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*For Richard Waswo*



*Complete Poems*

## I

Fresca rosa novella,  
 piacente primavera,  
 per prata e per rivera  
 gaiamente cantando,  
 vostro fin presio mando – a la verdura.

Lo vostro presio fino  
 in gio' si rinovelli  
 da grandi e da zitelli  
 per ciascuno camino;  
     e cantin[n]e gli auselli  
 ciascuno in suo latino  
 da sera e da matino  
 su li verdi arbuscelli.

10

Tutto lo mondo canti,  
 po' che lo tempo vène,  
 sì come si conviene,  
 vostr'altezza presiata:  
 ché siete angelicata – criatura.

Angelica sembranza  
 in voi, donna, riposa:  
 Dio, quanto avventurosa  
 fue la mia disianza!

20

Vostra cera gioiosa,  
 poi che passa e avanza  
 natura e costumanza,  
 ben è mirabil cosa.

Fra lor le donne dea  
 vi chiaman, come sète;  
 tanto adorna parete  
 ch'eo non saccio contare;  
 e chi poria pensare – oltra natura?

30

## I

Fresh-blossoming new rose,  
 Pleasant delightful spring,  
 Gaily I rise and sing,  
 Giving praise to your worth  
 Throughout the green earth in meadow and pasture.

In joy let your fine worth  
 Be praised anew by all,  
 Proclaimed by great and small,  
 Along each country path;  
 And may the sweet birds now, 10  
 Each in his proper tongue,  
 Morning and evening sing  
 Your lauds upon the bough.

Let the whole world sing out  
 Your high-exalted state;  
 The season now dictates  
 This as the fitting time  
 To hail you as sublime angelic creature.

Angelic form, I say,  
 Lady, resides in you: 20  
 God, how the luck was true  
 That turned my love your way!

Your blithe and joyful air  
 Surpasses and transcends  
 Custom and nature's bounds,  
 Miraculously fair.

Among the ladies called  
 A goddess, as you are,  
 So perfect you appear  
 That all my words fall short; 30  
 And who can make his thought go beyond nature?



Oltra natura umana  
vostra fina piasenza  
fece Dio, per essenza  
che voi foste sovrana:  
per che vostra parvenza  
ver' me non sia luntana;  
or non mi sia villana  
la dolce provedenza!

E se vi pare oltraggio  
ch'ad amarvi sia dato,  
non sia da voi blasmato:  
ché solo Amor mi sforza,  
contra cui non val forza – né misura.

40

Beyond our human nature  
God made your lovely presence  
To prove your very essence  
That of a sovereign creature.

Let not your countenance  
Ever be far from me;  
Show no discourtesy,  
O my sweet providence!

And if you find excess  
In that I love you so,  
Still blame me not; for know  
That Love compels my course,  
Against whom neither force avails nor measure.

40

## II

Avete 'n vo' li fior' e la verdura  
 e ciò che luce ed è bello a vedere;  
 risplende più che sol vostra figura:  
 chi vo' non vede, ma' non pò valere.  
 In questo mondo non ha creatura  
 sì piena di bieltà né di piacere;  
 e chi d'amor si teme, lu' assicura  
 vostro bel vis' a tanto 'n sé volere.  
 Le donne che vi fanno compagnia  
 assa' mi piaccion per lo vostro amore;  
 ed i' le prego per lor cortesia  
 che qual più può più vi faccia onore  
 ed aggia cara vostra signoria,  
 perché di tutte siete la migliore.

10

## II

In you the flowers are and all things green,  
Whatever shines and is most fair to view;  
Resplendently your face outbraves the sun:  
No man has worth who does not look on you.  
Throughout the world no creature can be seen  
So full of beauty, of such comely hue;  
If anyone fears love, your glance alone  
Rouses his courage to desire anew.  
The ladies that are in your company,  
Thanks to the love I bear you, please me well;       10  
And thus I bid them, in their courtesy,  
That whosoever has more power and skill  
Should honour and most prize your sovereignty,  
Because you are the noblest of them all.

## III

Biltà di donna e di saccente core  
e cavalieri armati che sien genti;  
cantar d'augelli e ragionar d'amore;  
adorni legni 'n mar forte correnti;  
aria serena quand'apar l'albore  
e bianca neve scender senza venti;  
rivera d'acqua e prato d'ogni fiore;  
oro, argento, azzuro 'n ornamenti:  
ciò passa la beltate e la valenza  
de la mia donna e 'l su' gentil coraggio,  
sì che rasembra vile a chi ciò guarda;  
e tanto più d'ogn'altr' ha canoscenza  
quanto lo ciel de la terra è maggio.  
A simil di natura ben non tarda.

10

## III

A woman's beauty and a sage's heart,  
Knights clad in armour and nobility,  
Discourse of love, and birds that sing their part,  
And tall ships sailing swiftly on the sea;  
The calmness in the air when dawn gleams white,  
Snow falling softly on a windless day,  
Clear-flowing streams and flowering meadows bright,  
Silver and gold and lapis lazuli:  
Such things give way before my lady's grace,  
Her beauty, gentle heart and precious worth           10  
That make whatever else is seen look base;  
In knowledge she exceeds all other minds  
Even as heaven is greater than the earth.  
Good is not slow in seeking its own kind.

## IV

Chi è questa che vèn, ch'ogn'om la mira,  
 che fa tremar di chiaritate l'âre  
 e mena seco Amor, sì che parlare  
 null'omo pote, ma ciascun sospira?  
 O Deo, che sembra quando li occhi gira!  
 dical' Amor, ch'i' nol savria contare:  
 cotanto d'umiltà donna mi pare  
 ch'ogn'altra ver' di lei i' la chiam' ira.  
 Non si poria contar la sua piagenza,  
 ch'a le' s'inchin' ogni gentil vertute,  
 e la beltate per sua dea la mostra.  
 Non fu sì alta già la mente nostra  
 e non si pose 'n noi tanta salute  
 che propiamente n'aviàn canoscenza.

10

## IV

Who comes this way, that all men stand and gaze,  
Who gives a trembling brightness to the air,  
And leads Love with her so that no one there  
Can speak a word, but all must melt in sighs?  
O God, the radiance of those glancing eyes,  
Beyond what I can say, let Love declare:  
All other women seem but fretful care  
Before this lady's modest gracious ways.  
There is no tongue that can describe her grace,  
Before her all the noble virtues bend,                   10  
Beauty's divinity made manifest.  
But we were never granted such great bliss,  
Nor was our mind so raised as to pretend  
To knowledge of her as she truly is.



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