

## TOSIGO ARDENTO

*Para  
María del Carmen Marí:  
The nobleness of life  
Is to do thus [Embracing]: when such a mutual pair  
And such a twain can do't, in which I bind,  
On pain of punishment, the world to weet  
We stand up peerless.*

*«Exim Annaei Lucani caedem imperat. is profluente sanguine ubi frigescere pedes  
manusque et paulatim ab extremis cedere spiritum fervido adhuc et compote mentis  
pectore intellegit, re c o rdatus carmen a se compositum quo vulneratum militem per  
eius modi mortis imaginem obisse tradiderat, versus ipsos rettulit eaque illi suprema  
vox fuit»*

TÁCITO

### 1

Coming out of the mist in the cold

of a sad sea  
the great health spas float.  
The long wooden walkways  
disappear as in a misted  
mirror

Lone deckchairs awnings folded. And

you hear  
the break of an ancient  
wave.

The boat's prow  
balances solemnly in the whiteness. I remember my grandfather's  
old motorcar—End of summer, the  
first  
chills, at dusk; some men  
grappling with boards doors and windows  
in the ramshackle beach-house. And the car, black, huge,  
magnificent, like a funeral

hearse — silence of photography: We all  
go up. I see the beach distancing  
from the window the wind moves the palm trees.

Meanwhile

I grow old. Some  
Girls go by  
in bare feet on the sand, they protect  
their necks with their arms  
around their jerseys. I hear them  
laugh. Their faces  
are lost in the (fog)mist. The waves break  
slowly. Like smooth  
dying animals  
the moorings creak.

With the sound of the sea

the music of some distant  
speakers arrives, an arcade  
of bumpers.

Lonely  
beach terraces,  
with a glass in my hand

It has always been  
night. Which is why you love  
Istanbul, sumptuous, and love Venice, I  
and the New York dawn, police  
cars in the rain.

Yes

Remember: the Atlantic in the solitude of the quays,  
the grime on the pillars dead rats  
move the water, the  
lights like a ghost train  
a transatlantic liner somebody crosses

the wet ground, with  
wellingtons, in the frozen  
silence, at the bottom  
of huge metal doors

Disappearing as of now

on the calm sea  
the great health resorts destroyed,  
their long mysterious promenades.

Phosphorescent ladies stroll slowly. The gulls  
go by on the other side of the

mist. The legs of the table  
stick in the sand,  
shells break. The  
world capsizes. Ah,

marvellous. We see a memorable fall.  
Contemplate it, acknowledge the gesture give  
a  
tip.

That child who went  
in his grandfather's car would have done so,  
the strand distancing itself,  
the palm trees shimmering in the wind. Let

night pass, drink,  
listen

to the sea that  
breaks  
against  
the dilapidated spas.

On the other side of these waters  
Alexandria, Smyrna, Alexander's Dream, dirty  
backstreets of some port.

And

hear that tune wafting  
from the speakers of a bumper's  
arcade.

An old  
and sugary and  
stupid  
song.

One night, in the Piazza

San Marco, contemplating  
its splendour,  
you thought  
that was  
the perfect place  
to end your life. Yes, there, the last bottle,  
little orchestras  
playing, stunning adolescents and Japanese  
go by,  
the shadow of Ezra Pound.

Yes, but

not in winter, you thought,  
although it would be more honourable, save  
one of those wonderful end-of-summer nights  
amidst hundreds of tourists, a coarse waltz,  
your memory like a hoor's bed. And, you

one now with the grandeur  
of the Piazza,  
sleep-inducements taking effect,  
deciphering the blurred columns, the domes  
of the Basilica, the music, the voices  
going out in your head. You think,  
perhaps, Las  
Meninas, The Winter's Tale, Maria Callas, trying  
to maintain a proud  
composure.

Meanwhile

the palaces eraze, the water  
rots the foundations, the stones covered  
in moss.

For

God's sake, leave it! Everybody has gone!

And you rise  
before the moon's splendour,  
that other moon of your indifference

There are lights in the mist.  
Distant. Like pearls.  
The sea caresses your tongue. Gold-clad  
women and fascinating motor cars  
go by. You hear  
a song known to the Spanish. The lights of the big wheel. You drain  
your drink.

Kiss  
death in the mouth.

Some couples  
embrace, like ghosts  
in the mist of the walk-ways.

You have

nothing.

That sand  
you take in your hand.

There was a morning

- the palaces reflected in the Great Canal  
like jewels thrown on a silk sheet -

I roamed the halls  
of one of those palaces.  
It was full of tourists,  
overwhelmed by luxury;  
one - I suppose - a teacher  
soliloquizing in front of some boys  
on a certain cloth.  
They looked,  
not now as if it such  
were of the past (including  
I, to whom such beauty gave so much consolation) but  
like indecipherable  
signs from another world.  
I thought that those ceilings and paintings,  
furniture and precious  
objects, those clothes, everything, were once  
chosen by somebody (somebody whose life  
we can hardly imagine)  
because it was part  
of his lifestyle.

We wandering around a dead aquarium,  
scraps of an abandoned dream  
now without any connection  
with our life.

And I thought of the Stanze  
of the Vatican,  
made for the gratification of a great Pope  
He would

have smashed his glass against a fresco  
on a delightful night  
And Raphael would have decorated again that wall,  
and perhaps even better.

Now that beauty  
was something that had  
to be watched over, protected, a unique  
wonder, strange,

that dies  
in the eyes  
of those who cannot now conceive it.

But perhaps that was  
my luck. To see the end.  
And like that beauty  
the solitude of my memory.

And for that reason  
you do not have to fear  
death. Not even  
imagine it honourable,  
proud, spent  
as that splendid jewel  
of the Piazza.

It may take you one day  
between the burnt iron  
of a car. Or die alone in an hotel. Take a fistful  
of

sand. It is moist. It is like taking  
a print in the hand. Listen

to the flotsam of the water

against the pillars.

Solemn, abandoned, in the  
mist,

the great health resorts float.  
The rumour of that sea  
breaks, dark, you almost  
understand everything. You are drinking  
against a background of lights clouded by the mist  
of an arcade of bumper  
cars. Death dances to excite you  
in a concrete lot a stupid  
song. Girls  
stroll by who are abysses.

Ah, listen. Those are the oars  
of the Greek ships. Hear

the *zzzzzzzzzz* of the gulls.

passing through

the mist.

Humid flesh

of the heavens.

The world stops.

Gods

of suicide.

Vivaldi's violent moon.

If that alone

had lasted If we had not read  
Homer,  
Virgil, Tacitus. If no

ruin  
had reached our eyes

this column

would have been enough,  
solitary at the edge of the promontory,

with just the right height for a man  
to use as a rest, and in the freshness of the pine trees  
contemplating the view  
allows his thoughts to soar

Column in the evening sun  
Sicily's immensity. The passer-by  
stops enthralled.

Everything is madness outside of this ambience.

And we pile up some logs  
beside her, and we make a bonfire,  
and gazing at the flame we drink wine  
and the sunset like a peacock  
closing in on itself alone and distant  
at the water's end. Someone recited  
verses of the Lliad, working up  
a challenge and the courage of some men  
in front of the sacred doors.

How

the heart  
ingnites how  
the oldest emotion  
revives,  
the flame, the blood, the victory.

A dog  
that came down from the mountain  
comes closer. We throw it  
a piece  
of bread.

The column decreases  
in the light  
of a huge night advancing.

Yes, that clarity.

Decided by someone

facing the same Destiny.

We lie down beside her,

to gaze on her  
and lick our wounds.

**and 3**

Shakespeare came within inches  
of losing  
his head. It is something  
we should  
reflect on measure

carefully  
the neck.

Afterwards

travel. It is worth  
(nevertheless) – while you roam  
the landscape  
like a cyclorama – it is worth  
meditating a lot on that  
which Montaigne wrote: Necessity is love  
which not only corrupts my  
judgement, but also  
my conscience. And

Oh, yes, World, pass by!

Stendhal sat in this  
café.

(perhaps

Stendhal has not yet  
sat in  
this  
café) I remember one winter's night  
the moon was a solemn goddess.

It lit up

The gates of Florien

like golden butterflies in the mist.

I had been drinking slowly  
when a couple entered and behind them  
a dog.

They sat  
under one of those agreeable paintings  
by Casa and Carlini. A waiter came  
and served coffee, some cakes.  
He withdrew. And a little later  
appeared carrying a silver  
bowl, full of water,  
and he placed it beside the dog.

That grandeur cannot be improvised.  
Like the eyes of the shoe shiners  
of Istanbul, like leprosy in Cairo.  
Know that the end of the world  
is nothing more than the vane repetition  
of certain misadventures now known,  
and never with greater interest than that of a  
perfect twilight service.

Good.  
Shakespeare just about  
saved his head. Don't forget it. It is something we should  
always bear in mind. It teaches you  
to survive. Our heads have always  
been worth  
little.

Remember it.

Remember it

while the gondolas go by  
like Death's lips while your life passes  
and you recognize it in some  
fragment

birds  
pass through the mist. The sea  
breaks against the quays. And

nothing means  
nothing, history  
rotten flesh,

ah, and you,

solitary drinker

who sees everything  
ah, you,  
who knows the end

You contemplate  
in the twilight  
facades most serene, see the gold of the world  
go out over the Dogana, Fortune soon still  
in the silence of the winds, you note  
how the city collapses

have seen time in the waters.  
And what you love, respect, float  
like rubbish in the tide.

Think about Shakespeare.

Remember how beautiful this Piazza is  
to die.

Without knowing anybody. One of those magnificent  
summer nights, the little orchestras play everything  
it is full of unknown

people. Some insomniacs.  
And drink.

And you see beauty vanish  
as the moon goes by.

They say, later: a  
foreigner, yes, perhaps the heart. Before carrying out  
the autopsy.

What they find.

Streets that blind the traveller women's  
faces

The

night is madness. It has  
the shine of mirrors. You feel  
the alcohol at one

with your body,  
it makes you perfect like a verse of Virgil.

All  
who were have gone  
dying on nights  
like this:

You finish off  
the last

drop, leave, note the cold  
on your face, a taxi goes by

Afterwards there is the desert. Rimbaud crossed it.

Yes, Rimbaud, that sick fiend.

Defending  
his money-belt.

I remember, entering the Jeu de Pomme, by the little exit

on the left, in the web

of Fantin-Latour. Ah, one

of those haughty nights

amongst friends, drinking, dreaming

with the glory, beside Verlaine,

moon of such heavens.

Ah the verse that doesn't die.

Your eyes are wild. Perhaps it is the night

of Merde

à la Poésie.

Toll of bell – I believe -. You know

others like him visited this portrait

over the years.

Verlaine shines.

That shit

still looks

ugly in poetry. He saw

himself lose his way, while he stroked a green glass he saw

himself erase in the fog of a dirty back-street, like  
a prostitute  
who retires  
tired.

In  
the fragile night

they drink.

I think  
on  
two subsequent events:

Ernst Jünger  
contemplates  
from a window of the Majestic  
Paris blacked-out. It doesn't matter who the victor

is in this war for  
behind the misted glass

It ends.

A head  
that had extended the limits  
of intelligence, courage, tolerance,  
died. In a mirror  
full of blood

he contemplates  
satisfied  
an undesirable. Time

of assassins. The young man of the web  
I mentioned had dreamt it.

And years  
later, in a small town  
in the USA, a young soldier  
enters

a diner, he carries two rifles, a

pistol, he begins  
to fire at the people, he doesn't select, he kills  
at random. He stops firing  
when he is no longer amused.

Good. There is no need  
to put

your  
hands  
to your head.

It is normal  
that it happens.

And perhaps of all  
who were eating there, it is possible that only the assassin  
held something of life in his heart, perhaps he was the only  
one you could sit down with  
to drink.

The television reported on it  
immediately. We could see the bodies.

Time

of assassins.

When the lights of the avenues  
shine like a disappointment on the wet footpaths.  
And motorcars go by  
beautiful ladies  
with powerful  
gazes.

The wind comes full of crystals,  
drags limbs,  
fetus clog the drains,  
and in New York

they appear at dawn  
stick out their heads from  
holes in the avenues  
white-eyed beings and without hair.

What they have to do to survive.  
No

Rimbaud, that sat waiting for them.  
Nor Verlaine, unprecedented shade  
of the moon

See the albinos,  
habitués of the left-overs,  
their animals cold as soap.

That is what remains.

That.

Many times I have read  
in the admirable Life of Pompeii,  
your death. And to those unsurpressable  
pages I refer.  
But I insist on an image:  
Cut off your head, preserve it  
in order to buy favours  
from Cesar, who will  
frown on the offering (and turning  
your  
face away, cry,  
says Plutarco).  
The body dumped in a bog,  
your free slave, Felipo, washes the remains in the sea  
and with planks from a boat  
he constructs a funeral pyre.

Then someone approached,  
someone who in your youth had been  
a soldier in the Legion of Pompeii,  
and in the name of that glory he waked the flame  
until the greatest of the captains  
was ash.

Perhaps those verses  
repeat this gesture,

and wake

another corpse:  
he of the Art.

Because only those ashes.

Daybreak has a bright  
moon  
of desperation.

Yes, listen.  
Mind your neck,  
Shakespeare barely  
saved

his.

The night  
is beautiful, divine.  
Nor does it matter much  
that a civilization  
collapses.

*Traducción John Liddy  
La noche de San Juan.  
Madrid, Junio 23, 2008.*

## TOSIGO ARDENTO

### I

Lo Pagán, Septiembre de 1983;  
Venecia, Invierno de 1983-1984;  
Taormina, Enero de 1984;  
Milán –París, Febrero de 1984;  
Sevilla – Cartagena, Octubre de 1984.

### II

Roma (Villa Doria-Pamphili), Junio de 1982;  
Lo Pagán, Noviembre de 1983;  
Locarno, Enero de 1984;  
Cartagena, Marzo de 1984;  
Roma, Mayo –Cartagena, Julio de 1984.

### III

Cartagena, Diciembre de 1983;  
Lausanne, Enero de 1984;  
Sevilla, Abril de 1984;  
Cartagena, Agosto de 1984;  
New York, Invierno de 1985.