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EL CORRIDO NACIONAL*

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Most of the material used in this work comes from an essay of the same topic —*Notas para un estudio del corrido en Guatemala*— edited by Carlos Navarrete, sponsored by the *Escuela Nacional de Antropología de México* in 1954, and from a work by the same author published in the *Revista Universidad de San Carlos*, corresponding to the first four-month period of 1963.

Our intention is to try to make known the richness of folklore, of popular poetry, of how ordinary people are also capable of expression, perhaps the most valuable one, to determine truly beautiful manifestations, whether in art itself or in philosophical literature, drawn from life itself, which flood a "recited piece," a romance, or a corrido, to record a battle, a crime, a love, or "an event"; also, to spread interest in our own things, since we have scarce bibliographic resources, as Guatemalan intellectuals have paid little attention to this topic, and we only have a few studies, such as the one by Adrián Recinos, titled *Canciones de cuna, adivinanzas y cuentos*, published from 1916 to 1927.

It is undeniable that the romance was the first popular manifestation of the folkloric sentiment of our ancestors, who in turn

* Lecture delivered by the author at the *Primer Seminario de Educación Estética*, Guatemala, February 19-23, 1973. This text has been enriched with later contributions.

adopted it from the Spanish conquerors, since by that time the romance had left its popular cradle to become a courtly, distinguished activity, and by the end of the 15th century it began to spread with the expulsion of the Jews by the Catholic Monarchs of Spain and traveled the roads of the known world through the minstrels, thus giving it a truly plebeian origin.

However, in Guatemala it is not until the second decade of the 18th century that we find the first examples of the romance, with a publication by Cristóbal de Hincapié y Meléndez—a work in which, according to David Vela, there is a distribution of five romances that describe everything that happened during the earthquake of the *La Muy Noble y Muy Leal Ciudad de Santiago de Los Caballeros de Guatemala* (official name of Antigua Guatemala) in 1717—an artistic vein that remained in our lands and was later more fully disseminated by Fray Matías de Córdova, Simón Bergaño y Villegas, and Rafael García Goyena, becoming part of the so-called “romances de relación.”

The cultivation of these artistic genres is nothing more than a consequence of our people's fondness for singing and recitation. José Martí himself, during his stay in Guatemala, after the triumph of the Liberal Revolution of 1871, recounts how, in a village in El Jícaro, he encountered “a ladino storyteller, boastful, literate, and one-eyed... who began to recite to him, ‘more or less,’ a good fable...”

This is common in the east and south of the country, and when asked about the music of certain recitations, the response has been that there is none because “just meant to be said; however, there are romances and recitations that do have music, and in Chiquimula, a naughty song, generally sung by students, was performed, called Micaila, whose lyrics say:

Micaila, cuando me muera,
guárdame la punta
(la punta del nabo, decía un estribillo)
no me entierres en sagrado,
pónganme por cabecera
un ladrillo colorado,
con un letrero que diga:
“Aquí enterró un desgraciado

Micaila, when I die,
save me the tip
(the tip of the turnip, went the refrain)
don't bury me in holy ground,
place at my head
a red brick,
with a sign that says:
“Here lies a poor bastard

The term *nabo* (translated as turnip) is slang for male genitalia (penis), and the song plays on this double meaning.

todita la punta”.

(*La punta del nabo, repetía el estribillo*). (the tip of the turnip, the refrain repeated).

But without a doubt, the oldest romance from the eastern region, and one that has indeed been passed down is *El torito colorado*, closely related to the previous song through its epitaph. Aside from its *romance* tradition, it also serves as a kind of advertisement for the cattle of an old estate in Jupilingo and its cowboys, an estate that Gabriel Ángel Castañeda locates in Esquipulas, and in two of its four versions, it says:

Suelten ese toro pinto
hijo de la mala entraña,
quiero echarme ante esa niña
una toreada con maña.

Release that piebald bull,
son of a wicked entrails,
I want to show off to that girl
with a skillful bullfight.

—Que yo soy hombre, señora,
que yo soy hombre, mi dama,
y si en Jumay he vencido
aquí ninguno me gana.

—I am a man, madam,
I am a man, my lady,
and if I've won in Jumay,
no one here can beat me.

Y si el toro me matara
no me entierren en sagrario,
dejen que la tierra seca
me cubra como sudario.

And if the bull kills me,
don't bury me in holy ground,
let the dry earth
cover me as my shroud.

Entiérrenme en campo seco
donde me pise el ganado,
un brazo déjenme fuera
y un letrero colorado.

Bury me in the dry land
where cattle freely tread on me,
leave one arm out,
and a red-colored sign.

Y que las gentes al verme
con el hueso calcinado
digan “murió Peruchito
un valiente desgraciado”.

And let the people, seeing me
with my bone scorched,
let them say, “Peruchito died,
a brave wretched.”

"No murió de mal de amores
ni de dolor de costado,
murió de fuerte cornada
del torito colorado".

Peruchillo sacá el toro
pa torearlo a lo valiente,
quiero que esa niña vea
mi valor ante la gente.

Y si acaso me matara
no me entierren en sagrado
pónganme en el campo verde
donde repaste el ganado.

Un cartel pongan encima
y un letrero colorado:
"Aquí yace por perjurio
un vaquero enamorado".

This romance has its antecedent in a Spanish one called *Mal de Amor*, and this explains why it also appears in other songs and corridos, mainly Mexican ones, such as in the corrido of *El hijo desobediente*, which ends:

Lo que le encargo a mi padre
que no me entierre en sagrado,
que me entierre en tierra bruta,
donde me trille el ganado.

Another of these romances, known as "profane," is *Ni lo conozco también*, which is also repeated in Jalapa and Jutiapa, with different lyrics but the same content:

Oiga usted buen caballero:
¿a mi marido no vio?

"He didn't die of heartbreak,
or a pain in his side,
he died from a strong goring
from the piebald bull."

Peruchillo, take out the bull
to fight it like a true man,
I want that girl to see
my bravery before the crowd.

And if by chance it kills me,
do not bury me in holy ground,
place me in the green field
where the cattle graze.

Put a sign above my body
with a red-colored sign:
"Here lies, for perjury,
a love-struck cowboy."

What I ask of my father
is not to bury me in holy ground,
but to bury me in raw earth,
where the cattle trample me.

Listen, good gentleman:
have you seen my husband?

—Señora no lo conozco,
deme su seña y vestido.

—Mi marido es alto y rubio
de buen porte y muy cortés,
y en la hoja de su espada
lleva un letrero francés.

—Por la señal que me ha dado
su marido muerto está,
en la frontera ha quedado
por amar la libertad.

—Que la buscara y quisiera
su esposo recomendó
si su voluntad pudiera
se casara usted con yo.

Ay, once años lo he esperado
otros tres lo esperaré
a veinte años más pudiera
aguantarme sin usted.

—Oiga usted señor soldado
que de la guerra ha venido,
en campos de Nicaragua
¿no me ha visto a mi marido?

—Diez años se fue a la guerra,
diez años ya lo esperé.

—No señora, no lo he visto
ni lo conozco también.

—Mi marido es alto y rubio,
tiene tipo de francés
y en la hoja de su espada
lleva el escudo del rey.

- Ma'am, I don't know him,
give me his description and attire.

- My husband is tall and fair-haired,
well-mannered and very polite,
and on the blade of his sword
he carries an inscription in French.

- By the sign you've given me,
your husband is dead,
he was left on the frontier
for loving freedom.

- He asked me to seek out for you
and your husband recommended
if your wish is,
that you might marry me instead.

Oh, I've waited for him eleven years,
and I'll wait three more,
I could wait twenty more years
without you, sir.

- Listen, soldier,
who has come from the war,
in the fields of Nicaragua,
haven't you seen my husband?

- Ten years he went to war,
I've waited ten years for him.

- No, ma'am, I haven't seen him,
nor do I know him either.

- My husband is tall and fair-haired,
he has a French look,
and on the blade of his sword
he carries the king's shield.

—Sí señora, sí lo he visto,
en un combate murió,
me dejó su testamento
que me case con usted.

—Ya me pongo luto negro
y abandono lo café,
ya me dicen los muchachos
que linda viuda quedé.

—Yo a mi marido he esperado,
otro día esperaré
si no viene pa' mañana,
con usted me casaré.

There is no indication that these romances have a Guatemalan origin; however, it cannot be denied that some versions may come from here, given that the content of marital fidelity in the previous ones transforms into infidelity, as seen in the following:

—Dios lo guarde, buen soldado,
¿de la guerra viene usted?
¿en tierras de Guatemala
a mi marido no vio?

—No señora, no recuerdo
si conozco a su merced,
si usted me diera alguna seña
tal vez lo reconoceré.

—Mi marido es alto y guapo
y se llama Juan Fernando
y el pecho de su camisa
lleva mi nombre bordado.

—Ya lo recuerdo, señora,
lo fusiló el enemigo

- Yes, ma'am, yes, I saw him,
he died in battle,
he left me his last will
that I should marry you.

-Now I wear black mourning,
and I give up wearing brown,
the boys already tell me
what a lovely widow I make.

-I have waited for my husband,
I'll wait one more day,
if he doesn't come tomorrow,
I'll marry you instead.

-God keep you, good soldier,
are you coming from the war?
In the lands of Guatemala,
have you seen my husband?

-No, ma'am, I don't recall
but I do recognize you,
if you gave me some sign,
perhaps I would recognize him.

-My husband is tall and handsome,
and his name is Juan Fernando,
and on the chest of his shirt
he has my name embroidered.

-Now I remember, ma'am—
he was executed by the enemy.

y en su testamento puso
que se case usted conmigo.

—Quisiera saber buen soldado
si el cuerpo fue sepultado
no vaya a ser que una noche
me venga resucitado.

—Oiga señor, buen soldado,
¿no me ha visto a mi marido?

—Sí señora, su marido
yace muerto y enterrado
y en vez del pobre he venido
a cuidarle su mandado.

and in his last will he wrote
that you should marry me.

-I'd like to know, good soldier,
if the body was buried
just in case one night
he comes back resurrected.

-Listen, sir, good soldier,
have you seen my husband?

-Yes, ma'am, your husband
lies dead and buried,
and instead of the poor man, I've come
to look after his errand.

Infidelity is also the theme of another romance from Jalapa, known as *Trovas de don Fernando y doña Elena*, which exists in various versions, inseparably linked to another one called *La esposa infiel*, widely spread in Chiapas, Mexico. The Guatemalan version of the verse goes as follows:

Al fin del plan de un barranco
Sin saber cómo ni cuándo
se aventaron de balazos
Benigno con don Fernando.

Benigno allí lo mató
y de pronto se marchó
se fue para donde Elena
y la puerta le tocó.

Abrime la puerta Elena,
sin ninguna desconfianza
yo soy Fernando el francés
que ahora vengo de Francia.

At the edge of a precipice,
not knowing how or when,
they shot each other
Benigno and don Fernando.

Benigno killed him there,
and suddenly left,
he went to where Elena was
and knocked on the door.

Open the door, Elena,
without any distrust,
I am Fernando the Frenchman,
who has just returned from France.

*Al medio abrir la puerta
se les apagó la luz
se tomaron de las manos
y se fueron al jardín.*

*Estando los dos allí
Elena le dijo así:
—Son las doce, don Fernando,
y usted no me habla a mí.*

*—O tiene amores en Francia,
o quiere a otra más que a mí,
o le teme a mi marido
que se halla lejos de aquí.*

*—No tengo amores en Francia
ni quiero a otra más que a ti,
ni le temo a tu marido
que se halla al lado de ti.*

*—Confesate con Dios Elena
que hasta aquí llegó tu vida,
te crees con don Fernando
estando con tu marido.*

*Perdoname esposo mío,
mi desgraciada aventura,
ve no lo hagás por mí,
hacelo por tus criaturas.*

*Criada, coge a esos niñitos,
llévaselos a mi madre,
si pregunta por Elena,
decile que no sabés.*

*Preguntan los chiquititos
a dónde quedó su madre,*

As she half-opened the door,
the lights suddenly went out,
they held each other's hands
and went out to the garden.

While the two were there,
Elena said to him:
—It's midnight, Don Fernando,
and you're not speaking to me.

—Either you have a love in France,
or you love someone more than me,
or you fear my husband
who's far away from here.

—I don't have lovers in France,
nor do I love anyone more than you,
nor do I fear your husband
he's standing right beside you.

—Confess to God, Elena,
for your life ends here,
you think you're with Don Fernando
while still being with your husband.

Forgive me, my husband,
for my unfortunate affair,
please don't do it for me,
do it for our children.

Maid, gather the children,
take them to my mother's home,
if she asks for Elena,
tell her you do not know.

The little ones ask,
where has their mother gone,

*responden los grandecitos:
la mató mi señor padre.*

*Vuela, vuela, pajarito,
no detengas el volido,
a ver, a ver a Elena,
a ver qué le ha sucedido.*

*Pobrecita de la Elena,
en qué martirio murió,
con tres tiros de revólver
que su marido le dio.*

*Que su marido la trajo
a morir en tierra ajena
y aquí termina el corrido
de la mujer que faltó.*

the older ones reply:
she was killed by our father.

Fly, fly, little bird,
don't stop flying,
go see Elena quickly,
and see what has happened to her.

Poor Elena,
what torment she died in,
with three gunshots from a revolver
that her husband gave her.

Her husband brought her
to die in foreign land,
and here ends the corrido
of the woman who faltered.

In an article published in the newspaper *El Imparcial*, Amadeo Machado gives us the version of what he calls *La esposa engañadora*, a variation of the previous one, which he attributes to Francisco Palencia, who, he says, used to sing the following in the 1930s:

*Caminando una mañana
por la oriyita del mar
me encontré una hermosa joven
que me quiso cautivar.*

*Luego le pedí de amores.
y de amores me encautó
mi mano quedó en sus manos
y a su casa me llevó.*

*Estábamos platicando
cuando el marido llegó,
¡tu marido! ¡mi marido!
¿a dónde me escondo yo?*

Walking one morning
by the edge of the sea,
I met a beautiful young woman
who tried to captivate me.

Soon I declared my love,
and with love she ensnared me,
my hand ended up in hers,
and she led me to her home.

We were talking
when her husband arrived
"Your husband! My husband!
Where on earth can I hide?

*Acostate en esa cama
mientras me disculpo yo,
que es celoso el comandante
y con pistola llegó.*

*—Abrime la puerta linda,
abrimela la puerta flor.
¿Que has tenido calentura
o tuviste mal de amor?*

*—No he tenido calentura
ni tampoco mal de amor,
lo que pasa es que me agita
el sofoco y el calor.*

*—¿De quién es ese caballo
que en mi corral relinchó
—Es tuyo querido esposo,
mi papá nos lo mandó.*

*—Qué regalado es tu padre
que antes nada me mandó
—Es porque hoy es el bailongo
de mi hermana que casó.*

*—Yo no quiero ese caballo
que tu lengua regaló,
lo que quiero es el bandido
que en mi petate durmió.*

*La mujer murió a la una
y el hombre murió a las dos,
tengan cuidado casadas
que encuachan detrás de Dios.*

Lie down in that bed
while I make my excuse
the commander is jealous
and he came with a gun.

-Open the door, darling,
open the door, my flower.
Have you had an arousal
or suffered lovesick hour?

-I haven't had an arousal,
nor love sickness,
what's happening is that I'm shaken
by the heat and the suffocation.

-From who is that horse that
is neighed in my corral?"
-It's yours, dear husband,
my father sent it to us.

-How generous your father is,
since he never sent me anything."
-It's because today's the party
for my sister's wedding.

-I don't want that horse
your lying tongue bestowed
what I want is the bandit
who slept on my sleeping mat!

The woman died at one,
the man died at two,
married women beware
don't hide behind God's view.

In this genre of ballads, religion too has found a popular vein for its expressions. In the eastern region of the country, in Chiquimula,

the so-called *Cristo Negro de Esquipulas* is venerated, and there are many different hymns and songs dedicated to Him. The prayers to Christ from that region include the *Alabado de la Pasión*, the best known among the faithful, which exists in various versions and recounts the path and tribulations of Jesus to Mount Calvary. These versions follow the "stations" in similar or different ways, including one called *Vía Crucis de la Pasión*, from which we quote the following stanza:

<i>Y le perforan los pies y le restiran las piernas y le quebrantan los brazos con el martillo que yerra.</i>	They pierce His feet, stretch out His legs, and break His arms with the hammer that forges.
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Although there is also a version that goes like this:

<i>Ya le sujetan los pies ya le rompen de las manos, ya le tiran la lanzada en su divino costado.</i>	They now hold His feet, they now break His hands, they now throw the lance into His divine side.
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But disrespect has created a parody in the following form:

<i>Ya lo suben Ya lo bajan, Ya lo montan en un mul y ya le dan de patadas en su santísimo culo.</i>	Now they lift Him up, now they bring Him down, now they mount Him on a mule, and now they start kicking Him in His most holy ass.
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From what has been presented, we come to the conclusion that the romance, as it came from the Spaniards to our lands, is the immediate predecessor of the so-called corrido, which belonging to the people, certainly does not ignore passion, happiness, suffering, and the series of events that make up its history, in an effort to express the injustices committed against them, their personal feelings, life, and its vicissitudes. It is therefore an expression of simplicity, joyful, intimate, beautiful, and pure and for that reason -says Navarrete- the corrido "is, from its origin, a means of lash out at injustice, rewarding conduct and kindness, and immortalizing what is memorable."

Thus, Carlos Navarrete himself classifies the national corridos in the following way:

- 1 Of historical periods
- 2 Of bandits or those pursued by justice
- 3 Of national disasters
- 4 Of accidents
- 5 Of memories and evocations of towns
- 6 Of prisoners
- 7 Of murders
- 8 Of failed love affairs
- 9 Of animals
- 10 Danceable
- 11 Of relation

Let's choose some examples from this classifications:

1. Of historical periods clasifications

One cannot help but highlight the beautiful corrido dedicated to the heroic death of José León Castillo, a patriot from Chiquimula, who was murdered during the regime of Ubico, like the Stations of the Cross, it marks fourteen stations, except for the tenth, that make up the chants to Christ:

*Señores que están presentes
mientras descansa el potrillo
voy a relatar las horas
de don José León Castillo.*

Gentlemen here present
while my colt is resting
I'm going to recount the final hours
of Don José León Castillo.

*Corre el año treinta y cuatro
y es la primera campanada,
buscando a don José León,
va pasando la montada.*

The year is thirty-four
and it's the first bell toll,
seeking Don José León,
the mounted patrol passes by.

*A las dos le dijo Ubico
a su policía Anzueto*

At two, Ubico told
his officer Anzueto

*que buscara al licenciado
para prenderlo vivo o muerto.*

to search for the *licenciado*
to capture him, alive or dead.

*A las tres se fue Pereyra
con el coronel Berganza
a toparlo en el camino
para saciar su venganza.*

At three, Pereyra went
with Colonel Berganza
to intercept him on the road
to satisfy their vengeance.

*¡Qué suerte tan desdichada!,
las cuatro daban entonces,
lo capturó la montada
entre diecisiete hombres.*

What an unlucky fate!,
The four o'clock bell tolled,
the mounted patrol captured him
among seventeen men.

*Diez días más otros cinco
hacen un 15 de septiembre
le resto dos a la fecha
pa' la captura de ese hombre.*

Ten days plus five more
make a September fifteenth
subtract two from the date
for the capture of that man.

*Seis horas van transcurridas
en su celda de captura,
en la noche que se acerca
le preparan su tortura.*

Six hours have passed
in his capture cell,
as the night draws near
they prepare his torture.

*Le preguntan a las siete
quién quiere botar a Ubico;
—A mí ese tirano indigno
siempre me ha importado un pico.*

At seven, they asked him
who wants to overthrow Ubico;
-That unworthy tyrant
has always meant nothing to me.

*A las ocho lo golpean
y lo cuelgan amarrado,
—No voy a decir ni rosca
porque soy un hombre honrado.*

At eight, they beat him
and hang him tied up,
-I won't say a damn thing
because I'm an honorable man.

*A las nueve se despide
del aire, del campo abierto,
ya pocas fuerzas le quedan,
ya casi camina muerto.*

At nine, he says goodbye
to the air, to the open field,
he has little strength left,
he is nearly walking dead.

*A las once se despide
de su esposa y sus hermanos,
también de sus tiernos hijos
que quedan desamparados.*

*A las doce no se aguanta,
ya todo se le perdió,
allí en la cuesta del Tuno
para siempre descansó.*

*Fue ese Pereyra Urizar
el asesino maldito,
pa' que no lo olviden nunca
aquí se los dejo escrito.*

*Y aquí me voy despidiendo
llevándome mi potrillo
no olviden una oración
por don José León Castillo.*

At eleven, he says goodbye
to his wife and his brothers,
and also to his young children
who are left unprotected.

At twelve, he can't hold on,
everything has faded away,
there on the slope of *El Tuno*,
he found his final rest.

It was that Pereyra Urizar
the damned murderer,
so that he's never forgotten,
I leave this written her.

And now I say goodbye,
riding off with my colt;
don't forget to say a prayer
for Don José León Castillo.

3. Of bandits or those pursued by justice

It is also in the eastern part of the country where there has been the most admiration for some of its men, transformed by circumstances into criminals or simple protectors of what they believe to be social justice. Among these men was Chema Duarte, whose feats and adventures were sung about; however, we transcribe a corrido dedicated to Benedicto Ruano González, more popularly known as *El Látigo del Sur*:

*Presten atención señores
mientras se enciende la luz,
me voy a echar unos versos
de un hombre de pelo en cruz.*

*¡Aquí está el látigo, hermanos,
viene desde Santa Rosa,*

Pay attention, gentlemen,
while the light is turning on,
I'm going to sing some verses
about a man with a cursed fate.

Here comes the *Látigo*, brothers,
coming from Santa Rosa,

*ya se les fugó a Jutiapa
o se les perdió en la costa!*

*No hubo rincón de la costa
ni monte ni ranchería
donde no pudiera nunca
buscarlo la policía.*

*Robó por darle a los pobres
y a los ricos los trabó,
por eso de los humildes
su corazón conquistó.*

he's escaped from Jutiapa
or vanished on the coast!

There wasn't a corner of the coast,
nor mountain nor *ranchería*,
where the police couldn't
search for him.

He stole to give to the poor
and punished the rich,
that's why from the humble
he conquered their hearts.

2. Of national disasters

These mainly refer to seismic phenomena, such as the eruption of the *Santa María* Volcano, which, according to history, occurred in 1929, and the earthquake of 1976. Here is the text of the first of these corridos:

*Oigan la triste historia
que ahora les voy a contar,
Guatemala está de luto
por la erupción de un volcán.*

*En una noche tranquila
los campesinos dormían
comenzó a hacer erupción
el volcán Santa María,*

*La gente toda espantada
por donde quiera corría,
y la lava con gran fuerza
toditito lo destruía.*

Listen to the sad story
that I'm going to tell you now,
Guatemala is in mourning
because of the eruption of a volcano.

On a peaceful night
the farmers were sleeping,
when the *Santa María* volcano
began to erupt.

The people, all scared,
ran everywhere,
and the lava with great force
destroyed everything.

And, then, that of the second:

CORRIDO DEL TERREMOTO

*Pongan atención, señores
lo que les voy a contar
el día cuatro'e febrero
en Guate empezó a temblar.*

*Las tres de la madrugada
marcó la hora fatal,
mi Nación fue derrumbada
desde'l pelo al carcañal.*

*Muchos salieron corriendo
para la vida salvar,
otros quedaron durmiendo
para jamás despertar.*

*Muchos gritaban en coro:
¡Ay Santo Dios, Santo Fuerte!;
pero el señor sin desdoro
no los salvó de la muerte.*

*Cayó la ciudad en piezas
con el temblor malhadado,
cayeron también iglesias
sin dejar santo parado.*

*Del interior van llegando
noticias en tanatón
pues la sierpe fue regando
a su paso destrucción.*

*De Quirigu'a Mixco Viejo
quedó mi patria partida,
yo me he quedado perplejo
con el alma adolorida.*

Guate: abbreviation for Guatemala

EARTHQUAKE CORRIDO

Pay attention, gentlemen,
to what I'm about to say:
on the fourth day of February,
an earthquake struck Guate* that day.

At three in the morning
the fatal hour came to be,
my Nation was torn to pieces,
from head down to the knee.

Many ran out in a hurry
trying to save their lives,
others stayed asleep in bed
never again to rise.

Many cried out in chorus:
"Oh Holy God, Mighty and Strong!"
but the Lord, without dishonor,
did not save them from death.

The city crumbled to pieces
with the cursed earthquake's toll,
even churches fell to ruins
leaving not a single saint whole.

From the interior, news arrives
in a dreadful tone,
for the serpent spread
destruction in its wake.

From Quiriguá to Mixco Viejo
my homeland split apart,
and I am left in disbelief,
with sorrow deep in my heart.

*Antigua, Patzún, Sumpango
fueron realmente destruidos,
lo mismo Chimaltenango,
tierra de desposeídos.*

*Zacapa, Gualán, El Rancho,
y el Progreso cabecera
cayeron a todo el ancho:
Oriente pues lo qu'era.*

*En las casas derrumbadas
hubo mucha soledad
hasta llegar las brigadas
de nuestra Universidad.*

*La gente por un momento
tuvo el corazón deshecho;
pero les llegó el aliento
de la brigad'a e Derecho.*

*Hambre, llantos y dolor
nuestra gente está sufriendo;
pero es grande ya el clamor
diun pueblo questá surgiendo.*

*Calmándose el temblorón
hubo ladrón avisado
que se robó hast' el balcón
del Capitán Maldonado.*

*Muchos se murieron juntos
a las tres de la mañana,
pero hubieron más difuntos
en el Gobierno de Arana.*

*Allí estaba el Presidente
con los del' Anacafé*

Anacafé: The National Coffee Association - Anacafé - is a private, public service, autonomous institution, with its own assets and private funds, founded by the Coffee Law in 1960.

Antigua, Patzún, Sumpango
were truly destroyed,
as well as Chimaltenango,
land of the dispossessed.

Zacapa, Gualán, El Rancho,
and El Progreso's capital
fell across the entire width:
the East is not what it was.

In the collapsed houses
there was much loneliness
until the brigades arrived
from our University.

For a moment the people
had broken hearts;
but hope came back
with the Law School brigade.

Hunger, tears, and pain
our people are suffering;
but there is already a great clamor
from a people that is rising.

When the quake had calmed
there was a clever thief
who stole even the balcony
from Captain Maldonado.

Many died together
at three in the morning,
but there were more deaths
in Arana's government.

There was the President
with those from Anacafé*,

*baboseándose a la gente
con ¡Guatemala está en pie!*

*¡En pie será mi sombrero!
el hombre ha sido explotado
por criollo y por extranjero
ya d'eso está muy cansado.*

*Ajena a la situación
la iniciativa privada
no dio colaboración
ni dio pura rebanada.*

*El Comité Nacional
ayudas acaparó
y partiéndose el tamal
todito se lo robó.*

*Por adinerarse más
entre ricos hay disputa
ya no nos dejemos más
de tanto hijo 'e la gran puta.*

*Aprovechando el momento
creció más la represión
y boinas verdes sin cuento
matan a la población.*

*Con grande preocupación
y ante situación tan grave
se vio a la Liberación
que asesinó al Chino Andrade.*

*Hay mucho hogar enlutado
hambre, miserias y llanto
pero el pueblo ha levantado
de la libertad el canto.*

fooling the people
with "Guatemala is standing!"

In standing will be my hat!
The people have been exploited
by both creoles and foreigners
and they're already tired of it.

Unaware of the situation
the private sector initiative
gave no collaboration
nor did it give a single slice.

The National Committee
hoarded the aid
and, splitting the tamale,
stole it all.

In their greed for more money
among the rich, there is dispute
let's not allow ourselves
to be fooled by those sons of bitches.

Taking advantage of the moment
repression only grew
and countless green berets
are killing off the people.

With great concern
and in such a grave situation,
the Liberation (movement) was seen,
which killed Chino Andrade.

There are many homes in mourning,
hunger, misery, and tears,
but the people have risen
singing the song of freedom.

4. Of accidents

They mainly refer to traffic accidents, or work-related accidents that don't happen in the factory, but rather during road construction, generally. Thus, we have the ballad of the accidents and sufferings on the Pan-American Highway, which, in some of its fragments, says:

*Carretera Panamericana
que une América en gran extensión,
cuánta sangre terraceó el camino
amoroso de tu construcción.*

*Víctor Gómez, el peón chiapaneco
Juan Rodríguez y el cabo Asención,
en la vuelta del Mango quedaron
al fallarle un frenazo al camión.*

*Dile a Juana gritaba Rodríguez
cocinera del puesto central,
que le diga a mi esposa querida
que la suerte me ha sido fatal.*

*Que una cruz se me ponga en el pecho
con dos ramas de tierno laurel,
que mis ojos se queden cerrados
en el pueblo de Santa Isabel.*

Pan-American Highway
that links the Americas far and wide,
how much blood terraced the path
of your loving construction.

Víctor Gómez, the Chiapanecan laborer,
Juan Rodríguez, and Corporal Asención,
at the Mango curve they remained,
for fate has been cruel to me.

Tell Juana, Rodríguez was shouting,
the cook at the central station,
that she should tell my beloved wife
that fate has dealt me a fatal blow.

That a cross be placed on my chest
with two sprigs of tender laurel,
that my eyes remain closed forever
in the town of Santa Isabel."

5. Of memories and evocations of towns

According to Navarrete, these corridos are generally plagiarized from foreign songs or parodies of them, and for that reason, commercially successful; nevertheless, we also excerpt the following one, perhaps familiar to readers:

*Es Guatemala, mi tierra querida,
por más que digan, ninguna es igual,*

It is Guatemala, my beloved land,
no matter what they say, none is the same,

*por mi honor que en el mundo no hay nada
como esta tierra linda del Quetzal.*

I swear there's nothing in the world
like this beautiful land of the Quetzal.

*De mi tierra chapina,
muy orgulloso estoy,
y a mucha honra,
Guatemalteco soy. . . , etc.*

Of my Chapín homeland
I am truly proud,
and with great honor,
I am Guatemalan... etc.

7. Of prisoners:

Also, of foreign origin and parodies of popular Mexican songs, the corridos of prisoners are commercially successful and are songs of those who are incarcerated or have been in prison:

*Por Fernanda fue mi pena,
por mi amor que le entregué
qué me importa la condena
si su traición le cobré.*

For Fernanda was my sorrow,
for my love that I gave her
what do I care for the sentence
if I took revenge on her betrayal.

*Sin embargo la recuerdo
y no dejo de llorar
haber sido su querido
y tenerla que matar.*

And yet, I still remember her
and I can't stop crying
having once been her lover
and having had to kill her.

8. Of murders

With a moral lesson, these corridos generally tell the violent death of someone, following a system of dates and details, like the well-known Mexican corrido of Rosita Alvérez, an example that Concha Colindres gave us in a romance called **Un 22 de Marzo** (On the 22nd of March) which in its last three verses says:

*La casa donde murió
estaba recién blanquiada
de tanto que se sangró
le dieron nueva lechada.*

The house where she died
had just been whitewashed
from all the blood that was spilled,
they gave it a new grout.

*Muchachas tengan enmienda,
no den esos malos pasos,
vayan a ver a Rosita
que está hecha mil pedazos.*

Young girls, take heed,
don't take those wrong steps,
go and see Rosita,
who's been torn to pieces.

*Muchachas tengan enmienda,
muchachas de las paseadas,
tiene siete puñaladas
que Pablo Chávez le dio.*

Young girls, take heed,
girls who wander astray,
she has seven stab wounds
that Pablo Chávez gave her.

Another stanza goes:

*La casa en que la mataron
estaba recién pintada,
y por las manchas de sangre
le dieron otra pasada.*

The house where she was killed
had just been freshly painted;
and because of the bloodstains,
they had to repaint it again.

6. Of failed love affairs

Among them, Navarrete gives us the relationship of Luisa Alvarado, tender for its simplicity and with expressions that are extremely popular:

*Pobre de Luisa Alvarado
qué suerte tan retorcida,
por un amor traicionado
se dio por la mala vida.*

Poor Luisa Alvarado,
what a twisted fate she faced,
for a love that betrayed her
she gave herself to a life disgraced.

*En la finca Concepción
bien la amaba un maquinista,
pero confió su pasión
en un canche oficinista.*

In the Concepción estate,
a machinist loved her well,
but she entrusted her passion
to a fair-haired office worker.

*Cómo paseaba Güichita
orgullosa de su amor
sin saber que el desgraciado
se burlaba de su honor.*

How proudly little Güichita* walked
proud of her love,
not knowing that the wretch
was mocking her honor.

Güichita: affectionate nickname for women called Luisa.

*Una noche bien borracho
a la calle la sacó,
y en medio de sus dolores
con otra mujer durmió.*

*¡Tan linda Luisa Alvarado
y qué suerte le ha caído,
en la casa de sus padres
su mamá no la ha querido!*

*Entonces muy resentida
en la calle se quedó
de rocolera en la tarde,
de noche con quien pagó.*

*De Santa Lucía al Puerto
y en fiestas de ranchería,
Luisa Alvarado ha dejado
lo mejor de su alegría.*

*Ya los hombres no la buscan,
pues se embola muy seguido,
ya con dos cervezas llora
y varias veces se ha herido.*

*Sus amigos de la finca
el saludo le han negado,
¡qué pura leña la gente:
machucar a un somatado!*

*Yo que soy Felipe Pérez
y sin que mi tiempo falle,
la saludo cariñoso
cuando la encuentro en la calle.*

*Y porque sepan las gentes
consolar al afligido,*

One night, very drunk,
he dragged her to the street,
and in the midst of her pain
he slept with another woman.

Such a lovely is Luisa Alvarado,
and what a fate she's received,
in her parents' house
her mother has rejected her!

Then, very resentful
she was left in the street
as a dancer in the afternoon,
and at night with whoever paid.

From Santa Lucía to the Puerto
and at village fair festivities,
Luisa Alvarado left behind
the best of all her glees.

Men no longer seek her out,
for she drinks herself away,
after two beers, she cries,
and she's harmed herself, they say.

Her friends from the estate
have denied her their greetings,
what a cruel thing people do
to crush someone already beaten!

I, Felipe Pérez
and without my temper failing,
greet her kindly
when I meet her in the street.

And so that people know
how to console the suffering,

*yo le compuse a Güichita
sus renglones de corrido.*

I composed for Güichita
her lines of this *corrido*.

11. Of animals

It is a tribute to animals remembered with affection, with a special dedication to horses, such as *El corrido del Caballo Colorado*, which, in excerpts, says:

*Desde Zacualpa y toda la sierra,
desde la costa hasta el Ahumado
no hubo caballo que lo alcanzara
cuando corría bien ajustado.*

From Zacualpa and all the highlands,
from the coast to El Ahumado
there wasn't a horse that could catch him
when he ran, tightly saddled.

*Hoy que su aliento se me ha olvidado
veo sus ojos que adiós decían,
veo su cola temblando triste:
pañuelo de despedida.*

Now that his breath has faded from memory
I see his eyes saying farewell,
I see his tail trembling with sorrow:
a handkerchief of goodbye.

*Allá en la tierra de mis mayores
se encuentra un árbol que yo he sembrado,
creció del pecho lleno de flores
de mi caballo colorado.*

There, in the land of my ancestors
there's a tree that I planted
it grew from the chest, full of flowers,
of my red horse.

10. Danceable

Quartets recited and interspersed with several guitar chords, the corridos for dancing became a custom at the beginning of the century, as Navarrete indicates. The one with the verses about the onion is a classic, which doesn't need to be reproduced.

9. Of relation

For some, these are the ones that involve animals, having a childlike dedication, such as *Los diez perritos* (The Ten Little Dogs), the verses of *El Periquito* (The Parrot), or *El piojo y la pulga se quieren casar* (The Louse and the Flea Want to Get Married); they stem from

the so-called ballad of relationship, and we recall the following:

*Estaba el señor don gato,
sentado en su silla de oro,
oyó pasar a la gata
con un paso muy sonoro.*

Mr. Don Cat,
was sitting in his golden chair,
he heard the lady cat walk by
with a very noisy step.

*El gato por darle un beso
se cayó desde el tejado
rompiéndose diez costillas
y un brazo desconchinflado.*

The cat, wanting to give her a kiss
fell off the roof
breaking ten ribs
and an arm all mangled.

*Al saberlo los gatitos
se pusieron a llorar;
al saberlo los ratones
se pusieron a cantar:*

When the kittens found out,
they started to cry;
when the mice found out
they started to sing:

*Ya murió el señor don gato,
ya lo llevan a enterrar,
entre cuatro zopilotes
y un hermoso gavilán.*

Mr. Don Cat is dead,
they're taking him to be buried,
between four vultures
and a beautiful sparrow hawk.

Thus, the corridos, like all popular expressions, are an epic manifestation that can encapsulate the entire history of a people, of a region, and signify the idiosyncrasy of a community. "True or imagined events," says Carlos Navarrete, "epic or amorous poetry, revolutionary or naughty, that in the voice of the people is modulated as a pure and spontaneous contribution to the history of small passions and great events, and is, in itself, a human document brimming with truth and poetry."