



Francisco Goya, *El tres de mayo de 1808 en Madrid* ( 1814)

ANDY WAINWRIGHT

## **THE THIRD OF MAY 1808 (FROM THE NOVEL *THE LAST ARTIST*)**

IN TERMS OF SIZE the Goya was the mammoth of his project. Alone, it would dominate one wall with its weighted collusion of levelled guns and bloody slaughter-ground. But the final, haunting gesture of the man in white lifted the dark veil for the viewing eye.

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“Look! Look José, Miguel, see what he’s done!” Pepé always had the loudest voice.

Manolo held the stick in his left hand above the square patch of dirt. He was right-handed when he wrote his letters in school, used a fork or spoon, or held the sword in mock bull-fights with his friends, so he wondered why he had drawn the French soldier with his left. There in the red clay of Spain was the hated enemy in his high boots, long jacket, and tall feathered cap they called a shako. He’d seen the soldiers in the nearby town, of course, so the uniform details were familiar, but he’d never thought to make a picture. It just came to him, that’s all. He’d been playing with his friends and had looked down at a smooth square of earth that he stepped over deliberately as he passed the ball with a deft flick of his bare foot. His momentum carried him on a few steps, then he turned back to the square as the game carried forward without him. The other boys didn’t notice his absence at first, but soon ran over to where he was crouching with the short stick he’d found.

“What is it?” José had shouted excitedly, expecting a lizard or snake they could torture. Then he had stopped and cried out at Manolo’s accomplishment.

“You didn’t do that,” Miguel said quietly. “You found it there.”

“How could he do that?” Pepé replied. “We’ve been playing here for half an hour. Nobody else saw the picture, did they? And besides, our feet would

have stomped it out.”

“I’ll do it now,” Miguel declared, lifting his leg above the soldier.

But Manolo grabbed it before he could slam it down. “No,” he said. “I haven’t finished.”

He drew a rifle with fixed bayonet hung by a sling over one shoulder. The blade pointed into the sky like a church spire.

“That’s a Frenchy, alright,” Miguel said. He spit on the soldier’s boots.

“It will disappear with the first rain, Manolo,” Pepé declared, pointing at Miguel, “if this idiot doesn’t destroy it first. You should do it on paper. Senora Consuela will give you a crayon tomorrow.”

Consuela Hernandez was the village school-teacher, and when the boys, even Miguel, crowded around her the next morning and shouted that Manolo was a great artist and she should give him a crayon to prove it, she laughed and told them to wait until the noon bell.

“Manuel can draw then. Right now you must learn your history of Spain.” Consuela was from a village not much larger than this one, and she knew how hard the boys and girls would have to struggle to make their ways in life. First they had to know who they were, and if, for her safety’s sake and theirs, she never said anything unpleasant about the French occupiers, she did quietly praise things Spanish, especially the King who had recently lost his beautiful, young wife. So she was not about to discourage any student talent, even if, in this case, she did not expect it to amount to much. Manuel was a bright boy who read his letters clearly and correctly for the most part, but, like his friends, he had not distinguished himself in any special way.

After the noon bell had rung and the children had eaten their simple fare in the shade of the adobe building—a piece of day-old bread, perhaps an apple or small bit of cheese, washed down by cool water from the nearby well—she announced that Manuel could now show them all what he could do. In the schoolroom, she spread a piece of paper on her table and gave him a charcoal crayon, one of only three she was allowed for the entire term. Never mind, she’d watch the boy carefully, and as soon as he’d done his stick figures or whatever dabbling he had in mind, she’d take the crayon back and stow it securely in the cupboard away from grasping hands.

Manolo paused above the paper. What he’d drawn in the dirt had been on the spur-of-the-moment. The scrap of earth had been there along with the stick, and the soldier had just appeared from his left hand. Senora Consuelo noticed how he was holding the crayon and gave a little gasp as he began to draw. The left was the devil’s hand, *siniestro*, and, with the approval of the priests, was tied behind the backs of children who favoured it when

they wrote. But her concern for Manuel's spiritual well-being gave way to astonishment as she saw the outline of a figure emerge and then the features of his face and apparel. The French soldier stared arrogantly at her from beneath his tall hat. Where had the boy learned to do this?

All Manolo knew was that the crayon gave him a freedom to make delicate strokes that the stick did not. He smudged the black lines of the hat with his thumb and the knee-high boots as well to give them a weight he sensed they needed. The figure in the dirt had been in profile and standing still, but this one was stepping toward whoever was looking at him, so he made several short light strokes behind his heel as if the air had been stirred by his motion.

His friends clapped and yelled. "See! We told you, Senora. Do another one, Manolo. Do Napoleon!"

"Yes, yes, Napoleon!" the rest of the class shouted.

"Hush, children!" Senora Consuelo held up her hands in consternation. Things were getting out of hand. The French tolerated no threat to their occupation of the country. She had heard of officials in towns and cities who were shot for speaking out. The priests were urging calm and warning their parishioners of the dangers of resistance. God would protect them, but they must leave matters in His hands. Now there was this boy drawing what might well be seen as an affront to authority. They would not harm him, of course, but she, she would be held responsible. Best to let things go no further. She reached down and picked up the drawing. Doubling it over, she put it in her apron pocket. "It's very good, Manolo," she said, "but the Emperor can afford real painters to do his portrait. As for our lowly French soldier, I think this should be his only appearance. Draw something else for us, a flower perhaps, or the plane tree in the schoolyard there."

She spread another piece of paper on the table. "Go on, then."

The class was quiet now, subdued by her pronouncement about the Emperor's power. Manolo had not turned around to see her fold his drawing, but he drew himself bent over the table with her standing stiffly behind him, the paper not folded but crumpled in her hand. Reflexively she put her hand in her pocket and crushed the soldier into a tight ball.

His father, Juan, was a sheepherder who spent the warm months with the flock on the mountain slopes of Burgos. When there was no school, Manolo would live in a large hut with his father and several other men and boys who ate beans from a pot that was always simmering above the fire and drank ice-cold water from a nearby spring with their cupped hands.

But the time for meals was short and that for sleep not much more. Their shared watch over the flock took up nearly all the hours of the day and night. Fiercely-loyal sheepdogs made wolves and wildcats nervous but not enough to keep them entirely at bay. Nearly every morning, despite the vigilance, the remains of a bloody adult sheep would be found among the rocks. The corpses of lambs would disappear entirely, having been dragged off into gullies or caves.

When the weather turned cold, Juan and the other men made preparations for the great trek south to Andalusia where their animals would graze with thousands of others in the foothills of the Sierra Morena. The weeks-long journey each November was very demanding, and because of his youth and school it was agreed between his mother and father that Manolo would not go along until he was fourteen. In the spring before this momentous birthday, however, they said he could meet the north-bound flock on the far southern outskirts of Madrid before the cobblestones of the city were covered in a moving sea of white wool.

In February 1808, the invading French troops had captured much of the north of the country, including Barcelona, and headed for the capital. News of the army's advance reached the village slowly, but even by mid-April there was no report of any dangers on the road for law-abiding citizens. What would Napoleon's troops gain by bothering simple shepherders going about their business? Manolo traveled south with old Andrès who, despite his seventy years, lined face, and bony frame, could still outlast many of the younger men on the trail. He wasn't stronger or faster than them, Manolo saw, just more determined in the end.

Following dirt roads and sleeping in haystacks and abandoned barns, they reached the northern edge of Madrid at the end of the month to find the French in occupation of the city. Individual soldiers in black and gray uniforms stood in high-vaulted doorways or gathered in bands on street-corners to watch everyone who walked by. Manolo was disturbed by their stern stares and overwhelmed by the buzzing noise of the crowds, the size of the buildings, and the endless tunnels of streets that ran off in all directions. When he and Andrès finally came to the Puerto del Sol in the centre of the city there were more people gathered there than the countless sheep in the Burgos flocks, and the houses and churches were so tall and wide that even a few of them together could have contained his entire village. The huge crowd in the square was shouting things about the King he didn't understand, and he saw many angry faces. Andrès led him on to a poorer neighbourhood where he took enough coins from his leather pouch to pay

for two pallets in a stable loft. From here they could look out over the rooftops to the south and see the plains that would soon be filled with sheep.

“They will camp out there and rest before they enter the city,” Andrès told him. “It is very hard on the animals and the men because they set off at dark and it takes them all night to push through. They must be beyond the northern wall before the cock crows. That is the law. Any sheep still on the streets after dawn are the property of those who can tie them down or kill them. Many linger with ropes and knives hoping for stragglers. There have even been deaths because hungry men and women have not waited for the sun. Your father will be at the head of the flock. You must stay by me in the rear and help drive the animals forward. Do not let them run down any alleys, but if one or two do that, let them go. Their sacrifice will let the others survive.”

Manolo was excited and a bit afraid. He wanted to behave as a man would and keep all the sheep on a straight and narrow path through the streets, but the unsmiling French soldiers and the angry citizens bothered him. The sheep became skittish if everything didn't go as usual for them. He'd seen their panic in a thunderstorm when a lightning bolt felled a tree and how they ran uncontrollably from a wolf pack that got between them and the men. That was why they were taken through the city in the dark hours. His father said once that if he could blindfold them all, he would. Surely those people who had made all the noise in the main square had to sleep and there would be only a few soldiers on guard duty during the night. Lying on his pallet he pictured the peaceful slopes of Burgos in summer and the sheep grazing there, but as he drifted off this image was replaced by his drawing of the French soldier with his gun. He tried to crush it as Senora Consuelo had done, but his mind was not as strong as her hands.

On the second afternoon thy heard much gunfire from one direction and saw the rolling waves of sheep approaching from the other. They walked through the wide southern gate of the city out onto the plain and eventually met Juan and the other herders by a river bank. Juan smiled at his son who was relieved his father didn't show more affection in front of the men. The sheep pushed and prodded one another as they milled about in the shallows.

“The French are in the city,” Andrès said. “They have gotten rid of the King. There were many rifle shots two hours ago.”

Manolo knew the old man had gone to a nearby tavern for some wine and conversation after he had supposedly fallen asleep, but he was surprised by this news. When they had heard the guns Andrès had said nothing about

the King.

"The sheep cannot wait," Juan said. "We must take them through tonight."

Some men expressed their disagreement, saying it would be better to remain by the river until things settled down.

"Nothing will settle down," Juan said. "If the King has gone, the unhappiness will stay in the streets for a long time."

After much arguing, it was decided that Juan and two other herders, along with Andrès and Manolo, would try to take a few hundred through that night. Then one of them would come back and tell the others of the situation.

As they sat by the fire waiting for dark, they could hear more gunfire from the city. "Will the French shoot at us?" he asked his father.

"No," Juan replied. "They will know we just want to take the sheep home. They will let us alone."

"Are you angry about the King?"

"I am sad about the King, Manolo, but Spain will go on until he returns." Juan looked up at the winking stars. "Or another takes his place."

A few hours later when they came to the gate, they were challenged by the French guard. Through an unhappy-looking interpreter who kept his head down, the sergeant told them they couldn't pass.

"We sell these animals in the city," Juan said. "Your companions there will need mutton and lamb stew, won't they?"

While it was true that butchers bought sheep for slaughter and hauled them away in wagons, they always did so before the drive through the streets began and therefore had already visited the riverbank. It was fortunate this sergeant and his men had not been on duty when the wagons had rumbled past the gate that morning.

"Alright," the Frenchman said, "but we'll have one of them now and without charge."

"That's fine. Make your choice."

Selecting a large ewe, the sergeant ordered his men to haul her away from her two suckling lambs who began to bleat loudly. "Looks like they want to come with their mama," he said, laughing.

"No," Juan told him. "We'll find other milk for them."

"Be careful in there, *mon ami*. Your countrymen aren't behaving like sheep and they're paying a price for it."

The interpreter shifted his position slightly as he spoke and, looking

down, Manolo saw his feet were hobbled.

Holding up a torch, Juan led the way. The two herders, carrying lanterns, took up positions on either side of the flock while he and Andrès brought up the rear, the old man brandishing a long crook and Manolo lifting high his own torch. For a while everything was quiet. They passed the occasional shadowy figure hugging the building walls but saw no soldiers or groups of Spaniards. Manolo had heard many times about the traditional route along the Calle Mayor through the Puerto del Sol and on to the northern gate, and he knew his father and the others wouldn't turn from it despite the sergeant's warning. The constant baa-ing and the soft shuffling sound of their sandals on the cobbles calmed his worries about any danger, and for over an hour he plodded along dreamily beside Andrès, awake only to stragglers and those animals that strayed from the confined order of the march. But when the sheep burst into the huge square where the angry crowd had stirred two days before, they smelled the blood and began to run.

Manolo caught sight of bodies in the dim light beyond the torch glow, limbs twisted and bent as if they were puppets whose strings had suddenly been cut. But he had no time to react to such horror because he saw the sheep break from their line and pour across the square, hiding everything on the ground beneath their terrified rush. He heard his father cry out far ahead and watched one of the herders fall under the stampede. Andrès yelled, "Go that way" and flung his arm out to the right. As the old man started to run toward the other side of the square to try to turn the flock, Manolo stumbled over a bloody corpse and fell heavily to the stones, rolling without check through an uproar of bleating and shouting until his head clipped a metal post and the noise ceased.

When he woke in the morning light the square was filled with the wails of women and the rough tones of French soldiers speaking to one another in their own language. He watched the women bend over bodies and cover their faces with their shawls, moaning and calling out to God. The soldiers paid them no attention but wandered idly past the dead, occasionally poking some remains with a bayonet or reaching down to retrieve a colourful bandana. Raising himself to his knees he tried to stand and felt a bolt of pain ram through his skull as if someone had hit him with a hammer. He sat down abruptly and leaned against the post. A few feet away a young woman was lying on her back staring at the sky, blood and bits of entrail smearing her exposed belly. Beside her, sprawled an older man with no visible wound, and past him knelt a boy, no bigger than himself, his face pressed into the cobbles and the top of his head blown away. Each of them was very real to



him, but he did not understand why they were here. He did not understand why he was in this place either. Trying to think about that, he stared dully at the ground. A trail of ants made their way past his sandal, across the stones, and up the skirt-folds of the young woman. Hordes of them disappeared into her red wound and he wondered how she could hold so many. A crow hopped onto the shoulders of the kneeling boy and began to pick at his skull. The sun was very hot and he was thirsty. His tongue felt swollen as he swallowed a bit of saliva, and he knew he must find some water and a piece of shade. I will go, he thought, but didn't move. "I will go now," a voice said aloud, and he didn't know who was speaking. Then the sun went away.

"He does not know who he is," the nun said.

"Does he remember anything?" the priest asked.

"He says nothing at all. Only his name, 'I am Manolo.' His accent is not *Madrilenos*. From the north, I think. There was nothing in his pocket but this." She held up a bit of charcoal crayon.

"Give him some paper. See if he will write something."

When his eyes opened it was dark. The square was silent except for an urgent whispering sound he didn't recognize. His head throbbed when he managed to stand, and as he took a few staggering steps the strange murmur ceased for a moment then began again more insistently. He felt a tugging on his trouser leg and a weight on the top of his foot, and crouching slowly so as not to tip his head he put out his hands in the darkness and felt a sharp nip of teeth on his fingertips and knuckles. Then the moon came out from behind a cloud and he saw the rats feeding on the body of a young woman.

At the edge of the square was a small fountain where he drank greedily and held his head for a long time beneath the cold stream. Feeling a little stronger he followed a wide street toward the sound of loud voices and flickering light. Figures brushed by him in the same direction and as he moved uphill he could see groups of men standing quietly in doorways of buildings as if waiting for a signal of some kind before they moved with him or turned back toward the square. The loud voices ahead spoke angrily in French. Between the words he could hear groans and cries that needed no translation.

Eventually he came to an open space at the top of the hill where many people stood facing a large wall of rock higher than his head and as wide as the church he could see beyond it. He circled this crowd as a volley of gunfire crashed against his ears, and he could see grey-uniformed soldiers wearing flat-topped, black hats, their guns raised and pointing at several men

pressed back against the wall. Bloody bodies were piled at the feet of these men, and at first he didn't connect the volley with the fallen or with those who stood just a few feet from the shining tips of the long knives attached to the rifle barrels. He could see all this because of a huge lantern box placed between the soldiers and the others, its glow lighting up the red earth and the forms of those who clung to one another or buried their faces in their hands. One man in a white shirt stood slightly apart, a silver cross gleaming at his neck, his eyes searching the crowd desperately as if to gather in everything around him in his final moments. Instinctively, without knowing why, the boy took a step forward.

"I am Manolo," he suddenly said, as if the figure in white had asked him who he was, though he didn't know why this name had come to his lips or why the man would question him. But between the steady thumps in his head were flashes of grassy slopes covered with white animals and a hut where this same man stirred a steaming pot, smiling as he turned and held out a wooden spoon piled high with beans.

"Where was he found?" the priest asked later.

"Near the rock where so many were shot," the nun replied. "It is clear he witnessed the slaughter."

"I warned them not to resist, but they would not listen. Instead they all cried '*Viva l'España!*' before they were mowed down like the wheat at harvest time. Now the French will have this on their souls."

"We shall keep him here. Perhaps he will remember eventually. Perhaps someone will come looking for him."

"Yes," said the priest, holding up the pages of drawings. "He has a God-blessed talent."

That evening the nun included the boy in her prayers. He called himself Manolo, but when he did it was as if someone else was speaking. She thought of what he had done with the stub of crayon. It was unforgettable and, despite the problem she had not mentioned to the priest, almost holy. The next morning after breakfast she gave him a new crayon. Over and over again she watched him draw:

A sword with curving blade sheathed in a scabbard and rectangular hilt burnished with wear.

A lantern box glowing with the flames of hidden candles.

A man's foot and leg encased in boot and gaiter, bent at the knee beneath insufferable weight.

The tonsured head of a mendicant lowered in agony or prayer.

Fingers and thumb of a hand spread wide—reaching, grasping, measuring, perhaps all three.

A cathedral spire like an extra finger.

A white v-necked shirt with silver cross balanced between borders of a finely-stitched hem.

A patch of earth flowing with rivulets, streams, oceans of blood.

Chimney pots on a distant rooftop like witnesses smoking to pass the time.

A fringed red sash waiting for a waist.

The whites of eyes downcast, uplifted.

A fixed bayonet and flare of powder flash.

Shadows everywhere.

He did all this with a single crayon, but she saw the colours anyway as if the black stick held a spectrum of them all.

“He is obsessed,” the priest said.

“There is something else.”

“Yes, sister?”

“He draws with his left hand.”

The priest crossed himself. “I will ask the Bishop for his advice.”

When he returned a few days later he gave instructions with an authority she could not question.

“You must tie the offending hand behind his back. The bishop feels if God still wants him to make pictures, he will do so properly.”

She did as she was told, but at first only when the boy sat at the table with the blank white page in front of him. He did not lift the crayon and would not hold it when she tried to place it between his fingers. After days of such refusal she tied him as instructed through all his waking hours in hopes that the right hand he used to eat and drink, and now awkwardly do his chores, like sweeping out the chapel or piling small pieces of firewood, would take over completely. Once she saw him lying with closed eyes on his straw mattress, his *siniestro* limb sketching the air above him, sword and sash and shadows, and all the other scraps from his unspoken past limned there in invisible grace. One morning she refused to tie him.

Old Andrès found the bodies of Juan and the two herders at the base of the rock along with many others left there for relatives or hungry dogs to claim. The night before he had tried to turn the flock, but the sheep were too quick in their panic and by the time he started his run many had already disappeared into the innumerable streets and alleys branching off from the

hub of the square. He saw other running figures fall down under the roar of muskets and ducked into a doorway where he crouched, breathing heavily, beside a bleating lamb. The soldiers were coming closer, so he gave the noisy animal a kick that sent it out into the open, then pushed his shoulder against the door. It gave way and he half-fell into a narrow hallway that smelled of coffee. There he lay for several hours listening for footsteps and wondering what had happened to Manolo and the others. He could hear occasional musket fire and shouts in Spanish and French and, just before dawn, the sound of many horses galloping through the square accompanied by screams of fear.

When it was light he peeked out and saw hundreds of bodies scattered across the cobblestones, too many to have been killed by the shots in the night. Leaving his refuge he stepped over flattened torsos and broken skulls that the charging enemy hooves had crushed. He wept at the shattered remains of the *Madrilenos* and searched frantically for any sign of the boy and his father.

In the end it was a lamb that might have been the one he had abandoned to its fate that led him to the execution site. He followed it away from the carnage along a rising passageway, thinking perhaps it would lead him to the remnants of the flock and his lost companions. But when he emerged from the confines of the narrow corridor there was only further butchery. In the bright sunlight that reflected harshly off the rock wall he saw a pile of bodies and the earth stained red beneath them. The lamb had stopped and was licking the bloody face of a green-robed friar whose bald pate was covered with flies. Beside the friar Juan lay on his back in his white shirt, his open palms upturned to the sky.

“It is the remarkable quality of the gesture,” the painter said. “Is he surrendering in despair or about to throw one last defiant cry in their faces? We cannot finally tell, and it is the ambiguity that haunts us.”

“Or is he thinking about meeting his God?” the Bishop replied. “The friar beside him is clearly praying for the souls of them all.”

“With respect, Your Grace, I think this is a Spaniard focused entirely on his last moment and he has made a choice, desolate or brave, about how he will spend it.”

The cleric gazed sombrely at the famous artist who had been court painter to Charles IV and then to Napoleon’s brother, Joseph, after the invasion. Things had not gone so well for him when Ferdinand was on the throne, but he still had a great many patrons and his work hung in palaces and stately homes all over Spain. He was a faithful Catholic, no doubt, and

had produced a marvellous portrait of the martyrs Justine and Rufina, but there was also the infamous *La maja desnuda* who was, because of their rumoured affair, very likely the Duchess of Alba. That corrupt woman had died years before, some said of a fever, but the Bishop believed with many others she had been deservedly poisoned by the jealous wife of a lover.

“It is not just him. Everything is done superbly, his companions, the soldiers, the blood-soaked earth. You say this boy is no more than fourteen, but the line and perspective in the drawing belong to a mature eye, even to a visionary one. Look at the few inches and infinite distance between the soldiers’ guns and the bodies of their victims, and the extraordinary opposition between the concealed faces of the killers and ruthlessly exposed features of the dead and those about to die. It all circles around the man in white, though. You might say a statement of faith is implicit because his arms emphasize the church towers in the background, but really they have their own angle that is more encompassing of the rock immediately behind.”

“The rock of the Church, perhaps.”

The painter laughed. “I see I will not win this battle with you, Your Grace. But surely we can agree the boy has captured the horror of war on this earth whatever the possibilities of salvation beyond these desecrated bodies.”

The Bishop sighed. “It is true,” he said. “I can almost feel the bullets about to penetrate that man and his comrades.”

The painter nodded. “Yes, and it has all been done with a simple stick of crayon.” He tapped his finger on the piece of paper where it lay on the Bishop’s desk. “Charcoal can only do so much, however. Think of this work in colour! The light that would come into play. You say this is all he has drawn, is that right?”

“Yes, and what you see is the only *complete* drawing. He does the sword and the guns and outspread hands over and over but quite apart from one another. It’s as if he cannot connect them anymore.”

“May I keep it?”

“Certainly. But if you do a painting make sure redemption is not forgotten.”

“As always, Your Grace.”

Recalling the lewd look in the eye of the Duchess as she lay back on her couch, the Bishop wasn’t entirely assuaged by the painter’s reference to constancy.

Juan had been arrested by the troops as he tried to follow the main cluster of sheep up the Calle Gran Via. Under the harsh glare of their torches, he tried to explain how he had come to be in Madrid and that he was not the rebel they took him to be, but they would not listen. Pushing him roughly ahead of them with a group of men he could see had been savagely beaten, they headed away from the square. He looked around anxiously for Manolo. Andrès and the other herders could take care of themselves, but the boy was a novice to violence and, of course, did not know the city. He cursed himself for allowing his son to come on the return journey and looked back over his shoulder as they marched. He could be lying injured or even have been arrested by another troop of Frenchmen. Surely not! They had nothing to fear from boys! A soldier poked his ribs with his rifle barrel. "*Allez-vous-en!*" he cried angrily, and Juan needed no translation. Walking uphill now, he found himself beside a friar whose robe was stained with red spatter.

"What has happened here, Father? Why have so many been killed?"

The friar sighed heavily. "The people rose up against the French when they heard the Royal family was to be taken from the palace and sent to France. They had only pitchforks and machetes and many were shot down or trampled by the cavalry charge. Now the Bonapartes will give a lesson to those who survived."

Juan replied he knew nothing of this but was a simple shepherd from Burgos returning with the flock from Andalusia.

"No, my son. Today you are just a Spaniard," the friar told him. "And you may soon have to die as one."

"Why are you here? Surely they cannot be against the church."

"I was giving comfort to the dying in the square. And since my robes are not those of an archbishop..." The friar shrugged. "I too am just a Spaniard."

"I must find my son," Juan declared. "He was with the flock. The sheep smelled the blood. Even my nose smelled it. When they panicked I looked back for Manolo but he wasn't there."

The friar gave no response, which only emphasized the loss for Juan. "Do you think they will harm a boy, Father?"

"I believe they would. They shot women and children in the square, after all."

They came out of the narrow street into an open space where a large rock loomed under the sky like a giant, dormant creature whose coarse skin glowed dully in the flickering torchlight. Juan had only an instant to catch the anguished looks on the faces of several men standing against the rock-

face before they were mowed down by a murderous volley from a rigid line of grey-clad Frenchmen. "*Madre de Dios*," he exclaimed, crossing himself automatically.

"Have courage, my son," the friar said, as they were herded toward the rock, slipping on the blood-slicked earth around the fallen bodies of their countrymen.

As he watched the Frenchmen reload their muskets, Juan searched the crowd for Manolo. The boy couldn't be here waiting for execution. Surely he had escaped the square and was with Andrès on his way to Burgos. He comforted himself with this thought and was then overcome with sadness that he would not see his wife and son again, or the mountain slopes covered by the white flock in spring. His body would be thrown into a pit and no one would know how and where he had died. The friar was beside him, his head bent and hands clasped in prayer. Behind him another man was so close he could feel his hot breath on the back of his neck. The prayer made him think of God and the promises of Heaven he had heard since he was a boy. He could not take such possibility in, and the man's breath kept him rooted to the hopelessness of the here and now. Standing dazed and passive as the soldiers raised their weapons, his arms helpless at his sides, he stared into the wavering shadows and saw a small figure take a step toward him. As he heard a Frenchman bark an order, Juan threw his arms in the air, spreading them wide to halt his son's advance. "Manolo!" he cried as the bullets tore the love from his face.