

To My Canary

mill-Malti: "Lill-Kanarin Tieghi" ta' Dun Karm

What has brought us to this silent house
Perhaps you do not know, gold-feathered bird,
Nor do you know why when I leave for work
With every morn, I close the door behind me,
And lock it fast; no footfall then is heard,
No living thing until I am come back.
'Tis better not to know, so you 'll not share
My vexing griefs, and between day and night,
Can lead a life untouched by pain and care.
With the first scattered light, crocus-tinged bird,
I see you wake, and from beneath your wings
Bring out your gentle head where you did hide it
The night before, when slow the sun sank down
And you prepared to sleep; quick raise one leg
Beside the other one upon the perch,
Stretch well your wings, and then alight to peck
Some hempseed. Soon the sweetness of your voice
Delights my ears with ever-swelling notes.
Pouring forth songs, you shoot about and jump,
Catch at the bars that stop and halt your flight,
Hold fast to them, let off to try again.
And your swift feet, your wings, your looks, your songs,
All speak of strength and pleasure unalloyed.
When'er I come to feed you, in your eyes
I see a gentle look. You know me well;



Ghasfur li Dun Karm kien iħobb iżomm għall-kumpanija kien il-Kanarin u, l-ghana ta' wiehed saħansitra twaħhad ma' dak tal-poeta meta kien qiegħed jaqra xi poeziji biex jigu rekordjati fuq tejp, illum miżmum fil-Laboratorju tal-Lingwi fl-Università tagħna, f'Tal-Qroqq. F'dan ir-ritratt, meħud minn Dun Frans Camilleri nhar il-15 ta' April, 1952, il-kanarin ukoll twaħhad mad-dehra sabiħa-umli ta' Dun Karm.

We know each other well; you do not fear
When I open the cage, take out the pots
Of seed and water to fill them once again.
And with one sturdy cry, it seems as if
You would express your thanks to gladden me,
When the cage I shut again to hang it there
Where cold cannot hurt you, but where sunshine
May keep you warm. In vain I silent come
On tiptoe now and then to see you waste
Your time in idle sleep or listless pose.
The sun will rise and set, still will you feel
As strong though restless, ever singing on.
There is a loveliness in life unsored by care,
With no thought of to-day or of to-morrow,
Above the strife and errors of the world!
But I don't envy you, gold-feathered bird,
Though I admire your life. For higher still
My hope has refuge found beyond this world.
I know that oft the bread I eat is soaked
With tears, that now and then I cannot speak
But groan with pain, for where flower-seeds I spread,
Rank thorns and brambles grew, and she whose love
Might be a consolation in my distress,
Is gone — she died — but still I know that tears,
Shed in this world, shall bliss repay in heaven,
That when the dream that men call life has passed,
Shall come the resurrection unto Eternal Light.

Together thus we live, gold-feathered bird,
You happy in yourself, and in my love,
I, in the hope God planted in my heart.