

A sonnet by Gaspara Stampa

(numbered 239 in the first edition of the *Rime*: 259 in subsequent editions)

Since you've drunk dry the fount of Helicon,
illustrious lord, and drained the Pierian spring
so happily that no one else can sing
because the water in those wells has gone,
how can I hope, desire spurring me on
so ardently it's all-encompassing,
even to sketch an outline picturing
the high esteem you earn from everyone?

Because my verse, in celebrating you,
is not alone in ending up too slight
(a thousand Orpheuses would fail too)
you must sing of yourself, or bring to light
for all the world what I had hoped to do
but was too lazy for, that wondrous flight.

Se quanta acqua ha Castalia ed Elicona
beveste tutta e sí felicemente,
chiaro signor, che poi le vene spente
restasser secche ad ogn'altra persona,
 come poss'io, quando desio mi sprona
a dir di voi sí caldo e sí sovente,
sperar di pur adombrar solamente
quanto di voi si stima e si ragiona?
 Anzi, perché non pur i versi miei
non posson dir quant'io v'onoro e còlo,
ma mille Lini meco e mille Orfei,
 o voi dite di voi, o di me solo
sappia il mondo ch'io vòlsi e non potei
alzarmi pigra a sí gradito volo.