

LOOKING AT A MAP

To Marian Aguiló

Take a good look, a good look at the queen
of our hearts, the Catalonia we love:
its high-flung contour brings to mind
an eagle taking flight.
There stretch above her brow Olympian skies,
beneath her feet the waves and foam,
at her back there runs a great river, around her
an aureole of encircling waters and snows.
Her immense beak is formed by Cap de Creus,
her enormous tail, Tortosa and its marshlands;
her robust hands,
Barcino's iron roads and harbor walls:
one spread out on the land,
the other beneath the waters, as one by one
festoons of speedy ships come in unstrung,
outdoing even the days of Roger de Llúria,
from eastern seas where daylight comes out
to the western seas of daylight's grave.
Her heart is Montserrat, heart that flows
with loving blood, vibrant and pure,
through branches splashing in arteries
like rivers of fire tossing and flashing.
Her lioness courage pours out from here,
where she drinks, in faith, her Herculean strength.
An eagle is she, outspreading her wings
in splendid and gigantic breadth,
one on each side of the Pyrenees,
beating brave on the air, battling
clouds, winds, and storms,
as she makes for the sun whose radiance floods
her shield of Stripes, reddened
with the stains of the blood of her Counts.

JACINT VERDAGUER

Translated from the Catalan by Ronald Puppó