



## 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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