

“The Four Seasons”: SONNET TEXTS

1. *La Primavera* (“Spring”)

| Mvt. | Sec. | Rhyme | Italian text | English translation |
|------|------|---|---|---|
| I | A | a | Ghunt' è la primavera e festosetti | Spring has come, and birds greet it |
| | B | b | La salutàn gl'augei con lieto canto; | Festively with a cheerful song; |
| | C | a | E i fonti allo spirar de' zeffiretti | And with the breath of gentle breezes |
| | | b | Con dolce mormorio scórrono intanto. | Springs trickle with a sweet murmur. |
| | | b | Vengon' coprendo l'aer di nero amanto, | Lightning and thunder, elected to announce it, |
| | | a | E lampi e tuoni ad annuntiarla eletti. | Come and cover the air with a black cloak. |
| E | a | Indi tacendo questi, gl'augelletti | Once they are quiet, the birds | |
| | b | Tornan' di nuovo al lor canoro incanto. | Return to their enchanting song. | |
| II | F | c | E quindi sul fiorito ameno prato | Then on the pleasant, flowered meadow |
| | | d | Al caro mormorio di fronde e piante, | A goatherd, with his faithful dog at his side, |
| | | c | Dorme 'l caprar col fido can' al lato. | Sleeps to the sweet murmur of fronds and plants. |
| III | G | d | Di pastoral zampogna al suon festante | To the festive sound of a rustic bagpipe |
| | | c | Danzan' ninfe e pastori nel tetto amato | Nymphs and shepherds dance under the beloved canopy |
| | | d | Di primavera all'apparir brillante, | At the brilliant appearance of spring. |

2. *L'Estate* (“Summer”)

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|-----|---|--|--|--|
| I | A | a | Sotto dura staggion' dal sole accesa | Under the harsh season ignited by the sun |
| | | b | Languè l'huom, languè 'l gregge, ed arde il pino; | Man and flock languish, and the pine burns; |
| | | a | Scioglie il cuoco la voce, e tosto intesa | The cuckoo offers his voice, and, soon heard, |
| C | b | Canta la tortorella e 'l gardellino. | The young turtledove and goldfinch sing. | |
| | D | a | Zeffiro dolce spira, ma contesa | Zephyr ¹ blows gently, but suddenly |
| E | b | Muove Borea improvviso al suo vicino; | Boreas ² offers opposition to his neighbor; | |
| | a | E plange il pastorel, perché sospesa | And the shepherd weeps, because he fears | |
| | b | Terme fiera borasca, e 'l suo destino. | A severe storm in the offing—and his destiny. | |
| II | F | c | Toglia alle membra lasse il suo riposo | The repose of his tired limbs is disturbed |
| | | d | Il timore de' lampi, e tuoni fieri, | By the fear of lightning and fiery thunder, |
| | | c | E de mosche e mosconi il stuol furioso! | And by a furious swarm of flies and wasps. |
| III | G | d | Ah, che pur troppo i suoi timor' son veri. | Unfortunately, his fears are justified. |
| | | c | Tuona e fulmina il Ciel, e grandinoso | The sky thunders and fulminates, and hail |
| | | d | Tronca il capo alle spiche e a' gran' alteri. | Flattens ears of corn and majestic grains. |

¹ The West Wind.

² The North Wind.

3. *L'Autunno* ("Autumn")

| Mvt. | Sec. | Rhyme | Italian text | English translation |
|------|------|-------|--|--|
| I | A | a | Celebra il vilanel con balli e canti | The peasant celebrates the blissful pleasure |
| | | b | Del felice raccolto il bel piacere, | Of a happy harvest with dances and songs, |
| | B | a | E del liquor di Bacco accesi tanti | And, glowing with the liquor of Bacchus, |
| | C | b | Finiscono col sonno il lor godere. | Many complete their enjoyment with sleep. |
| II | D | a | Fa ch'ogn'uno tralasci e balli e canti, | The air, tempered by pleasure, makes |
| | | b | L'aria che temperata dà piacere. | Everyone give up dances and songs. |
| | | a | È la stagion ch'invita tanti e tanti | It is the season that invites so many |
| | | b | D'un dolcissimo sonno al bel godere. | To the great enjoyment of a sweet sleep. |
| III | E | c | I cacciator' alla nov'alba a caccia | At dawn the hunters are off to the hunt |
| | | d | Con corni, schioppi, e canni escono fuore. | With horns, rifles, and dogs. |
| | F | c | Fugge la belva, e seguono la traccia. | The wild beast flees, and they follow its trail. |
| | G | d | Già sbigottita, e fassa al gran rumore | Frightened already, and fatigued by the noise |
| | | c | De' schioppi e canni, ferita, minaccia | Of rifles and dogs, wounded, it threatens |
| | H | d | Languida di fuggir, ma oppressa, muore. | Languidly to flee, but, overcome, it dies. |

4. *L'Inverno* ("Winter")

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|-----|---|---|---|---|--|
| I | A | a | Aggiacciato tremar tra nevi algenti | To tremble from cold in the icy snow, | |
| | B | b | Al severo splrar d'orrido vento, | In the harsh breath of a horrid wind; | |
| | C | b | Correr battendo i piedi ogni momento; | To run, stamping our feet every moment, | |
| | D | a | E pel soverchio gel batter i denti; | Our teeth chattering in the extreme cold. | |
| II | E | a | Passar al fuoco i dì quieti e contenti | Before the fire to pass peaceful, | |
| | | b | Mentre la pioggia fuor bagna ben cento. | Contented days while the rain outside pours down. | |
| III | F | b | Camlnar sopra 'l ghiaccio, e a passo lento, | To walk on the ice and, at a slow pace | |
| | G | a | Per timor di cader, glrsene intenti. | (For fear of falling), move carefully. | |
| | H | c | Glir ³ forte, sdruzzolar, cader a terra, | To make a bold turn, slip, fall down. | |
| | I | d | Di nuovo ir sopra 'l ghiaccio e correr forte | To go on the ice once more and run hard | |
| | L | c | Sinch' il ghiaccio si rompe e si disserra; | Until the ice cracks and breaks up. | |
| | M | d | Sentir uscir delle ferrate porte | To hear the Sirocco, Boreas, and all | |
| | | N | c | Sirocco, Borea, e tutti i venti in guerra. | The winds at war leave their iron gates: |
| | | d | Quest'è 'l verno, ma tal che gioia apporta. | This is winter, but, even so, what joy it brings! | |

³ "Andare," which does not fit the poetic meter, is found in some partbooks.