



Sweet Fire: Tullia d'Aragona's Poetry of Dialogue and Selected Prose

Tullia D'Aragona, Elizabeth Pallitto

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Tullia d'Aragona is one of the most renowned women writers from the Italian Renaissance. Given the title the "courtesan poet," Tullia was loved and desired by many. This collection includes fifty-five of Tullia's best poems and a selection of pieces written to her and about her.

Accompanying Tullia's poems is a series of risposte (responsive letters) written by well-known men of her day—including Girolamo Muzio, Benedetto Varchi and Lattanzio Bennucci—who offer poetic tributes to her honor, talent, and wit.

In these poetic dialogues, Tullia shows herself a match to her male contemporaries in verbal and intellectual dexterity. In a poem written to Piero Manelli, Tullia argues for a female poet's equal right to fame and literary immortality. In a tribute of gratitude to her muse, friend, and editor—aptly named Muzio—she claims that loving such a talented writer reflects well upon her: "the worth / was yours; but in loving you, the glory mine." Muzio, in turn, writes an introduction to Tullia's dialogue on love, praising the beauty of her mind and the brightness of her soul's "flame," refined by hardship and virtue.

The quality of craftsmanship, the originality of thought, and the fiercely proud ambition in these poems set Tullia d'Aragona in a category apart from other women poets of the era. Her wish to be immortalized in print, renowned in her own "eternal lines to time," will be fulfilled through this bilingual edition. Retaining the music of the Italian, these translations bring Tullia's work to life for an English audience.

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