

Classic Poetry Series

Antonio Machado

- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

Antonio Machado (1875-1939)

Antonio Machado was born in Seville and moved to Madrid at the age of eight. He studied in Paris where he worked as a translator, and met French poets. He became a schoolteacher. He returned to Spain and taught at Soria in Castile, from 1907, where he met his wife Leonor. Tragically she died very young, and in 1912 he left Soria for Baeza in Andalusia. Loyal to the Republic he left Spain for France when Catalonia fell, and died there in February 1939. He is acknowledged as Spain's finest poet of the early twentieth century.

Fields of Soria

Hills of silver plate,
grey heights, dark red rocks
through which the Duero bends
its crossbow arc
round Soria, shadowed oaks,
stone dry-lands, naked mountains,
white roads and river poplars,
twilights of Soria, warlike and mystical,
today I feel, for you,
in my hearts depths, sadness,
sadness of love! Fields of Soria,
where it seems the stones have dreams,
you go with me! Hills of silver plate,
grey heights, dark red rocks.

Antonio Machado

Guadarrama

Guadarrama, is it you, old friend,
mountains white and gray
that I used to see painted against the blue
those afternoons of the old days in Madrid?
Up your deep ravines
and past your bristling peaks
a thousand Guadarramas and a thousand suns
come riding with me, riding to your heart.

Translated by Alan S. Trueblood

Anonymous submission.

Antonio Machado

Has My Heart Gone To Sleep?

Has my heart gone to sleep?
Have the beehives of my dreams
stopped working, the waterwheel
of the mind run dry,
scoops turning empty,
only shadow inside?

No, my heart is not asleep.
It is awake, wide awake.
Not asleep, not dreaming—
its eyes are opened wide
watching distant signals, listening
on the rim of vast silence.

Translated by Alan S. Trueblood

Anonymous submission.

Antonio Machado

Last Night As I Was Sleeping

Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that a spring was breaking
out in my heart.
I said: Along which secret aqueduct,
Oh water, are you coming to me,
water of a new life
that I have never drunk?

Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that I had a beehive
here inside my heart.
And the golden bees
were making white combs
and sweet honey
from my old failures.

Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that a fiery sun was giving
light inside my heart.
It was fiery because I felt
warmth as from a hearth,
and sun because it gave light
and brought tears to my eyes.

Last night as I slept,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that it was God I had
here inside my heart.

Translated by Robert Bly

Anonymous submission.

Antonio Machado

Passageways

Who set, between those rocks like cinder,
to show the honey of dream,
that golden broom,
those blue rosemaries?
Who painted the purple mountains
and the saffron, sunset sky?
The hermitage, the beehives,
the cleft of the river
the endless rolling water deep in rocks,
the pale-green of new fields,
all of it, even the white and pink
under the almond trees!

Antonio Machado

Songs of the High Country

Soria, in blue mountains,
on the fields of violet,
how often I've dreamed of you
on the plain of flowers,
where the Guadalquivir runs
past golden orange-trees
to the sea.

Antonio Machado

The Wind, One Brilliant Day

The wind, one brilliant day, called
to my soul with an odor of jasmine.

"In return for the odor of my jasmine,
I'd like all the odor of your roses."

"I have no roses; all the flowers
in my garden are dead."

"Well then, I'll take the withered petals
and the yellow leaves and the waters of the fountain."

the wind left. And I wept. And I said to myself:
"What have you done with the garden that was entrusted to you?"

Translated by Robert Bly

Anonymous submission.

Antonio Machado

To Joaquin Palacio

Palacio, good friend,
is spring there
showing itself on branches of black poplars
by the roads and river? On the steeps
of the high Duero, spring is late,
but so soft and lovely when it comes!
Are there a few new leaves
on the old elms?
The acacias must still be bare,
and the mountain peaks snow-filled.
Oh the massed pinks and whites
of Moncayo, massed up there,
beauty, in the sky of Aragon!
Are there brambles flowering,
among the grey stones,
and white daisies,
in the thin grass?

On the belltowers
the storks will be landing now.
The wheat must be green
and the brown mules working sown furrows,
the people seeding late crops,
in April rain. There'll be bees,
drunk on rosemary and thyme.
Are the plum trees in flower? Violets still?
There must be hunters about, stealthy,
their decoys under long capes.
Palacio, good friend,
are there nightingales by the river?
When the first lilies,
and the first roses, open,
on a blue evening, climb to Espino,
high Espino, where she is in the earth.

Antonio Machado