

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Le carte in ch'io primier scrissi (Giambattista Marino)

Le carte, in ch'io primier scrissi e mostrai
L'arte di ben baciari, Lilla mi chiedi.
Ma di tanti, che loro io già ne diedi,
Tu crudel pur un solo a me non dai.

Deh, perché quei che'n lor baci stampai,
Stampar nel volto tuo non mi concedi?
E quel piacer che tu con gli occhi vedi,
Con la bocca sentire a me non fai?

Saprai qual sia maggior de duo dilette
S'io di questi o di quei sia miglior fabro,
E quai più dolci sien, gustati o letti.

Io volentier con porpora e cinabro
Cangio un vil don, se tu cangiar prometti
Baci per carmi e con un libro un labro.

You ask me, Lilla, for the pages on which I once wrote about the art of kissing well,
But of all those I have already given, you, cruel one, have not given me even one.
Ah, why of those I have already printed you do not allow me to print one on you face.
And that pleasure which you see with the eyes you do not make me feel with the mouth.

You shall know which is the greater of two delights and if I am the better maker of this one or the other, and which are sweeter: kisses tasted or read about. I will willingly change a base gift for purple and vermilion if you promise to exchange kisses for songs and a lip for a book.

NOTE: In Marino's text the third word of the final line is "versi" (verses). Perhaps appropriately Marini has changed it to "carmi" (songs). "Sien" in line 11 is in both Marino's text and Marini's setting and is likely an old spelling for "sian[o]".

Chi quella bella bocca (author unknown)

Chi quella bella bocca
Rimira e non languisse
Degno è ben che pietoso
Altri sospiri d'un Anima
Sì freda il duro sasso.
O bei labra vermigli,
Radici umide e dolci
Di teneri corali,
Radici sopra cui
Sul meriggio d'Amor vedro sovente
Fiorir i baci e germogliar il riso.
Quel amoroso riso
Che, fiorito e crescente
Tra suoi beati e spiritosi fiori,
Fa tremolar di due begli occhi il sole.

The person who sees that lovely mouth and does not languish is piteous and [worthy of ?] sighs of a soul as cold as hard stone. Oh lovely, ruby lips: sweet, moist roots of tender coral, roots upon which I often see kisses flourish and a smile blossom at the midday of love. That amorous smile which, blossoming and growing among its blessed flowers, causes the sun to tremble on account of two lovely eyes.

NOTE: The text in Marini's setting may be incomplete: the line "altri sospiri d'un Anima" does not scan like the others. Perhaps some words are missing.