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This edition is dedicated to the memory of three individuals:

GERARD LeBEAU – A truly good person
WALTER OLLER – A polyglot scholar and musician
and DIANA FRANCES HECHTER – A life too short
Introduction

Miguel de Cervantes was the fourth of seven children. He was born on 29th September 1547 in Alcalá de Henares, a university town about thirty kilometres 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 country’s capital, then on to Cordova in 1553. In 1564, when Miguel was seventeen, the family lived 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 a sixty-six-stanza-long elegy written in tercets) to the volume put together by López de Hoyos to honour the dead queen, Isabel de Valois. Cervantes – although not celebrated as a poet – could handle many poetic forms adroitly, and used a large number of poetic formats in Don Quixote. Don Quixote’s own poems are not very good, and his young admirer, Altisidora, writes like the fourteen-year-old she is, but these poems are intentionally bad. He is just giving us what we should expect from an old man, hardly a poet, and from an immature girl.

On 15th September 1569, an arrest warrant was issued in Madrid for Cervantes, who had wounded a rival in a duel. The warrant said that Cervantes’s right hand was supposed to be cut off, and he was to be exiled from Madrid for ten years. He fled to Andalusia, 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 learnt Italian and was initiated into Italian literature. There are many references to Italy, and writings in Italian, in Don Quixote, particularly the Italian continuations of the French Song of Roland. The novella of The Ill-Advised Curiosity (in Chapters 33–35 of the First Part) is 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 (Náfpaktos, Greece) on 7th October 1571, a critical battle on which the future of Europe as a Christian continent hinged, where he received a wound that crippled his left arm. After another battle in Tunis and a stay in Naples, as Cervantes was finally returning to Spain in 1575, his galley 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 (First Part, Chaps. 39–41).

Once back in Spain, twelve years after he 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 were later to populate his Don Quixote. The following year, he published the first – and, as it turned 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 Don Quixote (starting with First Part, Chap. 12).

For about ten years Cervantes worked as a buyer and tax collector for the crown, and travelled all around Andalusia. His knowledge of the geography of that region is frequently seen in Don 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 Cervantes moved to Valladolid, to a house that can still be visited today. The First Part of Don 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 instant success. As the printers were taking apart the type from the first printing, a second printing was urgently needed, and what had been taken apart had to be reset. Since the original royal licence (the equivalent of the modern copyright) didn’t include Portugal, two enterprising printers in Lisbon produced pirated Spanish-language editions immediately. It was reprinted in Madrid once again, this time including a licence for Portugal. There was also an edition in Valencia. All the above editions were published in 1605. Then came foreign editions in Spanish (Brussels, 1607; Milan, 1610), followed by translations (English, 1612; French, 1614; German, 1621; Italian, 1622–25; Dutch, 1657).

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 talks about a hundred and twenty authors. Although he had hinted at a second part of his Don Quixote at the end of the First Part, he waited until 1615 to finish his Second Part. In the meantime, in 1614, a second author came out with his own continuation of Cervantes’s book. Also in 1615 his Eight New Plays and Eight Skits was published. Cervantes was a real lover of the theatre, and in Chapter 48 of the First Part, there is a critique of the contemporary theatre. The following year, just as he was finishing his last novel, Persiles and Sigismunda (published in 1617), he died, on 23rd April.

* * *

VIII
Ever since *Don Quixote* has been annotated, every editor has pointed out that the book is full of inconsistencies, contradictions and errors. And it is absolutely true. 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. 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, a possible interpretation is that Cervantes put them in *Don Quixote on purpose*. But why? The answer is simple. Cervantes’s stated objective in writing *Don Quixote* was to imitate and make fun of the ancient romances of chivalry – books that told tales of roaming knights in armour.

In order to imitate the romances fully, Cervantes satirized not only their content but also imitated their careless style. Far from being a defect in the book, these contradictions can be regarded as an integral part of the art of the book. It is difficult to believe 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, 93 well-known books, 261 geographical locations, 210 proverbs, and who created over 350 characters, could forget from one paragraph to the next the name of Sancho Panza’s wife, or make mathematical and biblical errors. In this translation, I have preserved all the mistakes, contradictions and inconsistencies of the original text, while at the same time alerting the reader and giving explanations in my notes. For a more detailed analysis of the textual “mistakes” in *Don Quixote*, please see the Introduction to my extended edition of the work, privately printed (LinguaText: Newark, DE, 2005).

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In 1614, when Cervantes was on the way to finishing his Second Part of *Don Quixote*, something astonishing happened. It seems that in the unlikely city of Tarragona a second part of *Don Quixote* was published, written by an obscure author called Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda, who claimed to be from Tordesillas. Cervantes was angered, because Avellaneda’s work had appeared before his own Second Part, because Avellaneda neither possessed his inventiveness nor remotely understood the psychological subtleties of his Don Quixote and Sancho, and maybe especially because of several insults that Avellaneda hurled at him in the prologue, dealing with his age and maimed hand.

Avellaneda himself didn’t think that he was doing anything out of the ordinary. It was fairly common – and still is, for that matter – for a second author to continue a work by another. Avellaneda cites some examples of this
practice in the Prologue to his Second Volume of the Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de La Mancha, Which Contains His Third Expedition and Is the Fifth Part of His Adventures (as the First Part is itself divided in four parts). He says: “How many have dealt with the life and loves of Angélica? Several have written about Arcadia; La Diana wasn’t written by the same hand.” It is true that the amorous adventures of Ariosto’s Angelica were continued by two Spanish authors, one of them being Lope de Vega. And that same Lope wrote his own Arcadia in imitation of Sannazaro’s Arcadia (1504) of almost a century earlier. There are two continuations of Jorge de Montemayor’s La Diana. Many modern critics hold Gil Polo’s continuation in higher esteem than Montemayor’s original.

Avellaneda didn’t consider it improper to write his own sequel to Cervantes’s work so soon after the publication of the original. After all, both continuations of La Diana came out in 1564, just five years after Montemayor’s original, and Avellaneda had waited nine years. Aside from that, Cervantes had given every indication that he was never going to continue Don Quixote. The title page of the 1605 edition read simply The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de La Mancha, Written by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, and said nowhere that this was just the first of two volumes. Even the division of Don Quixote into four parts – reflecting the organization of Amadís de Gaula – appeared to add evidence that Cervantes considered his work complete.

At the end of the book readers in 1605 learnt, perhaps to their dismay, that there really could be no sequel to Don Quixote, because no authentic information about his third expedition could be found, although tradition held that he went to Zaragoza to compete in a tournament there. The hopes of those who longed for a continuation of Cervantes’s work diminished with each passing year, especially since Cervantes had turned his attention to other projects.

Cervantes himself fuelled the flames of doubt about a sequel in the very last line of Don Quixote, which is a subtle dare, a challenge to another author to continue Don Quixote’s adventures. It is a slightly erroneous quotation from Canto 30 of Ariosto’s Orlando Furioso, which reads: “Forse altri canterà con miglior plettro” – “perhaps someone else will sing with a better plectrum” (or pen, as Cervantes later interpreted this line).

Since Cervantes hadn’t published his own Second Part, since he dared someone else – anyone else – to take up his pen, and since so much time had gone by, Avellaneda accepted the challenge and wrote a continuation. In this book he sends Don Quixote to Zaragoza to participate in the jousting tournament, taking the itinerary from the end of the 1605 Don Quixote (Chap. 52). At the end of the continuation, this second Don Quixote winds up in the crazy house in Toledo. Then Avellaneda – following what Cervantes had done at the end of his book – suggested an itinerary for a future author to take up. He said
that when Don Quixote got out of the asylum, he took on a new squire – a young lady, and pregnant as well, of all things – and went to have adventures in Ávila, Salamanca and Valladolid. He then invited yet another author to continue Don Quixote’s adventures, echoing Cervantes’s original dare, saying that the knight’s adventures would not lack “a better pen to celebrate them” (Riquer, Vol. III, p. 130). No one took up this challenge.

Since he had not yet quite finished his own Second Part, Cervantes was able to attack and discredit the apocryphal edition by his rival. Avellaneda’s sequel, however, had a great impact on Cervantes’s own Second Part, and it is even possible that because of Avellaneda’s challenge to keep Don Quixote’s adventures going through yet another sequel, Cervantes decided to have his hero die at the end of the book, so that no one else could try to continue his own hero’s adventures. It is sad that Avellaneda’s book seems to have caused the death of Don Quixote.  

* * *

This translation was finished more or less in time to mark the fourth centenary of the publication of Don Quixote, First Part (1605–2005). When I read the original in J. Richard Andrews’s Don Quixote class as a graduate student at UCLA in 1964, I thought that this was a project I really would like to do one day, but I felt I needed a bit more experience with the text before I could undertake it. I didn’t realize at the time that I would have to wait forty-odd years to see my translation completed. In this four-decade period, I taught the original Spanish version of the novel twenty times, and in English translation four times; I prepared a Spanish edition for students (with more than 10,000 English glosses in the margins and about 3,750 footnotes), and I compiled a Don Quixote Dictionary. Along the way I published about twenty articles about the book, prepared eleven reviews dealing with the novel (including two reviews of recent translations, and one of a motion picture), and spoke thirty-six times at congresses and symposia on topics dealing with Don Quixote. All of this was wonderful preparation for the task at hand.

But why do yet another translation? After all, in the last ten years or so four other English translations have come out (Burton Raffel, John Rutherford, Edith Grossman, James Montgomery). The reason I felt justified in doing this translation is that translations are sometimes based on faulty Spanish editions, or editions that took too many liberties with the original text, fixing perceived errors, changing chapter titles, even adding text to the work.

My initial version tried to remain as close as possible to the original, both syntactically and grammatically. As I continued to read this text, version after version, I strived to make the English sound better each time.

In the production of this book, I made use of many editions, dictionaries and translations. The main Spanish edition used was my own (Newark,
which was itself based on the old-spelling edition of Schevill and Bonilla (Madrid, 1928–42, 4 vols.). I also consulted the original 1605 Juan de la Cuesta printing (in the photographically reproduced edition done from a copy in possession of the Hispanic Society of America). I turned frequently to other editions: Vicente Gaos’s new edition of Don Quijote is textually rigorous and has very complete and useful footnotes (Madrid: Gredos, 1987, 3 vols.). The new edition of Don Quijote done in Barcelona (Galaxia Gutenberg, 1998), by Silvia Iriso and Gonzalo Pontón, was most useful in helping to understand the meaning of some otherwise obscure expressions, as was the new edition directed by Francisco Rico (Instituto Cervantes-Critica, 1998). Volume I is the text, with excellent notes by Joaquín Forradellas. Volume II provides all kinds of complementary information. Among the classical editions, I consulted Francisco Rodríguez Marín’s ten-volume set (Madrid: Atlas, 1947–48), and the learned edition by Diego Clemencín, whose commentary exceeds the length of Don Quixote itself (the modern edition is published by Castilla, Madrid, no publication date mentioned). Occasionally I referred to the version edited by Juan Antonio Pellicer (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1893).

As for dictionaries, I used mainly the Spanish-English Cuyás Dictionary. I also used Covarrubias’s Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española in Martín de Riquer’s edition (Barcelona: Horta, 1943), and the Diccionario de la Lengua Española en CD-ROM of the Real Academia de la Lengua (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1995).

I also consulted translations into English and French. I used the former Norton Critical Edition version of Ormsby (1981), revised by Joseph R. Jones; the Putnam translation (Modern Library, 1949); Robinson Smith (Hispanic Society of America, 1932); and the version by my professor, Walter Starkie (Signet Classic, 1964). I counted on the first three of these translations to rescue the poetry – none of the poetic translations are my own. John Bowle (London, 1781), Shelton (in the Harvard Classics), Fitzmaurice-Kelly (London: D. Nutt; 1898–99) and Martin de Riquer’s edition of the false Don Quixote were also used. For translating legal matters, I relied on the advice of my friend Ed Manwell.

I have followed the typographical style of the first edition wherever possible. The look of the title pages (p. 1, for example); the way the parts end with lines of diminishing length (pp. 63 and 100, for example); the chapter headings all in italics with indented lines starting with the second line; the two-line drop capital to begin each chapter; indenting all lines of a poetic stanza after the first one, all follow the original edition. I have also followed the first edition’s Roman numeral 4, which is always IIII. Where Cervantes uses Arabic numbers, I use them as well, and “etc.” is always written “&c.” which I also copy. I keep foreign-language quotes in the original language as well.
As the primitive version of this translation was being done, Annette Cash read and corrected it all a few chapters at a time, and after it was well on its way, Victoria Richardson read the whole work. Russ Hultgren also read almost two hundred pages of the text at different stages. I would like to thank all these people for their feedback, advice and support during the production of this book. Thanks also to William Chamberlain at Alma Classics for shepherding the book through the British editorial process and for offering many good suggestions to improve the text, and to my agent, Scott Mendel.

– Tom Lathrop
Don Quixote
FIRST PART
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.

AD 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 the 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, shrivelled-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 got 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 absent-minded lover, and in the next, they give a 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 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 afterwards 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 maravedis 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, 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, and being that nowadays is of no little honour 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
Don Quixote

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 enchanters and witches, Homer has Calypso,* and Virgil Circe;* if brave captains, Julius Caesar 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 it 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 nothing to say about them, nor did St Basil,* and Cicero* equally said nothing. 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 favour 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 counsellor in my time of need, and your own relief in finding the sincere and uncomplicated history 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 honoured 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 labour 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:
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 neighbours lead:
Be prudent; oft the random jest
Recoils upon the jester’s head.
Your constant labour 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
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.
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;
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.

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.
FIRST PART

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 squire-like 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—

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 learnt 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
Valour 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.

**El Caballero del Febo**

*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,
First Part

For you do live in Dulcinea’s name,
And famous, honoured, 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.
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.”

17
PART ONE
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 a hidalgo of the kind that has 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 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 the 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 desereress 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 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 learned man, a graduate of the University of Sigüenza – about who had been the greater knight: Palmerin 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 impossible nonsense. As a result, he came to believe that all those fictitious adventures he was reading about were true, and for him there was no history more authentic in the world. He said that the Cid, Ruy Díaz,* had been a very good knight, but he couldn’t be compared with the Knight of the Burning Sword,* who with one backhand slash had cut two fierce and huge giants in half. He preferred Bernardo del Carpio because at Roncesvalles he’d killed the enchanted Roland* with the same deception that Hercules used when he strangled Antaeus, the son of the Earth, in his arms.*

He praised the giant Morgante* because, although he was of that gigantesque lineage, where they’re all arrogant and rude, he alone was courteous and well-mannered. But above all, he admired Reinaldos de Montalbán,* especially when he saw him leave his castle and rob everybody he came across, and when he was overseas, he stole that idol of Muhammad, which was made entirely of gold, as his history states.* If he’d had the opportunity to kick
that traitor Ganelon* to shreds, he would have offered up his housekeeper and his niece to boot.

So, having lost his wits, he came up with the strangest idea ever concocted by a crazy man, and that was that he thought it right and necessary, both to increase his honour and to serve the republic, to roam the world on horseback, dressed in his armour, seeking adventures. He would put into practice everything he’d read that knights errant did, redressing all kinds of wrongs, and by putting himself at risk and in harm’s way, he would achieve eternal renown and fame. The poor fellow – because of the might of his arm – already saw himself crowned emperor of Trebizond at the very least, and thus, with these very pleasing thoughts, carried away by the uncommon delight that they gave him, made haste to put his desire into effect.

The first thing he did was to clean some armour that had belonged to his ancestors, and which – now rusted and covered with mould – had lain for ages forgotten in a corner. He cleaned and repaired it as well as he could, but he saw that something was missing – the helmet had no closed front. It was just an artilleryman’s open helmet. But his ingenuity solved the problem: he fashioned a kind of closed front out of pasteboard, which, when it was attached to the open helmet, gave the appearance of a complete helmet. It’s true that to test its durability and to see if it could withstand a slash, he took out his sword and gave it two whacks. With the first one he instantly undid what had taken him a week to make. And the ease with which he’d knocked it to pieces truly seemed inauspicious to him. To protect himself from further danger, he made it again, and this time he put some iron straps inside to satisfy himself of its battle-worthiness. And not willing to put it to the test once again, he deemed it a very sturdy helmet.

He then went to see his nag, which tantum pellis & ossa fuit,* and although he had more cracks in his hooves than there are cuartos in a real* and more blemishes than Gonella’s* horse, it seemed to him that neither Alexander’s Bucephalus nor the Cid’s Babieca* could compare with him. He spent four days thinking of a name to give him, because – as he said to himself – it wasn’t right for a charger belonging to such a famous knight, and being such a good animal as well, not to have a celebrated name. So he tried to think of one that would reflect both what he’d been before he was the horse of a knight errant and what he’d become. It was quite reasonable that, since his master was changing professions, the horse should change his name as well, to something noteworthy and showy, as was befitting the new military order and profession his master was already engaged in. Thus, after many names he created, struck out and removed, added, erased and made again in his mind, he finally came to call him “Rocinante”, a name that, in his opinion, was majestic, sonorous and significative of what he’d been when he was a rocin, before what he was now, which was foremost among all the rocines* in the world.
Having given his horse a name so much to his pleasure, he wanted to give one to himself. These musings lasted another week, and finally he decided to call himself “don Quixote”,* which, as has been said, has led experts in matters of this true history to declare that his original name must have been Quixada, and not Quesada, as others have claimed. But remembering that the brave Amadís was not satisfied just with Amadís, but added the name of his country to make it famous, calling himself Amadís de Gaula, he wanted, as a good knight, to add the name of his region to his own, and thus wound up calling himself “don Quixote de La Mancha”. This reflected very vividly, in his opinion, his lineage and his region, and he honoured the latter by taking its name.

Having thus cleaned his armour, made the open helmet into a closed one, given a name to his horse and to himself, he convinced himself that the only thing left was to seek a lady to be in love with, because a knight errant without a lady love was a tree without leaves or fruit, and a body without a soul. He said to himself: “If, through my misfortune or good luck, I come across a giant – as frequently happens to knights errant – and defeat him with one blow, or split him down the middle of his body, or finally conquer and overcome him, wouldn’t it be nice to have someone to send him to? He’ll go in and get on his knees before my sweet lady, and will say with a meek and obsequious voice: ‘I, my lady, am the giant Caraculumiambro, Lord of the Island of Malindrania, whom the never-sufficiently-praised knight Don Quixote de La Mancha vanquished. He commanded me to appear before Your Greatness, to do with me whatever you will.’”

Oh, how it pleased our good knight when he’d made this speech, and particularly when he found the one to designate as his lady love! It happened – as is generally thought – that in a nearby village there was a good-looking peasant lass with whom he’d been in love for some time, although she never knew or even suspected it. Her name was Aldonza Lorenzo, and it seemed fitting to him that she should have the title of mistress of his thoughts. And looking for a name for her that didn’t differ much from her own, and which elevated itself and suggested and implied the name of a princess and a great lady, he came to call her “Dulcinea* del Toboso” – since she was from the village of El Toboso – a name that in his opinion was both musical and original, charged with meaning, as were all the other names he’d given to himself and his belongings.

Chapter II. Which deals with the first expedition that the ingenious Don Quixote made.

Having made these preparations, he didn’t want to waste any time putting his plan into effect. He was distressed at how the world was suffering because of his delay, such were the wrongs he planned to right, the injustices to rectify, the abuses to mend and the debts to settle. Thus, without
telling anyone at all of his intentions, and without anyone seeing him, one morning – one of the hottest ones of the month of July – he put on all his armour, mounted Rocinante and, with his poorly mended helmet in place, he clasped his shield, took his lance and went out into the countryside through the back gate of the corral, enormously happy and exhilarated at seeing how easily he’d begun his worthy enterprise.

But no sooner was he in the open countryside than he was assailed by a terrible thought, such that he almost gave up his just-begun undertaking, and that was that he’d not yet been dubbed a knight, and, in accordance with the laws of chivalry, he couldn’t, nor shouldn’t, take up arms against any knight. And even if he’d been so dubbed, as a novice knight he would have to wear plain armour – with no device on his shield – until he’d earned that right through his travails. These thoughts made him waver in his purpose, but since his madness overcame his reason, he resolved to have himself so dubbed by the first knight he came across, in imitation of many others who did exactly that, according to the books that had led him to that state. As for the plain armour, he planned to scour it when he had the time, so as to make it whiter than ermine. And with this he calmed down and continued his journey, taking the road his horse chose, believing that was what the spirit of adventure called for.

As our brand-new adventurer went ambling along, he talked to himself, saying: “Who can doubt that in years to come, when the true history of my famous exploits comes to light, the enchanter who will write about them, when he comes to relate this first expedition of mine, will begin this way: ‘Scarcely had the ruddy Apollo begun to spread the golden tresses of his beautiful hair over the vast surface of the earthly globe, and scarcely had the pretty painted birds with their harmonious tongues greeted in sweet, melodious strains the fair Aurora, who, having left her jealous husband’s bed, appeared at the gates and balconies of the Manchegan horizon, when the renowned knight Don Quixote de La Mancha, forsaking the soft down, and mounting his famous steed Rocinante, entered the ancient and celebrated Plains of Montiel.’” And it was true, because he was on those very plains!

And he went on, saying: “What a happy age and equally happy era when my famous deeds – worthy of being sculpted in bronze, carved in marble and painted on panels – will come to light for future remembrance. Oh, wise enchanter – whoever you may be – you, who have been chosen to be the chronicler of this uncommon history, I beg you not to forget Rocinante, my constant companion along these highways and byways!”

Then he went on to say, as if he were really in love: “Oh, Dulcinea del Toboso, mistress of this captive heart! You’ve done me a grievous wrong in dismissing and banishing me with your harsh command, forbidding me to appear before your beauteous person. May it please you, lady, to remember this subjected heart of yours, which suffers so many sorrows for your love.” Along with