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Lorca, Young and Gay. the Making of an Artist

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"Lorca, Young and Gay. The Making of an Artist" deals with the details of the education and character formation that, over time, transformed the indifferent student and provincial writer Federico García Lorca into one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century. Essentially, Lorca had two major hurdles blocking his way: one had its roots in his family, the other in a deep, personal spiritual crisis. The family obstacle was a formidable one. Don Federico García Rodríguez, his father, was a farmer of the modest rural middle class who became a rich landowner and entrepreneur and, through skillful maneuvering, an important financial and political member of Granada's high bourgeoisie. He expected that his son Federico, for whom he felt an almost obsessive paternal concern, would continue in the path that he had so successfully initiated. However, from the very beginning, Lorca disappointed him. Federico was possessed, initially with a passion for music and, later, with a love of poetry that grew into a consuming passion. A mediocre student at the University of Granada, he soon felt that he needed to transfer to Madrid, where he could find the intellectual ambiance more suitable to what, with surprising self-confidence, he trusted were his artistic gifts. If the father opposed what seemed to him a dangerous adventure, his mother supported him with a faith that never wavered. Don Federico finally relented and let his son enter the Residencia de Estudiantes, one of the most important cultural centers of Madrid. Lorca never attended a class at the University of Madrid; however, the Residencia became the most important intellectual force in his life. He became an intimate friend of Salvador Dalí, Luís Buñuel, Juan Ramón Jiménez, and many of the Spanish cultural leaders that frequented it, and his talent and charm, as well as his social skills, soon made of him a valued member of Madrid's intellectual circles. By 1925, when his father forced him to return to Granada, he had conquered the trust and admiration of the persons who opened the way to his future triumphs. The second hurdle that he had to overcome in order to mature into a self-possessed artist was spiritual: the awareness of his sexual identity. In 1916, Lorca started to write with frenzy until late at night, often until dawn. He alternated prose with poetry. He called most of his prose-poems "Mystics (of the Flesh and of the Spirit". They expressed a conflict whose nature is hinted at in a letter to his friend Adriano del Valle: Lorca confides that he is oppressed by what he calls "the tragedy of the physiology". A monstrous force pushes him toward aims that he wants to reject, but that he finds that he cannot vanquish. In his "Mystics" Lorca gives the theological explanation of this tragedy through the image of two stars in mortal struggle: the White Star of Jesus, and the Red Star of Life. The socio-religious forces that dominate Spanish society, and that are in conflict in his soul, force him to condemn the intimate impulses of his nature, while a passion for life moves him to justify the dignity of a passion lived with a pure and natural love. While this study treats, in detail, Lorca's early years, it also includes coverage of the main events and experiences associated with his later trips to New York and Cuba. There, liberated of the constraints of the social nets that imprisoned the spontaneous expression of his inner life, and immersed in new and freer worlds, his intimate self broke, al least partially, the mask that habitual conventions had forced him to wear. His "Oda a Salvador Dalí" was an effort to defend the honesty and purity of his love, and to present himself with total honesty to a society that damned him to irrevocable shame. He paid dearly for it.

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