

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO



Gabriele D'Annunzio, Principe di Montenevoso – nicknamed “**Il Vate**” – (The Poet) - was born on March 12, 1863, in Pescara, Abruzzo -Italy—died March 1, 1938, at Gardone Riviera, on Lake Garda. He was an Italian poet, novelist, dramatist, short-story writer, journalist, military hero, and political leader, the leading writer of Italy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The son of a politically prominent and wealthy Pescara landowner, **D'Annunzio** was educated at the University of Rome. When he was 16 under the influence of Giosue' Carducci he published his first poems, “*Primo Vere*” 1879 (“In Early Spring”). The poems that came later in “*Canto Novo*” 1882 (“New Song”) had more individuality and were

full of exuberance and passionate, sensuous descriptions. His best works of the time include the novel “*Il fuoco*” – 1900 (“The Flame of Life”); and the poems of his “*Alcyone*” - (one of the Pleiades). Some of the poems in this book **D'Annunzio** proclaims his sensuous, joyful feeling of communion with nature, and are among some the masterpieces of modern Italian poetry.

Some of his best plays include “*Citta' Morta*” 1898 (“The Dead City”) and his masterpiece “*La Figlia di Jorio*” 1904 (“The Daughter of Jorio”) a drama about the fears and superstitions of Abruzzese peasants .

Eager to perform on the world's stage in politics and in war, as well as art, **D'Annunzio** became an ardent nationalist, lost an eye in a wartime flying accident, and then personally led an assault on Fiume in 1919, annexing it to Italy, and ruling it like a Roman pro-consul for 16 months. His support of Mussolini prompted some critics to treat him as a progenitor of fascism.

D'Annunzio's colourful career, his scandalous amours, his daring wartime exploits, his eloquence and political leadership in two national crises, all contributed to making him one of the most striking personalities of his day. He retired to Gardone Riviera where he wrote his memoirs and confessions. There **D'Annunzio** built a stadium and displayed a ship half-buried in the hillside. After his death, a large mausoleum was constructed there to contain his remains. Gardone Riviera became not only his monument but a monument to Italian nationalism and one of Italy's most visited tourist sites.

Today he is also remembered with two Universities named in his honour – **Gabriele D'Annunzio University** in Pescara and Chieti.

CANTO NOVO

O falce di luna calante
che brilli su l'acque deserte,
o falce d'argento, qual messe di sogni
ondeggia a'l tuo mite chiarore qua gill!
Aneliti brevi di foglie
di fiori di flutti da'l bosco
esalano a'l mare: non canto non grido
non suono pe'l vasto silenzio va.
Oppresso d'amor, di piacere,
il popol de' vivi s'addorme.
O falce calante, qual messe di sogni
ondeggia a'l tuo mite chiarore qua gill!.

O sickle of moonlight declining
that shinest o'er waters deserted,
o sickle of silver, what harvest of visions
is waving down here, they mild lustre beneath!
Ephemeral breathing of foliage,
of flowers, of waves from the forest,
goes forth to the ocean: no cry and no singing,
No sound through the infinite silences goes.
Oppressed with its loves and its pleasures,
the life of the world lies in slumber.
O sickle declining, what harvest of visions
is waiting down here, they mild lustre beneath!