

Three Cathedrals in Spain

KATHRYN R. ASHWORTH

Toledo

Come, sir, won't you walk with me among
The columns growing upward into vaults
That hide the night until the day has gone?

Watch with me the black flames who gather
To await the march; they speak among themselves
With ringed eyes but have nothing to say to me.

We approach the sacristy. (May I wear
My shoes? The stone's so cold.) Open wide
The heavy gates of the room where Peter weeps.

Now, my dear Greek, answer me this: For whom
Did you weep that you could paint how it would be
To sleep, to say, 'I know not the man'?

No, no answer now. Quickly, then,
The outer doors before three weights descend
Upon us: columns, vaults, and hidden night.

KATHRYN R. ASHWORTH, *a well known poet, has published previously in* *BYU Studies and the Ensign*.



Barcelona

Round and pointed spaces
Hold the piped tunes
That follow one another
Then fold back upon themselves.

Outside, the sea rains upon the streets,
Which return the water to the sea.

At home, the tops of the mountains
Will have become red again
While these contrapuntal lines
Rub like cats against
The round and pointed spaces.

León

Strong ribs cross the vault
to meet behind the pillar
in the center place.

Two arches
which form lower borders of the vault
issue from the pillar
like equal stalks of water curving from twin pipes,
or wings poised above the body for straight flight.

If I could sit here long enough
to silence all the inner voices,
holding this scene in precise,
pillar-centered perspective,
do you suppose chorales of truth and wisdom
would issue with the water and the wings
to flood and fly over me?

As it is, small syllables and brief tones
appear like white wings
flashing through darker winds.