FOREWORD

This anthology is the first methodical presentation of its kind which has been attempted for the English-speaking reader. The work, which is not conceived historically, but which nonetheless embraces the main literary movements of our age, is an act of good will on the part of Carlo L. Golino, a tireless reader and student of Italian poetry. It is no less a sign of his faith in the American observer of the phenomena of European art in all its manifestations—a faith expressed in a time become arid from ideological differences and opposing political orientations such as almost deny the possibilities of creative intelligence to the man of our century. Fortunately, it is not my duty to reconstruct here a critical panorama (a most difficult task even now when one would expect the twentieth century might be viewed objectively). Instead, my purpose is to invite the American reader to acquaint himself with a poetry which, until now, has appeared, without any conscious intention of its own, as an elaboration of the poetics of European symbolism and decadentism. Might it be that the form of this poetry is such that it is not susceptible of analysis, that it has no independent life apart from the tradition? The patient English-speaking reader will immediately notice that the truth is quite the contrary. Carlo L. Golino, who is also the faithful translator of most of these poems, has evolved a “classification” by which he groups the poets according to their characteristics and relates them to the various cultural currents. As every anthology reveals its editor, so the present collection and arrangement display Golino’s critical taste, his predilection for certain subject matter, his prudence in choosing poets of the new generation.

I must add only that the most notable names of contemporary Italian poetry are included in this anthology (one might wish to add

two or three names at the very most), with or without their private histories as they were decided within the human time span of two wars that have altered the very nature of feeling and the ability of these *resistenti* of literature to continue to speak in verse.

Salvatore Quasimodo

Milan, June 1961