José Mariá "Agua": An Introduction and Translation

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José María Arguedas's Agua:
An Introduction and Translation

A Thesis
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The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Among the modern indigenist writers of South America, José María Arguedas has most successfully portrayed the range of values reflected in Andean culture. In his several volumes of short stories Arguedas focuses on the social and personal dilemmas experienced by those who live within this culture. Although Arguedas is highly sensitive to the variety of injustices which exist in Andean culture, he cannot be considered a social reformer, and he never embraces a political or religious ideology. What Arguedas does most effectively, however, is capture the individual plights of those caught in the social struggles between the distinctive social classes in this society. In his short story Agua, here translated into English, Arguedas depicts the struggle of a young man - Little Ernesto - against the determined social order of his community. Little Ernesto, who also appears in other stories by Arguedas, is seen in his struggle for self-identification. For although he is racially a white, by cultural background he belongs more to the Indian class. Little Ernesto identifies with the Indians, and he prefers the values of the Indian culture to those of the white culture. But he comes to discover that because of his race he can never be fully accepted into the Indian culture, and thus he is trapped between that which he wishes to reject and that which he hopes to embrace.
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JOSE MARÍA ARGUEDAS'S AGUA:
AN INTRODUCTION AND TRANSLATION
José María Arguedas is recognized as the best and most artistic of the South American indigenist writers, and his work represents the final and most glorious development in the evolution of the modern Indigenist short story. For Arguedas, it was important to illustrate what the Indian world holds to be of value, rather than to depict those aspects of the Indian world of interest to the outsider. Thus Arguedas rejected the premise of other writers that local color and social protest were the elements in Indigenist writings that were most attractive and interesting to readers; Arguedas did not believe that such works reflected the most worthy manifestations of Indian culture.

The prominent status Arguedas occupies in Latin American literature stems from his success in making the public aware of the range of values Andean culture possesses. The perspective he used in order to bring about his fiction was what indeed set him apart from the rest of the Indigenist writers. As William Rowe points out, Arguedas not only embodied Indian culture himself, but he wrote from the point of view of an Indian. Rowe elaborates, saying:

Because of his personal experience of Indian culture, the indigenista outlook was bound not to satisfy him, his position was the reverse of that of the indigenistas since he had come as an outsider not to Indians but to modern urban culture.¹

According to this view, Arguedas belongs to a new category of writers, a select group who considered themselves Indians and who write for Indians. Like Arguedas, these writers were also trying to break down the barriers between the metropolitan and the Andean cultures of their respective countries.
Arguedas's short stories and novels do not ignore political and ideological issues, and he frequently incorporates such elements into his stories about the Andean world. But Arguedas's denunciations of injustice and his portraits of the oppressors show no trace of identification with any particular doctrine or philosophy; and the temperate attitude exhibited in his works derives from his determination to bring more objectivity and veracity to Indigenist literature. One of the author's major aims in his writings is, in fact, to expose the plight of the Indian in contemporary Peru. But both his themes and techniques go far beyond the limits of conventional social protest, for although Arguedas delineates Indian tragedy, he combines his powerful and realistic depictions with Indian cultural values. Arguedas's way of expressing his condemnation of the servile state in which the Indian exists and the corrupt system which perpetuated this condition differs substantially from that of previous Indigenist writers. He does not follow the earlier patterns of depicting Indians as semi-barbarous creatures who mechanically respond to aggression with vengeful and brutal practices, nor does he follow the minute yet inconsequential presentations of the local colorists; instead, Arguedas appeases his anger by setting out to rescue and restore all those values and traditions which truly characterize and identify the Andean race. In an interview in Lima for the August, 1966, edition of the Revista Iberoamericana, Arguedas revealed the motivations that led him to undertake such an enterprise. In response to the question of what his opinion was concerning the novel as a means for learning the possibilities of any culture, he replied:

Mire, yo decidí escribir por las grociedades que en los libros se habían escrito antes
The unique understanding of Quechua mentality and tradition which Arguedas was able to project in his narratives could have emerged only from the personal conviction and involvement of one who not only knew but also identified himself with the Indians. Nonetheless, Arguedas never endorsed any social, political, or economic reform designed to raise the Indian's living conditions; and he was skeptical of superficial solutions continually proposed by the church and by political parties.

Arguedas's major technical achievement undoubtedly lies in his use of language. Here, in an entirely new way, he creates a literary language that makes Spanish a vehicle for portraying the Andean world. Because of his bilingualism and his personal attachment to Andean culture, Arguedas was faced from the beginning with the dilemma of whether to write in Spanish or in Quechua. If his prose were in Spanish, it would mean a loss of authenticity of the Indians' original way of thinking and behaving; therefore he was reluctant to use Spanish. On the other hand, if his writings were in Quechua they could reach only an erudite few. Although he had decided to become a Quechua writer by the time he settled down in Lima in 1931, other writers from the city promptly discouraged him and convinced him to do otherwise. (Before his death in
1969, Arguedas had come to regret this decision, and he returned to writing in Quechua.) Arguedas's solution to his dilemma was to create a language understandable by all readers of Spanish but one which would serve at the same time to convey the Andean world. For the former purpose he devised a modified Spanish which his Indian characters speak, but they do so in accord with the rules of Quechua syntax; he also incorporates Quechua myth, metaphors, phrases, and the words of many songs, which he generally translates within the context of his narratives. Thus Arguedas makes use of linguistic alterations in this form of an invented Spanish in order to reproduce some of the characteristics of Quechua. This Spanish becomes almost entirely an inflected language because articles, pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions were for the most part left out. Sentence word order in this special language also paralleled that of Quechua in which, for example, the verb is placed much later in the sentence than is in normal Spanish. With the aid of this language, Arguedas was able to capture the Indian's simplicity, dignity, and complex relationship with his natural surroundings.

No less significant than Arguedas's use of language is his employment of music in his short stories and novels. For many years during his literary career Arguedas became a controversial figure among Peruvian writers, due to a theory of his regarding the inner connection between music and poetry and traditional Peruvian culture. He maintained that modern Peruvian society was losing its identity and adopting more and more foreign models, and that only through Andean music and poetry would people be able to regain their sense of belonging to a more authentic reality. Jean Franco, on this point, explains the author's ideas:

He claimed that the folk-music and poetry of the Indians was not only the predominant
culture in the Indian villages of the sierra but that even non-Indians had been deeply affected by this. The true Peruvian culture, he felt, must be based on Quechua tradition since this was the only indigenous tradition in Peru.4

Although Arguedas fervently defended his theory in all the lectures and debates to which he was invited, the author was never able to break completely the rigid attitude of cosmopolitan audiences. In the Indian world music constitutes an ever-present reality in the lives of each individual; there is no single manifestation or activity that is divorced from this element.

Arguedas's best works on the Indian theme are contained in two collections of short stories, Agua and Diamantes y pedernales; in two volumes of Indian songs and folktales, Canciones y cuentos del pueblo Quechua5 (1938) and Cuentos magicos realistas y canciones de fiestas tradicionales en el valle del Montairo;6 and in three novels, Yawar fiestas, Todas las sangres, and Los rios profundos. Of all these books Agua, a collection of three autobiographical short stories inspired by the author's youthful experience in the Andean sierra, is perhaps the best illustration of Arguedas's style and social perspective. It is the title story in Agua which is the central concern of this thesis.

In this first story Arguedas focuses on certain characters who represent the determined social order of the community: Little Ernesto, the young protagonist and narrator of the story; Don Braulio, the landlord; the bugler, Pantacha; the Indian elder, Don Wallpa; the water distributor; and Don Vilkas, an Indian whose greed leads him to betray his own people. This concentration on only a few characters gives
Arguedas's composition greater unity and clearness. The author's creation of the character of Little Ernesto (who also appears in other narratives by Arguedas) is unique in Andean literature: he is an Indian by upbringing but a white in terms of racial order. Thus Ernesto experiences serious personal conflict caused by his belonging to two completely different worlds. In Agua the climax in the story occurs when Little Ernesto throws the bugle at the landlord's head and curses and shouts "thieves" at him and two other important white men; this is Ernesto's most bitter moment in his struggle for self-identification. He feels ashamed of his own white race and wishes to repudiate it. He comes to understand that people his color believe themselves to be superior to the Indians, and that the vast majority of them despise the Indians and take advantage of them heartlessly. After this daring action, Ernesto decides to run away from the whites and to seek refuge among the Indians.

However, despite Ernesto's deep love for the Andean culture, and most of all his solid identification with the Indians, he discovers that he can never be one of them. His racial features make him different from the others, and consequently their attitude toward him can never be one of full acceptance. In particular, Ernesto's anxious attempt to join the brave villagers of Utek'pampa leads to further disillusionment for the young boy. In his escape from the whites, he is also fleeing the Tinki and San Juan villagers. He comes to the sobering realization that the seeming toughness of the Tinkis fades away at the moment in which they are most needed, and that the San Juan people become worthless whenever they feel threatened or are asked to take any action against the injustices they suffer. Thus the boy's disenchantment with
certain characteristics of the Indians comes to parallel his condemnation of many white characteristics. Ultimately, however, Ernesto's attachment to the Indians prevails, and he sees himself as an Indian, and as one who will defend them and take shelter in them.

Don Braulio, another major character of the story, is a white man but a white man viewed from the Indian's perspective. The Indians who live in the Andean sierra place most mestizos in the same category as whites. The landlord, the mayor, the sacristan, and probably all the other whites of the village are in fact mestizos whose racial features are more white than Indian. Conversely, however, these same mestizos are viewed along the main cities of the coast as more closely related to the Indians. This concept is very significant for the understanding of the story, which reflects the Indian's attitude, not that of western readers. Although Little Ernesto narrates the story, it would be inaccurate to assert that it is told from the standpoint of the white man because Ernesto, in terms of cultural background, is an Indian.

As a wealthy and powerful white man in a small sierran town, Don Braulio controls people and natural resources to his own benefit. The army, the local authorities, and even some Indians collaborate to preserve the status quo, in which the landlord dominates in the community. Thus, Don Braulio manipulates those who might threaten his interests, and he does with Pascual, the water distributor of the week, who in this story tries to rebel against him. He also beats and jails anyone who happens to be in his way, and he abuses the Indians and their animals in order to keep them frightened and subservient.

Don Braulio is a wealthy man who has had very little education. He is a corrupt individual, yet his corruption does not come from a
conscious will to be vicious but rather from an unquestioned tradition of corruption. It is likely that his father and grandfather were also landlords, and he has simply continued their example. In no scene of the story do we see Don Braulio as an evil person; he is portrayed more as a man who acts without giving much thought to what he does. His appearance in the story is also almost completely limited to episodes in which he is under the influence of alcohol. His habit of getting drunk with other whites and with drunkard Indians keeps alive his rudimentary way of being happy. His ego is reinforced as he pays for drinks for everyone, and as he receives indulgence from both whites and Indians, who out of their drunkenness perform various crazy acts to keep him content. These whites and Indians indulge Don Braulio because they hope to gain his favor and be given water for the irrigation of their withering lots. These Indians, in a sense, are exactly like Don Braulio because they also continue living the same life that their forebears did; they do not question things the way they are. Don Braulio is not a vicious man by nature. He simply does not reflect upon his behavior; he acts and reacts.

The bugler Pantacha is an important character as well. He is the first individual to question the authority of Don Braulio. He has more personality than all the other Indians; he summons the people, attempts to incite them, and aggravates the landlord. After his service with the military on the coast, where the Indians have revolted and murdered their oppressive landlords, Pantacha returns excited by the possibilities of a similar uprising among the Indians in the mountains. But the dreamer and his dream are destroyed, and through his death, Pantacha becomes a martyr figure. He is the representation of the Indian's strength in the
Andes, in contrast to the frightened and undetermined Indians of the story.

Arguedas's treatment of violence in this story is unique among Indigenist writers, who tended to incorporate violence among the Indians as a mechanical response to oppression. In the story Agua, the author treats this element as a conscious attitude on the part of the Indians. The thought process in which he presents them prior to any confrontation, as well as the many passages he develops extensively to reveal how their anger develops and matures, create a more human image of this people because they are portrayed as intelligent and sensitive beings, and not as mere objects who are driven only by vengeful and brutal desires.
When Pantaleoncha and I arrived at the plaza, the arcades were still deserted, the doors closed, the corners where Don Eustaquio and Don Ramon lived were empty. The silent village, surrounded by immense mountains at that cold hour of the morning, seemed sad.

"San Juan is dying," said the bugler. The plaza is the heart of the village. Just look at our plaza; it is worse than the puna." 7

"But your bugle will call the people."

"Hah! These are not people; in Lucanas, yes, there are people, more people than ants."

As every Sunday, that Sunday we went to the arcade of the village jail.

The elder had already prepared the table for the water distributor. That yellow table, standing alone in the plaza, abandoned in the middle of the arcade, by itself, gave one the idea that the plunderers of San Juan had left it there because it was heavy and useless.

Some of the pillars that held up the roofs of the houses were supported by trunks; others were twisted and about to fall; only the white stone pillars remained upright and whole. The stone benches of the arcades, falling apart and scattered around, with the whitewash almost completely gone, were a pity to see.

"Water, little Ernesto. There is no water. San Juan will die because Don Braulio gives water to some and hates others."

"But they say Don Braulio gives water to everyone, cutting it off from Don Sergio, Dona Elisa, Don Pedro. . ."

"Lies, boy, now the whole month is Don Braulio's. The water distributors are cowards. They tremble before Don Braulio. Don Braulio is like a fox and like a dog."
We arrived at the door of the prison and sat down at one end of the arcade.

The weak morning sun reflected on the rooftiles of the settlement of Ventanilla, the silver mine abandoned so many years ago. In the middle of the mountain, at the head of a long white tongue of stone, the settlement of Ventanilla showed a hollowed black door, open forever. A great mine before, now it served as an Indian lovers' meeting place. On hot days, the cows entered the rooms and slept in the shade. In the evenings, wild pigs would snore there.

Pantacha looked for a while at the white tongue formation of stone that was Ventanilla.

"Before, when there were mines, the San Juan people were rich. Now the small lots do not produce enough for them."

"There's plenty of land, Pantacha, it's water we need. But you better make your bugle cry so the people will come."

The Indian put the horn to his mouth and began to play a cattle branding tune.

In the quiet of the morning, the tune of the bugle sounded strong and cheerful. It spread over the little village and revived it. As Pantacha played, San Juan seemed to me more and more a real town. I hoped that all of a sudden boys, girls, and members of the community would show up from the four corners of the plaza.

Gaily the sun settled upon the rooftops of the small houses of the village. The high tops of the alders and of the eucalyptus came alive; the whiteness of the tower and of the church facade reflected a strong, beautiful light toward the plaza.
The blue sky touched me, the few white clouds that rested almost glued to the ridge of the mountains, the grayish vegetation of k'erus and k'antus spreading all over the slopes, the silence all around, the sad face of Pantaleoncha, gave me one of those sweet pains that one frequently feels beneath the sky of the sierra.

"Another tune, Pantacha, for your San Juan."

"Pitiful little town!"

As every Sunday, when hearing the tune of the Indian, the people began to arrive at the plaza. First came the schoolchildren: Vitucha, Jose, Bernaco, Froylan, Ramoncha . . . They came around the corners, some through the main entrance. When the children saw us they began to run.

"Pantacha, Pantacha!"

"Little Ernesto!"

They all surrounded us; their faces overflowing with happiness; upon hearing Pantacha play, they rejoiced; one could tell that they wanted to dance the hierra.

The tune of the bugler made us remember the grand fiestas of the year: the harvest of corn on the plains of Utek' and Yanas; the digging of potatoes in Tile, Papachacra, K'oll, K'ollpapampa; the branding of the cows in the punas. It seemed to me that I was seeing the corral full of cattle: dapple, gray, brown cows, noisy, hot-tempered bulls, calves freshly adorned with red crepe on their foreheads, and ribbons on their ears and loins. I seemed to hear the cry of the cattle, the hoarse cursing of the branders.

"Hierra!  Hierra!" I rushed to the plaza, suddenly seized with happiness.
"Tap, boys, tap!"

"Yipee! Yipee!"

We all began to dance as a group. We all were full of pure happiness; joyful, like that beautiful sun that shone from a cloudless sky.

The torn trousers of many schoolchildren billowed like scarecrows. Ramoncha and Froylan limped.

Pantaleon became enthusiastic when he saw us dancing before him. Little by little his bugle became clearer, full of joy; at the same time, the dust stirred by our dancing mounted. The dance was not enough to fulfill us. Some began to sing:

...Kanrara, Kanrara,
mountain cruel and big,
you are black and always angry:
we have great respect for you,
Kanrara, Kanrara.

"Not that one. Play 'Utek'pampa,' Pantacha." I asked for that song because I loved the pampa Utek*. Here the papaya trees and the cornstalks are the sweetest in the world:

Utek'pampa,
   little Utek'pampa:
your partridges have loving eyes,
your deceitful larks sing as they rob,
your wild pigeons enchant me,
Utek'pampa
   little Utek'pampa.

Pantaleoncha's bugle and our song brought together the people of San Juan. All the Indians surrounded us. Some began to sing the wayno quietly to themselves. Many women raised their voices in chorus.

Shortly, San Juan plaza was having a grand fiesta.

The dirty and thin faces of the villagers lit up with joy; their yellowed eyes sparkled with contentment.

"If only we had a little something to drink!"
"True. All we need is some cañazo."

Pantacha changed the song; all of a sudden, he finished "Utek'pampa" and started playing the wayno of the harvest.

"Harvest! Harvest!"

Little Father, Little Mother:
the humming birds echo in the air,
the bulls are fighting on the plains,
the pigeons say "tinyay tinyay"
because there is mirth in their little breasts,
Little Father, Little Mother.

"Villagers of San Juan, you're making Little Father God angry with your dance. When the earth is dry, there is no dancing. You must pray to patron San Juan so that he will send you rain."

Don Vilkas scorned them from the end of the arcade: he had just arrived at the plaza and the gaiety of the villagers made him angry.

Don Vilkas was an old Indian friendly with the white landlords. He lived with his wife in a big cave, two leagues from the village. Don Braulio, the wealthiest man in San Juan, owner of the cave, gave him small parcels of land so that he could raise potatoes and corn.

Almost everyone in the community respected Don Vilkas. In regard to the distribution of water and of assignments of duties for the fiestas, Don Vilkas always addressed them. His face looked serious, his voice was somewhat hoarse, and he had a look of authority in his eyes.

The schoolchildren got scared when they heard Don Vilkas's voice; as if ashamed, they gathered near the white pillar, and then stayed very quiet. The villagers went up to the arcade, and then they sat down in a row on the stone benches without saying a word. Almost all
the women went to the other arcades to talk there, far from Don Vilkas. Pantaleoncha put his bugle on the pavement.

"Don Vilkas is our enemy. Just look at his face; he is like one of the white landlords, a nuisance."

"Right, Pantacha. Don Vilkas isn't nice to the boys; his face looks like a fighting bull; he is just that serious."

The bugler and I remained seated at the end of the arcade. Ramoncha, Teofances, Froylan, Jacinto, and Bernaco talked in a low voice, squatted next to the first pillar of the arcade; every now and then they stared at us.

"Certainly, they must be talking about Don Vilkas."

"I agree."

The villagers spoke softly, as if they were afraid of bothering someone. The old man leaned on the school door, and began to look at the mountain ahead of him.

The sky became clearer; the few clouds that could be seen rose up in the sky while turning whiter and whiter.

"Let's see who the rejoneo is," shouted Don Vilkas.

"I am the rejoneo, Sir," answered Felischa.

"Run to Don Cordova, ask him for the dagger, and kill the stray pigs. Today is Sunday."

"All right, Sir."

Felischa threw the ends of his poncho over his shoulders and rushed off in search of the dagger.

"If there are any landlords' pigs, go ahead and kill them," yelled Pantacha when the rejoneo went through the middle of the plaza.

"Yippee!"
We turned around to look at Don Vilkas; he was furious.

"What do you say, Sir?" Pantacha asked.

"Landlords are to be respected, bugler!"

"But the landlord's pigs also piss in the streets and on the church door."

After this, we turned our backs on the old man from Ork'otuna.

Pantacha lifted his bugle and started playing a song from the punas. Every once in a while, no more, Pantacha recalled his Wanakupampa songs. In the evenings, in his hut, his bugle moaned with the music of the villagers that lived in the high plains. In the silence of the darkness, these tunes reached the ears, like the cold winds that blow over the grasslands; the women stopped talking and listened quietly to the music of the punas.

"It seems as if we are in our lands of K'onani," said Don Braulio's wife.

Now, in the village plaza, from the arcade that was full of people, the bugle sounded differently; close to the joy of the sky, the music of the puna made no one sad; it seemed rather to be a foreign tune.

"Pantacha plays the puna style well," said Don Vilkas.

"It is because he was born in Wanaku. The people from Wanaku play their bugles in the morning and as it gets dark to liven up the sheep and the llamas."

"The Wanakus are very good people."

Pantacha played for a long while.

Afterwards, he laid the bugle on his knees and swept his eyes over the mountains that surround San Juan. There was no longer any grass on the mountains, only brown dried-out bushes without leaves, which gave
the impression that the mountains had some vegetation.

"Equally dry are the little parcels of Tile, of Sana, and everywhere. Don Braulio's rage is the cause of it all, Little Father does nothing, Ernesto."

"That is true. The corn of Don Braulio, Don Antonio, and Dona Juana is big and very green. There's even mud on the ground. And the villagers' corn! Dried out, bent, weak, it almost doesn't move even with the wind."

"Don Braulio is a thief, boy!"

"Don Braulio?"

"Even worse than the fox."

Pantaleon's talk turned angry.

Some nearby schoolchildren heard our conversation. Bernaco came up to us.

"Is Don Braulio a thief, Pantacha?" he asked, somewhat frightened.

Ramóncha, the joker, stood up before the bugler, showing us his drum-shaped belly.

"Have you caught him stealing?"

Both of them were scared; they looked secretly at the old man Vilkas.

"Where does Don Braulio get all his money? He takes it from the villagers. He steals the water. He snatches the Indians' cattle right in front of them. Don Braulio is as hungry as a hound."

Bernaco sat next to me and whispered in my ear:

"This Pantacha has returned from the coast to annoy us. He says that all the landlords are thieves."

"I guess that's true, Bernaco. Pantacha knows."
On seeing Bancucha and Bernaco sitting near the bugler, all the boys got together little by little in the spot where we were.

Pantacha looked at us one by one; one could see love in his eyes.

"Boys! Boys!"

He lifted the bugle and began to play the wayno which the people of San Juan sing during the digging of the big irrigation ditch of K'ocha.

In the eyes of the Indians shone the tenderness they felt for Pantaleon. They looked upon him as a big brother, as the owner of the heart of all the schoolchildren of the village.

"For Pantaleoncha I would even let Dona Juana's bullying son disembowel me. And you, little Ernesto?"

"You are a fool, Ramon; you'd just cry like a corraled calf."

"Hah!"

On seeing the mirth in his fat-bellied frog face, all we schoolchildren, careless of the old man, filled the arcades with laughter.

Ramoncha turned in circles, on one heel, holding his old man's belly.

"Ramoncha! Wiksa!"

Only the old man didn't laugh; he continued frowning, as if a stinking dog had appeared in the arcade.

The Tinki people appeared from the top of the Kanrara. Standing over a stone that faces the village from the gorge, the Tinkis shouted, imitating the neighing of a colt:

"The Tinkis! The Tinkis!"

The schoolchildren shouted in chorus. All the Indians got up from the benches and approached the edge of the arcade in order to be seen by the Tinkis.
"Tinki is a brave community," said Pantaleon.

He blew the bugle with all his might, so that the villagers would hear him from the K'anrara.

"That might even have reached Puquio," said Ramoncha, pretending to be afraid.

"It was probably heard all the way to Nazca," and I laughed.

The Tinkis jumped from the stone to the road and started coming down the mountain at a gallop. Every now and then they stood over the biggest stones and shouted at the village. The ravines of Viseca and Ak'ola from the distance answered the voice of the Tinkis.

"Viseca shouts the loudest."

"Of course! Viseca is a major ravine; Don Chituya is its owner; K'anrara belongs only to Ak'ola."

"K'anrara? The great K'anrara always has defeated Chituya, he is angrier."

"That's true. His head is pointed like Don Cordova's dagger."

"And Chituya? Four K'anraras could surely enter his belly."

The Indians looked from one mountain to the other. They compared them very seriously, as if they were looking at two men.

One of the mountains is in front of the other. They are separated by the Viseca River. The Ak'ola Creek breaks through the K'anrara on one side; on the other, it rises almost suddenly from behind a long and low hill. Looked at from afar, the great K'anrara has an angry expression.

"The mountain scolds Viseca River for singing loudly," the San Juan villagers say.

Chituya is a broad and high mountain. Its gentle slopes are covered
by thorny bushes and hawthorns. At a distance it looks black, like a swelling of a mountain range. Its aspect is not imposing, rather, it appears calm.

The San Juan Indians say that the two mountains are rivals and that in the dark of the night, they go down to the Viseca Creek and have it out from bank to bank.

The Indians entered through the corner of the church. They came alone, without their wives. They advanced through the middle of the plaza, towards the arcade of the school. They were about a hundred, all of them in blue woolen garments; their big white hats and wooly sandals moved along rhythmically.

"Tinkis are true men!" cried the bugler.

Don Vilkas despised the Tinki people; on seeing them at the plaza, he raised his head in an arrogant manner, but he followed them with his eyes until they reached the arcade. He feared them because they were a united people and because their chief elder, a retired corporal, had little respect for the white people.

Don Wallpa, the Tinkis' chief elder, climbed the steps first.

"Good morning, dear friends!" he saluted.

He came to Don Vilkas and gave him a hand, then he went toward the bugler; they hugged.

"Dear Don Wallpa!"

"Pantacha, big boy!"

"Has it been a long time since you returned from the coast?"

"Six months, sir."

Like Don Wallpa, the other Tinkis did the same: they saluted everybody, gave a hand to Don Vilkas, and hugged Pantaleon.
Promptly, we schoolchildren and the musician found ourselves surrounded by Tinkis. I took a look at each of these villagers' faces: they all looked angry, their eyes were yellowish, their skin was dirty and chapped by the cold, and they had long and sweaty hair; almost all of them were in rags; the crowns of their heads showed through their torn hats, and most of them wore sandals with holes in the bottom, just the straps and edges were fleecy. However, they had a better countenance than the people of San Juan; they didn't seem to be very tired, and they spoke and laughed loudly with Pantaleon.

One by one, the schoolchildren went away from the group; a couple of them climbed the white pillars, others began to play in the plaza. Among Tinkis, more than ever before, I felt fonder of the plaza, the little white tower, the big eucalyptus of the village. I experienced a deeper love for the villagers; it seemed to me that I was Tinki, that I had a villager's heart, that I had always lived in the puna.

"Bernaco, would you like to be a Tinki?"

"Sure! Tinki is man enough."

Pantaleon also seemed satisfied in talking to the Tinkis: his eyes showed cheerfulness. First he talked of Nazca: about cars, about stores, and later on, about the abusive patrons scattered all around.

"Don't you see? Pantacha has come back somewhat differently; he is angry at the rich people," the dancer, Bernaco, said in my ear.

"Do you think so? Landlords on the coast just take possession of the water too; the tenants from Lucanas, Wallwa, and Nazca are the last in the irrigation already, along with those who own two or three little plots; as an act of charity, landlords supply them with a little bit of water, but their grounds are thirsty year after year. But the Nazca
landlords are rich, the San Juan people can only purchase from their cornfields, from their alfalfa fields, and from their cattle. Almost all of them are like gringos, always uttering mean remarks; they make their peons respect them like the Little Father in church."

"That is true. That's the way the Nazcas are," said the elder Don Wallpa.

"As it is everywhere, the landlords in Nazca also mistreat the day laborers," continued Pantaleoncha. "Through bullish measures, they rob the work of the villagers who go over there from San Juan, Chipau, Santiago, Wallwa. Six, eight months they hold them bound on the plantations without their day's wages; even if they are shivering with fever, they are sent to the sugarcane plantations, to the cotton fields. Afterwards, two or three coins are thrown in their faces as if it were quite a great thing. Damn it! The money that they give isn't even enough for medicine. On the way home, in Galeraspampa, in Tullutaka, people just faint all along the road; the folks from Andamarca, from Chillke, from Sondon die shivering like children. They are all left right there, with a bunch of stones over their bellies. What do all you people of San Juan have to say?"

"Damn! Whites are like tigers!"

"Villagers are born to die like dogs!"

The Tinkis and the villagers of San Juan felt frustrated. Angry, they looked at each other, as though for an explanation. Pantacha's eyes had the same look as when the foolish Indians of San Juan got scared during the whip-fighting celebrations; they shown differently.

All the villagers got together close to the jail door in order to listen to Pantaleoncha; they were around two hundred. Don Vikas and Don
Inocencio were talking in another place; the old man pretended he was not listening, but he was there with such intentions so that later on he could tell everything to the landlord.

The bugler got on the stone bench of the arcade; he looked in everyone's eyes; they appeared frightened.

"But we, the common people, are so many, so many; landlords are just two or three. They say in other places that the villagers have revolted; from outside in, they have squeezed the rich as though they were just cats. What do you say, friends?"

The San Juan people got frightened, and so did the Tinkis. Pantacha was talking rebellion; they were afraid of such a thing, remembering the Indians of Chavina. These villagers pulled down eight leagues of fence that Don Pedro had had put up in lands belonging to the community; they ran after Don Pedro to murder him. But the soldiers came to Chavina and shot the villagers to death along with their elders and children; only those who fled to the highlands were able to escape. The villagers of San Juan were like women: they feared uprising.

Never before in the plaza of San Juan had a villager spoken against the landlords. On Sundays, they gathered together at the jail arcade. Whining, they asked for some water; afterwards they headed back. If they did not succeed in getting their ration, they walked away with much bitterness in their hearts, thinking that their little corn grounds would finally wither that same week. But this Sunday, Pantacha cried out loudly against the white people; right before Don Vilkas he was cursing the landlords.

"Landlords are only good for robbing, for collecting money, making mature people cry as little children. Let's kill the landlord like a
At first Don Vilkas feigned, along with Don Inocencio; but in the end, when he had heard Pantacha speaking about the white people of San Juan, he rushed toward the villagers, looked angrily at the bugler and yelled like a dog:

"Pantacha! Silence! The landlord is to be respected!"

Don Vilkas started pushing the Indians aside to clear his way to Pantacha.

"You wretched dog!"

Don Inocencio begged, holding him by his poncho:

"Don't bother Don Vilkas. Pantacha is only a talker."

"I'll attack you, sir," growled the bugler.

On hearing Pantaleon's threat, Don Inocencio held the old man back.

"Don't get angry, Don Vilkas."

Upon hearing the shouting, some men and women who stood by the other arcades came near the prison door so that they could see the quarrel.

Men and women spoke loudly.

"The old man is to be respected!" said most of the women.

"Such a bully! Don Vilkas is a mean person. Don't you think so?"

"He is just another Indian of San Juan," defiantly shouted Don Wallpa, the chief elder of Tinki, an old man like Don Vilkas.

"Wallpa! You jerk, Wallpa!"

Don Vilkas got up in a challenging way, staring straight at the chief elder of Tinki.

"If you want, one on one, like bulls in the ring," said Don Wallpa.
"Go ahead, sir, sock him in the belly," said the Tinkis to their leader.

Don Wallpa took off his poncho, tossed it over to his people, and jumped into the plaza. He stood there ready to attack, like a studbull.

"Hey, Don Vilkas!" He beckoned to him with his hand.

But the women held the old man. Otherwise, the chief elder would have made him scream like a frightened rooster.

Pantacha laughed aloud, looking at Don Vilkas.

"Ha, Ha!"

He put the bugle to his mouth and started to play a humorous wayno of the Indians of Wanakupampa:

Worn-out old man of the rocky grounds,
noisy little bird of the rocks;
do not fool me, worn-out old man.
Worn-out old man, you are presumptuous,
Mr. Engineer, they call you
Hah, worn-out old man!
show me your jackhammer.
Hah, worn-out old man!
show me your credentials.

The old man Vilkas, losing control, pushed aside the women who were restraining him, and rushed to the plaza. But he didn't go to fight against Don Wallpa, nor did he curse Pantacha; he walked straight toward the corner of Don Eustaquio. Almost at the center of the plaza, he turned his head to look at the villagers, and cried out:

"You'll answer to Don Braulio!"

"Ha, ha, you novice!" responded the chief elder.

The old man arrived almost running at the corner of Don Eustaquio, and then turned to the street of Don Braulio, the landlord of San Juan.

Don Vilkas went up to the arcade once again.
"You jerk! You are only good for scraping to Don Braulio," said the chief elder.

But the Indians of San Juan were already scared; they walked away from the Tinkis and went with Don Inocencio to a different arcade.

"The San Juan people are like Don Vilkas: jerks!" he said to the dancer Bernaco.

With the little bullets that Don Braulio shoots in the corners in the evenings, they have turned effeminate."

"Let's see what the sacristan is saying."

On the sly, we got near the arcade where the Indians of San Juan had gathered. The sacristan was pretty nervous: he kept looking towards the corner of Don Eustaquio.

The Indians were talking; they looked frightened. As if wanting to hide themselves behind each others' backs, they crowded around Sacristan Inocencio, asking for advice.

"Friends of San Juan!" explained Don Inocencio. "Don Braulio has lots of money; all the plains and the mountains belong to him. If any of our little cows enters into his fenced-in pasture land, he locks it up in his corral and lets it starve to death. He flogs us also, if he wants to. We better side up with Don Braulio. Pantacha is just a simple bugler, he is worthless."

"Yes!"

"He is lost against Don Braulio."

The people of San Juan were like timid roosters, like hares of the puna: whenever the landlord shouted or cursed loudly, or shot his little bullets in the plaza, they vanished, like wild pigs; they escaped to all parts.
Now the villagers were divided into two groups: the San Juan people with Don Inocencio, and the Tinkis with Pantaleon and Don Wallpa. The people of San Juan were greater in number.

The Tinkis were talking by the door of the prison; they had formed a group.

"Let's go and tell Pantacha what Don Inocencio has just said," I suggested.

"Let's go."

Bernaco and I went toward the prison arcade.

As we were walking around the corner, Don Pascual, the water distributor, showed up in the plaza through the main door.

"Don Pascual!" shouted Bernaco.

"Don Pascual!"

All the Indians repeated loudly the name of the water distributor. Pantacha signaled Don Pascual with his bugle.

The water distributor of the week went towards the arcade where the Tinkis had assembled.

The Indians of San Juan ran again towards the arcade of the prison so that they could speak with the water distributor; they left the sacristan alone.

The villagers of the entire district gathered around Don Pascual.

"People of San Juan, Ayalay, Tinki," I heard Pantaleoncha's voice. "Don Pascual will distribute water from the reservoir for those who need it. Surely Don Braulio will rage, but Don Pascual comes first. What do you say?"

Shortly, Pascual climbed on the stone bench.

"We have understood with the help of the musician Pantacha. This
week the water from the reservoir is going to be for Don Anto, the widow Juana, Don Jesús, Don Patricio. . . Don Braulio will surely have a fit. But at least for once, the poor will get water one week. Landlords are rich; the poor needs even more for his potato grounds, his corn grounds. . . The Blessed Sun frightens away the rain; only the water of the reservoir is what we have for irrigation. This time the reservoir water will reach the villagers."

Don Pascual's speech was not as violent as Pantacha's; rather, it seemed humble. He beseeched the villagers to rebel against Don Braulio.

"That's good, Don Pascual!"

"That's good!"
The Tinkis answered first.

"Don Pascual, make the distribution according to your conscience."

"Don Sak'sa, from Ayalay, spoke first for the people of San Juan.

"According to your conscience, sir!"

"According to your conscience!"

"Don Braulio mistreats the villagers. Community, let's make ourselves respected. This time the water of the reservoir is going to be for us!"

The Indians of San Juan were not frightened by Don Pascual's talk; they calmly stared at him. They looked like rams staring straight at their owner.

"There's no fear, people of San Juan!" cried Pantacha. "Only women are afraid of Don Braulio's revolver."

"Don Braulio is sure going to have a fit. Don't you think so? Let's just wait; I am going to give the villagers water right in front of him. . ."
The Indians looked at each other and started talking among themselves. They had just realized why Pantacha, Don Wallpa, Don Pascual were revolting against the landlord, against Don Vilkas and Don Inocencio.

"That is true, brother, there are only two or three whites in our town; we, so many, so many... They are people just like the Indians, with eyes, mouth, belly. Reservoir water for the villagers!"

"Don't you agree? The water of Mother Earth is for all."

The Indians of San Juan looked determined as well. They got together in separate groups of three and four. Pantacha and Don Pascual talked to them, one by one, about the necessity of enforcing the authority of the water distributor.

The community of San Juan was ready to confront the town's landlord, Braulio Felix.

On Sunday morning, the white folks went to look for Don Braulio at home. They waited for him in the yard for two or three hours until the landlord would get up. Next to a wall there were several old eucalyptus trunks; sitting on those logs, the white folks sunned themselves while Don Braulio finished sleeping. The landlord didn't have any fixed time to wake up; sometimes he came out of his room at seven, other times at nine, and at ten as well. Therefore, they went to see him whenever they guessed it was appropriate; some were pushier and dirtier than others, and would show up quite early in the yard so that they would be seen by Don Braulio's servants. Others went there solely out of fear that the landlord would bear a grudge against them; they got there later, when the sun was already high. Others figured the time in which Don Braulio
would get up to invite the townspeople for drinks; they courted the landlord only because they were drunkards.

On Sundays, Don Braulio was used to having a stiff drink for breakfast at Don Eraclio's shop: the little shop stood on the same street as the landlord's house. Like a mad man, Don Braulio made everyone drink cañazo; he laughed at the white folks of the village, he made them get drunk, and ordered them to sing dirty waynos. Don Braulio came out into the middle of the street laughing very loudly:

"All right, Don Cayetano! Don Federico, it was good!"

The drunken whites took off their pants, quarreled, hit their heads against the counter for no reason at all.

At noon, Don Braulio went to the arcade of the town jail for the distribution of water. The whites followed him.

Every once in a while, the landlord got so drunk that he even forgot about the distribution. Then Don Inocencio, the sacristan of the town church, made the bell toll at two or three in the afternoon. Upon hearing the bells, Don Braulio, depending on how he felt, either stayed quiet or dashed out on the street and, cursing, he ran toward the prison arcade. He beat whomever he wanted to, put two or three villagers in jail, and fired shots in the arcade. Indians and whites then fled from the plaza; the drunkards crawled away to safer spots. The arcade became silent; Don Braulio would make the plaza reverberate with the sound of his laughter, and afterwards he went back to sleep. Don Braulio acted as though he were the owner of San Juan.

It was quite possible that this Sunday the landlord was again drunk, because he was late in coming. Don Vilkas and Don Inocencio
would have stayed at the shop door only out of fear, waiting for the will of the landlord.

It was already late. The Blessed Sun burned the earth. The stones in Ventanilla's mine sparkled like little mirrors; the small hills, the slopes, the ravines were scorched with the heat. It seemed as though the Sun was burning the heart of the mountains, that is was draining the eyes of the earth forever. From time to time, the papaya trees and shrubs of the hills would die away, the great molle trees and the leafy willows along the irrigation ditches bowed humbly. The little birds of the cemetery kept quiet, and so did the villagers; they had fallen asleep, tired of much talking. Pantacha, Pascual, and Wallpa earnestly observed the road to Puquio, which wound over the loin of the mountain of Ventanilla.

The Blessed Sun wanted, perhaps, the death of the earth. He looked straight down with all his might. His ire made the world burn, and people cry.

The whitewash tower of the church was exploding with white light. The plaza was like an oven, and in its center the big eucalyptus of the village endured the heat quietly and motionlessly. There was not even air around; everything was static and overwhelming under that severe yellow sun.

The sky laughed from the heights, blue like the eyes of little girls; it seemed to enjoy observing the arid slopes, the bald heads of the mountains, the sand of the parched creeks. Its merriment clashed with our eyes, and it penetrated our insides like the laughter of an enemy.
"O Great Sun, you are good for nothing!" cursed Don Sak'sa, the old Indian from Ayalay. His elderly voice was heard throughout the arcade; it sounded grief-stricken and tired from the wrath of the sun.

"O misfortune! Such a misfortune!"

Pantacha stood in the middle of the arcade, and blew strongly the Wanakupampa bugle while looking eye to eye at the mighty sun. Now, the tune did excite the villagers' spirit as if it were the speech of their own suffering. From the overheated plaza, their misfortune ascended into the sky. It soared very far up, licking on its way the papaya trees and the withered corn, and carrying away the bitterness of the villagers, thrashed by the ire of the Mighty Sun and the wickedness of the landlord.

"Pantaleon, beseech God Father to reprimand the Sun."

All of a sudden, Don Braulio entered the plaza. The whites of San Juan came along in a group next to the landlord.

Vicenticha, the sacristan's son, ran to the tower to chime the big bell. Men and women stood up in all the arcades. As if a wild bull had slipped into the plaza, from all directions the people rushed to the jail door; they looked hungry.

"Poor people of San Juan," roared Don Sak'sa.

Don Wallpa, Pascual, and Pantacha got together.

"Don Vilkas has been waiting for quite a while, seated like a dog at Don Eraclio's door."

"So has Don Inocencio."

"When the landlord gets drunk, he loses his mind."
The Tinkis gathered together around Don Wallpa; the San Juan people, quiet and instinctive, assembled in a different place.

"There is no confidence. The villagers won't go too far with such an attitude," stressed Pantacha upon seeing the people divided into two groups.

"Villagers," he shouted, "reservoir water is for Indians!"

The Indians of San Juan turned their heads to look at the bugler; there was no manly strength in their eyes; they all looked like sad rams. The Tinkis didn't quite look sure, either.

"Don Pascual, stay firm against the landlord. He'll be certainly cursing and swearing."

"Do not fear. I will stay as firm as the great K'anrara; Don Anto, Don Jesús, Don Patricio, Don Roso..."

The village bell was tolling loudly. Now the plaza seemed festive. There was uproar everywhere, a white sun, a cloudless sky, and many bells pealing; only the spirit was not one of gaiety. The villagers watched the troop of whites suspiciously.

Don Pascual, Wallpa, and Pantaleon had placed themselves at one side of the table, looking toward Don Eraclio's corner. The Indians of San Juan, with their wives behind them, were standing at the side of the prison, the Tinkis next to the school door, and the schoolchildren had climbed up on the white stone pillars.

Don Braulio was already drunk. He walked kicking the little stones on the ground, carrying a handkerchief around his neck with the knot near his nape, and had his hat carelessly arranged. He walked with his hands in the pockets of his trousers, and the buckle of his belt shined. The holster of his revolver hung from one side. Red like a
Pasco turkey, he came in a hurry to finish up soon. Undoubtedly, the other principals were drunk too; Don Cayetano Rosas was staring.

In the middle of the plaza, right next to the big eucalyptus, Don Cayetano cried out:

"Hurrah for Don Braulio!"

"Hurrah!" replied everyone, including Don Braulio himself.

At the tail of the group, trying to hide, came Don Inocencio, the village sacristan, and Don Vilkas.

The dancer Bernaco was next to the pillar where I was.

"I am very frightened, little Ernesto. Perhaps there is going to be a fight."

"There's going to be a fight for sure, Bernaco. Pascual and Pantacha are furious."

"But Pantacha looks brave."

"Take a look at Don Braulio. Surely there is going to be a fight; probably Don Braulio has brought his dear revolver with him."

"Don't even say that, Ernesto! Don Braulio opens fire like a madman at any moment."

Don Braulio went up the steps of the arcade.

"Good morning, dear sir!" All the Indians greeted the village landlord.

"Good morning," replied Don Braulio. He walked straight to the side of the table and stood there with his back to the wall. The white followers, Don Vilkas, and Don Inocencio approached him.

The Indians glanced at Don Braulio; some were fearful and showed bright eyes, others looked tranquil, and some others were grunting.
Pantacha secured the belt which held the horn on his back; there was a kind of fever drawn on his face.

Don Braulio seemed a thoughtful pig. He had his eyes fixed on the floor, and had both hands behind him. Bent down as he was, he showed me his red nape covered with blond hair.

Don Braulio made my heart jump out of the pure anger I felt!

Silence fell over the plaza. The eucalyptus in the center of the plaza seemed to sweat as it looked humbly to the sky.

"Commissioner Pascual, proceed!" the landlord ordered.

Don Pascual jumped over to the table; from up there he looked at the bugler, at Don Wallpa, at Don Sak'sa, and then at the villagers.

"Let's proceed!"

"Monday for Don Enrique, Don Eraclio; Tuesday for Don Anto, the widow Juana, Don Patricio; Wednesday for Don Pedro, Don Roso, Don Jose, Don Pablo; Thursday for . . ."

As though he had received the crack of a whip on his back, the landlord straightened himself up; his eyebrows raised, resembling the crest on a fighting cock; and from the inside of his eyes, burst out the fury.

"Friday for Don Sak'sa, Don Waman. . ."

"Pascual, silence!" cried Don Braulio.

The party of Don Sak'sa got frightened, shook their heads, and got ready to run away right there. The Tinkis, on the contrary, remained firm in their places.

"Don Braulio, the water from the reservoir is for those who need it."

"The water has no owner!" Pantacha yelled.
"Villagers come first!" Don Wallpa added.

The landlord pulled out his gun.

"Get out of here, you wretch! Get out of here!"

The San Juan Indians stepped back, falling down from the arcade to the plaza. The women rushed out first, dragging along their large cloaks.

Two, three bullets were heard in the arcade. The white folks, Don Inocencio, and Don Vilkas formed a little group with Don Braulio. The San Juan Indians fled in all directions, they didn't even bother to look back. They ran as though they were being chased by the wild bulls of K'onani. The women shrieked all around the plaza. The children jumped down off the pillars. The Ayalay Indians got stuck at the main door; they wanted to cross it four, eight at a time. Pantacha screamed like the devil:

"Come back, villagers!"

There was no use in calling them; the villagers disappeared around the corners, through the doors. Just a couple of Tinkis stayed in the arcade; they were serious and rigid like the white stone pillars.

Don Antonio was also carrying a gun, which was probably lent to him by Don Braulio. The mayor stretched out his arm and discharged two more bullets into the air; the Indians who were still sticking their heads out around the corners vanished at once.

Don Pascual got down off the table quietly.

Principals and villagers glared straight into each other's eyes; only the table kept them apart. Don Braulio really looked like a madman; his eyes, fixed on Pantacha, showed a different look: their poison reached the heart and infected it. The whites and Don Vilkas waited, trembling, behind the landlord.
"You rotten thief!" cried the bugler. "Just go ahead and kill me, here in my chest, in my head."

He lifted his bugle high. Just like the midday sun, his look burnt and cracked the eyes. He swooped down upon the wretched landlord... Don Braulio fired his revolver, and the bugler fell on his belly over the stones.

"To prison!"

As if soaked with blood, Don Pascual, Don Wallpa, and the white folks shut their eyes. All of a sudden their courage vanished and became worthless and useless. They humbled themselves as tame roosters, as meek calves. They were just standing there looking at the ground.

"To prison, you dogs!" ordered Don Braulio in the manner of a criminal.

Don Vilkas opened the jail door. He was the town jailer. Don Wallpa stepped in first. He was shaking like a dog, and Pascual seemed like a widow in despair: bent down, he followed the chief elder humbly.

"The rest of the rams, to their punas. Get out of here!"

The Tinkis rushed away; it appeared as if they were trying to get ahead of one another; still suspicious, they glanced back from time to time as they ran.

Silence took over the plaza; there was nobody around. In a moment, everything was over: the uproar, the anger, the villagers. Pantacha, the good-hearted and daring young man, had disappeared too. The white folks also kept silence; they were staring at Pantaleon lying on the ground like a stabbed bull. Don Vilkas and Don Inocencio, standing at the jail door, were so frightened that they could not look at the musician's blood.
"Put him in there until evening!" Don Braulio ordered.
Don Vilkas and Don Inocencio were unable to pick him up.
"Drag him in, Indians!"
In vain he ordered: they feared him as though he were a ghost.
"No sir! No sir!" they begged him with the feeble voices of children.
"You, Don Cayetano."
"Of course! I can do it!"
"Goodness! It hit him in the head."
Upon seeing Pantacha being dragged in, I became furious through and through.
"You wretched vicuña hunter!" I yelled at Don Braulio.
I jumped up to the arcade. I thought myself a man, a true man like Pantacha. The great K'anrara's soul had surely entered my body; I was unable to control my increasing anger. I felt that my chest, my veins, and my eyes were about to explode.
Don Braulio, Don Cayetano, Don Antonio... all just gazed at me. Their eyes, like little round mirrors, did not move at all.
"Thieves!" I cried at them.
I picked up Pantacha's bugle from the ground, and like a weapon I threw it at the landlord's head. Instantly, blood spurted from his forehead and ran down until it reached the floor.
Well-aimed, like all tough boys! The principals surrounded their little father to assist him.
"Die, great master! You are a dog. You serve only to bite the villagers," I said to him.
"Bullets, damn it, more bullets!"
He shouted in vain. The iron of the bugle had made a crack on his forehead, and his blood ran down over him like the black blood of a snake.

"Don Antonio, kill him!"

He pleaded in vain. His speech was no longer that of a man; his blood intimidated him as if he were a woman.

"Good sir, put an end to him all at once, he is good only for biting."

I took a look at the white facade of the church.

"Hah! Little Father God was not there. It is just not true: there is no Little Father God."

Don Antonio made signals to me with his foot so that I could escape. The mayor loved me because I was a friend of his sons.

"Kill him, Don Antonio!" pleaded Don Braulio once more. I started liking the landlord's voice now; I would have stayed there. His cry dissipated my wrath, made me happy. Laughter was about to burst out of my mouth.

"Die, big dog!"

But Don Antonio kicked the cobblestone pavement and then he aimed at me with his revolver. My heart stopped beating out of dread. I jumped from the arcade to the plaza; I heard Don Antonio's bullet hissing behind me.

"Dear Don Antonio!" Undoubtedly, the mayor shot in the air just to pretend.

The Utek'pampa villagers are better than the Tinkis of the puna and the villagers of San Juan. They are daring and courageous Indians.
They made Don Braulio run. The landlord acted bullish in Utek' only
if he came in with soldiers from Puquio; he attacked the villagers and
slaughtered the animals of the plain, just to give them a lesson.

Don Braulio was violent only around the plaza of San Juan, but his
rage faded away as he approached the vicinity of Utek'; there he acted
like a good landlord.

So when I escaped from the plaza, the tough guys of Utek' came to
my mind.

The San Juan villagers had locked themselves up in their houses. I
saw only pigs on the streets. All the doors were closed as if it were
midnight.

I kept on running until I reached the Santa Barbara hill; from this
point, one can see the plains and the little town of Utek'.

Deep down there, next to the Viseca River, Utek'pampa spread out
as though it were a huge step in the middle of Santa Barbara hill.

The pampa of Utek' is never a sad place; it dwells far away from
the sky: even when there is a black fog, even when the shower makes
noise over the land, Utek'pampa is always mirthful.

When the cornfields are still green, the wind frolics around the
plants. Observed from afar, the plain awakens tenderness in the heart
of the outsiders. When the corn is just about to be reaped, all the
villagers build huts at the heads of their small grounds. The parakeets,
the parrots, and the thieving wild pigeons fly in flocks all over the
field. They pass by, whistling above the cornfields, revealing their
little yellow, white, and green breasts. Sometimes they sing from the
molle trees that grow next to the fences. From distant trails, Utek'pampa looks covered completely with smoke; it seems as though the whole
thing were the village. After the harvest, the plain grows crowded with big animals: bulls, horses, donkeys. The head males shriek all day long, challenging one another from afar; the loving colts neigh and can be heard all over the plain. Utek'pampa: Indians, whites, outsiders or not, all cheer up when they see her from the top of the gorge, from the trails.

"Mother Utek'pampa!"

I called out to the pampa as the Tinki villagers used to do it; like a young colt, I neighed from the Santa Barbara hill; I cried out loudly so that I could be heard by the brave people of Utek'. But I was deceiving myself! The bitterness in my heart increased even more as I observed the gaiety of the pampa and of the trails that go up and down the little town. There was no more Pantacha, no more Don Pascual and Wallpa; there was only Don Braulio. Even with his head broken, he would stand up again to curse, kick, and spit on villagers' faces, to get drunk with the money he stole from all the towns in the vicinity.

That afternoon, all by myself on that dried out hill, I wept for the villagers, for their little plots wilted by the sun, for their starving little animals. Tears covered my eyes; the clear sky, the plain, the bluish mountains, they were all trembling. The sun, bigger, even bigger... burnt the earth. I fell down and, as in church, kneeling on withered grass, looking at the great Chituya mountain, I begged her:

"Great mountain: let death come upon the landlords of the world!"

And then I ran down the hill to join and become one with the brave villagers of Utek'pampa.
NOTES

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2
Chester Christian, Alrededor do Este Nudo de la Vida," Revista Iberoamericana XLIX, 122 (1983), p. 232. "Look, I decided to write because of the absurdities which had appeared in the books published before I had decided or had realized that I was able to write at all. The Indian culture was completely misconstrued. It was described as a decadent population, dehumanized by vices such as alcohol, coca, and who knows what else. They were described as barbarous creatures, and I knew that was totally untrue, that such works were of people who had looked at things from a distance."

3
William Rowe, ed. Los Ríos Profundos, p. xviii.

4
Jean Franco, An Introduction to Spanish American Literature, p. 253.

5
Songs and Stories of the Quechuas.

6
Tales of Magic Realism and Songs of Traditional Festivities in the Montairo Valley.

7
High, cold, arrid plateau in the Andes.

8
Cattle branding tune.

9
Lively Indian music and dance of Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador.

10
Strong alcoholic beverage made out of sugar cane.

11
A person in charge of a dagger or rejón.

12
An Andean animal related to the llama, very much appreciated for its fine wool.
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VITA

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