



# The Rose in Contemporary Italian Poetry

*Thomas E. Peterson*

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"An original and significant contribution to scholarship in the fields of 20th-century poetry, Italian literature, and European literature. . . . The rose demonstrates both the skeletal similarities between ancient and recent lyric and the peculiar marks that distinguish the poetry of our time from its traditional heritage."—Beverly Allen, Syracuse University

Thomas Peterson surveys the use of the rose topos in 20th-century Italian poetry, providing an illuminating cross-section of the work of all the major poets, and the movements in which it appears. He examines the development of the topos, the individual instances of its appearance, and the cultural and linguistic contexts from which these instances emerge. The result is the delineation of a new topography of the contemporary Italian lyric.

Beginning with an exploration of the origins and development of Italian poetry, Peterson surveys French usage of the topos from Symbolism forward as a prolegomenon to his survey of Italian usage. By studying the gamut of Italian uses of the image, from Anacreontic and mannerist, to pathetic and ludic, to votive, prophetic, contemplative, and sublimative, Peterson demonstrates the importance of the topos for Italian lyric and its status as a central vehicle reflecting the changing tradition, tendencies, and styles of the Italian lyric in the 20th century.

Thomas E. Peterson is professor of Italian at the University of Georgia and author of numerous articles and books, including *The Ethical Muse of Franco Fortini* (UPF, 1997).

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