



I was born in springtime,
in the month when flowers bloom,
on a gentle morning
of an April dawn.
So they call me Rosa,
but the one with the sad smile.
I am a thorny rose
for everyone but you.
When I began loving you,
ungrateful one, all else ended
because for me you were everything—
my bliss, my reason for being.
Why then do you complain, Mauro?
Tell me, why do you complain,
when you know I would die
just to see you happy.
You pierced my heart with barbed words
and I never understood
your foolish demands
since I gave you all I could
in my hunger for you:

*I send you my heart
with a key to open it—
I have nothing left to give,
you have nothing left to demand.*



*Bells of Bastabales,
when I hear you ring,
I die of yearning.*

I

When I hear you ring,
bells, little bells,
I cannot stop my tears.

When I hear you in the distance,
I think you call me
and my heart aches.

I ache from a deep wound—
before, my life was whole,
but now it is only half.

Half my life was stolen
by those who brought me here,
by those who carried me away.

But those villains
could not take away my foolish love,
my oh! so foolish love.

By now love is gone,
loneliness has returned . . .
and I am consumed by grief.

II

In the early morning
I climb the hills
nimble, ever so nimble.

Like a spry goat, I climb
to hear the first peal
of the small bells.

The breeze brings me
the first chimes of the dawn
to comfort me.

To make me less tearful,
the breeze brings me the playful,
plaintive chimes on its wings.

Their mournful echoes,
amidst the green thicket,
amidst the green grove.

And through the lush meadow,
above the plains and valleys,
the chimes play on.

III

Slowly, slowly,
in the afternoon hush,
I walk along the path to Bastabales.

Path of my happiness—
as long as the sun shines,
I will sit upon this stone.

Sitting here, I watch
the moon slowly rise,
as the sun begins to set.

Little by little the sun disappears,
while the moon begins her race
to an unknown place.

Where does she go, all alone?
Mute, she does not listen to us,
the sad ones who gaze at her.

If she spoke and listened
she would hear the many things,
the many things I could tell her.

IV

Sadly the moon moves on—
every star, her diamond,
every cloud, her white feather.

She moves on, spreading her light
over valleys, meadows, hills, rivers,
where the day is ebbing.

The day wanes as night descends,
softly, little by little,
through verdant mountains.

Amidst greenery and foliage,
the night, bathed in mist,
slips under the branches' shadows.

From the boughs
songbirds twitter,
awakening with the dawn.

When they fall asleep at night,
they leave the singing to the crickets
who awaken with the dusk.

V

The wind blows, the river flows,
the clouds hurry on
to my house.

My house, my home—
everyone leaves and I remain
without company or friend.

I stay behind, watching
the embers in the houses
of those I long for.

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Night falls . . . the day dies,
the distant bells ring
the evening Angelus.

Their ring is a call to prayer,
but I don't pray—
choked by tears, I wonder
if others will pray for me.

*Bells of Bastabales,
when I hear you ring,
I die of yearning.*



*Blessed Saint Anthony,
give me a husband,
even if he flogs me,
even if he kills me.*

My Saint Anthony,
give me a husband,
though he may be no bigger
than a grain of corn.

Give him to me, my Saint,
even if he is lame
and has but one arm.

A woman without a man . . .
blessed Saint!
is a body without soul,
a feast without bread.

A rowingstick
who, wherever she goes,
never stops whirling.

But, when she has a husband,
Virgin of Carmen!
the day is not long enough
for her enjoyment.

No matter that his knees are knocked,
or that his legs are bowed,
a husband is a good thing to have.

I know of one I covet,
who makes heads turn—
lithe and blond,
with rosy cheeks
and flesh as soft as butter—
whose words are as sweet
as they are false.

I long for him
day and night,
thinking of his eyes
the color of the sky—
but he knows much of love
and little of marriage.

See to it, Saint Anthony,
that he comes to my side
to marry me,
a single girl.

As a dowry I have
an iron spoon
and a bed of boxwood,

a little brother
who already has teeth,
an old cow
who cannot give milk . . .

Oh, my little Saint,
please make my wish
come true!

*Blessed Saint Anthony,
give me a husband,
even if he flogs me,
even if he kills me.*

No matter that his knees are knocked
or that his legs are bowed,
a husband is a good thing to have.



*Farewell to rivers, farewell to streams,
farewell to little brooks,
farewell to all I love—
I don't know when I will see you again.*

My homeland,
land where I was raised,
orchard I loved so dearly,
little fig trees I planted,

meadows, rivers, groves,
pines swaying in the wind,
chirping birds,
my dear little cottage,

rustling chestnut trees,
clear moonlit nights,
chiming bells
from the little village church.

Farewell to the blackberries
I picked for my love,
and to the cornfields where we walked,
farewell, forever farewell!

Farewell to glory! Farewell to happiness!
I leave the house where I was born,
I leave the village I know
for a world I have not seen.

I leave friends for strangers,
I leave the valley for the sea—
if only I did not need to leave
all that is beloved by me . . . !
.....

But I am poor and, sadly,
my land is not my own—
for children of misfortune
even their roads
are only on loan.

So I must leave you,
orchards I fondly loved,
hearth of my home,
trees I planted,
small forest streams.

Farewell, farewell, I must depart—
churchyard grass
that covers my father's grave,
grassblades I kissed so often,
in the land of my childhood.

Good-bye, Virgin of Asunción,
white like an angel,
I carry you with me in my heart—
pray to God for me,
my Virgin of Asunción.

From far, far away, I hear the sound
of the bells from Pomar—
for me, poor thing,
they will never ring again.

Still farther away . . .
Every peal a sorrow—
I am going alone, without solace . . .
Farewell, my homeland, farewell!

Farewell also, my beloved!
Perhaps forever, farewell!
Tearfully I say good-bye
from the shores of the sea.

Don't forget me, my beloved,
should I die of longing . . .
So many miles out at sea . . .
My cottage! my home!