

## HORACE'S ODES

### I

Maecenas, who descend from royal ancestry,  
Who shield me, giving sweet public esteem to me,  
There are some who would be dust-smeared Olympians  
High in their chariots, raised to the gods above,  
Hot wheels scraping the post, giving great accolade,  
One raised by the fickle mob striving to lift him up  
And win him triple fame, one carrying away  
And storing in his barn grain that he garnished from  
Threshing-floors of Libya. That peasant who delights  
In ploughing his own fields (no Attalus, he) never  
Shall be tempted to sail into the Cretan Sea,  
Tense, in his Cyprian boat. Merchants in fear of  
The winds from Africa, fighting Icarian  
Waves, love the peace of their own countryside;  
Soon, though, their shattered ships, unused to poverty,  
They rebuild. There is one who will not spurn to quaff  
Massic wine, taking the time to spread his weary limbs  
Under a green tree or nearby a gentle sacred spring.  
Some love the military life, the trumpet and the horn,  
Those sounds that mothers hate. Hunters will undergo  
Chill skies, their tender wives cast to oblivion,  
Their staunch hounds having seen a deer, or a Marsian boar  
Piercing their even nets. Ivy that compasses  
The brows of the learned joins me to the gods above  
While cold groves and the light Nymphs and the Satyrs  
Entice me from the throng, as long as Euterpe  
Won't keep from me her flute or Polyhymnia  
Will not deny to play upon her Lesbian  
Lute. If you enter me among the lyric bards,  
Then high up with the stars I'll reach the firmament.

### II

The dotting river eradicated  
Its left bank in a violent spill  
And Troy's fall thus it vindicated  
Against Jove's will.

Our children, who are fewer today

Through parents' wrongs, will hear swords ground  
Rather to keep the Persians away,  
For battles bound.

What gods will the people beg for aid  
When Rome falls? What prayerful tears  
By the holy virgins will be made  
To Vesta's deaf ears?

Whom will Jove choose to redeem  
Our sins? Augur Apollo, we pray,  
Come, a cloud veiling the gleam  
Of your bright array?

Come, laughing Venus, if you would,  
Whom jesting, flying Cupid hems in;  
Or, leader, you, seeing no good  
Come to your kin,

Sated after a long campaign,  
Loving the helmet and war-call;  
With blood the cruel Moors you stain  
And cause their fall.

Or you, fond Maia's winged son,  
On earth a man now fashioned in  
A bird's shape, set to be the one  
To avenge our sovereign.

Don't haste back to the sky,  
Stay happily with us and bear  
Our sins; don't on swift wings fly  
Back through the air;

Enjoy great triumphs, glad to know  
Your sovereign name. O stay!  
The Medes must not unpunished go.  
Caesar, hold sway!

### III

You owe us, ship, our Virgil;  
And therefore may the powerful goddess  
Of Cyprus, may those bright stars

The brothers of Helen, may the Lord of Winds  
(Who sway all blasts but Iapex)  
Return him safe, I pray, to Attic shores  
And guard half of my spirit.  
Both oak and triple bronze enclosed the breast  
Of him who was the first man  
To trust his fragile ship to savage seas  
Nor fear the fierce South-West Wind  
Which grapples with the winds sent from the North,  
The bleak, wet Hyades,  
The raging South Wind, non-pareil of all  
Across the Adriatic  
In stirring up or calming down the sea.  
For what death could alarm him  
Who gazed on swimming monsters with dry eyes,  
Who saw the boiling ocean  
And the egregious rocks of Thunder-Heights?  
It was in vain a wise god  
Severed the land and sea, one from the other,  
If hostile ships nonetheless  
Travel through depths he wished inviolable  
Fearless in all its ventures,  
The human race deals in forbidden sin.  
Fearless, the son of Iapetus  
Brought fire to men with impious finesse.  
When fire was snatched from heaven,  
Wasting diseases and a strange throng of fevers  
Upon the earth was let loose;  
The power of death, which had been slow before  
This time, quickened her footsteps.  
Then Daedalus took to the empty air  
On wings not granted others:  
The toils of Hercules shook Acheron.  
Nothing's too high for mortals:  
We aim at heaven itself in foolishness  
And through our own transgressions  
Won't let Jove rest his angry thunderbolts.

#### IV

Keen winter is losing its grip and fine Spring and the West Wind appear;  
Ropes haul the dry hulls back to shore;  
No longer the flock hugs the fold, the ploughman abandons his fire,  
The fields no more white with hoar-frost;

Now Cythera's Venus brings on the dancers beneath the bright moon;  
The Nymphs and sweet Graces combine  
To trample the earth with their feet, while Vulcan, aflame, goes to see  
The Cyclopes' great furnaces.  
Now must we put on our sleek heads a wreath from the green myrtle-tree  
Or flowers the unfrozen earth bears;  
Now must we, in woods deep in shade, to Faunus offer sacrifice  
(A lamb or kid, as he prefers).  
Poor cottages and palaces are visited by pallid Death  
Uncritically. Sestus, my friend,  
You are, by your span of brief life, not given a too-distant hope,  
By night or the fabled Shades crushed  
And Pluto's disconsolate halls; and once you have entered therein,  
No roll of the dice gives you wine;  
You'll not gaze at fond Lycidas, for who all our young men now burn  
And soon all our maidens will too.

## V

Pyrroha, what slender boy, drowned in perfume,  
Is wooing you in some rose-crowded nook,  
Some pleasant cave? For whom  
Have you enhanced your hair

So simply? O how often will he weep  
Of treason and the gods and gaze upon  
Seas rough with pitch-black storms  
In dire perplexity,

Though now enjoying you, thinking you fine,  
Forever his, forever lovable,  
Yet heedless of the breeze  
That dupes! They're wretches whom

You dazzle at the first. The sacred wall  
Displays my votive tablet and wet clothes,  
Hung up in thanks to the god  
Who holds sway on the sea.

## VI

Brave conqueror by Varius, you'll be penned

In winged Homeric verse, no matter what  
Your savage soldiers did on land or sea  
Under your leadership:

I do not try to speak of this, Agrippa,  
Nor angry and unyielding Achilles  
Nor the crafty wanderings of Ulysses  
Nor Pelops' cruel halls.

Too slight for lofty themes, I am prevented  
By the friendly Muse whose power is the lyre  
From lessening the praise of our lord's deeds  
And yours with flawed finesse.

Who could write worthily of armoured Mars  
Or Meriones, swart with Trojan dust,  
Or Tydeus' son who, with Athene's aid,  
Was equal to the gods?

I sing of feasts, of maids who fiercely fight  
Young men with their pared nails in idleness  
As is my wont, whether I'm fancy-free  
Or smouldering with love.

## VII

Others will praise bright Rhodes or Mytilene  
Or Ephesus or twin-sea'd Corinth  
Or Dionysian Thebes or Phoeban Delphi,  
So famed, or Thessaly's Tempe.  
Some wish to laud virgin Athena's city  
In poetry perpetual,  
Wreathed with the olive gleaned from everywhere:  
To honour Juno many will  
Speak fittingly of steeds and rich Mycenae:  
Not even dogged Lacedaemon  
Or rich Larisa's fields impress me as  
The echoing Albunean cave  
And headlong Anio and Tibur's grove  
And stream-drenched orchards.  
The dry South Wind will clear the clouds away  
From dark skies yet refrain  
From raining constantly: so wisely end

Your sadness and life's toil,  
Plancus, with mellow wine whether in camp,  
Gleaming with standards, or  
Your shady Tibur. Teucer fled Salamis  
And his own father, yet  
Wreathed wine-flushed brows with poplar, it is said,  
And said to his sad friends:  
"Whether our fortune, kinder than my father,  
Should point us, friends, we'll dare.  
With Teucer's omens guiding you, despair  
Should flee. Unerring Phoebus vowed  
That Salamis should grow in some new land.  
Brave lads, you've suffered worse  
Often with me. So drown your cares with wine;  
Tomorrow – the wide seas!"

## VIII

For gods' sake, Lydia,  
Why are you bent on crushing Sybaris  
With passion, why does he hate  
The sunny Campus, once of dust and sun  
So tolerant? Why does he  
No longer ride with soldier-friends and rein  
His Gallic steed with bit  
That bites? Why does he shun the yellow Tiber?  
As it were viper's blood,  
Why won't he touch the wrestlers' oil, his arms  
Unbruised, once famous for  
Excelling with discus and javelin?  
Why does he hide? They say  
Achilles prior to Troy's fall did so  
Lest through his man's attire  
He'd face his death at the hands of Lycian troops.

## IX

See! White Soracte stands in heavy snow;  
The labouring woods no longer can sustain  
Their burden; motionless,  
Rivers are ice-bound.

Drive off the cold, place large logs on the fire;  
Be generous, Thaliarchus, and bring out  
The Sabine jars that hold  
Pure four-year-old wine.

All else leave to the gods- when they have lulled  
The winds that struggle on the raging sea,  
Nor cypress nor wild ash  
Will stir their branches.

Don't fret about the future, count as gain  
Whatever kind of day that fortune brings;  
Don't spurn delightful love,  
My child, nor revels,

While life is green and hoary age far off.  
Reseek the Campus and the playing-fields,  
Soft murmurings at night  
In appointed trysts,

And a maid in a cozy nook given away  
By her sweet laugh, whose promise you may snatch  
From her finger that resists  
Barely or her arm.

## X

Atlas' eloquent grandson, Mercury,  
Who shaped the uncultured manners of this race  
New-born, in language most judiciously  
And wrestling's grace,

O heavenly messenger, of you I'll sing,  
Inventor of the lyre, whose chief joy  
Is hiding mischievously anything.  
When just a boy,

Apollo threatened you and tried to make  
You give him back the herd you stole, though he  
Was quiverless; instead you made him shake  
With ample glee.

You helped Priam to leave his native land  
With ample wealth, dodging the bellicose

Atreidae and Thessalian fires and  
Their menacing foes.

You bring pure souls onto the happy shore,  
Using your wand to check them as they go –  
You whom the gods in heaven all adore  
As those below.

## XI

Leuconoe, don't waste your energy on what we should not know –  
The life span that the gods intend for us. All Babylonian charts  
You must avoid. Much better to endure whatever's thrust on us,  
Should Jupiter send more winters like this or this will be the last,  
That saps the strength of the Tyrrhenian Sea upon opposing cliffs:  
So use your head and mix the wine; since life fills up a tiny space,  
Limit that and hope. For envious, while now we speak, is flying:  
Then seize the day and of your time to come have all the doubts you may.

## XII

What god or man or hero is your choice,  
Clio, to celebrate upon your pipe  
Or on your lyre, his name in your gay voice  
In echoes ripe,

Either on Helicon's umbrageous strand,  
On Pindus' peak or else in Haemus' chill,  
Trees rashly following throughout the land  
Bard Orpheus' trill,

Stopping the flowing, with his mother's art,  
Of rapid rivers or the rushing breeze  
Or luring all the listening rocks apart  
With flatteries?

What shall be first for praises that are fit  
For the father who commands the human race  
And gods, sea, land, each season's benefit  
In every place?

There are none greater, no-one with the might

Approaching his or in proximity:  
And yet Athene equalled him in height  
Of dignity,

Outstanding in warfare. Bacchus, of you  
I'll not be mute nor, virgin, you whose foe  
Is beasts nor, Phoebe, you whose aim is true  
And dreaded so.

I'll praise Alcides and the progeny  
Of Leda, one a charioteer and one  
A boxer; their white star shines on the sea  
Just like the sun;

The storm-tossed moisture from the rocks streams down,  
The winds are calm, the clouds all start to flee,  
The waves repose, no more with threatening frown,  
Upon the sea.

Then – Romulus perhaps? The quiet reign  
Of Numa? Should the next one to be penned  
Be Tarquin's noble fasces, or, again,  
Great Cato's end?

Of Regulus, in verse thankful and grand,  
I'll speak and of the foolhardy Scaurus  
Facing the Carthaginian forces and  
Fabricius?

And long-haired Curius, and Camillus (these  
Were lessoned to be skilled in strategy  
By their small farms and their divinities  
And poverty).

Marcellus' fame with time quietly grows  
Just like a tree; but, glittering afar,  
A moon round lesser fires, amongst all those  
Is the Julian star.

Father and guard of men, the progeny  
Of Saturn, by the Fates you have been made  
Caesar's protector; hold supremacy,  
With Caesar's aid.

Whether he drives the menacing Parthian  
From Latium or those under Indian skies

Or the Seres dwelling beneath the Eastern sun –  
A well-earned prize –

Beneath you he will rule a happy world,  
While, as for you, Olympus shall endure  
Your heavy chariot, your thunder hurled  
At groves once pure.

### XIII

When, Lydia, you heap praise  
On Telephus's rosy neck and arms  
So white, alas! My passion  
Begins to burn and grieves me with its wrath.  
My hue and my emotions  
Are altered and in silence down my cheek  
There rolls a tear, thus proving  
How I'm consumed within by lingering fires.  
I burn, whether your white arms  
Are marked by quarrels magnified by wine  
Or on your lips a love-bite  
Your love-crazed boy has placed in memory.  
If you would heed my counsel,  
You'd not hope he who wounds so savagely  
Your pretty mouth which Venus  
Has moistened with her nectar can be true.  
Three times contented and more  
Are those whose pledge is unimpaired, whose love  
Is free of wretched quarrels  
And will not fail until life's final day.

### XIV

O Ship, fresh waves transport you out to sea!  
Where are you going? Strongly make for port!  
For you can surely see  
Your oars are wanting,

The swift south-western wind has smashed your mast  
Which with the sail-yards groans; devoid of rigging,  
Your hull can scarce endure  
The powerful waves!

No sail is now intact; you have no gods  
Whom you may call upon when in distress.  
Though you're of Pontic pine,  
Born of the famed woods,

And brag of your kin and an idle name,  
Yet timid tars mistrust a painted keel.  
Take care you don't become  
The breezes' plaything.

Not long ago you greatly wearied me,  
Though now my passion and my anxious care;  
Avoid the waves between the bright Cyclades.

## XV

When Paris, that false shepherd, took away  
Helen, his hostess, in his Trojan ship,  
Nereus checked in unwanted calm the winds  
To sing their cruel fate:

You take an ill-omened bird back home to Troy  
Who Greece will seek with an almighty force  
With a firm oath to break your marriage-vows  
And ancient Priam's rule.

What toil of steeds and men draws near you now!  
O what destruction do you bring on Troy!  
Pallas is ready with her helm and shield  
And chariots and fury.

With useless daring, under Venus' care,  
You'll comb your hair and play what pleases maids  
Upon your peaceful lyre; yes, in vain  
You'll hide within your room

And shun the heavy spears and Cretan darts  
And noise of war and Ajax' rapid raids;  
Too late, however, faithless one,  
You'll smear your hair with dust.

What of Odysseus, torment of your race?  
Have you not thought of Nestor of Pylos?

Bold Salaminian Teucer harries you,  
Bold Sthenelus, so skilled

In war and, if it comes to that, no less  
In charioteering. Meriones, too,  
You know. Diomedes, braver than his father,  
Ranges to find you out.

As in some valley's depths a fearful stag,  
Now heedless of its pasture, spies a wolf,  
You'll flee with heavy gasps, your head thrown back,  
Not as you vowed to Helen.

Achilles' angry armies may protract  
Ruin for Troy and for its womenfolk;  
But after some winters Greek fire will burn  
The houses of the Trojans.

## XVI

Child lovelier than your lovely mother, end  
My guilty iambs however you choose –  
Drowned in our waters  
Or else in flames.

Nor Cybele nor Phoebus plagues the minds  
Of priestesses within the Pythian shrine,  
Nor the Corybants,  
Cymbal-clashing,

Nor Bacchus as the wrath no Noric sword  
Can shatter, nor shipwrecks, nor savage fire,  
Nor Jove, sweeping down  
In mighty rage.

They say Prometheus, forced to add some part  
Of each beast to our first clay, filled our hearts  
With the great power  
Of a mad lion.

Wrath crushed Thyestes savagely, the cause  
Of lofty cities' ruin; it is why  
Scornful armies sent  
The hostile plough

Over the levelled spoil of shattered walls.  
Be calm: my youthful passions drove me on  
And forced me to pen  
Rapid iambs

In my delusion: now I'd change my gall  
To charm so we'll be friends again, if I  
Recant all I said.  
Give back my heart!

## XVII

Swift Faunus often moves from Arcady  
To my sweet Mount Lucretilis where he  
Safeguards all my goats  
From sun and rain.

Freely the nannies through the safe woodlands  
Wander in search of strawberry-trees and thyme,  
Their kids unafraid  
Of the green snakes

Or Mars's wolves now that my Ustica's  
Valleys and smoothly-sloping rocks  
Have resonated  
With sweet piping.

The gods protect me, for my piety  
And muse please them. The country's wealth will flow  
With horn of plenty  
To you in joy:

The Dog-Star you'll escape in those deep vales  
And on a Teian lyre sing of Circe  
And Penelope  
(They loved one man):

You'll bring cups of your innocent Lesbian wine  
Beneath the shade, where Bacchus won't contend  
With Mars in battle  
Nor, Lycoris,

Shall you fear insolent Cyrus lest he seize

Your sweet self, tearing off your clinging wreath,  
And rip apart your  
Innocent clothes.

## XVIII

Venus, don't scatter any seed before the rows of sacred vines  
That flow around the gentle soil of Tibur and Catilus' walls,  
Because the god decreed all sober men should suffer much distress;  
No better way exists to chase away our harsh anxieties.  
After his cups who prattles on about grim war or poverty?  
Who does not, rather, father Bacchus, praise you and, fair Venus, you?  
And lest we should transcend the bounds that modest Bacchus set for us,  
The Centaurs' and the Lapiths' battle, waged in wine, forewarns us all,  
Like the Sithonians and frenzied Bacchus, splitting right from wrong  
In much too fine a line of passion. Lovely Bassareus, I'll not  
Against your will disturb you nor reveal to everyone  
Beneath the sun whatever has been hidden underneath those leaves.  
Withhold the savage tympani and Cybele's Berecyntian horns,  
Which blind self-love pursues and Glory, who lifts up her empty head  
Too high and Faith that is not Faith but more translucent than the glass.

## XIX

Now Cupid's savage mother  
And Bacchus, Theban Semele's progeny,  
And lewd Immoderation  
Bid me recall a love I thought was past.  
I burn for Glycera's beauty  
Who gleams more brightly than Parian stone:  
I burn for her sweet pertness  
And face too perilous to look upon.  
Now Venus holds me wholly,  
Deserting Cyprus, letting me not sing  
Of Scythians or the horses  
The Parthians wheel about or anything else.  
Set up the green turf, boys,  
And laurel, frankincense and last year's wine:  
A victim that is spotted  
Will come before us with more gentleness.

XX

Come, from cheap cups drink rough Sabine  
(In Greek jars stored by me and smeared  
With pitch, when you, a knight so fine,  
Patron, were cheered

In the theatre). Tibur's banks that sound  
Returned; the Vatican your acclaim  
In joy re-echoed all around,  
Spreading your fame.

Caecuban and Campanian  
Come drink with me: for you may see  
Falernian nor Formian  
Aren't known to me.

XXI

Sing of Diana, tender maids, and, lads,  
Sing of long-haired Cynthian Apollo  
And Latona, loved  
Fiercely by Jove.

Diana loves the streams and leafy groves  
Of cool Algidus and the dim-lit woods  
Of Erymanthus  
And green Cragus.

Likewise praise Tempe, boys, and Phoebus' isle  
Of Delos, for Apollo is acclaimed  
For his brother's lyre  
And his quiver.

XXII

A pure man needs no Moorish javelin;  
No bow with quivered darts and poisoned end  
Is ever needed by men free of sin,  
Fuscus, my friend.

Whether in Caucasus's barren waste  
They plan to travel or the hot Syrtes  
Or where those legendary waters taste  
The Hydaspes.

For when in the Sabine woods I, free of care,  
Unarmed, went past my farmstead's boundary,  
As I sang of my Lalage, right there  
A wolf fled me.

Warlike Apulia no such monster bred  
In its great woods of oak that range apace,  
Nor Iuba's land, a lions' nursery bed  
And arid place.

Set me on lifeless prairies where no tree  
Shall in the hot midsummer breezes rise,  
Where there's no mist or glum inclemency,  
No gloomy skies,

Where there's no habitation anywhere,  
Where Phoebus' chariot rumbles very near,  
Where, laughing sweetly, Lalage's my care,  
My darling dear.

### XXIII

Chloe, you flee me like a fawn that seeks  
Its frightened mother in the mountain wilds  
In aimless fear of  
Stray winds and woods.

Whether new spring is rustling with its leaves  
Or lizards thrust the bramble-bush aside,  
It feels a shudder  
In heart and limb.

No savage tiger or Gaetolian lion  
Am I, though, out to crush you: leave behind  
Your mother! You're ripe  
For men to woo!

### XXIV

How can we curb our grief at such a loss?  
Teach me the saddest songs, Melpomene,  
Whose father granted you a limpid voice  
And mastery of the lyre.

Does endless sleep weigh our Quintilius down?  
When will his equal be by Honour found,  
By Justice's sister, constant Loyalty,  
Or by our naked Truth?

So many good folk weep for him, but none  
More copiously, Virgil, than yourself.  
In vain you beg the gods to bring him back,  
Yet he was but a man.

Should you play sweetlier than Orpheus  
To all the listening trees, would his vain shade  
Return to us now Mercury has shown  
With his repulsive wand

He's not receptive to our prayers and brought  
Him into his dark throng? It's hard: but still  
Let patience make it supportable  
To right whatever's wrong.

## XXVI

The Muses' friend, I cast my gloom and fear  
To the Cretan tempests, unscathed by the king  
Who frightens his folk  
On icy shores,

Or what might fright Armenians. You who  
Rejoice in fresh springs, intertwine bright flowers,  
Make of them a wreath  
For Lamia,

Sweet Muse! My praise is nothing without you:  
You all must with the Lesbian plectrum,  
Performing new strains,  
Glorify him.

## XXVII

It's but a Thracian thing to fight with cups  
Meant for delight: those folk are barbarous!  
Keep modest Bacchus  
From bloody brawls.

The Persian scimitar has no concern  
At all with lamps and wine: my friends, restrain  
Your hostile scrapping.  
Relax! Lean back!

You wish me, too, to drink my portion of  
This heavy wine? Megilla's brother, tell  
What arrow shall cause  
Your blessed death.

No? Well – my terms! Whatever love holds you,  
The flames that burn you are not shameful ones;  
Always your sin is  
With noble maids.

Whatever it is, place it in faithful ears.  
Poor wretch, such a Charybdis makes you squirm.  
My boy, you deserve  
A worthier flame.

What witch, what wizard with Thessalian herbs  
Could cure you? Or what god? Even Pegasus,  
Trapped by Chimaera,  
Could scarce free you.

## XXVIII

Geographer of sea, earth, countless sand,  
Archytas, you lie underneath  
A tiny mound near to the Matine shore.  
It is no good to you now  
To test the skies and round celestial vault  
Since you possessed a mortal soul.  
For Tantalus, a guest of gods, yet died  
And Tithonus, tossed to the winds,

And, privy to Jove's secrets, Minos, too;  
Tartarus holds Pythagoras,  
Consigned to Orcus twice, who fought in Troy,  
Choosing the shield Euphorbus bore,  
And gave but skin and sinews to dark death  
(And in your eyes quite a dab hand  
At truth and nature). One night waits for us,  
The path of death travelled by all,  
Some sent to bloody Mars for spoil by the Furies,  
Some to the sea, greedy for souls;  
Both young and old are densely packed in death;  
Not one Proserpina leaves out.  
Me, too, Orion's swift friend the South Wind  
Drowned in Illyrian waves.  
Sailor, don't spare a speck of treacherous sand  
For my unburied bones and skull.  
However threatening the Eastern wind,  
Buffeting Venus's woods,  
You shall be safe and garner rich reward  
By the impartial Jupiter  
And Neptune, guarding sacred Tarentine.  
Do you not care that you'd commit  
A sin to harm your blameless progeny?  
Justice, perhaps, and arrogance  
Await you: don't leave me unanswered prayers;  
You won't be freed by offerings.  
Though you're in haste, delay is short: you're free  
With merely three handfuls of earth.

## XXIX

Iccius, do you envy Arab wealth,  
Preparing savage war on Saba's kings -  
Yet undefeated -  
And fusing chains

For the fierce Medes? What foreign maid will you  
Enslave, killing her beau? What noble boy  
With his scented hair  
Shall serve your wine,

Taught by his father to shoot eastern darts?  
Who'll say streams can't flow back up mountain paths  
And the Tiber, too,

When you, who vowed

Improvements? Would you now change the noble books  
Panaetius wrote and Socrates's school  
To a Spanish suit  
Of armour plate?

XXX

Venus, queen of Cnidus and Paphos,  
Leave your dear Cyprus! Come to the sweet shrine  
Of Glycera, who  
With much incense

Calls you. Wild Cupid, loose-gowned Graces and  
The Nymphs shall hasten here and, without you  
Less beautiful, Youth  
And Mercury, too.

XXXI

What does the poet ask of Apollo?  
What is his prayer as he pours out the wine?  
Not Sardinia's  
Fertile harvests,

Nor hot Calabria's splendid herds, nor gold  
Nor ivory from India, not fields  
Our silent Liris  
Calmly cuts through.

Let lucky farmers prune Calenian vines  
That wealthy merchants may from golden cups  
Quaff wine they purchased  
With Syrian goods,

Dear to the gods, each season visiting  
The ocean safely. Olives, chicory  
And simple mallows  
Are all *my* fare.

Phoebus, let me enjoy my lot in health,

And sound of mind, and live advancing years  
In honour, playing  
Upon the lyre.

XXXII

I'm called on. If in leisure time I've played,  
On you, my lyre, languishing in shade,  
Some one- or two-year song, now sing to me  
Of Italy.

Alcaeus was your model, bold in war,  
Who, still in arms or bringing safe to shore  
His ship that had been tossed upon the sea,  
Made melody

Of Bacchus, Muses, Venus, Cupid, too,  
Who ever clings to her, and Lycus, who  
With those so jet-black eyes is passing fair  
And jet-black hair.

O lyre, Phoebus' glory, ever dear  
At Jupiter's feasts, sweet balm that gives the cheer  
To toiling folk, I call you duly: be  
Our remedy!

XXXIII

Albus, don't overgrieve for Glycera,  
The fiend, nor sing again sad elegies,  
Complaining that a younger man, your trust  
Now broken, outshines you.

Narrow-browed, lovely Lycoris burns with love  
For Cyrus, Cyrus wants harsh Pholoë;  
Yet woodland does will sooner mate with wolves  
From the Apulian land

Than Pholoë shall sin with some base rake.  
So Venus says, who joyfully will place  
Together ill-assorted minds and bodies  
Beneath her savage yoke.

When I looked for a noble love, freed slave  
Myrtale held me in her charming chains,  
And she was more acerbic than the waves  
That smash Calabria's shores.

#### XXXIV

A scant, infrequent worshipper of gods,  
I roamed, expert in crazy wisdom; now  
I must sail back, forced  
To trace old paths.

Jove, mainly splitting clouds with lightning flame,  
Has driven thundering steeds and chariot  
At a rapid pace  
Through the clear air,

Where the dull earth and wandering rivers, where  
The Styx and hateful Taenarus' fearfulness  
And Atlas's peaks  
Together shook.

He can match high with low, bring down the famed,  
Raise the obscure; rapacious Fortune whirrs  
Shrilly and takes off  
The crown to Heaven.

#### XXXV

O goddess, Antium's queen, who ever lifts  
Mortals from humble roots or else converts  
Arrogant triumphs  
To funerals,

Poor farmers tensely court you, queen of the main;  
The sailor, in his Bithynian boat, calls you  
As he's cleaving through  
Carpathus' sea;

Fierce Dacians, wandering Scythians, cities, tribes,  
Harsh Latium, mothers of barbarian kings,

Purple-robed tyrants  
Have dread of you

Lest carelessly you smash their pillars, lest  
The great crowds urge the peaceful to warfare  
And smash to pieces  
Authority.

Grim Need's always before you: her bronze hand  
Holds spikes and wedges; present, too, you'll find,  
Are both callous barb  
And molten lead.

Hope and rare Loyalty, all dressed in white,  
Seek you, their friend, when you desert great houses  
Once they have put on  
The garb of grief.

The treacherous mob, the perjured whores all leave;  
The jar now dry, false friends, who are unable  
To bear our distress,  
Depart as well.

Guard Caesar when he probes the furthest isles  
Of Britain and fresh troops of youth who go  
Along the Red Sea  
To cow the East.

I feel the shame of scars and sin and our  
Dead brothers. What has our harsh epoch spared?  
What sin's untried? What,  
Through fear of gods,

Has youth not struck at? What shrines left alone?  
May you on fresh anvils fashion swords  
To harry the Arabs  
And Scythians.

### XXXVI

Incense, song and the blood  
Of a bullock delights the gods who closely guard  
Our Numidia, safe back  
From farthest West, showering kisses on

His dear companions,  
None more, though, than upon sweet Lamia,  
Remembering their youth  
Spent with the selfsame master, togas changed  
At the exact same time.  
Let Cretan chalk mark this momentous day,  
Let wine flow without end.  
Like Salii, let's stamp our feet nonstop,  
Don't let drunk Damalis  
Outquaff our Bassus with her Thracian draughts,  
Lay roses at our feast  
And long-lived parsley, brief-lived lilies, too.  
We'll ogle Damalis,  
Each of us, but she'll not be parted from  
Her latest beau of choice –  
She clasps him tighter than the wanton ivy.

XXXVII

Now must we drink, now beat unfettered feet  
Upon the earth, now dress each sacred couch.  
Friends, let us prepare  
A Salian feast.

Before today, to break out Caecuban wine  
From ancient jars would have been wrong, while *she*  
Madly planned ruin  
For our empire,

With her sick throng of reckless men, headstrong  
With many dreams and drunk with lucky fate.  
But her mad frenzy  
Was mollified

Since scarce one ship escaped her flames. Our prince  
Turned her wine-sodden plans to living fears,  
Dogging her closely  
As on she fled.

A hawk with gentle doves, a hunter who  
Chases swift hares across the snowy plains  
Of Thessaly, he  
Was bent to take

That deadly fiend, who planned a nobler death –  
No womanish fear of swords, no seeking out  
For her swift navy  
Some hidden shore;

She dared to look upon her ravished land  
Serenely, bravely touching poisonous asps  
So she might absorb  
Their dark venom,

More fiercely yet; no ordinary dame,  
She'd scorn to be caught by our ships, a queen  
No more, or to be  
Proud triumph's slave.

### XXXVIII

Child, Persian pomp I hate; I cannot bear  
To see wreaths bound with lime-tree bark; don't try  
To chase about to find the places where  
Late roses die.

Don't guild the simple myrtle zealously:  
It graces you, its servant, but no less,  
As I lie quaffing wine, it offers me  
Its shadiness.

