

Barbara Carle

On The Shadow of Mount Rose

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Gradiva is the only small press exclusively dedicated to modern Italian poets in the United States. Its mission is to make known and to distribute contemporary poetry from Italy in English-speaking countries, in particular by publishing volumes never before translated. Its books fall into two series: the first consists of bilingual editions, and the second of Italian American poets. The press was born in 1985 as a branch of the journal *Gradiva*, an international poetry review founded in 1976 [...].

The journal's associate editor is Michael Palma, poet, critic, and outstanding translator. Palma's work has been published by Princeton University Press (Guido Gozzano, and Diego Valeri), Norton (Dante), and Gradiva (Armando Patti, Sergio Corazzini, Franco Buffoni, and Fontanella). In recent years Gradiva has intensified and improved its performance by obtaining an ISBN number and by distribution through Ebsco, Faxon, Blackwell, and Amazon. Its books are also distributed to universities in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand. Whom does this unique press publish? Major Italian poets writing today and those of the past century. The current literary situation in Italy is remarkable due to the sheer number of excellent poets writing. This means that there are dozens of high-quality poets whose work has yet to be discovered in English-speaking countries. In *New Italian Poets*, Dana Gioia reminds us that:

The achievements of twentieth-century Italian poetry have been extraordinarily rich. No other European country can surpass and few can equal the virtuosity and depth of modern Italian verse (*New Italian Poets*, page 14).

We may add that since in our century this particular richness shows no signs of waning, this courageous small press will not be short of quality poetry far some time to come. But let us return to the specific question of the books Gradiva prints. Starting from the most recent and considering the past few years, we can begin with *The Shadow of Mount Rosa*, which appeared in 2002. It is the first full-length English version of the poetry of Franco Buffoni, who in the past two decades has become well known and much admired by critics in Italy and France. Buffoni, an anglophile, has translated W.H. Auden, Stephen Spender, and Seamus

Heaney, among others, into Italian, which could in part explain the strongly narrative character of his poetry. In any case, his compositions seem to flow with particular smoothness from Italian to English [...].

Since its conception in 1985, Gradiva has published more contemporary Italian Poetry in the United States and other English-speaking countries than has any other press. Clearly, such a publisher performs an immense cultural service. Translation is an integral part of this accomplishment, because it throws one language against another, ultimately renewing and invigorating each one.