Nicolás Guillén
Riddles

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Nicolás Cristóbal Guillén Batista (1902-1989).
The poem belongs to *West Indies, Ltd.* (1934).

Riddles

The teeth, filled with the morning,
and the hair, filled with the night.
Who is it? It's him, or it's not him?
— The black man.

Though she being woman and not beautiful,
you'll do what she orders you.
Who is it? It's him, or it's not him?
— The hunger.

Slave of the slaves,
and towards the masters, tyrant.
Who is it? It's him, or it's not him?
— The cane.

Noise of a hand
that never ignores the other.
Who is it? It's him, or it's not him?
— The almsgiving.

A man who is crying
going on with the laugh he learned.
Who is it? It's him, or it's not him?
— Me.

Adivinanzas

En los dientes, la mañana,
y la noche en el pellejo.
¿Quién será, quién no será?
—El negro.

Con ser hembra y no ser bella,
harás lo que ella te mande.
¿Quién será, quién no será?
—El hambre.

Esclava de los esclavos,
y con los dueños, tirana.
¿Quién será, quién no será?
—La caña.

Escándalo de una mano
que nunca ignora a la otra.
¿Quién será, quién no será?
—La limosna.

Un hombre que está llorando
con la risa que aprendió.
¿Quién será, quién no será?
—Yo.