

All those platitudes to and about Laura  
done to a turn but breaking little new ground,  
the figures hard-won by past masters  
    appropriated to ornament *sonetti*  
    accomplished yes but hardly breath-taking  
    though they might perfectly capture their age

traditional renaissance rhetoric  
baroque or even mannerist technique  
blending poetry with argument  
    beautiful tropes *poetria* with apt  
    *sententiae* reason with elevated  
    lyricism or idiosyncratic

diction, sentences literary rather  
than imitating spoken discourse — highly  
abstruse allusions extended metaphors  
    copious erudite quotations crossing  
    recognized boundaries between  
    philosophy politics literature

The cellular hermetic scholastic ideal  
transformed by the prose he was known for at the time  
into a modern sense of solitude —  
    a life away from crowded haunts, leisure  
    for reading writing brooding peacefully  
    a small community of chosen friends

bringing to mind epicurean Horace  
with the twist that happiness no longer depends  
on doing one's social and supernatural duties  
    or on grace but is in one's own hands  
    a matter of one's personal will power  
    free individuals each

hoping through his own imaginary  
conversations with others living, dead,  
more or less fictional, to free himself  
    from distracting passions a question less of what  
    the world is than of how one sees  
    one's relationship to divine promise