

Milo De Angelis
on awarding the 2011 Ceppo Prize to Mariangela Gualtieri

It is with great lyrical force that Mariangela Gualtieri represents nature. All of nature. Not only its visible aspects, but its buried life as well, its underground movements, its secret.

Here we have an ancient poet, capable of following the thread that leads from the earliest myths of creation all the way through to the georgic voice of the classics; yet here we have a contemporary poet as well. In Gualtieri's work nature is scripted in the vibrant palpitations of language, enmeshed in the rectangle of the page, in this its restless and controversial space. Or, as the poet writes, in "the infinite algebra that descends/into the cipher, onto the line". Here nature is enmeshed with the living, with the joy and bliss of humans: an entire world of trees, leaves, water and animals that nourish us all with their teaching. But Gualtieri's vision of nature is also one that gets tangled up with the shadows, with the tongues of those who no longer speak, whom we continue to invoke: in her words, with "the ceaseless silence of the dead".

Removed from any stance resembling that of the historian or chronicler, Mariangela Gualtieri takes us into the very heart of nature. She reveals nature's archetypes, its supporting structures, its foundations. Her song returns unto us that which doesn't change, what remains stable under the kaleidoscope of forms; it returns to us the burning thorn that belies all appearances. She returns to us that which returns.

Bestia di gioia is a book replete with returns, spirals and rituals. It is a book that celebrates permanence: that which, in the throes of dissolution, echoes across time. Which demands of us the words whereby duration is made possible. In the belief that the world's very elements ask this of us, for their own deepest truth to come to completion, into song.

(tran. Anthony Molino)