

ODE TO SALVADOR DALI

excerpt

[The wine cave. BUÑUEL, SALVADOR, and FEDERICO are sitting around a table with a bottle of wine and some wineglasses. FEDERICO is reading haltingly from Mariana Pineda. Now and then he glances nervously at BUÑUEL, who leans back meditatively and smokes a cigar.]

FEDERICO: To tell you how I love him
Does not make me blush.
My love for him burns me up inside
And lights my entire being.
Whatever he tells me is my bitter truth,
That tastes to me of honey.
What does it matter if day is
Confounded in night,
So long as the light of his spirit
Still shines on?
Oh, this great and only love
That gnaws at my simple soul
Has turned me yellow
Like the rosemary flower.

Fernando:

Mariana, I let you fling your griefs
At me. But can't you hear?
My heart is wounded, too.
I, too, live tormented.

Mariana:

If my chest had panes of glass
You could look inside
And see my heart
Sobbing drops of blood.

[Suddenly, with a sound of impatience, BUÑUEL slams his hand down on the table.]

MAN: But this is shit, Federico!

FEDERICO: What?

MAN: It's shit! It's shit! Tell him, Salvador.

SALVADOR: *[simply]* Yes. It's shit.

FEDERICO: You say this?

SALVADOR: Yes, well— Yes— It's shit.

FEDERICO: But before you said—

SALVADOR: Yes, but when you hear it like that—I mean, said out like that—aloud—
this—this—

MAN: “Turning yellow like the rosemary flower.” I mean, what is that?

[He looks to SALVADOR for confirmation.]

SALVADOR: It's shit.

MAN: Shit.

SALVADOR: Shit.

[In a fury of mortification, FEDERICO gathers up his papers and glares at SALVADOR.]

FEDERICO: Never speak to me again!

[He rushes out.]

SALVADOR: *[looking after him with concern]* Do you think we upset him?

MAN: Oh, never mind. He's too sensitive. A little honest criticism...

SALVADOR: He seemed upset. Were we wrong?

MAN: You tell me. You're the one who said—this great new work for the theatre—a
divine blaze of theatrical truth—whatever.

SALVADOR: Yes, but when you said it like that, just now, when you said, “It's shit”—it
suddenly occurred to me, “Why, yes, it's shit!” *[rising]* I must go to him.

MAN: *[pulling him back down]* Leave it, Salvador.

SALVADOR: But if he—

MAN: Leave it, I said. He's not worth the trouble.

SALVADOR: Luis!

MAN: Listen to me now, Salvador, because this is important. He'll ruin you. I can see
it happening. You two are too cozy. You're getting too cute. And you're better
than that. You're better than him. You're the future, Salvador. He's the past.
You've got it. The fire! The madness! The eye! What has Lorca got? Gypsies
and moonlight. Olive trees. Horses. It's too precious. It's too— *[He makes his
wrist go limp.]* He's the worst kind of fake. He's an aesthete. And in my book an
aesthete is just one step away from a fairy. Tell me. Has he ever tried anything
on you?

SALVADOR: Tried anything?

MAN: You can tell me. I know people he's tried it on.

SALVADOR: Tried what on?

MAN: Oh, come on, Salvador. You're not a nun. Tried to make you his girl. Tried to shove it up you.

SALVADOR: Shove it—? [*Suddenly his eyes widen with understanding.*] Luis!

MAN: Oh, come on. Don't tell me you never—

SALVADOR: What can you mean? What are you—saying?

MAN: Oh, don't be such a virgin! Calm down!

SALVADOR: I can't calm down! You've upset me! You've upset me very much! [*He rises in consternation.*] I must go! I must go now!

MAN: Calm down, Salvador! Forget I—

SALVADOR: No, I'm sorry, Luis! I am very upset! I must go! Good day! There will be a check— Would you be so good as to— Good day, Luis! Good day!

{He runs off.}