



DANTÉS

Poemas

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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Poemas

Dantés

A Critical Reading Edition

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The Text-Tech Papers

Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry

Archival Images

A short selection from the source record



State Street, Santa Barbara, in the 1880s, the city in which Dantés published in La Gaceta.

Editorial Note

Each Spanish original is followed immediately by its English translation. Luis A. Torres's anthology is the copy text, checked across the complete-volume, Spanish, English, and facing-page scans. Its wording, spelling, accents, punctuation, capitalization, grammatical irregularities, stanza divisions, numbered movements, subtitles, notes, and deliberate indentation are retained. Only anthology running heads, folios, continuation labels, and unmistakable OCR-layer or scanning debris are removed; no reading is modernized or silently regularized. The unidentified translators' wording is likewise retained. The English translation rights require verification before unrestricted republication.

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Introduction

No one has yet discovered who signed the name Dantés in Santa Barbara's Spanish-language newspaper *La Gaceta*, but the poems left behind are anything but anonymous in feeling. Between 1879 and 1881, this writer moved easily from intimate love lyrics to satire, elegy, cemetery meditation, Catholic devotion, and an ambitious patriotic vision. Luis A. Torres argues in the introduction to *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910* that this newspaper verse was “remarkable for its poetic quality and versatility”; Dantés's sixteen surviving poems bear out that claim. This bilingual edition presents each Spanish original immediately before its English translation, preserving stanza shapes and internal divisions while making visible the strange, compelling outline of a literary life that history has otherwise erased.

Biography

Dantés is the pseudonym of an unidentified Spanish-language poet active in Santa Barbara, California, between 1879 and 1881. The known poems appeared in *La Gaceta*, a newspaper serving the region's Spanish-speaking community. No securely documented civil name, birth record, death record, occupation, or family connection has been attached to the signature. That anonymity must remain part of the historical record: it is not evidence that the poems were casual or that their author was marginal to the newspaper's literary life.

The surviving corpus reveals an unusually flexible writer. Dantés composed love poems addressed to named, initialed, and unknown women; an elegy for the child Pablo de la Guerra; philosophical and cemetery poems; an extended devotional sequence to the Virgin Mary; a poem on Mary Magdalene; political verse on Spain and national identity; and satire. The long poems use numbered movements and rhetorical changes of voice, while the shorter lyrics often depend on tight stanza patterns. The local references—to Ventura, Santa Barbara, and the de la Guerra family—place the writing firmly within Southern California's nineteenth-century Hispanic world.

The poems became accessible again through Luis A. Torres's anthology *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*. Earlier project descriptions counted fifteen poems, but a fresh title-by-title audit of the supplied English, Spanish, and facing-page scans located sixteen distinct works credited to

Dantés. Until the original issues of *La Gaceta* can be examined directly and the identity behind the pseudonym established, the newspaper dates and the anthology witnesses define the recoverable record.

La Gaceta

Santa Barbara newspaper poems | 1879–1881

All sixteen recoverable poems attributed to Dantés, with each Spanish original followed immediately by the anthology's English translation.

AL

Texto original en español

Tengo una rosa ante mí,
Preciosa cual tu mejilla,
Y al mirarla vida mía,
Pienso en mi amor—pienso en ti.

Junto á ella está un clavel,
Cual tus labios, nacarado;
Y yo de amor embriagado
Quiero libarle la miel.

Entre los dos está un nardo,
Perfumado cual tu aliento—
Y su rocío, sediento,
Quiero beber—porque me ardo.

Me ardo, sí, de amor inmenso,
Inmenso, cual es el cielo,
El cielo que con anhelo,
Anhelo hallar en quien pienso.

Sin duda entiendes querida,
Que ese cielo hallara en ti
Espero—pues para mí—
Eres mundo, cielo y vida.

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 27 September 1879; reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 62.

To L...

English translation

I have a rose in front of me,
Precious as your cheek;
And when I see it, my dear,
I think of love—I think of you.

Beside it lies a carnation,
Tinged like your lips, pearly;
And I, drunk with love,
Yearn to sip its honey.

Between the two rests a lilac
Perfumed like your breath—
I thirst to drink its dew
To quench my fire.

I burn, burn from immense love,
Immense as the heavens,
The heavens in which, longingly,
I long for the one of my dreams.

Doubtless you see, my love,
I will find that heaven in you;
I will hope—since you for me
Are the world, heaven, and life.

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 27 September 1879.
English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 63.

A mi amada llorando

Texto original en español

Junto á una fuente preciosa
Estaba una enredadera,
Enlazada placentera
Con una encarnada rosa.

Vertía la fuente mil gotas
De aqua cristalina y pura,
Que con amor ternura—
Cual brillantísimas motas—

Quedaban con lisonjera
Belleza, un rato enlazadas,
En las flores perfumadas
De la tierna enredadera.

Íbanse después cayendo,
Hacia el centro de las rosas;
Y en sus hojas olorosas
Íbanse en astros volviendo.

Un guainambi que veía
A la rosa, se arrimaba,
Y con deleite libaba
Las mieles que allí tenía.

Y tú Corina, alma mía,
Te pareces á la escena,
Que en esa mañana amena,
Yo ví con suma alegría.

Veo de tus ojos caerse
Mil lágrimas cristalinas;
Y en tus pestañas divinas
También las veo mecerse.

Se desprenden, una en una,
Cual riquísimos diamantes;
Cual lágrimas fulminantes,
Del alma, sol y la luna.

La fuente serán tus ojos;
Y tus pestañas preciosas
La enredadera; y las rosas
Son de tu faz los sonrojos.

Y yo adorada seré
El sediento guainambi;
Y de tu faz, bella mía,
Las lágrimas libaré.

Dáme esa perla que brilla,
Cual las perlas orientales—
Cual los astros celestiales,
En tu cándida mejilla.

Dejadme, amor, sin enojos
Libar los dulces licores,
Que solo por mis amores
Vierten tus célicos ojos.

Dejadme, pues, corazón,
Mi sed intensa saciar....
¿O quieres verme espirar,
Víctima de una pasión?

No, no; tened compasión
De quien te adora, y te jura—
Llevarse á su sepultura,
Tu amor en su corazón.

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 25 October 1879; reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, pp. 68–70.

To My Weeping Love

English translation

Beside a splendid fountain
Curled a climbing vine,
Joyfully entwined
With a blood-red rose.

The fountain cast a thousand
Crystalline, diamond drops
Which so lovely and delicate—
Like incandescent curls of hair—

Lingered with delighting
Beauty, briefly joined together
In the perfumed flowers
Of the tender vines.

Soon the fountain cast drops
Into the midst of the roses;
And within their perfumed leaves
They were transformed into stars.

A hummingbird glimpsed
The rose and approached it,
And delicately licked
The honey from the petals.

And you, Corina, my love,
You are the image of that scene
Which on that delightful morning
I gazed upon with perfect joy.

I see a thousand crystalline tears
Cascading from your eyes;
And in your divine eyelashes
I see your tears mingling.

They drop one by one,
Like precious diamonds;
An explosion of tears
Of soul, sun and moon.

This fountain is your eyes;
Your treasured eyelashes
Are the vines; the roses
Are the blush of your face.

And I, my precious, I am
That thirsty hummingbird;
And from your face, my darling,
I will sip your tears.

Give me that pearl which shines
Like the pearls of the orient—
Like the stars in the heavens
Of your ivory cheek.

Allow me, love, without quarrel,
To sip the sweet liquors
Which solely for my love
Flow from your celestial eyes.

Allow me then, dear heart,
To quench my ardent thirst...
Or would you see me perish,
Helpless victim of my passion?

But no, I beg-have sympathy
For him who loves you, and he
Swears to take to his tomb
Your love in his heart.

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 25 October 1879.
English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 69.

A Laura

Texto original en español

Salía el sol en el oriente ufano
Derramando sobre el mundo resplandores
Y las lágrimas preciosas de las flores
Tocándolas en líquidos diamantes.

Sereno estaba el día—el cielo hermoso;
Las aves con metódicos cantares,
Meciéndose en sus lechos de azahares
Saludaban al fulgente rey del día.

El límpido arroyuelo entre las flores
Desatábase y corría tiernamente,
Revestido con un manto reluciente
Que el sol con sus fulgores le prestaba.

Las flores se mecían con placer
A los besos del ambiente perfumado—
Y las fuentes con murmullo apasionado
Gorgeos modulaban de alegría.

Y tú mi Laura hermosa en tu ventana,
Las miradas del sol con tus miradas
Confundías; sí mi bien, y humilladas
Ante tí, las bellas flores se doblaban.

¿Pues cómo podrá ser la luz del sol
Más luciente que tu angélico pudor?
¿Sus rayos qué valdrán, con el candor
Que emana de tus ojos celestiales?

¿Y podría igualmente su grandeza,
Su magnánima y excesiva celsitud
Con esa flor divina—la virtud—
Que vive inmarcesible en tu existencia?

Las rosas no se atreven, Laura mía,
A imitar de tus megillas el color—
Ni tampoco—no—los nardos el color
Que esparce tu aromático suspiro.

En fin, querida mía, con orgullo
Te mira sin cesar Naturaleza—
Pues conoce en tu persona—en tu belleza—
La obra más perfecta de su mano.

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 27 November 1880; reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, pp. 76–78.

To Laura

English translation

The sun rose proudly in the east
Scattering resplendence over the earth
And touching the flowers' precious
Tears with liquid diamonds.

The day was serene—the heavens, beautiful;
The birds with melodious song, rocking
In flowery beds of citrus groves,
Saluted the radiant king of the day.

The limpid brook among the flowers
Flowed freely and gently,
Dressed in a shining silver veil
Loaned by the sun in its radiance.

The flowers swayed gently in the
Kisses of the perfumed breeze—
And the fountains in a passionate murmur
Sang their joyous songs in varied tunes.

And you, my beautiful Laura, at your window,
You dazzled the sun's gaze with your
Glance; yes, my dear, and the beautiful
Flowers bowed down, humbled before you.

For how could the sunlight shine more
Brightly than your angelic modesty?
And how gloomy is the sun against the
Purity glowing from your heavenly eyes.

And could its glory equal yours,
Could its lofty and exalted grandeur
Match that divine flower—that virtue—
Which blooms and never fades in you?

The roses could not dare, my Laura,
Imitate the color of your cheeks—
Nor could the white roses rival the
Fragrance of your aromatic sigh.

And finally, my love, Nature proudly
Gazes ceaselessly upon you-and
Sees in your person-your beauty-
The ultimate perfection of its creation.

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 27 November 1880.
English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846-1910*, p. 77.

¿Olvidarte? Nunca.

Texto original en español

¿Como crees querida mía
Que yo te olvide un instante
Cuando en el sol tu semblante
Estoy viendo todo el día?

¿Cómo olvidarte mi vida?
Si en la noche estoy mirando
Al cielo, estoy contemplando
En la luna á mi querida.

Sí es noche oscura, te miro
En aquella hermosa estrella
Que á ti te gusta, y en ella
Tu dulce beldad admiro.

Si acaso el cielo nublado
Se encuentra, en la blanda brisa
Oigo tu errática risa
Que mil veces me ha embriagado.

En fin adorada hurí
Te veo en todo lo bello
Que hay en la tierra y en el cielo—
¿Podré olvidarte á ti?

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 15 January 1881; reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 80.

Forget You? Never!

English translation

My beloved, how could you think
I would forget you an instant
When I see your likeness
In the sun through the day?

How can I forget you, my life?
If at night I am gazing up
At the sky, I reflect on
My beloved, there in the moon.

If the night is all darkness,
I see you in that lovely star
You cherish, and in that star
I delight in your sweet beauty.

And if by chance the sky is cloudy,
In the gentle breeze I hear
Your capricious laughter which
Has intoxicated me a thousand times.

Indeed, sweet amorous virgin,
I see you in all that is beautiful
Here on earth and in the heavens—
How could I ever forget you?

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 15 January 1881. English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 81.

A una desconocida

Texto original en español

Hermosa desconocida
Permitidme que te diga,
Que tu belleza me obliga
A ofrecerte mi alma y vida.

Cada vez ángel, lucero,
Que te veo, siento en mí
El ardor, preciosa hurí
Que enciende el amor primero.

Tu mirada celestial
Aumenta en mi corazón,
Amor, delirio y pasión—
Constancia y fé sin igual.

Sol que encendiste al instante
Que te ví, el amor más puro.
¡Que diera si mi futuro
Alumbraras rutilante!

Cada vez que veo tus ojos
Pienso que el mundo es el cielo—
Mi alma se abraza de anhelo,
Y yo te adoro de hinojos.

¡Cuántas veces, luz del día,
En mis sueños te he mirado—
Y junto á tí me he encontrado
En un pensil de alegría!

Esa estrella que con rojos
Rayos luce en el poniente—
No brilla tan dulcemente
Como la luz de tus ojos.

Ten fé querida en mi amor
Que es tan firme y tan profundo
Cual jamás tuvo en el mundo
Otro amante, otro amador.

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 9 April 1881; reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, pp. 82–84.

To an Unknown Woman

English translation

I do not know you, lovely woman,
But permit me to say to you
That your beauty obliges me
To offer you my soul and my life.

Every time, angel, Venus,
That I see you, I feel,
Sweet amorous virgin, the ardor
That inflames one's first love.

Your heavenly gaze
Magnifies in my heart
Love, delirium, and passion—
Constancy and faith without equal

The moment I saw you, the sun was
Set on fire, the purest love.
What I would give if your radiance
Would illuminate my future!

Each time I gaze into your eyes
I think the world is heaven;—
My soul burns with desire,
And I adore you on bended knees.

How often have I seen you,
Light of my day, in my dreams—
And there beside you, I found myself
In a lovely garden of happiness.

That shining star which glows
Crimson through the west wind
Does not shine as sweetly
As the light from your eyes.

My dear, have faith in my love,
For it is so constant and so deep
As if the world has never had
Another lover, another beloved.

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 9 April 1881. English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 83.

Muerte del jovencito Pablo de la Guerra

Texto original en español

Ocurrida en San Buenaventura, Nov. 22, 1880

Tu llanto enjuga, ¡oh! afligida madre,
Que si un hijo perdiste, habéis ganado
Un angel, que el eterno y justo Padre
Por tan digno á su reino lo ha llamado.

Cual astro fulgido en el cielo brilla,
Así brilló en el mundo su inocencia—
Pasó cual nardo que vivió en el día—
Al eterno después de otra existencia.

Tendió sus alas de virtud su alma,
Dejando en el mundo una ejemplar memoria.
Voló al empíreo á recibir la palma
De eterna dicha y de celeste gloria.

Allá en el cielo con su padre amado
Y hermanos que le abrieron los portales
Del cielo, ¡ah! dichoso y coronado
Resplandece entre escogidos inmortales.

Su cuerpo ya murió—descansa inerte
En el seno solitario de una fosa....
Mas brindole su temprana rauda muerte—
Por efímera existencia—una gloriosa.

¡Oh mundo! ayer lleno de vida y de salud
Jugaba sin saber—¡ay!—de su suerte—
Mas hoy—¡oh vida!—entre un lóbrego ataud
Nos le ocultan las sombras de la muerte.

Del mundo ya dejó la incierta vida,
Y ornado de virtud y de belleza,
Recibe la guirnalda merecida,
En el cielo, de su nítida pureza.

Pero, ¡ah! virtuoso Pablo, ¿no es mejor
Esa vida preciosa, eterna y pura
Donde gozas de María, el dulce amor,
En el mundo celestial que siempre dura?

Esa vida de delicias, ¿no es mejor
Que este mundo de miserias y de espinas?
Aquí todo es mentira, es humo, error...
Y allá todas las cosas son divinas.

Allá aquella verdad que siempre amásteis,
Tu frente ceñirá de resplandores;
Pero aquí, la mentira que tú odiásteis,
Nos da tormentos, penas y terrores.

Ya no sufres; y por siempre, Pablo gozas
Lo que todos los mortales alampamos—
En célica quietud tu ya reposas,
Y nosotros tus virtudes recordamos.

Dejásteis esta vida muy temprano,
Y volásteis á ese azul, á eterna gloria....
Dejando escrita aquí, con tierna mano,
La virtud, para siempre tu memoria.

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 11 December 1880; reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, pp. 110–112.

On the Death of the Child Pablo de la Guerra

English translation

Which Occurred in San Buenaventura, Nov. 22, 1880

Dry your tears, Oh! afflicted mother,
For if you lost a son, you have gained
An angel, which the eternal and just Father
Has deemed worthy to call to His reign.

As the resplendent stars shine above,
So his innocence shined in this world—
He left; like a rose that lived but a day-
Then left to the eternity of another existence.

His soul spread his wings of virtue,
Leaving this world an exemplary memory of him.
He ascended to empyrean heaven to receive
A garland of palms, celestial glory and joy.

In heaven with his beloved father and
Brothers who opened the gates of Heaven
For him, Oh! happy with his crown
He shines among the chosen immortals.

His body is now dead—it lies still
In the solitary bosom of a grave....
But offer a tribute to his early rapid death-
For this transient life—a glorious one.

Oh world! yesterday full of life and health
He played, not knowing—Alas!—of his fate,
But today—Oh life!—within an obscure coffin
He is shrouded by the shadows of death.

He suddenly left; the life of this uncertain
World, and ornate with virtue and grace
He received in Heaven the garland
His lustrous purity has earned.

But, Oh! virtuous Pablo, is not that
Precious, eternal, and pure life better

Where you enjoy Mary's sweet love
In the celestial world, everlasting?

Is not that life of delights better
Than this world of misery and thorns?
Here all is false, smoke and illusion...
In your new world all things are divine.

There truth, which you always loved,
Will garland your head in splendor;
But here, the lies you hated inflict
Us with torment, grief, and terror.

Suffer no more; and enjoy forever, Pablo,
That which all mortals long for-
In celestial tranquility you now dwell,
As we memorialize your virtues.

You left this life so very young,
And ascended to that blue, eternal glory....
Leaving written here in a tender hand
Your eternal memorial-Virtue.

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 11 December 1880.
English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846-1910*, p. 111.

“Verdades filosóficas”

Texto original en español

Sale uno al mundo inocente,
Y va creciendo paensando,
Neciamente,
Que su vida va aumentando,
Y al sepulcro va viajando
Lentamente.

Pasan los siglos volando,
Cual sombras que lleva el viento,
Sepultando
En el seno de un momento
Que concibe el pensamiento
Delirando.

Velocísimo torrente
En la vida que gozamos,
Brevemente,
Y que embriagados juzgamos
Ser eterna—mas cesamos
De repente.

Siglos tras siglos caminan,
En su vejez, ya cansados,
Que pacinan
Nuestros seres alocados,
Con placeres disfrazados
Que aniquilan.

Tras la dicha que en la mente
De los hombres sólo existe,
Diariamente
Corre el hombre—y no ve—¡triste!
Que es un sueño, un cuento, un chiste,
Solamente.

Las pompas y la hermosura;
La vida mas ilustrada—

La bravura—
Son sombras, cuya morada
Final, es una enlutada
Sepultura.

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 18 October 1879; reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, pp. 136–138.

Philosophical Truths

English translation

We leave into the world innocent,
And as we grow we think,
Foolishly,
That our lives flourish,
And that we journey to the grave
Slowly.

Centuries fly past
Like shadows blown by the wind,
To be buried
In the womb of a moment
Which gives birth to our delirious
Conceptions.

A fleeting torrent in this
Life over which we rejoice, but
Briefly,
And which, drunk with joy, we deem
To be eternal-but our end falls
Suddenly.

Age after age passes,
Time grows old, tired;
It nibbles away
At our futile existence,
And time's pleasant disguises
Condemn us.

Vainly seeking happiness, which
Exists only in our minds,
Day by day
We search-but do not see
It is a dream, a fiction, a joke,
And no more.

Beauty and splendor—
Life most illustrious—

Courage—
All are shadows, like our final
Home, a mournful
Grave.

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 18 October 1879.
English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 137.

El tiempo

Texto original en español

¿Quién eres, tú, gigante destructor,
Que con mano omnipotente todo acabas?
¿Quién eres, dí, infame y vil traidor,
Que hoy derrocas, lo que ayer, tú fabricabas?
Enérgico una vez con gran fervor,
Eregísteis los Gardines Suspendidos;
Mas ahora tu inconstancia con rigor,
En ruinas mil los tiene convertidos.

Que riquísimos palacios fabricásteis,
Nos enseña claramente las historias;
Mas nos dicen que también las arruinásteis—
Y has dejado solamente sus memorias.
Todo puede ¡oh Gran Tiempo! tu querer;
Pues hicisteis mundo, infierno, juicio, y gloria;
Mas el fin de tus trabajos—á mí ver—
Es un sueño que pasó... una memoria....

Existencia, con placer, al hombre das;
Y le dices que su vida siempre dura;
Mas de súbito, en silencio, inicuo vas,
Y le arrojas en desierta sepultura.
Le coronas con guirnalda y laureles;
Y le dices que su nombre es inmortal;
Mas su nombre, tú, después, con manos crueles
Confundes en olvido sepulcral.

Edades y edades van pasando;
Los años tras los siglos van caminando;
Los imperios, y los reinos que vas creando,
En tus simas insondables van cayendo.
Tu existencia todo mira—todo mira—todo atraza;
Lo pasado, lo presente, el porvenir;
Tu potencia todo cría—todo;
Y tu influjo donde quiera haces sentir.

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 29 November 1879; reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 140.

Time

English translation

You, who are you, gigantic destroyer,
 Who with omnipotent hand ends all?
 Speak! Who are you, infamous, wicked traitor
 Who today destroys what yesterday you created?
 Once with mighty force and passion
 You raised the Hanging Gardens of Babylon,
 But now, your cruel inconstancy
 Transforms them into a thousand ruins.

History has drawn for us vivid scenes of
 Rich, luxurious palaces you built,
 And shown us how you ruined them too—
 And left but scattered memories.
 Oh Great Time! Your will achieves all!
 You made the world, hell, justice, glory;
 But I see the end of all your labors
 Is but a dream already passed... a memory....

Existence, and idle pleasure, you give to man;
 You say his life will be eternal;
 But swift and silent you leave, shameless
 As you cast us into empty tombs.
 You crown us with garlands and laurels,
 And say our names will live immortal;
 But soon a name like all else lies humbled
 In a grave, forgotten through your cruel hands.

Ages and ages pass and pass;
 Years follow centuries, advancing;
 Empires and kings you ceaselessly create
 Soon sink into your depthless abyss;
 Your presence sees all—sees all—and designs
 The past, the present, the future;
 Your potency gives birth to all—to everything;
 And everywhere is felt your fatal force.

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 29 November 1879.
 English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 141.

AE

Texto original en español

Si la pálida estrella de mi vida
En el cielo de tu amor, jamás está—
Acuérdate que en nubes confundida
Tus pasos á la tumba seguirá.

Para siempre te alejásteis de mis brazos;
Tus promesas olvidásteis fementida—
Más no olvidéis—nó—las redes y los lazos
Que se tienden en el curso de la vida.

Es muy corta la dicha de est mundo,
Cuyas sendas son espinas y abrojos
Que conducen á aquel golfo tan profundo,
“El destino,” hondo abismo de despojos.

Cual la nube, que en la atmósfera oscilante,
Gira sólo al antojo de los vientos—
Así el ser humano en un instante,
Arrojado es de la dicha a mil tormentos.

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 24 January 1880; reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 142.

To E...

English translation

If the pale star of my life never
Reaches the heaven of your love, remember
My footsteps will follow yours through
Disturbed dark clouds toward the tomb.

You are distanced forever from my arms;
Your promises, unfaithfully, you forgot—
But never forget that nets and snares
Are stretched across the paths of our lives.

Happiness in this world is fleeting,
The pathway is thorns and bristles
Which guide us to that profound chasm,
“Destiny,” that deep abyss of our remains.

As the solitary cloud in the heavens
Is swept away by the whim of the winds—
Thus is humanity cast instantly away
From happiness into a thousand torments.

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 24 January 1880.

English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 143.

Reflecciones en un cementerio

Texto original en español

En un cementerio oscuro,
De muertos triste mansión—
¡Ay! mirando su futuro,
Lloraba mi corazón.
Triste hasta la muerte estaba
Pensando en la eternidad,
Mi corazón palpitaba—
Sollozaba de ansiedad.

Negros estaban los cielos
Con densos nubarrones;
Invadían á los suelos
Airados aquilones.
Brama el trueno en las alturas,
Los relámpagos brillan
Sobre tristes sepulturas
Que en mi torno habían.

Una cruz se levantaba,
Con funesta magestad,
Que un ciprés, sola, sombreaba
Con sombra de eternidad.
Sus verdes brazos caían
Sobre la blanca losa
En donde en pólvoro dormían
Los restos de una hermosa.

A la izquierda se levanta
Otra tumba suntuosa,
Donde el tecolote canta
Su canción pavorosa.
Y esa tumba rica encierra
Algun cuerpo apestoso—
Tal vez el polvo la tierra—
De un rey que fué poderoso.

Melancólica arboleda
Al necrópolo poblaba,

Que al son de bóreas cantaba
Alabanzas á los muertos.

De la luna encapotada
Rasgó á las nubes un rayo—
Que con tristeza y desmayo
Bajó á alumbrar una tumba.

Cuán conmovedora escena,
Es ver los rayos quebrados,
Por los brazos enlutados
De los cipreses verter,

Sus luces sobre las tumbas,
Que encerraban hermosuras,
Poderes, reyes, bravuras,
Para manjar de gusanos.

Yo sentado ante una tumba
Tenía un solo sentimiento—
Y éste cera mi pensamiento:
¡Hé aquí, el fin de mi jornada!

Unos van y otros venimos,
Como las olas del mar—
Mas tenemos que parar—
En polvo—pues polvo somos.

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 13 March 1880; reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, pp. 144–146.

Reflections in a Cemetery

English translation

In a dark cemetery,
Sad mansion of the dead,
Oh! my heart wept, gazing
Upon its future.
Sad even unto death,
My heart pondered its
Eternity and throbbed,
Fearful from foreboding.

Dense, threatening clouds
Blackened the sky;
Angry north winds
Swept the earth.
Thunder roars in the heavens,
Lightning flashes
Over sad sepulchers
Surrounding me.

In mournful majesty
A cross rose, shaded
By a lone cypress
Casting eternal shade.
Its green arms hung
Over a white gravestone
Beneath which slept the
Dust of a beautiful woman.

To the left rises
Another luxurious tomb,
Upon which an owl sings
His dreadful song.
And that ornate tomb
Encases a once-powerful king,
Now a putrid corpse—
Its dust becoming dirt.

Amid the teeming graveyard
The melancholy grove

Sang praises to the dead
To the tunes of the north wind.

From the cloud-covered moon
A beam pierced the clouds-
Sad and dismayed it settled,
Shining, upon a tomb.

Such a harrowing scene
To see the scattered rays
Through veiled, drooping branches
Of the leaning cypresses,

Moonlight falling on the
Tombs enclosing beauty,
Power, bravery, royalty—
All to become food for worms.

And I, seated before a tomb,
Felt just one premonition,
And this was my intuition:
This is my journey's end!

Like the waves of the sea
Some arrive and some leave—
But all must reach this shore-
Of dust-as dust we are.

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 13 March 1880. English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 145.

La Madre de Dios

Texto original en español

I.

Madre de Dios, inagotable fuente
De amor, de caridad y de ternura;
Esencia de virtud y de hermosura—
Hija y madre de un Dios Omnipotente.
¡Oh! virgen de las vírgenes... preciosa
Flor, allá en lo eterno cultivada
Por la mano de Dios.—Rosa sagrada
Que viertes aroma en la mansión gloriosa
De eterna dicha y sempiterna vida...
Madre—virgen—de Dios madre escogida.

A tu voz melodiosa el cielo entero
Himnos de regocijo, aplable canta:
“Auxilio del cristiano, y madre santa
Del ser humano y del pascual cordero.”
¡Oh madre del criador! inmaculada,
Que en la misma eternidad nacisteis pura;
Cuando el ángel rebelde—allá en la altura,
Contra el cielo levantó su impía espada—
En valídico misterio, Dios te dijo:
“A la sierpe vencerá, virgen, tu hijo.”

Y al fin venció tu hijo, madre amada
A la astuta serpiente, que envidiosa,
A Eva le brindó fruta onerosa—
Que conociéndola, ante Dios quedó culpada.
Si mujer fué quien al mal entrada dio
En el bello paraíso de placeres—
También una mujer les dió á los seres
Humanos, un Redentor que les salvó...
El Dios que desde el cielo humano vino
A cambiar de los mortales el destino.

Estrella matutina, cuya luz
En el Gólgota murió por un instante,
Cuando visteis á Jesús agonizante,

Clavado con dolor sobre la cruz.
 Que dolor madre santa tan profundo
 A tu pecho maternal ¡ay! oprimía
 Ese día sin igual—penoso día
 En que en luto se envolvieron cielo y mundo...
 —Era el criador el hombre que espiraba,
 Y por su padre la criación lloraba.

II.

Estrella de la mar, donde consuelo
 Busca el triste y desolado navegante,
 Cuando en noche borrascosa, suplicante,
 De tu amparo, la luz, busca en el cielo.
 Estrella de clemencia—astro divino
 Que rasgas el horrendo y negro manto
 De noche tenebrosa y de quebranto
 Que ofrece á los mortales flébil síno—
 Vierte en mi alma la luz de la esperanza,
 De fe, de caridad, y de templanza.

Tu mirada lo más lóbrego ilumina—
 Imposibles desvanecen á tu voz....
 ¿Pues qué no podrá hacer lo que de un Dios,
 Fué madre virgen y mujer divina?
 Sea el más perfecto y venturoso,
 Que en la misma eternidad el Padre creó....
 Virgen en su seno, tan feliz llevó
 Al Padre, al Hijo y á su Santo esposo—
 Preciosa y santa, y celestial María
 Del orbe madre y bondadosa guía.

Si humilde fué tu cuna, fué sagrada,
 Porque estabais escojida para madre
 Pura, del Hijo del eterno Padre,
 Quien al nacer te hizo inmaculada.
 Desde allá en la incomprensible eternidad
 En tu vientre el verbo eterno asiento halló;
 Y bajando del empíreo padeció
 En el mundo por salvar la humanidad....
 Sois del Dios-Redentor la Madre Santa

Y tu nombre al universo encanta.

III.

Madre benévola del fiel que llora
Éres, y siempre á su clamor atiendes;
Tus sacras alas sobre el mundo tiendes
Y el mundo, grato, con fervor te adora.
Sois escalera que al mortal conduce
Al reino eterno de gloriosa vida;
Reina del cielo—emperatriz querida
Que el trono de Dios fulgente luce—
Sóis de la gracia inagotable fuente,
Madre de Dios, inmenso, omnipotente.

Sois arca de la alianza celestial,
Y reina de los ángeles amada;
Por todos los profetas celebrados
Cual la célica abogada del mortal.
Espejo de justicia, y manantial
De todas las virtudes concebibles;
Para tí no puede haber imposibles
Del padre eterno, madre original,
Que reinas en el cielo enteramente
Cual la madre de un rey omnipotente.

Sóis auxilio de los fieles confesores
Que predicán en los áridos desiertos;
Protectora de los vivos y los muertos,
Y esperanza de los tristes pecadores.
¡Cuán grande es, madre mía, tu corazón!
Que si al justo prometes gloria eterna;
Al malo, amorosa, amable y tierna,
Le ofreces tu materna protección—
Tu mano salvadora, con la cual
Le llevas á gozar vida inmortal.

No puedo darte nombre más sagrado
Que el de madre de Dios, inmaculada,
De eterno incomprensible que de nada
Hizo un mundo de mil seres habitado.
De ese ser omnipotente que cubrió con

Sus obras iniguales todo el mundo...
Que sacó de las tinieblas del profundo
Luz, animales, plantas, hombres, y fijó
Sus leyes sapientísimas—seguras—en
El Tártaro, en el mundo, en las alturas.

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 20 and 27 December 1879 and 10 January 1880; reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, pp. 168–176.

To the Virgin Mary

English translation

I.

Mother of the Lord, ever-flowing fountain
Of love, charity, and tenderness;
Essence of virtue and loveliness—
Daughter and mother of an omnipotent God.
Oh! virgin of all virgins... most precious
Flower in the eternal garden sown by
The hand of God. Sacred rose who casts a
Perfumed fragrance in the glorious mansion
Of eternal happiness and everlasting life...
Mother—virgin—the chosen mother of God.

To your melodious voice the entire heaven
Delights in singing reverent hymns of joy:
“Comfort to all Christians, and sacred mother
Of the human race as of the Paschal Lamb.”
Oh mother of the creator! Immaculate,
Who in that same eternity was born pure;
When the rebel angel—who in heaven, against
The firmament, raised his impious sword—
In mysterious covenant, God told you:
“Virgin, your son shall vanquish the serpent.”

And eventually, beloved mother, your son
Did conquer the cunning serpent, who in
Envy offered the onerous fruit to Eve—who
Knowing of the fruit lay guilty before God.
But if it was a woman who permitted sin to
Enter the beautiful paradise of rejoicing,
It was also a woman who bequeathed to
Mankind a Redeemer who would save them...
A God who came from heaven as a man
To change the destiny of all mankind.

Oh morning star, your light
Died for an instant in Golgotha,
When you saw Jesus nearing death,

Nailed in agony upon the cross.
 Oh! what profound, oppressive sorrow,
 Sacred Mother, your maternal bosom bore
 On that day like no other—grievous day
 When Heaven joined earth to mourn as one...
 It was the Creator, as man, who died,
 And all creation wept for its father.

II.

Star of the sea, upon which the sad and
 Desolate seafarer seeks refuge, when
 In the darkest night, as suppliant of your
 Favor, he seeks the light of heaven.
 Star of clemency—divine star who tears
 Away the horrible black veil from gloomy
 Night, and from the grief and affliction
 Which present to mortals mournful destiny—
 Pour into my soul the light of hope,
 Of faith, of charity, and of temperance.

Your gaze illuminates what is most obscure—
 The inconceivable vanishes at your voice....
 But what could be impossible for she who
 Bore a God, virgin mother and divine woman?
 To be the most perfect and most fortunate,
 Who in the same eternity created the Father....
 Virgin, in your bosom you joyfully carried
 The Father, the Son, and your Sacred husband—
 Precious, saintly, and heavenly Mary,
 Of all the world mother and benevolent guide.

If your cradle was humble, it was sacred,
 For you were chosen for purest motherhood,
 Mother of the eternal Father's only Son,
 Who, at his birth, made you immaculate.
 From incomprehensible eternity, the eternal
 Word found a resting place in your womb;
 Descending from empyrean heaven, Christ
 Suffered in this world to save mankind....
 You are Sacred Mother of Christ the Redeemer,

And your name enchants the universe.

III.

Benevolent mother of the penitent faithful,
You always attend to their cries;
You shelter the world with your sacred wings,
And the grateful world fervently adores you.
You are the stairway by which mankind ascends
To glorious life in the eternal reign;
Queen of heaven—beloved empress who
Brilliantly illuminates God's throne—
You are the ever-flowing fountain of grace,
Mother of God, infinite and omnipotent.

You are the Ark of the Holy Covenant,
And beloved Queen of the angels;
As renowned prophets say, you are
The celestial intercessor for mankind.
Mirror of justice, and progenitor
Of all virtues to be conceived;
To you our eternal Father grants all
You request, paragon of mothers,
Who reins throughout Heaven as
The mother of the omnipotent King.

You are a patron to the father confessors
Who preach throughout the arid deserts;
Protectress of the living and the dead,
And the hope of the repentant sinners.
How great, my mother, is your heart.
As you promise eternal glory to the just,
You also offer to the wicked the maternal
Protection of your beloved, loving, tender
Hand as it offers salvation through which
You deliver the wicked to immortal life.

I can not call you by a name more sacred than
Immaculate Mother of God, mother of the
Ruler of infinite eternity who from nothingness
Made a world inhabited by a thousand creations...
Mother of the omnipotent One who extended

His inimitable works throughout the world...
Who drew out of the profundity of darkness
Light, animals, plants, and mankind, and
Established His wise laws—absolute—
In Hell, in the world, and in Heaven.

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La Magdalena

Texto original en español

Ante los piés postrada de Jesús
Lamenta y gime la triste Magdalena—
Después le ve clavado—¡ay!—en la cruz,
Y su alma se anonada en llanto y pena.

Su pecho henchido de dolor palpita—
Levanta al cielo sus llorosos ojos—
“¡Perdón, perdón!” arrepentida grita—
Se lanza ante la cruz, y cae de hinojos.

La abraza y la estrecha con amor tan tierno
Contra su pecho, ya purificado,
Que le dice desde el cielo el Padre Eterno:
“Ya está Magdalena tu perdón ganado.”

Postrada está la bella pecadora,
Y olvida de la vida los placeres—
“¡Perdón, perdón!” al Salvador implora
Que comprende sus intensos padeceres.

Palabras de dolor—preces divinas
Pronuncian sus labios con delirio—
Que anhelan besar—¡ay!—las espinas
Que coronan á Jesús en su martirio.

Los labios otro tiempo palpitantes
De delirio, de amor y de pasión—
Solo besar alampán, las punzantes
Heridas de la humana redención.

“¡Perdón, perdón!” repite en alta voz,
Y estrecha y besa la cruz con abandono;
“Pobre muger,” le dice el Hijo-Dios
Que está sobre la cruz, “Yo te perdono.”

Al fin entrega su alma el Hijo de Dios,
Y ella cae anonadada ante la cruz,
Y pronuncia sollozando en débil voz
El dulcísimo nombre de—¡JESÚS!

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 13 July 1880; reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, pp. 178–180.

Mary Magdalene

English translation

Before the bent legs of Jesus, sad
Mary Magdalene laments and grieves—
Later she sees him nailed—Oh!—to the cross,
And her soul surrenders to sorrow and weeping.

Her bosom, filled with anguish, trembles—
She lifts her weeping eyes to heaven—
“Forgive me, Oh, forgive!” she constantly cries,
Flinging herself on bended knees before the cross.

She embraces the cross with such tender love
Against her bosom, so quickly freed from sin,
That the Eternal Father in Heaven tells her,
“Mary Magdalene, you are already forgiven.”

The beautiful sinner lies prostrated,
And she forgets the pleasures of her life—
“Forgive me, Oh, forgive!” she implores the
Savior who knows of her fervent suffering.

Words of anguish—her lips deliriously
Pronounce supplications to heaven—
As she longs to kiss the thorns—Oh!—
Which crown Christ in his martyrdom.

Her lips in earlier times trembled
With longing, with love, and with passion—
But now they yearn to kiss the pierced
Wounds of the redeemer of mankind.

“Forgive me, Oh, forgive!” she entreats again
And caresses and kisses the cross with abandon;
“Oh sorrowful woman,” the Son of God tells her
As he hangs on the cross, “I forgive you.”

At last the Son of God delivers up his soul,
And she collapses, humbled, before the cross,
And pronounces in a weak and sobbing voice
The cherished, beloved name—JESUS!

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 13 July 1880. English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 179.

Sueño y visión de un patriota

Texto original en español

1.

En una choza de apariencia triste
Duerme un cansado é infeliz anciano:
Se pone en la frente su arrugada mano—
Y en sus párpados dos lágrimas se ven.
Tiemblan sus labios y sus miembros todos,
Se hincha y se agita su vetusto pecho—
Se lanza airado fuera de su lecho
Y dice temblando “¡Oh libertad perdida!”

2.

La voz de la natura nos enseña
Que todos al nacer somos iguales—
Y ¿porqué me ponen á mí en estos camales
Mientras otros pretenden ser mejores?
¡Maldito, oh maldito sea el mundo!
Que mira con desprecio al desgraciado—
Yo mil veces por mi patria he derramado
Mi sangre—y sin embargo nada soy.

3.

¡Maldita sociedad; inicuo ser!
Que te ciega de la plata el resplandor;
Ya no te importa la virtud—el honor—
Sólo el fulgor de las riquezas quieres.
A cuántos infames de conciencia negra
Recibes en tus brazos seductores,
Y miras con desprecio los sudores
Con que el pobre adquiere el pan de cada día.

4.

Es cierto que nacieron nuestros Padres
Bajo el yugo opresivo de Inglaterra;
Mas después de sangrienta y justa guerra

Independencia y Libertad ganaron.
 Libres instituciones heredamos—
 Independencia y Libertad gozamos—
 Mas hoy ¡oh Patria mía! nos hallamos
 Expuestos á perder nuestros derechos.

5.

Nuestro estandarte, emblema de Igualdad
 Sembrado de planetas fulgorosos,
 Se mira amenazado de ambiciosos
 Que quieren convertirlo el signo real.
 Nuestros Padres en la frente de Colombia
 Escribieron con resulta y firme mano:
 “Que sea para siempre este un Gobierno
 Del Pueblo, por el Pueblo y para el Pueblo.”

6.

¿Por qué entónces destruir la obra
 Que nuestros Padres con su sangre hicieron?
 ¿Por qué olvidar de orgullo que murieron
 Por nosotros, las ideas sacrosantas?
 Con su sangre patriótica regaron
 De América oprimida el bello suelo;
 Y ayudados por el justo Juez del Cielo,
 Victoria emanó de sus fatigas.

7.

Calla el anciano, y una vez escucha
 Que le dice con ternura: “Buen amigo,
 Sigue mis pasos, y con fé te digo
 Que por siempre tu patria será libre.”
 Lanzas á la puerta el triste anciano;
 La abre y en el aire se ve una diosa
 Que con voz encantadora y melodiosa
 Le dice: “¿Por qué lloras ciudadano?”

8.

“¿Temes acaso que tu Patria amada

Deje de existir dentro de unos meses?
No temas, no; que yo sus intereses
Vigilo día y noche sin cesar.
Estimo el amor tan grande y puro
Que le tienes á tu Patria, caro amigo:
Y si sigues mi estandarte, yo predigo
Para siempre será próspero y feliz.”

9.

“Siempre he sido la justa defensora
Del pobre triste que llora abandonado;
Las cadenas del esclavo he quebrantado,
Y reynos é imperios he vencido.”
“Mirad,” dijo la diosa con orgullo,
Extendiendo la bandera Americana,
“Siempre hemos defendido yo y mi hermana
La Justicia—este cielo terrenal.”

10.

“Sigue mis pasos y no estés tan triste
Que bajo principios justos y legales
Que emanan de mi mente, los mortales,
Siempre vivirán libres—felices.
Destructor soy de reynos y de imperios;
En mis pechos se nutrió la dulce UNION;
IGUALDAD Y LIBERTAD es mi inscripción
Y es mi eterno pedestal—¡CONSTITUCIÓN!

11.

“Que la ley rija al hombre es mi doctrina;
Y que el hombre obediente sea á ella;
Y así de Nuestra Patria—el alma estrella
Para siempre alumbrará libres hogares.
Protesto contra cetros y coronas,
Y proclamo una República ilustrada—
Por el Pueblo establecida, y gobernada,
Solamente por el Pueblo que la crió.”

12.

Extasiado de placer y de consuelo,
El anciano se fija atentamente
En el ser en quien miraba, claramente,
La muy digna protectora de su Patria.
Miró en la frente de la casta diosa
Una diadema donde escrita estaba
La palabra que todo lo explicaba—
Decía en letras de oro—¡DEMOCRACIA!

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A Patriot's Dream and Vision

English translation

1.

In a forlorn and somber shack
Sleeps a tired, sad old man: he
Raises his wrinkled hand to his brow—
A tear dangles from each eyelash.
His lips tremble, and his body shudders;
His old, troubled chest heaves in spasms—
Angered, he bolts out of bed and
Says, trembling, “Oh lost liberty!”

2.

“The voice of nature tells us that all
People are created equal at birth—but
Why have I been shackled in these chains,
While others pretend to be better?
Oh, wicked, wicked is this world!
It holds in contempt those in disgrace—
I have shed my blood a thousand times for my
Country—and without doubt, I am nothing.

3.

“Wicked society—you don’t deserve to exist!
Wicked society! Iniquitous thing!
You are blinded by silver’s shiny glitter;
Virtue and honor now mean nothing to you—
You only see the treasures’ rich luster.
You lure into your seductive embrace so many
Many vile men with consciences corrupted,
And yet look with disdain upon the sweat
By which the poor obtain their daily bread.

4.

“It is true that our Forefathers were born
Under the oppressive yoke of England;

But following their just and bloody war
Independence and Liberty was their victory.
We inherited free institutions—
We delight in Liberty and Independence—
But today, Oh my country! we find
Ourselves in danger of losing our rights.

5.

“Our flag, emblem of Equality, sown
On broad and fertile fields, now is
Threatened by the ambitious who would
Convert it to a symbol for royalty.
Our Forefathers wrote across the face of*
America, with a firm and resolute hand:
‘May this Government be forever
By the People, of the People, and for the People.’

6.

“Why then destroy that which our
Forefathers created with their blood?
Why allow our pride to make us forget
They died for us and their sacred beliefs?
With their patriotic blood they saturated
The bounteous soil of oppressed America.
And aided by the just Judge of Heaven,
Victory was born through their labor.”

7.

The old man ceased his speech, and suddenly
Heard a soft voice speaking: “My good friend,
Follow my path, and I will in faith show you
Why your country will forever be free.”
The old man rushed to the door; opening it,
He saw hovering above him a goddess
Who in enchanting and melodious voice
Asked him: “Why do you weep, citizen?”

8.

“Do you fear your beloved Country
Will fail to endure beyond a few months?
There is no need to fear; I will watch over
Your interests day and night without fail.
Dear friend, I cherish your intense, pure
Love for your country. If you follow
The path my flag ordains, I pledge this
Country will forever prosper and be happy.”

9.

“I have always been the rightful defender
Of the abandoned poor who weep in sorrow.
I have torn the chains from off the slaves,
I have vanquished kings and empires.
Look,” said the goddess with pride,
Unfurling the American flag,
“My sister, Justice, and I have always
Defended this earthly heaven.”

10.

“Follow my course and do not be so sad,
For under my just and legal doctrines
Which emanate from my mind, the people
Shall always live free—and happy.
I am the destroyer of kings and empires;
At my bosom I nourished the tender UNION;
EQUALITY AND LIBERTY is my inscription
And my eternal pedestal is—the CONSTITUTION!

11.

“My doctrine is, law must rule men;
And men must be obedient to the law;
And so from this Country—the starry soul
Will forever shine upon free homes,
A defiance against royal scepters and crowns,
And I proclaim an illustrious Republic—

Established by the People, and governed
Solely by the People, who created it.”

12.

Ecstatic with rejoicing and consolation,
The old man now gazed intently at this
Being before him, whom he now saw clearly,
This most dignified protector of his country.
He saw this precious goddess wore a
Diadem upon which was written the single
Word which explained all she had spoken—
It read in golden letters—DEMOCRACY!

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 24 July 1880. English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 261. Translator’s note. “Colombia” in stanza 5 refers to Columbia, the personification of America, not the South American country.

España

Texto original en español

Poesía dedicada a los españoles de California.

¿Vivirá por ventura, oh España,
Algún hombre—algún fiel español,
Que no gima de angustia y de pena,
Cuando mira los rayos del sol—
Cuyo rostro celeste no pudo
Esconder de tus amplios dominios—
Cuando el orbe seguía obediente
Tus decretos y grandes designios?

Siete siglos de guerra sangrienta
No agotaron tu insto valor;
Siempre fiel, siempre firme mostrásteis,
Tu grandeza, tu gloria y tu honor.
Y vencísteis por fin Madre España,
Y tu fama en dos mundos reinó—
Pues el orbe humillado y rendido
Noble culto á tu insignia rendió.

De Ysabel la corona patente
En su ínclita frente brilló;
Y á los dos continentes á un tiempo
A su cetro postrados miró.
Tu estandarte, ¡oh España querida!
En los aires de Europa flotó;
Y á los mares de mundos extraños
Y á las tierras del globo sombrío.

De los cielos los astros brillantes
No podían á la voz alumbrar
Los confines del imperio inmenso
Que tu cetro llevó a dominar.

Donde quiera que el sol alumbraba—
Con acento canoro y profundo—
Tu dulcísimo nombre sonaba—
Vuestro mapa era el mapa del mundo.

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 7 August 1880; reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, pp. 302–304. Torres’s note. [“insto”: puede ser “justo”.]

Spain

English translation

Poetry dedicated to the Spaniards of California

Is there by chance, Oh Spain, such a man
Living as this—a faithful Spaniard
Who does not grieve in anguish and pain
When he looks at the rays of the sun—
That celestial face which could not
Hide from your vast domains—
Whose orbit followed in obedience
Your decrees and grand designs?

Seven centuries of bloody war
Did not diminish your just valor; *
Always faithful, always resolute, you proved
Your grandeur, your glory, and your honor.
You at last were victorious, Mother Spain,
As your fame reigned throughout two worlds—
The world over, humbled to devotion,
Yielded noble worship to your flag.

From Isabel's illustrious brow
Blazed forth her prominent crown;
She saw both continents bow down
Together as one before her scepter.
Your flag, Oh beloved Spain!
Floated through the skies of Europe
Casting its shadow over foreign seas
And across the lands of all the world.

The glow of heaven's radiant stars
Could not eclipse the vast range
Over which your voice held sway,
The empire your scepter did dominate.

In every land where the sun cast its glow—
In a tone enchanting and profound-
Your melodious name would resound-
Your map was the map of the world.

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 7 August 1880. English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 303.

Una sátira

Texto original en español

A las señoras S. S. A. y R. T. T.

La dicha de esta vida es pasajera,
Cual caricia de mujer que nada dura;
Y que infame, traidora y embustera
En sus besos de miel brinda amargura.

Sus halagos, cual su cara, son postizos;
Y su pecho, cual sus piernas, de algodón;
De crines de caballo son sus rizos—
Sus afeites, cual toda ella, falsos son.

De sus labios la sonrisa embriagadora,
Tras la dulce apariencia, engaño encierra;
Cuando jura llorando que sí adora
Ni una gota de amor siente siquiera.

Las cadenas atractivas ¡cuántas veces!
Son compuestas de papeles y de hilachas...
Aún los años que las vencen hacen meses,
Las viejas por decir que son muchachas.

Con la tinta de zapato, muy ufana,
Enegrece su cabeza, ya tordilla,
Con la harina del vecino, muy galana,
Adorna su vetogésima mejilla.

Por la calle muy hermosa y muy brillante,
Se pasea con aquél que galantea,
Y en su cuarto, en la noche, en un instante,
Se convierte en lo que ES—en vieja fea.

No dudo que sus dientes, sean los dientes,
De las viejas quijadas del difunto,
O tal vez serán recuerdos de parientes
Que murieron en el sitio de Sagunto.

Son felices las mujeres, pues en dos
Se convierte cada una cuando quiere;
Su vejez, y juventud, marchando en pos,
Caminan sin cesar hasta que muere.

Sus años no se alteran—NO—¡jamás!
Nunca llega ¡que esperanza! a la vejez,
Y aunque muera de cien años, y demás,
En la cómoda ha dejado su niñez.

Publication. Original Spanish text first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 25 October 1879;
reset from Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, pp. 332–334.

A Satire

English translation

To the Ladies S.S.A. and R.T.T.

Happiness in this life is transient as
The caress of a woman, which never lasts;
And what infamous, treasonous hypocrite—
Her kisses of honey invite bitterness.

Her flatteries, like her face, are all false;
Her bosom, like her legs, shaped with cotton;
Her curls once were the mane of a horse—
Her make-up, like all else, is pure fake.

From her lips her intoxicating smile,
Behind her sweet facade, hides deceit;
When she swears, weeping, that she adores you,
In truth she does not feel one drop of love.

Enchanting chains—so often!—are fashioned
Of mere paper and thread... and yet, the years
That ravage women, they count as months,
And aging women insist they are yet girls.

With shoe polish in all arrogance
She dyes her hair, quickly turning grey,
And with flour borrowed from the neighbor
She gaily adorns her vein-streaked cheek.

Through the streets with her would-be lover
She parades all in beauty and in brilliance,
But in her room, at night, in the dark, she
Becomes in an instant what she is—an old hag!

I have no doubt that her teeth
Were taken from an old skull, or perhaps
They are relics of her parents
Who died in the siege of Sagunto.*

Women are truly happy, since each can
Transform into another when she pleases;
Her old age, and her youth, march each behind
The other, perpetually, until she dies.

Her years remain constant, and never—No, Never!—
Will she ever hope to reach a ripe old age!
And if she dies when she's a hundred, or older,
She has left her youth behind in her dresser.

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 25 October 1879.
English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 333.
Translator's note. Sagunto, an ancient Spanish city, was besieged by Hannibal in 219 B.C.

A la Dulcinea de Ventura

Texto original en español

Poder dormir sin sosiego,
Hermosísima señora,
Que si gusano ayer fuisteis,
Mariposa sois ahora.

A tu capullo—tu cuarto—
Gusano entrásteis ayer
Y hoy sales mariposa
Llena de humor y placer.

El Criador te dió una cara
Cuando á este mundo vinisteis;
Y tú con arte señora
Otra cara te pusisteis.

La naturaleza, ufana
Hizo tus megillas roñosas;
Y tú con gusto exquisito
Dibujas en ellas rosas.

Cuando nacisteis, nacisteis
Una muger natural,
Y con el tiempo te has hecho
Una dama artificial.

La diabla naturaleza
Te dió un tristísimo pecho...
Mas tú soberana artista
De lana uno lindo te has hecho.

Vi tus dientes hace días,
Y pensé que eran puñales;
Pero hoy veo en tus encías
Finas perlas orientales.

En la tienda Chaffee y Gilbert
Donde la otra noche entrásteis—
¡Ah p ____ para piernas—
Algo ____ qué composturas?

Tu ojo derecho ¡qué hermoso!
¡Fulmina como una estrella!
Mas decidme bella Psiquis
Si es pedazo de botella.

Nació la Venus antigua
Por naturaleza hermosa—
Mas tu te haces de fantasma
Horrible, atractiva diosa.

Si tu mano es fea, ¡qué importa!
¡Qué valen las hermosuras!
Miguel Angelo fué feo
É hizo bellas pinturas.

Polícleses fué también
Muy feo, hechicera hurí,
É hizo estatuas preciosas
Cual la que has hecho de tí.

Esa cintura que ayer
Era tan pobre y tan triste,
En un momento perfecta
Con mil hilachas la hiciste.

En fin bellísima joven
De monstruo que eras ayer,
Te has hecho con cinco pesos
Una singular muger.

Bien veo que ya arreglásteis
Lo que ayer ví en tu pechuga...
Era, mi bien, mi tesoro,
Una colosal arruga.

Ayer que ví tus pestañas,
Y tus cejas naturales,
Luego creí frecuentabas
Pasearte por los tunaless.

Ayer que ví tu cabellera
En el ambiente flotante,
Me figuré ver las cerdas
Del famoso Rocinante.

Mas hoy oran tu cabeza
Buches sedosos de chino,
Y no lo puedo entender...
¡Cuán variable es el destino!

En fin para no cansarte
Sois de la misma hermosura
El modelo más perfecto—
Y nunca usas... pintura.

Sólo una cosa no más
No has podido reformar—
Ese inmenso promontorio
Que te prohíbe el besar....

Esa nariz que imagino
Ser pedazo de otros mundos,
Y que vomitan ronquidos
Horrisonos y profundos.

Si pudieras conseguir
Despegarte, niña hermosa,
De esa nariz que te arrastra
Serías más linda y dichosa.

Siempre andarás por tu pié
Contenta, alegre y feliz,
Porque tendrás cuando vieja
Un bastón en tu nariz.

No creas que no padezco
De mi lastimado brazo,
Que tú sin pensar golpeásteis
De un tremendo narizaso.

Mas te perdono—y no creas
Que escriba yo sobre tí,
Si no para celebrar
Tu variación, bella hurí.

Se me habían olvidado
Tus orejas. Son buñuelos
Que sobraron en las pascuas
De tus antiguos abuelos.

Ayer un cuero de toro
Compró uno de tus amantes;
Y me dijo los quería
Para hacerte un par de guantes.

Mas como el pobre andaba
Si te alcanzaría con uno,
Fué á la matanza de Kaiser
Y compró otro de toruno.

Hablando ayer de tus labios
Hubo varias opiniones;
Al fin convenimos todos
En que parecían riñones.

Ayer tu andar saleroso
Contemplando estuve un rato;
Y dije al enamorado:
“Es más airosa que el pato.”

Tu pecho exhala un aliento
Dulcemente perfumado,
Que esparce suaves esencias,
Cual el ajo fermentado.

Encantadora doncella—
Veo mecerse en tus pestañas
Esas perlas color de oro
Que se llaman, creo—lagañas.

Tus zapatos son las lanchas—
Según la Mitología—
En que Carón, al averno
Las ánimas conducía.

En la isla habrá una fiesta
En Christmas, y no hay vapores
Para conducir de un viage
Mil señores y señoras.

Y no hallando otro recurso,
Os suplico que me rente
Uno de vuestros zapatos
Para trasportar la gente.

Esperando, pues, señora,
Me conceda este favor—
Tened en mí; siempre, vuestro
Justo y fiel admirador.

¿Y cómo no admirarte,
Cuando sois encantadora
En belleza; y tan famosa
Como escultora y pintora?

Ayer en tu cara eras
Un monstruo descomunal
Y hoy á la calle sales
Una diosa terrenal.

Sois tan linda y tan hermosa
Que en el mundo no hay tu igual;
Todos te admiran... no saben,
Que eres mona artificial.

Fué Dulcinea del Toboso
Famosa por su hermosura;
Mas tú la eclipsas, gallarda
Dulcinea de Ventura.

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To Dulcinea of Ventura

English translation

To be able to sleep without peace,
Truly lovely woman, for if
You were a caterpillar yesterday
You are a butterfly today.

Yesterday you entered your
Cocoon—your room—a caterpillar,
But today you emerged a butterfly,
Filled with happiness and rejoicing.

The Creator gave you a face
When you entered this world;
But, madam, with your artistry
You created a different face.

Nature, in its arrogance,
Made your cheeks scabbed and dirty;
But you with exquisite delight
Draw roses on them.

When you were born, you were
Born a natural woman, but
With time you transformed yourself
Into an artificial lady.

Devilish nature gave you
A sad-looking bosom.... but
Your supreme artistry created
A beautiful one out of wool.

I saw your teeth a few days ago,
And I thought they were daggers;
But today I see in your gums
Fine pearls from the orient.

In the store called Chaffee and Gilbert
Where you entered the other night,
Ah! ____ for feet—
Something ____ what repairs? *

Your right eye, what a beauty!
It sparkles like a star!
But tell me, beautiful Psyche,
Is just a piece of a bottle?

Ancient Venus was born
Beautiful through nature- -but you
Transformed yourself from a horrible
Spectre into an enchanting goddess.

If your hand is ugly, so what!
What price beauty!
Michelangelo was ugly
But he created beautiful paintings.

Polyclitus also was terribly
Ugly, you voluptuous witch,
And he sculpted priceless statues
Like what you carved from yourself.

That waist of yours which yesterday
Was so pitiful and pathetic,
You instantly tied it up quite
Perfectly with a thousand threads.

Finally, young beauty, from
The monster you were yesterday,
With just five dollars you fashioned
Yourself into a phenomenal woman.

I see plainly that you smoothed out
What I saw yesterday in your bosom....
It was, my dear, my treasure,
A colossal wrinkle.

* [The original is illegible for these words in these lines.]

Yesterday as I gazed upon your eyelashes
And your eyebrows supplied by nature,
It seemed you spent your time
Wandering through the cactus.

Yesterday when I saw your hair
Floating in the breeze,
I thought I saw the tail

Of the famous Rocinante.

But today a wrinkled crop of hair,
Fashioned from Chinese silk, harangues
Your head—and I can not understand
Why destiny is ever so fickle!

Finally—since I do not wish to tire you—
Let me say you are the most perfect
Model of beauty itself—
And yet, you never use paint.

There's just one thing—one minor item-
You haven't been able to improve-
That immense protrusion
Which prohibits you from kissing....

That nose which I assume
Is a chunk of another world
Which vomits forth a horrible
And most ominous snoring.

If, my young beauty, you could ever
Devise the means to become unstuck
From that nose that drags you down,
You would be yet more beautiful and happy.

You will always walk about
Contented, happy and gay,
For when you are old you will have
A cane- -which is your nose.

Do not think I do not suffer
From my injured arm, which
You so thoughtlessly struck with
A tremendous blow from your nose.

But I forgive you—and rest assured
That I write about you only
To celebrate your boundless
Variety, you voluptuous beauty.

Your ears had somehow escaped
My memory. They are *buñuelos*
Which your ancient ancestors

Left over from the Passover.

Yesterday one of your beaus
Bought the hide of a bull;
He told me he wanted it
To make a pair of gloves for you.

But the poor guy was worried silly
That one hide might not be enough,
So he went to the Kaiser's slaughterhouse
And also bought the hide of an ox.

Yesterday a few of us were chatting
Concerning various opinions about your lips;
And finally we agreed in counsel
That they are none other than kidneys.

Yesterday I contemplated for some time
Upon the graceful way you walk;
And finally I said to your beau:
"Her strut is more genteel than a duck's."

From your bosom you exhale
A breath so sweet and perfumed,
As it spreads out a mild essence
As from a ripened garlic.

Enchanting maiden—
I see blending together in your
Eyelashes golden pearls-
Or is it bleary-eyed slime....

Your shoes are the boats—
According to mythology-
In which Charon transports
The lost souls to Avernus.

On the island there will be a festival
This Christmas, and there is no steamboat
Which can transport on a single trip
A thousand men and women.

And since I have no other recourse,
I beg you to rent me
One of your shoes

In which to transport the people.

Trusting therefore, Madam, that
You will bestow this favor upon me—
I will always remain your
Trusted and faithful admirer.

And why should I not admire you,
When you are enchantingly
Beautiful, and as famous
As a sculpture or a painting?

Yesterday your face bore the appearance
Of an uncommon monstrosity,
But today you go out about the street
A goddess upon this earth.

You are so fine and so beautiful,
In this world you have no equal;
Everyone adores you... they do not know
You are a doll made artificial.

Dulcinea was from Toboso
Famous for her loveliness;
But you eclipse her, graceful
Dulcinea of Ventura.

Publication. Spanish original first published in *La Gaceta* (Santa Barbara), 12 March 1881. English translation in Luis A. Torres, ed., *The World of Early Chicano Poetry, 1846–1910*, p. 349. Torres's note. [The original is illegible for these words in these lines.]

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Colophon

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