Relatively little is known about the composer Salomone Rossi. It is likely that he was born in Mantua around 1570, and that he was connected through much of his life with the Gonzaga court. Two of his publications were dedicated to Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga and a third to the Marquis of Pallazzuolo, also associated with the court. In one of the dedications, Rossi refers to being in “the happy shade of your [Vincenzo’s] service.” Rossi seems to have been favored by Vincenzo since he was not required to wear the yellow badge that other members of the Jewish community had to wear at the time. Rossi also worked as an instrumentalist playing in and composing for Mantuan Jewish theatrical troupes that performed not only in the Jewish ghetto, but also for Christian audiences, including at court. Many consider his greatest and most unique achievement to be his collection of 33 motets in Hebrew published in Venice in 1622. A prolific composer of madrigals, Salomone Rossi released five separate books. The book from which this piece originates, Il Primo Libro de Madrigali a Quattro Voci (The First Book of Madrigals for Four Voices), contains 17 madrigals and is his ninth collection, published circa 1600. Rossi’s last published work bore a date of 1628 and nothing more is known of his life after this date. It is possible he died, along with many others, during the destruction of the ghetto and the onset of the plague, around 1630.

~Dane Carten

Translator's Note
There are some minor stylistic choices I have made–keeping Italian proper names untranslated, for example (Filli, Mirtillo, etc.). In all cases in which Amor/e is capitalized in Italian I have translated it as "Love" with a capital L–meaning the God of Love (Cupid). There are a few places in which "amor/e" appears in lower case, but is referring in fact to Amor (Cupid). All other appearances of "amor/e" in the lower case have been translated as "love," that is "love" in the general sense (to love someone, to be loved, etc.), or reference to the beloved (my love). I have closed the stanzas in the idiomatic translation because they do not make sense unless they are read through-composed.

~Cory Gavito

Word-for-word Translation
Mia vita, s'egli è vero
My life, if it is true
Ch'altra che voi sia donna del mio core,
That another than you is the lady of my heart,
Mi si mostri nemico sempr'Amore.
Me shows itself enemy forever Love.
Ma se voi sola sete
But if you alone are
Principio e fine d'ogni mio desio,
The beginning and end of each of my desires
Dhe non consenta ch'io
Alas, not allow that I
Giunga per troppo amarvi a l'ultim'hora
Reach for too much loving you to the final hour
E che voi diate morte a chi v'adora.
And that you give death to he who adores you.

Idiomatic Translation
My life, if it is true
That I hold a lady other than you in my heart,
Let Love forever be an enemy to me.
But if you alone are
The beginning and end of all my desires,
Alas, may Love not let me
Die from loving you too much,
Nor let you kill the one who adores you.

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Following the first version of this madrigal with piano reduction is a second version with a basso continuo part that has been realized by Nicky Manlove and that may be used for performance. Those wishing to create their own realization can use the lowest note of the included continuo part as the bass line - it is included in Rossi's collection. The editor also expresses gratitude to James Higgs for assistance with the piano reduction, Fabián Rodriguez Castro for assistance with engraving, and to Dr. Joshua Jacobson for editorial assistance.
Mia vita, s'egli è vero

_Il Primo Libro de Madrigali a Quattro Voci_

Anonymous

Salomone Rossi

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Mia vita, s'egli è vero, p. 3
Mia vita, s'egli è vero

*Il Primo Libro de Madrigali a Quattro Voci*

Anonymous

Salomone Rossi

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Mia vita, s'egli è vero, p. 2

re. Ma se voi sola se te Princípio e fine d'ogni mio desìo, Dhe

re. Ma se voi sola se te Princípio e fine d'ogni mio desìo, Dhe

re. Ma se voi sola se te Princípio e fine d'ogni mio desìo,

re. Ma se voi sola se te Princípio e fine d'ogni mio desìo,

non con sen ta ch'i o Giunga per trop po a mar vi a l'ult i m'ho ra

non con sen ta ch'i o Giunga per trop po a mar vi a l'ult i m'ho ra E che voi dia te

Dhe non con sen ta ch'i o Giunga per trop po a mar vi a l'ult i m'ho ra E che voi dia te

Dhe non con sen ta ch'i o Giunga per trop po a mar vi a l'ult i m'ho ra E che voi dia te