

From "The Poet OF Two Lands," Native Of Apulia" Quartetto Garganico by Joseph Tusiani

Joseph Tusiani (July 21, 2016)



On this page we offer four short poems by Joseph Tusiani, the "Poet of Two Lands" renowned worldwide for writing in four languages – English, Italian, Latin and Pugliese dialect. Recently honored as New York State Poet Laureate Emeritus by Governor Andrew Cuomo, "in recognition of contributions to the international literary community," Joseph is above all someone I am enormously proud to call a friend (L.A.)

SWALLOWS IN PADULA STREET

Swallows swallows everywhere,
and not only in the air
but now also on the ground
to be graciously around.
Look at some of them right here
in my street and near my home,
hopping happy, maybe looking
for some welcome easy crumb.
One of them comes closer closer
not for food as I surmise
but perhaps to bring to me
just its precious company.



But can such a thing be true
that a creature of the skies
is not only down on earth
but is eager now to be
just with me and only me?
Welcome, welcome, little bird,
and be not at all afraid.
It is I who strongly fear
that, if only I come near,
you will quickly fly away,
thinking wrongly—God forbid—
I don't want you here to stay.
Little bird, what did I do
that so fast away you flew?
I was just about to tell you
that your hopping I enjoy.
It reminds me of the time
when, like any healthy boy,
I would run and sing and play.
But a more important thing,
little bird, I would have said:
"Promise me to come right back,
to come often back to me
just to keep me company."

ULIVI DEL GARGANO

Non come noi, han secoli gli ulivi,
fissi contorti nella dura scorza
che ne cattura la forza. Privi
sono gli ulivi di mollezze lievi
e stagionali appariscenze rare,
nati a restar come restano gli evi.
Sono gli ulivi della terra mia,
sono la terra mia stessa, riarsa,
fiera e ferrigna e feconda e forte
nella calura maligna, e gentile
nella breve frescura mattinatale
che nell'ora serale è lieta sorte.

LI VUCELLE 'LU CAMPANARE

Me mpaccesse
pe qquessi
bbelle
vucelle
che vvòlene nturne
tuttu lu jurne.
Nu mare de vote
l'ej viste recòte
come na squatra
sope lu campanare
'la Cchjesia Matra.
Ma joje me pare
che vvonne dice
propia accuscì:
"Sinte, Peppi,
non t'avvelenne.
Li male venne,
venne e vvanne.



Lu jurne àdda menì—
ma crìdece, Peppi—
quanne pure tu,
vu' o no vvu',
cu ttutte lu bbone,
ha' lenzà ssu bastone
e, cchjù de prima,
àda fà rima
cu vvucelle
e ccose bbelle."

VIR MONTANUS

Montis imago tenet mentem, tenet omnia nota
Atque ignota meae vitae quae monte creatast.
Durae sunt cautes qui stant in pectore sensus
Ac durissima nunc et semper praefero verba.
Sum petreus sicut mons ille, tenax quoque vivo
Ut vivit ventus per viva cacumina spirans.
Sum qui sum, vir montanus de rupibus altus,
Cortex rugosus, lignum pluviis obsistens.
Atqui cur, mihi dicite, cur coram indice lucis
Matutinae sum mollis mitisque poeta?

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