

THE FINAL SOLITUDE OF THE POET ANTONIO MACHADO

(Memories of his Brother, José)

(Part 6)

II

CONCERNING HIS POETRY

The second part of this biography is devoted to his poems, selecting from them those which, in my opinion, awaken the greatest emotional sentiment. But of course no matter how much I try to express, it will not be possible to reveal more than a small part of the profound emotions of the Poet.

The earliest poems of Antonio, together with those of Manuel, appear in a journal called *The Caricature*. In it, during the year of 1898, the two poets published their poetry and their satirical articles. Antonio was then 20 years old, and he used the pseudonym "Cabellera" (*Longhair*), which described the style of his hair in those days. After that his compositions appear in *Electra*, a journal directed by Ramiro de Maeztu. Some of his poems were those which had already been published, along with others that were new. This was the time that the tireless poet, Francisco Villaespesa, started a publication called *The Iberian Journal* which, if I am not mistaken, was founded in the summer of 1902. Somewhat later the journal *Helios* appeared where Juan Ramon Jiménez published many of his poems. These were the journals which introduced those who would be the leaders of the new Modernist movement which would almost always be referred to as the Generation of '98.

The two most outstanding figures of this era of Modernism were then, and still are Don Miguel de Unamuno, poet, philosopher, essayist, philologist, novelist, etc., and the great American poet, Ruben Dario.

I will now say something which in my opinion is necessary to make things as clear as possible. This is something which to me is as obvious as the air around us which we all must breathe. Using the same analogy in the spiritual realm, the vision which has already been achieved by the Masters has often influenced the development of our ideals. This is a fact; however... these inevitable influences almost disappear, and sometimes do so completely with people like Antonio, who also influences others (without intending to of course), since their own character is so original that it resists outside influences, no matter how good they might be. And so it is possible to say in all fairness that he has never really been influenced by anyone.

Oh the other hand, the solid cultural foundations which he already possessed not only helped him preserve his originality, but it also gave him a lasting protection against the literary disease which infected all those who, throughout the period of Modernism

(and also at other times), joined the immense “chorus of crickets who chirp at the moon.” And although he didn’t say so until many years later in *Fields of Castile* (1912), in spite of all the echoes he could hear, he might already have said: “of all of these voices, I listen only to one” (his own).

It was with this background that he entered the turbulent field of literary activity in January 1903, carrying under his arm his first book, *Solitude*, in which the *leitmotiv* of his entire work was already pulsating. And so, written between the years 1899 and 1903, he offers it to us, thinking perhaps of those words which say: “if I were able to give you more, I would.”

I

... the fountain poured
its monotony over the white marble.

In this commentary on the different themes which appear in his poetry, I will give special attention to several that are already present in his first book, *Solitude* (1903).

It is very clear that the Poet felt a great love for nature. A constant desire to be one with it. We see this natural sympathy in the wonderful passages which could well be considered universal, since after beginning with a vision in which all the elements are captured with marvelous simplicity, he adds to it the warmth of a sincere human heart.

There could not be anything that is more all-encompassing nor more difficult, because first one has to feel and, then, to express these sentiments. To do this one must find the exact equivalence of a vital intuition with words which are also vital. And if these words are to be successful, they must give an external expression to an emotion which is felt inside.

To do this fully, as did our Poet, can be considered something almost miraculous when one realizes that with these words he has to express something which is absolutely new. With words that are old and hackneyed, and sometimes even corrupted by misuse, he must describe new feelings.

In order to carry out this arduous task one must make a Herculean effort which few people are capable of accomplishing successfully.

It was the great difficulty of achieving this artistic expression which I think was the principal cause of the dissatisfaction and the anxiety which the Poet felt during his entire life. Of this there was material proof in the infinite number of discarded pages that were crumpled and thrown into the waste-basket, and also in the many all-night efforts to disclose something, as he put it, of those things which we feel, but can never express.

Spring has come.
No one knows how.

These two memorable lines, the quintessence of the impression which spring made on him, took years of seeing this magical appearance before they could finally be written. But no one would realize that. What simplicity! For this reason his work is relatively short. Yes short, but large and definitive for the density and, above all, for human heart that always beats within it, so vital, and so typically his.

Because he feels that emotions are non-transferable, this is precisely the reason why he advises:

Bees and singers, (poets)
not to the honey, but the flowers.

Because this is the only way that *singers* will be able to achieve true originality—those very few... who might be capable of that.

All artistic imitations caused him the same feeling of disapproval, since he felt that anything which was copied was deformed. The only thing this accomplished was to emphasize its defects, not what was beautiful.

Since each heart has its own beat, it is this selfsame beat which must be heard. But of course this is not possible for everyone, and it can also be very painful.

He who tries to live his life is lost, Abel used to say.

The Abel mentioned here is his most intimate friend, the poet and philosopher, Abel Martin, who is now well-known.

As a matter of fact, nothing could be more exhausting, in a spiritual sense, than trying to continue living through your work. But the result is worth the effort. This is why he poured his soul into all his poems, and into all his work. But without ever letting the cup overflow. There is always an emotional sentiment that is present in his poems. And it is precisely because of that that he lives, and will continue to live, in the future. This effort to give us only that which is exactly right must be quite difficult. He has already forewarned us of this when he says:

It is all a question of measure,
a little more, a little less...

In this "...a little more, a little less..." consists the true norm of all perfection. And to achieve this in his work he became so absorbed that he seemed almost totally absent from those around him. He himself says it: "Oh, solitude, my only companion!" Because a heart is never more solitary than when it is accompanied.

It was this extraordinary realization that made him entitle his first book *Solitude*. This single word contains in itself these two: Antonio Machado. He repeats the same realization which his brother already had when he called his first book *Soul*.

With the solitude of their soul these two poets create with a thread that comes from the same ball of yarn.

It was in the solitude of the country, which Antonio loved so much, that I was able to see the deep emotion which the contemplation of water always produced in him.

How often I saw him stop and listen attentively, while totally captivated by its sound! He also seemed to be entranced by the sight of its flow. This extraordinary, almost magnetic attraction explains why, in this Poet, the theme of water is so essential. Just as it is an indispensable element of the world in which we live.

It already appears as a fundamental element in several poems from his first book, *Solitude* (1903), and especially, in one which was perhaps the first. It was entitled, if my memory is correct, "The fountain." It is too bad that it was not included in later editions. It is in this poem where the theme of water first appears. After that the constant flow of water continues throughout the course of his poetry.

One must not forget that the Poet first opened his eyes at the side of a great river: the Guadalquivir. That love waits for him on the banks of another: the Duero; and that his eyes closed forever on the shore of the sea in a foreign land.

I will always remember that only a few days before his death he went out to answer the mysterious call of the sea. That was the last time he was able to go outside.

It was water, with its constant flow and its eternal monotony, which said to him:

one day is like another,
today is just like yesterday...

And remember the dialogue he had with his "sister," the fountain. This was another composition from his early work in which we see his constant desire to become immersed in nature.

To the water of this fountain, which like the others has repeated and still recounts things which are eternal, he says goodbye with his heart full of sorrow, telling it:

Goodbye forever, your monotony
is more painful than my sorrow.

It is the bitterness caused by our limitations. The anguish of things that are eternally repeated. And he feels it once again in the conclusion of his gloss of those well-known lines by Jorge Manrique, when he exclaims:

But what about the horror of returning?
Great sorrow!

He devotes another poem to the children who are playing in the plaza next to the water:

The stone fountain
spills out the waters
of its eternal legend.

And he listens to their songs,

when they play and
together they pour out
their souls that dream,
like stone fountains
spill their waters.

Always that which is eternal. Childhood, then adolescence. A fountain, then a river. Everything lives in time, but it takes on new appearances which are neither more nor less real than those that are now present.

Captivated by the sight of a beautiful country sunset, he stops to watch the current of the river:

Under the arch of the bridge the dark water was flowing.
I thought: like my soul!

It seems as though in that moment he feels himself carried onward by the water. It is his soul that floats above the ripples that carry him to a mysterious dwelling of no return. Everything comes to an end.

On another occasion he meditates in front of a water wheel, and he watches as the buckets bring the water up from the depths into the light, like the Poet when he is able to bring to light his deepest thoughts. And again, the bitterness of “the eternal wheel.”

All of this is taken from his first book, *Solitude*. But the current keeps on flowing and later we find it in his well-known ballad, “The Land of Alvargonzalez.” The tragedy begins near a clear flowing spring, and it ends in the depths of a deep ravine where there was “night, fear and water.” “The Black Lagoon.” The water that swallows the father also opens to entomb the two sons who were guilty of his murder, after which it closes without leaving a trace. But as it flows through the countryside, its monotony repeats over and over the story of their horrendous crime.

As he sees the mouth of the Guadalquivir River, he tells it:

In Cazorla I saw your birth;
today you die in Sanlucar.
.....
Like me, close to the sea,
river of brackish sludge,
do you dream of your source?

The Poet asks this question at the place where the river ends. Little children, and poets, ask these questions which have no answer.

There is still much more to say about this theme of water which is so fundamental to his work. And thinking of this, I remember a day which is now in the distant past when, in one of our frequent discussions of his work, I told him that the poem entitled “The fountain” should not have been omitted from the editions of his work which were published after his first book, *Solitude*. He answered me saying that he intended to include it when the next edition of his work appeared. But since this never happened, the poem has often been forgotten.

This poem, “The fountain,” which I will remember as long as I live, could have been his first, or one of his first, and because it did not show the same technical mastery found in his later poems, the severity with which he always judged his work may have caused him to omit it. Nevertheless, I think that if there is something which is essential in Antonio’s work it was already present from the beginning, just as in the great symphonies of Beethoven the initial theme is the backbone around which the entire work is organized.

The emotional power of this poem which I am discussing is found, like others we will discuss later, in the final stanza, the only one which I remember word for word. This is what it says:

I would like to meditate and dream of you
free from hostility and sadness,
until, above the cold stone, I feel
that my head becomes covered with moss.

This final stanza is the culmination of the magnificent description of the fountain and of the water which flows eternally.

For this reason, which seems very clear to me, I will always believe that it was in the eternal flow of water where he found the strongest and the most enduring foundation for his poetry.

But let’s continue for a moment with a final comment about some different themes that relate to water. The water I want to mention this time falls from the sky like a blessing on the fields. The poem is called “In April, thousands of waters.” It seems to me that it would be difficult to write a better description of a downpour than the one which he gives that is so representative of the showers in April.

As always, what realism in the description, and what depth of feeling in this sudden downpour that falls even before clouds have completely covered the sky!

...And between the clouds
there are patches of blue sky.

One could say that these are the first spring rains that moisten the fields which will soon be covered in green once again.

The main sensation that this poem produces is one that revives the distant joys of childhood, making us want to sing enthusiastically while lifting our hands to the sky: Let it rain, let it rain, the Virgin in Spain...! What wonderful insight into the entire world of nature!

Then, I cannot help but include here this stanza which represents the quintessence of a downpour that is combined with rays of sunlight:

Rain and sun. One field
is dark, another is bright;
here a slope disappears
there a hillside rises up.

The literary form of this poem is perfect, but for me that is nothing compared to the profound emotion created by the voice of Antonio, which makes us feel that Nature itself has been contained in the work of the Poet.

Continuing with the compositions contained in his book, *Solitude*, I will turn to the one which begins this work, and which will continue to be the first poem in all the successive editions. It is called, "The Traveler."

In it he begins with an ordinary view of reality and then reaches another which is so emotionally intimate that it penetrates our spirit:

Here in the gloomy family parlor
with us all is the dear brother
who departed for a distant land on the
bright day of his childhood dream.

This is the family parlor where his intimate poetic sentiments began to mature, which also "reveals a soul almost completely absent," and as far away as the kites which climb so high in the sky when they are flown by the hands of children. In this setting he is surrounded by those who are dearest to him, beginning with his mother. But one also notes the sadness of a home caused by the absence of the father, who has departed from this place for that distant land from which no one returns.

The room where all are sitting gets darker little by little, "while light radiates out from the heart" of the Poet, revealing the sad experience of the dear brother, and various unanswered questions contained in this poem.

But previous to everything is the reality of the family mirror in which that autumn afternoon is reflected;

The autumn leaves are falling
from the trees in the dreary old park.

And then the first questions begin:

. Past disappointments
turned to gold by the fading afternoon?
Hopes for new life, in new years?

which are followed by others:

Does he lament his lost youth?
The poor dead wolf is far away.
Does he fear that the bright youth
he has neglected might sing at his door?

And concluding with this last one which seems to tear open the shadows in which we are sunken with the splendor of these lines:

Does he smile at the golden sun
in a land of an unrealized dream;
and does he see his ship sail a turbulent sea,
its white sail billowing with wind and light?

Now the shadows completely envelop us, and all of us are sunken in our own personal thoughts while:

In the sadness of our home the clock
ticks loudly. We all are silent.

The poet becomes silent so that his voice will continue echoing in time.

Many years have passed since this poem was written, and neither the clock nor the person who wrote it exist any longer. But these lines are still imprinted on my soul, like the memory of the ticking of that clock which still echoes in my ears.

RAIN

The words describing the memories of his childhood that I am going to mention now also correspond to the period of *Solitude*. This is the childhood he reveals from within, that he sees in others from without.

Something that is very obvious in children who are eager for freedom is the anxiety produced by the idea of going to school. One can appreciate the instinctive desire for freedom which appears during the most tender years of infancy.

The system of order which the teacher must impose is something so unnatural that most of time it is never completely achieved. The proof is that when they pour out of class the children protest so loudly that, more than a protest, it seems like they are fleeing in terror from an involuntary subjection. The tumultuous and disorderly escape is of course the normal compensation for the discipline which was imposed in school.

But there is something much more profound in these disorderly exits. It has to do with the infinite sadness caused by the lack of freedom which falls like a lead weight on the inner life of the child who is away from home and his own private world, which may be limited, but is still his own.

One sees in this the conflict between two things which oppose each other from the moment of birth until the moment of death: the constant desire for freedom which resists the restrictions imposed by life that are very different from what one desires.

This selected fragment of poetry shows the true feeling of what it must be like in “the hated classroom”:

A cloudy and cold afternoon
of winter. The schoolboys
are studying. Monotony
of rain on the windows.

Of course “studying” is a generous concession on the part of the Poet who always thinks not of what is, but of what ought to be.

THE SUN

Now following the sensation “of rain on the windows,” I will note that in another poem the light from the true sun was able to illuminate the galleries of the Poet’s soul. The perfect combination of what is within, with what is without:

It burned because it gave off
heat like a red hearth;
it was a sun that illumined
and also made me cry.

Then the Poet’s dream concludes with these lines where, in the most intimate part of his heart, he feels the fusion of his soul with the universal soul:

Last night when I was sleeping
I dreamed—blessed illusion!—
it was God that I felt
deep within my heart.

II

Now I will try to emphasize some other aspects of his work. I am referring to the way in which emotions are described so that they do not lose anything when they are expressed by thought. To preserve the intuitive so it is not distorted by reason. This is one of his greatest accomplishments. A difficult task, which consists in not saying anything more than what is absolutely essential. And more so if one takes into account

the complexities of thoughts which, when they appear, are immediately entangled with others that are struggling to emerge. So although his descriptions are always quite realistic, they are also able to capture the deepest vibrations of his feeling. Something like this can be seen in the conclusion of his poem entitled “To a dry elm tree”:

My heart is also
waiting, for light and for life,
for another miracle of spring.

Nothing could be more perfect than the way he describes this dry elm and condenses all the emotion into these final lines. With this reference to “another miracle of spring,” he expresses his final hope for something that will not be realized. Leonor, his young, almost adolescent wife dies just a few days after these lines were written. Thinking of her he wrote this remarkable poem without even mentioning her name; that’s how deeply she is embedded in his heart!

Continuing with another section of the book, which is entitled “Tributes,” I will only mention two—all should be read—as examples of his clear understanding of things worthy of praise.

The first is devoted to the death of his wise and dearly beloved teacher, Don Francisco Giner de los Rios. The greatest praise is expressed in these lines:

The dead die and shadows disappear.
He who leaves carries on, and he who lived lives on.

This entire poem is filled with the deepest emotion. And this *is* the fundamental characteristic of all his poems.

Someone who was very close to him once said that whenever he reads something by the Poet in public, he has to control himself so as not to shed a tear.

The other tribute I want to mention here is devoted to the death of Ruben Dario, the great Latin American poet. I will quote two lines from the beginning, and then the last two lines of this composition:

.....
Gardener of Hesperia, nightingale of the seas,
heart amazed by the music of the spheres...
.....
Let no one pluck this lyre if not Apollo himself,
let no one play this flute if it is not Pan himself.

What is most characteristic of Ruben Dario is expressed and assimilated into this poem so completely that some lines almost seem to have been written by Ruben himself. And this is because Antonio is one of those who have delved most deeply into the work of this distinguished bard, whom he read and re-read with ever-increasing admiration, in spite of the fact that he had little or nothing in common with him.

I also want to mention another aspect of the Poet's work which, in my opinion, is very important: the appreciation of popular art which, as I have said before, seemed to be almost innate in him.

When he created the ballad of "Alvargonzalez," he did so in the popular style. But he did not try to produce an imitation; he tried, rather, to find something which was *equivalent*.

He drinks from the same source as the people, and he then tries to create with the same basic sensibility that the former uses. With a profound philosophical purpose he searches for the roots of this popular culture, examining many different aspects of the passions and the sentiments, whether they be sad or happy, superficial or profound.

Speaking of some well-known musicians Antonio used to say that they were quite mistaken when they tried to create popular music with a theme they copied directly from folk music and then combined with their own individual feelings. With this they could only produce some hybrid form of art. In one of these compositions whenever the notes express a popular theme it sounds very good, giving the impression of something really great, but this disappears during the development which, although it may also be quite good, does not match the rest. Nevertheless, some composers have been quite successful with these *pastiches*, especially in other countries where they admire popular themes and they swallow everything that is in the work. It seemed to him that what one should do is to capture the profound emotion that beats within the veins of the Spanish people. A good example is his "Songs of the Upper Duero." In one of them a lover imagines she is traveling through the countryside to meet her shepherd, and she exclaims:

If I could only be an oak tree
on top of a hill!
If I could only be an oak tree
I would make shade
for his siesta.

Another dreams that when she marries her gardener, she will be a

Pretty lady gardener!
I will wear a green skirt,
scarlet like a nun.

And another thinks about her beloved, who is a woodcutter, and she says:

If I were only an eagle
I could watch my master
cutting branches!

This is how the eyes of these lovers look for love in this blessed land. And what a marvelous portrayal of real emotions is pictured in these "Songs of the Upper Duero"!

Speaking of these songs, as well as those of another great poet, the author of “Gypsy Songs” (Manuel Machado), one can say that their best characteristic is that they are the equivalent of genuine folk art; so much so that they seem to belong to the realm of traditional folklore. This is because both poets were able to achieve:

The art of throwing their heart
into the wind, what a wonderful
enterprise! says Lola
(the one who goes to the Ports
and the Island is deserted).

I am now going to continue, not with songs, but with the moment when the Poet casts his eyes with infinite sadness on the desolate soil of Castile.

The Castile where the poor inhabitants leave from their homes to work in the accursed plains which only bring them misfortune.

This is a group of rough travelers who herd their cattle in the direction of more fertile ground to keep themselves, and their herds, from dying in the rocky and barren land where they live.

This powerful, unforgiving land inspired the words from “In the Lands of Spain,” which begins in this way:

The man of these lands who burns the pine woods
and keeps what is left like the plunder of battle
in former times would have cut down the evergreens
and demolished the oak groves of the mountain range.

to continue somewhat later, describing the characteristics of these rural laborers whose brutal instincts are the origin of ballads like “Alvargonzalez.” He says:

The land and the villages are full of evil men
capable of perverse behavior and bestial crimes,
who hide an ugly soul under their dark cloak
like a slave to the seven deadly sins.

then this finally leads to an accurate and definitive description in the concluding lines:

The spirit of these lands is bloody and fierce;
when the sun is setting over the remote hills,
you can see the gigantic form of an archer,
the form of an immense centaur bowman.

concluding then with this planetary view:

You will see warlike prairies and ascetic plains
—the biblical garden was not in these fields—;
they are the land of the eagle, a part of the planet
where the roving shade of Cain wanders through.

This next poem from which we will cite only a few fragments is memorable since it is one of the most comprehensive visions of the unforgiving land of Castile.

We must also keep in mind that these lines are produced amid the desolation of these lands with their colors, so delicate and so beautiful, which grace the banks of the Duero in the spring:

Springtime in Soria, a gentle spring
like the dream of a simple-minded soul,
of a poor traveler who falls asleep
from weariness on an infinite plateau!

.
In the dusky-purple of the violet sky
a few bright stars were twinkling.
The darkened air
cooled my temples, and the murmur
of the water reached my ears.
Between the leaden and ashen hills
stained with wasted evergreen oaks
and the bare limestone banks,
under the eight piers of the bridge
flowed the father river that cuts
through the cold wasteland of Castile.

It is the soul of these lands that touches us in this unsurpassable description. It is easy to verify the essential importance of the emotions in these lines, without which in art “there is nothing... worth bothering about,” as I heard him say so many times.

EVERGREEN OAKS

Let us continue describing the blessed lands through which the Poet travels, while we listen to the dialogue that takes place between them.

He sets out toward the blue and white remoteness of his old friend, the Guadarramas, to whom he says:

Through your deep ravines
and your sharp peaks
a thousand Guadarramas and a thousand suns
ride with me as I enter into your heart.

There are many afternoons in Madrid when he has watched the sun set behind these mountains. He leaves the city thinking of its

. paltry vices,
niggardly virtues...

and after passing by the “Door of Steel,” he finally arrives at the Prado. There he pays close attention to the nearest grove of evergreen oaks. They are no longer the blackish smudge that one sees from a distance. After reaching the foot of these trees, they will become black once again as he leaves them behind, until they blend together in a bluish fringe at the foot of the cold Guadarramas.

The Poet goes on recalling the different types of impression which then at night he will write down:

Castilian evergreen oaks
on slopes and foothills,
.
full of dark undergrowth,
oaks, dark evergreen oaks:
humility and strength!
.
In your wide and rounded treetop
nothing shines,
not your dark green leaves
nor your greenish yellow flowers.
.
You grow straight, or crooked,
with a humility that bows
only to the law of life,
which is to live the best one can.
The land itself became a tree
in you, dark evergreen oak.

What a marvelous way to see the evergreen oak merge with the land where it is born! And what a wonderful way to appreciate the many dark colors of yellow and green that mix with shades of blue and gray! These are colors that also spread through the pathways of the air on the wings of sparrows. In this same way, Diego de Velazquez was able to capture these wonderful colors in his paintings.

But let us continue with more lines from this restrained rural poem:

...and the groves of Madrid,
beneath the cold Guadarramas,
so beautiful, so solemn,
with your Castilian haughtiness
correcting
the vanity, the attire
and the frenzy of the court!...

to arrive at these final lines which are, as always, so definitive:

but you are the land and the home
and the protecting shade
of the good citizens
who wear homespun clothes (with the same color as the evergreen oaks)
and cut your firewood
with their hands.

After visiting this landscape so often on the frequent excursions encouraged by his teachers when he was a student at the Free Institute of Learning, it became engraved on his heart, creating in him a love of nature which, as he himself said, was *even more powerful than that of art*.

If the evergreen oaks were able to create an impression that was more memorable than the olive trees of Andalusia, this is owing to the fact that (like poor marionettes whose strings are moved by the hand of Destiny) we were brought as children by our parents to Madrid,

...the breakwater for the lands of Spain.

In spite of this, the profound philosophical depths of Antonio's thought—his seriousness and his sadness—as well as his infinite sensitivity and innate charm, are all fundamentally Andalusian. Which in no way prevents him from being one of the most gifted poets of the land of Castile.

THE OLIVE TREES

When he is separated from Castile with a heart that is broken by the irreparable loss of his wife Leonor (his one and only love) and moves to Baeza leaving behind the pine groves of Soria, it is the olive trees of Andalusia that spread out before his eyes. From the window of his third-class coach he will see the parallel rows of olive trees moving rapidly by, like the ribs of a fan that are joined in the distance.

The infinite love of nature which often inspires his verses, and at other times serves as a counterpoint to his poems, accompanies him through the countryside.

This time he travels toward Baeza under skies that are even brighter than those of Soria and then, in Seville, they will acquire so much intensity that one might say the light shines like fire through the shutters and blinds.

He is passing through the olive groves of Baeza when he says:

Thirsty old olive trees
in the clear light of day,
dusty olive groves
in the land of Andalusia!
The Andalusian soil, combed
by the hot summer sun,
hill after hill lined with
rows of olive trees!

Then down a multitude of paths between the olive trees

. come
farmhands and muleteers
their mules loaded with baskets.
.

Olive grove, your tiny olives
will travel down a hundred roads
to a hundred mills.

giving work on the farmsteads

to workers and field hands,
oh, good dark brows
under the wide sombreros!...

as he pictures these men who work in the fields of Andalusia. And then he concludes the poem, asking God to bless the rude labor of these workers, saying:

God bless the hearths
and the souls of this land
of olive groves and trees.

It would be difficult to improve this admirable description which preserves the profound emotion that always throbs in his poems, while it is still very close to nature.

Table of Contents:

http://armandfbaker.com/biography_toc.html