

## Alfonsina Storni

Alfonsina Storni (1892-1938), one of the most controversial and well-known figures in Argentinian literature, was also one of the most important feminists of Latin America. She is the author of numerous poetry collections and theatrical works. Among her most outstanding collections are *El dulce dano* (1918), *Irremediamente*, *Mundo de siete pozos*, and *Antologia poetica* (1961), which contains all of her major work. A selection of her work was published in English by White Pine Press in 1987.

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### To Eros

Here's how it was: I caught you by the throat  
at the seashore. While you took  
the arrows from your quiver to wound me  
and I spied your full-flower crown on the ground

I gutted your womb like a doll's  
and examined its deceitful wheels  
and found wound deep into its golden pulleys  
a trap that said: sex.

Then, on the beach, I showed you (you now  
a sorry rag doll) to the hound of your deeds,  
the sun, before a frightened host of sirens.

Up the whitening rise was climbing  
your godmother of wiles, Lady Moon,  
and I threw you at the mouth of the waves.

poder

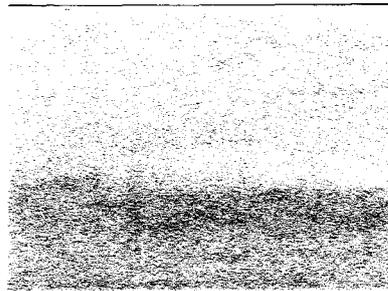
## Words to My Mother

Not great truths do I ask you;  
you would not answer in kind. I only want  
to know this: while I grew in you was the moon  
witness, abroad by the dark yards in bloom?

And while I in your bosom of Latin fervors <sup>is it Latin?</sup>  
listening slept, did a hoarse and sounding sea  
settle your nights and did you watch the water  
birds sink in the gold of the twilight?

For my soul is all fantastic and fly-about  
and a feather-cloud of madness enfolds it  
when the new moon climbs the bluing sky.

And if the sea unlocks its strong bouquet  
my soul, lulled in a bright singing of sailors,  
likes to watch the great undestined birds go by.



*The World is Bitter*

The world is bitter,  
unripe,  
stalled;  
its forests  
filled  
with steel points.  
Old tombs  
climb to the surface;  
the seawaters cradle  
God-awful  
houses.

The sun is bitter  
over the world,  
choked in the vapors  
rising from  
the  
stalled  
unripe place.

The moon is bitter  
over the world;  
green,  
pallid;  
on her damp  
skates  
she hunts specters.

The wind is bitter  
over the world;  
it huffs up clouds of dead insects,  
ties its broken self  
to towers,  
knots up in  
crepes of weeping;  
weighs on the roofs.

Man is bitter  
over the world,

balanced  
on his legs . . .  
At his back  
the all,  
stone desert;  
before him,  
all  
a desert of suns  
blind . . .

Translated by Mark McCaffrey.

