

# CESARE PAVESE

ITALY (1908–1950)

LANGUAGE: ITALIAN

## PASSERÒ PER PIAZZA DI SPAGNA

Sarà un cielo chiaro.  
S'apriranno le strade  
sul colle di pini e di pietra.  
Il tumulto delle strade  
non muterà quell'aria ferma.  
I fiori spruzzati  
di colori alle fontane  
occhieggeranno come donne  
divertite. Le scale  
le terrazze le rondini  
canteranno nel sole.  
S'aprirà quella strada,  
le pietre canteranno,  
il cuore batterà sussultando  
come l'acqua nelle fontane—  
sarà questa la voce  
che salirà le tue scale.  
Le finestre sapranno  
l'odore della pietra e dell'aria  
mattutina. S'aprirà una porta.  
Il tumulto delle strade  
sarà il tumulto del cuore  
nella luce smarrita

Sarai tu—ferma e chiara.



Cesare Pavese was an Italian poet, translator, and novelist during a period of political oppression, censorship, and war. As a young man, he moved to the northwestern city of Turin, where he studied and fell in love with American literature. With the growing threat of fascism in Italy, the poet attended underground anti-fascist meetings. At one such event, he agreed to help a woman receive contraband letters from a political prisoner, an activity for which he was arrested and imprisoned. In 1936, a year into his three-year sentence, he published his first book of poetry, although the fascist government censored four of the poems. Though he continued to write during World War II, due to continued censorship, he did not publish again until after the death of the dictator Benito Mussolini. Instead, Pavese spent the war translating and editing celebrated works of American literature into Italian for the first time. This particular poem was one of ten poems found after his death.

TRANSLATOR'S GLOSSARY		
WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
alle (prep.)	indicating location of someone or something	by the, near the, around the, at the, beside the, alongside the
aria (n.)	the invisible gaseous substance surrounding the earth	air, atmosphere
batterà (v.)	from the verb <i>battere</i> —to make a rhythmic sound	will beat, will pound, will throb, will palpitate, will pulsate
canteranno (v.)	from the verb <i>cantare</i> —to make musical sounds with the voice	will sing, will hum, will warble, will trill, will chorus, will croon
che (conj.)	used to refer to something previously mentioned when introducing a clause giving further information	that, which
chiara (adj.)	free of cloud, mist, or rain	clear, fair, cloudless, crystal clear, luminous, rainless
chiaro (adj.)	free of cloud, mist, or rain	clear, fair, cloudless, crystal clear, luminous, rainless
cielo (n.)	the region of the atmosphere and outer space seen from the earth	sky, firmament, blue
colle (n.)	a naturally raised area of land	hill, high ground, mound, foothill, hillside, hillock, knoll
colori (n.)	properties possessed by an object of producing different sensations on the eye	colors, hues, shades, tints
come (prep.)	in the manner of	like, just like, same as
cuore (n.)	an organ that pumps blood through the circulatory system of the body	heart, ticker, chest
del (prep. + art.)	expressing ownership or the relationship between a part and a whole	of the, from the
dell' (prep. + art.)	expressing ownership or the relationship between a part and a whole	of the, from the
della (prep. + art.)	expressing ownership or the relationship between a part and a whole	of the, from the
delle (prep. + art.)	expressing ownership or the relationship between a part and a whole	of the, from the

WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
di (prep.)	expressing ownership or the relationship between a part and a whole	of, from
divertite (adj.)	the state or feeling of finding something funny and enjoyable	amused, entertained, charmed, joking, having fun, sharing a joke
donne (n.)	adult human females	women, ladies, females, gals, dames, maidens
e (conj.)	in addition to	and, plus, also
ferma (adj.)	having a solid, almost unyielding surface or structure	still, steady, fixed, firm
finestre (n.)	openings in the wall of a building that are fitted with glass to allow people to see out	windows, casements, portholes, bay windows
fiori (n.)	the seed-bearing part of a plant, typically surrounded by brightly colored petals	flowers, blossoms, blooms, buds, florets, posies
fontane (n.)	ornamental structures in a pool or lake from which one or more jets of water are pumped into the air	fountains, founts, spouts, jets
i (art.)	denoting one or more people or things already mentioned or assumed to be common knowledge	the
il (art.)	denoting one or more people or things already mentioned or assumed to be common knowledge	the
la (art.)	denoting one or more people or things already mentioned or assumed to be common knowledge	the
l'acqua (n.)	colorless, transparent liquid that forms the seas, lakes, rivers, and rain	water, H <sub>2</sub> O, fluids, liquid
le (art.)	denoting one or more people or things already mentioned or assumed to be common knowledge	the
l'odore (art. + n.)	the quality in something that is perceived by the faculty of smell	the smell, the odor, the scent, the fragrance, the aroma

WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
luce (n.)	the natural agent that stimulates sight and makes things visible	light, daylight, illumination, luminescence, glow, radiance
mattutina (adj.)	characterized by the period of time between sunrise and noon	morning, of morning, of dawn, of daybreak, of first light, of sunup
muterà (v.)	from the verb <i>mutare</i> —to make or become different	will change, will alter, will adjust, will modify
nel (prep.)	the state of being enclosed or surrounded by something else	in
nella (prep.)	the state of being enclosed or surrounded by something else	in
nelle (prep.)	the state of being enclosed or surrounded by something else	in
non (adv.)	used to form the negative	not, nothing
occhieggeranno (v.)	from the verb <i>occhieggiare</i> —to stare at	will eye each other, will stare at each other, will look at each other, will glance at each other, will wink at each other
passerò (v.)	from the verb <i>passare</i> —to move in a specified direction	I will pass, I will go, I will proceed, I will travel
per (prep.)	by way of; in one side and out the other side of	through, by, via
Piazza di Spagne (n.)	one of the most famous squares in Rome, Italy; at its center is a baroque fountain in the shape of a boat and a long flight of stairs leading up to a church	Piazza di Spagne, Spanish Piazza, Spanish Plaza, Spanish Square
pietra (n.)	hard, solid mineral matter	stone, rock, boulder, mineral
pietre (n.)	pieces of hard, solid mineral matter	stones, rocks, pebbles, boulders
pini (n.)	coniferous trees that have clusters of long needle-shaped leaves	pine trees, pines, evergreens
porta (n.)	a hinged, sliding, or revolving barrier at the entrance to a building, room, or vehicle	door, portal, entrance, entry, gate

WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
quell' (adj.)	used to identify a specific person or thing	that, those
quella (adj.)	used to identify a specific person or thing	that, those
questa (pron.)	referring to a specific thing previously mentioned, known, or understood	this, that, such
rondini (n.)	migratory swift-flying songbirds with forked tails and long pointed wings, feeding on insects in flight	barn swallows, swallows, birds
salirà (v.)	from the verb <i>salire</i> —to go up	will climb, will ascend, will rise up
sapranno (v.)	from the verb <i>sapere</i> —to identify something from previous knowledge	will know, will recognize, will remember, will recall
s'aprirà (v.)	from the verb <i>aprire</i> —to allow access, passage, or a view through	will open, will unfurl, will extend, will unlatch, will reveal
s'apriranno (v.)	from the verb <i>aprire</i> —to allow access, passage, or a view through	will open, will unfurl, will extend, will unlatch, will reveal
sarà (v.)	from the verb <i>essere</i> —to be; to exist	will be, will stay, will rest, will go on, will become
sarai tu (v. + pron.)	from the verb <i>essere</i> —to be; to exist	it will be you, it is you, which is you, which becomes you, which turns into you
scale (n.)	a set of flat gradations leading from one elevation to another	steps, stairs, staircase, stairway
smarrita (adj.)	in the wrong place	misplaced, mislaid, far afield
sole (n.)	the brightness provided by the star around which the earth orbits	sun, sunlight, sunshine, daylight, beams, rays
spruzzati (adj.)	scattering or pouring small drops of a liquid	splashed, sprinkled, spurted, sprayed
strada (n.)	a public paved path leading from one place to another	street, road, roadway, lane, boulevard, highway
strade (n.)	public paved paths leading from one place to another	streets, roads, roadways, lanes, boulevards, highways
sul (prep. + art.)	moving to a location atop the surface of something	onto the, over the, above the, about the, around the

WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
sussultando (adj.)	moving suddenly and quickly in a specified way	leaping up, jumping, shuddering, shaking
terrazze (n.)	a level paved area or platform next to a building	terraces, balconies, patios, platforms, verandas
tue (adj.)	belonging to the person being addressed by the speaker	your
tumulto (n.)	confusion or disorder, characterized by loud, confused noises	tumult, turmoil, chaos, clamor, din, commotion, uproar, frenzy
un (art.)	used to refer to someone or something for the first time	a, an, one
una (art.)	used to refer to someone or something for the first time	a, an, one
voce (n.)	the sound produced in a person's larynx and uttered through the mouth	voice

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## PHRASE BY PHRASE

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I fiori spruzzati \_\_\_\_\_

di colori alle fontane \_\_\_\_\_

occhieggeranno come donne \_\_\_\_\_

divertite. Le scale \_\_\_\_\_

le terrazze le rondini \_\_\_\_\_

canteranno nel sole. \_\_\_\_\_

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le pietre canteranno, \_\_\_\_\_

il cuore batterà sussultando \_\_\_\_\_

come l'acqua nelle fontane— \_\_\_\_\_

sarà questa la voce \_\_\_\_\_

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## MAKE IT FLOW

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## DEFENDING YOUR TRANSLATION—FINDING THE MEANING

Group Member Names:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Pick a scribe for the group, and work together to answer the questions.

Note three phrases or words that were challenging or interesting to translate, and explain why.

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How did this poem make you feel?

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What do you think the poet is trying to communicate in this poem?

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## POETRY INSIDE OUT TRANSLATION CIRCLES<sup>®</sup>

Begin by seeking volunteers to read the poem aloud to the whole class. Several readings are fine. When possible, have a native speaker of the language read the poem. Hearing the poem is the first step in literary translation. A big part of translation is to have a sense of the piece, which begins with listening. Examine all the parts of the poem page and read the biography of the poet together.

Then break into groups of four—with mixed levels of language expertise, if possible. It is helpful—but not necessary—if one member of the group is a dominant English speaker and at least one is bilingual. NOTE: If a person in the class is a native speaker of the language of the poem, he/she should hold back on telling what the words are in English until the Make It Flow step in the translation process.

### 1. Become acquainted with the poem.

- Each member of the group reads the poem silently to him/herself.
- Anyone who is willing can read the poem aloud. If possible, start with someone who speaks the language of the poem.
- Search for cognates—words that look and sound the same as the English word. Use the cognates as clues to figuring out what the poem means.
- Once the poem has been read aloud several times, and the group has found all the cognates, make a prediction about the content of the poem.

### 2. Translate the poem—phrase by phrase.

- The group of four breaks into pairs. Balance the spoken language strengths of the group members when possible.
- The person least fluent in the language of the poem begins by guessing at all possible words. This can be done using the Translator's Glossary, if desired.
- If there is a person with knowledge of the language in the pair, this is the time to add her/his input.
- Remember, sometimes when you translate a poem from one language to another, you need to add small words like *the*, *it*, etc. Be on the lookout for where those words might be needed.

### 3. Make it flow.

- Once the phrase-by-phrase translation is complete, meet with the rest of your group.
- Share the translations.
- Make changes or adjustments based on what you learned from each other.

### 4. Defend your translation—find the meaning.

- As a group, discuss possible interpretations of the poem.
- Talk about words or phrases that were particularly difficult to translate, and why.
- Discuss which words were most interesting, and why.
- In the whole-class discussion be prepared to:
  - (a) Discuss and support your group's interpretation of the poem.
  - (b) Talk about what was interesting or difficult to translate.
  - (c) Share possibilities about what the poem might mean.