In qual parte del ciel, in quale ydea

What part of heaven was it, what idea contained the model from which Nature took that lovely face, in which she was resolved to show on earth what she could make above?

What bathing nymph, what goddess in the woods loosed to the wind hair of such perfect gold? When did one heart combine so many virtues, although the highest’s guilty of my death?

A man looks for divine beauty in vain, if he has never seen those eyes of hers, and felt the pleasure of the looks she casts.

He does not know how Love can cure and kill, if he is ignorant of how sweet she sighs, and how sweet, too, she speaks and sweet she laughs.

1: The “idea” is a Platonic one, a pure form located in heaven of which things in this world are mere imitations.

8: Laura’s highest virtue is her sexual purity.

13–14: The lines echo the conclusion of Horace, Odes 1.22 (the poem that formed the basis of Poem 145), “I shall love my sweet-laughing, sweet-speaking Lalage.”