

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Cesar Vallejo**

**- poems -**

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## **Black Messengers. (Translation of Los heraldos negros)**

There are in life such hard blows . . . I don't know!  
Blows seemingly from God's wrath; as if before them  
the undertow of all our sufferings  
is embedded in our souls . . . I don't know!

There are few; but are . . . opening dark furrows  
in the fiercest of faces and the strongest of loins,  
They are perhaps the colts of barbaric Attilas  
or the dark heralds Death sends us.

They are the deep falls of the Christ of the soul,  
of some adorable one that Destiny Blasphemes.  
Those bloody blows are the crepitation  
of some bread getting burned on us by the oven's door

And the man . . . poor . . . poor!  
He turns his eyes around, like  
when patting calls us upon our shoulder;  
he turns his crazed maddened eyes,  
and all of life's experiences become stagnant, like a puddle of guilt, in a daze.

There are such hard blows in life. I don't know

Cesar Vallejo

## **Black Stone on Top of a White Stone**

I shall die in Paris, in a rainstorm,  
On a day I already remember.  
I shall die in Paris-- it does not bother me--  
Doubtless on a Thursday, like today, in autumn.

It shall be a Thursday, because today, Thursday  
As I put down these lines, I have set my shoulders  
To the evil. Never like today have I turned,  
And headed my whole journey to the ways where I am alone.

César Vallejo is dead. They struck him,  
All of them, though he did nothing to them,  
They hit him hard with a stick and hard also  
With the end of a rope. Witnesses are: the Thursdays,  
The shoulder bones, the loneliness, the rain, and the roads...

Cesar Vallejo

## Los heraldos negros

Hay golpes en la vida tan fuertes . . . ¡Yo no sé!  
Golpes como del odio de Dios; como si ante ellos;  
la resaca de todo lo sufrido se empozara en el alma  
¡Yo no sé!

Son pocos; pero son . . . abren zanjas oscuras  
en el rostro mas fiero y en el lomo mas fuerte,  
Serán talvez los potros de bárbaros atilas;  
o los heraldos negros que nos manda la Muerte

Son las caídas hondas de los Cristos del alma,  
de alguna adorable que el Destino Blasfema,  
Esos golpes sangrientos son las crepitaciones  
de algún pan que en la puerta del horno se nos quema

Y el hombre....pobre...¡pobre!  
Vuelve los ojos,  
como cuando por sobre el hombro  
nos llama una palmada;  
vuelve los ojos locos,  
y todo lo vivido  
se empoza, como charco de culpa,  
en la mirada.

Hay golpes en la vida, tan fuertes . . . ¡Yo no sé!

Cesar Vallejo

## **Paris, October 1936**

From all of this I am the only one who leaves.  
From this bench I go away, from my pants,  
from my great situation, from my actions,  
from my number split side to side,  
from all of this I am the only one who leaves.

From the Champs Elysées or as the strange  
alley of the Moon makes a turn,  
my death goes away, my cradle leaves,  
and, surrounded by people, alone, cut loose,  
my human resemblance turns around  
and dispatches its shadows one by one.

And I move away from everything, since everything  
remains to create my alibi:  
my shoe, its eyelet, as well as its mud  
and even the bend in the elbow  
of my own buttoned shirt.

Cesar Vallejo

## To My Brother Miguel In Memoriam

Brother, today I sit on the brick bench of the house,  
where you make a bottomless emptiness.  
I remember we used to play at this hour, and mama  
caressed us: "But, sons..."

Now I go hide  
as before, from all evening  
lectures, and I trust you not to give me away.  
Through the parlor, the vestibule, the corridors.  
Later, you hide, and I do not give you away.  
I remember we made ourselves cry,  
brother, from so much laughing.

Miguel, you went into hiding  
one night in August, toward dawn,  
but, instead of chuckling, you were sad.  
And the twin heart of those dead evenings  
grew annoyed at not finding you. And now  
a shadow falls on my soul.

Listen, brother, don't be late  
coming out. All right? Mama might worry.

Cesar Vallejo