

ING 004

William Wordsworth

*Poems Dedicated to National  
Independence and Liberty*

[selecciones]

1808-1811

**PROYECTO OLE 11**  
**ARCHIVO ELECTRÓNICO DE FUENTES PRIMARIAS**  
**POESÍA PATRIÓTICA PROESPAÑOLA EN INGLÉS, FRANCÉS, ALEMÁN Y PORTUGUÉS (1808-1814)**  
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VII

“Composed while the author was engaged in writing  
a tract occasioned by the Convention of Cintra”  
1808

NOT 'mid the world's vain objects that enslave  
The free-born Soul--that World whose vaunted skill  
In selfish interest perverts the will,  
Whose factions lead astray the wise and brave--  
Not there; but in dark wood and rocky cave,  
And hollow vale which foaming torrents fill  
With omnipresent murmur as they rave  
Down their steep beds, that never shall be still:  
Here, mighty Nature! in this school sublime  
I weigh the hopes and fears of suffering Spain;  
For her consult the auguries of time,  
And through the human heart explore my way;  
And look and listen--gathering, whence I may,  
Triumph, and thoughts no bondage can restrain.

VIII

“Composed at the same time and on the same occasion”

I dropped my pen; and listened to the Wind  
That sang of trees uprooted and vessels tost--  
A midnight harmony; and wholly lost  
To the general sense of men by chains confined  
Of business, care, or pleasure; or resigned  
To timely sleep. Thought I, the impassioned strain,  
Which, without aid of numbers, I sustain,  
Like acceptance from the World will find.  
Yet some with apprehensive ear shall drink  
A dirge devoutly breathed o'er sorrows past;  
And to the attendant promise will give heed—  
The prophecy,--like that of this wild blast,

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Which, while it makes the heart with sadness shrink,  
Tells also of bright calms that shall succeed.

XIII

[“And is it among rude untutored Dales”]

AND is it among rude untutored Dales,  
There, and there only, that the heart is true?  
And, rising to repel or to subdue,  
Is it by rocks and woods that man prevails?  
Ah no! though Nature's dread protection fails,  
There is a bulwark in the soul. This knew  
Iberian Burghers when the sword they drew  
In Zaragoza, naked to the gales  
Of fiercely-breathing war. The truth was felt  
By Palafox, and many a brave compeer,  
Like him of noble birth and noble mind;  
By ladies, meek-eyed women without fear;  
And wanderers of the street, to whom is dealt  
The bread which without industry they find.

XVI

[“Hail, Zaragoza! If with unwet eye”]

HAIL, Zaragoza! If with unwet eye  
We can approach, thy sorrow to behold,  
Yet is the heart not pitiless nor cold;  
Such spectacle demands not tear or sigh.  
These desolate remains are trophies high  
Of more than martial courage in the breast  
Of peaceful civic virtue: they attest  
Thy matchless worth to all posterity.  
Blood flowed before thy sight without remorse;  
Disease consumed thy vitals; War upheaved  
The ground beneath thee with volcanic force:  
Dread trials! yet encountered and sustained  
Till not a wreck of help or hope remained,  
And law was from necessity received.

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XVII

[“Say, what is Honour? -'Tis the finest sense”]

SAY, what is Honour? -'Tis the finest sense  
Of 'justice' which the human mind can frame,  
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,  
And guard the way of life from all offence  
Suffered or done. When lawless violence  
Invades a Realm, so pressed that in the scale  
Of perilous war her weightiest armies fail,  
Honour is hopeful elevation,--whence  
Glory, and triumph. Yet with politic skill  
Endangered States may yield to terms unjust;  
Stoop their proud heads, but not unto the dust--  
A Foe's most favourite purpose to fulfil:  
Happy occasions oft by self-mistrust  
Are forfeited; but infamy doth kill.

XXIII

[“Ah! Where is Palafox? Nor tongue nor pen”]

1810

AH! Where is Palafox? Nor tongue no pen  
Reports of him, his dwelling or his grave!  
Does yet the unheard-of vessel ride the wave?  
Or is she swallowed up, remote from ken  
Of pitying human nature? Once again  
Methinks that we shall hail thee, Champion brave,  
Redeemed to baffle that imperial Slave,  
And through all Europe cheer desponding men  
With new-born hope. Unbounded is the might  
Of martyrdom, and fortitude, and right.  
Hark, how thy Country triumphs!--Smilingly  
The Eternal looks upon her sword that gleams,  
Like his own lightning, over mountains high,  
On rampart, and the banks of all her streams.

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XXIV

[“In due observance of an ancient rite”]

IN due observance of an ancient rite,  
The rude Biscayans, when their children lie  
Dead in the sinless time of infancy,  
Attire the peaceful corpse in vestments white;  
And, in like sign of cloudless triumph bright,  
They bind the unoffending creature's brows  
With happy garlands of the pure white rose:  
Then do a festal company unite  
In choral song; and, while the uplifted cross  
Of Jesus goes before, the child is borne  
Uncovered to his grave: 'tis closed,--her loss  
The Mother *then* mourns, as she needs must mourn;  
But soon, through Christian faith, is grief subdued;  
And joy returns, to brighten fortitude.

XXV

Feelings of a Noble Biscayan at one of those Funerals

1810

YET, yet, Biscayans, we must meet our foes  
With firmer soul, yet labour to regain  
Our ancient freedom; else 'twere worse than vain  
To gather round the bier these festal shows!  
A garland fashioned of the pure white rose  
Becomes not one whose father is a slave:  
O, bear the infant covered to his grave!  
These venerable mountains now enclose  
A people sunk in apathy and fear.  
If this endure, farewell for us all good!  
The awful light of heavenly innocence  
Will fail to illuminate the infant's bier;  
And guilt and shame from which is no defence  
Descend on all that issues from our blood.

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XXVI

The Oak of Guernica.  
Supposed Address to the Same

OAK of Guernica! Tree of holier power  
Than that which in Dodona did enshrine  
(So faith too fondly deemed) a voice divine  
Heard from the depths of its aerial bower-  
How canst thou flourish at this blighting hour?  
What hope, what joy can sunshine bring to thee,  
Or the soft breezes from the Atlantic sea,  
The dews of morn, or April's tender shower?  
Stroke merciful and welcome would that be  
Which should extend thy branches on the ground,  
If never more within their shady round  
Those lofty-minded Lawgivers shall meet,  
Peasant and lord, in their appointed seat,  
Guardians of Biscay's ancient liberty.

XXVII

Indignation of a High-Minded Spaniard

1810

WE can endure that He should waste our lands,  
Despoil our temples, and by sword and flame  
Return us to the dust from which we came;  
Such food a Tyrant's appetite demands:  
And we can brook the thought that by his hands  
Spain may be overpowered, and he possess,  
For his delight, a solemn wilderness  
Where all the brave lie dead. But, when of bands  
Which he will break for us he dares to speak,  
Of benefits, and of a future day  
When our enlightened minds shall bless his sway;  
*Then*, the strained heart of fortitude proves weak;

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Our groans, our blushes, our pale cheeks declare  
That he has power to inflict what we lack strength to bear.

XXVIII

[“Avaunt all specious pliancy of mind”]

AVAUNT all specious pliancy of mind  
In men of low degree, all smooth pretence!  
I better like a blunt indifference,  
And self-respecting slowness, disinclined  
To win me at first sight: and be there joined  
Patience and temperance with this high reserve,  
Honour that knows the path and will not swerve;  
Affections, which, if put to proof, are kind;  
And piety towards God. Such men of old  
Were England's native growth; and, throughout Spain  
(Thanks to high God) forests of such remain:  
Then for that Country let our hopes be bold;  
For matched with these shall policy prove vain,  
Her arts, her strength, her iron, and her gold.

XXIX

[“O’erweening Statesmen have full long relied”]

1810

O’erweening Statesmen have full long relied  
On fleets and armies, and external wealth.  
But from *within* proceeds a Nation’s health  
Which shall not fail, though poor men cleave with pride  
To the paternal floor; or turn aside,  
In the thronged city, from the walks of gain,  
As being all unworthy to detain  
A Soul by contemplation sanctified.  
There are who cannot languish in this strife,  
Spaniards of every rank, by whom the good  
Of such high course was felt and understood;  
Who to their country’s cause have bound a life  
Erewhile, by solemn consecration, given  
To labour, and to prayer, to nature and to heaven.

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XXX

The French and the Spanish Guerrillas

HUNGER, and sultry heat, and nipping blast  
From bleak hill-top, and length of march by night  
Through heavy swamp, or over snow-clad height-  
These hardships ill-sustained, these dangers past,  
The roving Spanish Bands are reached at last,  
Charged, and dispersed like foam: but as a flight  
Of scattered quails by signs do reunite,  
So these, –and, heard of once again are chased  
With combinations of long-practised art  
And newly kindled hope: but they are fled–  
Gone are they, viewless as the buried dead:  
Where now? –Their sword is at the Foeman's heart!  
And thus from year to year his walk they thwart,  
And hang like dreams around his guilty bed.

XXXI

Spanish Guerrillas

1811

They seek, are sought; to daily battle led,  
Shrink not, though far outnumbered by their Foes,  
For they have learnt to open and to close  
The ridges of grim war; and at their head  
Are captains such as erst their country bred  
Or fostered, self-supported chiefs, –like those  
Whom hardy Rome was fearful to oppose;  
Whose desperate shock the Carthaginian fled.  
In One who lived unknown a shepherd's life  
Redoubted Viriatus breathes again;  
And Mina, nourished in the studious shade,  
With that great Leader vies, who sick or strife  
And bloodshed, longed in quiet to be laid  
In some green island of the western main.