

Example 11.1: Arcadelt, *Il bianco e dolce cigno*

The musical score is written for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. It is in a minor key (one flat) and common time. The lyrics are: "se nel mo-rir' al-tro do-lor non sen-to, di mil-le mort' il di, di se nel mo-rir' al-tro do-lor non sen-to, di mil-le mort' il di mil-le mort' il di sa-rei con-ten-to, mil-le mort' il di, di mil-le mort' il di, di di mil-le mort' il di sa-rei con-ten-to, di mil-le mort' il di, sa-rei con-ten-to, di mil-le".

*When I die no other pain I feel, with a thousand deaths a day I would be content.*

that Petrarch sought in his verses: *piacevolezza* (pleasingness) and *gravità* (severity). In the pleasing category Bembo included grace, sweetness, charm, smoothness, playfulness, and wit, while in the severe he grouped modesty, dignity, majesty, magnificence, and grandeur. Rhythm, distance of rhyme, number of syllables per line, patterns of accents, lengths of syllables, and the sound qualities of the vowels and consonants all contributed to making a verse either pleasing or severe. Composers became sensitive to these sonic values. Many of the early madrigalists set Petrarch's poetry. Later composers preferred his imitators and other modern poets, almost all of whom worked in Petrarch's shadow.

How composers translated Bembo's theory into musical terms can be seen in settings of Petrarch by Adrian Willaert (see chapter 10) and in the writings of Willaert's student Gioseffo Zarlino (see Source Reading, p. 249). In the sonnet *Aspro core e selvaggio*, Petrarch expressed his beloved Laura's "harsh and savage heart" in a severe line, filled with double consonants and clipped, harsh sounds; he then described her "sweet, humble, angelic face" in a contrasting pleasing line made up of liquid, resonant, and sweet sounds. For the first line of his remarkable setting from the mid-1540s, shown in

*Adrian Willaert*