

Rime

Dante Alighieri

Translated by

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Rime

I

Dante da Maiano a diversi rimatori

Provedi, saggio, ad esta visione, 1
e per mercé ne trai vera sentenza.
Dico: una donna di bella fazone,
di cu' el meo cor gradir molto s'agenzia,
mi fe' d'una ghirlanda donagione,
verde, fronzuta, con bella accoglienza;
appresso mi trovai per vestigione
camicia di suo dosso, a mia parvenza.
Allor di tanto, amico, mi francai
che dolcemente presila abbracciare: 10
non si contese, ma ridea la bella.
Così ridendo, molto la baciai:
del più non dico, ché mi fe' giurare.
E morta, ch'è mia madre, era con ella.

I

Dante da Maiano to other poets*

Wise man, regard this vision with some care, 1
And draw out its true meaning, if you please.
So here it is: a lady who is fair,
A lady whom my heart is keen to please,
Made me a present of a leafy crown
And placed it on my head invitingly;
And then I found myself wearing a gown
Made to her measure, so it seems to me.
And then, my friend, it was that, growing bold,
I took her gently in a fond embrace; 10
She did not struggle, no: she smiled at me.
I kissed her many times, and she just smiled:
I'll say no more – she made me swear to this.
My mother, who is dead, was standing by.

[J.G.N.]

II

Dante da Maiano a Dante Alighieri

Per pruova di saper com vale o quanto 1
lo mastro l'oro, adducelo a lo foco;
e, ciò facendo, chiara e sa se poco,
amico, di pecunia vale o tanto.
Ed eo, per levar prova del meo canto,
l'adduco a voi, cui paragone voco
di ciascun c'ave in canoscenza loco,
o che di pregio porti loda o vanto.
E chero a voi col meo canto più saggio
che mi deggiate il dol maggio d'Amore 10
qual è, per vostra scienza, nominare:
e ciò non movo per quistioneggiare
(ché già inver' voi so non avria valore),
ma per saver ciò ch'eo vaglio e varraggio.

II

Dante da Maiano to Dante Alighieri

To find its value by experiment, 1
The goldsmith puts his gold into the fire
And, by refining it, he can be sure
Whether it's worth a little or a mint.
And I, to put my singing to the test,
Put it to you, the recognized touchstone
Of all who make this serious skill their own,
Or are reputedly among the best.
And I ask this, in my best poetry:
Will you, with your extensive knowledge, deign 10
To say what are Lord Love's most deadly cares?
I have not set my heart on splitting hairs
(Not something that you set your heart upon),
But ask what my worth is, what it will be.

[J.G.N.]