

just as your husband sleeps next to you.
The blind man mutters a name, your name. You say nothing.
The air burns your muttered, bitten name.
When the morning light shows through the shutters
the blind man leaves slowly, feeling his way
bitterly along the biblical walls of the city.

THE LOVERS

Flesh needs flesh
— *Ausiàs March*

“There were not two lovers like us in València.”

We made love fiercely from dawn to dusk.
I think of all of it while you hang out the wash.
Many years ago; many things have happened.

Suddenly a storm, or love, seizes me.
We cannot conceive of silk and compliments
(may chaste Mr. López Picó forgive us).
Love flares up like an old hurricane,
throwing us to the floor.
Sometimes I have wished for a civilized love;
the music is playing, I kiss you carelessly,
first your shoulder, then your earlobe.
Our love is abrupt and wild.
Kissing and scratching each other on the floor,
we long bitterly for our own land.
What can I do? We ignore
Petrarca and many other things:
Riba’s *Estances* and Bequer’s *Rimas*.
Afterwards, we realize we are barbarians.
It should not be that way;
we are old enough, and so on.

There were not two lovers like us in València.