

HORACE SATIRES II

I

"Some think my satires are too sharp and go
Beyond their proper limits; others, though,
Think they are weak and that, in just one day,
A thousand such lines could be penned. I pray,
Trebatus, advise me what to do."
"Be quiet." "Do you say I should be through
With verse completely?" "Yes." "I think that's just,
But I can't sleep." "Well, let those folk who must
Have deep sleep rub themselves with oil and breast
The Tiber thrice and then, before their rest 10
At night, fill up with wine. But if you yearn
So much to write be brave enough to turn
To the great Caesar's deeds and you will glean
Great merit for your labours." "I am keen
But frail, good father; nobody can tell
Of troops bristling with spears or Gauls who fell
On shivered darts or of the Parthian
Shot from his steed." "But him you surely can
Describe as just and brave, as Scipio
Was by the wise Lucilius." "Although 20
I'll show my zeal at such a chance, I fear
No work of mine shall reach the attentive ear
Of Caesar if ill-tried: if awkwardly
You stroke him, he kicks back defensively."
"To satirize the rake Nomentanus

With bitter verse, or else Pantolabus
 The clown, is worse, when everyone, though free
 From him, feels fear, while full of enmity
 For you." "What should I do? Milonius,
 When all the lamps seem multitudinous 30
 Once he is in his cups, will take delight
 In dancing. Castor loves to play the knight
 On horseback, while his brother likes to spar.
 There are as many fancies as there are
 Folk in the world. *My bent* is writing verse
 Like that of Lucilius – and we're both worse
 Than him. His books, as to a faithful friend,
 Once showed his secrets: whether things would end
 Badly or well, he'd never turn elsewhere;
 Thus this old poets' life was laid quite bare 40
 As on a votive plaque. His devotee
 Am I, although I'm in a quandary
 Whether to call myself Lucanian
 Or Apulian: the Venusinian
 Husbandmen plough these countries' boundary
 After the exile of the Sabelli,
 Sent to make certain, as the histories say,
 The enemy may not make a foray
 Into that gap, or lest an instigation
 To war is generated by one nation 50
 Or the other. But no-one from what I've penned
 Will suffer harm. This pen, though, will defend
 Me like a sword still in its sheath: for when
 I'm shielded from all hostile highwaymen,

Why should I draw it? Father Jove, great lord,
 May rust accumulate around my sword
 And keep me peaceful! I will make him weep
 Who plagues me – you will hear me cry out, ‘Keep
 Away! – and you will hear his infamy
 Chanted throughout the city. Angrily 60
 Cervius calls down the law, while on her foes
 Canidia threatens poison; Turius throws
 Threats of great harm if someone should dispute
 A claim when *he* presides over a suit.
 With all their strength people will terrify
 Those they suspect – it’s natural. Well, I
 Am one of them. The wolf will bite his foe,
 The bull will use his horns: whence is this so?
 It comes from deep within. The debauchee
 Scaeva should not be put in custody 70
 Of his ancient mother: but he’s dutiful,
 His hands are clean. Amazing! See the bull –
 He does not use his teeth; the wolf won’t kick.
 But hemlock, honey-based, will do the trick
 And kill the poor old dame. In summary,
 Whether serene old age will come to me
 Or black death hover round me, opulent
 Or poor, in Rome, or whether I am sent
 By destiny to exile, I will write,
 Regardless of what exigencies might 80
 Affect my life.” “O child, I fear your life
 Will not be long and that you’ll feel the knife
 Of a powerful friend.” “What? When originally

Lucilius dared to write his poetry
In the same mode as I and took away
The mask with which men strutted to display
A fair face which was ugly still inside,
Did Laelius or he who qualified
For fame at Carthage hate his wit and rue
Metellus' lashing and the verses, too, 90
That lampooned Lupus? He took on each man,
The leaders and the commons, clan by clan,
While leaving out only morality
And those she loves. When into privacy
From public view the valorous Scipio
And mild, wise Laelius were moved to go
They talked and joked with him, waiting to eat
The cabbages that they'd put on to heat.
Although I don't have his prosperity
And genius, whatever I may be 100
Yet envy will be pressured to concede
That I have lived a happy life indeed
Among great men – while she tries hard to grind
Her teeth on something soft, yet she must find
A solid thing. Is there something, however,
In what I've said, dear friend, that irks you?" "Never.
But lest your ignorance of sacred laws
Should cause you some distress, give yourself pause:
If one's abused by scandalous verse, there'll be
A legal hearing and a penalty." 110
That's fine, then, if the verse is scandalous,
But if the poetry is decorous

And praised by Caesar...? If a man is tarred
By insults who deserves them while the bard
Is innocent...? With jocularly
The case is closed and you get off scot-free.

II

My friends, now learn how fine it is to be
Frugal – this is not *my* philosophy
But of Ofellus, a rustic misfit,
Though wise, the owner of a home-spun wit –
Not at a splendid table, dazzled by
The senseless splendours that arrest the eye,
Where falsity seems better than what's true;
No, ere we eat, let me discourse with you.
Why? If I'm able, I'll elucidate.
Every dishonourable magistrate 10
Ill estimates the truth. When you've pursued
The hare and have succumbed to lassitude
On your unweary horse or else the drill
Within the Roman army makes you ill,
Who'd rather play the Greek – whether your zeal
In the swift game of ball fails to reveal
Its toughness or the quoit effects the same
Exhaustion in you when you play the game,
Or when hard work makes you less finicky
And you crave food and drink, *then* let me see 20
You spurn plain food. Falernian qualified
With honey from Hymettus should provide

Your only source of drink. Unfortunately
Your butler's off, the dark and wintry sea
Hides all the fish, but salt and bread will ease
A grumpy stomach. Whence will you get these
And how? No costly seasoning provides
Consummate pleasure: no, in you it lies.
By sweating seek fine foods: for one who's pale
And fat from gluttony wrasse will avail 30
Nor oysters nor the lagois that's caught
Abroad. But if to you a peacock's brought
I'd scarce begrudge it you to satisfy
Your taste in lieu of pullet, ruined by
Vain pageant as you are: a rarity
Like that is costly, such a sight to see,
Elaborate tail and all. Is such a thing
Important?? Do you plan on swallowing
The plumage you admire? Is it still fine
When cooked? But since the meat on which you dine 40
Is just the same, you've been deceived. Ah well,
Let it be so. How is it you can tell
Whether this gaping pike was Tiber-bred
Or pulled out of the sea or at the head
Of the Tuscan river or, quite possibly,
Between the bridges? Such insanity!
You praise a three-pound mullet which you need
To cut in little pieces. Yes indeed,
You're misled by its look. Therefore tell me
Why you hate bulky pikes. They naturally 50
Are bigger, these are smaller. It's a rare

Occasion when the hungry spurn plain fare.

“To see a massive mullet on a dish

That’s also massive is my fervent wish,”

The Harpy-like crow cries. But hither blow,

You southern blasts, and taint its food, although

A boar and turbot freshly-brought in smell

Whenever a sickly gut is given hell

By too much food, preferring, when replete,

A turnip and some bitter leaves to eat. 60

A poor man’s rations, though, will sometimes grace

A royal feast: today there’s yet a place

For paltry eggs and olives. Recently

Gallonius was marked with infamy

Due to a sturgeon. Did the ocean breed

Fewer turbot then? The turbot was indeed

Quite safe, as was the stork which in its tree

Would perch, until Sempronius, that would-be

Praetor and mastermind, fooled you. And so

If there were someone who would let you know 70

That roasted cormorants were savoury,

The youth of Rome, prone to depravity,

Would lap them up. Ofellus would maintain

A sordid life differs from one that’s plain:

You’d shun that life in vain if you should flit

From it but to embrace its opposite.

Avidienus, called – and rightly so –

‘The Dog’, eats dogwood from the trees which grow

In woods and five-year olives, while he’ll spurn

To pour his wine out till he sees it turn 80

To acid (nobody could stand the smell),
Though weddings, birthdays – other days as well –
He honours, dressed in white, and, drop by drop,
From a two-pound jar of horn, that he might sop
His cabbage, he pours out the wine, although
He doesn't spare the vinegar. And so,
Which should the wise man choose? "The wolf this way
Will lean, the dog the other," as they say.
He'll be thought decent if he does not gall
His friends and cultured if he does not fall 90
Into either extreme. No-one will rate
A man as harsh while he may allocate
Tasks to his slaves, if I may take the case
Of old Albutius, and he does not grace
His guests with oily water: that as well
Is an egregious fault. Now let me tell
You of the gains that simple fare will bring:
Being healthy is most important thing;
There is impairment in diversity
When you recall the plain food recently 100
Residing in your gut, so don't combine
Thrush and the shell-fish caught upon your line
Or boiled and roasted things, for the sweet juice
Will turn to bile, the thick phlegm letting loose
A torment on your stomach. See how wan
All people are when they have feasted on
A questionable meal! The heaviness
Upon your body, caused by the excess
Of yesterday, will add weight to your heart

While fastening upon the earth a part 110
 Of your celestial spirit. Hurriedly
 A man may eat, then seek tranquillity
 In sleep, then rise, restored, to work, although
 At other times he'll have recourse to know
 Fine food, if he desires to celebrate
 A holy day or to invigorate
 His ailing flesh or, when senility
 Approaches, treat himself more temperately:
 But when ill health or old age pounce on you,
 What, while you're young and vigorous, can you do 120
 For that decline that you anticipate?
 Before our time our ancestors would rate
 A rank boar highly not because one's nose
 Didn't function but because they would suppose
 It could be eaten by a tardy guest,
 Although, when it was at its juiciest,
 The host would have eaten it. I would the earth
 Among those splendid men had given me birth.
 Do you praise fame, which stirs the ear much more
 Delightfully than music? There's a store 130
 Of shame and loss that massive turbots bring:
 Then factor in an uncle niggling
 At you, your neighbours, you too, who disdain
 Yourself and want to kill yourself – in vain,
 For you have not a single sou to buy
 A rope. "Accusing Trausius, " you cry,
 "For saying that is fine. But I possess
 Such revenues and such plenteousness

As to suffice three kings." Can't you invest,
Therefore, on better things some of the rest 140
Of what you have? Why should any one of us
Be needy while you are so prosperous?
Why do the ancient temples lack repair?
You reprobate, do you not even care
To lavish some of your prosperity
Upon the land you love? Are you to be
The one success? Your foes will laugh at you
In latter years. Which one, then, of these two
Shall better cope in times of uncertainty –
He who pursues abundance, finicky 150
In mind and body, or he who's content
With little and, in peace, is provident
And yet prepared in wartime? So that you
May know this better, as a boy I knew
Ofellus did not spend more lavishly
When he was wealthy than more recently
Now he is poor. A farmer tills the soil
That used to be his own and in his toil,
Along with herd and family, will say,
"I used to eat, upon a working-day, 160
Nothing but herbs and a bacon slice or so.
When called on by a friend of long ago
Or else a neighbour who could entertain
Me at my leisure while incessant rain
Poured down, no-one fared better than we did,
But not on fish – a pullet and a kid
Would do. Grapes, nuts and figs were our next course

And then carousing, with none to enforce
A limit to our drinking. Then we praised
Ceres so that our corn-stalks would be raised 170
Up high. She smoothed our brows with wine. Therefore
Let fortune rage, for what can she do more
To hamper me? How much more provident,
My children, have we been since the advent
Of the new owner? There is no decree
Of nature that's appointed him or me
Or anyone to rule the earth. I've met
With ruin at his hands, but later yet
Iniquity or being unaware
Of some sly law will grant him equal share 180
Of loss: he'll be outlived eventually
By someone else. It's now the property
Of Umbrenus, Offelus' heretofore,
But no-one will own it forevermore:
The job is my responsibility
Right now but then another's will it be.
It's for this reason that one must be tough
And bravely face one's foes when times are rough."

III

"You write so seldom that in one whole year
You ask for parchment but four times, I fear,
Irascibly revising, so despite
Wine and repose there's nothing that you write
Worth speaking of. So what are we to do?

You left the Saturnalia, didn't you,
Still sober, and came here? Say something, then,
That's worth your vow. Nothing? Don't blame your pen;
Don't thump the blameless wall, which must have been
Built underneath the gods' and poets' spleen. 10

You liked one promising great poetry
Once your small villa welcomed you, then free
From occupation, wherefore would you stow
Archilochus with Eupolis, Plato
With Menander? While appraising jealousy,
You forgo virtue. O such enmity
Will people heap upon you! You must shun
That temptress Sloth and everything you won
In better days." "For your perceptive view,
Damasippus, may the Heavens furnish you 20

With a barber! How do you know me so well?"

"Since all my business dealings went to hell,

I work for others. More solicitous

Was I once to know sly Sisyphus -

Where did he wash his feet? I wished to see

A piece of sculpture cast amateurishly,

For which I cannily bade a hundred grand;

And I alone would truly understand

How to buy parks and mansions at a fee

That turned a profit: Thus man labelled me 30

'Mercurial'" I know. I'm stunned to find

You're cured. Another malady, though, comes behind

The old one, oddly as if your headache

Or stitches turn around and start to take

Possession of your heart, as someone might,
When plagued by lethargy, begin to fight
His doctor. Do not act like that, I pray:
As long as that's the case, then have your way."
"Old friend, don't fool yourself: you're crazy, too.
Aren't all of us ? If everything is true 40
Sertorius speaks of – it's from him I know
These precepts: he commanded me to grow
A philosophical beard, consoling me,
And bade me to return light-heartedly
From the Fabrician bridge, for in despair
I'd planned to shroud my head and through the air
Leap down into the river. Luckily,
He happened to be there and said to me,
'Shun doing something shameful. You've been caught
By bogus shame and for that you'll be thought 50
Mad among madmen.' "What's insanity?"
I'll ask you first; if you exclusively
Possess it, from now on 'I'll save my breath
And guarantee to you a valiant death.
The students of Chrysippus and his school
Consider every man to be a fool
When folly and not knowing what is true
Drive blindly on. Old men, yes, great kings too,
Embody this precept, sagacious men
Alone excepted. So acknowledge, then, 60
That those who charge you with insanity
Are mad themselves: Take the analogy
Of wanderers in a forest – they may veer

Through error from their path, some going here,
Some there, all lost however. Think, therefore,
Yourself no madder than he who's no more
Clever than you, who mocks you but will find
That someone's hung a tale on *his* behind.
Some fools fear harmless things and moan that rocks
And fires and rivers in the field are blocks 70
That thwart their progress. There are others, too,
Not one scintilla wiser, who dash through
Fires and rivers. Should his family -
Dear mother, father, in the company
Of sister, wife and other kinsmen – shout,
“A massive ditch! A bigger rock! Watch out!”
He'd heed no ore than Fuscus in the past,
Who nodded off while drunk among the cast.
Twelve hundred patrons in the theatre bawled,
As though the ghost of Polydore had called, 80
“Mother, I bid you” so that they might wake
Drunk 'Ilione'. Many people make
Such errors, as I'll quickly prove to you.
Damasippus shows his fatuousness due to
His buying ancient statues. What of those
Who are the creditors? Do you suppose
They're mad as well? Well if I were to say
“Accept this. You have no need to repay”
Are you insane to take it? Or maybe
Yet crazier to turn down Mercury 90
Who offers you such booty? It won't do
If for ten thousand sesterces that's due

You offer banker Nerius a bond;
 Then factor in the notes – to go beyond
 That case – of sly Cicuta: add five score
 Of pledges (even, p'raps, nine hundred more).
 And yet that rascal pRoteus will evade
 These chains and then, when charges have been laid,
 He'll laugh behind his mask and seem to be
 A boar, a bird, a rock may be a tree. 100
 If bungled business proves a man's insane
 And vice versa, Perillus's brain
 Is more decayed than yours will ever be,
 For he has ordained an indemnity
 That you van never honour. He who's wan
 With foul ambition, hewho dwells upon
 His love of wealth or with luxuriousness
 And superstition feels a great excess
 Of heat, or any other malady
 Of the mind, I bid you to sit comfortably 110
 And heed me, one by one, as I recount
 That you're all crazy. The largest amount
 Of hellebore should go to those whom greed
 Has poisoned. I don't know if there's a need
 To give all Ancyra the hellebore.
 Staberius' heirs would on his tombstone score
 What he had left them in his testament:
 If they did not, under requirement
 They showed the Roman populace ten score
 Of gladiators paired, and, furthermore, 120
 A feats, placed ih the hands of Arrius,

That offered corn as multitudinous
As Africa provides. "If this is ill
Or good that I have done, it was my will."
Staberius in his sagacity
Forsaw these words, or so it seemed to me.
What, therefore, was his purpose when he stressed
That what he left his heirs should be impressed
Upon his tombstone? While he lived, he thought
That penury was sinful and he sought 130
To shun it with the greatest earnestness;
Thus, had he died with just one farthing less,
He would have loathed himself. "Morality,
Fame, glory, all that is mortality,
All things divine bow down to wealth, and so
That man who's made a pile is bound to grow
In fame, in fairness and in bravery."
"And wisdom?" Yes, he'll be a king if he
Should wish. It was his hope the pile he made,
As if by good, would many an accolade
Bring him. Greek Aristippus in one way
Was like that man, for he was heard to say
Of Libya to his flock of servants, "Throw
The gold away – its burden makes us slow."
Which is the crazier? No instance will
Suffice that solves a dispute, being still
Another in its place. If someone paid
Out money for some lyres and then laid
Them all aside, though caring not one scrap
For lyres or Muses, if some other chap 150

Brought last and chisels even though his trade
Was not a cobbler's, if another laid
Out money for some nautical supplies
Although he didn't deal in merchandise,
He'd be considered mad deservedly.
But how dissimilar from all these is he
Who piles up cash and gold yet does not see
How he may make use of them and, as though
They were divine, fears touching them? And what
About the man who has acquired a lot 160
Of corn? He lies beside it constantly
And guards it with a long club: but will he
Touch but a grain? No. He would rather dine
On bitter leaves: a thousand jars of wine,
Both Chian and Falernian, he's laid up -
With full three hundred thousand he'll not sup
A drop; he'll drink sharp vinegar instead;
At seventy-nine, though he owns a bedspread
That's rotting in his closet, eaten through
By worms and moths, over the floor he'll strew 170
Some straw to sleep on, but not many find
Him mad, because the great part of mankind
Has been afflicted with this malady.
Foolish old man, the hated enemy
Of the gods, is it that so that you heir may run
Right through your wealth – your freedman or your son -
That you should guard it so? Does poverty
Alarm you? What minuscule quantity
Will each day lose you if a better brand

Of oil you pour upon your cabbage and 180

Your dandruffed, uncombed head" If aught will do,

Why lie, rob, pilfer everywhere? Are you

In your own mind? If you began to throw

Stones at the crowd and your own servants, though

You paid good money for them, every lad

And every lass would yell at you, "You're mad!";

If you strangled your wife or did away

Through poison your own mother, would you say

You're sane? Come now this isn't Argos! You

Are not Orestes who with steel blade slew 190

His mother. Do you think, once she was slain,

He *then* went mad, not driven quite insane

Already by the Furies ere that blade

Upon his other's jugular was made

To seethe? After folk judged Orestes' mind

To be unhinged, he did nothing you'd find

Flagrant. He did not dare to kill his friend

Pylades with his sword or make an end

Of Electra, merely cursing them when he

Was gripped by fierce impetuosity - 200

He called her 'Fury' and was odious

To Pylades as well. Opimius

Was poor though hemmed in by a fine array

Of gold and silver: on a holiday

From some cheap scoop he'd regularly quaff

Although a workday wine that had gone off

Was what he'd drink; he once was brought so low

By a great torpor that his heir would go

About his keys and coffers gleefully.

His doctor, though, in speedy loyalty 210

Perceived him in this way – at his command'

A table should be brought before him and

His sacks of money poured on it, and then

It should be counted by a crowd of men.

That got him up! Then he went on to say

"Guard what you have lest it be swept away

By heirs?" "While I'm alive?" "Oh yes indeed:

Watch out that you *may* live." "What do I need?"

"Your blood will fail you if you're indigent:

Your rotting stomach needs strong nourishment. 220

Come, take a little rice." "Expensive?" "No,

It's very cheap." "How much?" "Eight asses." "So

What does it matter if a malady

Or theft kills me?" "Then who is sane?" "Why, he

Who isn't dim.' 'The miser?' 'Mad *and* dim.'

'He who's not greedy – what do we call him?

Sane?' 'No.' 'Why, Stoic?' 'I will tell you. Take

This case: "My patient has no stomach-ache,"

Comments Cratinus. May he get up, then? He

Will tell him no: a piercing malady 230

Has put his lungs and kidneys in a place

Of danger. He's no liar, he's not base.

So let him to his hares offer a pig;

He's enterprising and his hopes are big.

To the port of Antiagra let him cruise:

What does it matter if you never use

Your goods or hurl them in a yawning ditch?

Opimius with an old estate was rich -
 He called his two sons to him as he lay
 Dying upon his bed, or so they say, 240
 And gave them his two farms: he said to one,
 "I saw you take your dice, Aulus my son,
 And conkers in your toga that you may
 Give them to friends or gamble them away,"
 And to the other said, "Tiberius,
 You stuffed yours in a hole, solicitous
 To hide them. I feared that you would pursue
 Two different, crazy ways, the two of you -
 Aulus, you would espouse Nomentanus
 While to Cicuta, you, Tiberius, 250
 Are leaning. By our own divinities
 I beg you – don't diminish the degrees
 Of what I think is right, Tiberius,
 And nature keeps in check, while you, Aulus,
 Must not increase them. I will bind you both,
 Should fame entice you, with a solemn oath:
 If a praetor or an aedile you became,
 May you be cursed with infamy and shame."
 Would you grow poor with gifts of beans and peas
 And lupins so that you may stroll at ease 260
 In the Circus or be a bronze effigy,
 Devoid of fields, without a legacy,
 And all because you're eager to attain
 The praise Agrippa has? Are you insane??
 You're like a fox attempting artfully
 To ape the noble lion. Although we

Would bury Ajax, why would you taboo
Our wishes, Agamemnon? "Over ou
I'm king." as his subject, I make appeal
No more. "I'm fair and well. If one should feel 270
That i'm unjust, I let him speak his mind."
"Great king, may you leave captive Troy behind
And sail back home. Will you enable me
To question you? Please answer honestly."
"Ask." "Why does Ajax, surpassed only by
Achilles as a hero, rotting lie,
So often praised in records, and like whom
So many youths lack an ancestral tomb?
King Priam and his people take delight
In this disgrace." "Ajax, when at the height 280
Of madness, killed a thousand sheep as he
Kept yelling out that he was killing me,
Menelaus and Ulysses." "Reprobate,
You sent your darling daughter to her fate
Upon an altar at Aulis instead
Of a sacrificial calf and on her head
Sprinkled salt cake. Why? In his lunacy
What was it Ajax did? His family
He spared- he slew but sheep. He roundly cursed
The sons of Atreus but this was the worst 290
He ever did. He caused no injury
To Ulysses and Teucer." "As for me,
So that the Greek fleet might be liberated
From hostile shores, ith prudence I placated
The gods with blood." "Your daughter's!" "Yes, that's true,

But not in madness." He who holds a view
That's wrong with evil thoughts will always be
Thought mad: whether it's through stupidity
Or anger that he happens to do wrong,
It will not matter. When he slew that throng 300
Of innocent sheep he was supposed distraught:
Your 'prudent' crime was just because you thought
Of empty titles. Can your mind be sound
When full of sin? If you would lug around
A sweet lamb in your litter and supply
Clothes for it, handmaids, gold and call it by
The name of Babe or Goldilocks and plan
To give it as a wife to some fine man,
A praetor would take your authority
From you and make one of your family 310
Your guardian. Is he right in the head
Who vows a mute lamb to a man instead
Of his own daughter? Well, the answer's 'No!'
Therefore, where wayward doltishness,
There, too, will madness. Where a fiend you'll find
You'll find a madman. He who's ever blind
To fame's inconstancy will learn that he
Will hear the thunder of Bellona, she
Who basks in carnage. Let us, then, condemn
Indulgence and Nomentanus, for them 320
Who squander all their money foolishly
Reason will prove mad Once his legacy
One man received, he called the fishmonger,
The poulterer, perfumer, fruiterer,

The impious mob out upon Tuscan Street,
Clowns, sausage-makers, peddlers of meat
Down in Velebrum, saying that at sunrise
they should come to his house. Surprise, surprise!
They came in droves. A pander then spoke out:
"All I and these fine men, have little doubt, 330
Is yours. Collect it now or the next day."
Hear what that decent then had to say:
"Upon Lacanian snow, booted, you sleep
That may eat boar; from the sea you sweep
Up fish. I'm lazy and should not possess
As much as this, so take up this largess:
Take ten; you, too, you triple! For your spouse
When called at midnight, rushes from your house."
Asopus' son a fine pearl extricated
From Metella's ear which e then saturated 340
With vinegar that he might swiftly drink
A million sesterces; but don't you think
That in a rapid river or some drain
He could have thrown it? Those exalted twain,
The trifling sons of Quintus Arrius,
Would dine on nightingales, so sumptuous
And choice? How should they be set down? Should they
Be marked with chalk as sane or put away,
With charcoal smeared? Now, if a man should start
To make dolls'-houses, rein mice to a cart, 350
Play odds and evens or prefer to ride
A hobby-horse, you would be justified
In thinking him insane, and if to be

In love were thought to act more childishly
Than that, and if your playing in the muck
As though you were a child or keen to fuck
A harlot did not matter, would you be
Another Polemon, your malady
Forgotten, elbow-puffs all put away,
Garters, cravats? For Polemon, as they say, 360
In private cast away the flowers he kept
Around his neck the moment he was swept
way by the frugal master's tutoring.

When to an angry boy an offering
Of apples you hold out, he tells you 'No!'
“Take them young puppy”: he denies you, though
if you don't give, he wants them. Is the man
Whose lover shuts him out so different than
This lad? That man's full of anxiety -

“Should I go back to her just so that she 370
Can cast me off again as there I'll lie
Against the hated lamp-posts? Or should I
Go when she calls? Or should I contemplate
Ending my pain? She bans me from her gate;
She calls me back; so should I go? Nofear,
Not even if she begs. Look who comes here -
Her slave, much wiser. “Anything,” says he,
“Good sir, that's lacking all sagacity
And measure can't be ruled by reasoning.

In love both peace and war can leave a sting. 380
Should you attempt to figure these things out,
Which almost like a storm blow all about

And shift with sightless reason, you'd explain
No more than if you planned to go insane
B rhyme and reason." Come on, when you flick
Your apple's seeds and say, 'That does the trick',
Because they hit the ceiling and rejoice,
Are you not mad? If with your ancient voice
You babble, does it render you more bright
Than a child who builds dolls'-houses? Now unite 390
Blood with this silliness and agitate
The fire with your sword. For when, of late,
Marius stabbed Hellas and instantly
Leapt to his death, was that insanity?
Would you accuse him of an unsound mind
Or use routine words of a similar kind,
As is your wont? There was an old freedman
Who fasted in the morning as he ran
From shrine to shrine with clean hands, and he said,
"Exclude me from the numbers of the dead - 400
Yes, me alone: you gods can easily
Effect this." This man had his sanity
I eyes and ears. When he gained freedom, though,
About his mind his master would not go
So far as to admit such sanity.
Chrysippus would the fecund family
Of Menenius include among that crowd.
"O Jupiter, " a mother cried out loud,
"Who give and take away great misery" -
Her son for five months in infirmity 410
Had lain in bed - "if you would take away

His fever, my boy, on that very day
That you decree a fast, shall at cockcrow
Stand naked in the Tiber." Thus, although
Chance or a doctor takes him from the brim
Of death, the doting mother quenches him
Upon a chilly bank, where once again
He'll feel the fever. What disorder, then,
Afflicts her mind? Irrationality!

Stertinius gave to me in amity - 420

He is the eighth wise man – these tools that I
Will live unscathed. Whoever calls me by
The name of madman shall hear back from me
As much abuse and learn always to see
The bag behind his back. "May everything
Be profitable since your ruining.

O stoic man! However, in what way
(Of all of them) am I mad, would you say?
I think I'm sane." "When the poor son she slew
And bore his severed head, did Agave , too, 400

Think herself sane?" "Alright, I own that I
Am foolish and insane. But clarify
In what way I am mad." "Well, first of all,
You are but two feet high, you ape the tall
And laugh at Turbo strutting pompously,
His armour much too bulky. Could you be
Less daft than he? When you try rivalling
Maecenas, you in every single thing
Are less than he. A frog was not around
When her young ones when by a calf's foot had been ground 410

Into the earth: it missed one who then said
 To his mother that his brethren now lay dead,
 Crushed by a massive beast. 'How big?' said she.
 She puffed herself up. 'Could it really be
 That big?' But he said, 'Half as much again'.
 She puffed up more and more. 'So this big, then?'
 'You'd burst in vain.' This isn't far away
 From you. Now add your poems – that is to say
 Put oil into the fire. If any man
 Who's sane did this, then surely you, too, can. 420
 I'll leave out your vile rage." "Stop there." "You live
 Beyond your means -" "O Damasippus, give
 Thought to your own affairs." "- you're clearly mad
 As thousands of young girls and many a lad
 As well." "A victim of insanity
 For long, please spare a lesser madman – me."

IV

"Whence are you here, and whither, Catius?"
 "No time to talk, for I'm desirous
 To earn new principles that have outdone
 Pythagoras, wise Plato and that one
 Charged by Anytus." "I confess my crime -
 I interrupted you at a bad time.
 Excuse me, sir. If something's slipped your mind,
 You'll soon retrieve it. For whatever kind
 Of talent you possess, whether by skill
 Or disposition, you have gained it. Still 10
 In both you're awesome." "But I was concerned

How I might keep these precepts that I've learned,
 Since they are subtle, spoken subtly."
 "Tell me your teacher's name and say if he
 Is Roman or a foreigner." "I know
 Them all by heart and will recite them, though
 The author I'll conceal. Serve eggs that are
 Elliptical, for they are whiter far
 And juicier than the round, for their hard shell
 Contains a male yolk. Cabbages, as well, 20
 Are sweeter when they're planted in the fields
 Than the suburban ones. A garden yields
 Insipid fruit when hosed excessively.
 Should an evening guest call on you suddenly
 Or on an old hen he won't wish to dine,
 Immerse it live in new Falernian wine -
 This makes it tender. Mushrooms turn out best
 When grown in meadows: mistrust all the rest.
 Who eats black mulberries to end his meals,
 Picked from a tree before the sun reveals 30
 Its strength, will be robust all summer long.
 Aufidius doused his honey in his strong
 Falernian, although one should take pains
 To pour but what is mild into his veins.
 It's better that you flush out with mild mead
 Your stomach, and, should it stay hard and need
 Emollients, it will be unblocked by
 Limpets and cockles which you must apply
 With sorrel leaves, Coan white wine as well.
 The slippery shell-fish are induced to swell 40

By new moons: but a multiplicity
Of shell-fish can be found in every sea.
The Lucrine mussel is more flavourful
Than Baiae's murex; oysters that they pull
From Colchian seas are best, which may be said
Of crayfish from Misenum; scallops bred
In soft Tarentum are its boast. Let none
Be rash enough to sermonize upon
The art of dining – that is, not unless
He's conned it well, acquiring his prowess 50
In subtle tastes. You must not sweep away
Fish from a costly stall while you can't say
What sauce is more appropriate, what grilled meat
Will cause a guest to sit up at his seat,
Quite satisfied. A boar that has been fed
In Umbria on what a holm-oak's shed
Should bend the plate of that man who would shun
All tasteless meat, for the Laurentian one,
Fattened on sedge and reeds, is flavourless.
The vineyard does not always give to us 60
Edible she-goats. Wise men will pursue
A pregnant hare for they are partial to
Her shoulders. Men sought out the quality
And age of fowl and fishes formerly
But I was first to find them. Some men make
Only new kinds of pastry. Big mistake,
Investing all your care on just one thing,
As though were a fellow labouring
To keep his wine in shape, improvident

About which olive oil ought to be spent 70

Upon his fish. Decant your Massic wine

Al fresco when the weather's very fine,

For if there should be any cloudiness there,

It will be cleared by the nocturnal air,

As will its nasty smell; all tastiness

Is gone, however, if you should express

It all through linen. All impurities

Will sink if you mix in Surrentine lees

With Falernian, for if a pigeon's egg

Is used to catch them, every single dreg 80

Is separated. Your drunk, languid guest

Is freshened if you get him to ingest

Roast shrimps and cockles from an African sea,

For lettuce floats on his sour gut once he

Is full of wine: it craves to be renewed

With sausage or with any hot dish stewed

In some foul cook-house. It's worthwhile to con

Rich dressings. The base one relies upon

Sweet oil, with which 'ts fitting to combine

An undiluted and full-bodied wine 90

And pickles only from Byzantium.

When, mixed with shredded spices, it has come

To the boil, upon it drip Corycian

Saffron and over it add Venafran

Olive oil that from the berry has been pressed.

In taste Picenian apples are the best,

Although Tiburtian ones are to the eye

More pleasing. It is better to put by

Venuculan grapes in pots. It's better, too,
To cure Albanian ones with smoke. Now, you 100
May know I was the first to serve up these
With apples, first as well to serve wine-lees
With herring, and white pepper that's been ground
With black, all of which is set around
Simple side-plates. To spend three thou on fish
Is shameful – and then in a narrow dish
To cramp the sprawling things! We're nauseous
When the slave with greasy fingers offers us
A cup (he's scoffed the pickings that he stole!)
Or grime clings to the ancient mixing-bowl. 110
One's trays and mats and scrapings all are cheap,
But when they're shipped, the shame would make one weep.
Would you sweep mosaic stone with a filthy broom
Or palm or else Tyrian carpet-loom
Over an unwashed couch? Did you forget
That the less fuss and outlay you have met
The more you are to blame that you would be
Than by neglecting what the nobility
Alone may eat?" Please, learned Catius,
By the gods and the love between the two of us, 120
Whenever you go to hear this man, take me
As well, for though you tell so accurately
What he has taught you, yet your own account
Cannot deliver quite the same amount
Of pleasure: for his face I have to see
And how he lectures – these things happily
You know, since you were there, and thus dismiss.

I have no small solicitude in this -
To drink at distant fountains – for to learn
The precepts of a happy life I yearn.

V

“Beside, Teiresias, what you've told to me
Tell me also by what dexterity
And method I'll be able to restore
The fortune I have lost. You laugh! What for?”
“It's not enough, then, for a man of guile
To sail back home to Ithaca and smile
Upon the household gods?” O you who lie
To none, see how by your prophecy I,
Naked and poor, go home. My cattle there
Are not untouched, my collar's almost bare. 10
Those suitors are to blame. Ability
And birth count less than weed pulled from the sea
If wealth is lacking.” “I'll cut to the chase -
Since you are horrified that you may face
Insolvency, hear how you may retrieve
Your wealth. If from someone you should receive
A thrush perhaps, then let the beast take wing
To where a great estate lies glistening,
Owned by an old man. Let the rich man eat
The tasty apples and whatever's sweet 20
within your well-kept farm before your Lar
Has done so, for he's more respected far.
He may be perjured, have no family,

Perhaps a fratricide, a refugee,
Yet if he wants you to, accompany
Him on his outside." "What? Would you have me
Go cheek-by-jowl with filthy slaves'? For thus
I was not back in Troy, but vigorous
And vying with the best. " "Then you will be
Penniless." "I'll force myself this misery 30
To bear; I've suffered worse than this before,
So quickly prophet, say how I may store
Up piles of lovely cash." "I'll say again
What I've just said – go after ancient men,
Snap up their wills. If one or two should dare
To take the bait unscathed, do not despair
Or quit the chase. Should anybody call
A case to court, whether it's large or small,
Speak for the childless crook against the man
With a fecund wife and sons, who's worthier than 40
The other. Say "Quintus" or, possibly,
"Publius" – fastidious ears greet joyfully
One's given name - " your worth makes me your friend.
I know the legal quirks and can defend
A case; I'd rather someone snatched from me
My eyes than cause the slightest paucity
For you; you'll not be duped nor will you brook
Defeat." Bid him go straight back home and look
To his own health. Defend him at the bar;
Be steadfast and endure, whether the Dog Star 50
Splits statues or far Furius copiously
Spews snow upon the Alps. 'Oh, can't you see,'

Says someone with a nudge, 'how dexterous,
 Constant and for his friends industrious
 He is?" More tunnies then will reach your store
 Of fish. If some rich bachelor, furthermore,
 Hs brought up someone else's ailing son,
 Lest your indulgence should by anyone
 Seem suspect, inch your hope up gradually
 That you'll soon be the second legatee, 60
 And if the lad should choose to die, you'll fill
 The void. This rarely fails. If then the will
 Is given you to read push it away,
 Declining it, bt only so you may
 Be glancing quickly, see the heading there,
 The name(s) beneath – are you the only heir?
 Or one of many? Some bailiff's tiro
 From time to time will dupe the gaping crow
 And make of Nasica a travesty
 Who tried to be Coranus' legatee. 70
 "Are you insane?" Or are you having fun
 By thus confusing me?' "Laertes' son,
 My lecture will prove true – or not. To me
 Apollo gave the gift of prophecy."
 'Then tell to me what it's meant to convey,
 If you're allowed to do o." "On that day
 The Parthian scourge, born of the family
 Of great Aeneas, will by land and sea
 Prove faous, this Coranus will then wed
 The daughter of Nasica, who feels dread 80
 At paying debts in full. He then will hand

His father-in-law the will and he'll demand
 He read it. He'll refuse it frequently,
 But finally he'll read it silently
 And find no legacy but heartache.
 Should some sly woman or a freedman take
 Care of a mad old man, become their pal.
 Praise them that in your absence you too shall
 Be praised. This helps, but you will best excel
 If you in person storm the citadel. 90
 If he, an idiot, wrote bad poetry,
 Praise him if he's inclined to lechery.
 Don't wait for him to ask you – just propose
 Your own Penelope." Do you suppose
 A chaste and sober girl ever agreed
 To that which many beaux have failed to lead
 Away from virtue?" Multitudinous
 Young men, indeed, arrived, penurious
 However, keen to eat up all the house
 Rather than have a dalliance with your spouse. 100
 So that explains Penelope's continence:
 Once tasting, though, an old man's dalliance
 And profits shared with you, she'll, like a bitch,
 For her dead quarry feel a constant itch.
 Listen to this: when to old age I'd grown,
 By her own will a wicked Theban crone
 Was carried, when a corpse, by her own heir
 Upon his naked shoulders, everywhere
 Her body well anointed. He, maybe,
 Thought even when deceased she thus might flee 110

From him, for he'd harassed her, I suspect
A great deal while she lived. Be circumspect
In your approach. Be tireless, but remain
This side of excess. Talkativeness will pain
The dour and cranky. On the other hand
Do not be mum. Like comic Davus, stand
With hand on one side, as though your dismay
Were great. Be pliant. On a windy day
Warn him to cover up his head. The tide
Of people packed about him push aside. 120
If he's inclined to chat, lend him your ear.
If he is much too passionate to hear
Your praise, praise him until, up to the skies
Lifting his hands, 'No more – enough', he cries.
With high-flown words inflate his vanity.
When he's freed you from your long slavery
And care of him you hear the old man moan,
'Let Ulysses be my heir that he may own
One-fourth of your estate – for you've been wide
Awake for this – say, 'Has my dear friend died?' 130
How shall I find a man so staunch and true?'
Let drop such words from time to time; if you
Are able, weep a little, but take care
To hide the joy your countenance may lay bare,
And if the tomb's left up to you, lash out
In its construction – then you'll hear a shout
Of praise from neighbours. 'If an old co-heir
Had a bad cough, ask him if from your share
He'd like to buy a farm or house and say

You'd gladly sell It him and he could pay 140
A pittance. Queen Proserpina's dragging me
Away. Farewell, and live propitiously.

VI

I've always craved a modest piece of ground
With a garden near my house that's set around
A constant fountain, and a little wood
As well. The gods have proved much more than good
to me. All's excellent. O Mercury,
I just ask that in perpetuity
They will be mine. If I've not made progress
Through sin or might make my possessions less
By overnight, if I don't foolishly
Complain of the irregularity 10
Of one near corner and hope to possession
It too, O may a stroke of happiness
Show me an urn of silver, as he found
A fortune who, before he did, was bound
To till the land in servitude, which he
Then bought, rewarded by his amity
With Hercules! Since I am satisfied
With what I have, I beg you to provide
For cattle (but don't swell my head) and be
My guardian, as for you is customary. 20
Note that I've left the city of Rome to dwell
Among the hills in my snug citadel.
What better matter for the verse I write

My mundane Muse, my satires? Here the blight
Of foul ambition, South Wind's leaden stress
And the oppressive Fall, the sharp goddess
Libitina's gain, can't slay me. O Janus,
The father of the morning (if by us
You wish thus to be called) by whom the sweat
And toil of life and business has been set - 30
So the fods will – begin my song for me.
You drag me off to court for surety: North Wind burst
'Be quick, for someone else may get there first.'
So I must go, even should the North Wind burst
Across the land or winter brings a day
Of snow. Then even though my actions may
Distress me, I am clear in what I speak.
Then, struggling through the bustling mob, I seek
To best the tardier. 'Are you insane?
What do you want? What is wrong with your brain?' 40
'I'm cursed by some vile man.' 'Yes, jostle through
All obstacles, for you are anxious to
Race back to Maecenas, who fills your head.'
This pleases me as though I have been fed
With honey – I'll not lie. But once I've reached
The gloomy Esquiline, there am I breached
By other people's interests which bound
About, into my head and all around
My person. 'Hey, two hours past daybreak,'
Says Roscius, 'your stand you'll have to take 50
At court.' 'The clerks entreat you to recall
That a public matter that concerns us all

Requires you to coe today.' 'Appeal
 To your Maecenas to append his seal
 To these reports.' 'I'll try,' I say, but he
 Says, 'If you will, you can,' insistently.
 Nearly eight years have passed since I've been counted
 Part of Maecenas' set, though it's amounted
 So far to being one he'd take to ride
 On journeys in his chariot and confide 60
 Such trifles as 'What time is it?', 'Tell me -
 Do you believe the chicken from Thrace will be
 A match for the Syrian?'he morning air
 Nips those who do not take sufficient care!' -
 What may be poured into a careless ear -
 And constantly I have from year to year
 Been envied. Everyone says Fortune's Son"
 Has been at theatres his companion
 And plays ball on the Campus with him,too.
 Should some dire rumour emanating through 70
 The streets come from the Forum, I am sought
 For counsel, many asking,'D'you know aught
 About the Dacian War? Surely you know
Something, so near the godhead?' 'I don't.' 'Oh,
 You're such a tease.' 'Then put me to the screws,
 You gods, for I have heard the slightest news.'
 'The lands that Caesar vowed his soldiery
 Would have – now, will they be in Sicily
 Or Italy?' They're filled with great surprise
 At how I shape my answers and surmise 80
 That I have deep, dark secrets. I'm denied

My peace by things like these. O countryside,
 When will I see you and have your consent
 To read the ancients in retirement
 And sleep, forgetting all anxiety,
 With beans (part of Pythagoras' family)
 And cabbages, with bacon fat, well greased,
 Set on my table. What a godly feast,
 What godly evenings! There my friends will eat
 with me before my Lar; left-over meat 90
 I'll feed my saucy slaves. As they incline,
 Each guest will drink a small amount of wine
 Or large, quite free from crazy regulations.
 Then we start to indulge in conversations,
 But not about where other people dwell,
 Their houses and their villas, or how well
 Lapos can dance, but what purports to us -
 What we regard to be injurious
 To ignorance: whether a man can be
 More blessed with riches or with probity, 100
 What leads us to friendship, self-interest
 Or virtue, or how we can study best
 The good, and what's perfection. Carius,
 My neighbour, on our theme is garrulous
 With old tales. If one foolishly should praise
 Arellius' irksome wealth, "In earlier days,"
 He says, "a country mouse, as folk declare,
 Took a town mouse into his scanty lair,
 An old, old friend. Unceremonious, 110
 Yet he could open up his narrow soul

To bring a buddy into his mousehole.
In short, his long oats and his stored chick-peas
He'd not deny his friend. As well as these
He brought him bits of bacon which he bore
Between his teeth and a dry plum, what's more,
Because he wished, with this variety,
To get the better of the delicacy
Of his friend, who barely ate a single thing,
His host meanwhile reduced to swallowing 120
Some grain and a darnel, while he would rest
On a straw bed, leaving his friend the best.
His guest said, How could you, my friend, live here
Within a glade and on a ridge so sheer?
Would you not mingle with society
In Rome and leave the wild wood's misery?
Come on with me, let's leave this place, for all
Are mortal: death awaits, whether we're small
Or large. So let's live joyfully, my friend,
And be aware how soon will be our end.' 130
The peasant mouse was struck by what he said,
And from his lair the town mouse swiftly sped.
They left together with the hope to creep
Beneath Rome's walls while people were asleep.
Four hours from dawn they found themselves inside
A gorgeous palace whose carpets were dyed
With crimson grain; couches of ivory
Had been positioned on them. They could see
Great remnants of a fine feast – scraps galore
In baskets – that was held the night before. 140

The peasant then was placed by the urban mouse
Upon the splendid carpet: through the house
The latter bustled, while his friend at ease
Lounged, taking in his host's civilities,
First tasting every scrap. What jubilation
The peasant took in this changed situation,
Plying the boon companion happily.
And then the doors were rattled noisily.
Shaken, they ran straight through the hall in fear
And utter turmoil at what they could hear. 150
The sound of mastiff dogs ranged all about
The lofty house. The rustic, with a shout,
Cried out, 'A life like this is not for me,
And so farewell: I'll find security
Within the woodland hollow where I dwell
And where the slender vetch will serve me well.'

VII

"For long I've heard you talk and now would speak
To you myself: the thought, though, makes me weak
With fear, for I'm a slave." "You're Darus, yes?"
"I am, and I've retained my faithfulness.
I'm serviceable, too, it may be said,
Enough, though, not to die young." "Go ahead
And use December's license, once designed
By our ancestors. Go on, speak your mind."
"Some men love vice and stick to their intent,
Many fluctuate, now being quite content 10

With what is right, now acting sinfully.
Persius would often wear three rings, and he
Lived an erratic life, his left hand bare
Sometimes. In just one day he'd often wear
Many different robes. A sumptuous estate
Would please him, then he'd suddenly relocate
To where an honest freedman couldn't be spied
Emerging without shame. He would reside
In Rome and play the rake and then take flight
To teach in Athens, living in despite 20
Of all Vertumni. Incapacitated
By well-earned gout that had debilitated
His fingers. Volanarius, whom we knew
For a fool, would daily pay a hireling who
Would take, then place inside their box his dice:
This man was constant in his only vice,
Less wretched than Priscus, who'd be distraught
Often by ropes too loose or else too taut."
"You rascal, where is all this nonsense leading?"
"To you." "you devil, how?" "You praise the breeding 30
And fortunes of the folk of long ago,
But if some god should take you back and show
Them to you, you'd refuse him earnestly,
Either because you were not totally
Convinced of what you'd said or were not set
On shielding what is right, eager to get
Your foot out of the mire. The countryside
You want when you're in Rome: when you reside
Out there you extol Rome capriciously,

And if you find yourself no invitee 40

To a meal, your lonely cabbage you commend,

As though you would have been compelled to spend

Some time as someone's guest. Ecstatically

You say you're glad and giggle happily

That n-one's called you to a boozy night.

Maecenas summons you at late twilight:

'Quick, fetch the oil!nWhat, are you deaf?' you yell

And stutter loudly; finally, pell-mell,

You scurry off. Now Munius has gone

With all those other jokers, heaping on 50

Your head foul curses. 'I confess,' says he,

My appetite allures me easily.

I sniff at fine aromas. I possess

No spine and I admit to laziness,

And I'm a glutton. Since you're these things, too,

However, and the worser man is you

Perhaps, why therefore do you harry me

As though you're better and deceptively

Attempt to hide your vice?' What if you're caught

Out dafter than myself, who have been bought 60

For just five hundred drachmas? Do not scare

Me with that angry visage; please forbear

To knock me to the ground while I unfold

What Crispinus's doorkeeper has told

To me. You crave another's wife; a whore

Attracts me: which of us two merits more

Punishment? Now, when I'm aflame, a lass

Who, naked in lamplight, will with her ass

Urge on her stallion and eagerly
Flick my hard cock, will not with infamy 70
Send me away, and I will never care
If a richer or more handsome man would share
Her mattress after me. But when you've cast
The symbols of your worthy past,
Knight's ring and Roman garb, and then step out
A common slave, draping your cape about
Your perfumed head, are you indeed not just
What you profess? You're trembling with lust
And fear when she has let you through the door.
So does it really matter anymore 80
If, gladiator-like, you're flagellated
Or with a blade of steel eliminated
Or locked in a filthy strongbox by the maid,
Who for her wicked mistress is afraid,
Your knees bent to your chest? Does some decree
Not let her spouse deal with this infamy
And punish both of you, but you more so -
You're the seducer. *She* does not forgo
Her dress or place, or sin to such excess
As you do, for she lives in fearfulness 90
Of you and does not trust you. You must face
The yoke deliberately since you will place,
Your fortune and your life, your reputation,
Your limbs before a man whose indignation
Is fierce. Have you escaped? It seems to me
That you, then, by familiarity
Will dread the future: no, you'll seek instead

A time when you may very well be dead
And fear no more, a slave day after day.
What creature, when it once has got away, 100
Would trust again those chains that held it tight?
'I'm not a libertine, ' you say. Alright,
I'm not a pilferer when I pass by
The silver vases honestly, say I.
Remove the danger: the you'll start to stray.
Are you my boss when underneath the sway
Of many men, and men much better, too,
Than you? Although the lictor's rod touched you
Thre or four times, you never will be free
Of inconsiderable anxiety. 110
I now must a point of no less weight -
Whether a master-slave has been your fate,
As you profess, or you've been forced to be
A fellow-slave, what do you think of me
Compared to you? Although to you I'm bound,
You're slave to others and are ed around
Like a puppet on another's string. Who's free,
Therefore? A prudent man has mastery
Over himself. Poverty won't terrify
That man, nor death, nor chains. He will defy 120
His passions bravely, scorn celebrity
And in himself is quite exemplary,
Rounded and smoothed: therefore no outside force
Can halt his sheen. Misfortune runs its course
Against him bootlessly. Do you espy
Yourself, therefore, in anything that I

Have said to you? A woman asks you for
Five tablets, bullies you and through the door
Thrusts you, then pours cold water in your face,
Then calls you back; come on, assert your place, 130
Lose the vile yoke and say, 'I'm free, I'm free.'
Say it! You don't have the ability!
A cruel boss torments your very heart
And with his sharp spurs makes your body smart,
Confusing you. When you are stupefied
At Pausias's art, can't you decide
Which of us sins the more, when Fulvius
And Rutuba and Pacideianus
Delight me as they fight on bended knee
In paint or charcoal? Such reality 140
They show us, as if truly battling,
Waving their blades, thrusting and parrying!
I'm lackadaisical and rascally,
But you are known as an authority
On ancient works, and if my eye has caught
Sight of a flaming pastry, I am naught.
Does your great soul and virtue turn away
from splendid feasts? My back must always pay
For what my belly craves. How d'you elude
That torment when you hanker after food? 150
That costs a bomb? Those sweetmeats certainly,
Taken nonstop, will cause acerbity
Inside your stomach and your feet will feel
To bear your body, sickly now and frail.
The slave who steals a scrubbing-brush at night

To buy a bunch of grapes – have we the right
To call him sinner? He whose property
He sells that he may serve his gluttony -
Is he not slave-like? Think of this point, too:
Not one hour can you be alone and you 160
Can't use your leisure wisely, and you shun
Yourself and, like a scoundrel, wish to run
Away, attempting to deceive your pain
With drinking wine or sleeping – al in vain:
That gloomy escort dogs you as you fly
From him." "Where can I get a pebble?" "Why?
He's mad at writing verse.!" "Go nstantly
Or be the ninth slave on my property."

VIII

"How did you like the banquet given by
Nasidienus, such a cheery guy?
While I was searching for a guest, they say
That you were drinking at from midday."
"I'd never felt so happy." "Humour me,
If you don't mind – what food primarily
Appeased your raging gut?" "There first appeared
A boar out of Lucania, which was speared
While the gentle South Wind blew, or so he said;
Around it was more fare on which we fed - 10
Sharp turnips, lettuce, radishes to excite
A jaded gut and rouse the appetite,
Anchovies, water-parsnips and the lees

Of Coan wine; a high-girt slave, when these
 Had been removed from sight, wiped clean and dried
 The maple table with some fabric dyed
 In purple; then the leftovers that lay
 Before the guests another swept away,
 Lest they'd offend us. Swarthy Hydaspes
 Came in with Ceres's solemnities 20
 And wines of Caecubum: he was arrayed
 In garments that would suit an Attic maid
 Alcon brought Chian wine that had not seen
 The sea. Our host said, 'If your choices lean
 To Albanian or Falernian, these wines, too,
 We have.' "Ill-fated wealth! I'm keen for you
 To say who dined with you." "There was Viscus
 Thurinus at the head by me; Varius
 Was next, as I recall, who sat below;
 Vibidius with Servilius Balatro 30
 (Maecenas' friends, though Nasidienus
 Had not invited them). Nomentanus
 Was sat above the host, and Porcius,
 For eating cakes whole thought ridiculous;
 Nomentanus, if anything should go
 Unnoticed by the guests, was there to show
 It us with pointed finger: for the crow -
 The rest of us, I mean – were setting to
 On oysters, fish and fowl, whose piquancy
 Was brought out by a juice society 40
 Did not know, but I soon became aware
 Of it after our host gave me a share

Of entrails of a turbot and a plaice,
Till then untasted: picked beneath the face
Of a waning moon. Honey-apples gratify
The most through ruddiness – he'll tell you why
Himself more fully. Then Vibidius
Said to Balatro, Well, the worse for us
If we don't drink him dry, for we will be
In debt to him for all eternity,' 50
Then called for larger glasses. Then our host
Turned pale because the thing that scared him most
Was heavy drinkers either because they cursed
More liberally or hot wines were the worst
For deadening one's taste. Vibidius
And Balatro, and then the rest of us,
Tipped all the wine-casks into goblets bought
In Allifae; the ones who tippled nought
Were those who on the lowest couch reclined.
And then a lamprey was brought in, combined 60
With floating shrimps. Our host said, 'This was caught
When pregnant: after birth she would have brought
Less taste with her. The dish was coalesced
With oil that in Velabrum had been pressed
In the best cells, garum from a fish from Spain,
With five-year wine which never crossed the main,
While boiling once this process has occurred,
Pouring in Chian wine is best preferred),
White pepper, vinegar made from fermented
Grapes gathered in Methymna. I invented 70
The way to mix green rockets and to fling

In sharp elecampane, too, as seasoning.
Sea-urchins, left unwashed, were Curtillus'
Invention, whose juice is more flavorful
Than that of shell-fish.' Then the tapestry
Came crashing down on this delicacy,
Scattering black dust, more than was ever spread
By the North Wind in Campania. We felt dread
Of something worse, but after it was plain
There was no danger, we rose up again. 80
Then Rufus, just as though his son had died
An early death, hung down his head and cried.
Who could have guessed what would have been the end
If Nomentanus had not raised his friend:
'Fortune, the harshest of divinities,
How resolutely you are pleased to tease
Mankind!' Varius could scarcely then contain
A laugh beneath his napkin. In disdain
At all of this, Balatro said, 'That's fate!'
That's life! Nobody's fame can correlate 90
With his own toil. That I may sumptuously
Be treated, must you with anxiety
Be tortured lest burnt bread and seasoning
Ill-mixed the servants to the table bring
And that those fellows are improperly groomed
And dressed; ad, too, that we may well be doomed
By falling tapestry and by a platter
mashed by a lackey tumbling a-clatter,
Although a dinner-guest's ability,
Like a commander's, through adversity 100

Is seen, though it is hidden by success.
Nasidicius said, ' May the gods bless
You with all your desires, for you're guest
Beyond compare.' Then he made a request
To bring his slippers. Whisperings could be heard
Among the gods." "Such fun I'd have preferred
To anything But what occurred thereafter
To cause among the dinner-guests more laughter?"
"Vibidius asked if a flagon also had
Been broken by a slave, for when he bade 110
A slave to bring the cups, they did not come,
And while there was a pandemonium
Of laughter at tall tales with Balatro
Egging us on, our host returned, as though,
With smoother brow, he planned to remedy
With skillfulness his late adversity.
Behind him came more slave-boys carrying
A huge dish of crane's legs with seasoning
Of salt and meal, goose liver, too, equipped
With fattened figs and hares' shoulders, all ripped 120
Out of their joints(much better served that way).
Then blackbirds' roasted breasts before us lay
And ringbirds sans their rumps. How savoury
They were, except their source and history
Our host described at length! But then we fled,
Avenged, so that we would no more be fed,
As if Casidia with her snake-like breath
Had blown on them and made them tools of death."

