

Written in 1989 and revised in 1991, *Aunque es de noche* ('Although it is night') is inspired by the writings of the sixteenth-century Spanish mystics St John of the Cross (1542-1591) and St Teresa of Avila (1515-1582). The title is taken from the refrain of St John's *Cantar del alma que se huelga de conocer a Dios por fe* (Song of the soul that rejoices in knowing God by faith), a classic expression of the Christian apophatic tradition, the *via negativa*, in which the poet describes the soul's search for *la fonte que mane y corre* ('the wellspring that flows and runs'). The titles of the first and third movements, *De noche iremos* ('we shall go by night') and *Sólo la sed nos alumbra* ('thirst is our only light') respectively, are taken from a poem by Luis Rosales (1910-1992) inspired by John of the Cross, with which I was familiar through its use in the liturgy of the Taizé ecumenical community in Burgundy in the form of a haunting setting by Jacques Berthier (1923-1994). The anguished second movement refers to lines of Teresa of Avila: *Ya no durmáis, no durmáis, pues que no hay paz en la tierra* ('do not sleep, for there is no peace on earth'). In its overall shape and trajectory, *Aunque es de noche* attempts to evoke a passage from spiritual thirst and darkness, through worldly turmoil, to the living water of the Spirit and the joyous radiance of Divine Light.