

AFTERWORD

I recently published a book of Sicilian proverbs. As we know, proverbs contain in succinct form the wisdom of a people as it emerges from centuries of their life experiences, their suffering and their joys. Thus when Stanley Barkan handed me Carolyn Mary Kleefeld's *Soul Seeds* and asked me to translate it into Italian it established a sense of continuity in my work, which became more urgent when we decided to translate the work into Sicilian as well. As president of Arba Sicula which promotes the language and culture of Sicily, it was important to translate Carolyn Mary Kleefeld's poetic and beautifully sculpted aphorisms into Sicilian because it would allow me an opportunity to show that Sicilian can express all the nuances of the English text that Kleefeld anchored in philosophy, psychology, and Eastern Religion in succinct, lapidary lines that reverberate in the readers' mind long after they have put down the book.

Sicilian and Italian were born as vehicles for poetic thought, first in the Sicilian School of poetry and then through the Tuscan triumvirate of poets (Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio) and they are both extremely rich in Carolyn Mary Kleefeld's chosen field: beginning with the Latin *Flores Sententiarum*, the *exempla*, to the *motti arguti* of Boccaccio, the lapidary musings of Leonardo da Vinci, the 14,000 proverbs collected by Giuseppe Pitre in Sicily, the tradition of condensing one's life experiences in sentences and reflections that others may use to their benefits has always been a well practiced art. Thus I was able to draw on the Italian and Sicilian traditions as I approached Kleefeld's complex musings and reflections on the world and on man's place in it. Although Kleefeld's texts may be easily classified as philosophical reflections on life, there is a special quality to her reflections that requires the reader to pause and concentrate on the message that's contained therein. Only by weighing the aphorism through reflection will the message manifest itself in its terse and limpid quality. Let me take one aphorism at random from the book:

Death is inherent in the birth of every beginning,
in our continual dying, in our detachment,
fear is transformed, yielding to wisdom.

The thought that life and death are necessarily bound as a continuum is certainly not new. What Kleefeld is describing here is not only a fact of life but a recipe for overcoming our fear of death and transforming it into wisdom and acceptance. The key to understand this aphorism is in the suggestion that we must detach ourselves and look at the matter from the perspective of eternity. Thus we see ourselves as links of an

endless chain that turns. The wisdom that Kleefeld alludes to is the same kind suggested by St. Augustine to Petrarch in *The Secretum*. After the three full days of dialogue between himself and St. Augustine, in which the poet obstinately refuses to abandon his love for Laura and for worldly attachments, Augustine suggested to him that the only cure for his malady was to meditate on Death.

Kleefeld's aphorisms contained in this book are varied, complex and difficult to categorize: they may be born out of an intuition, a reflection on past history, a sudden illumination, a novel twist on a well known thought, but in the end they represent an invitation into a reflective world that can provide insights and prodding for self-enlightenment and growth.



[XIII]

A la maniera di l'amanti

THE WAY OF THE LOVER

Alla maniera dell'amante

Pirchì nun criamu rilazioni comu criamu l'arti,
nvintannuni di cuntinuu ntô prucessu,
usannu la nostra mmaginazioni
pi esprimiri ili nostri idiali nveci di li stiriotipi dâ sucietà.

*Why not create relationships in the way we create art,
continually reinventing ourselves in the process,
using our imaginations rather than society's stereotypes
to express our ideals.*

Perché non creiamo relazioni come creiamo l'arte,
inventandoci di continuo nel processo,
usando la nostra immaginazione
per esprimere i nostri ideali piuttosto che gli stereotipi della società.

∞

L'amuri è lu manciari essenziali,
la facci di l'ineffabili, l'unica sustanza cosmica.
Circari di renniri l'amuri visibili mpacchittannulu,
diluemu la so putenza ca si trova nta la so finizza e omniprisenza.

*Love is our essential food,
the face of the Ineffable, the one cosmic substance.
In trying to make love visible by packaging it,
we dilute its power, which lies in its subtlety and omnipresence.*

L'amore è il cibo essenziale,
la faccia dell'ineffabile, l'unica sostanza cosmica.
Cercare di rendere l'amore visibile impacchettandolo,
diluiamo la sua potenza che è insita nella sua sottigliezza e ubiquità.

∞

Amari significa ascutari in maniera assoluta.

To love is to fully listen.

Amare significa ascoltare in maniera assoluta.