



TRANSLATORS' RINCON de TRADUCTORES CORNER



Three Poems

by José Luis García Martín

translated by
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Introduction

José Luis García Martín (Cáceres, Spain, 1950 -) is a writer, a former professor of Literature at the Universidad de Oviedo (Spain) and the director of *Revista Clarín. Revista de nueva literatura*. His literary work encompasses a multiplicity of books and genres, including critical editions, short stories, theater, and poetry. His first poetry collection *Marineros perdidos en los puertos* [Sailors Lost in the Harbors] was published in 1972 and he has written ten other poetry books since then.

The first two poems that are offered here in English translation, “**Mi patria**” [My homeland] and “**Amigos**” [Friends], are part of a larger collection called *Presente continuo* [Present Continuous], published in 2015. The third one, “**Despedida**” [Farewell], is part of the early poetry book *Treinta monedas* [Thirty Coins] (1989). These collections bring the reader to different parts of the world by using a variety of poetic styles and poetic voices in the never-ending journey of the written word. The poems at hand, although from different creative periods, reflect a recurrent topic in García Martín’s poetry: the presentation of abstract concepts in a poetic, yet quotidian, manner.

About the translator

Claudia Quevedo-Webb holds a Ph.D. in Spanish Linguistics from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. From 2017-2019, she worked as a Spanish Teaching Assistant in the department of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard University. Since the Fall of 2020, she has been an Assistant Instructional Professor of Spanish at the University of Chicago. As a higher education instructor, she focuses her efforts on the pedagogy of teaching Spanish Language and Culture. She has a great passion for Spanish Literature, and she authored the prologue for the book *Casa sin puertas*, by Carlos Alcorta (2017).

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MY HOMELAND

If they told me, you can choose your homeland,
a place to live,
a place to die for,
a great history full of falseness
that you have to believe without hesitation,
an undulating cloth
that should fill you with emotion
when sighted from afar,
what homeland would I choose?
The world is too large,
my village too small.
Will there not be a wandering asteroid
without a name,
without history, without a flag,
without blood on its hands,
without victims to avenge?

A rough stone ignored of everyone,
which will not be splashed
by the stupidity of men,
that I would want to be my homeland.



FRIENDS

Max Jacob¹

What better paradise than a few friends
in this clear never-ending night,
while the river flows behind the closed garden,
and, curious, between the branches, out comes the moon?

If lips tangle with melancholy,
if the forehead of the youngest is clouded,
With another drop of wine, smiles soon return.

Not even death do I fear when I am with you all
who are half my soul, indeed my whole soul,
friends who will leave, who have already left
in the river of time to a deserted place.
Like before, you are all here with me again,
on this lighted, paused, silenced night,
when all is said though we say nothing.

¹ Max Jacob (1876-1944) was a French artist known for his poetry, paintings, and work as a critic. One of his famous quotes that might connect him to this poem reads as follows: “L’amitié a été le clou où est pendue ma vie” [Friendship has been the nail where my life hangs], extracted from Scheler, L. (1982). *La grande espérance des poètes, 1940-1945* (p. 269). Temps Actuels.



FAREWELL

M. Altolaguirre², Poesía, III, 1930

You have not loved me, and you flee through your years
to a country where I do not exist,
but how much you leave with me by leaving me...
Others will see your life dissolve;
I will preserve the memory
of a fragile, adolescent beauty.
Soon you shall not be you, even if you do not die;
Even if you do not live, you will live in me.
In my memory, you will always be young:
So see how much I win by losing you.

² Manuel Altolaguirre (1905-1959) was a Spanish poet of the Generation of '27. Some of his poetry books include *Ejemplo* [Example] (1927), *La lenta libertad* [Slow Freedom] (1936) or *Poemas en América* [Poems in America] (1955).



Rincón de Traductores/Translators' Corner

Disponibles en/available at: <http://cervantesobservatorio.fas.harvard.edu/en/translation-corner>

1. RT/TC 001 (2019). "A Letter of Federico García Lorca to his Parents, 1935". Author: Federico García Lorca (Spain); Translator: Christopher Maurer; Genre: Letter.
2. RT/TC 002 (2019). "Like a Night with Legs Wide Open". Author: José Alcántara Almánzar (Dominican Republic); Translator: Luis Guzmán Valerio; Genre: Short Story.
3. RT/TC 003 (2019). "In the Parks, at Dusk" and "I Only Think of You". Author: Marina Mayoral (Spain); Translator: María Socorro Suárez Lafuente; Genre: Short Story.
4. RT/TC 004 (2020). "The Guide through Death" and "The Fat Lady". Author: Guadalupe Dueñas (Mexico); Translator: Josie Hough; Genre: Short Story.
5. RT/TC 005 (2020). "The Case of the Unfaithful Translator". Author: José María Merino (Spain); Translator: Erin Goodman; Genre: Short Story.
6. RT/TC 006 (2020). "The Guerrilla Fighter" and "May as Well Call it Quits". Author: Albalucía Ángel Marulanda (Colombia); Translator: Daniel Steele Rodríguez; Genre: Short Story.
7. RT/TC 007 (2020). "Miguel Hernández' Speech to His Companions in the Ocaña Jail". Author: Miguel Hernández (Spain); Translator: Constance Marina; Genre: Speech.
8. RT/TC 008 (2020). "On the Road to Houmt Souk". Author: Soledad Puértolas (Spain); Translator: Francisca González Arias; Genre: Short Story.
9. RT/TC 009 (2020). *Rincón de Traductores / Translators' Corner – Volume 1: Compilation 2019-2020*. Various Authors; Various Translators.
10. RT/TC 010 (2020). *Waiting for the Revolution: Cuba, the Unfinished Journey* (excerpt). Author: Gustavo Gac-Artigas (Chile); Translator: Andrea G. Labinger; Genre: Chronicle.



11. RT/TC 011 (2020). “A Bad Girl”. Author: Montserrat Ordóñez (Colombia); Translator: Clara Eugenia Ronderos; Genre: Short Story.
12. RT/TC 012 (2020). “Claudia and the Cats”. Author: Ivanna Chapeta (Guatemala); Translator: Lindsay Romanoff Bartlett; Genre: Short Story.
13. RT/TC 013 (2021). *Song of Being and Nonbeing*. Author: Santiago Alba Rico (Spain); Translator: Carolina Finley Hampson; Genre: Poetry.
14. RT/TC 014 (2021). “Christmas Eve in the Hills of Jaruco”. Author: Robert F. Lima Rovira and Robert Lima (Cuba/USA); Translator: Robert lima; Genre: Chronicle.