

Amore e 'l cor gentil sono una cosa,  
sì come il saggio in suo dittare pone,<sup>1</sup>  
e così esser l'un sanza l'altro osa  
com'alma razional sanza ragione.

5 Falli natura quand'è amorosa,  
Amor per sire e 'l cor per sua magione,

dentro la qual dormendo si riposa  
tal volta poca e tal lunga stagione.

10 Bietate appare in saggia donna pui,  
che piace a li occhi sì, che dentro al core  
nasce un disio de la cosa piacente;

e tanto dura talora in costui,  
che fa svegliar lo spirito d'Amore.  
E simil face in donna omo valente.

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LA VITA NUOVA: *Canzone 1*

Donne ch' avete intelletto d' amore,  
I' vo' con voi de la mia donna dire,  
Non perch' io creda sua laude finire,  
Ma ragionar per isfogar la mente.  
Io dico che pensando il suo valore,  
Amor sì dolce mi si fa sentire,  
Che s' io allora non perdessi ardire,  
Farei parlando innamorar la gente.  
E io non vo' parlar sì altamente,  
Ch' io divenisse per temenza vile.  
Ma tratterò del suo stato gentile  
A rispetto di lei leggermente,  
Donne e donzelle amoroze, con vui,  
Che non è cosa da parlarne altrui.

<sup>1</sup> This lyric describes how the thought of a new lady replaces the thought of Beatrice, now dead and in heaven, as the ruling power in Dante's soul. There is an elaborate allegorical interpretation in *Convivio*, II: the new woman represents Philosophy; the third heaven, the realm of rhetoric; the rays, the works of the rhetoricians, especially Boethius' *De consolatione Philosophiae*

Dante

Love and the gentil heart are one thing,  
as the wise one sets forth in his poem,<sup>1</sup>  
and one can be without the other only  
as much as the rational soul without reason.

5 Nature creates them both when it is turned toward love—  
Love as the lord, the heart as his mansion

wherein he abides and sleeps  
sometimes a short while, sometimes long.

10 Then beauty comes forth in a lady who is wise,  
so pleasing to the eyes that in the heart  
a desire is born for that beautiful thing;

and lasts so long, sometimes, in the heart,  
it makes the spirit of Love awaken.  
In woman's heart a man of worth brings forth the same  
awakening.

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THE NEW LIFE: *Canzone 1*

Ladies that have intelligence in love,  
Of mine own lady I would speak with you;  
Not that I hope to count her praises through,  
But telling what I may, to ease my mind.  
And I declare that when I speak thereof  
Love sheds such perfect sweetness over me  
That if my courage failed not, certainly  
To him my listeners must be all resigned.  
Wherefore I will not speak in such large kind  
That mine own speech should foil me, which were base;  
But only will discourse of her high grace  
In these poor words, the best that I can find,  
With you alone, dear dames and damozels:  
'Twere ill to speak thereof with any else.

and Cicero's *De amicitia*, which moved Dante to love philosophy. The opening lines are addressed to the angelic intelligences that guide the heavens in their courses; the third heaven is that of Venus. On these indwelling spirits, see the note to line 43f of Guinizelli's *Al cor gentil* (no. 20). Lines 12-13 here refer to the influence of the planet Venus.