POETRY AS AN ACT OF HISTORY

Al-Andalus, Sefarad, Spain

María Rosa Menocal

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Miguel de Cervantes published what is arguably the most canonical of all novels, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, in 1605. Almost immediately the novel became a phenomenal best-seller, and to this day it remains among the most widely read works of fiction—as well as one of those rare works of literature with instantly recognizable visual representations. Its sequel appeared a decade later, in 1615, on the heels of a rival and spurious sequel by another writer whose "false" continuation was able to take advantage of the extraordinary popularity, and thus sales, of the original novel. And thus, when Cervantes himself does manage to finish and publish his own continuation of the adventures of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, he begins "Part II" with a much cited and clearly half-ironic denunciation of falseness of authorship, and of who is, and isn't, the "true inventor"—*el verdadero autor*—of the Quixote, that most brilliantly constructed fictional character of all times.

All of this—and much more along these lines, stories within stories about stories and much to-do about "true" versus "false" fictional characters, about who and what is fake and illusory inside this very self-conscious work of fiction—has long been fodder for the mills of certain kinds of approaches to literature. Nothing has been easier than to use this novel as a proof-text for questions of meta-fiction, or to make points about the autonomy of literature, to talk about how literature is, in the end, about literature itself. And why not? After all, at the heart of the novel is a fictional character who himself seems unable to tell fact from fiction. Don Quixote is mostly inscribed in our cultural and literary memory as the very model of a person whose relationship to reality is distorted, perhaps to madness itself, by his apparent belief in the reality of literary texts. But for those of us interested in the history of medieval Spain—al-Andalus, Sefarad, España—Cervantes' great work is powerful in part precisely because it can also be read as something like the opposite of all of that: a work grappling ferociously with history itself, as well as with the elusive but ultimately central question of how literature is vital to historical memory. Or, to put it only a little differently, how poetry—and I will use this word to mean all the aesthetic forms—is sometimes an act of history.

Let us turn for a minute to that early moment in the novel that reveals the historical entanglement: we are introduced to a gentleman from a "certain village in La Mancha." He has so given himself over to reading books of "knight errantry," and so much does he believe in the truth of the fictions he reads, that one day he sets out—from books into history, so to speak—and tries to become a knight errant himself. But as it turns out it isn't so easy to become a knight errant at the turn of the seventeenth century, and two nearly fatal glitches have to be overcome in the course of the first eight chapters. The first is that after an initial series

of adventures, during which the knight is beaten to within an inch of his life, he returns home to find his household in a panic at his disappearance. And they have, in fact, summoned both the local priest and the village barber to help out. Everyone agrees that the source of the poor man's obvious madness is the reading of literature—and they decide that the only solution is to have a "Great Inquisition" of the library of Don Quixote and get rid of the offending books. There are all sorts of half-comic, often deeply ironic, discussions between the priest and the barber about the relative worth of the different books, but in the end the bulk of them are burned by the housekeeper, in one huge bonfire—much as Cardinal Cisneros, Queen Isabel's confessor, had burned Granada's Arabic library a century before—and the room where the library was once housed is walled off. Many critics are content to see this as emblematic of Cervantes' sophisticated sense of intertextuality and thus as one among many examples of why this is the first truly "modern" work of fiction. While this is surely the case, it is no less true that no contemporary reader, no Spaniard at the turn of the seventeenth century, could have missed the allusion to the tragedies of the day, the real book burnings—not to speak of the people burnings—of Inquisitorial Spain.

For a short period of time after this incident, Don Quixote does indeed stay at home, quite baffled as to what has happened to his library. But his "cure," this burning of books and walling up of a library, is wholly illusory and after fifteen days—during which, as it turns out, he was actually cultivating the neighbor who would become his wonderful sidekick, Sancho Panza—he sets out once again. And off they go, and the very first of their adventures after the burning of the library is the most famous one of the entire novel, the one everyone knows even if they haven't read the book: that iconic scene in which Don Quixote thinks those windmills so characteristic of rural La Mancha are

actually giants, and must be fought, tilted at. But no sooner has that adventure passed than we discover—or rather our narrator does—that the source from which these stories are being taken leaves off at this point. "But the difficulty in all this is that at this very point and juncture," quoting Cervantes now, from Edith Grossman's great new translation, "the author of the history leaves the battle pending, apologizing because he found nothing else written about the feats of Don Quixote other than what he has already recounted." So our narrator—Cervantes now emphasizes that he has been retelling another book and that he himself is the "second author"—goes off in search of some other source for this history, for another "first author." This search leads him to Toledo, the city of Spain most emblematic of its complex heritage: in the twelfth century Toledo had become the great center of translations of Arabic texts into Latin, a project, it is too often forgotten, undertaken by Christian scholars, many of whom traveled there from other parts of Europe to read in the rich Arabic libraries of science and philosophy of this city, which had fallen to the Castilians in 1085. And what followed was a vital metamorphosis in Europe's intellectual history, triggered by the newly available library of Greek philosophical texts, and its initially vexed relationship with the Church, although the translations had often been done thanks to the patronage of the Church, and especially of the great monastery of Cluny. And the era of translations from Arabic into Latin was followed, in the thirteenth century, by translations out of Arabic into the vernacular of the local Christian rulers, the Castilians whose language thus becomes the new literary and legal language of Spain.

So, Cervantes' search for a source in Toledo is primal, and highly charged, historically, not least because it has embedded within it the memory that Arabic was once one of Toledo's proud languages, and part of what made it a great international Christian

city: "One day," our narrator continues, "when I was in the Alcaná market in Toledo, a boy came by to sell some notebooks and old papers to a silk merchant; as I am very fond of reading, even torn papers in the streets, I was moved by my natural inclinations to pick up one of the volumes the boy was selling, and I realized that it was written in characters I knew to be Arabic. And since I recognized but could not read it, I looked around to see if [I could find] some Morisco who knew Castilian, and who could read it for me..."

Let me interrupt Cervantes, once again, to note that the Moriscos were the Muslims who, after the abrogation of the treaties of 1492, were forced to convert—and of course our narrator does rather easily find one, since before 1605, when they were expelled from Spain, they were an old and vital part of the population of Toledo. By the time Part II is published, ten years later, these Spaniards have been banished from their homeland, and with them their distinctive language, which was something called *aljamiado*, an invention worthy of Cervantes' fiction: medieval Spanish—most likely Castilian or Aragonese—written in Arabic script. "I urged him to read the beginning," continues Cervantes, "which he did, extemporizing a translation of the Arabic into Castilian and saying that it said: *History of Don Quixote of La Mancha*. Written by Cide Hamete Benengeli, an Arab Historian."

Bingo. Our narrator has found his true historical source, the "first author." So, the narrator then hires the Morisco translator and for a pittance has him restore this lost book; his translation *is* the rest of this great novel, whose pivotal fiction is thus deeply and ironically implicated in just about every historical milestone of a medieval Spain that is being expelled and then almost completely forgotten, a Spain where Christian kingdoms might be opposed to Islamic polities—although not necessarily more

so than to other Christian kingdoms—but where this hardly impeded political policies that allowed both Muslims and Jews to live in their kingdoms, or cultural practices that in many cases made the Arabic heritage part of their own (**Figure 1**). In this discovery of the manuscript that was about to be destroyed—sold to be made into rags, making the Quixote literally the pulp fiction of its age—are evoked those searing literary problems of what forgetting and remembering are all about, and the complex role that literature can play in our cultivation of history, and of historical memory. There is a stark historical realism, and a terrible historical tragedy, a summoning up of a great civilization that had been dismantled and destroyed. Just behind the façade of this fictitious translation—a translation of an Arabic chronicle of the life and times of this half-mad Castilian gentleman, written by an Arab and translated by an anonymous Morisco—lies one of the most poignant of meditations on the problem of historical memory and its falsifications, perhaps not so different from the problem of the relationship of literature to history.

With very high irony indeed Cervantes opposes literature's lies to history's truth, and describes the "false" Arab author as a "great liar." But Cide Hamete Benengeli, from that point on in the novel, is none other than Miguel Saavedra de Cervantes himself. Of course, at some level it might be perfectly reasonable to note that this is just another novelist's tongue-in-cheek riff on Plato's criticism and banishment of the poets from the Republic; after all, here we have a novel about the delusions in the "real world" caused by the lies of literature, about the pain and suffering of a man lost in a universe of fiction, and at the very end of Part II, a dying Don Quixote poignantly recognizes that they were all "just stories," and he appears to repent. But of course it is precisely the stark historical circumstance of Cervantes' times that makes us perk up our ears at all these otherwise amusing, even ironic,

circumstantial details about authorial identity: the force of his use of a Morisco translator—along with the sly suggestion that the

Figure 1. The church of San Roman, a place that would have been known well by Cervantes and by his characters. Built by Castilians at the beginning of the thirteenth century, it reveals the complex integration of the languages and cultures of Christian Toledo where Arabic was at the heart of its cultural prowess.

found manuscript might be an *aljamiado* text—the establishment of an Arab author as Cervantes' own fictional persona, and the simple fact that these two—the Arab author and the Morisco translator—are our narrator's only allies in the rescue and transmission of those stories about Don Quixote that are his

novel. A novel that becomes, in Spanish history—at least as an Andalusianist reads it—the real last sigh for a world irrevocably lost by Cervantes' time, lost not only because it no longer existed but because, as the novel's opening makes clear, even its memory was being destroyed, the libraries of its memory sold as rags.

Perhaps there are historical moments that are more evocative and central to the questions of why literature matters, and the role that literature plays in creating, as well as preserving, historical memory, than medieval Spain; moments when it is clearer that poetry—to use that term to mean all the aesthetic forms, the arts, really, including architecture—is an act of history. But if so I don't know what they are. How many images are there out there that can compete with the angel windows in San Roman, where the Arabic script that frames the window tells us a story about medieval Christianity that has been forgotten, first and foremost, it must be said, by the Christians of Spain (**Figure 2**)?

"Andalus," to quote the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, who died suddenly last August, "might be here or there, or anywhere ... a meeting place of strangers in the project of building human culture.... It is not only that there was a Jewish-Muslim co-existence, but that the fates of the two peoples were similar.... Al-Andalus for me is the realization of the dream of the poem." Pace Darwish, it was actually a Jewish-Muslim-Christian coexistence, although it is certainly true that it is the Arabic culture of Islam in the peninsula that profoundly shaped the culture of the Jewish community. Consider this synagogue, one of what were once the dozen or more of the great Jewish quarter of Christian Toledo, the Alcaná—where Cervantes'

Figure 2. One of the angel windows in the church of San Roman, Toledo.

narrator found the book he was looking for, the *verdadera historia* or "true history" of the Quixote (**Figure 3**). At its height, this was a real "quarter," occupying something like a fourth of this Castilian capital. This synagogue, which is from the twelfth or perhaps thirteenth century, is in the relatively austere style of the Moroccan Almohads—another irony that cannot be elaborated on here—and it is known today by its Christian name, Santa María la Blanca, a name it acquired when it began to be used

as a church. The only other synagogue that survives into our own times is the breathtaking Tránsito, built in the dramatically

Figure 3. The synagogue known as Santa María la Blanca in the Jewish quarter of Toledo.

different and highly ornamented style of its moment, the early fourteenth century, the age of the Alhambra of Granada and of the royal Alcazares of the Christian kings of Seville, both of which we will consider a little later.

Darwish's great expression "the dream of the poem" is also the title of a brilliant new volume by Peter Cole, who with this

book has incomparably enriched our access to Spain's often inaccessible poetic heritage. This anthology of translations of the Hebrew poetry of both Islamic and Christian Spain reveals, among other things, why this period has long been considered the "Golden Age" of Jewish culture—and, thus, why, for a period of time, progressive Jewish congregations in both Europe and the United States built their synagogues to pay explicit homage to their "Moorish" heritage. It was a culture at whose center lies this Hebrew poetry born of a profound and complex symbiosis with Arabic poetry, a poetry the Jews of Spain, who were for centuries native speakers of Arabic, knew intimately.

It is sad to say that nothing remotely like such a volume exists for that great corpus of Hispano-Arabic poetry of which both Jews and Christians were understandably—for some, alarmingly—enamored: "The Christians love to read the poems and romances of the Arabs," laments Alvarus of Cordoba, one of the leaders of the Christian resistance movement of the ninth century that led to a series of martyrdoms. "They study the Arab theologians and philosophers, not to refute them but to form a correct and elegant Arabic. They have forgotten their own language. For every one who can write a letter in Latin to a friend, there are a thousand who can express themselves in Arabic with elegance, and write better poems in this language than the Arabs themselves." In some ways Alvarus' famous lament perfectly exemplifies the question at hand about historical truths: does it lie principally in his and others' staunch opposition to the Islamic juggernaut? Or in the revelation of the great appreciation of Arabic poetry among other Christians? Or in the ways that the Great Mosque of Cordoba itself takes the characteristic horseshoe arches of the Visigoths and makes them the icon of the Islamic state, of Cordoba itself (**Figure 4**)?

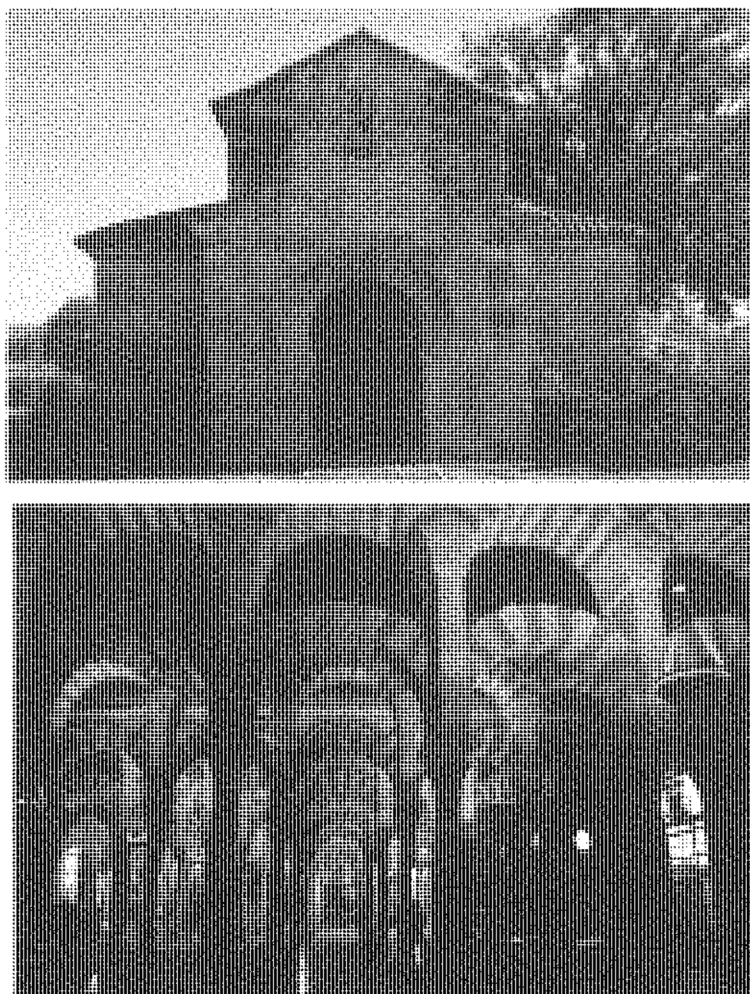

Figure 4. (Top) The church of San Juan Bautista at Baños de Cerrato, the oldest surviving church in Spain, from the time of the Visigoths, who became the revered and considerably mythologized ancestors of the Christians of the Islamic period. (Bottom) The Great Mosque of Cordoba.

That library of Arabic poetry of Spain so compelling to men and women of all faiths included, among other things, some of the most spectacular examples of songs of "courtly love" ever written, songs which certainly played a vital role in the

creation and development of our western troubadour tradition; and its singular and revolutionary inventions were hybrid and multilingual Andalusian song forms—the muwashshah, the zajal—that to this day are sung throughout North Africa. Indeed, the Andalusian heritage is the symbolic heart and soul of certain contemporary musical and poetic traditions in both Syria and Morocco. Musically, they are in fact dramatically different from each other; but they both proudly call themselves Andalusian, and each one has different but legitimate claims to intimate and direct ties to al-Andalus. But in both cases it is really about the iconic power of the Andalusian connection, and what it can say about identity in worlds where saying it more overtly would be dangerous. The literary evocation of the historical memory of al-Andalus has long been powerful in the Arab world, where writers have used it to summon up a special and especially glorious past, and do so in the context of an especially dismal present.

Perhaps no one captures the slipperiness and illusoriness—and centrality—of all this, and of the problems raised by the memory of al-Andalus in our own times than Edward Said. One of the last things he published, in December of 2002, was a rather bittersweet article on Spain for a popular travel magazine, *Travel and Leisure*. "[F]or me, and indeed for many Arabs," he says, near the beginning, "Andalusia [*sic*] still represents the finest flowering of our culture. That is particularly true now, when the Arab Middle East seems mired in defeat and violence, its societies unable to arrest their declining fortunes, its secular culture so full of almost surreal crisis, shock and nihilism." But in fact, the whole of Said's article veers back and forth—perhaps all too much like

Andalusian history itself—between, on the one hand, pride in the incomparable achievements of moments like tenth-century Umayyad Cordoba and, on the other, anger, directed first and foremost against "the self-destructive demise of the Andalusian kings and their tawai'f"—which he explicitly compares to "present-day Arab disunity and consequent weakness," pointing out the inescapable linguistic resonance and connection between the Andalusian "muluk at-tawaif," the taifas or city-states of the eleventh century, and the warring confessional sects, the tawaif of the Lebanese civil wars of our own times.

But in fact this association forces us to confront the next layer of the paradox: It was, as it happens, in the politically disastrous taifas—and not in unified, prosperous, and relatively peaceful Cordoba—that Andalusian poetic culture reached its greatest glories. The comparison is often made—correctly, I believe—with the Italian Renaissance, when individual city-states had murderous attitudes towards each other, and yet it was out of that political chaos that great cultural achievement arose. Indeed, it is that state of continuous civil wars in Italy, which already characterized the thirteenth century, that led Dante Alighieri to write his *Divine Comedy* out of deep political disillusionment and bitterness, in some ways not unlike that of Cervantes. And out of political exile. Exile is in fact the vital foundational condition of al-Andalus, rather than its more trumpeted conquest. Conquest was certainly the triumphant condition of 711 when Muslim armies first crossed the Strait of Gibraltar into Visigothic Spain; but the decisive creation of an Umayyad state in exile—and of the mindset and political attitudes that lead to the glories of Cordoba—begins a little later, in the 750s and very much in the caliph-to-be Abd al-Rahman's harsh exile from Damascus, in his personal loss of his family, and of his native land, in the great coup of 750 by the Abbasids.

> A palm tree stands in the middle of Rusafa,
> Born in the West, far from the land of palms.
> I said to it: How like me you are, far away and in exile,
> In long separation from family and friends.
> You have sprung from soil in which you are a stranger;
> And I, like you, am far from home.

Abd al-Rahman's sweet ode to both exile and the ability to transcend it—the palm tree, like him, is now really of the West, and a part of this brave new world, although it will be forever sentimentally tied to the old Syria, "the land of palms"—is the foundational poem in the Andalusian poetic tradition. And Said (who was a great student of Dante, by the way, and much interested in the effects of political exile on the great Tuscan poet of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) also cites Mahmoud Darwish, in a slight variation on the lines about the Andalusian question I cited earlier: "And in the end we will ask ourselves: 'Was Andalus here or there? On the land? Or in the poem?'"

Part of the problem is that the poet's reluctant answer is perhaps that even if it was once in the land, in what we tend to call "history," its difficult beauty and truth can only endure in the poem … in the novel, the building, the music. And the aesthetic forms sometimes tell us a dramatically different history, and that wonderful Cervantine lesson about literature's truth: that the lost and hard-to-decipher manuscript does also speak to us truthfully about history itself. Sometimes it is the only authentic historical memory; often it is the best. Recent years have brought us a highly politicized search for this memory, medieval Spain having become improbably popular since 9/11. But the truth is that the "meaning" of medieval Spain has always been bitterly contested, and it has very often been treated as the allegory or the figure for something else; its literature has always had its politics interwoven. When Darwish uses the stars over the Andalusian skies as poignant

markers of irreparable loss for a Palestinian, he is, at the same time, explicitly working in the poetic tradition of the eleventh-century Cordoban Ibn Hazm, whose *Tauq al-Hamama*, his book of love and lovers traditionally translated as "The Necklace of the Dove," is about the losses of love, which already, explicitly, seem to him indistinguishable from the destruction of the Umayyad Caliphate of Cordoba, and from his own unforgivable exile from Cordoba after the Berbers sacked both Madinat al-Zahra, the extraordinary palatine city just south of Cordoba, and the glorious Umayyad capital itself. Because one of poetry's virtues is its creation of a deep and synchronistic echo chamber, Ibn Hazm's exile reverberates with that founding exile of Abd al-Rahman from Damascus and that palm tree poem—and his own "Necklace of the Dove" becomes inescapably a part of the Andalusian mystique, of its memory among Arabs.

> Embrace me, so I can be reborn
> From Damascus swords hanging in shops!
> I've got nothing left but my ancient armor
> And my saddle worked in gold.
> I've got nothing left but a manuscript by Averroes,
> *The Necklace of the Dove*, various works in translation.

Here Darwish is bitterly lamenting the turning of the Andalusian past (and thus, he is also asking, will the Palestinian past also be transformed) into "mere" memory, much of it cheap and facile pseudo-memory, no better than the souvenirs of tourists—those "Damascene" swords that hang in every gift shop in Toledo. That Toledo was being created in Cervantes' time, when Arabic and Hebrew and the people who could read them were expelled and then in recent times brought back as tchotchkes for tourists. But the lament of this Palestinian poet is at the same time a nostalgic ode of love to a beloved past, and his

own poem generously partakes in this tradition of memorializing the Andalusian past—and making it speak to a different moment's historical and political needs.

It is worthwhile, in this context, to mention a couple of things about the history of the "various works in translation" that echo in Darwish's ode to Andalus. The Arabic poetry of al-Andalus was first really translated into modern Spanish by an enormously influential Arabist named Emilio García Gómez, in the first part of the twentieth century. His translations of Andalusian poetry first made parts of that canon available—and immensely influential—for poets like the brilliant Federico García Lorca, who is himself, in turn, a very important poetic presence in Darwish's "Andalusian Ode." Famously, García Gómez also translated Ibn Hazm's *Tauq*, and it is thus that *El collar de la paloma*—"The Necklace of the Dove"—itself becomes a landmark in modern Spanish literary history, one of those cases where a translation itself becomes an autonomous and canonical text. And in his preface to the text García Gómez called Ibn Hazm a "Muslim Don Quixote," "a victim of his dreams," a provocative insight indeed, among other things for its comparison of a historical figure with a fictional character, a very Don-Quixote-like thing to do.

At the heart of the matter here, to return to Darwish, is that evocation of Averroes' manuscript and Ibn Hazm's "Necklace of the Dove" which aligns the Palestinian poet with his Andalusian predecessors and soul mates, men who suffered in exile from their beloved homelands: Abd al-Rahman from venerable old Damascus, center of the Umayyad world as he knew it before his exile; Ibn Hazm from Umayyad Cordoba, destroyed by civil wars; Averroes from a much later Cordoba, then governed by fundamentalist Almohads, who distrusted his philosophical positions and sent him to their capital, Marrakech, where he would die. None of them, by the way, were victims of anything like interreligious

wars, let alone that "Reconquest" between Islamic and Christian Spain that dominates most conventional histories you are likely to read. But there is much those histories don't tell us about, and one example sits a stone's throw from the Giralda, in Seville: the "Alcazares Reales" or royal palaces of the Castilian kings. We are reminded by some of the inconvenient details of this history that exile comes from a very wide range of tyrannies. "Conquerors come, conquerors go" is another great Darwish line, and it resonates again. Sometimes it is the exile provoked by our own people or religion, or our own stubborn and uncompromising principles. And sometimes exile is redemptive—the tragedy that moves men to poetry, much as the failures of love do.

Andalus occupies a particular place in our cultural memory, in part because so much of it was already about memory, and about the great healing power of "the dream of the poem." It long specialized in making new buildings or poetry out of ruins. Mass tourism overruns the Alhambra in Granada, a monument invariably presented as the icon of Islamic achievement in the face of that Christian "Reconquest." But it is far from that simple, beginning with the fact that its famous gardens were themselves, when first built in the fourteenth century, an explicit effort to reinscribe the memory of Madinat al-Zahra, which had been sacked more than three hundred years before by fellow Muslims, and whose ruins provided vital tropes—that were and are more than just tropes—of loss and longing:

> The cry of the guitar
> Begins.
> The glasses of dawn

Are shattered.
It is useless
To quiet it.
Impossible
To shut it up.
It weeps monotonously
As water weeps,
As wind weeps
In a snow storm.
It is impossible
To stop it.
It cries for far away
Things.
Sand of the hot south
That begs for white camellias.
It weeps, arrow without a target,
Evening without a morning,
And the first bird
Dead upon the branch.
Oh, guitar!
Heart gravely wounded
By five swords.

Lorca, one of whose great poems this is, seems to have given us a guitar that is Andalusian in more ways than one, echoing voices we can be sure he heard both in the anthologies of translated Andalusian poetry of his time, and perhaps, since he was a native and great lover of Granada, in the ravines of the Alhambra itself. "Be a string to my guitar"—Darwish begins one of the sections of his qasida, or Andalusian ode: "conquerors come, conquerors go." Yes, this is Palestine, and it is Andalus, but it is also Lorca, shot dead at the beginning of twentieth-century Spain's brutal civil war, and the very last lines of Darwish's "Andalusian Ode"

continue to evoke Lorca—whose most famous collection of poems is the *Romancero gitano* or "Gypsy Songbook." Darwish ends his poem:

> Violins weep with Arabs leaving Andalusia
> Violins weep with Gypsies on their way to Andalusia.

This memory palace, that "meeting place for strangers in the project of building human culture," remains today a haunting muse, and one with special resonance in our own times of trouble. Even when the political and ideological histories speak to us about conflict and hatreds, the aesthetic traditions speak, often loudly and clearly, to a different history, one that produced Christian convents that reveal without embarrassment their ties to the builders of the Alhambra and even versions of the pilgrim Santiago—not Santiago the "killer of Moors"—who understood that Arabic was one of his languages as well, one of the languages of God in Spain. In that spirit I give the last word to an Andalusian poet, Ibn 'Arabi of Murcia, still revered today among Muslims as the greatest of Sufis. A great deal of Ibn 'Arabi's remarkable poetry—and I will read from the great translation of Michael Sells—does evoke the Andalusian moment and its ability to hold together a series of contradictory truths, to create societies with all sorts of imperfections but which, nonetheless, did provide the time and place where the three notoriously fractious children of Abraham somehow managed not only to live together but—more importantly—to build buildings and write poetry that could not have been written if they had lived without each other.

> Marvel,
> A garden among the flames!
> My heart can take on
> Any form:
> Gazelles in a meadow,
> A cloister for monks,

For the idols, sacred ground,
Kaaba for the circling pilgrim,
The tables of a Torah,
The scrolls of the Qur'an

I profess the religion of love;
Wherever its caravan turns
Along the way, that is the belief,
The faith I keep.

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