THE FIRST BOOK OF MADRIGALS, 1594

[1] Sweet and tender kisses – Part One
Sweet and tender kisses, sustenance of my life, first you seize, and then return my heart: you want me to learn how a soul in rapture feels not the agony of death, yet dies.

[2] There is sweet love enough – Part Two
There is sweet love enough for me to kiss you for ever, o sweetest of roses, on whom all has ever rested; and were I able to end my life with your sweet kisses, how sweet that death would be!

My lady, truly do I wish there were in you either mercy or cruelty enough to match your beauty. For the one would give my heart what it desired, while the other would put an end to my life.

[4] How can it be that I live?
How can it be that I live, if you kill me? And how can you want me to die yet still give me life? Between the two you hold me, life and death. By living I die and by not living I have life.

[5] My lady has ice in her breast
My lady has ice in her breast and a flame in her face, I am frozen without and have a fire burning within. This is because love lives in her brow and in my heart, and never changes its lodging to take refuge in my eyes, or in her heart.

While my lady rested her weary limbs after erring happily and willingly, a wise little bee murmured as it stole the sweet nectar from that flowery bank, deceived by the sweetest of colours it flew to the lips whose loving breath nurtures eternal blooms in the light of two fair eyes, and thought to drink from a deep red rose.

[7] Alas, all too wisely – Part Two
Alas, all too wisely do you wander, happy temerity, for that which to my desire is denied, is granted to you alone. A poor bee, Love, has robbed me of a dear prize. What have you if another takes the honey? How will you ease your bitterness and my sorrow?
[8] If by such a noble hand
(Torquato Tasso)
If by such a noble hand
my wounds are to be bound,
Love, why do you not pierce
my breast with a thousand blows?
I should not blame you for it,
for however grievous a wound
might be to my heart,
more tender still would be
the gentle touch of this fair hand.

[9] Love, I ask not for peace
(Torquato Tasso)
Love, I ask not for peace:
I ask not for shield or armour,
but against my bare breast,
if she be the healer, may you be the warrior.

[10] So joyful do my sorrows make me
(Luigi Cassola)
So joyful do my sorrows make me,
my lady, for loving you,
that I would die loving you for ever.
And to myself I say then:
if my suffering brings me such joy,
whatever will death do?

(Luigi Cassola)
O sweet torment of mine,
cause of my rejoicing.
Yet if I am deprived of you,
my life is happier and more blessed.
Such is the power of love,
that in robbing me of my heart it can
delight me in new and wonderful ways.

[12] Thyrsis wished to die – Part One
(Giovanni Battista Guarini:
Concorso d'occhi amorosi, da "Madrigali" CLI)
Thyrsis wished to die
gazing into the eyes of his beloved.
When she, who desired him just as much,
said to him: alas, my love,
ah, do not die yet
for I too long to die with you.

[13] Thyrsis did check the desire – Part Two
(Giovanni Battista Guarini:
Concorso d'occhi amorosi, da "Madrigali" CLI)
Thyrsis did check the desire
he felt to end his life that instant,
suffering death in not being able to die.

[14] As, my star, you watch
(Torquato Tasso)
As, my star, you watch
the celestial bodies turn,
I wish that I were heaven,
that if you were to turn
your lovely eyes
and look up into mine,
I could gaze down upon
your thousand beauties through as many stars.
[15] Non mirar, non mirare
(Filippo Alberti (1548-1618))
Non mirar, non mirare
di questa bella imago
l’altere parti e rare.
Ahi, che di morir vago
tu pur rimiri come
l’immoto guardo gira
e loquace silenzio il labro spira.
O desir troppo ardito,
va, va, che sei ferito!

[16] Questi leggiadri odorosetti fiori
(Livio Celiano (1557-1629))
Questi leggiadri odorosetti fiori
fur già ninfe ed pastori
ed or de’ miei pensieri
son muti messaggieri.
Deh, mentre voi pietosa
volgete gli occhi a la lor sorte ria,
pietà vi mova de la doglia mia.

[17] Felice primavera! – Parte prima
(Torquato Tasso)
Felice primavera!
de’ bei pensier fiorisce nel mio core
Novo lauro d’Amore
A cui ride la terra e il ciel d’intorno
e di bel manto adorno
di giacinti e viole, il Po si veste.

[18] Danzan le ninfe oneste – Seconda parte
(Torquato Tasso)
Danzan le ninfe oneste e i pastorelli
e i susurranti augelli in fra le fronde
al mormorar dell’onde e vaghi fiori
donan le grazie ai pargoletti amori.

[19] Son si belle le rose
(Livio Celiano)
Son si belle le rose
che in voi natura pose
come quelle che l’arte
nel vago seno ha sparte.
Non so, mirando poi,
se voi le rose, o sian le rose voi.

[20] Bella angioletta
(Torquato Tasso)
Bella angioletta, da le vaghe piume,
prestanle al grave pondo
tante ch’io esca fuori di questo fondo
o possa in qualche ramo
di te cantando dire: io amo.