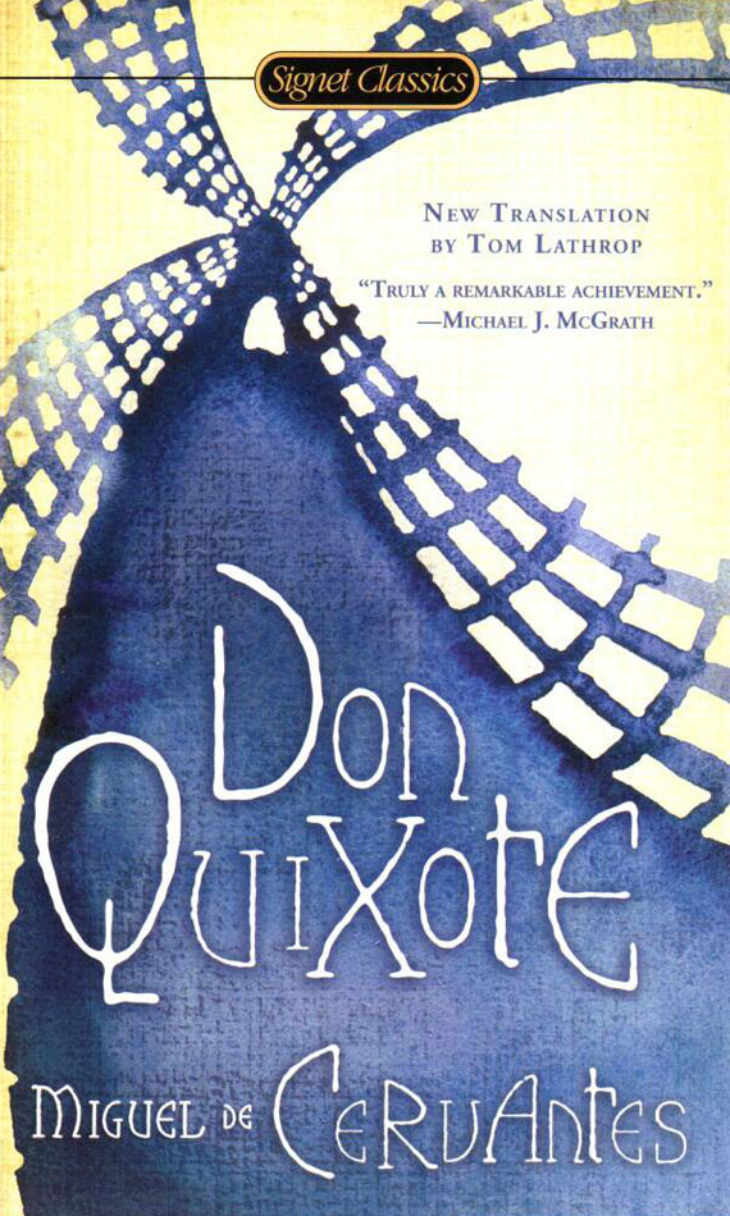
Signet Classics
New Translation
by Tom Lathrop
"Truly a remarkable achievement."
—Michael J. McGrath
Don Quixote
Miguel de Cervantes

Introduction

Don Quixote is the most translated work of fiction. In fact, four other English translations have come out during the ten years preceding this one (Burton Raffel, John Rutherford, Edith Grossman, James Montgomery). So, why in the world would I take on yet another translation? The reason I felt justified in doing it is that translations are frequently based on Spanish editions that have taken too many liberties with the original text, fixing perceived errors, changing chapter titles, even adding words to the work. That their translations reflect the defects of the Spanish editions is, of course, not the fault of the translators. Read on, and you'll discover why these so-called errors and wrong chapter titles really should be left as written by Cervantes. My translation is based on the original Spanish edition of 1605 (Part I) and 1615 (Part II) and will be free from the "corrections" made over the ages. Also, this introduction will help, I hope, to set the record straight about a number of misconceptions about the work.

But First, the Life of Cervantes as It Relates to This Work

Miguel de Cervantes, the fourth of seven children, was born on September 29, 1547, in Alcalá de Henares, a university town about twenty miles east of Madrid. His father,

Rodrigo, was a barber-surgeon. The family had little money and moved frequently. When Miguel was three and a half years old, they moved to Valladolid, which was the capital, then on to Cordova in 1553, when Miguel was seven. In 1564, the family was in Seville. Next to nothing is known about Miguel's education, although it had to be both intense and broad, whether in schools or on his own. There is a record that he attended the Estudio de la Villa de Madrid for about six months when he was a rather old twenty, under the humanist priest Juan López de Hoyos. Cervantes contributed four poems (one sonnet, two short poems, and an elegy) to the volume put together by López de Hoyos to honor the dead queen Isabel de Valois. Although not celebrated as a poet, Cervantes could handle many poetic forms adroitly, and used a large number of poetic formats in the *Quixote* (there are forty-five of his poems in the book). Don Quixote's own poems are not very good, and his young admirer, Altisidora, writes like the fourteen-year-old she is, but these bad poems are not Cervantes' fault. He is just giving us what we should expect from an old man, hardly a poet, and from an immature girl.

On September 15, 1569, an arrest warrant was issued in Madrid for Cervantes, who had wounded a rival in a duel. The warrant said that Cervantes' right hand was to be cut off and he was to be in exile from Madrid for ten years. He fled to Andalusia—the southern part of Spain—and shortly thereafter made his way to Rome, where he worked in the household of Cardinal Giulio Acquaviva, whom he may have met the previous year in Madrid. During his stay in Italy, he learned Italian and was initiated into Italian literature. You will see many references to Italy, and writings in Italian, in the *Quixote*, particularly the Italian continuations of the French *Song of Roland*. The novella of the *Ill-Advised Curiosity* (in chapters thirty-three through thirty-five in Part I) is also based on Italian models.

In the summer of 1570, Cervantes joined a Spanish regiment in Naples and went off to war as a naval gunner. He fought against the Turks in the Battle of Lepanto (at Náfpaktos, Greece) on October 7, 1571, a critical battle on which the future of Europe as a Judeo-Christian continent hinged. After another battle in Tunis, and a stay in Naples, as Cervantes was finally returning to Spain in 1575, his gal-

ley was attacked by Barbary pirates and he was taken to Algiers, where he was held for five years waiting to be ransomed. His time in Algiers is reflected in the Captive's Tale (Part I, chapters thirty-nine through forty-one).

Once back in Spain, twelve years after he had left, he had to set about earning money, and got some work from the king. Miguel married Catalina de Salazar—eighteen years his junior—in 1584, in what turned out to be an unhappy marriage. They lived in Esquivias in La Mancha, where he came to know the types of people who would later populate his *Quixote*.* The following year, he published the first—and, as it turns out, the *only*—part of his pastoral novel *La Galatea*. The novel was not successful enough to support him for long, but he liked the pastoral genre well enough to write a number of pastoral narrations in the *Quixote* (starting with Part I, chapter twelve).

For about ten years he had a job as a buyer and tax collector for the crown, and traveled all around Andalusia. His knowledge of the geography of that region is frequently seen in the *Quixote*. In 1590 he applied for one of several positions in the New World—Guatemala, Cartagena [in modern Colombia], or La Paz [in modern Bolivia]—but his petition was denied, for which posterity can be grateful.

In 1604 he moved to Valladolid to a house that you can visit today. Part I of his *Quixote* was all but finished by then, and was printed on the presses of Juan de la Cuesta in Madrid in 1605. It was an instantaneous success. As the printers were taking apart the typeset pages from the first printing, a second printing was urgently needed, and what had been taken apart had to be reset. Since the original royal license (the equivalent of the modern copyright) didn't include Portugal, two enterprising printers in Lisbon

* For example, fifty years earlier, the local priest in Esquivias was named Pero Pérez, and he baptized the son of Mari Gutiérrez. Pero Pérez is the name of don Quixote's village priest, and Mari Gutiérrez is one of the names ascribed to Sancho Panza's wife. This is reported by Astrana Marín in his *Vida ejemplar y heroica de Miguel de Cervantes* (Madrid: Reus, 1948–1958, vol. IV, p. 29). It all may just be coincidence, of course, since neither name is remarkable in any way, but what is important is how Cervantes created his village folk partially based on his daily observations in Esquivias.

produced pirated Spanish-language editions immediately. It was reprinted in Madrid once again, this time *including* a license for Portugal, and there was also an edition in Valencia, all before the end of 1605! Then came foreign editions in Spanish and in translation.

Now that he was well-known as an author, Cervantes turned to other projects. In 1613 he published his twelve *Exemplary Novels*, several of them being in the Italian style. In 1614 he published a long poem called *Voyage from Parnassus* in which he writes about a hundred and twenty authors. Although he had hinted at a second part of his *Quixote* at the end of Part I, he waited until 1615 to finish his Part II. In the meantime, in 1614, a second author came out with *his own* continuation of Cervantes' book (more about this in the section dealing with Avellaneda later in this introduction, since the spurious *Quixote* greatly affected Cervantes' second part). Also in 1615 his *Eight New Plays and Eight Skits* was published. Cervantes was a real fan of the theater, and in chapters forty-seven through forty-eight of Part I, there is a critique of the contemporary theater. The following year, just as he was finishing his last novel, *Persiles and Sigismunda* (published in 1617), he died on April 23.

The Maligned Genius

Ever since the *Quixote* has been annotated, every editor has pointed out that the book is filled with inconsistencies, contradictions, and errors. And it is absolutely true. You will soon see that when something—*anything*—is stated, sooner or later it will be contradicted. This has led footnote writers since the erudite and vituperative Clemencín in the 1830s to proclaim that this masterwork of world literature was written by an extremely careless author who must have written at full speed without ever going over his work, and that he included hundreds of contradictions without ever realizing his terrible mistakes. That there are hundreds of inconsistencies is undeniable, but that Cervantes was a careless writer is very far from the truth.

Since there are no wholesale contradictions in his other works, the obvious conclusion has to be that Cervantes put

them in the *Quixote on purpose*. But why? The answer is very simple. Cervantes' advertised objective in writing *Don Quixote* was to imitate and make so much fun of the ancient romances of chivalry—books that told tales of roaming knights in armor—that no further ones would be written. Cervantes was quite successful, since no new romances were written in Spanish after the *Quixote* came out.

In order to imitate the romances fully, Cervantes satirized not only their content but also imitated their *careless style*. It's as simple as that. In fact, this intent is clearly stated in the Prologue to Part I. There you'll see that the author's unnamed friend, who advises him about a number of things, says: "You only have to imitate the style of what you're writing [i.e., the romances of chivalry]—the more perfect the imitation is, the better your writing will be." Far from being a defect in the book, these contradictions are truly an integral part of the art of the book. No one can convince me that Cervantes, whose erudition and memory were so vast that he was able to cite, in this book alone, 104 mythological, legendary, and biblical characters; 131 chivalresque, pastoral, and poetic characters; 227 historical persons or lineages; 21 famous animals; 93 well-known books; 261 geographical locations; 210 proverbs; and who created 371 characters (230 of whom have speaking roles),* could possibly forget from one paragraph to the next the name of Sancho Panza's wife (yet she is called Juana Gutiérrez in Part I, chapter seven, and Mari Gutiérrez four lines later. And she is *also* called Juana Panza, Teresa Panza, and Teresa Cascajo). Of greater importance is the real name of don Quixote himself. Half a dozen or more variants are proposed (Quixano, Quesada, Quijana . . .). On a couple of occasions one of them is proclaimed to be the true one, each one a different variant. In the battle of the two armies, the adversaries are identified as Pentapolín or Pentapolén and Alifanfarrón or Aleanfarrón. The doctor in *Amadís de Gaula* is said to be both Elisabat and Elisabad. A soldier is referred to as Vicente de la Rosa and Roca. (Lots of editors of this work try to help out old Mr. Careless, by homogeniz-

* These numbers come from the very organized appendices to Américo Castro's edition of the *Quixote* (Mexico: Porrúa, 1960) prepared by José Bergúa.

THE INGENIOUS *HIDALGO* DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA,

Written by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra.

DEDICATED TO THE DUKE OF BÉJAR,
Marquis of Gibraleón, Count of Benalcázar and Bañares,
Viscount of the Puebla de Alcocer, Lord of
the villages of Capilla, Curiel and
Burguillos.

A.D.  1605

WITH COPYRIGHT
IN MADRID By Juan de la Cuesta

Sold in the establishment of Francisco de Robles, book dealer
to the king our lord.

Prologue

IDLE READER, you can believe me when I say that I'd like this book, as a child of my intellect, to be the most beautiful, the most gallant, and most ingenious one that could ever be imagined. But I haven't been able to violate the laws of nature, which state that each one begets his like. So, what could a sterile and ill-cultivated talent such as mine engender, if not the story of a dry, shriveled-up, unpredictable child, who was filled with thoughts never before imagined by anyone else—such a book as one might dream up while in jail, where all discomfort is to be found, and where all lugubrious sounds dwell? Tranquillity, a pleasant place, the amenity of the countryside, the serenity of the heavens, the murmuring of fountains, the stillness of the soul, make even the most sterile muses appear fertile, and allow them to bear fruit that fills the world with wonder and content.

It happens that if a father has an ugly and clumsy child, love puts blinders on his eyes so that he'll see his defects as cleverness and charm, and he describes them to his friends as if they were subtleties and witticisms. But, although I seem to be don Quixote's father, I am just his stepfather, and I don't beg you, as others do almost with tears in their eyes, to forgive or overlook the defects that you see in this child of mine. You aren't his relative, or even his friend, and you have a soul in your body, you have free will like anyone else, and you're in your home, where you're lord and master—as the king is of his taxes—and

you know the common proverb: "under my cloak I kill the king."* All this exempts and frees you from any obligation, and you can say whatever you want about the story, without fearing reprisal for anything bad you might say about the work, nor expecting a reward for anything good you might say.

I only wanted to offer it to you plain and simple, without the embellishment of a prologue or the countless sonnets, epigrams, and eulogies that are customarily added to the beginning of books. I can tell you that, although it required enormous effort to write the book, the hardest part was writing this prologue you're reading. Time after time I took up the pen to write, and then I put it down, not knowing what I'd say. But at one of those times when I was uninspired—paper in front of me, the quill behind my ear, my elbow on the desk, and my cheek on my hand, thinking about what to say—a witty and wise friend of mine came in unexpectedly, and when he saw me so pensive, he asked me why. I told him that I was thinking about the prologue I had to write for the history of don Quixote, and not only had it gotten me in such a state that I didn't want to do it, but I was also on the verge of abandoning all the deeds of the noble knight himself.

"How can you expect me not to be fearful of the opinion of that ancient judge they call the public, when they see that after so many years of sleeping in the silence of oblivion, I'm coming out now—at this late age—with a tale as dry as mat-weed, devoid of artifice, diminished in style, poor in conceits, lacking in all erudition and doctrine, and without marginal citations and annotations at the end that I see in other books, even in the novelistic and secular ones, filled with maxims of Aristotle, Plato, and the whole multitude of philosophers, that amaze the readers and make their authors appear well-read, erudite, and eloquent? And when they cite the Holy Scripture, they're thought to be St. Thomases† and other Doctors of the Church, and they maintain such a resourceful decorum that in one line they describe an absentminded lover, and in the next, they give a

* In other words, all people are free to think whatever they want.
† St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–74), Italian priest who founded the accepted philosophy of Catholicism.

Christian homily that's a pleasure to hear or read. My book will be lacking in all of this because I have no citations for the margins, nor any notes to put at the end, and I know even less which authors to put at the beginning in alphabetical order, like everyone else does,* starting with Aristotle and ending with Xenophon† and Zoilus‡ or Zeuxis,§ although the second one was a slanderer and the last one was a painter. My book will also lack sonnets at the beginning, at least by authors who are dukes, marquises, counts, bishops, ladies, or celebrated poets; although if I'd asked two or three friends who are poets, I know they would have written sonnets for me, and such that the most renowned poets in this Spain of ours couldn't equal.

"In short, *señor* and friend," I continued, "I think that *señor* don Quixote will remain buried in his archives in La Mancha until heaven furnishes someone who can adorn him with all those things that are lacking, because I'm not capable of providing them owing to my deficiencies and lack of learning, and because I'm too lazy by nature to seek authorities to say what I can say without them. So, that's where the predicament in which you found me comes from, my friend—a sufficient cause for the quandary I told you about."

When my friend heard this, he slapped his forehead, gave a hearty laugh, and said: "By God, brother, I now realize how mistaken I've been about you all the time we've known each other, because I've always considered you to be enlightened and judicious in everything you did; but now I see that you're as far from being so as heaven is from earth. How is it possible that things of so little consequence, and so easy to remedy, can baffle and absorb such a mature mind as yours, which is able to break through and

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* Cervantes was probably thinking of Lope de Vega's *Isidro* (1599), which had an alphabetical list of 267 names at the beginning—including the ones cited here—and lots of marginal citations and notes.

† Xenophon was born in 431 B.C. He was a friend of Socrates, a soldier of fortune, and a historical writer.

‡ Greek Sophist (fourth century B.C.) who wrote nine books severely criticizing the contradictions in Homer.

§ Classical Greek painter, fifth century B.C. No work of his survives, but many were described.

overcome other more difficult things? I swear it's not that you're incapable, but rather that you're excessively lazy and poverty-stricken in your thought. Would you like to see if what I'm saying is true? Well, listen to me and you'll see in the twinkling of an eye how I can overcome all your problems, and how I can fix all the defects that you say confound and intimidate you so much that you don't feel like publishing the history of your celebrated don Quixote, the light and mirror of all knight-errantry."

"Tell me," I replied, when I heard what he was saying to me, "how do you envision filling the vacuum of my fear, and converting the chaos of my confusion into light?"

To which he said: "First, with respect to the sonnets, epigrams, and eulogies written by important persons of rank missing from the front of the book, you can fix that if you write them yourself, and afterward you can baptize them with whatever name you want, attributing them to Prester John of the Indies or the Emperor of Trebizond,* who I've heard were famous poets; and even if they weren't, and if pedants and university graduates come forth to challenge and complain about it behind your back, you shouldn't care two *maravedís*† about it, because even if they discover your deception, no one is going to cut off your hand because of it.

"With regard to citing books and authorities in the margins from where you got the maxims and sayings you put in your history, all you have to do is find some aphorisms and Latin phrases that fit, and that you already know by heart, or that at least won't be hard to find. For example, when you're dealing with freedom and captivity, use: *Non bene pro toto libertas venditur auro*;‡ and then in the margin cite Horace, or whoever said it. If you're talking about the power of death, use: *Pallida Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas regumque turres.*§ If it's friendship and the love that God commands you to have for your enemy,

* Both of these are fictional, legendary characters.

† These coins were worth very little.

‡ "Freedom is not wisely sold for all the gold in the world," from Walter Anglius' *Æsop's Fables* (12th century).

§ "Pale death goes equally to the hut of the poor and to the towers of kings," from Horace.

just go into Holy Scripture, which you can do with minimal research, and say the words used by God himself: *Ego autem dico vobis, diligite inimicos vestros.** If you're dealing with evil thoughts, go to the New Testament: *De corde exeunt cogitationes malæ.*† If it's the inconstancy of friends, there's Cato, who can give you this couplet: *Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos, tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris.*‡ And with these Latin phrases, and others like them, you'll at least be taken for a professor of grammar, which nowadays is of no little honor and worth.

"As far as putting notes at the end of the book goes, surely you can do it this way—if you mention some giant in your book, make sure it's Goliath, and with this, which won't take any work at all, you can say: 'The giant Goliath, a Philistine whom the shepherd David slew with a large stone in the valley of Terebinth, as cited in the Book of Kings,' in the chapter where you'll identify it's written. After this, to show that you're a scholar in human letters and geography, arrange it so that you name the Tajo River in your history, and you'll have another great citation by writing: 'The River Tajo, which was so named by a King of Spain, starting in such-and-such a place and flowing into the Ocean Sea, kissing the walls of the celebrated City of Lisbon, and it is held that it has golden sands,' &c., &c. If you speak about thieves, I'll tell you the story of Cacus,§ which I know by heart; if prostitutes, there's the Bishop of Mondoñedo,¶ who'll lend you Lamia, Laida, and Flora, the note for which will increase your reputation; if cruel people, Ovid will hand over Medea;** and if it's about enchant-

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* "But what I tell you is this: love your enemies," Matthew 5:44.

† "From out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," Matthew 15:19.

‡ "When you are prosperous, you'll have many friends, but when your situation looks black you'll be alone," adapted from Ovid, *Tristia*, I, 9.

§ Famous bandit of Roman mythology, son of Vulcan. He stole Hercules' oxen. His story is related in Virgil's *Æneid*, Book 7.

¶ Fray Antonio de Guevara (1480–1545) was the Bishop of Mondoñedo (province of Lugo), and writes of these three prostitutes in his *Epistolas familiares.*

** Medea murdered all but one of her children by Jason (whom she helped to find the Golden Fleece), and probably killed her father as well.

ers and witches, Homer has Calypso,* and Virgil Circe;† if brave captains, Julius Cæsar will lend himself to you in his *Commentaries*,‡ and Plutarch will give you a thousand Alexanders.§ If you speak of love, with the two ounces you know of Italian, you'll come upon León Hebreo,¶ who will satisfy you completely. And if you don't want to go into other countries, you have Fonseca right here, in his *Of the Love of God*,** where you'll find everything you and the most fastidious person could possibly desire on that subject. So, you only have to try to list these people or use these histories I've mentioned in your own story, and by Jove, you'll fill your margins and use up thirty-two pages at the end of the book.

"Now, let's come to the bibliography that other books have and yours doesn't. The cure is very simple—all you have to do is look for a book that lists references from A to Z, as you say. You can put this list in your book as is, and even though the deception can be clearly seen, since you really didn't need it in the first place, it doesn't make any difference. And maybe some simpleton will think that you actually *used* those sources in your simple book. And if it serves for nothing else, that catalogue of authorities will give instant credibility to the book. And what's more, no one will set out to prove whether you used them or not, since they'll have nothing to gain by doing so, and moreover, if I understand it correctly, this book of yours doesn't need any of the things you say are lacking, because it's all a censure of the books of chivalry, and Aristotle†† had noth-

* Calypso offered Odysseus eternal youth and immortality if he would stay with her (he left after seven years).

† Circe was the mother of three of Odysseus' children. She lived alone on the Island of Aeaea, where she turned all visitors into animals.

‡ The *Commentaries* by Cæsar (102–44 B.C.) deal with the Gallic Wars and the civil war.

§ This is Alexander the Great, who is described among the forty-six biographies in the *Parallel Lives* of Plutarch (A.D. 46?–120).

¶ León Hebreo (Juda Abravanel) wrote his *Dialoghi d'amore* in Italian (1535), but you didn't need to know Italian to read it since it was translated into Spanish three times before 1605.

** Fray Cristóbal de Fonseca wrote *Treatise on the Love of God* (1592).

†† Aristotle, the greatest Greek philosopher (384–322 B.C.), studied under Plato and tutored Alexander the Great.

ing to say about them, nor did St. Basil,* nor Cicero.† The exactness of truth is not connected to the fictional nonsense found in those books, nor are the observations of astrology, nor are geometric calculations important to them, nor the confutation used by rhetoricians, nor do they have a reason to preach to anyone, since they mix the human with the divine, which is something in which no Christian intellect should be clad.

"You only have to imitate the style of what you're writing—the more perfect the imitation is, the better your writing will be. And since the intention of your writing is to destroy the favor and influence the books of chivalry have in the world and hold over the common folk, you have no reason to go around begging for maxims by philosophers, counsel from the Holy Scripture, fables by poets, orations of rhetoricians, or miracles of saints; but rather you need to try to make sure that your writing is plain, clear, and witty, using pure and well put-together words charged with meaning. Declare your thoughts without complications and without muddling them. Try also to make the melancholy person who reads your history laugh; and the mirthful to laugh even more; and be sure you don't vex the simpleton. Move the wise person to marvel at your invention, the grave not to scorn it, and the prudent not to cease in their praise of it. So, fix your attention on bringing down the ill-founded framework of these chivalresque books, despised by many, and praised by many more; for if you achieve this, you won't have achieved little."

In profound silence I listened to what my friend was telling me, and I was so impressed by his words that, without disputing them, I deemed them to be correct, and decided to use them for this prologue, in which you'll see, gentle reader, the wisdom of my friend, and my good fortune in finding such a good counselor in my time of need, and your own relief in finding the sincere and uncomplicated history

* St. Basil (329–379) defended the orthodox faith against the heretical Aryans. His writings include the *Address to Young Men*, in which he supports the study of pagan literature by Christians, such as that of classical Greece.

† Cicero (106–43 B.C.) was Rome's greatest orator, also a politician and philosopher.

of the famous don Quixote de La Mancha, whom all the dwellers around the plains of Montiel believe to be the purest lover and the most valiant knight seen around there for many a year. I don't want to overrate the service I'm doing you by introducing you to such a noble and honored knight, but I do want you to thank me for the acquaintance you'll make of the remarkable Sancho Panza, his squire, in whom, I believe, I have exemplified all the squirely graces that are scattered throughout the books of chivalry. And with this, may God give you health—and may He not forget me.
*Vale.**

To the book about don Quixote de La Mancha

URGANDA THE UNKNOWN†

If to be welcomed by the good,‡
Oh, book! you make your steady aim,
No empty chatterer will dare
To question or dispute your claim.
But if perchance you had a mind
To win of idiots approbation,
Lost labor will be your reward,
Though they'll pretend appreciation.
They say a goodly shade he finds
Who shelters 'neath a goodly tree;
And such a one your kindly star
In Béjar hath provided thee:

* Latin for "good-bye."
† Urganda was an enchantress in *Amadís de Gaula* who could change her appearance.
‡ In the original, these verses were written with a "broken end," as they say in Spanish, that is, with the last syllable being replaced by a dash, creating a linguistic puzzle for the readers. All of these poems are modified from Ormsby.

A royal tree whose spreading boughs
A show of princely fruit display;
A tree that bears a noble Duke,
The Alexander of his day.
Of a Manchegan gentleman
Thy purpose is to tell the story,
Relating how he lost his wits
O'er idle tales of love and glory,
Of ladies, arms, and cavaliers:
A new Orlando Furioso—
Innamorato,* rather—who
Won Dulcinea del Toboso.
Put no vain emblems on your shield;
All figures—that is bragging play.
A modest dedication make,
And give no scoffer room to say,
"What! Álvaro de Luna here?
Or is it Hannibal again?
Or does King Francis at Madrid
Once more of destiny complain?"
Since heaven it hath not pleased on thee
Deep erudition to bestow,
Or black Latino's gift of tongues,
No Latin let your pages show.
Ape not philosophy or wit,
Lest one who can comprehend,
Make a wry face at thee and ask,
"Why offer flowers to me, my friend?"
Be not a meddler; no affair
Of thine the life your neighbors lead:
Be prudent; oft the random jest
Recoils upon the jester's head.
Your constant labor let it be
To earn yourself an honest name,
For fooleries preserved in print
Are perpetuity of shame.
A further counsel bear in mind:
If that your roof be made of glass,
It shows small wit to pick up stones

* See chapter six, page 53.

To pelt the people as they pass.
Win the attention of the wise,
And give the thinker food for thought;
Whoso indites frivolities,
Will but by simpletons be sought.

AMADÍS DE GAULA*

To don Quixote de La Mancha

SONNET

You that did imitate that life of mine
When I in lonely sadness on the great
Rock Peña Pobre sat disconsolate,
In self-imposed penance there to pine;
Thou, whose sole beverage was the bitter brine
Of thine own tears, and who without a plate
Of silver, copper, tin, in lowly state
Off the bare earth and on earth's fruits did dine;
Live thou, of thine eternal glory sure.
So long as on the round of the fourth sphere
The bright Apollo shall his coursers steer,
In your renown you shalt remain secure,
Your country's name in story shall endure,
And your sage author stand without a peer.

DON BELIANÍS DE GRECIA†

To don Quixote de La Mancha

SONNET

In slashing, hewing, cleaving, word and deed,
I was the foremost knight of chivalry,
Stout, bold, expert, as e'er the world did see;
Thousands from the oppressor's wrong I freed;

* Amadís de Gaula is Spain's greatest fictional knight. The first complete existing edition of his exploits was published in Spanish in 1508.
† Don Belianís de Grecia [of Greece] was the hero of a romance of chivalry that bears his name (Seville, 1545).

Great were my feats, eternal fame their meed;
In love I proved my truth and loyalty;
The hugest giant was a dwarf to me;
Ever to knighthood's laws gave I good heed.
My mastery the Fickle Goddess owned,
And even Chance, submitting to control,
Grasped by the forelock, yielded to my will.
Yet—though above yon horned moon enthroned
My fortune seems to sit—great Quixote, still
Envy of your achievements fills my soul.

THE LADY ORIANA

To Dulcinea del Toboso*

SONNET

Oh, fairest Dulcinea, could it be!
It were a pleasant fancy to suppose so—
Could Miraflores change to El Toboso,
And London's town to that which shelters thee!
Oh, could mine but acquire that livery
Of countless charms your mind and body show so!
Or him, now famous grown—you made him grow so—
Your knight, in some dread combat could I see!
Oh, could I be released from Amadís
By exercise of such coy chastity
As led thee gentle Quixote to dismiss!
Then would my heavy sorrow turn to joy;
None would I envy, all would envy me,
And happiness be mine without alloy.

* Oriana was Amadís de Gaula's lady, as Dulcinea was don Quixote's.

Gandalín, Squire of Amadís de Gaula

To Sancho Panza, squire of don Quixote

Sonnet

All hail, illustrious man! Fortune, when she
Bound thee apprentice to the esquire trade,
Her care and tenderness of thee displayed,
Shaping your course from misadventure free.
No longer now doth proud knight-errantry
Regard with scorn the sickle and the spade;
Of towering arrogance less count is made
Than of plain squirelike simplicity.
I envy thee your Dapple, and your name,
And those saddlebags you were wont to stuff
With comforts that your providence proclaim.
Excellent Sancho! Hail to thee again!
To thee alone the Ovid of our Spain
Does homage with the rustic kiss and cuff.

From El Donoso, the Motley Poet

To Sancho Panza and Rocinante*

I am the esquire Sancho Pan—†
Who served don Quixote de La Man—;
But from his service I retreat—,
Resolved to pass my life discreet—;
For Villadiego, called the Si—,
Maintained that only in reti—
Was found the secret of well-be—,
According to the *Celesti*—:
A book divine, except for sin—
By speech too plain, in my opin—

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* Rocinante was don Quixote's horse. Donoso is a made-up name meaning "witty."

† Ormsby, whose version I keep, has elected here to keep the "broken end" format. If you don't know titles of Spanish classics, you won't know *Celestina*, a tragedy written as a novel in dialogue.

To Rocinante

I am that Rocinante fa—,
Great-grandson of great Babie—,*
Who, all for being lean and bon—,
Had one don Quixote for an own—;
But if I matched him well in weak—,
I never took short feedings meek—,
But kept myself in corn by steal—,
A trick I learned from Lazari—,
When with a piece of straw so neat—
The blind man of his wine he cheat—.

ORLANDO FURIOSO†

To don Quixote de La Mancha

SONNET

If you are not a Peer, peer you have none;
Among a thousand Peers you are a peer;
Nor is there room for one when you are near,
Unvanquished victor, great unconquered one!
Orlando, by Angelica undone,
Am I; o'er distant seas condemned to steer,
And to Fame's altars as an offering bear
Valor respected by Oblivion.
I cannot be your rival, for your fame
And prowess rise above all rivalry,
Albeit both bereft of wits we go.
But, though the Scythian or the Moor to tame
Was not your lot, still you do rival me:
Love binds us in a fellowship of woe.

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* Babieca was the Cid's horse, and Lazarillo, six lines down, is an urchin antihero of the book that gave rise to the picaresque novel *Lazarillo de Tormes*.

† *Orlando Furioso* is an Italian epic poem (published in 1540) based loosely on the French Roland legend. Orlando Furioso means "Roland Insane" in Italian.

THE KNIGHT OF PHOEBUS*

To don Quixote de La Mancha

SONNET

My sword was not to be compared with thine
Phoebus of Spain, marvel of courtesy,
Nor with your famous arm this hand of mine
That smote from east to west as lightning flies.
I scorned all empire, and that monarchy
The rosy east held out did I resign
For one glance of Claridiana's eye,
The bright Aurora for whose love I pine.
A miracle of constancy my love;
And banished by her ruthless cruelty,
This arm had might the rage of hell to tame.
But, Gothic Quixote, happier you do prove,
For you do live in Dulcinea's name,
And famous, honored, wise, she lives in thee.

BY SOLISDÁN†

To don Quixote de La Mancha

SONNET

Your fantasies, Sir Quixote, it is true,
That crazy brain of yours have quite upset,
But aught of base or mean hath never yet
Been charged by any in reproach to you.
Your deeds are open proof in all men's view;
For you went forth injustice to abate,
And for your pains sore drubbings did you get
From many a rascally and ruffian crew.

* The "Knight of Phoebus" was the hero of a romance of chivalry published in 1555.

† No one knows who this Solisdán is. It looks like an imitation of a character from—or author of—a romance of chivalry, since the language of the sonnet—at least in Spanish—uses archaic words and pronunciation.

If the fair Dulcinea, your heart's queen,
Be unrelenting in her cruelty,
If still your woe be powerless to move her,
In such hard case your comfort let it be
That Sancho was a sorry go-between:
A booby he, hard-hearted she, and you no lover.

Dialogue
Between Babieca and Rocinante

Sonnet

B. "How comes it, Rocinante, you're so lean?"
R. "I'm underfed, with overwork I'm worn."
B. "But what becomes of all the hay and corn?"
R. "My master gives me none; he's much too mean."
B. "Come, come, you show ill breeding, sir, I believe;
'Tis like an ass your master thus to scorn."
R. He is an ass, will die an ass, an ass was born;
Why, he's in love; what's plainer to be seen?"
B. "Is it foolish to love?"— R. "It doesn't make much sense."
B. "You're metaphysical."— R. "From want of food."
B. "Rail at the squire, then."— R. "Why, what's the good?
I might indeed complain of him, I grant you,
But, squire or master, where's the difference?
They're both as sorry hacks as Rocinante."

FIRST PART OF THE INGENIOUS *Hidalgo** don Quixote de La Mancha.†

First Chapter. Which deals with the lifestyle and pursuits of the famous hidalgo *don Quixote de La Mancha.*

In a village in La Mancha, which I won't name, there lived not long ago an *hidalgo* of the kind that have a lance in the lance rack, an old shield, a lean nag, and a fleet greyhound. A stew of a bit more beef than mutton, hash most nights, bacon and eggs on Saturdays, lentils on Fridays, and an occasional pigeon on Sundays consumed three-quarters of his income. The rest of it went for a broadcloth tunic with velvet undertunic‡ for holidays, with matching slippers; and on weekdays, he adorned himself with his finest homespun outfit.

In his house he had a housekeeper who was past forty, a niece who was not yet twenty, and a houseboy who saddled his horse and did the gardening. The age of our *hidalgo*

* An *hidalgo* is a member of the lesser nobility, exempt from taxes.
† La Mancha is a rather poor, sparsely populated area of south-central Spain. *De la* means "of the."
‡ Don Quixote's tunic flared out at hip length, and beneath it was the undertunic that would be about midthigh length. His legs would be covered by tights.

was close to fifty.* He was of sturdy constitution, but a bit thin, lean of face, a great early riser, and fond of hunting. They say that his last name was Quijada or Quesada—for there's some difference of opinion among the authorities who write on this subject—although by credible conjecture we are led to believe that he was named Quejana. But this is of little importance to our story—it's enough that in the telling of it we don't stray one iota from the truth.

It should be known that the above-mentioned *hidalgo*, during the periods when he was idle—which was most of the year—devoted himself to reading romances of chivalry† with such eagerness and pleasure that he almost completely neglected the hunt, and even the administration of his estate. His curiosity and folly got to such an extreme that he sold many acres of farmland in order to buy romances of chivalry to read, and he took home every one of them he could find. And of all of them, none of them seemed as good as those written by the famous Feliciano de Silva,‡ because the clarity of his prose and those obscure words of his seemed to be pearls, and more so when he came to read those flirtatious remarks and letters of challenge, where many times he found items such as these: "The reason of the unreasonableness which against my reason is wrought, doth so weaken my reason, as with all reason I do justly complain of your beauty." And also when he read: "The high heavens, which with your divinity doth fortify you divinely with the stars, and make you deserveress of the deserts that your greatness deserves."§ Because of this kind of nonsense the poor man lost his wits, and he spent many a sleepless night trying to understand those words and to figure out their meaning, which Aristotle himself

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* In seventeenth-century Spain, this was considered quite old.

† These books are early fiction about the exploits and loves of knights in armor.

‡ Feliciano de Silva (1492–1558) was a prolific and not very good author. His most famous novel of chivalry is *Amadís de Grecia* (Greece) (1535), capitalizing on the well-known *Amadís de Gaula* (1508). Gaula is the Spanish name of a fictional region situated in Brittany.

§ These are not real quotations of Feliciano de Silva, but the first one resembles a passage from his *Florisel de Niquea* (1532) and the second one from his *Segunda Celestina* (*Second Celestina*) (1534). I've used Shelton's 1612 translation of these quotes.

couldn't have succeeded in doing, even if he were brought back to life for that sole purpose.

He wasn't at all comfortable with the wounds that don Belianís inflicted and received, because he thought that no matter how great the doctors were who treated him, his face and body would have been covered with scars.* Nevertheless he praised the author for the way he ended his book with the promise of more adventures, and many times he was tempted to take up his own pen and finish those endless adventures himself, exactly as it's promised there, and without a doubt he would have done so, if other more pressing matters hadn't prevented him.

He had frequent debates with the priest of his village—a learnèd man, a graduate of the University of Sigüenza†—about who had been the greater knight: Palmerín de Ingalaterra‡ or Amadís de Gaula.§ But *maese*¶ Nicolás, a barber from the same town, said that no one could touch the Caballero del Febo,** and if anyone could be compared to him it would be don Galaor, brother of Amadís de Gaula, because he was ready for anything, and he wasn't a namby-pamby knight, nor a crybaby, like his brother; and where bravery was concerned, he was his brother's equal.

In short, he became so absorbed in his reading that he spent his nights poring over his books from dusk to dawn, and his days from sunrise to sunset. Thus, from his little sleep and considerable reading, his brain dried up and he lost his sanity. Fantasy filled his mind from everything that he read in the books—enchantments, quarrels, battles, challenges, wounds, flirtations, love affairs, misfortunes, and

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* Don Belianís is the hero of the four books entitled *History of don Belianís de Grecia* (1547–1579). The annotator Clemencín (1765–1834) counted 101 serious wounds given to don Belianís in the first half of the saga alone.

† Sigüenza's minor university was held in little esteem.

‡ Palmerín de Ingalaterra (England) is the hero of a Portuguese romance of chivalry first published in 1547. *Ingalaterra* is an old variant of *Inglaterra*.

§ Amadís de Gaula is the first and greatest hero of the Spanish romances of chivalry.

¶ *Maese* means "master."

** The Knight of Phoebus was the hero of the four books of the *Mirror of Princes and Knights* (*Espejo de príncipes y cavalleros*) (1555).