroiled in lawsuits, while lawyers have recourse to arms.

⁸ **casa a la malicia**: 'la que está edificada en forma que no se puede dividir para haber en ella dos moradores; así evitaban la obligación de alojar a los criados del rey' (Cov.). **perejil** and **yerbabuena**: 'parsley and mint', slang euphemisms for excrement. **Buena pro les haga**: 'much good may it do them.'

and is memorable for its compressed Latinate opening, its use of metaphors and symbols drawn from the classical world, and the devastatingly lucid chain in the closing lines.

Menos solicitó veloz saeta
destinada señal que mordió aguda,
agonal carro por la arena muda
no coronó con más silencio meta,
que presurosa corre, que secreta 5
a su fin nuestra edad.⁹ A quien lo duda,
fiera que sea de razón desnuda,
cada sol repetido es un cometa.¹⁰
¿Confiésalo Cartago, y tú lo ignoras?¹¹
Peligro corres, Licio, si porfías 10
en seguir sombras y abrazar engaños.
Mal te perdonarán a ti las horas,
las horas que limando están los días,
los días que royendo están los años.

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⁹ **agonal**: relating to the Agonalia, a festival/games in honour of Agonius/Janus, celebrated in Rome (see Cov., on 'Agonales fiestas', s.v. *agonia*). **meta**: another Latinism, 'the conical columns set in the ground at each end of the Roman Circus, the goal, turning-post' (Lewis & Short). The image of speed corresponds to the title-word *brevedad*; the idea of silence, to *engañosa*.

¹⁰ **cometa**: a harbinger of doom.

¹¹ **Cartago**: the great city of Carthage, razed to the ground by the Romans, was Antiquity's finest *exemplum* of mutability, transience, and the vanity of power and greatness.

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<https://www.upf.edu/todogongora/> [an online resource with up-to-date criticism and reliable online versions of the complete works]

Félix **Lope** de Vega y Carpio (Spain, 1562–1635)

Nicknamed by his contemporaries 'el fénix de los ingenios', the phoenix of wits, referring to the mythical and unique bird which could regenerate itself from its ashes, Lope was famed from his own day for his prodigious capacity for literary invention, and self-reinvention. Born in Madrid of relatively humble origins, Lope was one of the first truly professional writers of his age. While most authors exercised writing as a pastime – at least in principle – Lope was able to make a living not through nobility of birth, or entering the Church, the university, the army or the court, but directly through his own pen and intellect, although this didn't stop him seeking patronage too. Lope was, and is, best known as a playwright: his youth coincided with the creation of Spain's first commercial theatres, the *corrales*, and he was widely seen as the inventor of a new form of drama, the *comedia nueva*, which remained predominant throughout the Golden Age. However, he wrote prolifically in multiple genres, composing three epic poems, prose fiction, semi-autobiography, letters and shorter poetry of all kinds throughout his long career.

As Jonathan Thacker and Alexander Samson put it, 'the confusion and conflation of Lope's life and art in his own work is systematic and deliberate', and this is nowhere more apparent than in his lyric poetry. In Lope's youth, his ballads (*romances*) were widely read and performed, in which he created different personas (a lovelorn shepherd, a Moorish warrior) to voice aspects of his scandalous early love life, which had resulted in him being exiled from Madrid for libel when his relationship with a married actress, Elena Osorio, came to a stormy end. The sonnets are the work of a more mature and established poet keen to secure a lasting reputation. Those represented here come from his three major anthologies: the *Rimas* (1602), some two hundred love poems, the *Rimas sacras* (1614), poems of divine love, and the *Rimas humanas y divinas del licenciado Tomé de Burguillos* (1634), in which he again creates an alter ego, this time the antiheroic, impoverished graduate (*licenciado*) Tomé, who is hopelessly in love with a down-to-earth washerwoman, Juana. One further sonnet comes not from an anthology but from a *comedia* – a reminder of the rich cross-over between plays and poetry in the period, and of the fact that even the most immediate 'yo' of love lyric is a carefully constructed performance.

¿pero cómo te digo que me esperes,
si estás para esperar los pies clavados?

16. 'Dice como se engendra amor, hablando como filósofo'¹⁶

The *Rimas humanas y divinas* are part of Lope's *ciclo de senectute*, works of his old age, which are marked by illness, bereavements and disappointments, but not without humour. This sonnet parodies Garcilaso's sonnet VIII but also some of Lope's own earlier work. Tomé is expounding according to the best scientific and Neoplatonic principles of his day the corporeal experience of falling in love – but it appears that his listener has other things on her mind.

Espíritus sanguíneos vaporosos
suben del corazón a la cabeza
y saliendo a los ojos su pureza
pasan a los que miran amorosos.¹⁷

El corazón opuesto los fogosos
rayos sintiendo en la sutil belleza
como de ajena son naturaleza¹⁸
inquiétase en ardores congojosos.

Estos puros espíritus que envía
tu corazón al mío, por extraños
me inquietan, como cosa que no es mía.

Mira, Juana, qué amor, mira qué engaños,
pues hablo en natural filosofía
a quien me escucha jabonando paños.

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chapter 5, Arantza Mayo, "'Quien en virtudes emplea su ingenio...': Lope's Religious Poetry'; chapter 6, Isabel Torres, 'Outside In: the Subject(s) at Play in *Las rimas humanas y divinas de Tomé de Burguillos*'

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¹⁶ Lope de Vega, *Rimas humanas y divinas del licenciado Tomé de Burguillos*, ed. Ignacio Arellano (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2021), no. 19.

¹⁷ Essentially, warm blood passes from beloved's heart, to her head, and sends out warm rays through her eyes to those of her admirer (in this period, the eyes were thought to be active as well as passive organs, sending out rays which could cause a powerful emotional effect in those they encountered). Lovers were often said to be able to communicate in this way from eye/heart/soul to soul, without the use of words.

¹⁸ Hyperbaton: 'como son de ajena naturaleza' (i.e. the rays have reached the lover's heart, where they are detected as a foreign force and cause 'ardores congojosos').



Fig. 1: Cecilia del Nacimiento, *Tratados místicos* (1603) (MSS/3766, Biblioteca Nacional de España). Source: Biblioteca Digital Hispánica (<https://www.bne.es/es/catalogos/biblioteca-digital-hispanica>)

The sixteenth century in Spain was a period of intense religious devotion and debate; while the Protestant Reformation took hold across much of Europe, Iberia witnessed its own wave of Catholic reforms and revivals. Among those most notable were the reforms of the Carmelite religious order led by Teresa of Ávila and San Juan de la Cruz, and the associated revival of Catholic mysticism. It was against this background that Cecilia Sobrino Morillas, the youngest daughter of a highly literate and religious family, was born and raised. She was educated first by her mother, an accomplished linguist, artist, and musician, and later at the Monasterio de las Huelgas Reales in Valladolid, where her father was secretary to the university. Among her parents' nine children, four entered the disclated Carmelite religious life, including Cecilia and her sister, María. Together, they joined the Convento de la Concepción de Nuestra Señora del Carmen in Valladolid in 1588, twenty years after it was founded by Teresa as part of her reforms, taking the names Cecilia del Nacimiento and María de San Alberto. In 1600, Cecilia was sent to assist the founding of a new convent in Calahorra, as part of the ongoing extension of Teresian reforms. In 1602 she was elected as prioress but was removed from her position due to her correspondence with Fray Tomás de Jesús, her spiritual advisor, who had been called back to Rome and erroneously understood to have abandoned the order. She was re-elected as prioress in 1608 but was unable to finish her term due to ill health, and returned to Valladolid in 1612. She remained there until her death in 1646.

Cecilia's writings, which include both poetry and prose, are influenced by those of Teresa and San Juan and their experience of mystical union with God. Drawing on her biblical knowledge, especially the Song of Songs, her works express a direct relationship between herself and Jesus, through the trope of marriage with Christ as spouse. Written mostly for her male spiritual advisors, herself, and her convent sisters, her works were not originally intended for a wider reading public and were not published in her day. After her death, they were largely forgotten, but re-entered circulation in the twentieth century (albeit initially ascribed to San Juan himself). In addition to being a poet, she was also an accomplished painter, and her works are kept in her convent to this day.

17. 'Entre tantas saetas con que llaga' (DC587)¹

Here, Cecilia develops the mystical image of the soul being pierced by the love of God, which overcomes all worldly fortunes. Drawing on the language of courtly love, she describes the experience as one of simultaneous pleasure and pain.

Entre tantas saetas con que llaga
mi corazón fortuna, que no queda²
lugar do nueva herida le suceda,³
hace la del amor sensible llaga.⁴
Salud no busca el alma, que aunque haga 5
por sanar de sus males cuanto pueda,
tan dulce es el dolor que en esta queda⁵
que apostase la rompe y se la estraga.⁶
Mas tan secreta está que no parece 10
y el mismo amor la va desconociendo,
resurtiéndola el tiro juntamente.⁷
Fortuna, suspendida en esta fuente,⁸
mira correr mi llanto, atribuyendo
a Dios la causa, y no se ensoberbece.⁹

18. '¡Oh peregrino, hiende el alma mía...!' (DC588)

Cecilia expresses the paradoxical joy of mystical union with Christ, experienced through a process of *kenosis*, or self-emptying. The flame of Christ's love both guides and purges her desires; as he died and was resurrected, so his love will consume and renew her.

¡Oh peregrino, hiende el alma mía,¹⁰
que solo sin resabios ni recelos

¹ Poems are taken from *Obras completas de Cecilia del Nacimiento*, edited by José Díaz Cerón (DC, here p. 587).

² **fortuna**: used here in the sense of 'fate'. Unlike fortune, which is capricious, the love of God causes pain but is ultimately healing.

³ **do**: poetic form of 'donde'.

⁴ This line is an instance of hyperbaton: 'hace la [saeta] del amor sensible llaga'. The image of the piercing of the heart evokes Teresa of Ávila's account of her transverberation, in which her heart was pierced by a 'dart of love' ('saeta de amor') held by an angel: 'Veía un ángel cabe mí hacia el lado izquierdo, en forma corporal... No era grande sino pequeño, hermoso mucho, el rostro tan encendido, que parecía de los ángeles muy subidos... Veíale en las manos un dardo de oro largo, y al fin del hierro me parecía tener un poco de fuego. Éste me parecía meter por el corazón algunas veces y que me llegaba a las entrañas; al sacarle, me parecía las llevaba consigo y me dejaba toda abrasada en amor grande de Dios' (*Vida*, ch. 19).

⁵ **esta** = el alma;

⁶ **aposta**: 'deliberately'; **estraga**: 'arruinar, destruir, echar a perder, dañar y causar ruina y perjuicio' (Auts). The subject of this line is, as in 1.7, 'el dolor'.

⁷ **resurtiéndole** (resurtir): 'Dicho de un cuerpo: retroceder de resultas de un choque con otro' (RAE).

⁸ **suspendido**: 'vale también detener, o parar por algún tiempo' (Auts)

⁹ **ensoberbecer**: from *soberbia* ('pride'), 'to make proud'.

¹⁰ **hender**: 'dividir, rajar, o separar alguna cosa' (Auts)

puedes matar mi sed, quitar mis duelos
y convertir mi llanto en alegría!¹¹

Pues, eres tú mi luz, mi guarda y guía¹² 5
que tengo yo en la tierra y en los cielos,¹³
no quiero medios, no quiero consuelos,
fuera de ti de todo me desvía.

En soledad, de todo enajenada,
desnuda de mi ser y de mi vida, 10
para ser como fénix renovada,¹⁴
en tu amorosa llama y encendida
me arrojo, que si fuere allí quemada,
seré cual salamandra renacida.¹⁵

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¹¹ A reference to Psalm 29.12 [30.11] 'Thou hast turned for me my mourning into joy' (Douay Rheims).

¹² See San Juan de la Cruz, 'Noche oscura del alma', 'ni yo miraba cosa, sin otra luz y guía, sino la que en el corazón ardía' (ll.13–15).

¹³ A reference to the Lord's Prayer (*Pater noster*) 'sicut in caelo, et in terra' ('on earth as it is in heaven').

¹⁴ **fénix**: The phoenix was said to die in flames and to rise reborn from its own ashes. In Christian imagery, the phoenix symbolises the resurrection of Christ and the immortality of the human soul.

¹⁵ **salamandra**: In this period, salamanders were thought to be unaffected by fire.

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Francisco de **Quevedo** Villegas (Spain, 1580–1645)



Fig. 1: Velázquez (attrib.), *Francisco de Quevedo*, c. 1631–35 (Madrid, Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan)

Fig. 2: Francisco de Quevedo, *Obras* (Brussels: Francisco Foppens, 1660), frontispiece: Parnassus

Born in Madrid to middle-class parents who worked at court, Quevedo spent much of his life in and around circles of power. His fortunes, however, oscillated wildly. Having first made his mark on the literary scene as a young upstart in Valladolid in the early 1600s, he travelled as a diplomat in the service of the viceroy Osuna in Sicily and Naples in the 1610s before falling out of favour after the collapse of the *privado* Lerma's regime in 1618, and the death of Philip III in 1621. Periods of exile from Madrid followed in the early 1620s but flattery of the new regime, and the new *valido*, Olivares, saw a return to favour, and, by the early 1630s, a starring role in the court of Philip IV as *de facto* poet laureate. Defection to an opposing camp and unfettered criticism of Olivares's tyranny then led to arrest and imprisonment in the late 1630s and early 1640s. When Olivares fell in 1643, Quevedo was released; in 1644, he withdrew to his private estate to prepare his poetry for publication, but his health was broken, and he died, in 1645, before completing the project.

Quevedo was once famously described, by Borges, as 'menos un hombre que una dilatada y compleja literatura', and his range as a writer is huge, spanning philosophical reflection and beautiful love lyric, political commentary and devotional verse, biting satire and stomach-churning grotesque. The first printed edition of his collected poetic works (*El Parnasso español*, 1648) was structured according to the classical muses (see Fig. 2, from a later edition of his wider *Obras*). The four sonnets chosen here are drawn from three muses (Polymnia, Erato, Thalia); together, they give a flavour of Quevedo's range of subject and tone (and reference), his remarkable facility with language, his ability to refresh commonplace (poetic, philosophical, etc.), and the demands placed by his poetry (and prose) on the reader's intellect and imagination.

19. 'Representase la brevedad de lo que se vive y cuán nada parece lo que se vivió' (GS63, B2)¹

This sonnet on the transience of life demonstrates Quevedo's ability to energise the oldest of commonplaces through hyperbole and conceits. It also offers an example of his talent for twisting the most everyday vocabulary into memorable shapes.

«¡Ah de la vida!»... ¿Nadie me responde?
 ¡Aquí de los antaños que he vivido!
 La Fortuna mis tiempos ha mordido;
 las Horas mi locura las esconde.²
 ¡Que sin poder saber cómo ni adónde
 la salud y la edad se hayan huido!
 Falta la vida, asiste lo vivido,
 y no hay calamidad que no me ronde.
 Ayer se fue; mañana no ha llegado;
 hoy se está yendo sin parar un punto:
 soy un fue, y un será, y un es cansado.
 En el hoy y mañana y ayer, junto
 pañales y mortaja, y he quedado
 presentes sucesiones de difunto.

20. 'Afectos varios de su corazón fluctuando en las ondas de los cabellos de Lisi' (GS269, B449)

Leander drowned one stormy night when swimming the Hellespont to visit his lover Hero; Icarus plummeted to his death when he flew too close to the sun on wax wings; the Phoenix is endlessly reborn in fire; Midas died of hunger when he was granted his wish that all he touched turn to gold; Tantalus was eternally tortured by insatiable thirst. All this is inspired by the moment Lisi unties her hair...

En crespa tempestad del oro undoso,
 nada golfos de luz ardiente y pura
 mi corazón, sediento de hermosura,
 si el cabello deslaza generoso.³
 Leandro, en mar de fuego proceloso,
 su amor ostenta, su vivir apura;
 Ícaro, en senda de oro mal segura,

¹ Titles are by José Antonio González de Salas (GS), Quevedo's friend and first editor. The parenthesis gives positions within *El Parnasso español* (here, p. 63) and also José Manuel Blecuá's edition of *Obra poética* (no. 2).

² ¡Ah de la vida!: from the colloquial phrase *¡Ah de la casa!*, 'is there anybody there?'. **Aquí de los antaños**: from *aquí de*, 'ho there, over here!', to rally help, as in *¡aquí de la justicia!*, *¡aquí de los nuestros!*, etc.

³ For the sense of this quatrain, read ll. 1–4 in reverse. **mi corazón**: the speaker's heart is the subject of the verbs that follow in ll. 5–14, in apposition to the mythological figures of Leander, Icarus, etc. (GS).

arde sus alas por morir glorioso.⁴
 Con pretensión de fénix, encendidas
 sus esperanzas, que difuntas lloro,
 intenta que su muerte engendre vidas.
 Avaro y rico y pobre, en el tesoro,
 el castigo y la hambre imita a Midas,
 Tántalo en fugitiva fuente de oro.

10

21. 'Amor constante más allá de la muerte' (GS281, B472)

Here, the hyperbole of undying desire, a commonplace of Renaissance love poetry, is expressed with stunning formal, metrical, and rhetorical perfection. The poem links up with the Neoplatonic idea of disembodied love and contains notable examples of Quevedo's mastery of paradox.

Cerrar podrá mis ojos la postrera
 sombra que me llevare el blanco día,
 y podrá desatar esta alma mía
 hora a su afán ansioso lisonjera;
 mas no de esotra parte en la ribera
 dejará la memoria en donde ardía:
 nadar sabe mi llama el agua fría,
 y perder el respeto a ley severa.⁵
 Alma a quien todo un dios prisión ha sido,
 venas que humor a tanto fuego han dado,
 médulas que han gloriosamente ardido:
 su cuerpo dejará, no su cuidado;
 serán ceniza, mas tendrá sentido;
 polvo serán, mas polvo enamorado.

5

10

22. 'A un hombre de gran nariz' (GS416, B513)

'Los epigramatarios griegos tropezaron mucho en las narices grandes, y así fatigaron con no poca agudeza a los narigudos muchas veces' (GS). Like many of the epigrams in Thalia, this one depends on accumulation, line-by-line piling up of conceits linked by anaphora.

Érase un hombre a una nariz pegado,
 érase una nariz superlativa,
 érase una alquitara medio viva,
 érase un peje espada mal barbado,
 era un reloj de sol mal encarado,

5

⁴ **arde**: 'Quema. Hácele verbo activo' (GS).

⁵ **llevare**: future subjunctive. **hora a su afán ~ lisonjera**: the moment that 'soothes the soul's tormented desire', i.e. death. **de esotra parte**: 'on the other side', i.e. of the Lethe, river of Oblivion. **ley severa**: i.e. of forgetting.

érase un elefante boca arriba,
 érase una nariz sayón y escriba,
 un Ovidio Nasón mal narigado.⁶
 Érase el espolón de una galera,
 érase una pirámide de Egipto,
 las doce tribus de narices era;
 érase un naricísimo infinito,
 frisón archinariz, caratulera,
 sabañón garrafal, morado y frito.⁷

10

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⁶ **sayón y escriba**: the Jewish Scribes and Pharisees were called executioners (*sayones*) of Christ; the phrase locates this poem in the ambit of anti-Jewish invective (*doce tribus*, the twelve tribes of Israelites, I. 11).

⁷ **frisón**: 'cart-horse, Frisian', noun as adjective. **caratulera**: from *carátula*, 'Carnival mask', with its exaggerated long nose. **garrafal**: from *garrafa*, 'Vaso [...] de cuello largo y angosto' (Cov.).

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Leonor de la Cueva y Silva (Spain, 1611–1705)



Fig. 1: Titian, *Flora*, c.1515 (Florence: Galleria degli Uffizi). Source: www.artstor.org

Little is known of the biographical details of the Spanish poet Leonor de la Cueva y Silva. Born in 1611 in Medina del Campo, Spain, she was one of at least five children of Agustín de la Rúa and Leonor de Silva, who were members of the minor nobility. Her parents' social privilege likely gave Leonor access to an education that allowed her to cultivate her literary talents. Much of what we know of her background is taken either from legal documentation concerning her brothers' military and ecclesiastical careers, or from the dedications of her own poetry. The position of her family in the social, political, and cultural elite of early modern Spain is seen in Leonor's uncle, Francisco de la Cueva y Silva. A poet, playwright, and lawyer, he was a contemporary and friend of Lope de Vega and Quevedo (the urban legend, however, that he was poisoned by the Count Duke of Olivares in

1621, is unfounded). His death in 1628 was marked by eulogies by both poets, as well as one by his young niece, her first datable poem.¹ There is little concrete evidence about Leonor's personal life. Historian Sharon Voros has suggested that she married Baltasar Blásquez de Frías, and died in March 1705, leaving as her only heir her nephew, Juan de Soto.

Leonor's poetry covers a wide range of styles and forms. Many of her poems can be categorised as what we now know as 'occasional poetry', written (either by commission or voluntarily) to commemorate public or private occasions such as festivals, births, weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, or deaths. Two funeral poems were published during her lifetime, one on the death of Isabel de Borbón ('Este grandioso túmulo erigido', 1645) and one on the death of María Luisa de Borbón ('La flor de Francia, Lis, que a nuestra España', 1689). In addition to her two published poems, she left a manuscript of 54 poems and one play, a 'comedia de capa y espada', *La firmeza en la ausencia*. There is no record of any public performance of the play, and it may have been intended for private reading among the literary circles of Medina del Campo, in which several scholars have postulated that Leonor participated. Leonor most likely wrote more than her known poems and plays, and further texts may yet well be discovered.

¹ Lope de Vega, 'Medina en cuyo campo solamente'; Quevedo, 'Túmulo de don Francisco de la Cueva y Silva, Grande Jurisconsulto y abogado' (Melpómene, Sonnet XVI); Leonor de la Cueva y Silva, 'Éste que ves, que cubre blanca losa'.

23. 'Introduce un pretendiente, desesperado de salir con su pretensión, que con el favor de un poderoso la consiguió muy presto'² (Sonnet III)

A critical observation of the workings of patronage, and the rapid change of fortunes it entails, through the metaphor of a shipwrecked sailor. Having fallen from grace alongside his patron, he clings to political favour to ride out the storm. As Dian Fox comments, however, the client here 'is not the architect of his own destiny, but is portrayed as an insignificant and unworthy piece of flotsam on the ebbing and flowing tide of political favour' (Fox, 43).

Sin esperanza en su tormento esquivaba
un navegante, por el mar perdido,³
de mil olas furiosas combatido,
rota la nave, al agua se derriba;
y aunque su furia del sentir le priva,⁴ 5
se anima contra el mar embravecido
y sale al puerto de una tabla asido,⁵
muerta su pena ya, su gloria viva.
¡Ay débil pretensión, que ansina eres⁶
navegante en un mar de mil temores! 10
Rota la nave, muerta la esperanza,
al agua del olvido echarte quieres,
donde, asiendo la tabla de favores,
sales triunfante al puerto de bonanza.⁷

² Texts are taken from Olivares and Boyce, *Tras el espejo la musa escribe*. Numbers in parenthesis refer to their location within this collection. Although a 'pretendiente' in this period could refer to a suitor, throughout her poetry Cueva prefers the term 'galán' for her lovesick subjects. The context of the poem suggests that this is a political, not amorous, suitor.

³ The use of the ship as metaphor is common in Golden Age literature (in part due to Spain's navigational prowess in this period). 'It is often used as a metaphor for the state, with all its connotations of control and of navigation by reference to the stars [i.e. the highly placed patron]' (Fox, 42).

⁴ Hyperbaton: 'aunque su furia [de las olas] le priva del sentir'. The waves almost overpower the man, depriving him of 'sentir' (consciousness).

⁵ **sale al** here in the sense of 'entering' (as it is used in the theatre to mean to enter the stage); **tabla** 'se toma también por alguna pequeña parte del navío, u otra embarcación derrotada'. Here and in l.13, Cueva plays with the polysemy of the word as 'plank' or 'table' (which may suggest the comforts of food and security offered by the patron).

⁶ **ansina**: 'así'

⁷ **bonanza** 'tranquilidad, serenidad y sosiego en la mar, contraria a la borrasca y tormenta, a que comunmente suele seguirse' (Auts)

24. 'Ya ha salido el invierno: ¡albricias, flores' (Sonnet XXIII)⁸

On its surface, a simple sonnet celebrating the arrival of spring. By association, the evocation of the renewal of the natural world also points to the revival of human love and thus to a celebration of feminine creativity, both physical and poetic. Its celebration of the spring triumphing over winter inverts the *carpe diem* topos seen earlier in this collection.

Ya ha salido el invierno. ¡Albricias, flores,⁹
árboles, fuentes, prados y arroyuelos!,
que del rigor de sus helados velos
os saca el mayo derramando amores.
Ya os cantan dulcemente ruiseñores 5
llenos de gusto y libres de desvelos,¹⁰
y liberales los empíreos cielos,
os dan la variedad de mil colores.
Ya compone los bellos cuadros Flora,¹¹
desafiando el arte a la natura, 10
a quien vence la hermosa jardinera¹²
que por la vista alegre y enamora,
el alma suspendiendo en la hermosura
de la verde y galante primavera.

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⁸ This opening line is reminiscent of the Song of Songs 2.11-13, which associates the coming of spring with the encounter between bride and bridegroom: 'Ya ves; pasó la lluvia y el invierno fuese. Los capullos de las flores se muestran en nuestra tierra; el tiempo del cantar es venido; oída es la voz de la tórtola en nuestro tiempo [...] Por ende, levántate, Amiga mía, hermosa mía, y ven' (trans. Fray Luis de León).

⁹ Here, we see the inversion of the temporal progression found in the *carpe diem* poems (see sonnets 2 and 10 in this collection). Where Garcilaso and Góngora depict the linear progression from spring (i.e. youth) to winter (i.e. old age), Leonor emphasises the circularity of time, and the triumph of spring over winter.

¹⁰ **ruiseñor**: the nightingale is known for its harmonious song, and was often depicted as a sign of the coming spring (e.g. Homer's *Odyssey* 19.519). It was also said not to sleep while it sits on its eggs: 'en el tiempo que empolla sus huevos, afirman algunos naturalistas que no duerme' (Auts)

¹¹ **Flora** is the Roman goddess of spring and flowers, and of fertility and youth. Her festival, the *floralia*, was held in April and May, although her popularity in Renaissance classical revivals was far greater than her significance in the classical world.

¹² **hermosa jardinera**, i.e. Flora. The image here picks up the common trope of the comparison between (female) physical and natural beauty. However, instead of being the passive object of male representation, here the woman is the active creator of the art that rivals nature.

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Juan del Valle y Caviedes (Spain, 1645–Peru, 1697)



Fig. 1. Miners of the cerro rico de Potosí, from Theodor de Bry's *Historia Americae sive Novi Orbis* (1596).

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Theodoor_de_bry.jpg

Born in the province of Jaén in Andalucía to a family of the minor nobility, with relatives working in the Spanish administration of the Indies, Valle y Caviedes emigrated to the Viceroyalty of Peru probably as a teenager, where, as he wrote to Sor Juana, ‘heme criado entre peñas / de minas, para mí avaras’, referring to the silver and mercury mines of the Andes. He married a well-born *criolla* and had several children, but despite his involvement in mining, trade and commerce, seems to have lived in financial precarity: during an illness in the 1680s he asked to be buried in a site reserved for paupers. Some of his poems intended for public occasions were printed, but most circulated in manuscript and orally, leaving us a substantial body of different manuscript versions.

Inspired by Quevedo and Góngora and a correspondent of Sor Juana, Valle y Caviedes is one representative of what the Venezuelan historian Mariano Picón Salas termed the ‘barroco de Indias’. His poetry is wide-ranging but he is best known as a satirist. Many themes are common to the Iberian satirical tradition, while others are adapted to the preoccupations of the Viceroyalty. For instance, his famous collection known as *Guerra física, hazañas de la ignorancia y proezas medicales* or *Diente del Parnaso* (c. 1689) is dominated by poems lampooning doctors, a commonplace target, but whereas Quevedo’s anti-medical diatribes often have an antisemitic slant, given the long European tradition of accomplished Jewish and *converso* physicians, Caviedes’s speak to anxieties about race and miscegenation; in Lima, medicine was a field in which *mulatos* (persons of mixed European and African heritage) particularly excelled. Few sectors of colonial society are spared, however, high or low, and as Raquel Chang-Rodríguez notes, ‘Más apropiado [...] es apreciar esta poesía por su singular capacidad para transmutar la realidad circundante por medio del artificio verbal’.

25. 'Lo que son riquezas del Perú'¹

One well-worn topos of the *carpe diem* sonnets, represented in this collection in numbers 2 and 10, is the golden hair of the beauty of today ('oro') turning into silver tomorrow ('plata'). Here it is not beauty but the 'plata' itself that corrodes and corrupts. Silver, mined by Indigenous labourers at Potosí in modern-day Bolivia (fig. 1), was indeed the single most 'anhelada' commodity of viceregal Peru: not only Spain and its territories but the newly global economy were dependent on it.

La plata de estos Reinos, anhelada,
adquirida con logros y con daños,
a polvo se reduce en pocos años,
en seda rota y lana apollada.

Ya tan grande tesoro paró en nada, 5
los cambrayes, las telas y los paños,²
anzuelos de enemigos y de extraños,³
muladares⁴ aumentan, que no son nada.

En muladar pararon los desvelos 10
de los logros, insultos y avaricias,
¿qué habrá en ellos de infamias y de anhelos,
de robos, tiranías e injusticias,
de que claman los pobres a los cielos,⁵
mártires de miserias y codicias?

26. 'Remedio para ser caballeros los que no lo son en este'

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a time of urban expansion, and in the city, the possibilities for fashioning one's own social identity were greater than in the village. The topos of imposters and fraudsters passing themselves off as nobles, *caballeros*, at court, is thus a common satirical trope, which was thought to apply to an even greater extent to those who emigrated and refashioned themselves in the court of Lima. The poetic voice here gives some tips to such would-be social climbers.

¹ Poems are taken from Raquel Chang-Rodríguez (ed.), *"Aquí, ninfas del Sur, venid ligeras": voces poéticas virreinales* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2008).

² **cambrayes**: cambric or chambray, a fine linen originally produced in France. Cloth was expensive in this period and used as a signifier of wealth: here the luxurious fabrics (seda, lana, cambrayes, telas, paños) represent the finest American and imported goods displayed by wealthy *limeños*.

³ The 'enemigos y extraños' might represent the pirates, hostile European powers and undesirable migrants supposedly angling for a share of Peru's mineral wealth.

⁴ **muladar**: a dung heap.

⁵ According to Catholic theology, there are four *peccata clamantia* (Lat. 'screaming sins') mentioned in the Bible which so offend God that they call down vengeance from heaven: one of these is the 'cry of the poor' (represented in the Old Testament by the Israelites enslaved in Egypt, the stranger, the widow and the orphan) who are oppressed; another is withholding the just wages of labourers.

Para ser caballero, de accidentes⁶
te has de vestir, en voces y mesura
sacando el pecho, derecha la estatura,
hablando de hidalguías y parientes, 5
despreciando linajes, entre dientes,
andando a espacio, grave y con tesura,⁷
y aunque venga o no venga a coyuntura,⁸
usarás de las cláusulas siguientes:⁹
el punto, el garbo, la razón de estado,¹⁰
etiqueta, usía, obligaciones,¹¹ 10
continencias, vucencia, mi criado,¹²
mis méritos, mis tardas pretensiones,¹³
y caballero quedas entablado
desde la coronilla a los talones.

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⁶ **accidentes**: in philosophical terminology, 'cualidad o estado que aparece en algo, sin que sea parte de su esencia o naturaleza' (RAE; cf. also Cov.).

⁷ **a espacio**: despacio; **tesura**: 'gravedad excesiva, afectación' (Aut.).

⁸ **a [buena] coyuntura**: en el momento oportuno. Coyuntura, 'oportunidad favorable para algo' (RAE).

⁹ The detailed instructions on posture, gait, topics of conversation and language parody Renaissance manuals for the good courtier, such as Baldassare Castiglione's *Il cortegiano*.

¹⁰ **punto**: among many other meanings, 'pundonor'; **razón de estado** = 'reason of state', one of the most bandied and disputed political terms of the seventeenth century.

¹¹ **usía**: abbreviation of *vuestra señoría*, your lordship.

¹² **vucencia**: abbreviation of *vuestra excelencia*; **criado**: servant (traditionally 'criado', brought up, in the lord's household).

¹³ Referring to the countless petitions for reward and recognition for good service (*relaciones de méritos y servicios*) addressed to the court.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (Juana Inés de Asbaje y Ramírez) (New Spain, 1651–1695)



Fig. 1: Jorge Sánchez Hernández, 1976, *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (Amecameca, Museo de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz)



Fig. 2: Juan de Miranda, *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*, c. 1713 (Mexico City, Palacio de Bellas Artes)



Fig. 3: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Fama, y obras postúmas* (Madrid: Manuel Ruiz de Murga, 1700), frontispiece by Clemente Puche

As a self-taught, illegitimate woman from a *criolla* family, Juana Inés de Asbaje Ramírez (later Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz) was an unlikely candidate to become the most famous American poet of the colonial era. Born in rural New Spain (present-day Mexico) she spent her childhood on her grandfather's *haciendas* before moving to the care of extended family who had close connections to the Viceroyal court in Mexico City. As a young teenager, she entered the court as a lady-in-waiting to the then Vicereine, Leonor Carreto. There, she developed a reputation for her prodigious intellect and her poetic skill. In 1669, after an unsuccessful period as a Carmelite novice, she entered the Jeronymite convent of Saint Paula, where she remained for the rest of her life. Alongside her religious obligations, she continued her poetic career, composing works for civic and religious festivals, as well as personal poems and private works for her patrons. Her most prolific period coincided with the tenure of the Viceroy Tomás de la Cerda y Aragón and his wife, María Luisa Manrique de Lara y Gonzaga, the Count and Countess of Paredes, from 1680 to 1686. On their return to Madrid, María Luisa published the first volume of Juana's collected works, *Inundación Castálida* (1689), cementing her fame on the other side of the Atlantic. The 1690s, however, witnessed a turn in Juana's career that critics have struggled to explain. After the publication of a second volume of her works (*Segundo volumen*, 1692), including her *Crisis sobre un sermón* and her masterwork *Primero sueño*, she renounced most of her literary work and dedicated herself to the pursuit of religious perfection. Juana died in 1695 during an outbreak of the plague. The final volume of her collected works, *Fama y obras postúmas*, was published in Madrid in 1700.

27. 'Procura desmentir los elogios que a un retrato de la poetisa inscribió la verdad, que llama pasión' (OC145, *Inundación castálida*, p. 3)¹

A meditation on the deceptive nature of art. The sonnet was likely a response to a portrait of Sor Juana herself. As she modestly spurns the painting's flattery, she demonstrates her mastery of *ekphrasis*, or the translation into poetry of a work of visual art.

Este que ves, engaño colorido,²
que del arte ostentando los primores,
con falsos silogismos de colores³
es cauteloso engaño del sentido;
este en quien la lisonja ha pretendido
excusar de los años los horrores
y, venciendo del tiempo los rigores,
triunfar de la vejez y del olvido,
es un vano artificio del cuidado,
es una flor al viento delicada,
es un resguardo inútil para el hado;⁴
es una necia diligencia errada,
es un afán caduco, y bien mirado,
es cadáver, es polvo, es sombra, es nada.⁵

28. 'Que contiene una fantasía contenta con amor decente' (OC165, *Segundo volumen*, p. 282)

In this sonnet, Sor Juana combines a solution to unrequited love with a reflection on the nature of imagination. Inverting the usual scheme of male lover/poet and female beloved, she triumphs over her beloved's rejection by capturing him in her imagination.

Detente, sombra de mi bien esquivo,
imagen del hechizo que más quiero,
bella ilusión por quien alegre muero,

¹ Titles are by Juana's editors, Francisco de las Heras (*Inundación Castálida* (1689) and *Poemas* (1690)), the secretary to the Countess of Paredes, or Juan de Orúe (*Segundo volumen* (1692)). The parenthesis gives details of the first volume in which the sonnet was published, along with its position in the *Obras completas* published by the Fondo de Cultura Económica (OC, here no.145). Sor Juana's own physical beauty is attested by her contemporaries, including her biographer Diego Calleja, who writes of 'el riesgo que podía correr de desgraciada por discreta y, con desgracia no menor, de perseguida por hermosa' (*Fama, y obras postúmas*, 1700, [p.16]).

² **ves**: The second person addressee may be the Countess of Paredes, who commissioned the portrait.

³ **silogismos**: A form of logical reasoning, in which a conclusion is drawn from two given or assumed premises. The portrait is presented as proposing an argument, i.e. that it is able to freeze its object in time.

⁴ **resguardo**: protection, in often in a legal sense: 'la seguridad de alguna deuda, o obligación' (Cov.)

⁵ The last line is a re-working of Góngora's 'Mientras por competir con tu cabello' (sonnet 10 in this collection), 'en tierra, en humo, en polvo, en sombra, en nada'. Indeed, the whole sonnet can be read as a riposte to Góngora's in its exploration of similar themes and tropes.

dulce ficción por quien penosa vivo.⁶
 Si al imán de tus gracias, atractivo,
 sirve mi pecho de obediente acero,⁷
 ¿para qué me enamoras lisonjero
 si has de burlarme luego fugitivo?
 Mas blasonar no puedes, satisfecho,
 de que triunfa de mí tu tiranía:
 que aunque dejas burlado el lazo estrecho
 que tu forma fantástica ceñía,
 poco importa burlar brazos y pecho
 si te labra prisión mi fantasía.⁸

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29. 'Soneto burlesco' (OC160, *Poemas*, pp. 43)

The most daring of Sor Juana's burlesque sonnets. Composed for 'domestic entertainment' (most likely in the convent) and giving the writer a set rhyme scheme, it mocks a common Golden Age topos: the cuckolded husband and promiscuous wife.

Aunque eres, Teresilla, tan *muchacha*,⁹
 le das quehacer al pobre de *Camacho*,¹⁰
 porque dará tu disimulo un *cacho*¹¹
 a aquel que se pintare más sin *tacha*.
 De los empleos que tu amor *despacha*
 anda el triste cargado como un *macho*,
 y tiene tan crecido ya el *penacho*,¹²
 que ya no puede entrar si no se *agacha*.
 Estás a hacerle burlas ya tan *ducha*¹³
 y a salir de ellas bien estás tan *hecha*,

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⁶ The paradoxical language here is that of courtly love, which combines the pleasure of the state of desire with the pain of being rejected by the beloved.

⁷ **imán, atractivo, acero:** Juana employs the language of magnetism to express her attraction to her beloved, combining the discourse of courtly love with her interest in science.

⁸ **fantasía:** Equiv. 'imagination'. In Aristotelian philosophy, the *phantasy* is a faculty of the soul that preserves images of objects apprehended by the senses and reproduces them in their absence (*De anima*, III.3).

⁹ **Teresilla:** The name Teresa comes from the Greek *θερίζω* ('therizo') meaning 'to reap'. Sor Juana displays here the practice of 'forced rhymes' ('consonantes forzados'), in which the poet is given a rhyme scheme and must conform their lines to it. It is one of five such poems that appear in *Poemas* ('Para los cinco sonetos burlescos que se siguen, se le dieron a la poetisa los consonantes forzados de que se componen, en un doméstico solaz', p.43). The Golden Age is replete with similar examples (e.g. Quevedo's 'La vida empieza en lágrimas y caca').

¹⁰ **Camacho:** The name may derive from Latin *gammus*, a kind of deer. This may be an allusion to the animal's horns, which in Spanish ('cuernos') can refer to marital infidelity.

¹¹ **cacho:** 'horn' (see note above)

¹² **penacho:** 'El copete de plumas que tienen algunas aves sobre la cabeza' (Auts). Another attribute of the cuckolded husband in Golden Age satire.

¹³ **ducha:** 'lo mismo que diestro o acostumbrado' (Auts)

que de lo que tu vientre *desembucha*,¹⁴
 sabes darle a entender, cuando *sospecha*,
 que has hecho, por hacer su hacienda *muchacha*,
 de ajena siembra, suya la *cosecha*.

30. 'Soneto a san José, escrito según el asunto de un certamen que pedía las metáforas que contiene' (OC209, *Segundo volumen* p. 546)¹⁵

This sonnet picks up the theme of adultery in a very different idiom. One of Sor Juana's religious poems, it reflects on the figure of Saint Joseph, the 'foster father' of Jesus, who initially suspects Mary of adultery. The poem combines allegorical readings of three biblical narratives: Mary's pregnancy, the Nativity, and the Massacre of the Innocents.

Nace de la escarchada fresca Rosa
 dulce Abeja, y apenas aparece,¹⁶
 cuando a su recio natalicio ofrece¹⁷
 tutelar, verde Palma victoriosa.
 Así rosa, María, más hermosa,
 concibe a Dios, y el vientre apenas crece,
 cuando es, de la sospecha que padece,
 el Espíritu Santo palma umbrosa.¹⁸
 Pero cuando el tirano, por prenderlo,¹⁹
 tanta inocente turba herir pretende,
 solo vos, ¡oh José!, vais a esconderlo:²⁰
 para que en vos admire, quien lo entiende,
 que vos bastáis del mundo a defenderlo,
 y que de vos, Dios solo le defiende.

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¹⁴ **desembucha:** 'echar o expeler las aves lo que tienen en el buche' (Auts). The image of the bird expelling food from its crop (a pouch in its gullet where food is prepared for digestion) is comically applied to the woman giving birth.

¹⁵ This sonnet is one of several written by Sor Juana for a poetry competition ('*certamen*') which prescribed its central metaphor (Mary as the Rose and Christ as the Bee). She also produced a *romance* on the same topic for the same competition (*Romance* 53, 'De la más fragante Rosa nació la Abeja más bella').

¹⁶ **rosa, abeja:** The sonnet creates an allegory (or extended metaphor) of the birth of Christ. The Virgin Mary is the rose ('fresca' indicating her youth, 'escarchada' her purity); the bee is Jesus, who gives both forgiveness (sweet honey) and justice (in its sting), and the palm is Joseph, who protects both the rose and the bee from the sun (possibly a reference to Psalm 92.12-15 [91.12-15], 'The just shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow up like the cedar of Lebanon').

¹⁷ **recio:** Autoridades: '*áspero y duro*'. A comment the harsh circumstances of Christ's birth.

¹⁸ When Mary becomes pregnant, Joseph suspects her of adultery and decides to divorce her privately. However, an angel appears to him in a dream, telling him to take her as his wife (Matthew 1.18-20).

¹⁹ **El tirano:** In Matthew's gospel, Herod (i.e. Herod the Great, c.72BCE-c.4 BCE) orders the death of all male infants in the vicinity of Bethlehem, in an attempt to kill the Christ child (Matthew 2.16).

²⁰ Also in a dream, an angel warns Joseph of the danger to his child, and he flees with Mary and Jesus to Egypt (Matthew 2.13-14).

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