

SECOND PRIZE WINNER

Sancho

Don Sancho was a Spanish cat, a mighty *caballero*,
Who loved to ride as well as sing, or dance a light *bolero*.

His boots he wore right to the knee, they were of leather patent;
His blazing eyes and whiskers long well suited this combatant.

In saddle and in armour bright aboard his sable steed
He'd charge at any foe afield with thunder and with speed.

The ground would shake, the turf would quake with Sancho bearing down
On any who'd attack the land or royal realm or crown.

Through horsemen or through footmen or through arrows from their bows,
His lance atilt, his mace on high, he'd launch against his foes

A howling and a roaring raid like an equine juggernaut;
Don Sancho'd hurtle down on all, and all would soon be caught.

And every time a force pressed on to do their will malign,
Don Sancho with his martial mind discovered their design.

And thus he kept the kingdom safe, its borders well defended;
The finest time for old Castile, an era truly splendid.

And so it was, long, long ago, on a wide Castilian plain
Don Sancho led his horsemen out through mud and pouring rain.

It was to be the final call for this stout champion regal:
For, battle won, he left the field and soared aloft—an eagle.

And still today in the narrow streets of the old towns of *Castilla*,
If you listen close you can hear the song on the lips of *niño* and *niña*;

At times in the morn, at times at night, echoing through *los valles*,
“¡Viva el Gato, viva gran Sancho!” goes ringing along *los calles*.

G.A. Parr

Copyright belongs to the poet
as published in *Whispers on the Wind*
by The Poetry Institute of Canada 2009