

Catari, maggio, l'umore

A man speaks about himself,
his everyday hardships but also the joys of love.

Some of the loveliest and most famous Neapolitan songs,
that paint a deeply human picture of a world that has now been lost.
Or forgotten...

attr. Filippo Campanella (XIX sec)

Guglielmo Cottrau (1797-1847)

Gaetano Lama (1886-1950)

E. A. Mario (Giovanni Gaeta 1884-1961)

Mario Pasquale Costa (1858-1933)

Teodoro Cottrau (1827-1879)

attr. Guglielmo Cottrau (1797-1847)

Antonello Paliotti (1963)

Alfredo Barberis (1920-1957)

Giuseppe Cioffi (1901-1973)

Antonello Paliotti (1963)

Mario Costa (1858-1933)

Enrico Cannio (1874-1949)

Roberto Murolo (1912-2003)

Rodolfo Falvo (1873-1937)

Salvatore Di Giacomo (1860-1934)

Totò (Antonio De Curtis 1898-1967)

Roberto De Simone (1933)

Pino Daniele (1955-2015)

Te voglio bene assaje
verses by Raffaele Sacco (1787-1872)

È pazzo chi se 'nzora
verses by anonymous author

Reginella
verses by Libero Bovio (1883-1942)

Dduje paravise
verses by Ciro Parente (c. XX)

Catari
verses by Salvatore di Giacomo (1860-1934)

Santa Lucia
verses by Enrico Cossovich (1822-1911)

Fenesta vascia
verses by Giulio Genoino (1773-1856)

Variazioni sul basso di tarantella
for various instruments (1999)

Munasterio 'e Santa Chiara
verses by Michele Galdieri (1902-1965)

M'aggia curà
verses by Egidio (Gigi) Pisano (1889-1973)

Nonna-nonna
verses by anonymous author, oral tradition

Serenata napulitana
verses by Salvatore di Giacomo (1860-1934)

'O surdato 'nnamurato
verses by Aniello Califano (1870-1919)

Cara Lucia
text and music composed in 1952, inserted poem by
Eduardo De Filippo (1900-1984)

Guapparia
verses by Libero Bovio (1883-1942)

Lettera amirosa
from the collection Voce Luntane, Naples, 1888

Malafemmena
verses and music composed in 1951

Villanella a ballo
from: La Gatta Cenerentola (1976), arr. by A. Paliotti

Terra mia
text and music composed in 1977

Marco Beasley
Antonello Paliotti

voice
guitar and arrangements

Ti voglio bene assaje...

Nzomma so' io lo fauzo?
Appila, siè Maesta,
Ca ll'arte toja è cchesta
Lo dico mmeretà!
I' jastemma' vurria
Lo juorno ca t'amaje:
Io te voglio bbene assaje
E tu nun pienz" a mme!

Pecchè quanno me vide
Te ngrife comm'a gatto:
Nenne' che t'aggio fatto
Ca nun me puo' vedè?
Io t'aggio amato tanto,
Si t'amo tu lo ssaje,
Io te voglio bbene assaje
E tu nun pienz" a mme!

Quanno so' fatto cennere,
Tanno me chiagnaraje,
Sempe addimannaraje
"Nennillo mio, addo' è?!"
La fossa mia tu arape
e lla' me truvvaraje...
Io te voglio bbene assaje
E tu nun pienz" a mme!

So I am the liar here?
Leave it, oh mistress,
for this specialty is yours,
I can say that in all truth!
I would like to curse
the day I fell for you:
I love you so much,
but you don't think of me!

Why, when you see me,
do you become vicious like a cat?
Girl, what have I done to you,
that you can't bear the sight of me?
I have loved you dearly,
you know it, if I still do.
I love you so much,
but you don't think of me!

When I've become ashes,
only then will you cry for me,
you will ask all the time
'My love, where has he gone?'
You can open my grave,
and there you will find me...
I love you so much,
but you don't think of me!

È pazzo chi se 'nzora

Maromè qua nera sciorte
A 'nzorarme me cecaje,
Si me trovo int' a sti guaje
'nce ho colp' io, non c'è che fa;
Ato sfoco mo non aggio
Che scarammare a la malora:
Quant'è pazzo chi se 'nzora
E chi penza 'e se 'nzora'!

Me sceglieste una che tene
Li verrizze e li golie
De biscià, galanterie,
Guante, scuffie e farbalà;
S'è sposato n'artegiano
E vo fare la signora...
Quant'è pazzo chi se 'nzora
E chi penza 'e se 'nzora'!

Poor me! What a dark fate
blinded me into getting married!
If I now find myself in misery,
it's my own fault, it can't be helped.
I have no other way to vent myself
than to scream against misfortune:
Only a fool would get married,
or even think about marriage!

I chose myself one who has
crazy whims and appetites
for bijoux and pretty things,
gauntlets, fancy hats and frills;
she has married an artisan
but wants to live like a lady...
Only a fool would get married,
or even think about marriage!

Io ntramente ngotto, e tengo
Lo vorzillo sbacantato,
Lo premmone nfracetato,
E la meuza pe' sbotta'!
Donca voglio reprecare
Cientomila vote l'ora:
Quant'è pazzo chi se 'nzora
E chi penza 'e se 'nzora'!

And I wind myself up, while
my wallet's been emptied,
my complaints are ignored,
and I'm about to explode!
And so I want to repeat
ten thousand times an hour:
Only a fool would get married,
or even think about marriage!

Reginella

Te si fatta na vesta scollata,
Nu cappiello cu 'e nastre e cu 'e rrose,
Stive mmiezo a tre o quatto sciantose,
E parlave francese: è accussi?
Fuje ll'autriere ca t'aggio nconuntrata
Fuje ll'autriere a Tuledo, ngnorsi!

T'aggio voluto bbene a te
Tu m'hai voluto bbene a mme
Mo' nun nc'amammo cchiù
Ma 'e vvote tu
Distrattamente pienze a mme?

Regine', quanno stive cu mmico
Nun magnave ca pane e cerase,
Nuje campavamo 'e vase, che vvase
Tu cantave e chiagnive pe mme...
E 'o cardillo cantava co' ttico:
"Reginella, 'o vuo' bbene a stu rre?"

T'aggio voluto bbene a te
Tu m'hai voluto bbene a mme
Mo' nun nc'amammo cchiù
Ma 'e vvote tu
Distrattamente parla 'e mme?

Oi cardillo a chi aspiette stasera?
Nun 'o vide, aggio apiert'a gajola?
Reginella è volata, e tu vola,
Vola e canta, nun chiagnere ccà!
T"e a truva' na patrona sincera,
Ch"è cchiù degna 'e sentirte cantà!

T'aggio voluto bbene a te
Tu m'hai voluto bbene a mme
Mo' nun nc'amammo cchiù
Ma 'e vvote tu
Distrattamente chiamme a mme?

You were wearing a deep-cut dress,
and a little hat with ribbons and roses,
you sat between three or four *chanteuses*
and you spoke French, wasn't it so?
It was only yesterday that I met you,
only yesterday, in via Toledo, yes ma'am!

I loved you once,
and you loved me
and now our love is over.
But you, don't you ever think
distractedly of me?

Reginella, when you were with me,
you ate nothing but bread and cherries
and we lived on kisses – such kisses!
you sang and you cried for me...
and your goldfinch sang with you:
'Reginella, do you love your prince?'

I loved you once,
and you loved me,
and now our love is over.
But you, don't you ever talk
distractedly of me?

Goldfinch, who are you waiting for tonight?
I've opened your cage, don't you see?
Reginella has gone, fly away too,
fly and sing, don't stay here crying!
You should find a faithful mistress,
one more worthy of hearing your song!

I loved you once
and you loved me,
and now our love is over.
But you, don't you ever cry
distractedly for me?

Dduje Paravise

Dduje viecchie pruffessore 'e concertino
Nu juorno nun tenevano che ffa';
Pigliajeno 'a chitarra e 'o mandulino
E 'mparaviso jetteno a suna':
"Tuppétù, San Pie', arapite! Ve vulimmo divertì!"
"Site 'e Napule? E trasite, e facitece sentì!..."
"V'avimmo 'a fa sentì ddoje o tre canzone
Ca tutto 'o paraviso adda canta'
Suspiré, vase, musica e passione,
Rrobbà ca sulo a Napule se fa'!"

E 'a sera 'nparaviso se cantaje,
E tutte 'e Sante jetteno a sentì:
'O repertorio nun ferneva maje,
Carmela... O Sole mio... Maria Marì...
"Ah, San Pie', chesti ccanzone sulo Napole 'e po' ffà!
Arapite stu bbalcone, 'a sentite 'sta cetà?
E sotto 'o sole e 'a luna vuje sentite
Sti vvoce, ca so' vvoce 'e gioventù:
Si po' scennite llà' nun 'o credite?
Vuje 'mparaviso nun nce turnate cchiù!"

Ma doppo poco d" a malincunia
'E viecchie se sentettero 'e piglià;
Suffrevano nu poco 'e nustalgia
E a Napule vulettero turnà:
"Mo', San Pie', si permettite nuje v'avimmo 'a salutà."
"Site pazze!.. Che dicite!.. Nun vulite restà ccà?.."
" Nuje simmo 'e nu paese bello e caro,
Ca tutto tene e nun se fa lassà:
Pusilleco... Surriento... Marechiaro...
'O paraviso nuosto è chillu llà."

One day two old concertino players
were in want of something to do;
so they took their guitar and mandoline
and went up to Paradise to play. 'Knock-knock,
Saint Peter, open up! We want to entertain you!'
'Are you from Naples? Come in, let us hear you!'
'We have a couple of songs for you,
and the whole of Paradise can sing along,
of sighs, kisses, music and passion,
stuff that only in Naples we do!'

That evening in Paradise they sang,
and all the Saints came to listen.
There was no end to the repertoire:
Carmela, O sole mio, Maria Marì...
'Ah, Saint Peter, these songs only Naples can do!
Open your windows, do you hear this city of ours?
Under the sun and the moon, do you hear
those voices, the voices of youth?
You won't believe it, but if you'd go down
you would never go back to Paradise!'

But after a while, the old men felt
they were taken by melancholy,
they suffered a little from nostalgia
and wanted to return to Naples:
'And now, Saint Peter, we'd like to say goodbye.'
'You must be mad! Don't you want to stay here?'
'We come from a city beautiful and dear,
that has everything and cannot be left.'
Posilippo, Sorrento, Marechiaro...
Our Paradise is the one down there!'

Catari

Marzo: nu poco chiove
e n'ato ppoco stracqua
torna a chiòvere, schiove;
ride 'o sole cu ll'acqua.
Mo nu cielo celeste,
mo n'aria cupa e nera,
mo d' o vierno 'e 'tempeste,
mo n'aria 'e Primavera.

N'auciello freddiglusso
aspetta ch'esce o sole,
ncopp' o tterreno nfuso
suspirano 'e viole...
Catari, che vuò cchiù?
Ntienneme, core mio,
Marzo, tu 'o ssaje, si' tu,
e st'auciello song' io.

March: one moment it rains,
the next moment it's dry.
The rain starts again, then stops,
the sun laughs through the water.
Now the sky is bright and blue,
now it's dark and grey,
now the storms of winter blow,
now the breath of spring.

A shivering little bird
waits for the sun to come out,
and in the cold wet earth
the violets are sighing...
Catarina, what more do you want?
Listen to me, my love:
March, you know it, that's you,
and that little bird is me...

Santa Lucia

Comme se fricceca la luna chien!
Lo mare ride, ll'aria è serena...
Sul mare luccica l'astro d'argento,
Placida è l'onda, prospero il vento...
Venite all'agile barchetta mia!
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!
Vuje che facite 'mmiezo a la via?
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!

Stu viento frisco fa risciatare:
Chi vo' spassarese jenno pe mmare?
O dolce Napoli, o suol beato,
Dove sorridere volle il creato!
Tu sei l'impero dell'armonia!
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!
E' pronta e lesta la varca mia,
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!

How bright the full moon shines!
The sea laughs, the sky is clear...
A silver star sparkles in the sea,
the waves are peaceful, prosperous the wind...
Come, come to my agile little boat!
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!
What are you doing in the middle of the road?
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia!

This fresh wind brings relief:
who wants to enjoy themselves at sea?
O sweet Naples, o blessed soil,
where creation just wants to laugh!
You are the realm of harmony!
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!
My boat is swift and ready,
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!

Fenesta vascia

Fenesta vascia e patrona crudele,
Quanta suspire m'haje fatto jettare:
M'arde sto core comm'a na cannella,
Bella, quanno te sento annommenare!
Oje piglia la sperienza de la neve,
La neve è fresca e se fa maniare,
E tu co' mme si' tant'aspra e crudele,
Muorto me vide e nun me vuo' ajutare?

Vurria addiventare nu picciotto,
Co' na langella a gghi' vennenno acqua;
Pe me ne j' da chisti palazzuotte:
"Belle femmene meje, a chi vo' acqua?"
Se vota na nennella da lla' ncoppa,
"Chi è stu ninno ca vo' venne acqua?"
Ed io risponno cu pparole accorte:
"So' llagreme d'ammore e nun è acqua!"

Blind window of a cruel mistress,
how often you made me sigh for you!
My heart burns in my breast like a candle,
beauty, whenever I hear your name!
Just follow the example of winter snow:
snow is cold but permits to be touched.
But you, are you so harsh and cruel,
you see me die and won't come to my aid?

I want to become one of those boys
who go around with a pitcher, selling water.
And then I would go to your house:
'Pretty ladies of mine, who wants water?'A girl calls out from up above:
'Who is that boy who wants to sell water?'
And I shrewdly respond to her and say:
'This isn't water, they're tears of love!'

Munastero 'e Santa Chiara

Dimane? Ma vurria partì stasera!
Luntano no, nun nce resisto cchiù:
dice ca c' è rimasto sulo 'o mare,
ch' è 'o stesso 'e primma ... chillo mare blu!
Munastero 'e Santa Chiara,
tengo 'o core scuro scuro,
ma pecchè, pecchè ogne ssera,
penzo a Napule comm' era,
penzo a Napule comm' è?
Funtanelle 'e Capemonte...

Tomorrow? But I want to leave tonight!
Faraway or not, I can no longer resist:
they say that only the sea has remained
the same as before... oh, that blue sea!
The Monastery of Santa Chiara...
My heart is shrouded in darkness.
But why, oh why every night
I think of Naples as it was,
I think of Naples as it is?
The Fountain of Capodimonte...

Chistu core me se schianta,
 quando sento di d' 'a ggente
 ca s' è ffatto malamente
 stu paese ... ma pecchè?
 No, nun è overo!
 No, nun nce credo...
 E moro pe sta smania 'e turnà a Napule ...
 Ma ch' aggia fà?
 Me fa paura 'e nce turnà!

Paura, sì ... e si ffosse tutto overo?
 Si 'a ggente avisse ditto 'a verità?
 Tutt' 'a ricchezza 'e Napule era 'o core,
 dice ch' a perzo pure chillu llà!
 Munastero 'e Santa Chiara, ...
 nchiuse dint' a quattro mura,
 quante femmene sincere
 se perdevano n' ammore,
 se spusavano a Ggiesù!
 Funtanelle 'e Capemonte ...
 Chistu core me se schianta,
 quanno sento di d' 'a ggente
 ca s' è ffatto malamente
 stu paese ... ma pecchè?
 No, nun è overo!
 No, nun nce credo ...
 E moro pe sta smania 'e turnà a Napule ...
 Ma ch' aggia fà?
 Me fa paura 'e nce turnà!

My heart is torn apart
 when I hear people say
 that she's turned for the worse,
 this city... But why?
 No, it isn't true!
 No, I don't believe it!
 I die of this craving to return to Naples..
 But what should I do?
 I'm afraid to go back!

Afraid, yes, for what if it's true?
 What if those people were speaking the truth?
 The true wealth of Naples was her heart,
 and they say she has lost even that!
 Monastery of Santa Chiara...
 How many honest women
 enclosed within four walls
 lost their loves there
 and married Jesus!
 The Fountain of Capodimonte...
 My heart is torn apart
 when I hear people say
 that she's turned for the worse,
 this city... But why?
 No, it isn't true!
 No, I don't believe it!
 I die of this craving to return to Naples..
 But what should I do?
 I'm afraid to go back!

M'aggia cura'

Comme mme pesa 'sta capa, neh!
Comme mme pesa 'sta capa, neh!
Aiza! Che d'è? Aiza! Che d'è?
'A capa me pesa, 'o 'i ne'!

M'aggia cura', m'aggia cura'
 'miez'a 'sta capa na cosa
 pesante pesante me sento;
 mi fermo qua mi fermo là,
 e a squarciagola mi metto
 a contare da uno a trecento!
 E' pazzo 'o 'i! E' pazzo 'o 'i!
 'A gente dice: Fuite, fuite!
 Il viso del folle, l'ho fatto per te;
 il grugno del pazzo, lo tengo per te.
 Ho venduto trecento carrozze
 ho venduto trecento palazzi
 'A faccia do pazzo l'ho fatta pe' te!
Comme mme pesa 'sta capa, neh! (...)

Oh, how heavy my head is!
Oh, how heavy my head is!
Ah! What is it? Ah! What?
Hey, you! My head is so heavy!

I need to heal, I need to heal!
 In my head, in the middle,
 I feel this heavy heavy thing;
 I stop here, I stop there,
 and start to count, from one
 to threehundred, out loud!
 'He's crazy, that one, he's crazy'
 the people say: 'Quick, let's get out!'
 The fool's face, I wear it for you,
 the crazyman's scowl, I don it for you!
 I sold threehundred carriages,
 I sold threehundred palaces;
 I look like a madman, only for you!
Oh, how heavy my head is!

M'aggia cura', m'aggia cura'
 Oggi il dottore mi ha detto:
 'Mio caro, vuje state 'nguajato!
 Guardate qua, toccate qua'
 E, aret' a capa, na specie
 'e na palla 'e tennisse ha truvato...
 E' tosta 'a 'i'!... E' tosta 'a 'i'!...
 Ah, comm'e' tosta 'sta palla 'e tennisse!
 Il viso del folle l'ho fatto per te...
 'A capa co' a palla 'a tengo pe' te!
 Ho venduto tre quadri e uno schizzo,
 Quattro piume di struzzo e un arazzo:
 'A faccia do pazzo l'ho fatta per te!

Comme mme pesa 'sta capa, neh! (...)!

M'aggia cura', m'aggia cura'
 E che mm'he fatto tu, donna perversa,
 bugiarda e spugiura!
 Che debbo fa'? Che pozzo fa'?
 Se mi suicidio vedendomi morto
 mme metto paura!
 M'aggia spara'! Nun te spara'...
 'A gente dice che e' meglio a campa'...
 Il viso del folle l'ho fatto per te,
 Allora mo' campo, ch'è meglio pe' mme
 Mo mme magno na sarda e na pizza
 'na scamorza e na capa 'e merluzzo
 'O pranzo d' o pazzo... l'ho fatto per te!

Comme mme pesa 'sta capa, neh! (...)!

I need to heal, I need to heal!
 Today the doctor said to me:
 'Dear chap, you are in trouble!
 Let me look here, let me touch there..'
 And then in my head he found
 some kind of tennisball...
 What a big one, what a big one,
 oh, what a big one, this tennis ball!
 The fool's face, I wear it for you,
 because of you I have a ball in my head!
 I sold three paintings and a sketch,
 four ostrich feathers and a tapestry:
 I look like a madman, only for you!

Oh, how heavy my head is!

I need to heal, I need to heal!
 What have you done to me, you evil,
 treacherous, deceitful woman!
 What should I do? What can I do?
 If I kill myself, I'll get scared
 when I see myself dead!
 I'll shoot myself! Don't shoot yourself!
 People say it is better to live...
 The fool's face, I wear it for you,
 so I'll live for now, that's better for me.
 I'll have a sardine and a pizza now,
 some scamorza, and a cod's head,
 I'm eating crazy pie for you!

Oh, how heavy my head is!

Nonna-nonna

Nonna-nonna, nonna-nonnarella,
 Miette la pace addo' ce sta la guerra.
 La pace è fatta e la guerra è fernuta
 Stu piccerillo mio s'è addurmuto.
 S'è addurmuto a 'na connola d'oro,
 addo' se ripusale Santu Nicola.

Santu Nicola mio de la Duana
 Cu' l'acqua toia li malate sana,
 E san'a li malate puverielle,
 E suonno puorte dint' a lu mantiello.
 Santo Nicola mio, viato a ttene:
 Famme stu' figlio santo comm'a ttene.

Nonna-nonna, nonna-nonnarella,
 Sana sta nenna mia ch'è piccerella:
 è piccerella e s'ha da fare granne
 Vo' fare li servizi a la sua mamma.
 A la mamma e a tutte li pariente,
 Io de sta figlia ne vurria ciento.

Nonna-nonna, nonna-nonnarella,
 bring peace where there is war.
 Peace is made and the war is over,
 and this little one of mine is asleep.
 He's asleep in a cradle of gold,
 where once Saint Nicholas rested.

Saint Nicholas of the *Dogana*,
 with your water you heal the sick.
 You heal those poor and sick,
 and carry dreams under your mantle.
 Saint Nicholas, you are blessed:
 make my child a saint like you.

Nonna-nonna, nonna-nonnarella,
 heal this little sick child of mine:
 she's only small but will become big,
 she wants to do chores for her mother.
 For her mother and all of her family,
 if only I had a hundred girls like this...

Serenata Napulitana

Dimme, dimme a chi pienze assettata
sola sola addereto a sti llastre?
'Nfacci' o muro 'e rimpetto stampata
veco n'ombra e chest'ombra si' tu!
Fresca è 'a notte: 'na luna d'argento
saglie 'ncielo e cchiù ghianca addeventa:
e nu sciato, ogne tanto, d' 'o viento
mmiez' a st'aria se sente passà.
Ah, che notte, ah, che notte!
Ma pecché nun t'affacce?
Ma pecché, ma pecché me ne cacce,
Catarì, senza manco parlà?
Ma ce sta nu destino,
e io ce credo e ce spero.
Catarì! Nun è overo!
Tu cuntenta nun sì!
Catarì, tu cuntenta nun sì...

Catarì, Catarì, mm' e' lassato,
tutto 'nzieme st'ammore è fernuto:
tutto 'nzieme t' e' sciveto a n'ato,
mm' e' nchiantato e mm' e' ditto bonni!
E a chist'ato ca mo' tu vuo' bene
staie penzanno e, scetata, ll'aspiette;
ma chist'ato stasera nun vene
e maie cchiù, t' o dico io, venarrà!
No! Nun vene, nun vene.
L'aggio visto p' a strata
cammenà core a core cu' n'ata
e, rerreno, parlaveno 'e te.
Tu si' stata traduta!
Tu si' stata lassata!
Tu si' stata 'nchiantata!
Pure tu! Pure tu!
Catarì, tu cuntenta nun sì...

Tell me, tell me of whom you are thinking,
seated all alone behind the window?
Against the wall in front I see a shadow
outlined, and that shadow is you!
The night is fresh: a silver moon rises
in the sky, becoming ever more pale:
and every now and then I feel
a breath of wind pass through the air.
Oh, what a night, what a night!
But why don't you show yourself?
Why, oh why do you send me away,
Catarina, without even a word?
But there is something like fate,
and in this I hope and trust.
Catarina! It isn't true!
You're not happy!
Catarina, you're not happy...

Catarina, Catarina, you have left me,
all of a sudden this love of ours was over:
all of a sudden you chose another,
you abandoned me and told me goodbye!
And thinking of this other you now love so much,
you stay awake, and wait for him.
but this other will not come tonight,
never, I tell you, will he come again!
No, he won't come, he won't come.
I saw him on the street,
walking heart to heart with another girl,
and they were laughing and talking of you.
You've been betrayed!
You've been left!
You've been abandoned!
You as well! You as well!
Catarina, you are not happy...

'O surdato 'nnamurato

Staje luntana da stu core,
a te volo cu 'o penziero:
niente voglio e niente spero
ca tenerte sempe a fianco a me!
Si' sicura 'e chist'ammore
comm'i' so' sicuro 'e te...
Oje vita, oje vita mia...
oje core 'e chistu core...
si' stata 'o primmo ammore...
e 'o primmo e ll'ùrdemo sarraje pe' me!

You are faraway from my heart,
and so I fly to you in my thoughts:
I want and hope for nothing,
than to have you always by my side!
Be sure of my love for you,
like I am sure of you....
Oh, life, oh my life,
oh, heart of my heart
you were my first love
the first and last you'll be for me...

Quanta notte nun te veco,
nun te sento 'int'a sti bbracce,
nun te vaso chesta faccia,
nun t'astregno forte 'mbraccio a me?!

Ma, scetánnome 'a sti suonne,
mme faje chiagnere pe' te...

Oje vita, oje vita mia...
oje core 'e chistu core...
si' stata 'o primmo ammore...
e 'o primmo e ll'úrdemo sarraje pe' me!

Scrive sempe e sta' cumenta:
io nun penzo che a te sola...
Nu penziero mme cunzola,
ca tu pienze sulamente a me...
'A cchiù bella 'e tutt'e bbelle,
nun è maje cchiù bella 'e te!
Oje vita, oje vita mia...
oje core 'e chistu core...
si' stata 'o primmo ammore...
e 'o primmo e ll'úrdemo sarraje pe' me!

How many nights I don't get to see you,
don't get to hold you in my arms,
how many nights I can't kiss your face,
can't press you close against me!

But, waking up from these dreams,
you make me cry for you....

Oh, life, oh my life,
oh, heart of my heart
you were my first love
the first and last you'll be for me...

Write to me always, be happy,
I think of nothing but you...
Only one thought is my comfort,
that you think of nothing but me...
You are the most beautiful of all,
no one is more beautiful than you!

Oh, life, oh my life,
oh, heart of my heart
you were my first love
the first and last you'll be for me...

Cara Lucia

Pusilleco, vint'anne dint'o core,
Pe 'na viarella ca scenneva a mare,
Je suspiranno te parlaje d'ammore,
E tu tremmanno, me diciste "Sì"..."
Cara Lucia, nnammuratella mia,
Si' stata 'a primmavera 'e chesta gioventù;
Cara Lucia, che suonno 'e fantasia,
Nascette dint'o core vicino a tte, Lucia!

E po' 'na sera 'e vierno fredda e amara,
'A Napule partette 'nu vapore,
Addio speranze, addio suonno d'ammore,
E addio pe' sempe a chi nun torna cchiù...
Cara Lucia, nammuratella mia,
Si' stata 'a primmavera 'e chesta gioventù;
Cara Lucia, po' quanta nustalgia
Scennette dint'o core luntan'a te, Lucia!

*Cumme vanno sperdute
p'o munno
sti vvite neste...
Cumme ll'uocchie d'a ggente,
'e pparole sbagliate
stunate
e vacante, currenno pe' ll'aria,
pazzianno
e redenno,
se vanno mmiscanno
e mbruglianno...*

Posilippo... we were only twenty,
walking down a little path towards the sea,
I spoke of love to you, sighing,
and you, trembling, told me 'Yes'...
Dear Lucia, my little love,
you were the spring of my youth,
Dear Lucia, such fantasies and dreams
arose in my heart close to you, Lucia!

Then, on a cold and bitter winter night,
a steamboat departed from Naples...
Farewell hope, farewell dreams of love,
farewell to her who will not come back...
Dear Lucia, my little love,
you were the spring of my youth,
Dear Lucia, such nostalgia
fell upon my heart faraway from you, Lucia!

*Oh how they get lost
in the world
these lives of ours...
Like the eyes of the people,
like the wrong words,
dissonant
and empty, fly away,
they play around
and laugh,
get mixed up
and confused...*

*E allora sti vvite
sbandate
e sbattute
tu 'e vvide sperdute
p"o munno:
un"a ccà,
n'ata 'a llà...*

Doppo tant'anne nce simmo ncuntrate,
E nun nce simmo quasi canusciute:
Tu mo' si ll'ombra triste d'"o passato,
E j' mo' so' chillo ca nun spera cchiù...
Cara Lucia, nnammuratella mia,
Si' stata 'a primmavera 'e chesta gioventù;
Cara Lucia, mo' che malincunia
Me sento dint'"o core penzann" a tte, Lucia!

*And so, these lives,
without direction,
and battered,
you see them get lost
in the world.
One here,
the other there...*

Many years later we met again,
and we hardly recognised eachother.
You are now a sad shadow of the past
and I am one who hopes no more...
Dear Lucia, my little love,
you were the spring of my youth.
Dear Lucia, such melancholy
I feel in my heart when I think of you, Lucia!

Guapparia

Scetateve guaglione 'e mala vita
ca è ntussecosa assaje sta serenata:
io songo 'o nnammurato 'e Margarita,
ch' è 'a femmena cchiù bella d' 'a 'Nfrascata ...
L'aggio purtato 'o capo concertino
p' 'o sfizio 'e me fa sentere 'e cantà,
m' aggio bevuto nu bicchiere 'e vino
pecchè stanotte 'a voglio ntussecà ...
Scetateve guaglione 'e mala vita!

È accumparuta 'a luna all'antrasatte,
pe lle dà 'o sfizio 'e me vedé distrutto...
Pe chello ca sta femmena m' ha fatto
vurria c' 'a luna se vestesse a llutto!
Quanno se ne venette 'a parte mia,
ero 'o cchiù guappo 'e tutta 'a Sanità:
mo' ch'aggio perzo tutta 'a guapparia
cacciatammenne 'a dint' 'a Suggetà.
Scetateve guaglione 'e mala vita!

Sunate, giuvinò, vuttate 'e mmame,
nun v' abbellite ca sto bbuono 'e voce ...
Io me fid' 'e cantà fino a dimane
e metto 'ncroce chi m' ha miso 'ncroce ...
Pecchè nun va cchiù a tiempo 'o mandulino?
Pecchè 'a chitarra nun se fa sentì?
Ma comme! Chiagne tutto 'o concertino
addò ch' avess' a chiagnere sulo io!
Chiagneno sti guaglione 'e malavita!

Stir yourselves, boys of the underworld,
this will be a most poisonous serenade:
I am the lover of Margarita,
the most beautiful woman in Arenella...
I've brought her a choice little orchestra
for the pleasure of making myself heard,
and I've emptied a whole glass of wine,
for tonight I want to make her angry!
Stir yourselves, boys of the underworld!

All of a sudden, the moon has come out,
to give her the pleasure of seeing me destroyed...
For what that woman has done to me,
I'd want the moon to dress in mourning!
When Margarita joined my side,
I was all the rage here in the Sanità:
But now I've lost all my bravado
you can just kick me out of the gang!
Stir yourselves, boys of the underworld!

Play, my boys, give it your best,
don't back out, for I'm in good voice..
I feel I could sing until tomorrow:
I'll crucify her like she's crucified me...
Why isn't the mandoline in tune?
Why can't I hear the guitar?
What's this? The whole orchestra is in tears,
while the only one crying should be me!
They're all crying, these boys of the underworld!

Lettera amirosa

Ve voglio fa' na lettera all'ingrese,
Chiena de termene scivete e cianciuse.
E ll'aggia cumbinà tant'azzeccosa
Ca s'ha d'azzeccà mmano pe' nu mese.
Dinto nce voglio mettere tre ccose...
Nu suspiro... na lacrema... na rosa,
E attuorno attuorno all'ammilucca nchiusa
Ce voglio da' na sissantina 'e vase.
Tanto ch'avita di: "Che bella cosa!
Stu nnammurato mio qunto è priciso!"
Mentr'io mi firmo cu gnostia odirosa,
Il vosto schiavotielo: Andonio Riso.

I want to write you in English style,
a letter full of charming, delicate words,
and I will make it so affectionate,
that it won't leave your hand for a month.
Three things I want to put in there,
a sigh, a tear, and a rose...
and on the envelope, all around,
I will press at least sixty kisses,
so you will say: how beautiful!
This lover of mine, how accomplished he is!
While I sign my letter in perfumed ink:
'Your faithful slave, Antonio Riso.'

Malafemmena

Si avisse fatt'a n'ato chello ch''e fatto a mme,
St'ommo t'avesse acciso, e vuò sapè pecchè?
Pecchè ncopp''a sta terra femmene comm'a tte,
Nun nce hann''a sta pe' n'hommo onesto comm'a mme!
Femmene, tu sì 'na malafemmena
Chist'uocchie hai fatto chiagnere
Lacreme e 'nfamità...
Femmene, si' tu peggio 'e na vipera,
M'haje ntussecato l'anema,
Nun pozzo cchiù parlà...
Femmene, si ddoce comm''o zucaro,
Però sta faccia d'angelo
Te serve pe''ngannà...
Femmene, tu sì 'a cchiù bbella femmena,
Te voglio bbene e t'odio,
Nun te pozzo scurdà...

Te voglio ancora bbene, ma tu nun ssaje pecchè;
Perchè l'unico amore si stata tu pe' mme!
E tu pe nu capriccio tutt'aje distrutto, oj nè...
Ma Ddio nun t''o pperdona chello ch'haje fatt''a mme...
Femmene, tu sì 'na malafemmena
Chist'uocchie hai fatto chiagnere
Lacreme e 'nfamità...
Femmene, si' tu peggio 'e na vipera,
M'haje ntussecato l'anema,
Nun pozzo cchiù parlà...
Femmene, si ddoce comm''o zucaro,
Però sta faccia d'angelo
Te serve pe''ngannà...
Femmene, tu sì 'a cchiù bbella femmena,
Te voglio bbene e t'odio,
Nun te pozzo scurdà...

If you did to another what you did to me,
that man would have killed you, and you know why?
Because in this world evil women like you
have no business to be with honest men like me!
Woman, you are an evil woman,
you made these eyes cry
tears of humiliation...
Woman, you are worse than a viper,
you've poisoned my soul,
I can't speak anymore...
Woman, you are as sweet as sugar,
but this face of an angel,
it serves you only for deceit.
Woman, you are the most beautiful woman,
I love you and I hate you,
but I can't forget about you...

I still love you, but you don't know why;
because you were the only love for me!
And for a whim you've destroyed everything...
But God won't forgive you for what you've done to me...
Woman, you are an evil woman...
you made these eyes cry
tears of humiliation...
Woman, you are worse than a viper,
you've poisoned my soul,
I can't speak anymore...
Woman, you are as sweet as sugar,
but this face of an angel,
it serves you only for deceit.
Woman, you are the most beautiful woman,
I love you and I hate you,
but I can't forget about you...

Terra Mia

Comm'è triste e comm'è amaro
sta assettato a guarda tutt'è cose,
tutt'e parole ca niente ponno fà
si m'accido aggio jettato chellu poco 'e libertà
ca sta' terra e sta' gente 'nu juorno m'adda dà...

Terra mia, terra mia, comm'è bello a la penzà,
terra mia, terra mia, comm'è bello a la guardà!

Nun è overo nun è sempe 'o stesso
tutt'e journe po' cagnà
ogge è diritto, dimane è stuorto
e chesta vita se ne va.
'E vecchie vanno dinto a chiesia cu' a curona pe' prià
e 'a paura 'e sta morte ca nun ce vo' lassà.
Terra mia, terra mia, tu sì chiena 'e libertà,
terra mia, terra mia, 'j mó a sento 'a libertà!

How sad it is, and how bitter
to sit here and watch all the things
and all the words that won't do any good.
If I kill myself I'll throw away the little bit of freedom
that this land and this people one day will have to give me.

My land, my land, how beautiful to think of her,
my land, my land, how beautiful to look at her!

It isn't true, things aren't always the same,
they can turn around every day.
Today is straight, tomorrow is crooked,
and this life just passes by.
The old women go to church to pray, with rosaries
and with the fear of death, that never leaves us.
My land, my land, you are full of freedom,
my land, my land, I now feel her, freedom!

