

## Il Poverello

She was your true love—Lady Poverty.  
In that springtime of your vocation,  
amid the almond blossom, virgin white,  
you wooed her and pursued her.

With eager joy you undertook  
the trials of your love. They were both pain  
and poetry. Her troubadour,  
you made your life a chanson in her praise.

Romance aside, it was your Lord you loved,  
his poverty and passion you embraced.  
With him you slept in haylofts, tramped barefoot,  
and kissed his love, the leper, on the lips.

Like him you took the lowest place,  
where you could not humiliate the poor  
or patronize. Penniless on principle,  
you had good news—only good news—to share.

You sought the clarity of being poor,  
clear as the stream on Mount Subasio,  
where in the caves you slept on beds of stone  
and rose enraptured by the songs of dawn.

You longed to count for nothing,  
stripped of the things that we invest  
our self-worth and our self-importance in,  
so that for you God could be everything.

So poverty became extravagance,  
free of all niggardly restraint,  
generous as Brother Sun,  
wide as the arms of Christ.