

Quemar Press

LO SOMPNI

The Dream

**Bernat
Metge**



Translated by

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Preview:

Beginning of *Lo Sompni - The Dream* - by Bernat Metge

(Early Catalan text beneath Quemar's English translation. We stress that it is not necessary to be able to read the Catalan, as it is translated above)



A little time had passed since I was imprisoned, not for any demerits that my pursuers and enviers knew against me - something afterwards shown clearly to their shame - but because of their iniquity alone, that they felt towards me, or perhaps because of some secret judgment by God! One Friday, close to midnight, studying in the chamber to which I had become accustomed, the one which was testimony to my deliberations, a great, strong wish to sleep came to me. Standing up, I walked this room a little while, but I was surprised by so much tiredness, which convinced me to lie on the bed, and suddenly, without undressing, I fell asleep, not at all in an habitual way, but in the way sick or hungry people often sleep.

Being in this state, it seemed to me that a man of medium stature appeared to me, with a reverent face, clothes of downy crimson velvet sown with golden double crowns, with a deep red hat on his head. And two men with great stature accompanied him. One of them was young, intensely beautiful, and was holding an orb between his hands. The other was very old with a long beard, eyeless, and he held a great staff in his hand. And there were many falcons, goshawks and dogs, of different kinds, surrounding everything described above, and crying out, howling fearsomely.

POCH temps ha passat que stant en la preso, no per demerits que mos perseguidors e envejosos sabessen contra mi, segons que despuys clarament a lur vergonya ses demostrat; mas per sola iniquitat quem havien, o per veuntura per algun secret juy de Deu; un divendres, entorn mitja nit, studiant en la cambra hon yo havia acostumat estar, la qual es testimoni de les mies cogitacions, me vench fort gran desig de dormir, e levantme en peus passegi un poch per la dita cambra. Mas soptat de molta son, convenchme gitar sobrel lit, e soptosament, sens despullar, adormim, no pas en la forma acostumada, mas en aquella que malalts o famejants solen dormir.



Estant axi, a mi aparech, a mon vijares, un hom de mitja estatura, ab reverent cara, vestit de vellut pellos carmesi, sembrat de corones dobles daur, ab un barret vermell en lo cap. E acompanyavenlo dos homens de gran estatura; la hu dels quals era jove fort bell, e tenia una rota entre les mans. Laltre era molt vell, ab longa barba e sens ulls, lo qual tenia un gran basto en la ma.

E entorn los dessus dits havia molts falcons, astors e cans de diversa natura qui cridaven e udolaven fort letjament.

And when I had looked with more attention - especially at the man I spoke about above, with the medium stature - it seemed to me I saw the King John of Aragon, of glorious remembrance, who passed through this life a short time ago and who I had served for a long time. And, doubting who it was, I was in terrible fear. So then he said to me:

- Let all fear leave you, for I am who you think I am.

As soon as I heard him speak, I knew him. Trembling, I said:

- Oh, Sir, how can you be here - did you not die the other day?

- I did not die - he said. I returned my spirit to God, who had given it to me, and left my body to its mother.

- The spirit? How? - I said - I cannot believe that the spirit could be anything, anything that can have take a different path to that of the body.

- Then, what do you understand me to be? - he said. Do you not know that, the other day, I moved from the corporal life in which I was?

- I heard that said, I replied. But I do not believe it now, for if you were dead, you could not be here. And I see that you are living. But people tell what they want, for they are always happy about what is new, and especially about



a new lordship - or as some trick, they have made it famous that you are dead.

- That news is true. I have paid the debt to nature, and it is my spirit who speaks with you.

-You, Sir, can tell me what you please - but, speaking with reverence, I will not believe that you can be dead; for dead men cannot talk.

- True, he said, the dead cannot talk; but the spirit does not die. So speaking is not impossible for it.

- It does not appear to me, I said, that the spirit could be anything after death, for I have seen animals and birds and men die on many occasions and I did not see that a spirit or anything else could exit a body. Through that, I could recognise that the body and spirit were two separate, distinct things. But I have believed always that this thing people call spirit or soul may be but natural warmth or blood inside a body that ceases because of some discrepancy in its four humors, the way fire does, through the wind that casts it from its place. Or - when the subject is corrupted - where it extinguishes, and from that moment forward people do not see it.



E quant hagui be remirat specialment lo dessus dit hom de mitja estatura, a mi fo vijares que vaes lo rey en Johan de Arago, de gloriosa memoria, que poch temps havia que era passat de aquesta vida; al qual yo longament havia servit. E duptant qui era, espahordim terriblement.

La donchs ell me dix:

«Lunya tota pahor de tu, car yo son aquell quiet penses.»

Quant yo l hoy parlar, coneguil tantost; puys tremolant digui:

«O Senyor, com sou vos aci? e no moris l altre dia?»

—No mori, dix ell, mas lexi la carn a la sua mare, e reti l esperit a Deu quil me havia donat.

—Com, l esperit! digui yo, no puch creure quel esperit sia res, ne puixa tenir altre cami sino aquell que la carn te.

—E donchs que entens, dix ell, que sia yo? No sabs que laltre dia passi de la vida corporal en que era?

—Hoyt ho he dir, respongui yo. Mas ara no ho crech, car si fosseu mort, no foreu aci. E enten que sots viu; mas la gent ho diu per tal com ho volria, car tostemps se alegra de novitats, e especialment de novella senyoria, o per alguna barateria que vol fer, ha mes en fama que sots mort.

—La fama, dix ell, es vera, que yo he pagat lo deute a natura, e lo meu esperit es aquest que parla ab tu.

—Vos, Senyor, me podets dir queus plaura. Mas, parlant ab vostra reverencia, yo no creure que siau mort; car homens morts no parlen.

—Ver es, dix ell, quels morts no parlen; mas l esperit no mor. E per conseguint no li es impossible parlar.

—No m par, digui yo, quel esperit sia res apres la mort, car moltes vegades he vist morir homens e besties e ocells, e no veyia que esperit ne altra cosa los isques del cors, per la qual yo pogues conexas que carn e esperit fossen dues coses distinctes e separades. Mas tostemps he cregut que ço que hom diu esperit o anima no fos als sino la sanch o la calor natural que es en lo cors, que per la discrepancia de les sues quatre humors mor, axi com fa lo foch per lo vent quil gita de son loch, o quant es corromput lo subject en que es qui sapaga; e daqui avant nol veu hom.

To be continued

