

## The Hills

Purity, solitude? There. They are grey.  
Intact greys not even the idle foot  
surprised, supremely light. Greys beside  
Nothing, melancholy and beautiful, which  
the air shelters like a soul, visible  
because so true to its object: waiting  
always. To be! And even more remote,  
for smoke, for eyes of the most distracted,  
a secure Nothingness: the perfect grey  
on tender aridness, grey of those hills!

*– Translated from the Spanish by Julian Palley*

## Calm of Gardens

The stars advance among  
storm clouds  
toward the final garden.  
Stones. flowers.

What of the human accident?  
Block-like quiet.  
The dead are more dead  
every night.

Marbles, fronds all alike:  
green is the order.  
Over the cypress, stars:  
more verdure.

The dead go on dying.  
Well they remain  
in peace and oblivion  
bereft of their names!

May their weariness enjoy  
shade in accord.  
The stars approach among  
storm clouds.

*– Translated from the Spanish by Julian Palley*

## The Names

Dawn. The horizon  
opens its lashes,  
begins to see. What? Names.  
They are on the patina

of things. The rose  
is still called  
rose, and the memory  
of its passing, haste.

Haste to live more, more!  
May the instant's acrid  
plunge lift us, move  
us to unending love! So

swift in reaching its  
goal it rushes to impose  
later! Watch out, I shall  
be! And the roses?

Closed eyelids, final  
horizon. And there remains  
nothing, at all? No,  
there are still the names.

– *Translated from the Spanish by Julian Palley*

Federico García Lorca  
*Dedicated also to the memory of  
Miguel Hernández*

II

A murmur crosses the silence  
with a continual flowing,  
a source like dawn among rocks  
glimmers above seafoam.  
Does a human gaze hesitate on water?  
An illumination becomes sharper  
as if it were radiant spirit  
and moves now toward song  
which says...

It says: life.  
Nothing more.

An invasion  
of evidences presses upon us, uplifts  
us, convincing without intoxicating,  
carries us to light – air. The clearest,  
irrefutable nakedness imposes.  
Clarity breaks forth,  
clarity that is yet human  
with its conquering light  
approach of a form,  
of a gesture that is language,  
a creator's triumph,  
and with his angel, his *duende*, his muse,  
luminous specters,  
he leads into plentitude  
the humanness of man.

## II

A man knows what the tree does not,  
what the sea contemplates indifferently.  
Through a casual dazzling light  
is suddenly discovered....

What?

Behind life comes death along –  
there's no cure – a rigorous succession.

Behold the chosen one.  
Does he freely, gladly instill  
the joy of his light?  
Now it is he who suffers  
beneath the somber ray.  
Pain, terror, alarm always on guard.

In the shade of this cruel sun,  
in spite of the leaden  
peace of siestas,  
whitewashed walls are a sign,  
among cactus and olives,  
of an outrage, a crime.  
Baleful imminences  
will violently  
precipitate  
the flowing of blood toward a knife  
of vengeance, of rage.  
Observe him well. He knows best  
that final crimson outpour.

### III

The countryside surrendered to its blackness,  
the sky's deserts without their lights,  
the vilest forces prevail  
and extend that chaos  
not ready for being.  
Chaos: a single ocean  
of vomit. Hatreds  
seek reasons, find madness.  
The dead wander lost in silence,  
silence among shots.  
Sepulchers without headstones.

Will the finest fall?

Something glistens momentarily  
and the divination does not err:  
The best. Shall fall.

He will not.

No!

No!

Eyes are there to see. Has fallen.

The world does not recover soon  
from its long stupor.  
Despair, tearless,  
does not weep.  
But the invisible starry cumulus  
latently accompanies.

Scattered, distant hearts  
join their rage.  
Who escapes that universal sorrow?  
There are not enough tears  
for all the fallen,  
for the buried, the unburied.

Creation is destruction.

Even the most eloquent is silenced.  
Immortal in us, but dead.  
There is no melancholy wind among the olive trees.  
Only a despairing wind above the dead man.

Despairing man beside the dead.

– *Translated from the Spanish by Julian Palley*

PERMISSIONS

"The Hills," "Calm of Gardens," "The Names," and "Federico García Lorca"

Reprinted from *Affirmation: A Bilingual Anthology, 1919-1966*, Translated with Notes by Juilan Palley (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968). Reprinted by permission of University of Oklahoma Press.