

times has taken on an iconic quality in Latin American literary studies, González Martínez advises writers to “wing the swan’s neck”—that is, to avoid the Parnassian rhetoric, the residue of Romantic sentiment, that had characterized much of the poetics of the nineteenth century and of several generations of Modernists. (Because of a popular misunderstanding of that poem, González Martínez later felt obliged to explain that he had not had in mind either Rubén Darío or his swan, but the poems of many subsequent imitators of Darío. In any case, he would not accuse the author of *Cantos de vida y esperanza* [*Songs of Life and Hope*] of aesthetic frivolity!)

As he pared away those early excesses from his poems, González Martínez opened the way from late Modernism to post-Modernism, toward contemporary aesthetics. He introduced to Mexican poetics a new sensibility and originality—paradoxically, values firmly in keeping with the “Modernist” impulse he is most famous for challenging. “He is not therefore a denier of Modernism,” Octavio Paz concludes, “but the only true Modernist poet Mexico has had.” Though ironically famous for his image of iconoclastic symbolic violence against the Parnassian “swan,” Enrique González Martínez was a kind, reclusive man. In his parallel careers as a poet and as a medical doctor, he exhibited a profound respect for the physical world and an almost mystical respect for the unity of created beings.

ze...

de engañoso plumaje
al de la fuente;
pero no siente
voz del paisaje.

todo lenguaje
el ritmo latente
ora intensamente
renda tu homenaje.

yo tiende las alas
agazo de Palas
tielo taciturno...

...sne, mas su inquieta
pupila, que se clava en la sombra, interpreta
el misterioso libro del silencio nocturno.

Wring the Swan's Neck

Wring the swan's neck who with deceiving plumage
inscribes his whiteness on the azure stream;
he merely vaunts his grace and nothing feels
of nature's voice or of the soul of things.

Every form eschew and every language
whose processes with deep life's inner rhythm
are out of harmony... and greatly worship
life, and let life understand your homage.

See the sapient owl who from Olympus
spreads his wings, leaving Athene's lap,
and stays his silent fight on yonder tree.

His grace is not the swan's, but his unquiet
pupil, boring into the gloom, interprets
the secret book of the nocturnal still.

1905/1911

trans. Samuel Beckett

Como hermana y hermano

Like Sister and Brother

que con ser realidad parece sueño.
De pronto, en un recodo del camino,
oímos cantar... Parece el trino
de un ave nunca oída,
un canto de otro mundo y de otra vida...
“¿Oyes?” —me dices—. Y a mi rostro juntas
tus pupilas preñadas de preguntas.
La dulce calma de la noche es tanta
que se escuchan latir los corazones.
Yo te digo: “No temas, hay canciones
que no sabremos nunca quién las canta...”

Como hermana y hermano
vamos los dos cogidos de la mano...

Besado por el sople de la brisa,
el estanque cercano se divisa...

Bañándose en las ondas hay un astro;
un cisne alarga el cuello lentamente
como blanca serpiente

que saliera de un huevo de alabastro.
Mientras miras el agua silenciosa,
como un vuelo fugaz de mariposa
sientes sobre la nuca el cosquilleo,
la pasajera onda de un deseo,
el espasmo sutil, el calosfrío
de un beso ardiente cual si fuera mío...

Alzas a mí tu rostro amedrentado
y trémula murmuras: “¿Me has besado?”
Tu breve mano oprime
mi mano: y yo a tu oído: “¿Sabes? Esos
besos nunca sabrás quién los imprime...
Acaso, ni siquiera si son besos.”

Como hermana y hermano
vamos los dos cogidos de la mano...

En un desfalleciente desvarío
tu rostro apoyas en el pecho mío,
y sientes resbalar sobre tu frente
una lágrima ardiente...

Me clavas tus pupilas soñadoras
y tiernamente me preguntas: “¿Lloras?”
“Secos están mis ojos... Hasta el fondo





Song of Songs by Guillermo Prieto

I am the one who without protection crossed life
In its cloudy dawn, suffering child,
With my soul wounded,
Mourning and misery on the forehead;
And in my lonely home and, agonizing,
My loving mother.

I am the one who wanders fairy tales,
And the echoes of the town that
Torné collected in songs;
Because the humble people were all my science
And it was a shield, in my struggles with destitution,
Of my sorrows.

The austere solitude and the free wind
They gave my chest a strong breath,
Fierce fortitude;
And so my lyre had many senses,
In the intimate of my soul deaf moans
Of my poverty.

The cloud who flew with wings of gold,
The turtledove that complained
As with weeping;
The murmur of the aura that mimicked
The expressive voices of feeling
Covered my accent.

And the bandolón that a loquacious neighborhood moves,
And the stormy pleasure with which the plebs
shows happy;
Their dances, their songs and their loves,
were light streams, birds and flowers
of my talent.

Singing even I suspected
that in me, the beautiful country with a voice was born,
That in me it sprouted
With its sorrows, with its glory and its joy,

its mountains and its lakes, its beautiful sky,
And its soul that in perfumes spread .

Then to the hut of the day laborer,

To the tumultuous field of the guerrilla

I took my songs;

And not to royal beauties or pilgrims,

but to modest workers, to cheerful Chinese

Say my songs.

O idolized homeland, I in your brokenness,

I tenderly praised your holy privileges,

without losing control;

Your land was my flesh, your love, my life,

gall acerba in your duels was my drink

to get drunk!

I had triumphant hymns for your dead,

My voice sowed hope in your deserts

And, complacently, I was

comforted by the tired troop,

and hearing my legends revived me,

laughing bravely.

Today I deserve a memory of that past

of light and darkness, of crying and glory;

I am a spoil, a rest almost erased

from memory.

But this poor lyre that is in my hands,

Keep senses for my people;

And avenging accents and curses;

To his tyrants. .

Mexico:

Manuel Acuna (1849-73)

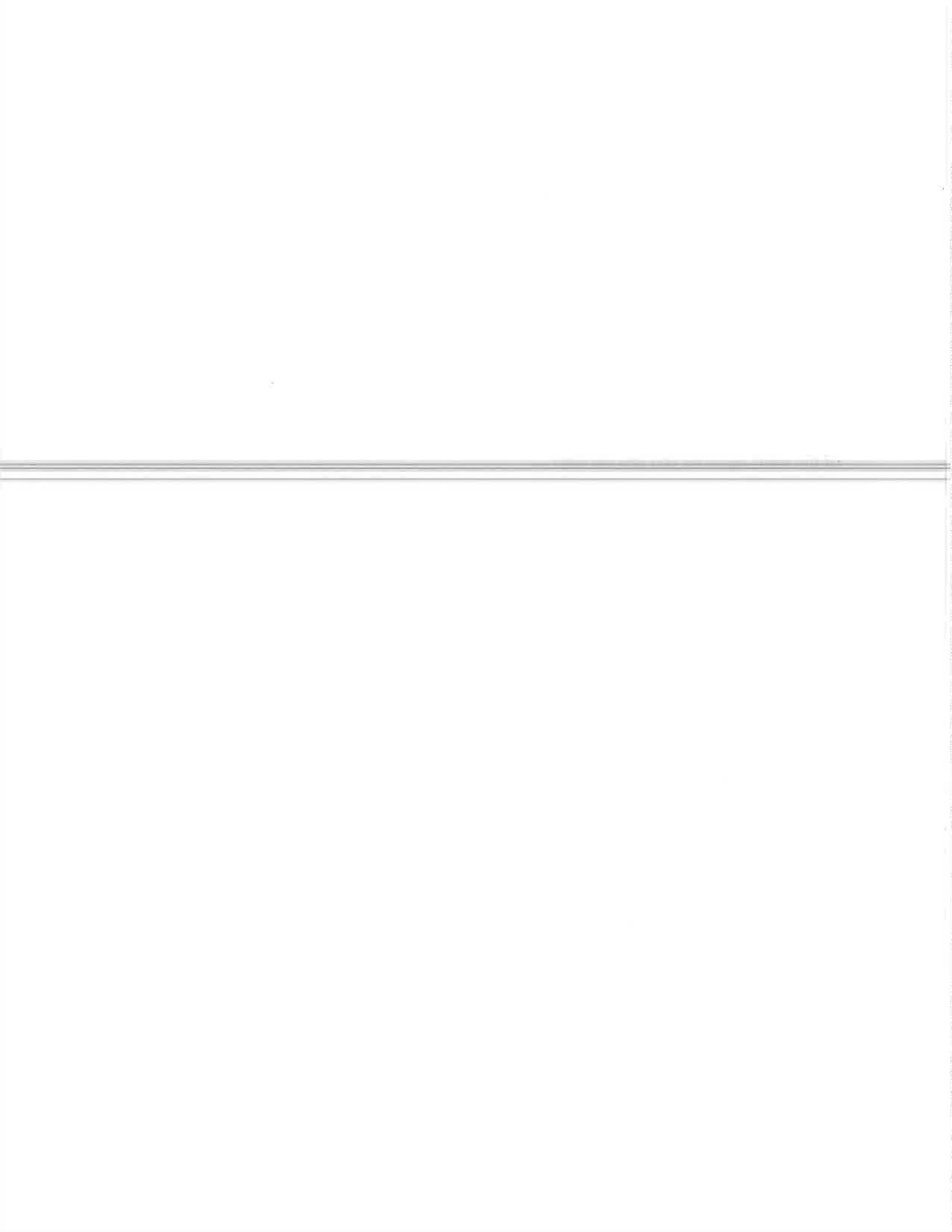
To a Flower

When your bud barely half-opened
Aspires to good fortune and happiness,
Do you already bend tired and breathless,
Giving yourself over to pain and despair?

Do you not see that the vile shadow
Which blackens the firmament's blue,
Is only a cloud which will at the blow
Of the wind, again let you see the day? ...

Wake up and rise! ... The time is not yet here
When deep within your heart,
You yield to the pain that humbles you.

Unjust to the sun is your accusation
That the shadow which passes and blinds you
Is darkness, for night hasn't arrived yet.



Glossed Tenth Poem by Guillermo Prieto (1818-97)

[Mexico]

Big bird,
Lend me your medicine
To heal a thorn
That I have in thought,
That is treacherous and hurts me.

It is of death the appearance
When saying of the elusive fate;
But he is buried alive
Who suffers ills of absence.
How to resist
the torment's slump?
I will go back to the wind
So that you with decorum
Tell my good that I cry,
Corpulent little bird.

Tell him I'm tempting
in the dark of my life,
Because it's like a lost light
The good that I'm suffering.
Say that I am renewing myself
For her devout beauty,
And, if you look at her fine,
Put my plea in between,
And say: «You are her remedy;
Lend me your medicine.»

The prisoner has his flowers
And the spring his freshness,
And I all my fortunes and his cheerful loves
Today my pains are
punctured With such Indian stubbornness,
I cannot be anxious.
Aigre, land, sea and sky,
who wants to give me comfort
to heal a thorn?

It is the deity that I adore,
It is my loving calandria,
My rain of rose leaves
And my little golden bell.
Today his lost treasure He
has me like in the wind,
Without a coat, without a seat:
His memory of tenderness
It is like a grave
I have in my mind.

It is to look at what was a
terrible and empty hole fountain ;
it is to see how the cold killed
The airy and powerful kills;
It is a redemptive feeling
To the death that comes close,
It is that it has my soul on it
A sorceress ghost
That follows me wherever I want,
That is traitorous and hurts me.

From *Poesías de Manuel Carpio: con su biografía* (published 1860)

Manuel Elogio Carpio Hernández (1791-1860)

To a Mexican Lady Bound for Sevilla

1. You are going to leave your country and your home,
2. Which are good to you just like life has been good to you;
3. And after your very sad departure,
4. You'll cross the turbulent seas.
5. You will step on foreign beaches,
6. Of the happy Baltic enchanted lands,
7. You will see the Alhambra and the Vega of Granada,
8. And the Guadalquivir beautiful shores.
9. But in the midst of so many wonders,
10. As it shows its fertile soil,
11. You will miss this splendid sky,
12. The country fields and its pure waters.
13. In the silence of the cold night,
14. When looking at the sapphire sky,

Annotation/Analysis Guide:

- Read the poem once
- Read again and **annotate**
 - a. Syntax
 - b. Figurative Language
 - c. Diction/Imagery
 - d. -ism/Historical Connection
- **Analysis:** Select TWO elements to analyze for how it reveals/illuminates something about Romanticism.
 - a. Write the two sentences on the back of this poem or attach a separate sheet of paper.

Mexico

15. And for our sweet departure a sigh

16. Blissful homeland, when God wants!

NOTE: non-professional, literal translation – a work in progress. From Ms. Morales!

Guiding Questions:

1. What are potential issues with works in translations? Examine the original Spanish version of this poem on the back of this handout. What differences can you hear/see, even without knowledge of the language?

2. How does the poet use 2nd person narrative and to what effects?

3. How does the poet use setting to develop a thematic message?

1. _____ (element):

2. _____ (element):