

Juan Ramón Jiménez
Translated By Diana Burgos

XXXIII: The Hungarians

Look at them, Platero, look how the tired dogs drape their asses over the sidewalk.

See the young woman, a statue of mud, spill her copper nudity
into the chaotic bundles of her green rag clothes.
Her blacker-than-the-depths-of-a-cooking-pot hands reach –
she yanks out dried herbs.

A little girl, a blur of hair, paints obscene allegories on the wall in coal dust.
A little boy's urine is a fountain that makes his belly a latrine.

A man scratches his tangle of hair, and a monkey strums its ribs like a guitar.

Every so often, the man voluntarily joins the spectacle.
He gets up, walks to the center of the street, and with a lazy force,
beats on his tambourine –
never allowing his gaze to leave a nearby balcony.

And after the little boy has kicked her, a young woman sings a song
about the monotony of her life.
Meanwhile, the monkey, which weighs less than the chain that confines it, walks
a crescent path in search for the softest gutter stone.

It's three. The train leaves. A new street is in the horizon.
The sun is alone.

Well, there you are, Platero. This is the Amaro family ideal.
A man scratches himself like a beech tree. A woman models herself after a grapevine. Two
little rascals are destined to further their family.
And a monkey, small and frail like the world,
feeds us the fleas it has plucked from its body.