

*When the generous Peter, who had sworn
to die at the side of his dear Lord
amidst a thousand spears and a thousand swords,
realized that, overcome by cowardice,
he had been found wanting at the time of trouble,
the pain, shame and sorrow
for his own failure and for the other's pain
wounded his chest with a thousand stabs.*

*The bows, however, that hurled towards his chest
the fiercest and most deadly arrows
were the eyes of the Lord, when they saw him:
the eyes were the bows and arrows were the eyes,
which, not content with the heart, burrowed
into the soul; and caused wounds so deep
that he had, for the rest of his life,
to anoint them with the tears of his eyes.*

*Three times already he had declared and sworn
to the insolent and brazen handmaid, the servant,
and the whole nefarious lot that he had never been
in the retinue of his Lord, nor did he know him.
And after the rooster, announcing his guilt,
had called in the new day as witness,
and as he became suddenly aware of his shortcoming,
his eyes met those of Christ.*

*No one should boast being able to tell
how the already stricken Peter felt
as he met the gaze of those holy eyes,
for no tongue could even approximate the truth;
it looked as if his Lord, surrounded by many
enemies and abandoned by his peers, wanted to say:
«What I foretold him has now come to pass,
disloyal friend, proud disciple».*

*Never did a young lady see
her pretty face in a mirror of polished crystal
as clearly as the wretched old man
saw his error in the eyes of the Lord;
nor could an avid ear, even if it listened
ceaselessly for thousands of years
for someone's words, as he did hear,
just by that gaze, in that moment.*

*As it happens sometimes that a lover discovers
by mere gazing the desires hidden in the other's eyes,
without being told, (although such comparison
of sacred and profane is undignified),
he also, who is experienced
in the art of love, can teach the inexperienced
how to speak with one's eyes
without saying a word, or writing notes.*

*The eyes of the Lord were like
a quick tongue, and Peter's eyes
like ears yearning to hear his voice.
«Prouder», he seemed to say, «are your eyes
than the godless hands that will crucify me;
nor have I felt a blow that struck me as hard,
among the many that did strike me,
as the one that came out of your mouth.*

*I found none faithful, no friend
among the many that I chose to be called mine:
but you, for whom my love was so intense,
are more deceitful and ungrateful than any.
Each of them hurt me by leaving me:
but you denied me, and now you stand
there with that godless bunch enjoying my pain,
and seem to share in their delight».*

*If one could retell one by one
the words of scorn, yet filled with love,
that Peter seemed to see written
in the calm sacred eyes of the Lord,
would blow the mind of anyone who'd listen;
anyone who knows how powerful the gaze
of a mortal can often be on mortal senses,
can also imagine how strong the divine gaze was.*

*Like a snowbank which, having lain frozen
and hidden in the depth of the valley all winter,
and then in springtime, warmed by the sun,
falls apart and melts into streams,
such was the fear which had lain like ice
in Peter's heart and made him repress the truth;
when Christ turned His eyes on him,
it melted and was changed into tears.*

*And his crying was not a small spring
or mountain stream, which dries in the warm seasons;
for although the king of Heaven forgave him
immediately for his disgraceful deception,
not a single night in his remaining life passed
without the cock's crow waking him up
and reminding him how shamefully he behaved,
and inciting new tears for the ancient betrayal.*

That face, that moments earlier
had donned the colour of death,
as all blood rushed to the heart,
leaving all other parts cold and pale,
(leaving his limbs cold and pale)
warmed by the rays emanating
from the sacred eyes became aflame,
and fear fled whence it had entered:
(and whence fear had entered, it fled:)
in its place shame appeared.

*Realizing that he felt much different
than before, and unable to bear to remain
in the presence of the scorned Lord,
who loved him so, he didn't wait to see
if the harsh tribunal would hand down
a severe or clement sentence, but,
leaving the despicable place where he was,
bitterly crying, he returned outside.*

Wishing to find someone who'd punish him
for his grave error, because the fear
of greater evil curbs the daring hand,
[Peter] went through the many shadows
of the dark night, shouting, where pain led him;
and life, which he cared so much about a little earlier,
now he hates more than anything else, for it hurts him;
because it caused him to err, he wants it no more.

*«Go, life, go away», he said crying,
«where you're not hated nor despised.
Leave me alone, for you should not travel
with such guilty company as myself.
Go, life, go, for I don't want you to teach me*

*to be a coward ever more!
To preserve your fragile nature, I do not wish
to kill the soul, which is destined to everlasting life.*

*O life, too guilty and deceiving,
that made me lose the eternal peace of heaven
to avoid such an insignificant hardship here on earth:
he who desires you the most,
fastest lies without you, derided;
and him who'd readily depart from you and be buried,
you never wish to leave, despite his wishes,
always wishing to offer him new suffering.*

*To how many, happy in their youth,
did waiting for you bring terrible torments?
If they had been allowed to die once old age
caught up with them, they'd have been happy,
because there is no mortal state that brings
perennial happiness, nor endless torment.
Thence, life, I am right to be pained by you,
for you stay with me when I no longer want you!*

*My faith would have not failed as it did,
if you had not been with me till this day!
And if my desire for you hadn't taken
reason and memories away from me,
I would have remembered that I saw the lame walk,
the dumb speak, the blind see and,
most astonishing for the shadows below,
souls returned to the bodies whence they came.*

*These events, that the world and I knew of,
should have reminded me that their maker
must be the source of salvation,
and remove any fear from my heart.
Now it's easy to see that, when afraid,
I was beyond myself and had lost my mind,
for I denied the very life for fear of death,
when I looked for a way out of peril.*

*By denying my Lord, I denied
the very life whence all life is derived:
a calm life, that is not afraid nor knows hope,*

*and which knows no end. And because
I denied true life, there is no reason for me
to live this one, which is false.
Go away, deceitful life, out of my sight:
as I rejected true life, I no longer want its mere shadow».*

*See, O man, what things I endure for you;
To you I cry, I who am dying for you;
See the pains with which I am afflicted;
See the nails with which I am pierced.
There is no suffering like unto that with which I am tormented.
And though the outward suffering be so great,
Yet is the inward suffering heavier still,
When I find you to be so ungrateful!*