

GOOD FRIDAY

Holy, Holy Easter Friday,
day of pain and lamentation;
joyous palm-strewn acclamation
turned to bitterness and coins.

Green olive tree; Christ in the Garden
opens the cortège.
Penitential green procession,
light of candle, dying.

Under crack of hissing scourge
Ecce-Homo passes by,
guarded by the hooded men,
and women walking barefoot.

Men in yellow pointed hoods,
The Nazarene beneath the cross.
From the corner balcony
laments a sacred song.

White the cloaks and white the gloves,
sound of trumpets and of drum;
Christ is carried shoulder high
down the main street's hill.

In her rush chair sits and prays
one little lady, meditating;
blind, not seeing, she sees Christ,
though no-one would believe it.

Dirge-like chant, sepulchral glass,
silent velvet coloured red;
Civil Guards with tricorn hats
watch over Jesus' body.

Silver canopy, mantillas;
Soledad looks for her Son.
Grief so hard and anguished sadness,
broken heart beneath her gown.

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turned to bitterness and coins.

Alberic, Good Friday 1998

Notes:

Easter Friday

All over Spain there are processions during Holy Week. They are organised by various 'cofradías', or guilds. 'Nazarenos' and 'Penitentes' dress in pointed, conical hats ('capirotos') and robes of certain colours or in soft-hooded cloaks. Some walk barefoot beside the 'pasos', or wooden platforms which carry life-like tableaux of the Biblical Easter story, from Christ's betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane to His crucifixion. The pasos are carried through the streets on men's shoulders, or on wheels, often accompanied by trumpets and drums, and the 'saeta', a passionate and plaintive lament sung by a solo voice. The effigy of Christ's body is carried in an ornate glass coffin; Mary, His mother ('La Soledad') is accompanied by women wearing black lace 'mantillas' over their heads. The pasos of Mary and Jesus eventually meet together, usually in the town square. The little blind lady in this poem is the author's Nanny, Natalia.