

# The Poet Writes to Lorca Hoping for No Response

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Honors in the Arts '22-23

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## Poet Talks at Lorca

I am the one who holds you by the ear  
blank white and shirtless, folded in a lump,  
wherever they had left you. Buried in some dump?  
You are not mine, so let's make one thing clear:

I spit my blood at you so it becomes  
a fire lily reaching from a stump.  
It might become a trespass sign, a clump  
of brambles raining soot on me in thrums.

I'm told, You be respectful of the dead  
who must sit idly by mientras que  
we turn each life on its thoughtless head

shaking it down for every penny or clue  
to why we are still here. But they, you see,  
don't let me lose what I have learned from you.

## The Poet Speaks to Lorca on the Phone

Don't let me lose what I have learned from you,  
part undertaker, part bourgeois prince,  
part liberator from my lonely silence  
while I sit here alone and bound and nude.

O hands, not Lorcan hands but right on cue—  
the bondage—tighter!—so the knot still sings  
so you can hear my every moan and wince.  
Here O, o here, o here—O, I got to

admit I'm scared to open my mouth, engulf  
you in a foreign tongue while you loom  
like water on the continental shelf.

I'm calling "you" not knowing to where, to whom...  
I've never asked me what I call myself,  
except on nights when you were in my room.

## The Poet In New York

On those dark nights when you were in your room  
the city was a thousand flaming eggs  
that wouldn't hatch. Columbia was elite dregs  
apt for the sinkerator. Your house, a tomb.

Alone, you might as well have got on Zoom.  
You spotted faces when you stretched your legs,  
and used a word (would it translate to "fags"?)  
I'd never utter, even in my room,

alone as you were. Did you hate yourself that you  
would not, could never have a son or daughter?  
I do, without your images to confuse:

I tried to leap off your building's highest tier,  
like many of my friends have done or wanted to,  
the ladder impaled me like an untouched spear.

## The Poet Climbs Lorca's Apartment Building in New York

The ladder impaled me like an untouched spear –  
to get to there, I had to take the stairs.

The lights were on but flickered, like they cared  
to make the darkness San Juan says not to fear,

to push through, shielded behind your prayers,  
where *up* becomes the central, wounded, dear  
life deemed worth living fully. Near  
that darkness, which is lost in earthly nightmares,

I asked, how many of us living in this ghost town  
can speak to those behind the thin veneers,  
who all that time they coldly free-fell down

passed between the worlds like sonneteers,  
and, if they were to speak, would make it known  
it's you who starts on me, it's you who sneers?

## The Poet Writes to “Lorcaboy420” on Grindr Hoping for No Response

It's you who starts on me. It's you who sears  
me...If ya wanna...lol jk

The message sent at 7:58.

Receiver notifications muted. Tears!

Again, I'm wet and waiting for you here

Can't I just notify him anyways?

As though to block my need, the screen displays  
a pop-up of two boys – they must be queer –

syringes in their arms and fingers on their keypads.

I'm drunk. I came back from the party hoop-less.

I press the little X, delete the ads.

I looked so good, my spangled dress all moonlit.

I lie alone in bed, your Gypsy ballads,

your words laid on my lifting chest, they soothe it.

The Poet Writes to Lorca from the Holy City of Ávila

Your words laid on my lifting chest, they soothe it.  
The incense rising in the air surrounds  
the Virgin Mary. In the crypt a song resounds.  
My song contained inside your breath is muted.

Along the walls are fifteen hundred cruces  
giving me the side-eye. What was founded  
in Ávila is lost on me, unchaperoned.  
But standing on las murallas stirs the muses:

Those friends who've died, I find them on my mind.  
I should not feel anywhere less clueless  
than here, my God, but they have undermined

my faith. The kind of God who soothes is toothless  
if He, She, They leave some of us behind  
with a stone-cold tear. The steam absorbed in you is ruthless.

The Poet Writes to his Ex, Hoping for No Response

With a stone-cold tear, the steam absorbed in you. Ruthless,  
the mind has conjured you again. You're high.

A man is crawling, chanting *Semper Fi!*  
Between us something opens, a new rift.

In my new Ikea bed we two sit:  
together, still; the screws are not yet tight.

I turn and risk my being too polite:  
I won't be used. I want to be of use. If

you want me to, I'll go, when I am told.  
Rolling into me, we're chest to chest. The fear  
unbends with every breath, but we stay curled

as one. To me you have become too clear,  
staring at me locked in a stranglehold,  
eyes, blind to those red words that disappear.



Sonnet at Valle de los Caídos

Eyes, blind to these red words  
that disappear and are  
ignored by the tomb-goers.  
There aren't exactly hordes

of people and fewer birds,  
but for those that are  
here to learn there are  
no signs where they disinterred

his corpse. My aim is not to wade  
into their sorrows, negate  
the space between exclave

and enclave, but I would say  
the stretch is global. Each makes  
the body a shallow grave.

## Acrostic Sonnet

For you I make my body a shallow grave;  
Entombed in need, I half-believed I could be  
Done manufacturing an Other to be

Good against. What do we want to save?  
All the playas, hostels, Guggenheims?  
Ratings online for travel destinations  
Create my entire list of recommendations.  
In the dream, I shoot you five more times.  
A green case falls out of your hand,

Lays there in front of me, but I don't care.  
On second thought, I should run? And  
Really, I don't want to be, I can't be, ensnared.  
Cautious, I lift the lid, and, on command,  
A serpent's arms—it's you—pull at my hair.

Sonnet with 12 of Lorca's Lines

For you, my serpent arms pull at my hair  
Through the anemones lifted into trees,  
Between the I-love-yous and you-love-mes  
The plants' tremble, the stars extend in air.

For what you choose to give, I'll never ask you.  
Your disdain becomes a God; and my complaints  
are moments, doves locked on a chain.  
If I live without myself, I want to have you.

I'm scared to lose that wonder of your statue  
eyes, and the mark placed on my cheek at night  
by that one solitary rose of your breath. You're right,  
I'll never understand how much I have you.

Without my craze of words I am nothing but sick.  
I rise and fall in accordance with your hips.

Sonnet in which the poet imagines starting a family with Lorca

I rise and fall in accordance with your hips  
and feel evaporated sweat encrust  
my fingertips. Our children tossing just  
beyond us in their cots, who use their kips

to fib about their daddies' strong devotion,  
curl their defenseless, cochlear bodies alone  
in cotton blankets that make them feel a clone  
is holding them, so that, por fin, no motion

no stirs, no fuss, and I feel loss, somewhat,  
shooting its roots inside my chest. I tried to stave  
it off so long, I thought it couldn't rot

here anymore. I tried to think I could outbrave  
forgiving myself for turning death to art, to what  
I am: the scars I ask my flesh to save.

## Sonnet in Granada

These are the scars I ask my flesh to save  
and this, my hooded cloak, I hope conceals  
my sin and lets my skin transpire. (All that appeals  
during this ghastly sweaty Holy Week heatwave).

And this procession scything the streets I long  
to chase after but stop a moment. Stood  
stock-still, I let my mind pour forth, a hood  
among hoods, giving out into the throng.

And they, the children in the apartment window,  
know nothing of tradition and less of fire,  
and, freer for it, they might do well to follow

a lesser god, like love, or else they'll tire  
along the path and die embittered and hollow,  
so someone else may find what's hidden there.

Sonnet towards Fuente Vaqueros

So someday I may find what's hidden there,  
I, having dreamt forever of your birthplace,  
depart Granada alone and everywhere  
spring petals fall, as though to deface

the dusty empty road that narrows  
into the verdant valle from the height  
of the city, over which the sun's arrows,  
at least one hundred seven Farenheit,

angle through Lorca's childhood bedroom window  
lighting the cradle whose pink blanket wraps  
no child, and, dropping to my knees below

the drawing of a boy, I just collapse  
because that knock-kneed graphite kid must know  
that all I say is whispered from your lips.

## Sonnet

When all I say is whispered from your lips  
and all I voice is blotched out stars, the black  
of underbrush, three amputated arrows, the lack  
of wine spilled on the bone, or an eclipse,

and when the song that strays from me  
creates a finished, woven garland of cold  
resilience against the sun's shifting hold,  
in turn, repeating the night unendingly,

I'll be the dog of your estate, unable  
to sing but singing, all the same, your name  
in a language I cannot forget, no matter my aim,  
and I'll join you and your kids at the table

where—here I want to be completely clear—  
I am the one who holds you by the ear.

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Your words into my lifting chest and soothes it  
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Eyes, blind to these red words that disappear.

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For you, my serpent arms pull at my hair.  
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So someday I may find what's hidden there  
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