

The hill Cicada; from its height I saw  
Vesuvius was like a cone of grey,  
In contrast with the vineyards at my feet:  
Later I stood above Pompeii, found  
My hill was changed to barren, rocky slopes;  
Round me were many blossoms and the vines!  
I learned by this illusion of the eyes,  
To challenge sense with reason—prove no fact  
By feeling—Fathers, is that heresy?  
He is an infidel who dares to bound  
God's might! Take now a creed of Mother Church—  
The Mother whom I love—hold ye one thought  
That cramps Creation and Omnipotence?  
Then ye are heretic. Find God in Nature,  
As ye discover artists by their work.

*Ponder the lilies of the field*, said Christ.  
O Priests of Venice! ye who try me here  
Against my death at Rome for heresy,  
What do ye know of lilies? can ye tell  
The monk of Nola how the lilies grow?  
I knew them ere I learned to sing High Mass,  
Or hear confession and expound the Book!  
If only ye seek God beyond the stars,  
How can ye hope to find Him Who is near?  
If ye disdain the portico of heaven,  
How can ye love the House not made with hands,  
Eternal in the heavens? Oh, how ye rob  
Life of its joy! How narrow is the world  
Wherein ye move! Your sky is but a dome