



Punti di vista sulla poesia  
10<sup>th</sup> April 2020

## **Toward the World of Unity: from the Dissociation of COVID-19**

**Kooseul Kim**

T.S. Eliot, considered one of the greatest writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was greatly influenced by Dante Alighieri. When Eliot was asked by an interviewer in 1949 what his favourite period in Italian literature was, he replied, “Dante, and then, Dante, and then Dante. No one has had a greater influence on me than Dante.” Eliot searched for the ‘unity’ through his literary theory and practice in a world of contradiction and dissociation. He finally found the ideal ‘unity’ in Dante and his period in literature as well. Dante’s works show the characteristics of the poetics of unity, in which there is no disparity between feeling and thought, subject and object, and matter and mind. Dante’s poetics might apply to the possible holism of the world. From a viewpoint of ecosystem of the globe, it also implies a critical issue, focusing on the first principle of ecology, “Everything is related to everything else.” This kind of cognition eventually could help to bring us a happy and healthy life on the globe. But in this world, unfortunately, we are now divided from ourselves, from the ecosystem, the society and the world.

We are now threatened with the pandemic of the COVID-19 all over the world. Even, Italy, the native land of one of the greatest poets, Dante, whose ideal unity without dissociation shown in his literature has been revered by Eliot as well as many writers in literary history, fights COVID-19. But poetry is like the air and water, which gives us life. In history, poetry or poetic mind has played a critical role in many different levels of crises. Above all, Italy, with its noble and brilliant insight as witnessed by Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, which explored the height and depth of human soul and Giovanni Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, which prophetically warned of this plague in 14<sup>th</sup> century can for sure overcome this pandemic. Deep insight and a sharp prophecy peculiar to the Italian people will accompany their self-control and solution, helping to create the unity of a person, a society and the world.

At this juncture, I send a poem, my loving friends, wishing it would bring solace and hope to you in hardship.

## **Birds Fly and Flowers Bloom: In the Place Where the COVID-19 has left**

*Kooseul Kim*

The earth is where the truth left behind by humans always keeps its place  
From the places where the Virus passed about flow strangled moans  
As the globe is a great hive with many rooms of life  
It gradually collapses when one does harm to others

Like a procession on its way to learning what death is  
Among the white masks walking motionless  
The living are falling down one by one  
Like a garland drooping

As if being alive alone were too much for them  
All, holding their breaths in perfect silence  
Smile vaguely on the survivors  
And gaze at magnolia petals fallen in a second

It is unhappiness that is deepening  
It is happiness that keeps refreshed  
The deeper unhappiness becomes every day  
The closer it becomes to happiness every moment

There is no distinction between the abysses of darkness and light:  
As through the deepest abyss of darkness leaks light  
The abyss of unhappiness reaches that of happiness:  
As in the deepest abyss of unhappiness resides happiness

Every moment, even in darkness, yearns for the sun

As the places where flower petals have fallen turn green  
Where the night ends in the deep sky  
Where the dead have left  
Birds fly and flowers bloom

My friends, ceaselessly rise up and fiercely stand up against yourselves!