



C'era una volta...  
Once upon a time...  
Great poets sang my forebears' epic deeds:  
When the nurse beheld the telltale scar,  
Homer flashed back to Odysseus' hunt  
That made the world know he was a man.  
It was the boar who wrote the fact  
With fangs upon the hero's thigh.  
Another of my kind  
Made Venus, Love and Beauty Herself,  
Break down in sobs, crying to the heavens  
The loss of perfect Adonis,  
Who changed from dying youth into  
A tender white and purple flower:

Thus Shakespeare, after Ovid, kept the story  
Immortal.  
And when the English author was yet living,  
A sculptor here in Florence brought me into being:  
Pietro Tacca, on commission from the Duke,  
Cast me in bronze. Eventually  
They set me up nel Mercato Nuovo,  
Where for centuries I've sat, benevolent,  
Ready to shine, never to bite nor gouge,  
A good luck charm for those who pet my snout  
And pose for photos near the busy vendors  
Of leather and souvenirs.  
Now,  
Loneliness...  
O so lonely  
Amidst these empty rinascimento arches,  
No longer feeling warm caresses on my head,  
No longer hearing coins clank and jingle  
Beneath my burnished bristly belly...  
Such  
Loneliness...  
So lonely here  
Nel centro storico/città fantasma,  
Through all these lockdown days and nights,  
Missing the students, thinking of my amici  
Nelle Ville: Ulivi, Sassetti,  
Natalia, Colletta, La Pietra...  
Wishing for their return, when I will bring  
Merry smiles for their present times,  
And happy fortune for their times to come,  
As their ever faithful  
Porcellino.

Firenze, 12 May 2020

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## Eric Nicholson

Eric Nicholson received his PhD in Renaissance Studies from Yale University (1991), and has performed in and directed numerous early modern plays, as well as published several articles in this same field. At NYU in Florence, he teaches courses on cultural history, early modern drama, and the performance of classic theatre.