

## MARTIAL

### DE SPECTACULIS

#### I

Far Memphis, on the Pyramids keep mum;  
Assyrian toil, on Babylon be dumb;  
Ionians, don't praise the sanctuary  
Of Trivia and, Delos, silent be  
About your hornèd altar; don't exalt,  
O Carians, King Mausolus's vault,  
Poised as it is upon the vacant air.  
To Caesar's Amphitheatre every care  
Gives up its place; one work alone shall Fame,  
In stead of all, from this time on proclaim.

#### II

The starred Colossus looks upon the sky  
With massive scaffold towering nearby –  
Here shone the palace of the vicious king,  
One dwelling dominating everything.  
And where the Amphitheatre stands out clear,  
Stately and huge, there once was Nero's mere  
Where we admire the baths, swiftly largessed,  
The poor by a proud state were dispossessed.  
This useless pile extended quite as far  
As the Claudine piazzas furthest shadows are.  
Your rule, O Caesar, in which we delight,  
Has rescued Romans from a tyrant's might.

#### III

What tribe's so primitive, so faraway  
That doesn't have *one* member here today,  
O Caesar? There's a farmer here, a Thracian,  
A blood-of-horses drinker, a Sarmatian,  
One's who quaffed from the Nile, and one whose home  
Was where there beats the Ocean's farthest foam.  
Arabs sped here, Cilicians too, now steeped  
In their own scents, and those whose hair is heaped  
In one top-knot (these are from Germany),  
And differently coiffed Aethiopi.  
So many sounds yet one confederation,  
Since you are the true father of our nation.

#### IV

A nasty mob, a foe to peace and rest,  
And to unhappy millionaires a pest,  
Has been disgraced (the Arena could not hold  
Their numbers); now the sneak feels exile's cold  
As once his victims did. To Rome he's lost –  
This you may reckon to our Prince's cost.

#### V

That Pasiphaë wed that bull don't doubt;  
We've seen it and old myth still bears it out;  
Caesar, don't let old age be dubious:

What Fame extols the Arena shows to us.

VI

Unconquered Mars is not enough for you,  
O Caesar; you commission Venus too.  
The lion in Nemea's vale laid low  
Is famed, a bold and Herculean show.  
Witness of old, be dumb: for Caesar's games  
Now feature, we may say, destroying dames.

VII

Prometheus on his rock, once, long ago,  
Fed tireless birds his heart – and now, just so,  
His vitals Laureolus gave a bear  
While on a real cross he was hanging there.  
His mangled limbs still lived, though dripping gore,  
A body with no clear shape any more.  
At last a fitting punishment - he'd slain  
His father (or his master) or, again,  
Despoiled a temple in his aberration  
Of all its gold, or caused a conflagration  
In Rome, outdid all crimes of yesterday,  
His punishment what once was mere display.

VIII

Daedalus, being mangled by a bear,  
Don't you crave wings to fly you through the air?

IX

Upon the sand stood a rhinoceros,  
Not threatening, a fighting show for us,  
O Caesar. Menacing rage pervaded it!  
A dreadful bull. His foe? A counterfeit.

X

A vicious lion had his master gored,  
Tearing familiar hands; he earned the sword,  
Unwounded though he was – fit penalty  
For such a crime. O what morality  
Befits a man when emperors require  
Wild beasts to overcome their natural fire?

XI

Head down, on bloody sand, there stood a bear,  
Stranded, since there was bird-lime everywhere.  
Let burnished spears, their iron hidden, cease,  
And lances flung from poised arms be at peace.  
Hunters may snatch their prey out of the air  
When beasts are now caught with a fowler's snare.

XII

In Caesar's cruel hunt a spear ran through  
A pregnant sow when, springing into view,  
Emerged a newborn piglet from the tear.  
O barbarous Lucina, could you swear

This was a birth? She would have welcomed death  
From many spears and thus have sanctioned breath  
For all her brood. Who can that tale gainsay  
That Dionysus saw the light of day  
Upon his mother's death? So you may see  
That thus were born both beast and deity.

### XIII

Felled by a spear, the mother sow both lost  
And gave a life. That lance with skill was tossed!  
Lucina's hand was there, it's plain to see.  
For, dying, she proved the divinity  
Of two Dianas, both the sow's midwife  
And she who dispossessed her of her life.

### XIV

From her full womb a pregnant sow gave birth,  
Made mother by a wound, yet on the earth  
The piglet did not lie but ran away  
Just as she fell – two *casus* in one day.

### XV

The highest point, Meleager, of your fame  
Palls when one mentions Carpophorus' name –  
Think of that boar! And of that polar bear  
He speared as it attacked him. It was there  
He slew that alien lion, massive peer  
Of Hercules. Again, with far-flung spear  
He slew a rushing leopard. Thus he gained  
The prize of honour, yet his strength remained.

### XVI

A bull tossed high before the viewing nation  
Was not a work of art but veneration.  
Europe came by bull across the seas:  
Now up, tossed by a bull, went Hercules.  
Compare the steer of Jupiter, o Fame,  
With that of Caesar. Let them be the same  
In your account when you adjudge the load  
They carried; Caesar's, though, much higher rode.

### XVII

The elephant, a loyal devotee  
Which just now scared a bull for all to see  
Adores you, Caesar, uncompelled, no less.  
He too, believe, feels your godliness.

### XVIII

A peerless tiger from the Hyrcanian land,  
Though wont to lick her fearless master's hand,  
Has gored a savage lion: something new,  
And quite unknown before; she did not do  
Such things when she lived in the wilderness;  
In Rome now, she shows more bloodthirstiness.

XIX

A bull, taunted by fire, grasped and tossed  
The counterfeits, but finally he lost  
To “Ardent Tusk” – as effortless a thing  
It was, he thought, an elephant to fling.

XX

Two warriors were called for by the mob,  
So Caesar pardoned both – no easier job  
To finish off a friendly rivalry!  
An undefeated lord’s sweet strategy!

XXI

What Rhodope saw, they say, of Orphic powers  
Upon *her* stage has Caesar shown on ours.  
Cliffs creeping, speeding woods, a grove of trees  
Like that, they say, of the Hesperides.  
Among the flock were beasts of every kind.  
Above the bard all sorts of birds you’d find.  
But he by an ungrateful bear was torn.  
This deed alone was out of fiction born.  
The yawning earth accomplished this attack  
(Eurydice desired her Orpheus back).

XXII

The trainers spurred the one-horned prodigy  
In panic, as the beast’s ferocity  
Gathered its strength. The crowd despaired of action;  
At last, though, its old fire gave satisfaction –  
He tossed up with his horn a heavy bear  
As bulls toss counterfeits. [XXIII] And, then and there,  
Like young Carpophorus, with a deadly blow  
He felled a bison and a buffalo  
And flung aloft two steers with supple ease:  
And now a lion headlong, as he flees,  
Crashed on the spears. Spectators, on your way,  
Complain *now*, if you dare, when there’s delay.

XXIV

Late foreign visitor, who till today  
Has never seen this pageant, let me say,  
Lest this sea-battle and this seeming sea  
Deceive you, only now there used to be  
Firm earth right here. You doubt it? Very well,  
Just watch while Mars is wearying with the swell  
Of seas: a short respite, and then you’ll say,  
“But only now, all this was sea today.”

XXV

Leander, at that night-time wave don’t wonder:  
It’s Caesar’s! It would not let you go under! [XXVb]  
Leander, as his love he bravely sought,  
Was overpowered as the waves he fought;  
It’s said the poor wretch thus addressed the foam:  
“Let me speed on; drown me as I go home.”

## XXVI

Some gentle Nereids played in the seas  
And, as they gambolled, painted effigies –  
A menacing trident, anchor, oar, a boat;  
That bright Laconian star, too, seemed to float  
Above, the sailors' friend, and we perceived  
The bellying sails. Who is it that conceived  
Such art achieved on water? Thetis taught  
These things or knowledge of them elsewhere sought.

## XXVII

If Carpophorus had only looked upon  
This earth in earlier times, then Parthaon,  
O Caesar, would have never feared that beast,  
Nor Marathon that bull, nor in the least  
Would leafy Nemea that ferocious cat  
Nor yet would Arcady have shuddered at  
That boar. Just one death would the Hydra's be  
Once he was armed; and the totality  
Of the Chimaera felled just once. Don't doubt  
He'd kill the fire-breathing bulls without  
Medea's help and, for Pasiphaë,  
Kill both the beasts. Should we recall today  
The sea-monster, alone he would set free  
Andromeda – also Hesione.  
Count Hercules's feats: it counts for more  
That, at one time, of beasts he slew a score.

## XXVIII

Augustus here produced a naval war  
With a trumpet-blast, but there was much, much more!  
Strange beasts, foam-covered chariots contending,  
The steeds of Neptune; Nereus, after sending  
Those ships to battle, shuddered when he found  
That, though at sea, he stood on solid ground.  
Such spectacles have Caesar's ample seas  
Provided for you. Therefore, silence, please,  
On Fucinus or dreaded Nero's lake:  
This sea-fight only may the future take!

## XXIX

When Priscus fought with Verus endlessly,  
Each always showing equal energy,  
Great shouts went up for discharge for them both;  
To break his own law, though, Caesar was loath –  
One has to struggle on until the crowd  
Has seen the finger raised; what *was* allowed  
He'd do, with gifts of plates. It had an end,  
However: they continued to contend  
As equals, then, as equals, they surrendered.  
The wooden sword plus prizes Caesar rendered  
Both men: skilled valour earned this compensation.  
There's not another leader of our nation  
Who's witnessed this event but you, o lord:  
Two fought together, two gained a reward.

## XXX

A hind was fleeing hounds and artfully  
Was stretching out the chase. At Caesar's knee  
She, like suppliant, stood and those same hounds  
Would not go near her.....  
She lived because she knew that it was he.  
Indeed, our Caesar has divinity:  
His power is sacred – him we adulate;  
Wild beasts have not yet learnt to fabricate.

### XXXI

Pardon my haste. A man who speeds to please you  
Does not deserve, o Caesar, to displease you.

### XXXII

The second prize goes to the weaker foe.  
The palm the weaker *wins* is heavier, though.

### XXXIII

O Flavian clan, your third heir stole your fame.  
Perhaps we should have had none of that name.

## BOOK I

### I

You asked for this and now you're reading it:  
I'm Martial, famed all over for his wit  
In stylish epigrams. You've given me,  
O studious reader, immortality  
While living; other bards are rarely said  
To gain such honour even when they're dead.

### II

You want my poems with you and wish to share  
Long journeys with them here and everywhere?  
Then buy them, for their pages are so small:  
Large books need boxes but one hand is all  
You need for mine. But yet, should you not know  
Where they are sold and wander high and low,  
I'll be your guide and you will be alright:  
Seek out the freedman of the erudite  
Lucensis, at the rear of Peace's shrine  
And Pallas's forum, and you'll be fine.

### III

You'd rather dwell in Potter's Field, small book,  
While my bookcases stand quite empty? Look,  
You don't, alas, know Mistress Rome is proud:  
Too smart for you is that whole Martian crowd.  
No-one sneers more: all ages go about  
With tilted nose, like a rhino's snout.  
You're tossing kisses, hearing that "Bravo!",  
Then – from a blanket to the skies you go.  
But to avoid your master's frequent blottings  
And savage pen that slams your playful jottings,

You rake, you'd rather take off to the sky.  
You'd be more safe at home, but then – go fly!

IV

Caesar, should you come by my books somehow,  
Don't show your dominating, frowning brow.  
Your triumphs too have been subject to mocking.  
To be the food for wit is hardly shocking.  
As you look on Thymele and the clown  
Latinus, so in kind, without a frown,  
Look on my poems. The censor winks at fun:  
The poems are lewd, my life's a flawless one.

V

I offer you a sea-fight; in return  
You offer me some epigrams: you burn,  
O Marcus (and I think I've got this right)  
To join them as they float beside that fight.

VI

The eagle carried Ganymede through the air,  
Unhurt, in timid talons: now the hare  
In safety plays in Caesar's lions' jaws,  
Bewitching them in spite of Nature's laws.  
What's more amazing? This is quite a teaser.  
Great ones caused both events – one Jove, one Caesar.

VII

Stella's pet dove. Maximus, I must say  
(Even though Verona hears me) now is way  
Beyond Catullus' sparrow. She's above  
Him as a sparrow overrides a dove.

VIII

You follow perfect Cato and you read  
Great Thrasea and yet you feel the need  
To live unscathed and not seek your demise  
On swords, Decianus. That is truly wise.  
Who wins fame with his own blood's not for me.  
Who's praised while living is exemplary.

IX

Of cuteness and renown you want a union;  
Cotta, a cute man is a puny 'un.

X

Gemellus wants Maronilla for his bride;  
He sends her gifts, he begs, "Stay by my side."  
Is she so fair? None's uglier than she.  
What gives then? Well, she's coughing frequently.

XI

A knight gets ten wine-tokens. Well, that's plenty.  
So why, my friend, do you alone drink twenty?

The slaves would not have kept pace with the rate  
Of water's need did you not drink it straight.

XII

The road to those cool Herculean heights  
In Tibur passes by the true delights  
Of Albula's milk-white streams where sulphur flows;  
The fourth stone from the nearby city shows  
The Muses' sacred grove and an estate.  
A rude arch offers summer shade. But wait –  
That arch committed an unheard-of crime!  
It suddenly collapsed right at that time  
When Regulus had driven through that mass.  
At our complaints Fortune's a timorous lass  
Who such ill-will as this cannot defy.  
Now even detriment can gratify.  
A great deal comes from insecurities.  
A standing roof can't prove divinities.

XIII

When Arria to her husband gave the blade  
Which fatal havoc in her guts had made,  
She said, "Paetus, it doesn't hurt, believe me.  
But what you must do now will *truly* grieve me."

XIV

Caesar, we saw the lions' games and pranks  
(Where the Arena gives you further thanks).  
One's fondling fangs would grasp and then let go  
A hare which through its mouth ran to and fro.  
How can a ravaging lion spare his prey?  
He can, of course, because he's yours, they say.

XV

Julius, my treasured friend, second to none,  
If lifelong trust may be relied upon  
And ancient claims, you're almost sixty, man,  
Though your true life is but a few days' span.  
You should not put off what may be denied  
And only deem what's gone with time and tide  
As yours. Cares wait for us, joys don't remain  
But fly away. So grasp them and retain  
Them close. For they slip from your very soul  
And glide away. It's not a wise man's role  
To say, "I'll live", tomorrow is too late,  
Believe me, so do not procrastinate.

XVI

Avitus, here are good and bad displayed  
(And passable). That's how a book is made.

XVII

"Plead cases," Titus says. "There's quite a yield."  
That's what a farmer garners from his field.

XVIII



Why do you mix the old Falernian,  
Tucca, with Vatican grapes? What profit can  
You get from such an unappealing brew?  
What harm have fine wines ever done to you?  
Well, I don't mind: it's wrong to put the knife  
To the Falernian or to take the life  
Of the Campanian. P'raps your guests *should* go  
To Hades. Such a priceless jar, though? No.

XIX

Aelia, you had four teeth. Am I correct?  
One cough, and then one more, you saw eject  
Two teeth each time. Now you can cough all day  
Since you have no teeth left to blow away.

XX

Madness, Caecilianus! Down the hatch,  
In front of guests, the mushrooms you dispatch  
Alone. That throat and gut deserve this prayer –  
May Claudius' mushrooms also be *your* fare!

XXI

The hand that sought the king but rather came  
To slay a servant lay down in the flame,  
Set on self-slaughter. But the kindly foe  
Vetoed the cruel act and let him go.  
Mucius scorned the fire but the king  
Could not endure the sight. Let glory ring  
For that right hand. For one must acquiesce –  
A truer aim would have accomplished less.

XXII

Why flee the placid lion's jaws, o hare?  
He's not yet learnt to crunch such tiny fare.  
For huge necks does he keep those mighty claws,  
Not thirsty for such little blood as yours.  
Dogs' prey, a hare will not immense mouths fill:  
A Dacian boy from Caesar fears no ill.

XXIII

You invite bath-mates only: baths, it's true,  
Cotta, alone provide your guests for you.  
I used to wonder why you'd not include me:  
But now I know you didn't like the nude me.

XXIV

D'you see that man with all the shaggy hair  
Whose brooding looks give you, too, quite a scare?  
He carries on about the Curii  
And of the freedom-fighting Camilli.  
Don't credit what that grim brow seems to say:  
He was a bride, Decianus, yesterday.

XXV

Publish at last your two books and send out  
A culture, learned work (there is no doubt  
That Athens and our sages would not stay  
Unmoved or silent). Why do you delay  
To let in Fame who's standing by the gate.  
To claim your just deserts don't hesitate.  
Let deathless verse live *now* and live through you.  
When you ashes, glory's overdue.

XXVI

Sextilianus, you alone toss off  
Five benches' worth: if that amount you quaff  
Of *water*, you'll be drunk; your neighbour's share  
Is not your only quest – you look elsewhere  
Beyond your place. Pelignia was not  
Where this was pressed, nor were the grapes begot  
In Tuscan hills; rather the choicest jar  
Of old Opimius was drained; there are  
Massic store-rooms that in back jars send  
It to us here in Rome, and so, my friend,  
From "mine host" get some Laetanian lees  
If you get more than ten wine-tokens, please.

XXVII

Last night (I think I'd had five cups), I said,  
"Tomorrow dine with me." You took as read  
My statement, Procillus, immediately.  
My drunken words you noted secretly.  
That sets a very dodgy precedent.  
A drinker with a memory I resent.

XXVIII

Acerra reeks of last night's wine, you say?  
Not so. She always drinks till break of day.

XXIX

They say, Fidentinus, that you recite  
My poems to folks as if they're mine. Alright –  
You want them called *mine*? Then they're yours for free.  
*Yours*? Buy this poem that they may never be.

XXX

A doctor once, Diaulus now serves those  
Who've passed on. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

XXXI

Phoebus, Encolpos, his dear master's pet,  
Vows all his hair to you once Pudens' debt,  
His chief centurion's bonus, is assigned.  
Cut off that long hair, Phoebus, quickly, mind,  
While still no down can smirch that tender face  
And tumbled locks yet his white shoulders grace;  
That both may long enjoy your gifts, be sure  
That he's soon shorn, and *afterwards* mature.

XXXII

Sabidius, I don't like you. Wherefore?  
I don't know. I just don't - I can't say more.

XXXIII

When Gellia's alone, she never weeps  
For her dead dad; when company she keeps,  
Tears flow. Who seeks praise does not truly cry:  
True grief is shown when no-one's standing by.

XXXIV

You sin with open doors, without a guard,  
And, Lesbia, you never try too hard  
To hide those sins. The watcher pleases you  
More than your lover, and your bliss won't do  
If it is hidden. Yet a prostitute,  
Repelling witnesses, the bolt will shoot,  
The curtains draw; it's rare a chink you'll see  
At the Summoenian arch. Learn modesty  
From whores at least: for even a gravestone  
Masks dirty sluts. Should I leave this alone?  
Too harsh, you think? Well, Lesbia, I instruct  
You not to get caught, not to not get fucked.

XXXV

Cornelius, you say my poems aren't stern  
Enough and such as boys in school may learn?  
But like a man his wife, they'll satisfy  
No-one without a cock. Now, say that I  
Am asked by you to write a marriage-song  
But with no marital words. Garments belong  
To Flora's festival: a prostitute  
May wear the modest stole. It's this statute  
That makes amusing poems not please unless  
They're prurient. Put off your squeamishness -  
Wink at my wisecracks and my pleasantries,  
And don't be keen to make eunuchs of these  
My poems. Nothing's more foul than Priapus  
When he's dressed up to look like some Gallus.

XXXVI

Lucanus! Tullus! If the destiny  
Of Leda's Spartan sons were yours, there'd be  
A private rivalry, each keen to die  
Before his brother, while the first to fly  
To nether shades would say, "Live out your spell  
Of life, my brother; live out mine as well."

XXXVII

Bassus, quite shamelessly you always shit  
Into a golden urn (I pity it).  
Meanwhile you drink from crystal – so, it's sure,  
You take a crap with more expenditure.

XXXVIII

That book's mine, Fidentinus, which you quote.

Your vile performance makes it yours, though, note!

XXXIX

If there's a rare friend, known to loyalty  
And aged Fame, a cultured devotee  
Of Attic and of Roman literature,  
A truly honest man, who guards what's pure,  
Admires probity nor needs to pray  
In whispered tones and has as his mainstay  
The strength of his great mind, then may I be  
Struck dead if Decianus is not he.

XL

Morosely read that last poem, boor, pout too!  
Envy all men! Let no man envy you!

XLI

You think you're witty, but you're not, trust me,  
Caecilius. What, then? You seem to be  
A home-born slave, a peddler from across  
The Tiber who will barter suchlike dross  
As pale sulphur for broken glass, a man  
Who sells the mob pease-pudding, guardian  
And owner of some vipers, a cheap slave  
Of a salt-seller, or that cook and knave  
Who hawks warm pans of smoking sausages,  
A bad street-poet, a bounder from Cadiz  
Who teaches dancing, or a mouthy gay.  
Caecilius, turn your errant thoughts away –  
No-one agrees you could with Galba vie  
Or Caballus in wit. A critic's eye  
Is not afforded everyone: such dense  
Attempts at wittiness, such impudence  
Has not a Tettius Caballus made,  
But rather his equine namesake – a jade.

XLII

When Porcia heard her husband's fate, and grief  
Was looking for the weapon that some thief  
Had taken, she declared, "I can't forgo  
This death. Did not my father's dying show  
This need?" Then she gulped down the glowing meal.  
Now go, officious mob, deny that steel!

XLIII

Full sixty of us were your guests, Mancinus,  
Last night, but only one wild boar between us;  
No grapes left hanging late into the season,  
No honey-apples which a man might reason  
Were luscious combs, no pears hung up with broom,  
No pomegranates which the look assume  
Of transient roses, no Sassinic cheese,  
No olives from Picenum – none of these.  
No, just a boar - a tiny one what's more  
An unarmed dwarf could kill. Beyond this boar  
Not one thing else. We all just looked around.  
Such rations even at the Games are found.

After that stunt, no servings of that kind!  
Receive the boar Charidemus was assigned.

XLIV

A larger page of mine and one that's less  
Shows hares and lions in their playfulness –  
Twice! Stella, if you find this overdone,  
Serve me *two* of hare instead of one.

XLV

Lest tiny books should cause my toil to be  
Of no avail, then add, "In answer, he..."

XLVI

"Get on with it, " you say, "I'm in a rush."  
But suchlike words simply my ardour crush.  
Tell me to wait, Hedylus: then I'll go  
Much faster. If you hurry, bid me "Slow!"

XLVII

So now, Diaulus, you are a mortician,  
Though once a doctor? It's the same position.

XLVIII

The trainers can't tears bulls from those wide jaws  
Through which their prey cavorts on nimble paws;  
It leaves that mouth with more velocity  
(A greater wonder!), for his enemy  
Has passed to him some spirit of his own.  
He's just as safe as when he runs alone  
Upon the sand – likewise he's as secure  
As when locked in a cage. Therefore be sure,  
If you'd avoid dog-bites, you rascal hare,  
The lion offers sanctuary – right there.

XLIX

Worth praise by Spanish tribes, renowned in Spain,  
Licinianus, you will soon attain  
To towering Bilbilis, who is extolled  
For steeds and men, old Caius, white and cold,  
The holy mountains of Vadavero,  
Boterdus' pleasant grove that's cherished so  
By blithe Pomona, Congedus you'll make  
Your pool, smooth, tepid, and the Nymphs' mild lake;  
Relaxed by this, you'll brace your limbs and feel  
The cold of narrow Salo, which chills steel.  
Vobesca will provide wild beasts to spear  
While you are eating lunch – they come that near!  
You'll quell the summer heat, shaded by trees,  
In golden Tagus; Dercenna will ease  
Your avid dryness with her icy flow,  
And Nutha too, which is more cold than snow.  
But when wild winter and December's rime  
Moan with the harsh North Wind, you'll know it's time  
To seek the sunny shore of Tarraco  
And your own Laletania; the doe

You'll catch in nets, the home-bred wild boar, too;  
The crafty hare will not outscamper you  
On your stout steed; the stags you will resign  
To your land-steward; and you will consign  
The neighbouring wood to your own fireplace  
Where crawls each boy-slave with his grimy face.  
You'll call your huntsman in to be your guest –  
No toga, nor no shoe with half-moon crest,  
No raiments either, reeking of purple dye;  
The brash Liburnian with his strident cry,  
The winging clients and all those demands  
Of widows will be far away; no bands  
Of whey-faced clients will disturb your sleep –  
You'll dream all morning, let another reap  
That loud, insane 'Bravo!' Commiserate  
With those who have success; appreciate  
Your joy without conceit, while Sura earns  
Applause instead of you. Life never yearns  
Presumptuously for what remains for it,  
When fame possesses all that it deems fit.

L

You called your cook 'Mistyllus', did you say?  
I'll call mine 'Taratalla', then, OK?

LI

Fierce lions only want the choicest prey.  
Ambitious hare, why flee those teeth? I say  
After great bulls you'd have them swoop and be  
Destroyers of a neck they cannot see?  
Don't hope for such a glorious demise:  
Such foes don't thirst for such a slender prize.

LII

Here, Quintianus, are my poems – if I  
May call them so when they're recited by  
That poet of yours – if of such slavery  
They make complaint, their champion may you be;  
Stand bail and say they're 'manumitted' – mine!  
Three or four times will shame the guilty swine.

LIII

A page of yours, Fidentinus, is there  
Within my books, a page which shows, I swear,  
A faithful correspondence with its owner –  
A patent theft. The cloak of a Lingoner,  
Complete with cowl, defiles with greasy fleece,  
The urban purple, as some crockery piece  
Degrades the crystal, or as a black crow,  
If he should stray and in Caÿster go,  
Is by the swans of Leda roundly scoffed,  
Or as a dulcet nightingale aloft  
Makes seethe the sacred grove, then some rude jay  
Upsets with squawks the doleful Attic lay.  
I need no judge nor title for belief;  
The page stands there before you, crying "Thief!"

LIV

Fuscus, I ask, if you still have some space  
For love (for you have friends in every place),  
One niche if one remains, and don't decline  
Me just because I'm new, for that long line  
Of old friends once were new. You merely ask,  
"So is this new friend equal to that task?"

LV

Fronto, renowned in politics and war,  
If you should ask what Marcus wishes for,  
In brief, he wants to till his own meadows,  
Just small ones, and to have rough-hewn repose.  
Who'd want a frigid hall with masonry  
Of Spartan type and bring in (foolishly!)  
His morning greeting, when he's well-supplied  
With spoils from wood and field, and can, beside  
His hearth, spread out his nets and then and there  
Withdraw the fish from out their trembling snare  
And from red jars his golden honey take?  
For whom his bailiff's portly wife can make  
The wobbly table groan, and eggs, got free,  
Are cooked in charcoal? Who does not love me,  
I beg, likewise he won't love this lifestyle  
But palely live a city drone the while.

LVI

Incessant raindrops trickle from the vine:  
Barman, you would, but can't, sell unmixed wine.

LVII

Flaccus, what is my taste in girls, you ask?  
Neither too yielding nor too hard a task.  
One in the middle I appreciate.  
She neither should torment nor satiate.

LVIII

The dealer asked me for a hundred grand  
For the boy: I laughed, but Phoebus met the demand  
Straight off. My cock complains and clearly hates me  
While Phoebus is acclaimed it irritates me.  
His cock's made him a hundred thousand score:  
Give me what he has got and I'll bid more.

LIX

In Baiae six sesterces is my dole.  
Amid such affluence a gaping hole!  
Now put Rome's gloomy baths before my eyes:  
I badly dine, so I shall bathe likewise.

LX

You're in the lion's massive mouth, o hare,  
And yet he still believes his jaws are bare.  
Whose shoulder shall he pounce upon, whose back?  
With force that kills steers who will he attack?  
Why tease the lord and king of wood and bower?

Only those he selects will he devour.

LXI

Verona loves her bard, Mantua's praised  
For Vergil while Aponus has been raised  
To glory by her Livy, Stella too,  
And Flaccus, flooding Nile awards his due  
Of praise to her Apollodorus, and  
Paelignia gives her Ovid a warm hand,  
The matchless Lucan and each Seneca  
Are eulogized by fluent Corduba,  
Happy Cadiz delights in Canius,  
Emerita in my Decianus;  
Licinianus, Bilbilis will crow  
Of you and speak somewhat of me also.

LXII

Laevina, chaste, never inferior  
To all those ancient Sabines, more demure  
Than any stern husband, went here and there –  
The Lucrine Lake, Avernus, Baiae where  
She bathed, but then she fell into the fire:  
She left her husband and, in her desire,  
She stalked a young man. Like Penelope  
She came, but, leaving, Helen seemed to be.

LXIII

You'd hear my poems? No, thank you all the same.  
Your wish is not to hear but to declaim.

LXIV

You're fair, you're young, you're rich, I know, it's true.  
Whoever can deny all this of you?  
Fabulla, when you boast with such excess,  
Then not one of these things can you profess.

LXV

You mocked my 'ficus' as barbarity,  
Requiring instead 'ficos' of me.  
The tree-grown fruit I'll 'ficus' call, but those  
Which grow on you, my friend, I'll call 'ficos'.

LXVI

Book-thief, you err if you can estimate  
That you can be a poet for the rate  
Of transcripts and cheap paper: yes, you're wrong –  
Acclaim is not acquired for a song.  
Look for unpublished works which one man knows,  
Who, father of these virgin pages, those  
Not roughened by tough chins, with lock and key  
Keeps in his bookcase. Books the world may see  
Can't change their author. If there is a book  
With unsmoothed edges and unfinished look,  
Not yet embossed or wrapped, procure it, please.  
I have such books and none shall know of these.  
Reciting others' works and seeking fame?



Don't buy books, buy suppression of your name.

LXVII

Cerylus, I'm "too bold", I hear from you.  
That man who censures you – is he bold too?

LXVIII

To Rufus Naevia is everything.  
When glad, sad, mute, only of her he'll sing.  
When dining, toasting, asking, or when he  
Denies or nods his head, there's only she.  
No Naevia? He's dumb. Just yesterday  
He wrote his father, yet – what did he say?  
"Naevia, my bright sunbeam, good-day to you."  
She read this and, though shifting from his view,  
Guffawed. She's not the only Roman lass.  
Why are you so besotted, silly ass?

LXIX

Though once the site of Pan, o Maximus,  
Tarentum nowadays shows Canius.

LXX

Go as my herald, book: be dexterous,  
Go to the fancy house of Proculus.  
The way? You'll go past Castor's sanctuary  
Where aged Vesta and her home you'll see,  
The sacred hill, the august Palatine,  
Where statues of our glorious leader shine,  
So many of them. Do not stop to gaze  
At this colossus with its gleaming rays  
That glories to surpass the Rhodian statue.  
Turn there and find Lyaeus staring at you,  
Drink-sodden, and the painted devotees  
Of Cybele. Now on the left of these  
You'll see a high and lofty edifice.  
Approach it. Do not be afraid of this,  
Don't fear disdain or pride. For no door oozes  
More cheer nor is more cherished by the Muses  
And Phoebus. Should he ask, "So why did he  
Not come himself?" make this excuse for me –  
"These poems could not, whatever is their worth,  
Be penned by any "visitor" on earth.

LXXI

Four measures drink to Laevia, to ida three,  
Justina six, five Lycas, four Lyde.  
Compute each toast by each syllabic number.  
Since none of them arrives, relieve me, Slumber.

LXXII

You're borrowing my poems, so you suppose  
Yourself a poet. Standards such as those  
You use, Fidentinus, makes Aegle see  
Herself as having teeth, though ivory  
And bone replaced them, or Lycoris, who

Possesses quite a falling-mulberry hue,  
Imagine herself pretty when white lead  
Is plastered over her from toe to head.  
So you too would now be a poet called?  
Thus you'll have flowing locks when you are bald.

LXXIII

Caecilianus, not one man in Rome  
Would touch your wife for free, but now your home  
Is guarded, there's a milling company  
Of rampant men. What ingenuity!

LXXIV

He was your lover, Paula; you said no.  
Now he's your husband: let that falsehood go.

LXXV

Who'll give to Linus half, and fear the lot,  
Wants to lose merely half of what he'd got.

LXXVI

Flaccus, whose love's no cheap reward to me  
For all my care, the hope and nourishee  
Of Antenor, forget the Pierian lay,  
Put down the Muses' lute. Not one will pay  
A penny for your songs. What is it you  
Would get from Phoebus? It's Minerva who  
Has lots of cash. She's wise, the usurer  
Of all the gods. What can Bacchus confer  
Upon you with his ivy wreaths? The tree  
Of Pallas with its varied greenery  
Is dark with weighty fruit upon the vine.  
Beyond the lyres and chaplets of the Nine,  
Beyond its stream, there's nothing Helicon  
Can offer but a great, though vain, "Well done!"  
What's Cirrha or nude Permessis to you?  
The Roman Forum's nearer, richer too.  
Cash jingles there – but where we poets mingle  
On stage, in sterile chairs, just kisses jingle.

LXXVII

Charinus is pale, although his health is fine.  
Charinus is pale, though barely taking wine.  
Charinus is pale, though quite the trencherman.  
Charinus is pale, although he tries to tan.  
Charinus is pale, although make-up he uses.  
Chainus is pale – for he likes licking coozies.

LXXVIII

A wasting sickness stormed his guiltless throat  
While a foreboding plague began to coat  
His features. Festus, quite dry-eyed, addressed  
His weeping friends and openly confessed  
The River Styx was now his destination.  
A good man, he'd not risk contamination  
With secret poison nor prolong his span

With laggard hunger; no, a Roam man,  
He chose a Roman death, his soul set free  
By nobler means than that. Renown may see  
Great Cato's death as less than such an end:  
For after all, Caesar was this man's friend.

LXXIX

Attalus, you're always "doing" "businessman"  
Or "lawyer"; you "do" everything you can,  
Even if there's nothing there for you to "do";  
If there's no trade or lawyering for you,  
You'll "do" "the muleteer"; to keep the tide  
Of things to "do" in spate, "do" "suicide".

LXXX

Canus, the day you died you sought the dole.  
That there was only one let loose your soul.

LXXXI

You know you're slave-born and confess it thus  
With charm – you call your father 'dominus'.

LXXXII

This arch lies ruined, wreathed in clouds of grit,  
Guiltless – Regulus had driven under it,  
Then, of a sudden, down it crashing came,  
Crushed by its own weight, feeling now no shame  
For its master, in one safe and bloodless blow.  
So now that we can let our griping go,  
Who could deny you're in the custody  
Of gods who saved you from calamity.

LXXXIII

Your pup, Menneia, licks your lips; then it  
Is not surprising that the dog eats shit.

LXXXIV

Quirinalis won't have a wife, and yet  
He does want sons, whom he knows how to get –  
His maidservants he screws and expedites  
The procreation of home-born slave-knights  
To fill his fields and home -his property.  
A true paterfamilias is he!

LXXXV

Some well-tilled hills a jokester auctioneer  
Was selling, plus some lovely acres near  
To Rome. He said, "Should one of you suppose  
That Marius needs to sell, he's wrong. He owes  
Nothing; indeed he *lends* his cash. Why, then,  
Are they on sale? Well, there he lost his men,  
His flocks, his crops. He does not like the spot,  
Therefore. Who'd make a bid upon the plot  
Unless he wished to lose his all? And thus  
This noxious land still sticks to Marius.

## LXXXVI

Novius is my neighbour – I can touch  
 His hand right from my window. How, with such  
 A handy friend, can one not envy me  
 And think me always happy? But, you see,  
 He's just as far as Terence, who is head  
 Of Nile's Syene. I may not break bread  
 With him, or see or hear him. None in Rome  
 Is so close by yet so far from my home.  
 I'll have to move (or he). If him you'd see  
 Be his close neighbour or his co-lessee.

## LXXXVII

To quell last night's wine-odour you knock back  
 Cosmos's pastilles wantonly. This snack  
 Blackens your teeth. The stench, though, won't abate  
 When from your stomach's depths you eructate.  
 Fescennia, should some drugs be interspersed  
 A double odour with a longer burst  
 Would then be smelled. From these known tricks desist.  
 We've tumbled to them. Therefore, just be pissed.

## LXXXVIII

Snatched from your master in youth and now  
 Beneath light Levican turf you I endow  
 Not with that Parian stone whose nodding weight  
 Vain labour gives to ashes, doomed by fate  
 To perish; no, accept instead box-trees  
 And vines, shady and dense, and greeneries,  
 Dew's with my tears. Receive this indication  
 Of my distress, dear boy; your reputation  
 Will ever live. When Lachesis shall ply  
 My final thread, thus honoured may I lie.

## LXXXIX

You're always gabbling in the ears of folk,  
 Even that which *may* be heard. You laugh and joke,  
 Carp, shout, are mum, grumble, conjecture, sing,  
 Accuse (it's always in the ears). This thing,  
 This sickness is so rooted, you acclaim  
 In ears of all you speak great Caesar's name.

## XC

Bassa, I never saw a man with you,  
 No buzz has never named a beau, it's true,  
 All of your jobs are done by a multitude  
 Of those of your own gender, not one dude.  
 Lucretia, then, I own, you seemed to be,  
 Yet you're a fucker (o calamity!).  
 Two cunts you bring together, thigh to thigh;  
 Aberrant Venus imitates a guy.  
 A Theban riddle you've dreamed up. So see,  
 Where no man is, should be adultery.

## XCI

Your poems you hide, you slam ours, Laelius.  
Publish your own or do not censure us.

XCII

Mamurianus, Cestos moans to me  
Quite often with o'erflowing eyes that he  
Is harassed by your finger. You have got  
No need to use a finger. Take the lot,  
Is he is all you lack. But if the frame  
Of a bare-bones camp-bed or a fireside flame  
Or a broken cup like that of Chione  
Or else Antiope one may not see  
Chez vous or if a faded cloak, threadbare,  
Hangs from your loins, if only half your pair  
Of bum-cheeks hide beneath a cape from Gaul,  
Your only food a grimy kitchen's pall  
Of steam, and when you have a need to sup  
You lie beside a dog and guzzle up  
Foul water, your blocked arse I will not ply  
But rather poke out your remaining eye.  
Don't censure me with jealousy or spite.  
Go, with your gut full, bugger boys, alright?

XCIII

Two firm friends lie forever, side by side;  
Aquinus glad he crossed the Stygian tide  
Before his pal. A twin altar can swear  
They both were first centurions; more is there –  
You may peruse a succinct dedication:  
"Both men are knit in sacred obligation  
Of lives, both of which had high-minded ends,  
And (what fame seldom knows) they were true friends.

XCIV

While you got fucked, you sang atrociously,  
Aegle, now you sing well. Kiss you? Not me.

XCV

Aelius, you shout, you interrupt the court,  
But not for nothing – your dumbness is bought.

XCVI

If it's no bother, scazon, speak a word  
To friend Maternus, so you may be heard  
By him alone. Sad-coloured cloaks he chooses,  
Wears Baetic wool, ash-coloured togs, and muses  
That men in scarlet clothes aren't men at all,  
That amethyst's for women; though he'll call  
For native, sober hues, yet minty-green  
Remain his morals. He'll ask why I've been  
Suspecting of the man's effeminacy.  
We bathe together, and not once does he  
Look up but quite devours with his eyes  
The butch men and what dwells between their thighs  
He gazes at with wildly twitching lip.  
Who is he? Hm, I've had a mental slip.

XCVII

When all are shouting out, then you orate  
(And think yourself to be an advocate).  
All are persuasive by this reasoning.  
Naevolus, the court is silent; say something.

XCVIII

Gout-ridden, Diodorus takes the stand  
But pays his lawyer zilch - that's gout of the hand.

XCIX

You'd less than two mill yet could surely boast  
Such lavish gifts and were so good a host  
That all your friends wished you five times that sum.  
Our prayers were heard – when seven months had come  
And gone four deaths gave you those eight you lacked;  
As if this had not happened, though, in fact  
As if some thief had come and stolen it,  
You now adopted such a stingy fit  
That those luxurious partied that you threw  
Just once in one whole year do not cost you  
More than some grubby coins. We seven chums  
Are worth just one brass farthing for those crumbs.  
What worthy prize should we petition for  
For such a feast, Calenus? Fifty times more  
Than that two mill! But if you get it, friend,  
Starvation will destroy you in the end.

C

Afra has 'mommies' and 'daddies' – we could call  
That dame the great grandmammy of them all.

CI

A faithful scribe who brought much fame to us,  
Known to the Caesars, now Demetrius  
Has left behind his youth, a mere nineteen:  
Yet lest a slave sink to the Stygian scene  
With foul disease to burn him, we let go  
Our master's rights while he was suffering so.  
Demetrius deserved recovery  
By means of this our boon. Now dying, he  
Sensed it and called us 'patron' on his way,  
A free man, to that dark infernal bay.

CII

The painter of your Venus, seems to me,  
Lycoris, was Minerva's devotee.

CIII

Scaevola, you said, though not a full knight,  
"A million from the gods would see me right;  
I'd live in clover!" Laughing easily,  
The gods provided. After that, we'd see  
A much more filthy toga than before,  
A shabbier coat, boots three times, maybe four,

Repatched, six-tenths your olives stored away,  
One serving for two meals; you merely pay  
An as for warm pea-soup, for sex the same,  
The dregs of Tuscan red you drink. For shame!  
We'll off to court! We'll take you to account!  
Live well, man, or give back the whole amount.

#### CIV

The leopard has a pretty yoke on it,  
Fierce tigers bear the whip, a golden bit  
Is bitten by the stag, the Libyan bear  
Is cowed by reins, the boar (a huge affair  
Like that of Calydon folk speak about)  
Submits to purple ropes. A black mahout  
Can make an elephant dance, a Gallic car  
Is pulled by ugly bison. These sights are,  
You'd say, the shows of gods. But he who sees  
The lions' humble prey which swiftly flees  
And tires them would call them trifling.  
Releasing, re-ensnaring, fondling  
Their unscathed prey, delighting in this play,  
Slack-jawed and keeping all their teeth at bay,  
They shame to mangle such a fragile prize  
(Just now they'd crushed beasts of much greater size).  
There was no training for this clemency,  
But lions know who holds supremacy.

#### CV

Wine of Nomentan vintage as it ages  
Begins to shed by incremental changes  
Its nature and its name, and at its end  
May choose whatever name it wants, my friend.

#### CVI

Rufus, you often water down your booze,  
And, if pressed by a friend, you might just choose  
To drink, diluted, one Falernian measure.  
Did Naevia promise you a night of pleasure  
And you prefer precise and sober screwing?  
You're dumb, you groan, you sorrow: "Nothing doing,"  
She says. Down pints galore, throttle your pain.  
Why not? What's left but – back to sleep again?

#### CVII

Dear Lucius, you often say to me,  
"Write great verse, slacker." Grant me liberty,  
But that which Maecenas one time conferred  
On Horace and on Vergil – I'd be spurred  
To turn out deathless works and from the fire  
Retrieve my name. Bullocks do not desire  
To labour in poor fields; a fertile ground  
Exhausts, but in the labour joy is found.

#### CVIII

Your house (long may it flourish!) stands across  
The Tiber, quite a beauty: where I doss  
Are seen Vipsanian laurels. I've grown old

Within this suburb. Gallus, I must fold  
My tent and move elsewhere if I'm to visit  
You in the morning. Beneficial is it  
Should you live even farther off. It's not  
Much to you if, through me, you now have got  
One togaed citizen, though it's much to me  
Not to discard this opportunity.  
At four I'll often greet you face-to-face.  
At dawn my book will greet you in my place.

CIX

Issa is naughtier than Catullus' pet,  
Purer than a dove's kiss, more coaxing yet  
Than any maid, than Indian pearls more dear.  
She's Publius's lap-dog. Should you hear  
Her whine, you'd think she talks, she feels both pleasure  
And grief; upon his neck she takes her leisure  
And sleeps so soundly that one cannot hear  
A single sigh, and when her belly's near  
To bursting, she will not betray the sheet  
With any drop, but with her coaxing feet  
She rouses you, thus telling you that she  
Wants lifting down. Such is her modesty  
She's still intact; we have not found a mate  
Worth such a prize; lest death appropriate  
Her altogether, he portrays his dear  
In paint, a likeness that's so very near  
The pet herself, the painting seems to be  
More like her than herself. Let people see  
Them side by side: you'd think that both were really  
Alive or else that both were paintings merely.

CX

"Your poems are long," you moan, Velox, to me.  
You write no poems. Yours are more summary.

CXI

You're known for wisdom and for piety,  
Your faith and your mental ability  
Are thus commensurate. He does not know  
How to reward the worthy who can show  
Surprise when you receive, o Regulus,  
A book of poems and frankincense from us.

CXII

Unknown to me, I called you 'majesty':  
Now that you're known, you're just 'Priscus' to me.

CXIII

The verse I penned when just a little guy,  
The rot even I cannot identify  
(If you would wish to waste good hours and hate  
Your leisure-time, o reader) then locate  
Publius Valerianus – he's the chap  
Who won't allow to perish this claptrap.

CXIV



These gardens, Faustinus, next door to you,  
This narrow field and these moist meadows too  
Are Faenius's. Here's where he interred  
His daughter, sanctified her name – one word,  
Antulla. He it was who should have died.  
Her father should have passed to the other side  
Of River Styx. But since it could not be  
Let him live to respect her dignity.

CXV

A certain girl (Procillus, envy me!)  
Desires me. A washed swan couldn't be  
More white, nor silver, lily, privet, snow:  
I want a maid more black than black night, though,  
Or ant, or pitch, jackdaw, cicada. You  
Were thinking what a cruel rope could do:  
But now, Procillus, if I know you well,  
You've changed your mind and won't proceed to hell.

CXVI

The dead receive eternal sanctity,  
Here where fine acres and a grove you'll see,  
Granted by Faenius – here snatched away  
Too soon from loved ones Antulla may stay  
Within her tomb. Both parents shall their dust  
Mingle with hers. If you feel that you must  
Possess this plot, no hope will it afford  
To you, forever faithful to its lord.

CXVII

Whenever we meet, right off you have to ask,  
Lupercus, "May I set my slave a task,  
To come to you and get from you a book  
Of epigrams? After a thorough look  
I'll send it swiftly back." No need, my friend.  
The Pear-Tree's quite a distant way to send  
Your boy. Three flights of stairs, and steep ones, too,  
He'd climb. What you require is nearer you.  
Well, Potter's Field you visit, do you not?  
Across from Caesar's forum you will spot  
A shop whose door-posts top to toe abound  
With ads – a list of poets there is found.  
Look for me there. No need to ask the guy  
Who runs the place, Atrectus: he'll supply,  
From out the first or second slot, a duly  
Polished-with-pumice copy of yours truly,  
In modish purple, for six dollars. You  
Say I'm not worth that much? Well, well, that's true.

CXVIII

My friend, a hundred epigrams suffice.  
If not, you'd tolerate no end of vice.

BOOK II

I

Three times a hundred epigrams, book, you'd bear;  
But who'd bear *you* and read you once they're there?  
The merits of a little book now see:  
Less paper's wasted firstly; secondly,  
My scribe's through in an hour, so his leisure  
Won't all be needed for the dubious pleasure  
Of copying my trifles; third, if you  
Are read aloud, you may be bad all through  
But won't be dull! Your guest will read the lot  
In just five cups before his drink has got  
Lukewarm. Such brevity's still bothering you?  
To many, though, you'll still seem long, it's true.

## II

Crete gave a great, Africa a greater, name,  
Which Scipio and Metellus duly claim  
As victors, Germany, the Rhine now quelled,  
Gave one more noble, worthy to be held,  
Caesar, by you when you were yet a lad.  
Your father, and your brother too, both had  
Their triumphs over the Idumaei;  
The Chattian bay was *yours* entirely.

## III

You're not a debtor, Sextus, we may say:  
He only is a debtor who can pay.

## IV

Ammianus, how your mother dotes on you,  
And how you dote upon your mother, too!  
You call her 'sister' and she calls you 'brother'.  
Why choose such shameful names to call each other?  
Be satisfied with that which is your lot.  
You think this is amusing? Well, it's not.  
A mother who'd be 'sister' to her son  
In actual fact wants to be neither one.

## V

I swear I want to see you night and day,  
Decianus, but two miles are in the way,  
Four when I must return; you're often out,  
And when you're in, I'm often left without  
An invitation; or you're only free  
For clients or yourself; that I may be  
Your guest two miles do not seem very far;  
To be denied you, though, four surely are.

## VI

So much, Severus, for your urging me  
To publish. When you've barely reached page three,  
The final one you scanned, then out you drew  
A lengthy yawn – when I re-read for you  
These poems, you grabbed them from me to transcribe  
(Vitellian-style!); whenever you'd imbibe  
Or visit theatres, these books always came  
With you; and yet they are the very same,  
Or better ones unknown to you. To me

A book is useless that's so willowy  
Tat it's no thicker than its roller-end,  
A book that merely takes three days to spend  
On reading it. No lazier aesthete  
Exists than you. A prey to self-defeat  
So quickly, when you find you have the need  
To go to Bovillae, a change of steed  
You'll manage at Camenae if you can.  
So much for urging me to publish, man.

VII

Agreeably you argue and declaim,  
Write histories and the poetry the same,  
You write mimes, you are an astrologist,  
An epigrammatist, philologist,  
You sing, dance, Atticus, and play at ball,  
You also are a lyre-player – all  
Agreeably performed. Although you do  
Not one thing well, there's not a thing that you  
Don't do agreeably. What are you, sir?  
I'll tell you: you're a major dabbler.

VIII

Reader, if anything is too abstruse  
Or dubious Latin here, it is no use  
To censure me: my scribe it was who marred  
Some things when he was pushing very hard  
To get these verses out. You say it's me,  
Not him? I think, then, your capacity  
Is slight. "They're bad, though." Do I not comply?  
They *are*; you write no better, though, than I.

IX

I wrote her – no reply! She'll not put out.  
She read it, though, I think: she'll yield, no doubt!

X

Thanks. Postumus, for this your half-lips kiss:  
You may take half away from even this.  
Is there a greater present that you crave  
To give me? Keep all of that half you gave.

XI

A cloudy brow has Selius, you see,  
His silent face betrays despondency,  
The portico he paces every night,  
Nose almost to the ground, an ugly sight,  
He beats his breast and combs his hair, he weeps  
For neither friend nor brother; life still leaps  
In both his sons, and may that long be so,  
His tenant and his steward do not know  
Of bankruptcy. His wife and slaves are healthy,  
All of his goods are safe, so he's still wealthy.  
What causes all this grief of his, you say?  
He dines at home, en famille, every day.

XII

Your kisses smell of myrrh. What, pray, is this?  
There's always something alien in your kiss.  
Your *constant* fragrance puzzles me as well:  
Always to smell so good negates that smell.

XIII

The judge and patron both demand their fee.  
Your creditor should be paid, it seems to me.

XIV

Now sure at last that he must dine at home,  
Our Selius, picking up his fine-tooth comb,  
Runs to Europa since he feels the need  
To praise you and your Achillean speed  
Ad nauseam, Paulinus. She says no?  
Then to the Saepta Julia he will go  
To see if Chiron or Aesonides  
Will guarantee an invite that will please.  
No luck? On to the Isis Temple, where,  
A sad heifer, he sits on pews. From there –  
The hundred-columned roof, the double wood  
Of Pompey; maybe there'll be something good  
From baths, the gloom of Gryllus or the caves  
Of Lupus; time and time again he'll lave  
Himself at all three hot baths. Even so,  
When everything's been done, the god says no:  
From there, sun-warmed Europa's grove's in sight:  
Perhaps a friend is strolling late at night.  
By you, and by your wanton maiden too,  
O bull, invite the man, I beg of you!

XV

Hormus, you drink to nobody. Yet this  
Is just a human action, not hubris.

XVI

My friend is ill: the cause is his bedspread.  
What would a coverlet of vivid red  
Do for him were he well? Or how (or why)  
Should he be served with sheets of Sidon dye  
Which reeks to heaven, or by a Nile-made bed?  
It's only senseless wealth which can be fed  
By illness. Doctors!? Knock it on the head!  
You want to convalesce? Take *my* bedspread!

XVII

A lady barber's at the very lips  
Of Subura, right where the bloody whips  
Used by the executioners are revealed,  
Where many a cobbler faces Potter's Field.  
She doesn't shave you, though, I think you'll find.  
She doesn't shave you, no – she skins you blind.

XVIII

I'm angling for a meal, I'm shamed to say,

You for another's: equals anyway!  
I greet you in the morning, they tell me  
You greeted someone else: we're equals, see?  
I squire a haughty lord, you do as well:  
So once again you see the parallel.  
I'll be a slave, and not one's underling.  
A king should not possess another king.

XIX

Zoïlus, you think I'm glad to be a guest?  
And one of *yours*? The man who feels he's blessed  
By meals like yours should have a perfect right  
To take his meals up there at Beggar's Height.

XX

Paulus buys poems he then, as his, recites,  
For that which someone buys is his by rights.

XXI

Friend, some you kiss, to some you give your hand.  
"Which would you pick?" The latter I demand.

XXII

You Muses, Phoebus, what are you to me?  
The jesting muse hurts her own bard. You see,  
My Postumus, to kiss me, was not loath  
To use one lip, but now he uses both.

XXIII

Who Postumus is in my publication  
I'll not, despite your endless supplication,  
Reveal: why should I ever give offence  
To kisses which can make their own defence?

XXIV

"Should Fate land you in court, I'll cling to you  
In squalid garb and of a paler hue  
Than an accused; and if your destiny  
Is exile, over seas and rocks I'll be  
Your comrade." She has made you affluent:  
For two? Will you give me 50 per cent?  
"That's quite a lot." With me, then, you'll be sad.  
But if to save you all the gods agree,  
Alone you'll savour your prosperity.

XXV

You never grant my prayers yet guarantee;  
Galla, if always false, say "No" to me.

XXVI

So Naevia hacks and wheezes, often spits  
On you, Bithynicus. Do you think that it's  
*A fait accompli*? No, that isn't true.  
She is not dying, she is wheedling you.

## XXVII

When Seliuſ casts his net for dinner, pleaſe  
 Do take him with you, if you're handling pleaſ  
 Or elſe juſt giving counſel, ſo that he  
 May praſe you: "Good point! Grave! A ſpeedy plea!  
 Bravo! How blithely ſaid!" For that I yearned:  
 No need for more words now, your meal's been earned.

## XXVIII

Who callſ you "queer" make him a laughing-ſtock.  
 Flip him the bird! You don't deſire cock,  
 Sextilluſ, nor are you a man who ſcrewuſ,  
 And Vetuſtina's hot lipſ you'll not chooſe.  
 You're none of theſe. What are you? I can't tell,  
 But you know there are more thingſ aſ well.

## XXIX

You ſee who lolſ in hiſ front ſeat, whoſe hand  
 Even from here ſcintillateſ with a band  
 Of ſardonyx, whoſe cloak's drunk Tyrian dyeſ  
 A thouſand timeſ, whoſe toga clearly vieſ  
 Within virgin ſnow (and winſ!), whoſe greaſy hair  
 Reekſ of Marcelluſ' theatre, armſ quite bare,  
 Shiny and plucked, a ſole upon hiſ ſhoe  
 Not one day old and in a creſcent, too;  
 Red leather on hiſ perfect foot, hiſ brow  
 Bedecked and ſtarred with many patcheſ. Now,  
 Do you not know wherefore thiſ iſ the caſe?  
 Lift up hiſ patcheſ – you may read hiſ face.

## XXX

I once aſked for a loan of twenty grand –  
 No heavy burden for an affluent hand.  
 I aſked it of a rich, old friend, though – he  
 Keepſ quite a tight hold on hiſ currency.  
 "You're rich," he ſaid, "a lawyer." Gaiuſ, do  
 Give what I ſeek: I do not ſeek your *view*.

## XXXI

I've often fucked Chriſtina. Iſ ſhe free  
 With favoureſ? Beyond them you'll nothing ſee.

## XXXII

I have a caſe with Balbuſ; Pontuſ, you  
 Don't wiſh to irritate him: I've one, too,  
 With Licinuſ, who's an important guy.  
 My wee field Patrobaſ, who liveſ hard by,  
 Trepaſſeſ on a lot: you fear to rile  
 Caſar's freedman; Laronia, meanwhile,  
 Denieſ I leant to her my ſlave; you'll ſay,  
 "She's childleſſ, rich, a widow, paſt her day."  
 I muſt not be a ſlave's ſlave, can't you ſee,  
 Though a friend? Who'd be my lord, let him be free.

## XXXIII

Philaenis, why do I not kiss you? Hell,  
You're bald, you're ginger, you're one-eyed as well.  
Philaenis, he who kisses these, you know,  
Is one who practises fellatio.

XXXIV

Your favourite you saved from slavery  
With your whole dowry, but you let your three  
Sons die of hunger. Such excess you grant  
Your hoary cunt, which even chaste love can't  
Make decorous. Then may the gods agree  
That Phileos, your favourite, shall be  
Your lifelong partner, mother. Oh, it's true,  
Not even Pontia was more vile than you.

XXXV

-Because with moon-horn legs you have been born,  
Phoebe, you could wash them in a drinking-horn.

XXXVI

Don't curl your hair or ruffle it; your skin  
I don't want sleek or dirty; don't begin  
To grow an Eastern beard or one you'd see  
On a defendant. I'd not have you be  
Either too masculine or not enough.  
Now as it is, your legs are very rough,  
Your chest is bristly; it's your mind that's been,  
O Pannychus, entirely plucked clean.

XXXVII

Whatever has been served at table you  
Sweep off – a hazel-hen that's meant for two,  
Sows' teats, pork-rib, one half of a barbel,  
A whole sea-bass, a leg of pork as well,  
A side of murre and a chicken-haunch,  
A white-sauce-dripping pigeon: these you launch  
Into your sodden napkin, which goes back  
Home with your boy, while we, an idle pack,  
Just lie there. Give it back. Be fair. Don't steal.  
I didn't bid you to tomorrow's meal.

XXXVIII

You ask what is my manor's revenue,  
Linus? I'll tell you – that I don't see you.

XXXIX

You give a known slut gowns of violent hue?  
Give her what she deserves. A toga'll do.

XL

Tongilius is feverish, they say:  
They're wrong. I know the tricks that he will play.  
He's hungry and he thirsts. The crafty net  
Is set for thick thrushes, he's out to get  
The mullet and the bass. Let all the wines

Of Caecuba be strained, and let the vines  
Of Opimius be stripped and yield their fruits;  
Pour dark Falernian in little flutes.  
The doctors bid him bathe. They're wrong. You see,  
You think it's fever, but it's gluttony.

XLI

“Laugh, if you're wise, girl.” I believe Naso  
The poet said that – not to all girls, though,  
Or if to all girls certainly not to you.  
You are no girl, you've only three teeth, too,  
The colour of pitch and boxwood. Count on me  
And on your glass. Don't show hilarity!  
Fear laughter as Spanius fears a gale,  
Or Priscus a touch or else Fabulla hail  
(Since she's pearl-powdered) or Sabella heat  
(White-leaded as she is). No, counterfeit,  
Assuming as severe a face as she  
Who married Priam or Andromache.  
Also avoid Philistion's silly mimes  
And all unruly (though immoral) times  
And any dirty jokes which loose the face  
In howling laughter. No, it's more your place  
To sit beside a mother who is grieving  
Or else a wife or sister, thereby leaving  
Yourself to tragedy. Let me advise  
Once more: lament, weep, girl, if you are wise.

XLII

Why foul the bathtub with your bum? Immerse  
Your head, Zoilus, and make it even worse.

XLIII

“Friends share all things.” Are these your words? Are they?  
These words you intone grandly night and day?  
You wear a Spartan toga or one made  
In Parma from some choice flock. I'm afraid  
That mine a bull has gored (which the first-thrown  
Stuffed dummy won't acknowledge as its own!).  
Thabes sent you cloaks of Tyrian dye;  
You could not sell the scarlet ones that I  
Put on for sixpence. You decorously eat  
At Libyan boards, with ivory for feet;  
My beechwood table rests upon a pot.  
On yellow-golden dishes you have got  
Huge mullets, while my dish just might contain  
A crab of matching colour. Your large train  
Of slaves could with that poncy Paris vie;  
My ministering Ganymede is I.  
“Friends share all things”? A buddy, old and true,  
From all this wealth gets not a sou from you.

XLIV

Suppose I've bought three or pounds of plate,  
A slave or a fleecy toga – my old mate  
The usurer Sextus worries, full of care,  
Lest I should beg a loan, with me right there,  
He'll mumble to himself: “That's seven grand



I owe Secundus, four to Phoebus and  
To Philetus eleven; in my coffers  
There's nothing." Is this what a buddy offers?  
It's hard to balk when asked, but even more  
To balk when no request has gone before.

XLV

Glyptus, you have cut off your drooping phallus.  
You fool, why use the knife? You were a Gallus.

XLVI

Like Hybla, full of flowers and multi-hued,  
Where bees of Sicily brief spring denude,  
So shine your cloaks beneath their presses' weight,  
And countless lounge-suits make to scintillate  
Your chest, with togas that could clothe horde  
Of people, that the Apulian fields afford  
From several flocks. You idly eye your pal  
Who shivers in his garments – quelle scandale! –  
Your escort, too, threadbare and cold. Tell me,  
How is it you commit such larceny?  
Two sorry rags? What, Naevolus, do you fear?  
Yourself? No, it's the moths that may appear.

XLVII

Shun that well-known adulteress's spell,  
Though smoother than a Cytherean spell  
You may be. Have you confidence in your rear,  
O Gallus? But her husband is no queer:  
There are just two things that the man may do:  
Either enjoy fellatio or screw.

XLVIII

One bath, one butcher, barber, one landlord,  
A few books (but my own choice), one draughts-board  
(With pieces), just one friend and not too dim,  
A tall boy, not too young, and, dear to him,  
A girl – give these to me, even at Port Zero,  
Rufus, and you can keep your Baths of Nero.

XLIX

I'll not wed *her* – she's an adulteress.  
But she *is* kind to boys, Alright, then, yes.

L

You suck and you drink water. That's no sin.  
Where water's needed, there you take it in.

LI

There's often one sou in your money-box,  
And that more worn-out than your own buttocks.  
It won't go to a baker or barmaid,  
But to a prick too eager to get laid.  
Your wrstched gut sees your arse feed, Hyllus,  
And while gulps away, *he's* ravenous.

LII

To count his bathers, Dasius asks three fees  
Of giant-breasted Spartale: she agrees.

LIII

It's liberty you want? It's not, you know.  
But if it is, this is the way to go,  
O Maximus: you're free if you've no will  
To dine at others'; if you drink your fill  
Of Veii's grape, and laugh at Cinna's dishes,  
Gold-inlaid, and the toga that you wish is  
Somewhat like mine, and if, downtown, you'd bed  
A whore for tuppence, and must lower your head  
To penetrate your house, is strength of mind  
In matters such as these you always find,'  
And self-control is there in everything,  
You'll live more freely than a Parthian king.

LIV

Your wife has clearly shown you her mistrust,  
Linus, and in what areas you must  
Be more upright. She posts a eunuch-guard.  
No-one is wiser, nor no-one more hard.

LV

You want courtship, o Sextus: but I needed  
To love you. Well, of course you must be heeded.  
As ordered I will court you: if I do,  
However, Sextus, I will not love you.

LVI

In Libya your wife is harassed by  
A charge of massive greed. A great big lie!  
Sextus, your wife is not one to acquire  
Those favours. Rather she is their supplier.

LVII

This man you see here ambling through town,  
Parting the crowds and in an amethyst gown,  
As in the Saepta Julia (my friend  
Publius himself cannot hold up his end  
In gowns compared with him, nor Cordus, who's  
Mr. Sartorial for cloaks) he'll cruise,  
A throng of toga'd clients following,  
And long-haired servants, his sedan a thing  
Of beauty, brand-new blinds and straps and all,  
Just now at Clodus's pawnbroker stall  
Has managed, only barely, to complete  
Securement of a ring so he may eat.

LVIII

You mock my threadbare toga, while you shine  
In your posh one, Zoilus. But it's *mine*!

LIX

I'm called "The Tiny": what I am you see,  
A little dining-room: across from me  
Look, you may see the dome of Caesar. Wear  
The couches out, drink wine, and roses bear  
Upon your brows, go scented, too, my friend.  
That god bids you think on your mortal end.

LX

You fuck a tribune's wife and merely fear,  
Hyllus, a young boy's punishment. Oh dear!  
You'll have your gonads cut off while you're screwing.  
That's not allowed? Well, is what you are doing?

LXI

You sucked men's cocks, with cheeks not yet hirsute,  
But now you've earned a certain disrepute  
Among morticians of the penniless  
And with the poor hangmen a weariness,  
Your tongue is used elsewhere, to your great shame:  
Now you will bark out any filthy name  
At any time in dreadful jealousy.  
A vicious tongue like that should rather be  
Upon the middle parts of men employed.  
When sucking, it was surely less alloyed.

LXII

You tell your girl your chest, legs, arms you pluck,  
That bristles ring that thing with which you fuck  
(Who doesn't know this?). Whom, though, do you tell,  
Labienus, that you pluck your arse as well?

LXIII

900 quid is all that you possessed  
And from the Sacra Via you accessed  
Leda for all of that. It's luxury  
To purchases such a love for such a fee  
Regardless of the wealth one may accrue.  
"I'm not in love," you'll say. That's luxury too.

LXIV

You want to be a barrister one day,  
The next a rhetor, and you still can't say  
What you would do – well, man, that time's gone by  
Of Peleus, Nestor, Priam. And, say I,  
It's too late to retire. So embark –  
Three rhetors died last year – if you've some spark  
Or talent in your calling. You denounce  
The schools? Well, all the courts are full of bounce.  
Even Marsyas himself may plead a suit.  
Up, then. How long are we to give you? Tout de  
Suite, man. While you are sat there dithering  
You may at last find you're not anything.

LXV

Why's Saleianus strangely weebegone?"  
"A trivial cause?" You say, "My wife's passed on."  
O grievous fate! O chance heavy as lead!  
Is wealthy Secundilla really dead?  
That million-dowried woman? Oh, I rue  
That, Saleianus, this happened to you.

LXVI

Of all that hair one curl had gone amiss,  
Loose-fitted. Lalage requited this,  
Using the glass which showed the wickedness:  
Plecusa, struck, fell down – a cruel tress!  
Stop, Lalage. Don't trim your damnèd mane.  
Let not a maid touch you – you're quite insane.  
Use salamander or let a blade erase  
The lot and let your mirror fit your face.

LXVII

TO POSTUMUS

Each time we meet you cry out straightaway,  
"How are you?" (that's the first thing that you say).  
Even if we meet ten times an hour, you  
Say this: I think *you*'ve not t thing to do.

LXVIII

I used to call you "lord" but now I say  
Your name; don't call me insolent, I pray:  
I bought my freedom with my property.  
A man should surely have a "lord" if he  
Cannot possess himself and longs to earn  
Those thing which lords and masters also yearn  
To have. If you without a slave can go,  
Olus, you'll do without a lord also.

LXIX

You're dining out aganst your will, you cry:  
I'll hang myself if that is not a lie,  
Classicus. Even Apicius would delight  
To dine at others'. When he'd no invite  
It saddened him. Well, if you're disinclined,  
Why go? "I'm bound," you say. That's true: you'll find  
That Selius is as well. You're now, it seems,  
Invited to the dinner of your dreams  
By Melior. Where are all your vows so fine?

LXX

No-one should use the bath before you do,  
Cotilus? There's one reason – it's lest you  
Touch sex-stained water. But it must be said –  
Wash first, but wash your prick before your head.

LXXI

You're forthrightness itself. I note that you,  
Whenever I have read you just a few  
Of my distichs, you'll read immediately

Catullus or Marsus. Well, could this be  
A compliment as if you've read bad verse  
Which, when compared to mine, is so much worse,  
Caecilianus? That I'll take as true.  
I'd rather, though, hear those composed by you.

LXXII

At last night's meal, o Postumus, they claim,  
A deed was done for which I render blame  
(Who could approve it?). You a bruise sustained  
More noisily than when Latinus brained  
Wretched Panniculus: what's even more  
Unheard-of – the entire city's lore  
Maintains Caecilius performed the act.  
You say, however, this is not a fact:  
You want me to believe it? Well, I do.  
Did someone, though, *see* this attack on you?

LXXIII

Lyris asks what she's doing. Slurping spunk!  
That's what she always does when she's not drunk.

LXXIV

Saufeijs, front and back, is quite surrounded  
By clients (Regulus was likewise hounded  
When going home, his trimmed defendants now  
Sent to the high gods' temple with their vow  
Of gratitude). Matronus, do you see him?  
Well, pray with all your heart you'll never be him.  
Those friends, those toga'd clients at his call –  
Those ill-famed usurers provide them all.

LXXV

A lion, used to his bold master's blows,  
Stays mild as into his great mouth there goes  
A hand, but now farewell his peaceful ways,  
His wildness greater than in Libyan days.  
Two of those boys who rake the bloody sand  
Were cruelly dragged from that youthful band  
And torn to pieces. Never has there been  
On that warlike arena such a scene.  
Cry, "Treacherous", cry "Robber", cry "Uncouth."  
Learn from the Roman wolf to spare our youth."

LXXVI

Marius left you five pounds of silver plate;  
You gave him nothing; he gave you – mere prate.

LXXVII

You think my poems are long, Cosconius. You're  
Of use for greasing axles – nothing more.  
Logic like this would make Colossus tall  
And categorize Brutus's son as small.  
Look, often Marsus and Pedo, that sage,  
Treat of one theme in just one double page.  
A poem one can't abbreviate is never

Too long – *your* poems are truly long, however.

LXXVIII

Where should you keep you fish now summer's here?  
In your warm bath, Caecilianus dear.

LXXIX

You know I've guests, yet send an invitation.  
I'm dining in: please take this explanation.

LXXX

ON FANNIUS

He offed himself, fleeing his enemy.  
Dying to cheat death's an absurdity.

LXXXI

TO ZOÏLUS

Your litter's large as a six-seat sedan?  
It's *yours*, though, so – a pauper's litter, man!

LXXXII

TO PONTICUS

Why make your servant mute, then crucify him?  
Folk speak, you know, what can't be spoken by him.

LXXXIII

Spouse, you that cuckold-maker mutilated,  
His nose and ears cut off. Retaliated  
Sufficiently, did you? Well, no such luck:  
He still has the ability to fuck.

LXXXIV

Brave Poeantius was emasculated:  
Thus Venus Paris' wounding vindicated.  
Sertorius licks cunts, apparently  
Because the man who killed Eryx was he.

LXXXV

A flask enclosed in wickerwork, protected  
In water boiled and iced, is now projected  
To be my gift to you at Saturn's season.  
Should you complain there seems to be no reason  
To send a summer present in December,  
Send me a threadbare toga, then, remember.

LXXXVI

I don't exalt in verse that's mixed up quite,  
Nor backwards read Sotades the sodomite,  
No Greekling echo answers, nor to me  
Does graceful Attis read his fragmentary

And hedonistic galliambics. Thus  
I'm not too bad a poet, Classicus.  
Why force Ladas to brave the narrow span  
Of a springboard? Hard knickknacks degrade a man;  
Inane is labour spent on foolishness.  
So let the mob obtain some happiness  
By poems penned by Palaemon: I, however,  
Would have my poems delight the few but clever.

LXXXVII

So, Sextus, you inflame each man's fair daughter?  
You, with the face of someone underwater?

LXXXVIII

TO MAMERCUS

Reciting nought, you would a poet be?  
Be what you like but read no poetry.

LXXXIX

I pardon boozing late into the night,  
Gaurus: a fault of Cato's! That you write  
Un-Mused and un-Apollo'd says that you  
Rate praise – a gift of Cicero's. You spew?  
So Antony! You splurge? Apicius!  
You suck? Well, *that* vice has eluded us.

XC

Great trainer of our errant young, the fame  
OF Rome, Quintilianus, find no blame  
That I want *life*, though poor yet not worn out  
By years: there is no man, without a doubt,  
Too keen for life. The man who would transcend  
His father's means and crams, from end to end,  
His home with busts, let him delay. For I  
Prefer my hearth, a roof that won't decry  
Black smoke, a living spring, rough grass, a slave  
Home-born and plump, a wife who won't behave  
As one too educated, sleep at night  
And total lack of lawsuits in daylight.

XCI

Caesar, our hope, the glory of our state,  
Through whose sure hand we know the gods are great,  
If these my poems have captivated you,  
Who read them often although hurried through,  
Give me what Fortune bans and let me be  
Deemed father of three sons: if you think me  
Deficient, let it be my consolation;  
If good, then let it be my compensation.

XCII

I begged the three-sons right, and he whose aid  
Alone could be of use my Muse repaid.  
So farewell, wife. The boon that was borne hither  
To me by my commander must not wither.

### XCIII

“Where is the first, if that’s the second one?”  
You say. My book’s too shy? What’s to be done?  
If you’d have this as first, though, then, say I,  
Take, Regulus, from the title just one ‘I’.

### BOOK III

#### I

For what it’s worth, this book is sent your way  
By Gallia Togata far away.  
You read it and may praise the former one:  
Which you think better that’s the one I’ve done.  
Who’s born in Rome should like it most of all:  
A home-born book should best the one from Gaul.

#### II

Whose present would you be, book? Hurry, quick,  
Lest you be snatched and in the very thick  
Of sooty kitchen wrap up tunny-fry,  
In soggy papyrus, or else supply  
Yourself to be some sort of pepper-pot  
Or cornet for some incense. You have got  
Good sense if to Faustinus you would flee.  
Then, cedar-dripping, you would saunter free,  
Twin brows bedecked, and saucily displayed  
With painted bosses, and your whole arrayed  
With purple, title scarlet. You need fear  
Not even Probus then: that’s very clear.

#### III

With sooty salve you paint your pretty face,  
With ugly frame the water you deface.  
Think that the goddess says, as I do, “Show  
Your face or clothed into the water go.”

#### IV

Book, go to Rome: and say to her, should she  
Ask where you came from, “The locality  
Of Via Flaminia.” “Where’s he?” she’ll say.  
“Cornelius’s Forum” is OK.  
“And why not here?” In brief confess it all:  
“He cannot bear the futile toga’s pall.”  
“When is he back?” Reply, “A bard for hire  
He left; when he returns, he’ll play the lyre.”

#### V

In haste to Rome alone, small book, would you  
Be loved by many or will just one do?  
One, surely – Julius – would satisfy  
(I often speak of him). He lives nearby,  
Smack on the Tecta, in the very house  
Where Daphnis used to live. He has a spouse  
Who’ll take you to her heart and welcome you,  
Though you be dusty. Should you see the two



Together or else separately, you'll say  
(And it's enough), "Marcus bids you good-day."  
A letter may to others recommend;  
He's wrong, though, who thus importunes a friend.

VI

This day, o Marcellinus, May Eighteen,  
You must twice celebrate, for it has been  
Your father's natal day, and equally  
It stripped your blooming cheeks of hair. Though he  
Received the gift of life that day, no more  
Will he be granted now than heretofore.

VII

A weary escort's largesse, adios,  
You hundred farthings, which the bathing-boss,  
All sodden, would dole out. So what think you,  
O famished friends? Now we must say adieu  
To a haughty patron's dole. "No trickery  
Will help: he must give us a salary.

VIII

"Well, Quintus loves Thaïs." "Which one?" "The one  
With one eye." She has one eye, he has none.

IX

Cinna, they say, writes verse against me.  
He doesn't write whose poems no-one would see.

X

Two grand a month your father left you, and  
He paid it daily – for constant demand  
Through need beleaguers every luxury  
And one needs cash for one's profligacy.  
He, dying, left the lot to you, it's true,  
But, Philomelus, he's thus disowned you.

XI

Your girl is neither one-eyed nor Thaïs?  
So why do you conjecture that my piece  
Refers to her? There's some affinity.  
So was my saying "Thaïs meant to be  
"Laïs"? "Hermione" and "Thaïs" sound  
Quite unlike. Let's change the names around  
(For you are Quintus): then we may discover,  
If you don't want her, Sextus is her lover.

XII

You gave your guests at dinner yesterday  
A nice perfume but, I regret to say,  
Carved nothing. It's droll to be ravenous  
And also scented. That man Fabullus,  
Who doesn't eat and is anointed too –  
He seems to be a corpse, I tell you true.

XIII

TO NAEVIA

You won't serve fish and chicken and you'll spare  
A more than putrid boar, and yet you dare  
To beat the cook as though what he sent through  
Was all crude. Well, *I'll* not be crude chez vous.

XIV

There came to Rome the man called Tuccius  
From out of Spain – and he was ravenous!  
Then came to him news of the dole in Rome:  
The Milvian Bridge is where he turned for home.

XV

None gives more credit than does Cordus here.  
“How's that? He's poor!” He loves, though blind, I fear.

XVI

Cobbler, you give a gladiatorial show,  
You little stitcher-king, so what you owe  
The awl the dagger snatches. You're pie-eyed  
(You wouldn't do it sober – use your hide  
To have some sport). You do, though. Take this in –  
Keep to yourself within your little skin.

XVII

A tart went round for some time at dessert  
And many people's fingers did it hurt,  
So hot it was, but one man's gluttony  
Was hotter still and so, immediately,  
Three or four times he puffed his cheeks and blew  
Upon it so in time it cooler grew  
So that it would our fingers now admit,  
But none would touch it. Why? 'Cos it was shit.

XVIII

“I have a cold,” in your address you say.  
Excused thus, why continue anyway?

XIX

Just near the Hundred Columns, where we see  
Within the plane-groves beasts in effigy,  
There is a bear. Fair Hyllas, while at play,  
And challenging its gaping mouth one day,  
Thrust in his youthful hand. But skulking there  
Was a foul viper, deadlier than the bear.  
He felt its fatal bite, quite unaware,  
And died. Foul deed, occasioned by a fake!

XX

What's Rufus up to, Muse? Might he just be  
Writing a history of the Claudii  
In deathless pages for the eyes of man,

Or aping what the false historian  
Ascribed to Nero, or the playful art  
Of naughty Phaedrus? Is he tragic-tart  
Or elegy-led? Or is he harrowing  
In Sophoclean buskin? Idling  
Inside the Poets' School or, p'raps, creating  
Verse graced with Attic wit? Perambulating  
The Isis Temple, if he's gone from Rome?  
Or strolling through the Argo's sailors' home?  
Europa's portico as she enjoys  
The sun while he delights in equipoise  
Among the post-noon heat of her box-trees,  
While sitting or while walking? Maybe he's  
At Titus' or Agrippa's bath, or that  
Of shameless Tigillinus. Is he at  
Lucanus' or at Tullus' country-seat,  
So charming? Did the great torridity  
Of Baiae beckon to him? So is he  
Skimming the Lucrine Lake? So what's he at?  
He's laughing, Muse. You can be sure of that.

## XXI

A doomed man was saved by a slave he's branded.  
Not life, but lifelong shame, has he been handed.

## XXII

You blew on gourmandizing sixty mill,  
Apicius, and you've a sixth part still.  
At last you poison took, vexed by this dearth,  
The most voracious deed on all the earth.

## XXIII

You hand to slaves behind you all the meat.  
Why's not the table spread out at your feet?

## XXIV

A pleasing he-goat stood there at the shrine,  
Condemned to die for gnawing of a vine,  
Bacchus. The Tuscan seer, the sacrifice  
Decided, told a peasant, in a trice  
And with a sharp knife, to castrate the beast  
So that its foul flesh would not in the least  
Pollute the air. When on the turf the seer  
Was cutting with his knife, while on the bier  
The animal strained, and pressing with a will,  
A hernia (an omen very ill)  
Appeared. The clown assumed that this same rite  
Demanded this, and that the gods delight  
In entrails such as these, so took a blade  
And excised it. So you, a seer, were made  
A Gaul: thus a castrated goat you slew  
And by that act were you castrated too.

## XXV

Faustinus, would you cool such blistering  
A bath for even Julianus? Bring  
The orator Sabineius. He would chill

The baths of Nero with that high-flown skill.

XXVI

Alone you've lands and cash, carnelian, plate  
Of gold, Caecuban wine (Opimius' date),  
And Massic too, you have ability  
And genius – all yours alone. You see,  
Just yours (I would deny it?), Candidus.  
You're married, though, and she is shared with *us*.

XXVII

You'll not invite, though, invited here,  
You often come. That's fine, but – let's be clear –  
As long as you invite no others too.  
You do, though. It's a fault of me *and* you.  
“What fault?” Well, I have no sagacity  
And, Gallus, you have got no decency.

XXVIII

Why's Marius' ear smell foul? It's you, I fear,  
Who are the cause – you whisper in that ear.

XXIX

TO GARGILIANUS

These double chains, o Saturn, king of kings,  
Zoilus gives you. They were once his rings.

XXX

There is no dole: you dine chez moi quite free.  
What do you do at Rome? Explain to me.  
Whence comes your wretched toga? Whence id the rent  
For your foul attic? Whence the farthing meant  
For bathing? Whence the means for sustenance  
Of your Chione? You may say perchance  
That you've very sound economy:  
That fact that you still live's not sound to me.

XXXI

You've scads of land all over, and in Rome  
In many places you have many a home.  
So many debtors find that they are tied  
To your great coffers; gold plate may be spied  
Supporting all your banquets. Don't pooh-pooh,  
However, friend Rufinus, those whom you  
Regard as lesser: Didymos had more,  
While Philomelus has that much in store.

XXXII

TO MATRONIA

“Could you accept an old sweetheart?” you say.  
You are not old, you're dead! Hecuba I may,  
Or Niobe, on this accord alone –  
That one's not yet a dog, nor one a stone.

## XXXIII

I'd choose a free-born girl. She can't be mine?  
 A freedwoman would be the next in line:  
 Last option's a maidservant, yet she'd be  
 The first if she'd just *look* free-born to me.

## XXXIV

You are and you're not worthy of your name.  
 You're cold and black - -'Chion' yet *not* that same.

## XXXV

The fish you see in finely carved relief  
 By Phidias could swim, it's my belief.

## XXXVI

Like a new friend, Fabianus, you bid me  
 To greet you in the foul frigidity  
 Of morning every day and travel through  
 The mud, and in your chair, and follow you  
 To Agrippa's baths though I am used to go  
 To Titus' (this at ten or later). So,  
 For all those thirty years is this my pay –  
 A greenhorn in your friendship every day?  
 My self-bought toga's threadbare: surely you  
 Agree that my discharge is overdue?

## XXXVII

Rich friends, to be incensed is all you know.  
 You don't act well but it avails you so.

## XXXVIII

Sextus, what's brought you here, what confidence  
 Invites you? What shall you acquire hence?  
 "I'll plead in court, a better Cicero;  
 In all three fora here there will be no  
 Equal to me." Two men, well-known to you,  
 Civis and Atestinus, both these two  
 Pled causes but could never raise their rent.  
 "I'll be a poet, if that brings no content:  
 You'll hear a second Vergil. " Madman, there  
 Are Ovids, Vergils almost everywhere  
 In freezing mantles. "Then I'll cultivate  
 Important men." That method has, to date,  
 Produced but three or four, the rest are wan  
 With hunger. "So what's your opinion?  
 What *shall* I do? To live here is my bent."  
 If you are good, you'll live by accident.

## XXXIX

One-eyed Lycoris loves a man as fair  
 As Ganymede. Half-blind with sight so rare!

## XL

You loaned one-fifty grand, my friend, to me  
Out of your coffer's great prosperity.  
Does giving it suggest great friendliness?  
No, that's because you get it back, I'd guess.

XLI

Wrought on its bowl Mentor's lizard stands there.  
To touch its silver surface we don't dare.

XLII

To hide the wrinkles on your womb, it's said,  
Polla, you use bean-meal; your gut you spread  
But not my lips, though. Simply let there be  
A tiny spot on your anatomy.  
That which is covered up you're sure to find  
Is larger than it is in someone's mind.

XLIII

You ape youth, Laetinus, with your dyed hair,  
A swan once, now – a crow! Not everywhere  
Do you deceive: the Lady of the Dead  
Will pluck away the mask from off your head.

XLIV

None wants to meet you: everywhere you go  
There's flight and solitude. You'd like to know  
The reason, Ligurinus? You are too  
Poetic. That's a perilous fault for you.  
No tigress robbed of cubs, no snake, sun-burned,  
No deadly scorpion has ever earned  
Our fear as much. Who'd tolerate, I ask,  
Such heavy trials that you take to task?  
You read when I am standing, when I'm sitting,  
You read when I am running, when I'm shitting.  
I rush to bathe: I hear you there. I go  
To take a swim: I cannot do it, though.  
I rush to feast: you catch me on the street.  
I get there but you rout me as I eat.  
I sleep, exhausted: but, as I lie there,  
You rouse me from my sleep. So would you care  
To know the sin you cause? You're just, say I,  
You're upright, harmless, yet you terrify.

XLV

Did Phoebus turn from old Thyestes' feast?  
I don't know. But *we* turned from yours at least,  
Ligurinus. Sure, the spread was fine and choice  
But things went bad once that we heard your voice  
Reciting. No mushrooms, please. No flatfish,  
Large mullets, oysters: silence is my wish.

XLVI

You want my endless toga'd work, but I  
Don't go but send my freedman. "This, " you cry,  
"Is not the same." I'll prove it's better still.  
Though I escort your litter rather ill,

He'll carry it. If you should chance to fall,  
With just his elbow he'll unsaddle all.  
I'm weak and urbane. If you tell a tale  
In court, I will be silent, without fail:  
He'll bellow six bravos. You have a suit  
Against you, much abuse he'll loudly hoot:  
My reticence forbids strong words. "Therefore,"  
You say, "You will not help me anymore,  
Though you're a friend?" Well, Candidus, I'll do  
Whatever jobs he cannot do for you.

XLVII

Just where the Capene Gate drips heavily,  
Where Almo washed Cybele's knives, where, see,  
The sacred plain of the Horatii is green,  
Where little Hercules's temple's seen  
Thronged with the mob, Faustinus, Bassus went  
In a crowded coach, with every accoutrement  
The country can provide – huge cabbages  
And every kind of leek, squat lettuces,  
Beets for a queasy stomach; also there  
A circle of fat thrushes and a hare  
By Gallic hound brought down; a piglet too,  
Too young for beans. What did the runner do?  
The man was surely not on holiday  
But carried eggs protected by some hay  
Before the coach. Was Bassus facing Rome?  
Oh,, not at all: he sought his country home.

XLVIII

He built a 'poor man's box' but sold his pelf.  
Now Olus has a 'poor man's box' himself.

XLIX

You mix me Veii's but drink Massic wine:  
I'd rather smell than drink these cups of mine.

L

Your dinner invitation, just between us,  
Is just for this – to read your poems, Ligurinus.  
Shoes off, a massive book was brought along,  
The lettuce and the fishy sauce among:  
The first course waited while you read a second:  
A third you read while still the pudding beckoned.  
A fourth! A fifth! A sick sight is a boar  
That has been offered many times before.  
Consign your poems, Ligurinus, to the sea  
Or you will never dine again with me.

LI

Galla, I praise your face, your legs, your palms.  
"You'll like me better nude." Yet you have qualms  
To bathe with me in any bathing joint.  
You're not afraid that I may disappoint?

LII

## TO TONGILIANUS

Two hundred grand secured your house for you;  
One accident, however – down it flew!  
(And that's no rarity in Rome at all).  
You got a million in collateral.  
Will it not seem, among the folk in Rome,  
That you yourself set fire to your home?

### LIII

I could forgo your neck, eyes mouth, cheek, lips,  
Your hands, your legs, your breasts, your bum, your hips.  
Lest I with every detail overdo,  
Chloe, I could forgo the whole of you.

### LIV

Galla, the price you ask I cannot pay.  
So, Galla, why don't you just say me nay?

### LV

Cosmus is always on the move, it seems,  
His cinnamon pouring forth in endless streams.  
Do not flaunt such a foreign bagatelle.  
My dog, I think, has just as nice a smell.

### LVI

## RAVENNA

A cistern's better here than vines, it's true.  
For water yields a better revenue.

### LVII

## RAVENNA REVISITED

A sly landlord imposed on me of late:  
I asked for mixed but I got it straight.

### LVIII

In Baiae Faustinus's villa shows  
No idle myrtles, widowed planes in rows,  
No clipped box-trees, there's no unfruitful space:  
He keeps an honest and an artless place.  
In every nook the corn's compacted hard;  
Some ancient autumn flows from many a shard.  
Whe, post-November, winter, looming, creeps,  
Last-minute grapes the scruffy pruner reaps.  
Deep in the valley bulls all loudly bray  
While unfledged steers are itching for the fray.  
The grimy poultry wanders here and there,  
Shrill geese and gaudy peacocks everywhere,  
The bird who from his red plumes gained his name,  
The painted partridge, speckled guinea-game,  
The evil Colchians' pheasant; haughtily  
The cocks control their Rhodian hens and, see,  
The cotes resound as many pigeons coo,  
A ringdove moans, a sleek turtle-dove too.



The greedy pigs pursue the pinafore  
 Of the bailiff's wife; their mothers' milky store  
 Mild lambs await; the home-born servant young  
 Surround the cackling fireside; among  
 The household gods on every holiday  
 Large billets gleam; time's not frittered away  
 By him who trades in wine; the greased man who  
 Is wrestling-coach will not his oil run through  
 But for the greedy thrush cast his keen net  
 Or with his trembling line contrive to get  
 A catch of fish or bring a hapless doe  
 Caught in his toils. The town slaves gladly hoe  
 The kindly plot; the wanton Ganymedes  
 With their long hair all execute their deeds  
 Unsupervised. The eunuch loves his work;  
 The country visitor will never shirk  
 To bring a gift: white honeycombs one sees,  
 From Sassina's wood a pyramid of cheese.  
 Here is a shaggy goat, a capon there,  
 Some sleepy dormice, from their mothers' fare  
 In baskets strapping maids of honest men  
 Present; when all the work is done, why then  
 A neighbour's called to dine, no greedy board  
 Will victuals for tomorrow's diner hoard.  
 All feast – the full attendant is not green  
 When any drunken visitor is seen.  
 But you an elegant hunger have in Rome,  
 Seeing just laurels from your lofty home;  
 You'r safe enough, Priapus fears no theft,  
 Your vine-dresser eats urban corn; you heft  
 Out to your frescoed villa eggs and cheese,  
 Fowls, cabbages, fruit, must. Now tell me, please,  
 Should we entitle this a country home  
 Or else a townhouse that's away from Rome?

## LIX

You had a show, cultured Bononia,  
 Presented by a cobbler, Mutina  
 Got one too, from a fuller. Where now, pray,  
 Will a taverner produce such a display?

## LX

### TO PONTICUS

Since I'm no longer bought to come and dine  
 As earlier, why should your fare and mine  
 Be different? You eat oysters that are plump  
 From Lucrine waters, I must suck a lump  
 Of mussel with a hole cut from the shell:  
 Mushrooms you get, I get hog fungus. Well!  
 You get a turbot, I, though, get a brill.  
 Of golden turtle-dove you have your fill,  
 Its rump so fat, but placed in front of me –  
 A magpie which died in captivity.  
 I dine with, yet without, you. Let us see  
 The dole again; let's both eat equally.

## LXI

Base Cinna, you say that for what you sue

Is nought. Well, that nought I'll deny to you.

LXII

A hundred grand or two for slave you pay,  
Wine from King Numa's time you quaff away,  
Your few effects you give a million for,  
A pound of silver plate's a five thousand more,  
The value of a farm you have put down  
For one gilt coach, what buys a house in town  
You paid for a mule: you think these things are done  
By a great mind, Quintus? No, a puny one.

LXIII

You are a pretty man, I hear folk say.  
In fact, what *is* a pretty man, I pray?  
“A man who neatly combs his curly hair,  
Rubs cinnamon and balsam everywhere;  
Sings snatches from Cadiz or else the Nile,  
Rhythmically waving his plucked arms the while;  
Sits with the dames as long as it's daylight,  
Constantly whispering in their ears; he'll write  
Wee notes while reading others that have been  
Sent hence and thence; and he will not be seen  
Allowing his neighbour's cloak to touch his skin;  
He knows who's screwing whom and who is in  
A constant hurry to a meal somewhere  
And knows Hirpinus' pedigree.” Whoa there,  
Cotilus! These are pretty fellows' features?  
Well, pretty fellows, then, are complex creatures.

LXIV

Wily Ulysses got away, they tell,  
From the Sirens who consigned sailors to hell –  
Destructive joy, alluring punishment –  
Who captured everyone once he had bent  
His ear to them. That's no surprise to me,  
But, Cassianus, if he were said to flee  
That Canius and his endless disquisitions,  
That story would arouse my deep suspicions.

LXV

A young maid's apple breath, a saffron breeze;  
The early grape-scent from the vineries;  
The smell of grass new-cropped by sheep, perfume  
Of myrtle, amber rubbed, the Arab whom  
One pays to gather spice, a fire lightened  
By Eastern scent; the smell of earth that's heightened  
By gentle summer rain, a crown that knows  
Hair dewy with spikenard; each one of those  
Is like your kisses, cruel boy. Give me  
Them all (why not?) *without* antipathy.

LXVI

Antony and the Egyptian both committed  
A heinous crime; a sacred life was quitted  
By both; in laurelled triumphs Rome attained  
The one, the other as she talked she gained.

Yet Antony a worse defence must plead  
For what he did than the Egyptian's deed.  
For service was Pothinus' butchery,  
*Self*-service motivated Antony.

LXVII

You're slackers, boys, and useless and more slow  
Than are the waters over which you go,  
Dipping your sluggish oars to the bosun's call.  
Now Aethon sweats when Phaethon starts to fall,  
The day burns brightly and, right at midday,  
The weary steeds are freed. You merely play  
In placid waters, slack and safe. I'd call  
You Argonauts, not mariners at all.

LXVIII

Matron, so far my book for you is meant.  
The later parts? For me. You must absent  
Yourself. The gym, baths, stadium are here.  
We're taking off our clothes. Do not come near  
Our naked bodies. Modesty put away  
With wine and roses, drunk Terpsichore  
Knows not her words: in honest speech she cites  
The symbol which the proud Venus invites  
In June and which the bailiff places right  
Within the garden (maids who are upright  
Will shield their eyes at this). If I know you  
As thoroughly as I believe I do,  
You put aside this long book wearily  
But now you'll read the whole thing carefully.

LXIX

You write chaste epigrams, one can't detect  
A cock in any poem. You've my respect,  
The purest of all men; my pages, though,  
Are full of smut – old fellows, tortured so  
By girlfriends, naughty men and women who  
Are sinful should read me. However, you,  
Cosconius, with a text sacred and pure  
Should just be read by boys and maids demure.

LXX

You are Aufidius' lover, who have been  
Her husband. Now her husband's clearly seen  
To be your rival. Why is that you  
Are drawn to someone else's wife, not to  
Your own? Could it be that the law's protection  
Prevents you from securing an erection?

LXXI

TO NAEVOLUS

The boy's cock's sore, your arsehole feels the same.  
I'm no diviner but I know your game.

LXXII

You'd like to fuck me but won't bathe with me,  
Saufeia. Is there some deformity  
Involved? Do wrinkled tits hang from your breast?  
You fear that, naked, you will manifest  
A belly's furrows or your groin will show  
By cuts its frequent use? Does something grow  
Upon your cunt? No, none of this is true,  
And nudity will prove a gorgeous you,  
I'm sure. So you've a worse deficiency  
If what you say's not true – stupidity.

LXXIII

TO GALLUS

You sleep with well-endowed young boys; however,  
While they stand up, you don't. Phoebus, whatever  
Am I to think? You're passive? Yet I hear  
You're *not* inclined to take it up the rear.

LXXIV

You salve your cheeks, rub pitch in your bald head.  
What, does a barber fill you full of dread?  
What of your nails? You can't trim them with clay  
From Venice or with resin. Don't, I pray,  
For shame, mistreat your bald scalp. For that's what,  
Gargilianus, girls do to their twat.

LXXV

For ages now, despite your anguished tussle,  
You've failed to elevate your penile muscle.  
The lusty bulb, the naughty savory,  
The rocket all have no efficacy.  
Your wealth corrupts pure cheeks: the sex act, too,  
When called upon has not advantaged you.  
Good lord, who would believe that what you've lost  
Has *stood*, Lupercus, at so great a cost?

LXXVI

Old women make you hard, yet you've disgust  
For girls. Half-dead, not fair, awakes your lust.  
Crazy! A cock gone mad! So Hecabe  
Is possible, but not Andromache!

LXXVII

No mullets, thrush, no hare, no boar for you,  
You'll shun a roll, a piece of cut cake, too,  
Phasian and Libyan birds aren't to your taste;  
You'll wolf down capers, onions with fish-paste,  
A lean an dodgy ham; you'll shovel in  
A black-oak tunny with a whitish skin,  
A resined wine you'll drink but you'll eschew  
Falernian. I'll hazard, then, that you  
Have in your gut some taint that's best forgotten.  
Baeticus, why else would you eat flesh that's rotten?

LXXVIII

TO PAULINUS

You pissed once while your ship passed near the shore.  
You'll be Palinurus should you pee once more.

LXXIX

TO SERTORIUS

You never finish anything you do.  
I bet in bed, too, you don't follow through.

LXXX

You fault, no-one, of no-one you speak ill,  
Yet you've a base tongue, says the rumour mill.

LXXXI

What is your interest in a girl's abyss?  
That tongue of yours should *fellows*' middles kiss.  
Why was your cock with a Samian shard cut through  
When, Baeticus, a cunt will satisfy you?  
Your head should have been gelded: for despite  
The fact that in your groin you're Gallic quite,  
Yet you can mock Cybele's liturgy.  
So in the mouth you are a man, I see.

LXXXII

Who can be Zoïlus's guest should dine  
Among the prostitutes and drink his wine  
From Leda's broken jar: for I tell you  
That's easier and the decent thing to do.  
Green-garbed, he lies alone upon a cot  
And elbows here and there the guests he's got,  
On purple and on silken throws propped up.  
When he is belching from his brimming cup,  
A nearby bum-boy offers him red quills  
And toothpicks, while a harlot gently chills  
The air with her green fan as there she lies,  
To quell his heat; a slave shoos off the flies  
With a myrtle twig; from his head down to his toes  
A shampooess with expert fingers goes;  
A finger snap! A eunuch guides the knob  
Of his drunk master, for it is his job  
To know when he begins a delicate pee;  
His lapdogs eat goose livers, through whom he  
Throws to his wrestlers choice pieces of boar,  
And rumps of turtle-doves go to each whore;  
Ligurian-rock-born wine a guest consumes  
Or must that's boiled in Massilian fumes;  
He toasts his fools with choice Opimian  
In crystal and murrine cups; with Cosmian  
Scent-bottles is he drenched; but the pomade  
Of some starved whore that's in a gold shell laid  
He doesn't blush to portion out to us.  
And then he's snoring, lost within the fuzz  
Of drunkenness, while we, as we recline,  
Must at these snorts be mute and drink our wine

With nodding pledges. Thus is Malchio,  
The arrogant swine, and we must undergo  
These insults, Rufus, and retaliation  
Is just not possible: he likes fellation.

LXXXIII

TO CORDUS

Write shorter epigrams, you say to me.  
“Do a Chione.” Now, *that’s* brevity.

LXXXIV

What is that your whore says? Do confide.  
No, not your girl. Your tongue’s what I implied.

LXXXV

Who urged you to cut off the bastard’s snout?  
It was another part that found him out.  
Your wife’s lost nothing by this act, you fool.  
Your Deiphobus has still got his tool.

LXXXVI

I warned you no to read my dirty book,  
Chaste lady: all the same, you take a look.  
If you watch mimes, though (my poems are no worse  
In content than those mimes are), read my verse.

LXXXVII

They say, Chione, that you’ve never been mounted:  
Among the purest things your cunt is counted.  
When bathing, though, you cover the wrong place:  
Be modest – put your drawers across your face.

LXXXVIII

A pair of twins lick different groins. Are they  
More unlike or more similar, would you say?

LXXXIX

Take lettuces and soft mallows: for it  
Seems by your face you’re straining for a shit.

XC

Now Galla will, and will not, let me screw ‘er.  
What she may mean by this I am not sure.

XCI

A discharged soldier, off to his abode  
In Ravenna, chanced to meet along the road  
The band, half-man, half-maid, of Cybele.  
A handsome lad, steeped in iniquity,  
Achillas, his mater’s runaway slave, was there  
With him. These fairies knew this and said, “Where  
Do you sleep in the bed”? He saw the guile:

He lied and they believed him. After a while,  
Now drunk, they went to bed: this vicious mob  
At once snatched steel and did a hatchet job  
On the old man in *his* section, while the boy  
On the inner side was safe from all annoy.  
They say a hind once took a virgin's place:  
A cock replaced a stag, though, in this case.

XCII

TO GALLUS

My wife asks me to brook her gigolo –  
Just one. Shall I gouge out his two “eyes”, no?

XCIII

TO VETUSTILLA

You've seen three hundred consuls, live and dead,  
You have three hairs and four teeth in your head,  
A grasshopper's breast, an ant's leg (and its hue),  
A forehead wrinkled like a stola, too,  
Tits like a spider's web; a crocodile  
Has narrower jaws than you; a frog, the while,  
Croaks better than you can; a gnat can trill  
With greater sweetness; in the morning will  
An owl see better; you've a goaty stench,  
A skinny duck's backside; your bony trench  
Would quall an old cynic; you are allowed  
Into the baths among the motley crowd  
Of tomb-tarts only when the lights are killed;  
In August you're still wintry, so chilled  
Malaria will not melt you; after you  
Have wed two hundred men, you're dying to  
Marry again and have a man who's bent  
On what remains of you (equivalent  
To hoeing rocks). For who will want you so  
When Philomelus not too long ago  
Called you grandma? But if your corpse must be  
Scratched, spread a bed from the refectory  
Of Orcus – that's the only thing for you  
Upon your wedding-day – and let him who  
Cremates the corpses bear the lamps in front;  
A torch alone can penetrate such a cunt.

XCIV

TO RUFUS

The hare's not cooked. You plan the cook to beat.  
You'd rather skin the cook than skin the meat.

XCV

You never say “Hello” but will repay  
Those words, which often even crows will say  
First off. Why do you look for this from me?  
You are not either by nobility  
Or wit, I think, my better. Lionized  
By both Caesars, I now have realized  
The three-sons privilege. They speak of me

All over, I have gained celebrity  
While still alive. There's something in this, too:  
I was a tribune; I can sit where you  
Are ousted. I suspect more were created  
Citizens by Caesar than were subjugated  
By you. You're queer! And o! you wriggle so!  
You *are* my better, Naevolus: hello.

XCVI

You lick my girlfriend's pussy yet eschew  
To actually get into her skirts and screw.  
You chatter *like* a fucking gigolo.  
If I should catch you, you won't chatter so.

XCVII

TO RUFUS

Please do not let Chione read my verse.  
They injure her, but she can injure worse.

XCVIII

Your arse is skinny. Why? You ask of me.  
It makes you dexterous at sodomy.

XCIX

TO A COBBLER

Please, don't let my book get under your skin.  
Your trade, and not you, caused the greater sin.  
Brook harmless jests. Why mayn't you license me  
To jest when you have sanctioned butchery?

C

TO RUFUS

At noon I sent a courier to you  
With my poems and he was drenched when he got through,  
I think: a great downpour occurred that day.  
My poems should have been sent no other way.

BOOK IV

I

Domitian's birthday, holier than that day  
When Zeus was born, come oftener, I pray,  
Than Nestor's years, and always brightly gleam  
As now or with an even greater beam.  
May he revere Minerva frequently  
Amidst the gold of Alba and may he,  
The mighty one, confer on many men  
The oak-wreath and, as they come round again,  
Honour the rolling years and sacred rite  
Of Pluto. Deities of heavenly light,  
It's much we ask but fit for mortal use:  
For such a god what vows are too profuse?



## II

Horace alone of all the Roman folk  
Was looking at the show in a black cloak,  
Though our great chief, the cream and all the rest,  
The commoners and plebs, in white were dressed.  
But then a sudden snowstorm came in sight:  
So Horace now was watching dressed in white.

## III

See how the fleecy rain falls on the face  
And breast of Caesar. Caesar, though, shows grace  
To Jupiter and, with his head quite still,  
Smiles at those waters packed with icy chill.  
He has been known to tire the constellation  
Of Boötes and show no consideration  
To Helice with his drenched and dripping mane.  
Who is it wantoning with this dry rain  
And frolicking in heaven? I surmise  
That Caesar's child sent snow from out the skies.

## IV

### TO BASSA

A drained-marsh stench, a sulphur-springs-like smell,  
The old reek of a salt fishpond as well,  
The stench of rutting he-goat and the boot  
That has been worn by some shagged-out old coot,  
Of fleece twice-dipped in purple, or a Jew  
Who's fasting or the sad sighs of those who  
Are up on charges, at its expiration  
The lamp of filthy Leda, embrocation  
Made from the dregs of Sabine oil, the air  
That comes from a wolf in flight, a viper's lair –  
I'd sooner suffer any single stench  
I mentioned here than your foul odour, wench.

## V

### TO FABIANUS

A good man, poor but true in tongue and heart,  
What is it that you would have Rome impart  
To you now that you're here? You'd revel? No.  
Be a pimp? The man who calls poor folk to show  
In court with gloomy voice? One who'd seduce  
His best friend's wife or else play fast and loose  
With bloodless crones? Or in the palace grounds  
Make empty promises? Applaud the sounds  
Of Canus or of Glaphyrus? How shall  
You live, poor man? "An honourable pal,  
A trusty gentleman." – That's nothing! No!  
You'll never be a Philomelus so.

## VI

You would be thought of first-class chastity  
And bashful, though you're wickeder than he  
Who poetry in the Tibullan style  
Is wont to read in Stella's domicile.

## VII

Boy Hyllus, why do you deny today  
What you gave yesterday and wildly sway  
From warmth to harshness? It's my beard, my hair,  
My age, you plead. O one long night so rare  
To make old men. Don't mock me. Yesterday  
You were a boy, so how a man today?

## VIII

### TO EUPHEMUS

The first two hours make clients enervated,  
The third makes hoarse-voiced lawyers animated:  
The through the fifth Rome works, to weary men  
The sixth gives respite, and the seventh then  
Will be the end; then oil-slick wrestling  
Fills up the eighth hour, at the ninth hour bring  
The couches ut, the tenth is for my verse,  
While you ambrosial provender disburse,  
And kindly Caesar's able to unwind  
With nectar; in his large hand you may find  
Small wine. Accept my jests; my Thalia fears  
To face the morning with unlicensed cheers.

## IX

Daughter of Doc Sotas, you left your man,  
Labula - with Clytus away you ran.  
You shower him with gifts and with your passion:  
Your behaviour, then, is not in 'Sotas' fashion.

## X

### TO FAUSTINUS

My book's still new, unsmoothed; the page, still wet,  
Yet fears a touch: go, then, o boy, and let  
My friend receive this little gift from me,  
For he deserves to be the first to see  
My trifles. Run, but mark – along with it  
Convey a Punic sponge for it is fit.  
Countless corrections can't emend each spot:  
One wiping of the sponge emends the lot.

## XI

Pride-swollen, you must vaunt an empty name:  
To be called Saturninus you feel shame,  
Wretch. You revolted while in Germany  
Just as elsewhere that other Antony  
Alongside Cleopatra went to war.  
Have you forgotten what that name stood for,  
The heavy doom that Actium's strait incurred?  
Or did the Rhine give you some promised word  
The Nile did not to him? Should Arctic seas  
Have offered more? That famous Antony's  
Demise came under Roman arms, but he,  
Compared to you, great Caesar seems to be.

XII

Thais, you don't say "no" to anyone.  
If you don't have the shame to have such fun  
Wherever you can find it, all the same  
Of saying "no" to nothing feel some shame.

XIII

TO RUFUS

Claudia to my friend Pudens is wed,  
A blessing, then, o Hymen, be it said,  
Upon your torches. Cinnamon is fine  
To mix with spikenard just as Massic wine  
Blends well with Attic combs, the elm's made for  
Its union with tender vines, the shore  
Is loved by myrtle, lotus loves the wet.  
Fair Concord, linger in your bower yet,  
Venus, look kindly on so apt a bond:  
May she still love her spouse when he's beyond  
His middle years and may he think his wife  
Not old at all despite her lengthy life.

XIV

TO SILIUS

Pride of the Castalian maids, in mighty song  
You crushed the sinful and barbarian throng  
And forced false Hannibal and his faithless hordes  
To make surrender to our great warlords:  
Put of a while your stern austerity  
While chill December flirts with uncertainty  
(And the risky dice-box here and there is ringing  
And the *stola* with its naughty bones is pinging)  
And to my Muse direct your relaxation  
And with unwrinkled brow read my creation  
Steeped in amusements. Thus Catullus' Sparrow,  
I may surmise, was dispatched to great Maro.

XV

TO CAECILIANUS

You asked me for a grand just yesterday  
On six or seven days' credit. You heard me say  
"I haven't got it": as a friend had come  
To stay, you begged from me a dish and some  
Vases. You're mad. Where do you think I'm at?  
I have no grand. I won't give five times that.

XVI

Your stepmother, o Gallus, it's been said,  
Was not in fact your stepmother when wed  
To your father. While unprovable when he  
Still lived, he now has no abode while she  
Lives with you. Bring great Cicero from the shade,  
Let your defense by Regulus be made,  
You'll still not win: for since his death he never  
Stopped being one, so was not one ever.

## XVII

“Write verse against Lycisca,” you have said:  
They’ll make her blush and angry when they’re read.  
O Paulus, you’re a rogue! It’s obvious,  
You have in mind a spot of coitus.

## XVIII

Near the Vipsanian Columns there’s a gate  
Dripping with water, and a constant spate  
Makes the stone wet, a boy was passing through  
Beneath that dewy roof when down there blew  
An icicle upon his throat which made  
The poor boy breathe his last. The fragile blade  
Then melted on the heated gash. What, then,  
Has savage Fortune not imposed on men?  
Wherever kin the world is there not death  
If waters are cut-throats and stop men’s breath?

## XIX

A Gallic weaver spun this thick sweatsuit  
Which has a Spartan name – it’s hardly cute;  
On cold December nights, though, don’t dismiss  
This gift I send, this gorgeous *endromis*  
While using sticky ointment or while throwing  
The warm handball or while toing and froing  
The lightweight bladder-ball or as you snatch  
The dusty scrimmage-ball or try to catch  
Swift-footed Atlas, lest the cold should pierce  
Your moist limbs or lest Iris, speedily fierce,  
Should overwhelm you. With this gift you’ll smile  
At wind and rain, protected all the while  
From all the elements. You may be sure  
Tyrian muslin will not make you so secure.

## XX

Caerellia says she’s old, though still a maid,  
Gellia claims girlhood though she’s a jade.  
Collinus, you could neither tolerate:  
One’s stupid and the other fosters hate.

## XXI

### TO REGIUS

“No gods are in the sky. There’s proof,” you smile,  
“For as I made these claims I mad a pile.”

## XXII

Still new to marriage and her husband’s tool,  
Cleopatra plunged into a gleaming pool  
To dodge his kisses. But the waves exposed her:  
She shone although the waters still enclosed her.  
Thus lilies in pellucid glass must be,  
Thus crystal shows in its transparency  
Soft roses: I dived in and struggled for  
A kiss or two: the pool prevented more.

XXIII

While you were judging carefully those two  
Greek rival poets and deciding who  
Came first, the winning prize Callimachus  
Resigned to eloquent Bruttianus.  
If this man, steeped in Attic pleasantries,  
Decides to trifle with the drolleries  
Of Roman epigram, o may you say  
That I'm his runner-up, Thalia, I pray.

XXIV

Each of Lycoris' friends has quit her life,  
Fabianus. O may she befriend my wife!

XXV

Altinum's shores, the rivals of Baiae,  
The forest wherein Phaëthon's ashes lie,  
Sola, the forest Dryad, Faunus' bride  
By the Euganean lakes, the sanctified  
Aquileia at the river Timavus,  
Honoured by Leda's sons, where Cyllarus  
Once quaffed its sevenfold waters: you will be  
The place where I will rest, the sanctuary  
Of my senescence if I have the right  
To choose where I may spend my life's twilight.

XXVI

TO POSTUMUS

Because I have not called on you all year,  
You ask how much I've lost. I'd say it's near  
To sixty sesterces. O pardon me:  
A sorry toga costs more than that fee.

XXVII

You often praise my books: a jealous bore  
Refuses to praise them: should you, therefore,  
Extol them less? Not only orally  
You've honoured me with gifts that cannot be  
Granted by others. Filthy nails that worm  
Now gnaws. Caesar, give more and make him squirm,

XXVIII

TO CHLOE

You give to young Lupercus wool from Spain  
And Tyre, dipped in purple dye, again  
A Tarentine toga, from India  
Sardonyx, emeralds from Scythia,  
A hundred sovereigns of new-minted cash:  
His every wish serves to augment his stash.  
Boy-lover, wretched dame, what misery!  
Lupercus there will strip you totally.

XXIX

Dear Pudens, my book's bulk gets in the way:  
So many poems will make the reader say,  
"I'm tired and sated." Rare things please one best.  
First apples, winter roses interest  
Us more: the pride of her who bleeds you dry  
Attracts. A beau's not always standing by  
An open door. More often Persius  
Wins praise for one book than does trite Marsus  
With his Amazonid. Choose one – surmise  
That it's the only book – its price will rise.

XXX

Angler, flee from that Baian lake lest you  
Depart in guilt. Those waters through and through  
Are full of sacred fish – they understand  
Who is their master, and they kiss the hand  
Of one who is the greatest of us all.  
They bear his name and, summoned by his call,  
Swim to him. A base Libyan one day  
Was hooking on his trembling line his prey  
When, suddenly struck blind, he could not see  
The captured fish, and now, in enmity,  
With his sacrilegious hook there in Baiae  
He sits, a beggar. You, though, guiltless fly,  
Into the waters throw your blameless bait  
And these exquisite fishes venerate.

XXXI

You want to feature in my poems and see  
That honour as *something*, well, bugger me  
If that's not very pleasing to me. So  
I'll put you in my books. Your mother, though,  
Gave you a cruel name (the Muses' spring  
Was harsh), an infelicitous-sounding thing  
Which none of the Sisters could articulate  
Or even Phoebus. Then appropriate  
Some name which all the Muses will admire:  
On someone's lips "Hippodame" sounds dire.

XXXII

An amber-drop hides and makes bright the bee  
That she seems wrapped in her confectionery.  
So handsomely did industry repay;  
I think she would have wished to die that way.

XXXIII

Your shelves are full of poems, doggedly penned.  
Why don't you publish, then? "My heirs will send  
Them out." But when? The time is overdue  
For us, Sosibianus, to read you.

XXXIV

Your toga's soiled – he's right, though, Attalus,  
Who says that what you wear is "niveous".

XXXV

We've seen mild does butt heads in fierce combat  
And share a lethal fate. Hounds have stared at  
Their prey, the proud huntsman amazed his knife  
Was now not needed to extinguish life.  
Whence comes such fury in soft creatures, then?  
This way bulls battle, this way men slay men.

XXXVI

White beard, black hair? Olus, here is the matter:  
The former you can't dye, you *can* the latter.

XXXVII

"Coranus owes a hundred grand to me,  
Mancius owes twice that, Titius three,  
Sabinus and Albinus double *that*;  
Three million comes from every farm and flat;  
My Parman flock brings in six hundred thou."  
Afer, you say this every day and now  
Better than my name I know this litany.  
To soothe my pain count something out to me.  
With cash my daily nausea you must ease:  
I can't for nothing hear such words as these.

XXXVIII

Refuse! Love cloyes when joys don't lacerate.  
But, Galla, don't refuse till it's too late.

XXXIX

You've every kind of silver plate, just you  
Possess the old artwork of Myron, too,  
Praxiteles, Scopas, the chiselled art  
Of Phidias, what Mantor can impart  
From metal, genuine Grattiuses, gold  
In Spanish plate; your family's tables hold  
Reliefs; of all this wealth of silver, though,  
It's odd that you have nothing pure to show.

XL

The Pisos' halls have noble ancestry,  
Three names attach to learned Seneca's tree,  
Yet we chose you alone, o Postumus,  
Over these riches: for you were to us  
A consul though a poor equestrian.  
We've weathered thirty winters now, old man.  
Now rich in rank and wealth, you may largess  
Dole out, or squander: which choice I must guess.  
You don't do anything and it's too late  
To find another patron. Fortune, state  
Whether this pleases you or not. "I am  
Convinces the man you talk of is a sham."

XLI

Why wrap a scarf around your neck when reading  
Out loud? Our ears that muffler will be needing.

## XLII

Flaccus, should someone grant the boon to me,  
 Hear now what kind of stripling it should be.  
 Let Egypt be his mother, for no land  
 But that one smut can better understand.  
 In swarthy Mareotis such a hue  
 Is gorgeous in its rarity value.  
 His eyes must be like stars and his soft hair  
 Must tumble down his neck. He must not wear  
 His locks in braids – I hate it. Let the line  
 Of his brow be low, his nose *just* aquiline,  
 His lips like Paestum's roses. He'll compel  
 When I'm unwilling, but again repel  
 When I am keen for action, and be freer  
 Than is his master. All boys let him fear  
 And often shun the maids, and let him be  
 A man to others but a boy to me.  
 I truly know him now; to me it's true.  
 "That boy's our Amazonicus," say you.

## XLIII

I did not call you faggot, no, not I;  
 I'm not so rash or daring, I don't lie.  
 And if I did, may Pontia poison me  
 Or Metillus: I swear by Cybele  
 And Isis' swellings. What, then, did I say?  
 A little thing and almost a cliché,  
 Well-known and over which you will not bicker:  
 I said, Coracinus, that you're a cunt-licker.

## XLIV

Just now Vesuvius with viny shade  
 Was green; the noble grapes were thickly laid  
 Into the dripping vats; in Nysa's height  
 Than in these downs Bacchus took less delight;  
 Just now the Satyrs danced there; there's the place  
 For Venus, showing a more pleasing face  
 To her than Lacedaemon, with a fame  
 That has been gained by Hercules's name.  
 Now all's interred with dismal ash and fire:  
 Even the gods would ban an act so dire.

## XLV

Here from his flowing censer, o Phoebus,  
 These offerings our lord's Parthenius  
 Joyfully gives his son, that Burrus, who  
 Turns five today, may count his years anew  
 And many Olympiads and satisfy  
 His father's vows, and may your wreath comply  
 With you, and may assured virginity  
 Content your sister, so eternally  
 Gleam on in youth; may Phoebus' hair outshine  
 In length that of our Roman god of wine.

## XLVI

The Saturnalia's brought prosperity  
 To our Sabellus: there's no-one, says he,



More blessed among the lawyers. This conceit  
Involves crushed beans and half a peck of wheat,  
Plus one and one half pounds of resined gum,  
Pepper, haggis from the Falisci, some  
Bulbs, a flagon full of black, boiled lees,  
Some Libyan jellied figs, some snails, some cheese.  
A client from Picenum also sent  
A tiny box whose total complement  
Could be a few olives; he also gained  
A set of seven cups ineptly planed  
By a Saguntine potter, thus embossed  
As clay upon the Spanish wheel was tossed,  
And a broad-striped napkin. The last decade  
Has not such blessings on Sabellus laid.

XLVII

Phaëthon's encaustically delineated  
On this stone. Why's he twice incinerated?

XLVIII

TO PAPYLUS

While being shagged, you're happy. Once it's done,  
You weep. Why rue what causes you such fun?  
Do you regret your wanton itch? Or do  
You wail the fact that I've *stopped* shagging you?

XLIX

The man who thinks they're all frivolity  
Does not know epigrams, believe you me.  
That man's more frivolous who writes his verse  
About foul Tereus' meal or, even worse,  
That of heartless Thyestes, Daedalus  
Fitting his son's moist wings, Polyphemus  
Grazing his sheep. There's no bombast to see  
In all my work. No frenzied tragedy  
Will swell my Muse. "All *love* these tragedies.  
Quite right: it's those they *praise*, but they *read* these.

L

Why do you always call me old, Thaïs?  
No-one is old who still rips off a piece.

LI

TO CAECILIANUS

When in your book six grand could not be found,  
In a coach and six they carried you around.  
The eyeless goddess gave to you a pair  
Of millions: now you ride on Shanks's mare,  
Your coffers bursting. For such luck what's due?  
Well, may the gods restore your coach to you.

LII

Stop riding on those yoked goats, Hedyllus –  
A *ficus* once, you'll be *caprificus*.

### LIII

This man you often see within the walls  
 Of our Pallas and at the entrance halls  
 Of the New Temple holding a purse and cane,  
 With long and filthy beard, white, shaggy mane  
 On end, a threadbare cloak that shares his bed,  
 Fed by the crowd with barked-for bits of bread,  
 You think a Cynic by his get-up, but  
 He's not. What is he, Cosmus, then? A mutt.

### LIV

Tarpeia's crown of oak you have achieved,  
 Your worthy locks are gloriously be-leaved:  
 So live flat-out if you're intelligent  
 As though your very life's end's imminent.  
 No-one can move the Fates: they keep the day  
 Of the appointment that they've made. So may  
 You gain more wealth than Crispus, may your soul  
 Be firmer than Thrasea's, may your goal  
 Be greater elegance than ever is  
 In glossy Melior, for ;Lachesis  
 Unwinds the spindles, adding nothing to  
 The wool – one Fate then cuts the thread in two.

### LV

The glory of your age, o Lucius,  
 Who won't allow the snow-bedecked Gaius  
 Or our Tagus to give way to Arpi,  
 That eloquent town, let Argive authors be  
 The ones to sing Mycenae or, again,  
 Famed Rhodes, Thebes or the Spanish grounds where men  
 Compete at wanton wrestling. We who came  
 From Celts and Spanish folk must never shame  
 To sing the harsher names of our own land  
 In pleasing verse – Bilbilis, vever grand  
 In steel production, overshadowing  
 Pontus and Noricum, the clarion ring  
 Of Platea, that iron-making place  
 Which little Salo, with her restless pace,  
 Tempering armw, surrounds, and Rixamae,  
 Its choruses and guardian, Carduae  
 With festive feasts, Peteris with rosy hue,  
 Rigae, our ancient stage, the Silai who  
 Are accurate javelin-throwers, and each mere  
 Of Bergontum and Perusia, the clear  
 Banks of small Tuetonissa, the oak-wood  
 Sacred to Buradon (even an idler would  
 Stroll through it), winding Vativesca's hills  
 Which Manlius with his strong oxen tills.  
 These rustic names amuse you? Well, feel free  
 To laugh. I'd choose them over Butunti.

### LVI

You give great gifts to widows and old men:  
 ShouLd I call you a bounteous fellow, then?  
 You are the foulest thing, beyond compare,  
 To call things gifts which truly are a snare.

The specious hook courts greedy fish this way,  
The cunning bait leads silly beasts astray.  
If you don't understand true charity,  
I'll teach you, Gargilianus: give to me.

LVII

While the seductive, wanton Lucrine Lake,  
And caves which the volcanic waters make  
So warm, hold me, you cultivate the clay  
Of Greek Catillus, twenty miles away  
From Rome. But Leo blazes terribly  
And Baiae will not comfortable be  
With just her heat. So, sacred founts, farewell,  
And pleasing shores, where Nymphs and Nereids dwell.  
Be wintrier than Hercules's hills,  
But now capitulate to Tibur's chills.

LVIII

TO GALLA

You weep your husband's death in secrecy.  
I think you shame to wail him publicly.

LIX

TO CLEOPATRA

A snake was creeping on the weeping bough  
Of a poplar when a gummy drop somehow  
Fell on her; to be held that way quite shocked her –  
At once the icy mass immobile locked.  
Don't pride yourself on your royal monument –  
One viper's sepulchres more eminent.

LX

In summer seek Ardea and the places  
Around Castrum or else the open spaces  
Which are ablaze with Leo's constellation –  
Note Curiatius's condemnation  
Of Tibur's airs, sent to the world below  
From such beloved streams. The Fates can go  
Wherever they may wish. When death is nigh,  
In Tibur Sardinia's nearby.

LXI

Constantly you bragged just recently  
A friend gave you two hundred grand. When we  
Were chatting three days back in the poet's guild,  
You told us that Pompulla had been billed  
Ten grand for cloaks she gave you; you swore blind  
You got a sardonyx that's triple-lined  
And real, and two gemstones that seem to sway  
From Caelia and Bassa. Yesterday,  
When Pollio was singing, suddenly  
You left and, as you did, you said to me  
You'd got three hundred thousand from a will,  
At dawn a hundred more, another still  
This afternoon. What have we done to you?

Pity, you wretch, have done! If you can't do  
Such a thing as hold your tongue, well, tell us, then,  
What we *would* like to hear just now and then.

LXII

Dusky Lycoris moved to Tibur: there  
She was convinced that anything turned fair.

LXIII

Caerellia, a mother, from Bauli  
En route to Baiae, in a maddened sea  
Was drowned. Shame, waters! You refused to do  
The same when even Nero ordered you.

LXIV

Julius Martial's little acreage  
Reclines upon Janiculum's long ridge,  
More blessed than are the grounds of the Evening Stars.  
Broad, sheltered nooks look down upon these scars;  
Its flat top, gently swaying, takes delight  
In clearer skies, and, all alone, shines bright  
When murkiness obscures the winding vales:  
The delicate roof of the high house gently sails  
Up to the cloudless stars: one can, from here,  
Spy the royal halls and be an overseer  
Of all of Rome, the Alban Hills as well,  
The Tusculans, and every shady dell  
That lies near to the city, small Rubrae  
As well as that old veteran Fidenae,  
And Anna Perenna's apple-bearing glade;  
And on that side the traveller's journey's made  
On the Flaminian and the Salarian Way,  
His carriage mute lest noisy wheels just may  
Disturb sweet slumber which the boatswain's call  
And bargee's shout are able not at all  
To break, although the Mulvian Bridge is near  
As are the keels which hastily career  
On sacred Tibur's streams. This country-seat  
(Or mansion, p'raps?) is offered you complete  
By its owner" you might think that it could be  
Your own, so full of liberality  
Is he: the pure house of Alcinous  
You'd think it or that owned by Molorchus,  
The nouveau-riche. All this small, you say?  
Well, over Tibur (chilly place!) have sway,  
Praeneste too, and use a hundred hoes,  
Give Setia one tenant – yet to those  
Three places permit me to be less partial  
Than to the acreage of Julius Martial.

LXV

Philaenis always weeps with one eye. "Why,"  
You ask, "is that?" She only *has* one eye.

LXVI

Linus, you've lived a rural life always:  
None's cheaper anywhere. On certain days -

The Ides, the Kalends only now and then –  
You don your wretched toga, summers ten  
Have seen your dinner-suit put on. The glade  
Has given you baors, no money need be paid  
For hares caught in the field, the woods impart  
Substantial thrushes. From the river's heart  
Come fish, and from a red jar there is poured  
Your native wine, nor need you to afford  
A Grek boy-slave – no, just a rustic gang  
Attends your simple household. When the tang  
Of wine emboldens you, you fornicate  
With your housekeeper or perhaps the mate  
Of some rough husbandman. No conflagration  
Affects your house, no Dog-Star devastation  
Comes to your fields, your ship is never lost  
At sea (you *have* no ship!), nor have you tossed  
The die for coaxing bones, your only bet  
Just a few nuts. Tell me, where's the million net  
Your grasping mother left you? Not a one  
Remains: it's one tough thing that you have done.

LXVII

Poor Gaurus asked the praetor, an old mate,  
For a hundred grand and told him that, to date,  
He'd got two hundred, needing yet one grand  
So, as a kosher knight, with clapping hand  
He could applaud our Master. I reply  
The praetor told him: "You know well that I  
Shall to Scopus and Thallus hand out dough.  
Would it were only a hundred thousand!" Oh,  
Ungrateful nouveau-riche and money-bag!  
What you won't give a knight you'll give a nag!

LXVII

Poor Gaurus asked the preator, an old mate,  
For a hundred grand and told him that, to date,  
He'd got two hundred, needing yet one grand  
So, as a kosher knight, with clapping hand  
He could applaud our Master. In reply  
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Ungrateful nouveau-riche and money-bag!  
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LXVIII

TO SEXTUS

For just a hundred farthings you invite  
Me to your house for dinner. Well, it might  
Be that I am invited for a meal,  
But maybe it's that I may envy feel.

LXIX

Setine or Massic wines into one's glass  
You always pour, yet they are second-class,  
I hear. They say you've lost four wives thus. I  
Don't buy that, Papyrus – but I'm not dry.

LXX

His father left Ammianus in his will  
Just one dry rope and other than that – nil!  
Who’d think, Marullinus, that it could be said  
Ammianus would not want his father dead?

LXXI

For long I’ve sought a woman who says no  
Throughout the city, but it’s been no go.  
As if it isn’t fair or tolerated  
Or proper, such a word is never stated.  
Thousands are chaste. What does a chaste girl choose  
To do? Not give herself, yet not refuse.

LXXII

TO QUINTUS

You press me for my poems. They’re not with me.  
You’ll find them at the book dispensary.  
“Am I so mad to pay for trifles? Why,”  
You say, “I’m not so stupid.” Nor am I.

LXXIII

Vestinus, sick, was dying, on the verge  
Of crossing Styx, but then began to urge  
The spinning sisters to decelerate  
The drawing those black threads. Already late  
Unto himself, the friends that he held dear  
He lived for now; and those prayers raised a tear  
In those stern goddesses. He gave away  
His ample wealth and then the light of day  
He quit forever; death thereafter he  
Considered was that of maturity.

LXXIV

What fierce frays do unwarlike does essay!  
Such anger in such timid beasts! How they  
Seek seering death with puny brows. O spare  
Those does, o Caesar! Send your hounds out there.

LXXV

Happy in soul and husband! Foremost star  
Among the Latin wives! Joyous you are  
To share your father’s riches with your man,  
Your ally and your mate. Evadne can  
Burn for her husband, a like destiny  
May send Alcestis to the galaxy.  
You’re better: for in life you swear this bond;  
No need to prove your love from the beyond.

LXXVI

You sent six grand – I asked for twice that score.  
To get that much, I’ll ask for twenty-four.

LXXVII

I never asked the gods for wealth, content  
With what small property that I was meant  
To have. Now – pardon, poverty – depart!  
To what, you ask, is this quick change of heart  
Imputed to? The fact that I would see  
Zoilus hanging from the nearest tree.

LXXVIII

TO AFER

You're sixty plus and your white, shining face  
Is hairy, yet throughout the town you pace,  
No seat that doesn't get your "How d'you do?"  
Each morning in your bustle. Without you  
No praetor travels (it's not tolerated).  
Each consul is always associated  
With you. The times you climb the sacred hill  
Up to the Palatine. You always fill  
Your conversation with light-minded chat  
Of gentlemen-in-waiting. Alright, *that*  
A youth may do: but nothing's uglier than  
Such doings in a womanish old man.

LXXIX

Matho, you were a constant guest of mine  
At my estate in Tibur. Alright, fine:  
You bought the place. Now you have been misled  
By me for you have bought your own homestead.

LXXX

Maro, when fevered you declaim. If you  
Don't know that this is frenzy, you're quite fou.  
You perorate through every malady:  
That's how you sweat> well, then, there's sanity  
In it. "It's a great thing." No! If a riot  
Of fire's in your gut, the "great thing" is quiet.

LXXXI

Fabulla read the poem in which I said  
No girl says no, so the, solicited  
Once, twice, thrice, she declined. Fabulla, vow!  
I didn't mean forever, just for now.

LXXXII

TO RUFUS

Commend to Venuleius Three and Four,  
Give him some leisure, for a few hours more  
Let him forget his cares and his career  
And rate my trifles with a gracious ear.  
Let him not read them, though, early or late  
When drinking but when in that middle state  
That Bacchus loves. Is two too much? Then wind  
One up, and half of it is brief, you'll find.

LXXXIII

When calm, there's nothing worse than you, again,  
When anxious, you're the very best of men.  
Calm, you say "Hi" to none, hate everyone,  
None human, no-one free under the sun:  
Anxious, you give gifts, defer to us,  
Call friends to dine. Be anxious, Naevolus.

LXXXIV

There is no person in the whole of Rome  
Who can attest that he has rammed it home  
With Thaïs. Many men desire to fuck 'er,  
And begged. But is she chaste? No, she's a sucker.

LXXXV

We drink from glasses, you murrine. For why?  
Glass cups betray your two wines to one's eye.

LXXXVI

Book, you'd be praised by Greeks? I urge you, then,  
To please that most enlightened of all men,  
Apollinaris, the most scholarly,  
Precise: a fair and kindly man is he,  
None more so. If he holds you in his speech  
And heart, you'll never fear the rogues who preach  
Derision or wrap mackerels in your tar-  
Soaked sheaths. If he dislikes you, then you are  
Condemned to run to where the fish-shop stands  
Or to be ploughed by pens in schoolboys' hands.

LXXXVII

TO FABULLUS

Your Bassa always puts an infant near  
To her, calls it her darling and her dear.  
Strange, though, an infant's not close to her heart.  
Why does she do it, then? She's apt to fart.

LXXXVIII

You sent no gifts for my small offering  
(And now the holiday's over) – not a thing!  
Not even some Septician silver plate  
Or yet a napkin that you had of late  
From a client, no jar that's ruddy with the gore  
Of Antibes tunny or one with a store  
Of tiny figs plucked from a Syrian tree,  
Or some Picenian olives, wrinkly  
And in a stumpy basket so I'll leave  
Some memory of me. Others you" deceive  
With words and kindly looks, but you will be  
Forever a dissembler to me.

LXXXIX

Enough, wee book! We've now come to the end,  
But you'd prefer continually to wend



Your way, persisting even in this one  
Last strip, as though your task is not yet done  
When it was carried through on the first page.  
The reader grumbles, at the flagging stage;  
And now even my own amanuensis  
Cries out: “Enough, wee book! Come to your senses!

## BOOK V

### I

Whether on Pallas’ Alban hills you laze,  
Where you may on Diana’s temple gaze  
Or Thetis, whether those true sisters hear  
Your oracles, where the sea’s flat waters near  
The city sleep, or whether Circeii  
Or Aeneas’ nurse should keep you company,  
Or healthy, gleaming Anxur, here I send  
This book, o blessed guardian, o friend;  
That Jupiter is grateful we believe  
By your security. Then please receive  
My gift: I will assume you shall have read it  
And, satisfied, bask in my Gallic credit.

### II

Virgins and boys and matrons, quite sedate,  
It’s you to whom this book I dedicate.  
More wanton readers who love shameless wit,  
Read my first four books – they are full of it.  
The fifth laughs with its lord; this, be it said,  
He may with Pallas read and not turn red.

### III

Prince, one who dwells on Degis’ bank (now Rome  
Possesses it), come from the subject foam  
Of Ister, looked with joy and admiration  
At who is the lord of every nation  
And told his friends, they say: “A prouder lot  
Has been assigned than my brother’s got;  
For I’m permitted to behold so near  
The god he worships from so far from here.”

### IV

Myrtale reeks of wine, but she deceives  
Her friends by eating up the laurel leaves,  
Neat wine thus mixed with artful foliage.  
When you behold her at the crimson stage,  
With swollen veins, Paulus, you might well say,  
“Myrtale has partaken of the bay.”

### V

## TO SEXTUS

Roman Minerva’s eloquent votary,  
While relishing the god’s proximity  
(You know our ruler’s cares as they unwind  
And all the secret notions of his mind),  
For my wee books let there a place be made

Where Pedo and where Marsus are displayed,  
Catullus, too. That heavenly creation  
That chronicled the hostile conflagration  
Upon the Capitol set in that place  
Which tragic Vergil's epic verses grace.

## VI

Muses, if it's not too irksome a strain,  
Grant to Parthenius: may you attain  
A blithe old age while our lord's still with us  
And joy in Envy's luck. Soon may Burrus  
Respect his father: in your hallowed hall  
Receive, I beg, my book, timid and small.  
You know when Jove is placid and serene  
And apt to veto nothing. Nothing mean  
Or lavish does it beg, so decorated  
With cedar oil and purple, germinated  
To adulthood, black-knobbed. Don't hold it out  
But keep it close as if you were about  
To offer nought. I'm sure the Muses' lord  
Will seek this bright book of his own accord.

## VII

As when the Assyrian nests renewed by flame,  
When one bird's lived ten cycles, just the same  
New Rome's cast off her old age and today  
She wears her guardian's face. Vulcan, I pray,  
Forget that well-known feud: from Mars, it's true,  
We are descended, but from Venus, too:  
May your wild spouse pardon her custody  
In Lemnos and love you submissively.

## VIII

Our master's law, whereby the ranks are made  
More settled and those men of knightly grade  
Get back their rights, Phasis was lately praising  
While at the theatre, purple cloak a-blazing.  
He proudly boasts: "The seating's good at last –  
Knights' dignity's restored. We're not pressed fast  
Or sullied by the mob." Thus he opined  
With other suchlike words while he reclined.  
This haughty purple mantle then and there  
Leitus gave orders that he leave his chair.

## IX

### TO SYMMACHUS

When I was sick you came to tend to me,  
And five score tyros. The frigidity  
Of five score hands were everywhere – it's true.  
I had no fever then, but now I do.

## X

"How to explain? – the living are denied  
Their glory and few readers can abide  
Their own times." These are truly Envy's ways –  
To choose the old over the new always.

We seek Pompey's old shade ungratefully,  
Old men prise Catulus' poor sanctuary.  
Ennius we read though Vergil's close at hand,  
Homer was scorned while he existed, and  
The crowned Menander rarely got acclaim  
In theatres. And can anybody name  
Who noticed Ovid but Corinna? O,  
You books of mine, though, do not hurry so!  
If only post-death comes celebrity,  
I really have no sense of urgency.

XI

TO SEVERUS

Sardonyx, emerald, diamond, jasper too  
Stella tweeks on one finger. Truly you  
Will find so many gems there, many more  
Within his verse: his hand's adorned therefore.

XII

So Masclion proudly bears a nodding weight  
Upon his brow and seven, maybe eight,  
Young boys are borne by the immensity  
That is huge Ninus: thus it seems to me  
Not hard for Stella on one finger there  
(This one or that one) ten young girls to bear.

XIII

I am, I own, and always have been, poor,  
A knight, though, neither ill-famed nor obscure.  
I'm read all over – "Look," they say, "it's he."  
What death gives few this life has given me.  
Your house has five score columns and your chest  
Covers a freeman's wealth with in it pressed.  
Syene's widespread lands are tilled for you,  
Your large flocks sheared in Gallic Parma too.  
That's us; but what I am you cannot be.  
Your case fits any from the laity.

XIV

Used to the front row, when it was no crime  
To grab a seat, Nanneius, not one time  
But twice or thrice, was made to shift, so he  
Sat down between the sheets, thus making three  
(Almost!) behind two knights. Beneath a hood  
He watched the show just as a lewd man would,  
With one eye. Even thence he was rejected  
Into the aisle and thus, semi-projected,  
He perched upon a bench, no-one permitting  
Much room at all and, feigning to be sitting  
To one knight with one knee, to the other knight  
With the other knee he seemed to stand upright.

XV

Augustus, my fifth book of trifles here  
Has given no-one any cause to fear  
Distress. No, many love my honoured name,

Gaining, from this my gift, undying fame.  
“While praising many, though, what do they net?”  
Nothing, I hope – these trifles please me yet.

XVI

I could write sombre stuff, yet I incline  
Towards these trifles; you, o reader mine,  
Have prompted me – you read me throughout Rome  
And hum my poems; it doesn’t, though, hit home  
How much it costs me. For if I desire  
To plead a case, my speeches out for hire  
To anxious clients, many a tar will bring  
Me casks of Spanish oil – my purse will ring  
With strange and filthy cash. My book’s no more  
Than a guest, a boon-companion, and my store  
Of poems will only please when it is free.  
Our ancestors were not content to be  
Just praised – the smallest present to a poet  
Was an Alexis.”You write well, we know it,”  
You say. “We like and will celebrate  
You always.” You’ll make me an advocate.

XVII

While you recalled your mighty forbears, I,  
A mere equestrian, could hardly vie.  
You said just the broad stripe was meant for you,  
Gellia, yet you got married to a Jew.

XVIII

TO QUINTIANUS

December’s here – tapers and napkins fly,  
Paper, slim spoons, damsons, preserve and dry  
In pointed jars, yet all you get from me  
Is my small, home-made books – I’m niggardly,  
Perhaps, and rude. The guile of gifts is so  
Distasteful – they’re like hooks: who does not know  
The bream’s fooled by the fly that it’s devoured?  
Whenever, then, a rich man has been showered  
With not a thing that’s by a poor man sent,  
This act makes that bankrupt beneficent.

XIX

Great Caesar, trust me, there’s no generation  
That betters yours. More triumphs please the nation  
Than ever. And the gods of Palatine  
Deserve our thanks the most. More fair, more fine  
Has martial Rome not been until today,  
No greater freedom than under your sway.  
One fault, no small one, though a single thing:  
Poor folk court thankless friends. Does any bring  
To wealth old, trusted pals? Does any knight  
Escort a protégé? It is the height  
Of lavishness to send a spoon that weighs  
Eight ounces on the Saturnalian days  
Or else a flame-hued toga that, all told,  
Is worth ten scruples – these are ranked as gold  
By haughty lords: maybe just one will spend

Some sovereigns. Caesar, you must be our friend  
So long as these are not. Integrity  
In one who is a chief can never be  
So great. Germanicus, you softly smile  
Since my advice will help me all this while.

XX

TO MARTIAL

If we could be at leisure and delight  
In carefree times, and revel night and day,  
Enjoying genuine life, we would not see  
The halls and homes of men of mastery,  
Tormenting lawsuits or the anxious court,  
Ancestral busts; no places of this sort  
Should interest us. Rather, the promenade,  
The lounges, bookshops and the colonnade,  
The cold and warm baths, shade, the plain – all these  
Should be our haunts and our activities.  
None lives now for himself – every good day  
He sees escape from him and slip away.  
They die and then are added to our tally.  
Does he who can enjoy life ever dally?

XXI

The rhetorician Apollodotus  
Called Macer Crassus, Quintus Decimus.  
He's got them right now. Industry cured that.  
He wrote them out and got them both down pat.

XXII

TO PAULUS

If I'd not wished and earned the right to see  
You early chez vous, I'd want you to be  
Yet further from me in the Esquiline.  
But I live very near the Tiburtine  
Where rustic Flora and old Jove unite.  
From the Subura I must scale that height  
(Foul pavement! Never dry!) – I scarce can squeeze  
Through long mule-trains and marble blocks one sees  
With many a cable hauled. More misery  
Awaits me, for your doorman says to me,  
Fagged out from all my toil, "He is not here."  
This is the end of misspent pains, I fear,  
In sweaty toga: just to visit you  
At dawn's not worth the work it's put me through.  
So cruel is each busy client's friend:  
Sleep in, or our liaison's at an end.

XXIII

While seating rules were mute, you dressed in green.  
Now in bright red or purple you are seen  
Because the placid censor has restored  
The law and genuine knights are in accord  
With Oceanus, and thus you estimate  
That you are cheating him. No-one could rate  
Cloaks at four hundred grand: then Cordus might

Before all other men become a knight.

XXIV

HERMES

Our joy in combat, weapons connoisseur,  
Fighter and trainer both, a rioter  
Within his school; he is the only man  
Whom Helius trembles at; none other can  
Beat Advolans; he'll conquer yet not kill;  
No-one replaces him; all seats he'll fill;  
He's darling of the fighters' wives; he wields  
His spear with pride; and no-one ever yields  
To his sea-trident; he inspires fright  
With his drooping helmet, Mars's great delight  
In all his shapes; in singularity  
He's everything, though one he's truly three.

XXV

TO CHAERESTRATUS

"You've no four hundred grand; get up, for, see,  
Leitus is coming: get up, run, hide, flee."  
Does any call or bring him back? A pal  
Open his treasure chest? Who's here who shall  
Be put into my books and gain sweet fame?  
Who wants to cross the Styx without a name?  
Is this not so much better than to sweep  
The stage with ruddy billows or to steep  
Yourself in saffron? Than that sum bestow  
On a senseless nag so Scopus' nose may glow?  
Uselessly rich, no friend! These words of mine  
Do you approve? Your fame is on the line!

XXVI

I called you, in some verses recently,  
Cordus, A1 in cloaks. If you should be  
Enraged by these few words, then you should state,  
"In togas you're B2," to compensate.

XXVII

I own your wit, your manners, birth, your grace  
Befit a knight: the rest a common face  
Display. You shouldn't sit in the front fourteen  
So by Oceanus your pale face be seen.

XXVIII

There's not a thing, Aulus, that you can do  
That Mamercus may speak and think well of you.  
You may indeed the brothers Curvii  
Outdo in friendship, in serenity  
The Nervae, the Rusos in courtliness,  
In goodness the Macros, and in fairness  
The Maurici, again the Reguli  
In rhetoric, the Pauli in repartee:  
His cankered teeth bite all. You think he's bad?  
Whom no-one pleases, he, I think, is sad.

XXIX

Whenever you sent me a hare, you'd say,  
You'll be good-looking up to the seventh day."  
No kidding? If you speak true of this fare,  
My love, it's clear you've never had a hare.

XXX

Varo, renowned in Sophoclean verse,  
And in Calabrian meter thought no worse,  
Leave off your work and do not let the stage  
Of eloquent Catullus grace your page,  
Nor trim-locked Elegy. No, cast your eyes  
On poems that thick December won't despise,  
Sent in their own time. Or perhaps you'd choose,  
Varro, your Saturnalian nuts to lose.

XXXI

The placid steers are leapt on by the mob;  
The bull accepts the burden as his job.  
Here one hangs off the horns while over there  
Another ranges, weapons everywhere,  
Along the shoulders. See it, rooted, stand:  
The sand's not safer, nor the level land.  
No troubled moves. The boy thinks he has earned  
The laurel while the bull remains concerned.

XXXII

Crispus to his wife, o Faustinus,  
Left not a thing. To whom, then? To Crispus!

XXXIII

Some lawyer dissed my poems. I don't know who,  
But if I did – lawyer, a plague on you!

XXXIV

TO FRONTO AND FLACILLA

To you, o father, mother, this sweet maid  
I yield to you, lest she the murky shade  
And Cerberus' sharp teeth should look upon  
With fear. Six short years had Erotion  
(Less six short days) survived. May she now play  
Among her aged guardians and say  
My name in lisps. No hard clods cloak her, no!  
Earth, don't be harsh: to you she was not so.

XXXV

TO FABULLUS

While Euclides, in scarlet clad, was saying,  
In full voice, that his Patrae farms were paying  
Two hundred and that yet more would he  
Collect from his Corinthian property  
And from fair Leda he could trace his strain

And all the time Leitus was raising Cain,  
Between them quite an animosity,  
From out his pocket then there fell a key.  
This haughty, rich and noble knight? Oh dear,  
There never was a key so foul, I fear.

XXXVI

TO FAUSTINUS

A man praised in my book pretends that he  
Is not in debt to me. Such trickery!

XXXVII

There is a maid, more sweetl-voiced to me  
Than aged swans, with more fragility  
Than is Galaesus' lamb; the lake Lucrine  
Could not provide a shell that is so fine;  
The Erythraean pearls you'd not select,  
Nor else a polished tusk, snow yet untreked,  
An untouched lily; her hair is more shiny  
Than is the Baetic fleece, the knots of Rhine,  
The golden dormouse, her breath's fragrancy  
More than the Paestan rose or what the bee  
Of Attica produces; amber taken  
From the hand; the very peacock looks forsaken  
Compared to her, the phoenix none too rare,  
The squirrel not beloved. Her pyre there,  
Still warm, Erotion holds, whom bitter fate  
Hs in her sixth year taken very late,  
My love, my joy, my darling. "Don't be low,"  
Says Paetus, while he beats his own chest so  
And tears his hair. "For is it not a shame  
To mourn a home slave? I'm still in the game  
Although I've lost my wife, a woman who  
Was known to all, proud, noble, well-to-do."  
Who's more steadfast than he who can possess  
Full twenty million - and lives nonetheless."

XXXVIII

TO SEXTUS

That Callimachus has a knight's estate  
Who doesn't know? He had, though, I must state,  
A brother too. "Halve twenty score," you say.  
Go, share a fig: you really think two may  
Sit on one horse? What do you have to do  
With this your brother, or with Pollux too,  
That troublesome man? If you had not that man  
Then you'd be Castor. You are one but can  
You sit as two? Get up: you perpetrate  
A solecism. Or else imitate  
Leda's sons: you cannot sit, then, with your brother:  
Go then, instead sit one after another.

XXXIX

TO CHARINUS

Full thirty times you sealed your will while I



Sent honey-cakes from Hybla's fields. Oh my,  
I'm fagged: now pity me: so either seal  
Less often or do one time what, I feel,  
You cough suggests *will* happen any time.  
I've shaken out my boxes dime by dime:  
Though rich as Croesus, I'll have little means  
If you'd so often swallowed down my beans.

XL

TO ARTEMIDORUS

You painted Venus, though you idolize  
Minerva. That it's failed you feel surprise?

XLI

Like a soft eunuch you're a sissy sight,  
More feminine than Attis' catamite  
(Howled by the Mother's deballed priest); you speak  
Of theatres, rows of seats, the purple clique,  
Edicts, the Ides, clasps, wealth, with pumiced paw  
You point at paupers. I'll peruse the law  
Of knights' seats for you, Didymus. But no,  
You cannot sit where all the husbands go.

XLII

A cunning thief will pilfer all your pence,  
And wicked fire burn down your residence,  
A debtor will not pay the sum he owes,  
Your fields won't yield the crop your farmer sows,  
Your mistress will leave you in poverty,  
Your merchant ships will all be dashed at sea,  
A gift to friends is beyond fortune's power:  
Wealth given is the only constant dower.

XLIII

THAIS AND LAECANIA

One has black teeth, the other white as bone.  
How? This one's bought hers, that one has her own.

XLIV

Whatever's happened, Dento, that when I  
Called you to dinner, you dared to deny  
Me four times (yes, it's true)? You run from me  
And don't look back, yet very recently  
You sought me in the baths, the theatres too,  
The dining-rooms. It's clear, therefore, that you  
Have found a richer dinner, and the hound  
Is caught by a bigger kitchen. I'll be bound,  
Once that they get to know you and get bored  
With what you are, you'll start to be ignored:  
The wealthy place will kick you out and you  
Will come back to the bones of my old stew.

XLV

TO BASSA

You say that you're a maid and that you're pretty.  
She who says that is neither, more's the pity.

XLVI

I spurn your kiss except the one you grant  
Reluctantly; your anger's what I want  
And not your face, Diadumenus. I beat  
You many times just so I may repeat  
Solicitation of you: thus, you see,  
That you have neither fear nor love of me.

XLVII

"I've never dined at home," says Philo. Quite:  
He just won't dine if he has no invite.

XLVIII

The power of love! For to the barber's went  
Encolpos, not without his lord's consent  
And yet against his will. Pudens allowed  
The deed and wept: in this way Helios bowed  
And, sighing, gave his sons the reins: also  
Was Hylas raped; Achilles, too, let go  
His locks and was found out (his mother teared  
With grief). Yet do not hurry yet, o beard,  
And do not trust short hair: decelerate  
And thus requite a sacrifice so great.

XLIX

I saw you sit alone and yet believed  
You were three people. Yes, I was deceived  
By your bald head. Each side of it possesses  
What could be thought to be a young boy's tresses.  
You're naked in the middle, not a strand  
Is seen in that expanse. Now that was grand  
In December when Domitian forwarded  
Some food, and with three baskets full of bread  
You wandered home. I think that Geryon  
Was like you. For, in my opinion,  
Philippus' portico you should eschew:  
You are undone if Hercules sees you.

L

TO CHAROPINUS

If I do not invite you for a meal,  
At once we are sworn enemies: you feel  
The need to run me through if you are not  
A guest of mine when my kitchen is hot.  
Therefore will it be not permitted me  
To dupe you? Nothing to your gluttony  
Compares. So leave my kitchen! Sling your hook,  
That now and then you're cheated by my cook.

LI

That man weighed down with papers, buffeted

By smooth-cheeked scribblers, when he is fed  
Note-books and letters, like a Cicero,  
A Cato, Brutus, scowls at all; although  
The fiddle-strings forced him, he could never speak  
“How are you, sir?” in Latin or in Greek.  
If you should think that this is all a lie,  
Well then let us accost him, you and I.

LII

TO POSTUMUS

Your gift to me I always shall recall.  
Why am I silent, then? *You* say it all.  
Whenever I am starting to address  
Someone about it, promptly he says, “Yes,  
He mentioned it.” Some things are not for two  
To say: one here’s enough: therefore if you  
Want me to speak, shush! Givers’ chattiness  
Makes even large gifts lose their forcefulness.

LIII

Why write of Medea or of Thyestes,  
Andromache, Niobe? Bassus, please  
Believe me, for your books Deucalion  
Is fittest, or, if not, then Phaethon.

LIV

My rhetoric friend’s become spontaneous:  
Without penned prompts he hailed: “Calpurnius!”

LV

You queen of birds, whom do you carry? Jove.”  
But with no thunderbolts? “Well, he’s in love.”  
For whom? “A boy.” Why look with open beak  
Mildly at Jove? “Of Ganymede I speak.”

LVI

TO LUPUS

Long have you anxiously of me inquired  
Which teacher for your young son should be hired.  
Grammar and rhetoric teachers, I suggest,  
Should be avoided; also it is best  
To disregard Vergil and Cicero  
And not to read Tutilius – let him go.  
Should he write poems, repudiate the bard.  
He fancies profit? Let him study hard  
The harp or pipes; he’s dull? Let him select  
To be an auctioneer or architect.

LVII

TO CINNA

If I should call you “master”, do not crow:  
I sometimes even greet my servant so.

LVIII

You say you'll live tomorrow. When, tell me,  
Will that day come? How distant can it be?  
Where is it? How d'you find it? Does it lie  
In Parthia or Armenia? Can you buy  
It? For how much? Tomorrow, may we say,  
Is old as Priam or Nestor? Live today?  
Too late for that, Postumus: everyone  
Who's wise his living has already done.

LIX

TO STELLA

You got no gold or silver plate from me.  
It's to your benefit, though, can't you see?  
A generous man expects much in return;  
Your burden's less by this my modest urn.

LX

Bark, snarl at me as often as you may.  
The fame you crave of me day after day –  
To live within my poems everywhere  
Somehow – I am determined to forswear.  
Why should one know you lived? Wretch, you should die  
Unknown. A very few in Rome may try  
To bite a piece out of a dog or bitch:  
Myself, I'll keep my nails from such an itch.

LXI

TO MARIANUS

Who's that curled spark who's always hovering near  
Your wife? Who whispers in her tender ear  
Sweet nothings and who leans upon her chair,  
Whose legs do not display a single hair,  
Whose every finger sports a summer band?  
No answer? "Well, my wife keeps him on hand  
To do her jobs." He's trusty, rugged too,  
To flaunt a procurator straight at you,  
A true Aufidius! Sure, you deserve  
The beatings of Panniculus. Huh? Serve  
Your wife? Does he indeed do *any* chores?  
He doesn't do your wife's jobs, he does yours.

LXII

Stay in my grounds, provided, visitor,  
You are content to lie on bare ground, or  
You bring a pile of furniture with you:  
*Mine* asks the mercy of my guests. It's true –  
My broken couches sport no cushion, no,  
Not even one unstuffed – its swathing, lo,  
Rotten and cracked, lies on the floor. However,  
The two of us should make a firm endeavour  
To share the cost: I bought the residence  
(The greater share); *you* furnish (less expense).

LXIII

“How do you like my books?” you often say  
In anxious tones, o Ponticus. Okay,  
I think they’re great, I’m dazed: not anywhere  
Is anything their equal, to your flair  
Regulus will concede. “Is that your view?  
May Jove and Caesar bless you. “ No, no, *you*.

LXIV

Pour double measures of Falernian,  
Callistus. And yo, Alcimus old man,  
With ice dilute it. With abundant cream  
Anoint my locks, and let my temples stream  
With roses knit. These tombs announce to all:  
“Enjoy your life! Even the gods can fall.”

LXV

Although his stepmother expostulated,  
Achilles, when he had exterminated  
The lion of Nemea and the boar  
Of Arcady, and the oiled wrestling Moor  
Chastised, and in the dust of Sicily  
Laid low huge Eryx, and killed Cacus (he  
Who dragged oxen to caves, secret and sly),  
Was granted every star fixed in the sky.  
A small part of your shows, Caesar! Each day  
Brings greater battles to us. Massive prey,  
Huger than the Nemean lion, fall!  
Maenalian boars, so many, one and all  
Yield to your spear. If now that three-fold bout  
Were with the Spanish shepherd carried out  
Once more, there’s one to conquer Geryon.  
Although the Grecian Lerna’s beast had on  
His shoulders many heads whose numbers grew  
When one was cut off, what’s the Hydra to  
The brutes of Nile? The gods once duly paid  
His worth with speediness its accolade  
Of heaven to Achilles. But they’ll do  
The very same, yet tardily, for you.

LXVI

TO PONTILIANUS

I often greet you, but you greet me never  
Before I greet you. Fine! Goodbye forever.

LXVII

When swallows sought their winter sanctuary  
As was their wont, one stayed within the tree.  
In springtime they returned and spied the sin,  
The sinner torn apart by her own kin.  
Late did she pay the price, deservedly,  
But that was after Itys’ butchery.

LXVIII

I sent you from the North a lock of hair  
That you may know that yours is much more fair.

LXIX

TO ANTONY

You can't reproach Pothinus and you know  
Less guilt than for the death of Cicero:  
Why aim your sword at Roman eloquence?  
Not even Catiline brooked such offence.  
An impious soldier bribed with cursed gold! –  
A voice forever silenced, bought and sold!  
O why was that sublime tongue stifled so,  
Dear-bought? All men will speak for Cicero.

LXX

Ten mill his patron gave to Syriacus,  
Who, gadding all around, o Maximus,  
Went through the lot on bar stools all about  
The four baths. Gluttony, without a doubt,  
Of great proportions! Guzzling ten mill!  
Not once a guest – that's more amazing still.

LXXI

TO FAUSTINUS

Above chilled vales moist Trebula stands high,  
Its green fields icy even in July,  
Unspoilt by Leo, ever genial  
To the South Wind. Your farm here calls you, old pal:  
Spend your long harvests here and you will see  
Tibur a winter haunt will seem to be.

LXXII

TO RUFUS

If Jove was Bacchus's mother, one can say  
That, equally, his dad was Semele.

LXXIII

TO THEODORUS

Why will I not, despite your pleas, donate  
My books! Good Lord! Lest you reciprocate.

LXXIV

IN Asia and in Europe's confines lie  
The sons of Pompey; under Libya's sky,  
However – if his grave is *anywhere* –  
Pompey himself's entombed. That here and there  
He's scattered should not stagger us one jot.  
Great savagery could not lie in on spot.

LXXV

Laelia, so the law be satisfied,  
Has married you. She's now your "lawful" bride.

LXXVI

TO CINNA

Mithridates poison often drank so he  
Could not be harmed by deadly drugs. We see  
You too, by always eating bad collation,  
Make sure you never perish from starvation.

LXXVII

It has been said, a witty thing to hear,  
That you, Marullus, bear oil in your ear.

LXXVIII

TO TORANIUS

A cheerless meal at home depresses you?  
Eat modestly with me. Here may you chew  
Cheap lettuces, strong-smelling leeks, a shred  
Of tunny in sliced eggs.(I think you said  
That you take appetizers?). You won't lack  
Green broccoli served on a dish that's black  
(You'll burn your fingers!), straight from the cool ground,  
Sausage on white pease-pudding will be found,  
Pale beans with ruddy bacon. And dessert?  
Old grapes and pears from Syria won't hurt,  
Or chestnuts learned Naples can create,  
At slow heat roasted: you will advocate  
The wine by drinking it. Then, should you crave\  
What Bacchus stirs, let noble olives save  
You, which Picenian branches recently  
Withheld, warm lupine and the hot chickpea.  
Small pickings, yes! But nothing insincere  
Will you yourself communicate or hear.  
You'll lie at ease with candid countenance;  
Your host won't read a massive tome; no dance  
Will be performed by wanton women who  
Hail from Cadiz, thrusting their hips at you  
In practised writhings; little Condylus  
Will pipe a modest tune. Well, that is us  
At dinner. Claudia you will pursue.  
Prior to me, what woman's tempting you?

LXXIX

TO ZOILUS

You left your couch eleven times all told  
To change your clothes in case a sweat take hold,  
Held in by moist attire, and every pore  
A searching draught injuriously explore.  
While dining, why do I too not perspire?  
Much coolness comes from one's only attire.

LXXX

At leisure you won't grant an hour to me,  
Demanding payment for your commentary  
On these my trifles. "I am on vacation."  
I beg you, please put up with this privation.

If with clever Secundus you should pore  
Over my book (am I too bold?), much more  
Is owed by it to you than to the man  
Who wrote it. For, secure, it will not scan  
The weary Sisyphus' restless stone, when you,  
My friend Severus, shall have read straight through  
Its lines, through which the rigid dossier  
Of versed Secundus, too, shall make its way.

LXXXI

TO AEMILIANUS

If you are poor, then poor you'll always be.  
Only the rich attain prosperity.

LXXXII

TO GAURUS

Why did you promise me two hundred thou  
If you can't give me ten? Please tell me now,  
Have you the means but won't? There's nothing - no –  
More scandalous than that. Get lost! You're low!

LXXXIII

You chase, I fly, you fly, I chase. Your "yes"  
I spurn, for it's your "no" for which I press.

LXXXIV

TO GALLA

The boy's recalled, sad to have left off play,  
By his clamorous teacher; and now, dragged away  
From the hidden cookshop and so ill-betrayed  
By the fascinating dicebox in a raid,  
The boozy gambler begs for leniency.  
The Saturnalia's past and I don't see  
Small gifts from you – not even smaller than  
You usually give. December's span,  
Depart. *Your* day (March One) quite soon we'll see,  
And then I'll give you what you gave to me.

BOOK VI

I

Dearest Martial, to you this book is sent  
Which please emend, careful and diligent:  
Thus with less anxiousness and with less fear  
Will you then come into great Caesar's sphere.

II

TO DOMITIAN

Betraying holy wedlock once was sport,  
And maiming sinful males. Things of this sort  
You've banned – you help each future generation  
In making sure that birth's no denigration.



With you as governor in Rome there'll be  
No eunuch, none steeped in adultery:  
Before, though (when our ways were easier!),  
Even a eunuch was an adulterer.

III

Be born, o Roman promise, holy, dear,  
Illustrious boy, that after many a year  
Your father give the reins to you, so you  
May rule the world, an old man, with one who  
Is older still. The golden threads will she  
Who is your aunt with snow-white fingers be  
The one to draw and rotate piece by piece  
Upon the spindle Phrixus's ewe's fleece.

IV

Great censor, lord of lords, although to you  
She owes so many triumphs, temples new,  
Temples rebuilt, shows, towns, Rome, to be sure,  
Owes even more to you in that she's pure.

V

TO CAECILIANUS

I've bought myself a country property  
At great cost. Lend a hundred, please, to me.  
No answer? "You'll not pay it back", I feel  
You're thinking: well, my friend, hence my appeal.

VI

There are three actors in a comedy.  
And yet, Lupercus, there's one more than three  
That your girl Paula fancies; therefore you  
My make it four – she loves an extra, too.

VII

TO FAUSTINUS

A month or so ago the Julian Law  
Was re-enacted and again we saw  
Exacted purity: Telesilla, since then,  
Has managed to be married to ten men.  
Not really, though – she's an adulteress.  
A simple prostitute offends me less.

VIII

Two praetors, four tribunes, seven men of law,  
Ten poets, for a young girl's hand all saw  
Her aged father. He, with little fuss,  
Picked out an auctioneer, one Eulogus.  
Now, if you please, Severus, answer me:  
Did he react with imbecility?

IX

In Pompey's theatre you drop off: and do

You grumble when Oceanus rouses you?

X

I asked Jove for a paltry grand or two.  
“Who gives me temples shall give them to you.”  
He gave him temples, yes, no money, though,  
To me: to beg from Jupiter is so  
Unworthy of me. No severity  
Or anger did he show, how placidly  
He read my suit! Thus to the Dacians’ plea  
He granted diadems; in triumphs he  
Frequents the Capitolian ways. O miss,  
Our Thunderer’s friend, if with a face like this  
He tell me no, then were he to provide,  
How would he look? Athene laid aside  
Her shield but briefly: “Do you think, you clown,  
That what’s not given yet has been turned down?”

XI

TO MARCUS

Pylades nor Orestes live today.  
Are you surprised? The selfsame wine did they  
Imbibe, no better bread nor better game  
Was given to Orestes: yes, the same  
Repast was granted both. Oysters you scoff  
From the Lucrine lake, watery mussels off  
Peloris I must eat: yet, nevertheless,  
My taste is cultivated too. You dress  
In clothes from Tyre, the wool from greasy Gaul  
Clothe me: would you, in purple, have me call  
You “love” in my coarse mantle? That I may  
Prove a Pylades, there must be some way  
For someone else to prove an Orestes.  
By love, not words, come such results as these.

XII

TO PAULUS

Fabulla warrants that her purchased hair  
Is really hers. Does she, then, falsely swear?

XIII

Who would not think that Phidias chiselled you,  
That you are not the work of Pallas too?  
White Lygdian marble in expressive mien  
Replies and living beauty’s lustrous sheen  
Shows in her peaceful face. A gentle hand  
Is playing with the Acidalian band  
She snatched from little Cupid’s neck. That love  
May be recaptured from the mighty Jove,  
As well as Mars himself, let Juno sue  
To you for your ceston, and Venus too.

XIV

TO LABERIUS

You can write elegant poems? Why don't you, then?  
Those who can do this *should* write. *They* are men!

XV

An ant was roaming in a poplar's shade  
When one imprisoning amber drop was laid  
Upon him. Once despised while he had breath,  
He's now considered precious by his death.

XVI

All buggers with your scythe and with your yard  
All men you scare, whilst you these acres guard,  
These few secluded acres. Let there not  
Be hoary robbers in this orchard-plot;  
Let them not enter here, your only care  
One boy and one fair girl with flowing hair.

XVII

You say, "Just call me Cinna," Cinnamus.  
But surely this is a 'barbarismus'!  
If you have been called Furius, then you'll  
Be now entitled 'Fur' by this same rule.

XVIII

TO PRISCUS

Saloninus's holy shade's in Spain,  
At rest – no nobler one has ever lain  
Across the Styx. Don't grieve: he's left your side  
But now dwells where he's happy to abide.

XIX

TO POSTUMUS

No case of violence or poisoning  
Or wounds, this legal action that I bring  
Concerns three she-goats, stolen by a neighbour  
(Whose proof the judge requires of my labour):  
The Mithridatic War and Cannae too,  
With ringing tones and every gesture, you  
Have treated roundly, the oath-violation  
Made by the raging Carthaginian nation,  
Sulla, the Marii, the Mucii,  
Now mention my three she-goats – that's my plea.

XX

"Loan me a hundred grand," I asked (you'd said,  
"You'd beg for nothing?"). Now you doubt instead,  
Delay, ask, for ten days torment us so.  
For heaven's sake, then, Phoebus, tell me 'no'.

XXI

While yoking Ianthis in close unity  
With poet Stella, Venus joyfully  
Said, "I could not give more." The bride heard this,

But in his ear she felt the need to hiss  
A naughty “Watch it, rogue. I often hit  
The wanton Mars in rage when he saw fit,  
Not yet my spouse, to stray. Now mine to keep,  
He never ever gives me cause to weep  
With other girls: such virtue should Juno  
Want for a husband. Thus she spoke and lo!  
She struck him with her mystic whip, whosae aid  
Succeeded. Now, though, goddess, strike the maid.

## XXII

You wed your man – your lover once but now  
Your husband, Proculina – but somehow  
You must not the Lex Julia transgress,  
So you don’t marry – rather you confess.

## XXIII

“Be always stiff for me,” I hear you say:  
A prick is not a finger, though, no way.  
You coax me with your voice and with your hand,  
What lets you down’s your face’s stern command.

## XXIV

Charisianus! Quite the libertine!  
At Saturn’s feast he toga’d may be seen.

## XXV

True son of a good father, over there  
In Arcady, where the cold-bringing Bear  
Displays his chariot, now hearken to  
What an old family friend holds out for you  
And keep it close: let not your bravery  
Be careless nor impetuosity  
Lead you into battle’s hideous gore:  
Let those with lack of reason hanker for  
Ferocious Mars and wars, you may accord  
Your valour for your father and your lord.

## XXVI

Our Sotades’s head’s in jeopardy:  
Is Sotades accused, you think? Not he.  
Our Sotades can’t get it up, and so  
He must have recourse to fellatio.

## XXVII

Your twice my neighbour, Nepos (being close by  
Both Flora and ancient Ficeliae),  
Whose daughter apes your features to a T,  
A witness to her mother’s chastity.  
Don’t be too mean with wine – make jars replete  
With piles of money, may your girl be sweet  
And opulent, but let her drink new wine:  
A jar of what was lately on the vine  
Will with its very mistress reach old age.  
Let not Caecuban vintage wine assuage  
Only the childless men: believe you me

That fathers too can relish jollity.

XXVIII

Melior's freedman, well known to all, has died;  
Rome grieves his patron's short-lived pet; beside  
The Flaminian Way the marble tomb we see  
Of Glaucias: of purest chastity,  
Good manners, nimble wit, profuse appeal;  
Just thirteen summers was he doomed to feel.  
O traveller, who now bemoan this pain,  
May you never have cause to weep again.

XXIX

Home-bred, no household-mob slave nor one bound  
To the grasping mart, but of his master's sound  
Affection worthy, though his patron's boon  
Has not yet touched him, Glaucia, so soon,  
Is Melior's freedman. Rectitude and grace  
Reap their rewards. Who has a fairer face,  
One like Apollo's? Who more captivates?  
A shortened life (seldom old age) awaits  
Unworthy folk. What gives to you delight,  
Pray that it does not please beyond what's right.

XXX

If you had given me immediately  
Six grand when you said, Take, it's yours" to me,  
I'd owe two hundred grand. But these delays  
(Between, I think, two and three hundred days)!  
Shall I now tell you what's truer than true?  
Your six grand, Paetus, has eluded you.

XXXI

TO CHARIDEMUS

Your doctor fucks your wife – you let it go.  
You want to die, but not of fever, no.

XXXII

The outcome in the balance and Otho  
The likely victor of his mortal foe,  
He railed at Mars as bringer of much gore  
And stabbed himself. Let Cato be much more  
A mensch than even Caesar when in breath.  
But was he greater than Otho in death?

XXXIII

TO MATHO

I've never seen a man more melancholy  
Than the sodomite Sabellus – once so jolly.  
Theft, flight, slaves' deaths, fire, grief afflict the bloke.  
Now sad, he actually enjoys a poke.

XXXIV

## TO DIADUMENUS

Give me hot kisses. “How many?” you state.  
So you request me to enumerate  
The ocean’s waves, the scattered shells one sees  
Off the Aegean and the straying bees  
On Mt. Hymettus, and the theatre’s cheers  
And claps when Caesar suddenly appears.  
What Lesbia gave Catullus – that amount  
Is not for me. He wants few who can count.

## XXXV

The seven ‘water-clocks’ you loudly wanted  
The grudging judge, Caecilianus, granted.  
But on you go while from glass amphorae  
You drink your tepid water. But, say I,  
To satisfy your thirst and oratory,  
Drink from the water-clocks – that is my plea.

## XXXVI

## TO PAPYLUS

You’ve got a massive nose and matching yard,  
So one can smell the other when you’re hard.

## XXXVII

## CHARINUS

He’s no ass left, split up to his midriff;  
He itches all that way, though, the poor stiff.  
Oh what a wretched sore, a sorry sight.  
He has no ass, yet he’s a sodomite.

## XXXVIII

## REGULUS

Just three years old, you see this little boy  
Who hears his father’s speech and claps with joy,  
And, seeing him, jumps from his mother’s knee  
And, as his own, enjoys this eulogy.  
The shouts, the Hundred Courts, the mob, packed tight,  
The Julia Tecta please the tiny mite,  
Just as a proud steed’s foal savours the race  
Or as the steer with unprotected face  
Craves battle. Gods, fulfil his parents’ plea  
That he may hear *his* son and both men she.

## XXXIX

## TO CINNA

You’ve by Marulla seven... Children? Why,  
No son of yours or one who lives nearby  
Or any friend’s among them. No, begot  
Upon some mattress or upon some cot,  
Their features show the dame’s adulteries:  
This curly-haired, proud Moor admits that he’s  
The son of the cook Santra. But this thing,

Flat-nosed and fat-lipped, has the very ring  
Of Pannychus the wrestler. Now this one –  
Who cannot know he is the baker's son  
Who's known the bleary Dama? That one now,  
With pallid face and with a bugger's brow,  
Was by your bumboy Lygdus ushered in.  
Fuck him as well. Why not? It is no sin.  
This, with donkey's ears and pointy head,  
Is moron Cyrta's son, it must be said.  
Two sisters now, one carrot-topped, one black,  
Can both to other fathers be traced back –  
A piper and a bailiff. Seems to me  
You'd have as many sons as Niobe  
Had not two slaves among your household mob  
Been the recipients of a hatchet job.

XL

TO LYCORIS

You once were all men's choice; now none can be  
More popular than Glyceris; for she  
Will be what you are; you're not her. Time's sway  
Is great. I once craved you, it's her today.

XLI

He who recites wool-scarf at neck will state,  
"I cannot speak but yet cannot abate."

XLII

TO OPPIANUS

If you don't use the Etruscan Baths, you'll go  
Unwashed always. No others lure one so –  
Aponus's men-only fount, tranquil  
Sinuesssa, hot Sparrow, Anxur-on-the-Hill,  
The streams of Phoebus or top-rate Baiae.  
No other place has such a cloudless sky:  
The light is longer there, there is nowhere  
The day recedes so slow. The quarries there  
Of Taygetus are green, the rocks all vie  
In varied colours, cut more deeply by  
The Phrygians and Libyans; onyx,  
So rich, pants out dry heat; sly fire licks  
At snakestone. If you like the Spartan rite,  
Content with arid warmth take your delight  
By plunging in the Virgin's natural stream  
Or that of Marcia; behold its gleam, S  
So bright and clear you'd think no water's there  
But only Lygdian marble's empty stare.  
You're deaf, I fear, and won't listen to me,  
Or don't you care? You'll always unwashed be.

XLIII

You caper, Castricus, in fine Baiae,  
Swimming in the Nymph's white, sulphurous waters; I  
Stay at my quiet Numentan estate,  
A small house, to my fields commensurate.  
*This* is my Baian sun, my mild Lucrine,

For me *this* is the wealth on which *you* dine.  
Once I'd frequent famed spas and never fear  
Long journeys: now, though, I prefer what's near  
And fancy haunts with easier access.  
That's fine, if it allows me laziness.

XLIV

TO CALLIODORUS

You think that you're a jester: only you  
Are full of endless wit and you pooh-pooh  
All others with a sneer; thus, as a guest,  
You feel that you can entertain the rest.  
May I say something, though not smart yet true?  
No-one will pass a pledging-cup to you.

XLV

You've had your fling! Now, wanton cunts, get wed:  
For you must have *chaste* love. Laetoria said  
She'd marry Lygdus. Is *this* purity?  
She'll prove a worse wife than a whore, you'll see.

XLVI

TO CATIANUS

The Blue whips on his horses constantly  
Yet crawls. Yours is a clever feat to see!

XLVII

Nymph, welcomed to my Stella's house, you glide  
With your pure spring and enter now inside  
Its master's gemmed halls. Did Egeria  
Send you here from the cave of Trivia?  
Or are you the ninth Muse? I exculpate  
Myself with this young pig because, of late,  
When sick, I from your streams drank secretly.  
I pray that with my misdeed you will be  
Content and grant to me your spring's delight  
So once again my thirst will be sans blight.

XLVIII

The toga'd mob acclaims you with a yell.  
It's not you – it's your meal that speaks so well.

XLIX

I am no fragile elm nor, standing straight,  
Hewn out of any wood of common rate;  
Of aged cypress was I made which fears  
No endless cycles of a hundred years.  
Felon, beware! If you should snatch away  
The smallest shoot, this cypress will, that day,  
Although you'd like to say it isn't true,  
Will graft a clustering of figs on you.

L



When pauper Telesinus cultivated  
Good friends, he shabbily peregrinated  
In a poor, starving toga: but today  
He's courting queers and he alone can pay  
For tables, silver-plate, for houses too.  
Bithynicus, would you be rich? Then you  
Must be a partner. Kisses that are true  
Will not bestow a scintilla on you.

LI

TO LUPERCUS

Because without inviting me you play  
The host so often, I have found a way  
To needle you. I'm angry: pleading, you  
Ask me what I will do – I'll call chez vous.

LII

Pantagathus lies here, so early taken,  
The sorrow of his master, now forsaken;  
At cutting hair he was so masterly  
The blade would barely touch the locks, and he  
Trimmed rough cheeks. Earth, lie lightly, as is right:  
Than his skilled hand you could not be more light.

LIII

TO FAUSTINUS

Andragoras bathed and in high spirits fed  
With us yet the next morning was found dead.  
You ask the cause of such a swift decease?  
He dreamt he had seen Doc Hermocrates.

LIV

TO AULUS

If you forbid him to pronounce 'so tall',  
Both masculine and feminine, he'll stall,  
Poor Sextilianus, and he'll barely tie  
Three words together. "Where's the problem lie  
With him?" you ask. I think I know the score:  
These words (both masc. and fem.) he must adore.

LV

TO CORACINUS

Because with cassia and with cinnamon  
You smear yourself and thickly plaster on  
The perfumes of the lordly phoenix' bed,  
Reeking of Niceros's jars of lead,  
You laugh at reekless us. I'd rather smell  
Of absolutely nothing than smell well.

LVI

TO CHARIDEMUS

Your legs and chest are rough: accordingly  
You think you cheat repute. Have faith in me  
And root all hair out – make it obvious  
You shave your ass. “What for?” you ask of us.  
You hear the gossip-engine loudly hum:  
Let people think you take it up the bum.

LVII

TO PHOEBUS

With cream you counterfeit that you have hair  
And hide with paint a dirty scalp that’s bare.  
No need to call a barber: seems to me  
A sponge would do the job more readily.

LVIII

TO AULUS

You watched the Northern Bears up close and spied  
The laggard Getic stars, while I near died,  
Snatched off to Styx and the Elysian strand.  
My weary eyes looked for your features and  
Your name frequented my poor lips so blue.  
If only my life’s threads of purple hue  
Remain neglected by the Sisters three  
And gods aren’t deaf then safe we both shall be:  
To Latium you’ll bring back glory bright,  
A chief centurion and a famous knight.

LIX

Baccara grumbles that he feels no chill  
Thanks to his countless mantles, thinking ill  
Of sunny winter days; he wants less sun,  
But snow and winds. What damage, cruel one,  
Has my cloak caused, a cloak one puff of air  
Can carry from my shoulders? Isn’t there  
A more straightforward and a kinder way?  
Just wear your mantles on an August day.

LX

Rome praises and adores my verses, and  
All hold them in their pocket or their hand.  
Yawns, blushes, pallor, stupefaction, curses!  
I want that: now I dearly love my verses.

LXI

TO FAUSTINUS

Pompullus has his wish: he will be read  
And have his name throughout the city spread.  
“So flourish the gold-haired Usipian nation  
And those who hate Roman administration!”  
His verse is clever? “Fame needs more: fine books  
In droves feed moths and bookworms. Only cooks  
Will buy them! Glory wants a certain plus:  
A book must, to survive, have genius.”

LXII

TO OPPIANUS

Salanus lost his only son. So now  
 You won't send him a gift. How monstrous, how  
 Outrageously depraved! O cruel fate!  
 What vulture shall we see this corpse create?

LXIII

TO MARIANUS

You know a greedy man singles you out  
 And you know what he wants, I have no doubt.  
 And yet, mad fool, you write him in your will  
 And you desire him your shoes to fill.  
 "He sent fine gifts." But they came with a hook:  
 And can a fish love fishermen? Now look,  
 Will he weep honest tears at your demise?  
 Well, give him nothing, *then* see if he cries.

LXIV

Although not born of the stern Fabii  
 Nor Curius' wife who, under an oak tree,  
 Gave birth when fetching him his meal one day  
 While he was at the plough, but of a gay  
 And his whore of a wife (she might, in fact,  
 Call *him her* wife): you'd actually redact  
 My books, which Fame well knows, and criticize  
 My happy trifles – trifles which those wise  
 In statesmanship and law would not disdain  
 To listen to attentively, again,  
 Which the bookshelves of timeless Silius  
 Think worthy of them, and which Regulus  
 Recited often very skilfully  
 And our Diana's neighbour, Sura, he  
 Who views up close the mighty Circus' strife,  
 Which even Caesar, with his active life  
 Of large affairs of state, will not reject  
 But read sometimes. But you've more intellect –  
 Minerva's honed your mind more piercingly,  
 Your judgment, too, is fashioned subtly  
 By Athens! I'll croak if there's not more wit  
 In that which has a hanging paunch on it,  
 Big hooves and gory guts, lugged everywhere  
 By an insensate butcher. And you dare,  
 On top of this, to scribble against me  
 Some paltry verses none will ever see  
 And spoil your wretched paper. Nonetheless,  
 If all the ardour of my bitterness  
 Should burn you, it would live on and be scanned  
 Throughout the entire city and this brand  
 Even Cinnamus himself with all his art  
 Will not erase. Pity yourself – don't start  
 To tempt with savage teeth a living bear  
 Which sports a foaming snout. So have a care –  
 Although he may be mild and lick your hand  
 And fingers, roused to righteous anger and

In agony, he'll be a bear once more:  
Don't wear your teeth out on a carnivore –  
Pick out a hide untenanted and try  
To find a piece of flesh that can't reply.

LXV

“A hexametric poem?” says Tacca. Hey,  
That is allowed; it's normal, too, I say.  
“It's long, though.” Same reply: if you prefer  
Short poems, read only distichs. Let's confer:  
To skip long poems I give you liberty;  
Composing them, though, be permitted me.

LXVI

GELLIANUS

This auctioneer's just sold a wench of no  
Good reputation, like those maids who go  
Into Subura Central. Since she's gone  
For little sums so long, he tried to con  
The crowd by showing that the wench was pure –  
Though she objected, he just went up to her  
And tried four times to kiss the girl. So what  
Did he achieve for this? What has he got  
For those four kisses? Well, a fellow who  
Had bid six hundred suddenly withdrew.

LXVII

TO PANNYCHUS

Why does your wife have eunuchs only? Well,  
She wants to have some sex but not to swell.

LXVIII

TO CASTRICUS

Naiads, weep for your crime on Lucrine Lake –  
Let even Thetis hear the din you make.  
That Eutychos, your sweet-tempered ally,  
Was snatched away by waters at Baiae.  
He helped you in your work and soothed your woe,  
He was your love, the Alexis of Maro.  
Did some lewd nymph see in that liquid glass  
Your naked form and send back his Hylas  
To Hercules? Or did a goddess slight  
Tender Hermaphroditus at the sight  
And the embraces of a man so gentle?  
No matter, though – whatever instrumental  
Reason there was for such swift thievery,  
Earth, waves, lie lightly on him is my plea.

LXIX

TO CATULLUS

I'm not surprised your Bassa guzzles water:  
I *am* surprised, though, that so does her daughter.

LXX

TO MARCIANUS

Now Cotta's 62, I think, and he  
Has never known one day of malady.  
He points his finger (but the middle one!)  
At Symmachus, at Dasius, at Alcon.  
Let us our own years very strictly reckon,  
And when harsh fever or sore weakness beckon,  
Or dreadful pain, from life's felicity  
Let us be disconnected. Although we  
Are infants, we seem old. Those who believe  
Nestor's or Priam's age was long, deceives  
Himself entirely. Living's not the aim  
Of life but living with a healthy frame.

LXXI

To castanets she wriggles wantonly  
And whirls to Spanish tunes so cleverly,  
She'd rouse the palsied Pelias and fire  
Priam himself over his Hector's pyre.  
Her former master she's put on the rack:  
He sold a maid, a mistress he bought back.

LXXII

TO FABULLUS

A most notorious thief, keen to despoil  
A garden, found in that extensive soil  
A marble Priapus, nought more, and so,  
Because he had no willingness to go  
Back empty-handed, this Cilician  
Picked up the god himself and off he ran.

LXXIII

No ill-equipped, rude husbandman made me:  
A steward's noble work is what you see.  
For loaded Hilarus who tills the green  
Of Caere owns these hills and slopes serene.  
How real I seem, not made of wood at all,  
Sporting my warlike cock not doomed to fall  
By dint of fire. Of deathless cypress built,  
It stands quite vertical, never to wilt,  
Worthy of Phidias. You who live here,  
I counsel every one of you – revere  
Celestial Priapus and thereby  
Ensure these fourteen acres never die.

LXXIV

TO AEFULANUS

Regard that fellow on the honoured side,  
His three sole hairs with brilliantine applied,  
A toothpick in his open mouth: now he  
Is quite a fraud: he has no teeth, you see.

LXXV

## TO PONTUS

You send a thrush, a scrap of cake to me,  
A hare's leg or some similarity:  
You say you've sent me your *bonnes bouches*, my sweet:  
These will I neither send elsewhere nor eat.

## LXXVI

That guardian of our toga'd god,  
His camp commander, lies beneath this sod –  
Fuscus. Allow, Fortune, my theory:  
This stone the threats of any enemy  
No longer shudders at. Our for, the Dacian,  
Has now submitted to our domination  
With humbled neck, and his victorious shade  
Has this defeated grove his subject made.

## LXXVII

You're poorer than poor Iros, younger than  
Parthenopaeus and a stronger man  
Than was Artemidorus when he won  
The contest. Why, then, do you ride upon  
Six Cappadocians? You cause merriment –  
You'd cause no greater laughter if you went  
Right through the forum naked. Visualize  
A little mule matched with great Atlas' size,  
A Libyan atop a trumpeting  
Wild tusker. Do you know how sickening  
Your litter is? Even carried to the flames,  
You should not be supported by six frames.

## LXXVIII

Phryx, noted drinking-man, was semi-blind  
(The other eye was bleary!). "Better mind  
Your drinking," said Doc Heras. "You drink wine  
And you'll see *nothing*." Laughing, Phryx said, "Fine –  
Goodbye, my eye," then immediately  
Ordered eleven drams and frequently!  
You ask what the result was then? Well, *he*  
Was filled with wine, his *eye* toxicity.

## LXXIX

## TO LUPUS

You're sad, though lucky. Don't let Fortune know –  
She'll call you an ungrateful so-and-so.

## LXXX

## TO CAESAR

Egypt has proudly sent a gift to you  
Of winter roses – something that's quite new.  
When first in Rome, the Memphis mariner  
Scorned Egypt's gardens, fragrant Flora's spell,  
The grandeur of the Paestan fields as well;  
Each place he went, each place to which he'd turn

Had paths which would with twining roses burn  
So bright. Rome's winter now you must see through:  
Send us your crops, our roses we'll send you.

LXXXI

TO CHARIDEMUS

You bathe as though incensed at folk: your knob  
You give throughout a thorough cleaning job.  
I would not have you wash your *head* this way.  
You do, though: "Wash your cock" is what I say.

LXXXII

Someone inspected me a while ago  
As though I were a slave for sale, as though  
I was at gladiator school. Then he  
Pointed me out and said, "Oh, could you be  
That Martial, whose lewd jests are known to men  
Who have some wit?" I smiled I silence then  
And with a slight bow answered him that I  
Was whom he spoke of. Then he said, "So why  
Have you bad cloaks?" I answered, "Well, you see,  
I'm a bad poet." May less frequently  
This happen to a poet – to that end,  
Please send good cloaks to me, Rufus my friend.

LXXXIII

Etrusus' father's in Etruscus' debt  
Because of his solicitation: yet  
Both are in debt to you, o lord of all:  
Your bolts you have been willing to recall:  
I would that Jove had that much gentleness;  
Were you both of one mind, there would be less  
Employing of that bolt's full force. To you  
And to your bounty this man charges two  
Advantages – sharing the deportation  
Of his father and then his repatriation.

LXXXIV

TO AVITUS

Though sound, Philippus has for his sedan  
Eight men. You think he's sound? You're crazy, man.

LXXXV

TO RUFUS

My sixth's book's been produced, and without you,  
And has no hope that you will read it through:  
Now evil Cappadocia, who has felt  
The ill-omened hostility you've dealt,  
Is sending to your father what's left  
Of you. Lament, Bononia, bereft,  
Let all Aemilia hearken to your grief.  
What filial piety! A life so brief!  
Just five Olympiads did you but see.  
You'd quote my poems – a brilliant memory –

Accustomed to recall whole poems by heart;  
Let my sad tears and this brief song impart  
Your friend's distress: assume that these lines are  
Scattered on you like incense from afar.

LXXXVI

O Setine, oft-filled cups and ice wine, too,  
When shall I be allowed to guzzle you  
With medical approval? He's a loon,  
An ingrate and not worthy of this boon  
Whose choice is to be the recipient  
Of wealth like Midas's. Do you resent  
My life? Well then, go, Libyan crops attain,  
Hermus, and Tagus. Go, warm water drain.

LXXXVII

The gods and, Caesar, you grant what you're due!  
If worthy, may you grant it to me too.

LXXXVIII

TO CAECILIANUS

I greeted you this morning by your name  
And didn't add 'my master' to that same.  
The cost of such a sloppy disposition?  
My hundred farthings vanished to perdition.

LXXXIX

PANARETUS

At midnight, with a finger-snap, he sought  
A chamberpot, quite drunk. To him was brought  
A Spoletine he'd previously drained dry,  
A flagon not enough to satisfy  
His single self! With greatest accuracy  
He emptied in it the amount that he  
Had drunk from it. How could the flagon meet  
The need, you ask? Easy! He drank it neat!

XC

GELLIA

She has a lover – only one, it's true.  
That's all the worse, though: she's the wife of two.

XCI

The censor of the lord of lord's decree  
Has holily debarred adultery.  
Zoilus, you may celebrate, for you  
Are not the sort of person who will screw.

XCII

TO AMMIANUS

Though Myron's snake is on your cup, yet you



Drink Vatican: so, you drink poison too.

### XCIII

Ah, Thaïs smells as bad as does a pot,  
A greedy fuller's ancient one, which got  
Smashed in the street, a goat that's just been laid,  
A lion's breath, a dog's hide that's conveyed  
From across the Tiber, or a chicken, dead  
In some foul egg, or, with a putrid bed  
Of fishy sauce, a jar. To cannily  
Change this smell for another one, when she  
Strips at the baths, she shows herself quite green  
With some depilatory, barely seen  
Beneath a chalk-and-vinegar creation  
Of bean-flour (four layers thick). Though she believes  
That through a thousand dodges she deceives  
The people that she meets, do what she will,  
Even so, Thaïs will reek of Thaïs still.

### XCIV

#### CALPETIANUS

Off gold-enamelled plate he dines always  
When he is eating out or when he stays  
At home, in inns, the countryside. Has he  
No other plates? Well, not his own, you see.

### BOOK VII

#### I

Receive Minerva's merciless breastplate,  
O Caesar, for it intimidate  
Medusa's wrathful tresses. It should be  
Referred to as 'cuirass' when you may see  
That it's not worn. 'Aegis; let it be called  
When on your sacred person it's installed.

#### II

#### TO DOMITIAN'S CUIRASS

Sarmatian arrows cannot pierce right through  
The cuirass of our leader – it's more true  
Than Mars's Getic shield. Security  
Against Sarmatian weapons guarantee  
The smooth hooves of a hundred thousand boars.  
O what a blessed providence is yours  
To touch the sacred breast and feel the heat  
Of his fierce fire. Go with him and defeat,  
Undinted, many foes, and bring him home,  
Palm-tunicked; swiftly give him back to Rome.

#### III

#### TO PONTILIANUS

Why don't I send your poems to you? I'll tell  
You why – so you won't send me yours as well.

IV

TO CASTRICUS

Because he looked like he'd a malady,  
Oppianus started writing poetry.

V

The Roman people, Caesar, long for you,  
The Latian folk who love our empire, too:  
Answer our prayers, bring back our god. Though news  
Of victories is constant, Rome yet views  
Her foes with envy who may plainly see  
The world's one lord more closely than can we,  
And in your countenance non-Romans sight,  
In equal measures, terror and delight.

VI

First aiming at the Hyperborean strands,  
Is Caesar turning to Ausonian lands?  
There is no witness, every living voice,  
Though, speaks of it. Well, Fame, you are my choice –  
You always tell the truth. Of victory  
Dispatches tell, compelling public glee,  
Pikes show the green of laurel. City-wide  
Your triumphs are proclaimed – on every side  
You are declared UNCONQUERED CONQUERING LORD.  
But so that greater faith you may afford  
In our delight, confirming what folk say,  
Appear, the herald of Sarmatian bay.

VII

Though wintry lands and savage Peuce hold you,  
Though Hister and its beat of hooves enfold you,  
And Rhine's presumptuous horn, now smashed three times,  
As you subdue those treasonable climes,  
Exalted lord of people everywhere,  
You can't escape our prayers. We too are there,  
Caesar, in soul and vision; you possess  
The hearts of Romans in such singleness  
That in the Circus we can't tell between us  
If next up is Tigris or Passerinus.

VIII

O Muses, now make merry joyfully,  
If ever you did in my poetry:  
Our god's returned from the Odrysian land,  
Victorious. December, here you stand,  
Fulfilment of our prayers: now we may shout  
"He comes". You're lucky! You might have shut out  
Next month, if you gave now the ecstasy  
That he'll give us. With festive raillery  
The soldier, crowned, will revel when his steeds,  
Belaurelled, bear him here. Frolicsome deeds  
And trivial song are granted even you  
If victory itself may pleasure woo.

IX

Cascellius is just intelligent,  
Though sixty. When will he be eloquent?

X

Eros does little boys, while Linus licks:  
What's it to you how people get their kicks,  
Olus? Matho a hundred grand will pay  
For sex. So what? You'll not get poor that way  
(He will). Sertorius dines till broad daylight:  
What's that to you? For you may snore all night.  
Lupus owes Titus seven hundred g:  
So...? Don't lend him a sou. You seem to be  
Neglectful of what appertains to you,  
Your main concerns. Your little toga's due  
A payment: that is your affair, you know.  
No-one will lend you cash now: that also.  
It is your business that your wife's a whore,  
Your large daughter demands a dowry: more  
Of the same. I could give samples endlessly:  
But what you do has nought to do with me.

XI

You bully me my verses to emend  
With my own pen. How greatly you commend  
And love my poetry and to possess  
My autograph in scanty flimsiness.

XII

TO FAUSTINUS

O may my master with serenity  
Read me and with accustomed scrutiny  
Welcome my jests, just as my words don't maim  
Even those that they quite justly hate, and Fame  
Won with another's blush does not please me.  
How can this help when some would like to see  
My words as weapons which are saturated  
With Lycambes's blood, and one who's stated  
He hates the daylight vomits in my name  
A viperous bane? My jests are free of blame:  
You know this well: by mighty Fame I swear  
And every Muse and by your ears which bear  
The image of a god, you who are free,  
Reader, from merciless malignity.

XIII

Old tusks grow white, heard dusky Lycoris,  
In Tibur's sun, and so, to settle this,  
She finds those hills. The power of the clime  
Of Tibur! She turned black in record time!

XIV

TO AULUS

A girl of mine a dire calamity  
Has suffered; what gave such felicity

To her, her darling, she has lost: no bird  
Whose naughty tricks, Catullus, we have heard  
Were mourned by Lesbia, nor yet a dove  
Whose death was sorrowed by my Stella's love  
(Now flying in Elysium); no, she's  
Not captivated by such toys as these –  
Such losses do not move her: no, a boy  
Who's merely twelve years old, her special joy,  
She's lost, a lad who had on him a dong  
Which wasn't yet one foot and one half long.

XV

TO ARGYNNUS

What boy is this close by the sparkling spring  
Of Ianthis? Is it Hylas who's shunning  
His mistress-nymphs? It's good that Hercules  
Is worshipped in this wood and watches these  
Impassioned waters! Safely tend this spout.  
The nymphs won't harm you but the god...? Watch out!

XVI

Regulus, I'm broke: one thing remains, though: I  
Can sell your presents. So, then, will you buy?

XVII

O library of a lovely country home,  
From which the reader has a view of Rome,  
If wanton Thalia may deserve to be  
With sacred works, these poems that you see  
I've sent you, please place in some tiny slot  
(The bottom shelf's content to hold the lot),  
All in the author's hand! Such editing  
Adds to their value. O you delicate thing,  
Soon to be praised throughout the world and known  
By all through this small present of my own,  
Protect this, my heart's pledge, o library  
Of Julius Martial. Please do this for me.

XVIII

TO GALLA

Though fair even beyond a woman's flak,  
No marks upon your body front and back,  
D'you wonder why few cocksmen seek you out  
(Or come a second time)? It's all about  
Your flaw – a serious one. Whenever I  
Approach you and we're at it, thigh to thigh,  
Your cunt pipes up (*you're* silent). Gods, would that  
*You'd* speak, not *it*. I'm irritated at  
Your chatty cunt. I would prefer you fart  
(Symmachus says it's useful for a start,  
And we would have a laugh). But who could chuckle  
At noisy cunts? Whose todger does not buckle  
(Whose mind as well) when it begins to chat.  
Say *something*; interrupt the sound of *that*  
Cacophonous thing. You're dumb? Then have a care  
To learn the art of speaking from down *there*.

XIX

You think this fragment cheap and useless? Well,  
It was the first to brave the unknown swell.  
The Dark-Blue Rocks could not destroy this keel;  
The Scythian Sea's great wrath it did not feel.  
Now on the rock of time it's run aground,  
Though it is holier than its ship that's sound.

XX

SANTRA

No-one's more mean or greedier than he.  
Called to a formal dinner, speedily  
He went (he'd angled many days for it),  
And full three times asked for the boar's titbit,  
And four times for the loin, and for each haunch  
And wing of hare, not blushing yet to launch  
Into a pack of lies about a thrush  
And snaffle up the oysters' purple bush.  
He stains his filthy napkin with the cake  
(Great wedges of it); then a stab he'll make  
At grapes, preserved, some pomegranate too,  
An obscene haggis-skin, some figgy goo,  
A flabby mushroom. And when his napkin  
Is bursting with a thousand thefts, then in  
His gown's hot folds he hides gnawed vertebrae  
And a headless turtle-dove. What's swept away  
Or left by dogs he's not ashamed to hoard  
With one long reach. Nor is the groaning board  
His only theft: he pours into a jar  
Water and wine. The churl goes home to bar  
His attic-door, high-up, and stash away  
His spoil. He sells the lot the following day.

XXI

TO POLLA

This day, aware of its celebrity,  
Gave Lucan to us all. O cruelty,  
Nero, most hated for this death. At least  
*This* deed should not have been allowed that beast.

XXII

Our poet was born on this day of fame.  
Muses, hallow these rites with your sweet name.  
Creating Lucan, let your honours ring!  
Let Baetis merge with Castalian spring.

XXIII

Come, Phoebus, as when to the Battle King  
You granted Latium's second lyre-string.  
Such a bright day requires, Polla, that you  
Revere your spouse and that he know it too.

XXIV

You tried a brawl with my friend Juvenal  
And me. Perfidious tongue, theres nought at all  
You will not dare to say. Your denotation  
Of wrong would have created detestation  
Between Orestes and his lifelong friend,  
Theseus' love for Pirithous would end,  
You'd part the Sicilian brothers and those who  
Ruled Argos, and Castor, Pollux. Curse you! –  
For your deserts and what you undertake  
Do what you do – that is the prayer I make.

XXV

You're always writing stuff that's saccharine  
And whiter even than enamelled skin:  
No grain of salt, no drop of bitter gall,  
You madman, and yet you would have them all  
Be read! Food's bland when reft of vinegar's bite,  
A face undimpled gives us no delight.  
Sweet apples, dull figs are for kids: give me  
A Chian fig – its tang gives piquancy.

XXVI

Salute Apollinaris, limping beat,  
And if he's free (for God's sake be discreet),  
Give him this paltry thing (he has some part  
In it): let cultured ears attend my art.  
If with unruffled brow he should receive you,  
Ask that his well-known favour may relieve you.  
You know he loves my trifles to excess:  
And it is true I too can't love them less.  
If you desire to live free from all faults,  
Salute Apollinaris, Verse-That-Halts.

XXVII

The Tuscan mast's despoiler, corpulent  
With acorns, virtually as eminent  
As the Aetolian beast, this boar lies here,  
Run through by my friend Dexter's gleaming spear,  
A booty odious to my hearth. O may  
The household gods grow fat on this array  
Of steaming meat and my gay kitchen burn  
With a denuded hill. But, in his turn,  
The cook will eat much pepper and will quaff  
Falernian with his treasured fish-sauce. Off,  
Back to your lord, my hearth's too small, you see.  
I'd rather starve, for you would ruin me.

XXVIII

TO FUSCUS

So may Diana's Tibur wood grow tall,  
Renewed when lopped. Nor may your olives fall  
To Spanish presses, may your vats flow free  
With lots of must, and may the law-courts three  
Admire you, and may the Palatine  
Offer you praise, and may the people twine  
Many palms about your door: when mid-December  
Gives you a little leisure, then remember

To con with care the jests which you've read through.  
"So you would like to know the truth, would you?  
Well, that is a hard matter, I confess."  
Tell me what you wish said to you, no less.

XXIX

TO THESTYLUS

Voconius Victor, dear torment (no lad  
Is better known throughout the world, make glad  
Your lovers with your beauty, now your hair  
Is shorn, and may no lady be thought fair  
By this your bard: for a short time forsake  
Your master's learned books; I'll undertake  
To read him some small poems. Although Maro  
Was singing of Alexis, even so  
Maecenas was conversant with the miss  
Of Marsus' poems, the dusky Melaenis.

XXX

The Parthians, Germans, Dacians you provide  
With services, and you don't even hide  
From Cappadocians or Cilicians; 'cross  
The ocean came a Memphian from Pharos  
To fuck you, a black man from the Red Sea,  
The circumcised Jews you do not flee,  
The Alan on his steed won't pass you by,  
O Caelia, I needs must ask you why,  
Despite the fact that Rome has nurtured you,  
There is no Roman todger that will do.

XXXI

Hens' eggs and cackling farm-birds, Regulcus,  
And figs from Chios, clearly ochreous  
From middling warmth, a kid, olives that show  
They can't survive the cold, cabbages that glow  
With hoar-frost – you think all of them once were  
At my estate? How carefully you err.  
My fields deliver nothing else but me.  
What your Umbrian bailiff or what he  
Who rents from you or what your own estate,  
Which words on the third milestone indicate,  
Or what your Tusculan or Etrurian fields  
Send you, for me the whole Subura yields.

XXXII

TO ATTICUS

You who the names of an eloquent race beget  
Anew and will not sanction to be set  
A silence on a mighty house, are squired  
By Minerva's pious votaries, desired  
By cloistered ease and by the men who teach  
Philosophy, but boxing-masters reach  
For other youngsters, battered ears and all,  
And riches quite unmerited befall  
The filthy greaser. Hand-ball's not your way,  
Nor bladder-, feather-ball, so that you may

Take your warm bath; you make no blunted blow  
Against the naked stump; you practise no  
Arm-stretches, smeared with sticky goo, nor sport  
With dusty scrimmage-balls; your only sort  
Of play is running by the Virgin's tide  
Or where that taurine passion lives, inside  
Europa's portico. Frivolous play  
In various sports where every venue may  
Be seen to cater to them, I confess,  
Though one may run instead, is idleness.

XXXIII

Mud-filthy is your toga, yet your shoe  
Is white as snow: why, idiot, do you  
Fan out your straggling garb over your feet?  
Lift it, Cinna: your shoe's no longer neat.

XXXIV

TO SEVERUS

How can the foul Charinus do one thing  
So well? It needs this brief interpreting:  
What's worse than Nero? What is better, though,  
Than Nero's baths? At once a gossip – low,  
Malicious – says, “What can you put above  
The bounties of the object of our love,  
Our lord and master? No, no, I prefer  
Nero's warm baths to those of a buggerer.

XXXV

A slave, black leather round his loins, there stands  
Whenever you are by caressing hands  
Soothed with hot water. *My* slave, may I state,  
Displays to all a ponderous Jewish weight  
Beneath his naked frame; yet, naked, you'll  
Bathe with both young and old. Is your slave's tool  
The only real one? So, do you pursue  
At all, o matron, recesses that you  
Seed on young girls? *Cunt*, do you secretly  
Bathe yourself in your own liquidity?

XXXVI

TO STELLA

My rugged villa could not stand Jove's spate  
And swam in wintry squalls, while many a slate,  
To carry winter's torrents off, reached me  
Because of your benevolence. O see,  
The North Wind's thunder roars, and you protect  
The villa but its farmer you neglect.

XXXVII

TO CASTRICUS

You know the quaestor's sign for death? It's new:  
It's well to learn it: every time he blew  
His nose – it's cut-throat time! That hateful schnozz



Was bearer of an icicle that was  
So ugly, when December's wilful blast  
Blew from his throat: his colleagues held him fast:  
Well, then, what further question could you pose?  
The wretch was to blow his nose.

XXXVIII

TO POLYPHEMUS

Severus' slave, you're such a massive brute  
The Cyclops too would gape. And hardly cute  
Is Scylla. Put these monsters side by side –  
Each beast would from the other seek to hide.

XXXIX

Fed up with morning visits, wandering  
Around the town, the wealthys' prideful sting,  
Caelius simulated gout. He tried  
So hard to prove it genuine, applied  
Both bandages and salves to his sound feet  
And walked with laboured carriage down the street  
(How real does illness seem through cultivation!);  
No longer does he practise simulation.

XL

This old man, famed in the Augustan court,  
Not humbly bore the humour of each sort  
In our own god. His spouse's sacred shade  
Is joined to his (the obsequies were made  
By his sons): Elysium holds them both. His wife  
Died first, deprived of even a *young* life.  
Yet he himself lived almost ninety years.  
And yet, Etruscus, if one saw the tears  
That tumble down your face, he'd surely say  
That he was snatched too speedily away.

XLI

You fancy that you're the epitome  
Of what in Cosmos' perfume shop you see,  
Sempronius Tucca. Yet it's clear one could  
See there as many bad perfumes as good.

XLII

Who vies with you in gifts should also vie  
In poems. I'm poor in both – you'll find that I  
Am ripe to be surpassed: so hushed respite  
And unimpaired repose are my delight.  
Why do I send such bad poems, Castricus?  
You think no fruits were sent Alcinous?

XLIII

If I want something from you, give it me;  
But after that refuse immediately.  
I like a giver, nor do I hate either  
One who withholds. But, Cinna, you do neither.

XLIV

TO OVIDIUS

Here's your friend Maximus, whose features can  
Still be discerned in living wax: this man  
Nero condemned; but you yet had the nerve  
To condemn *him* and share, though not deserve,  
A banishedman's exile: on Scylla's sea,  
A worthy friend, you sailed, who recently  
Refused to be a consul's friend. If names  
Shall live within my pages and the flames  
Which lick my earthly corpse subside before  
My words, all present and all future men  
Shall hear what Seneca was to you back then.

XLV

Great friend of Seneca, that eloquent man,  
Who's closest to and even greater than  
Severus, here is he who frequently  
Receives the happy 'salutem' from me.  
You followed him across Sicilian seas,  
Spurning your lord's angry indignities,  
O Ovid, whom all tongues should publicize.  
Let Age its own Pylades idolize  
Who cleft for friendship's sake to someone who  
Was exiled by his mother. Of the two  
Who could compare the risks? You chose to go  
With someone who was exiled by Nero.

XLVI

TO PRISCUS

You wish to recommend a gift in verse  
To me, determined to declaim no worse  
Than Homer. Many days we're on the rack,  
We two – alas, your Thalia seems to lack  
A voice. You send the rich fine poetry:  
Yet to the poor you give banality.

XLVII

TO LICINIUS SURA

Most famed of learned men, whose old-world tongue  
Recalls your stern forefathers, you're among  
Us once again ( a boon of destiny!),  
Though almost cast into eternity.  
Already had our prayers lost all their fears  
And sadness calmly wept and from our tears  
You went: dumb Hells' landlord could not withstand  
Our censure and to that sororal band  
Returned his ravished distaff. Thus you've seen  
What grievances of mortals there have been  
Thanks to false death, and you enjoy your own  
Succession. Pluck life's joys – they fly away –:  
Repaid life should not lose a single day.

XLVIII

ANNIUS

He has 300 tables yet sets out  
Servants instead: so platters scud about  
And dishes fly. So keep your feasts, gourmets:  
I hate this peripatetic-banquet craze.

XLIX

TO SEVERUS

From my estate I send a little loot:  
Eggs for your hunger, for your palate fruit.

L

Spring of my mistress, where Ianthis, queen  
Of this whole region revels in its scene,  
Sweet glory of a splendid residence,  
Ringed with so many snow-white slaves and hence  
A mirror of young Ganymedes is made  
Upon your lake. What, in that sacred glade,  
Is Hercules about? Why is his den  
So near to you? Is he protecting, then,  
The famous wanton nymphs so that some day  
These Hylases will not be snatched away?

LI

TO URBICUS

If you're not keen my trifles to procure  
And yet my wanton verse keeps its allure  
For you, seek out (perhaps you know the guy)  
Pompeius Auctus. He'll be sitting by  
Avenging Mars, exuding law, astute  
In every aspect of a legal suit.  
He's not the reader, but the book; and he  
Has so committed it to memory,  
Declaiming all my poems, that not one line  
Is missing from them; if he wished, in fine,  
He could be thought their author; his choice, though,  
Is to support my fame. You're free to go  
And seek him after ten (before that, he'll  
Not be at leisure); just a little meal  
Will get you two: he'll read, you'll drink; should you  
Not wish it, he will keep declaiming, though,  
Regardless: when you say at last, "That's *it!*"  
He'll read still – that won't bother him a bit.

LII

TO AUCTUS

You read my poems to Celer – good for you!  
As long, that is, as they please Celer too.  
He ruled my people and the Celts of Spain,  
No man more honourable in his reign.  
Yet there's an awe that troubles me much nearer –  
Those ears are of a judge and not a hearer.

LIII

## TO UMBER

You sent me every gift, on Saturn's fête,  
The five-day interval will tolerate:  
Twelve tablet, seven toothpicks and a cup,  
Half a peck of beans you've gathered up,  
A sponge, a napkin, plus a wicker crate  
OF Picenian olives, and you inundate  
Me with a dusky flagonful of must  
From Laletania, prunes as dry as dust,  
Small Syrian figs and some from Libya too,  
A heavy jar of them; I'm telling you  
That thirty sesterces would buy it all –  
Yet eight great Syrians, hulking ones and tall,  
Conveyed them. How much more appropriate  
For one boy with five pounds of silver plate.

## LIV

## TO NASIDIANUS

Youe pester me with dreams that feature me  
Each morning – and they make me crotchety!  
Two vintages have turned to residue  
And still the witch expels the dreams that you  
Have had; a heap of frankincense I've finished  
Up, salt cakes too, my flock has been diminished  
By frequents sacrifices of a lamb;  
I have no pigs left, so goodbye to ham;  
No poultry, so no eggs; please, for my sake,  
Have dreams about yourself or stay awake.

## LV

## TO CHRESTUS

If you give no-one presents in return,  
Then do the same with me; you still will earn  
My judgment that you're fairly generous.  
But if to Lupus, Gallus, Titius,  
Apicius and Caesius you bestow  
Your gifts, then you'll perform fellatio  
(Oh not on me, my cock is small and chaste)  
But on that cock from Solyma (now laid waste  
And totally consumed by conflagration  
And subjected just lately to taxation).

## LVI

## TO RABIRIUS

If Pisa's Jupiter (that was created  
By Phidias) I should want a temple mated  
To Jupiter's repute, then she will ask  
Our lord to lend your hands to this great task.

## LVII

Gabinia has a Castor reassembled  
Out of a Pollux: Achilles resembled  
Pythagoras but now she's brought to light

Hippodamus (the man's become a knight).

LVIII

TO GALLA

You've married six or seven queers – long locks  
And well-combed beards attract you. Now, their cocks  
Flaccid and knackered, tested out by you,  
You leave frail sex and pansies, yet it's true  
You go back to the same intrigues. Go see  
A man who always talks of the Curii  
And Fabii, hairy, refractory,  
A country man. You'll find him; puffery,  
However, even the grim tribe contains:  
The riddle of wedding a *real* man remains.

LIX

TO TITUS

Our Caecilianus dines habitually  
On wild boar. What a splendid guest has he!

LX

Great ruler of the Capitoline, whom we,  
While our dear lord is safe, believe to be  
The Thunderer while all men weary you  
With prayers demanding presents which you, who  
Are gods, may give: I ask for not a thing,  
Though do not think that I am swaggering  
And rage. For Caesar I should entreat you:  
But for myself it's Caesar I should sue.

LXI

The reckless huckster's robbed the city blind –  
No threshold stays within its own true kind.  
Our narrow streets are broadened by your code,  
O lord - what was a path is now a road.  
Chained flagons don't fence pillars, praetors lose  
No dignity by walking through the ooze,  
No razor's drawn in dense mobs anywhere,  
No grimy cook-shop clogs the thoroughfare.  
Each keeps his place, each barber, landlord, cook,  
Butcher. No huge shop now, we've a new look.

LXII

TO AMILLUS

You fuck great fellows in an open hall  
And hope to get caught – that way you forestall  
A freedman or a slave saying something,  
Or some dark client slyly chattering.  
Who testifies, denying sodomy,  
Will often testify while testis-free.

LXIII

You read immortal Silius' poetry,  
Poems worthy of a Latin gown - must we  
Assume the Muses' haunts alone delight  
The bard, and Bacchic bay? He scaled the height  
That mighty Cicero had scaled before  
He essayed tragic Vergil's art: nay more,  
He's talked of by the Hundreds sacred spear  
In graceful tones. He's ruled that mighty year,  
With the twelve axes, when the world restored  
Her freedom (and for that it is adored);  
His old age he to letters dedicates:  
No lawyer now, its Muse he cultivates.

LXIV

TO CINNAMUS

Now you're a knight, though once a well-known barber  
(Your mistress bought the rank), but now a harbour  
In Sicily you seek, because you would  
Dodge rigid litigation. What art could  
Support your heavy years now you're no use?  
What could a sad and fugitive ease produce?  
Rhetorician, teacher or grammarian?  
A Cynic? Stoic? No, nor even can  
You raise applause in theatres over there.  
What's left to you? Once more you'll cut folks' hair.

LXV

TO GARGILIANUS

A suit of twenty winters wears you out!  
One suit, three courts! What, wretch, are you about?  
You're mad! Who takes so long to try to win  
A case when can always just give in?

LXVI

Fabius left Labianus his whole store  
Of goods. The latter says, "You owe still more."

LXVII

That lesbian Philaenis masturbates  
The boys; what's more, eleven female dates  
Receive the treatment from her rigid lust  
(More than a man's); she in the sandy dust  
Gets tawny, plays catch-ball, the dumb-bells whirls  
With ease ("They're heavy!" say the boys-slash-girls),  
Mud-spattered from the filthy wrestling-ring,  
From oily coaches fields a manual sting:  
Won't dine till seven measures of neat wine  
She's puked up; when she's had the chance to dine  
On sixteen lumps of meat, she'll then return  
To booze. And *then*, when she begins to burn  
With lust, on cunts she'll – well, not *suck* precisely  
(That's cissy), but just guzzle (hardly nicely!).  
O may the gods an apt mind give to you  
Who think that that's a manly thing to do.

LXVIII

## TO INSTANTIUS RUFUS

Rufus, please don't commend my poetry  
To your father-in-law; he may choose gravity  
In verse. Should wanton lines, though, please him, then  
I'd urge them onto Curius and suchlike men.

## LXIX

## TO CANIUS

Theophile here is your intended spouse,  
Steeped in Athenian lore. The Attic house  
Of the great sage might claim (and rightly too)  
Her for its own, no less that Stoic crew.  
Whatever work you hear shall always be;  
So much uncommon acumen has she  
(Not like a woman). Your Pantaenis there,  
Though well-known to the Muses, won't compare  
Herself too far above her. Wanton maid  
Sappho could offer up an accolade  
To a poetess: Theophila's more pure,  
Sappho was no more learned, that's for sure.

## LXX

## TO PHILAENIS

A lez's lez, you rightly could defend  
Calling the girl you penetrate "girlfriend".

## LXXI

Both man and wife have tubers, grandson too,  
Son-in-law, daughter; even that man who  
Controls his farm is not without that wen  
(How ugly!), nor his steward, nor the men  
Who dig and plough. Both young and old (so many)  
Have them, but (strange!) *one* field does not have any.

## LXXII

Enjoy December, be the recipient  
Of no crap tablets, tiny napkins, scent  
In half-pound jars; I hope no wealthy friend,  
Or hulking great defendant either, send  
Plates, ancient goblets: no, what pleases more,  
Play dice and vanquish each competitor,  
Hemmed in by pawns and glassy thieves; I pray  
The athletes from their oily conflict may  
Award you victory against the crowd  
Of thin-clad handball players and aloud  
Judge you no worse than the left-handers; and,  
Should some malignant person take a stand  
And say some venomous poems are mine, please be  
My patron and, with every faculty  
That you possess within you, without end,  
Say, "That by my friend Martial was not penned."

LXXIII

Upon the Esquiline you've real estate,  
Some more upon Diana's hill, some slate  
Upon a roof up on Patrician Way:  
The shrine of widowed Cybele you may  
Regard from here and that of Vesta too,  
New Jove, old Jove. Well now, I ask of you:  
"Where shall I meet you?" Who lives everywhere,  
Essentially, o Maximus, lives nowhere.

LXXIV

Pride of Cyllene and a heavenly god,  
Persuasive minister, whose golden rod  
Is brisk with twisting snakes: may no prospect  
For intrigue pass you by, should you elect  
For your amours Ganymede or Paphie;  
With sacred fronds may Maia's Ides be gay  
And your grandfather with but little weight  
Be bowed down: may Norbana celebrate,  
With Carpus, this day when she first began  
Her amorous encounters with her man.  
A loyal high-priest, to wisdom he is true  
As he invokes with incense our Jove too.

LXXV

Though old and ugly, you want sex for nowt.  
Dumb! You want to put out yet not put out.

LXXVI

TO PHILOMUSUS

Since powerful men take you to feasts and plays  
And colonnades, and love with you to laze  
At baths, whenever you may meet, and be  
Conveyed about, don't let pomposity  
Take too much of a grip on you, d'you hear?  
They don't *love* you, you're merely for their cheer.

LXXVII

TO TUCCA

"Give me your books," you say. Hear my refusal:  
For you want them for trade, not for perusal.

LXXVIII

You dine on Spanish lizards or, if you're  
In lavish mood, on oiled beans, yet a boar,  
Pork belly, oysters, mullets, shrooms, hares too,  
You send to friends: no sense, no taste, have you.

LXXIX

I've just consumed a consular wine. You ask,  
"How old and generous?" It's from a cask  
Of an ancient consulship, Severus. Who  
Served it to me? He was a consul too.



LXXX

TO FAUSTINUS

Now Roman peace restrains the Thracian North  
And looming brass no longer trumpets forth,  
Please send my book to Marcellinus who  
Is free for poetry and a joke or two.  
If your friend's little gifts you'd recommend,  
Let a boy carry them but do not send  
A Getan-milk-fed lad who's wont to play  
At hoop on frozen streams but rather, say,  
A Mitylene slaver's ruddy lad  
Or else a Spartan who has not yet had  
His scourging at his mother's stern command.  
But you'll be sent a slave who's from the land  
Where captive Danube flows, and he will keep  
An eye upon and feed your Tibur sheep.

LXXXI

TO LAUSUS

"The book's got just thirty bad poems." If there  
Are just as many good, it's pretty fair.

LXXXII

TO FLACCUS

Menophilus's cock has got a brace  
So huge that it would do for all the race  
Of comic actors. I had thought (for we  
Bathe often in each other's company)  
He cared to save his voice: but then one day  
While he was exercising, on display  
To all those wrestlers, we saw it rip  
By some mischance: well, he had had the snip.

LXXXIII

EUTRAPELUS

Whiel he was trimming round Lupercus' face,  
On one beard lo! Another took its place.

LXXXIV

CAECILIUS SECUNDUS

While he is painting, his cunning hand  
Giving the canvas life, seek. Book, the land  
Of Peuce and of Hister, now prostrate:  
These conquered lands he rules. To my old mate  
You'll give small but delightful gifts: my face  
Within my poetry you will clearly trace;  
It will, despite the blows of many a year,  
Thrive, while Apelles' paintings disappear.

LXXXV

You've written witty quatrains and a few  
Nice distichs, Sabellus, and I praise you  
For it. No wonder, though! It's mere child's play  
To pen nice epigrams. But a book? No way!

LXXXVI

I used to get a yearly invitation,  
O Sextus, to your birthday celebration,  
Though not a friend. What happened suddenly,  
After so long and such close amity,  
That your old pal's passed over? Oh, *I* see –  
No pound of Spanish silver's come from me,  
No smooth-napped, toga, new cloaks. You cannot  
Bargain with hospitality. For what  
You seek is gifts, not friends. "Well, I'll be dashed,"  
You'll say now. "Let the bidder, then, be lashed."

LXXXVII

If that long-eared lynx pleases my Flaccus  
And a grim Aethiope charms Canius;  
And if a tiny lap-dog fascinates  
Publius, if a monkey captivates  
Cronius with its long tail (so akin  
Are they!); if Marius finds his pleasure in  
A mischievous rat; if Lausus can take  
Delight in talking magpies; if a snake,  
All moist, adorns the shoulders of Glaucilla;  
If, honouring her nightingale, Tersilla  
Has built a monument: why, then, should he  
Who sees how much their masters seem to be  
Enamoured of their monsters not be glad  
At Labycas's features, Cupid's lad?

LXXXVIII

Lovely Vienna, so it's bruited, can  
Aver she owns my books. There, each old man  
And youth and boy read them. Each modest she  
In front of her stern spouse peruses me.  
These I prefer to them who drink the Nile  
Straight from the very source; it makes me smie  
More than if my own Tagus were to please  
Me with its gold or Hybla feed my bees  
Or else Hymettos. I am something, then,  
And am not by the blandishments of men,  
Who offer flattering legacies, deceived:  
I think now, Lausus, you should be believed.

LXXXIX

Go, happy rose, and softly gird the hair  
Of my Apollinaris, yet beware! –  
It must, though long hereafter, we may pray,  
Be white: may Venus love you thus each day.

XC

Mine's an unequal book, Matho declares:  
If that's the case, he recommends my wares.  
Others write equal ones. Creticus, look –

An equal book is an atrocious book.

XCI

I'm sending you some nuts from my small field,  
Persuasive Juvenal, old Saturn's yield.  
The Guardian God's lewd cock the other fruit  
Bestowed upon young girls of ill repute.

XCII

TO BOCCARA

"You want something? No need to ask, " you say  
Not twice but thrice within a single day.  
Secundus truculently barks at me:  
You hear but do not know the urgency.  
My rent is sought loudly and openly:  
You hear but do not know the urgency.  
"My cloak's threadbare" – this gripe you hear from me:  
You hear but do not know the urgency.  
My need's a stroke from heaven rendering  
You silent: then – no more "You want something?"

XCIII

TO NARNIA

Surrounded by a sulphurous, eddying tide,  
Your double peaks near barring any side  
From being scaled, why do you take delight  
In keeping my friend Quintus from my sight  
For many a day? Why do you mar the rate  
Of my Nomentan farm (I estimate  
It highly as he lives so close to me).  
So spaer me now, o Narnia, and see  
You don't abuse my Quintus: for all time  
May you enjoy that viaduct sublime.

XCIV

PAPYLUS

That little box held perfume recently:  
But now he's smelt it, it's fish-pickle, see!

XCV

Winter is here, December, stiff with frost,  
Bristles, yet you with icy kiss accost  
All those you meet and kiss all Rome. If you  
Were buffeted and beaten black and blue  
What more severe revenge could you exact?  
In cold like this, not even my wife, in fact,  
Should kiss me nor my winsome daughter: you  
Are more refined, though, and more pleasant, too,  
On whom a livid icicle hangs off  
Your dog-like lips, whose beard is stiff and rough,  
Like what a Cilician barber shaves away  
From a Cinyphian he-goat. Any day  
I'd rather meet a hundred of those that  
Are rather predisposed to licking twat,

Or priests of Cybele, fresh from their game.  
If you have any feeling, then, or shame,  
Linus, defer each wintry smackeroo  
Until next April, please, I beg of you.

XCVI

URBICUS

An infant, mourned by Bassus, in this place  
I lie: great Rome gave me a name and race.  
The harsh goddesses snapped my thread when I  
Had reached just thirty months. What use were my  
Good looks, my prattle and my age? You who  
Read this, weep at my grave. And him whom you'  
Would have survive you, let not Lethe's tears  
Transport till he has grown to Nestor's years.

XCVII

CAESIUS SABINUS

You know him well, my book, Umbria's boast,  
My Aulus' fellow-townsmen? Well, then, post  
And give him these, however busy he  
May be. He's eager for my poetry  
Howe've many cares may agitate  
His mind. He loves me and my poems all rate  
With him next to great Turnus. O what fame  
You'll gain! What glory! O such great acclaim  
From many a fan; your name will surely ring  
Through banquets, for a, houses, echoing  
In byways, bookshops, colonnades. To one  
You're sent but you'll be read by everyone.

XCVIII

O Castor, everything is bought by you;  
The result is that you sell everything too.

XCIV

Crispinus, may the Thunderer always be  
Placid to you, and may Rome's amity  
Be no less than the love of your birthplace,  
Memphis, if our own Palatine should grace  
My poems (for they enjoy the sacred ear  
Of Caesar); candid reader, do not fear  
To say, "He's given to our generation  
*Something*, not so much less in estimation  
Than Marsus or Catullus." That is all:  
I leave our god to do what will befall.

BOOK VIII

I

Book, soon to be inside the residence  
Of laurelled Caesar, speak with reverence.  
Nude Venus, leave: for this book is book is not yours.  
Come, Pallas, Caesar's patron, through my doors.

## II

### JANUS

The father of our annals saw just now  
The Danube's conqueror, and then, somehow,  
He thought his many faces weren't sufficient  
And also that in eyes he was deficient –  
In every tongue he pledged the Lord of All,  
Our Universe's god, that he'd not fall  
Till four times Nestor's age. I beg of you,  
O father Janus, add your own years too.

## III

Five was enough: for six or seven indeed  
Is just too much; do you still have the need  
To frolic, Muse? Propriety's my care;  
Fame cannot give me more, for everywhere  
My books are thumbed; Messalla's stone will bust  
With atrophy, the marble turn to dust  
Upon Licinius' tomb, yet even so  
They'll read me: many a traveller will go  
Back to his native land with poems that I  
Have written. Then did Thalia reply,  
Her hair and garb with unguent stained, "Can you  
Leave your sweet trifles, then? What will you do,  
Ingrate, that's better when unoccupied?  
Go from the comic to the tragic side,  
Intoning savage wars on even feet,  
So that a pompous teacher may repeat  
Your poetry with raucous voice, abhorred  
By big girls and good boys? Let that grim sword  
Be taken up by overly severe  
And sombre men, who, reft of any cheer,  
Work by their midnight lamp. Let levity  
Be in your books immersed, and let Life see  
Her customs. To a thin pipe seem to sing,  
If many others' trumpets conquering.

## IV

Great meeting at our altars where we pay  
Our vows to our Germanicus! Hooray!  
This is not only *human* happiness:  
The gods now, too, give sacrifice, I'd guess.

## V

While giving rings to girls whom you adore,  
O Macer, you have no rings anymore.

## VI

There's nothing worse than old Auctus' antiques  
(I'd much prefer clay beakers), when he speaks  
Nonstop about those crazy pedigrees,  
Making the wine insipid: "Look at these –  
Laomedon owned these cups: and, to acquire  
These cups Apollo built, through his own lyre,  
Troy's walls, brave Rhoetus battled for this bowl  
With the Lapiths: you may see it took its toll

In warfare. These two goblets all esteem  
Through old Nestor, whose thumb has caused to gleam  
This dove. This stein Achilles, for his friends,  
Filled up with very strong and powerful blends  
Of wine. In this bowl Dido, radiant lass,  
Pledged Bitias, when she feasted Aeneas.”  
When you’ve admired the chasings on each cup,  
In those of Priam Astyanax you’ll sup.

VII

So, Cinna, is this eloquence to declaim  
Exactly nine words in a ten-hour frame?  
Now you demand four water-clocks, no less,  
Quite loudly. How much silence you possess!

VIII

TO JANUS

You show the dawning of the years that fly,  
Renewing lengthy ages rushing by  
With your visage; you’re first to be implored  
By holy incense, first to be adored  
With prayers, and everyone pays court to you,  
Each magistrate, the joyous purple too:  
Yet you prefer to think that January  
Has brought our own god home for all to see.

IX

Hylas offers three-fourths of what you lent  
To him, blear-eyed; but it’s 50%  
Now he’s one-eyed. Quick! Take it! Gain for you  
Flies fast: if blind, he’ll not give you a sou.

X

Bassus has bought a mantle for ten grand –  
It’s of the finest Tyrian purple. And  
He made a profit. “Bought *that* cheap?” you say.  
Oh yes indeed: you see, he will not pay.

XI

The Rhine knows you’ve come home – he too can hear  
The people’s voice: our hearty shout put fear  
Into the Getae and the Sarmatae  
And Danube. While long cheers were rising high  
Within the Circus, no-one was aware  
That four horse-races had been run. Nowhere  
In Rome has any chief been so adored;  
Though willing, she can’t love you more, o lord.

XII

TO PRISCUS

Why don’t I take a rich wife? You inquire.  
Well, I don’t want to *be* a wife. Desire  
The wife to always be subordinate –  
Alone that makes each sex proportionate.

XIII

TO GARGILIANUS

An idiot, they said: for twenty thou  
I bought him. But he's bright: requite me now.

XIV

That your Cilician orchards may not fear  
The winter and grow pale, nor breeze severe  
Nip at your tender grove, your glass windows  
Which look on the South Wind which strongly blows  
Admit pure sunlight and unblemished day.  
But in an attic I am tucked away  
With an ill-fitting window (Boreas  
Himself would not live in it!). Such a pass  
Would you enforce for an old friend like me?  
One of your trees would give more sanctuary.

XV

Pannonian war adds glory to our Rome  
And sacrifice for Jove returning home  
Is made; the mob, the Senate and the knights  
Give balm; the Latin tribes to greater heights  
Of wealth are carried by a third bequest;  
This triumph, too, though secret, Rome has blessed,  
That bay of peace is of no lesser weight –  
Because you trust our rapture consecrate,  
You trust yourself. The ruler of a land  
Must, most of all, his people understand.

XVI

TO CYPERIS

For long a baker, you're a lawyer now,  
Making two hundred grand a year: somehow,  
However, you get through it and arrange  
Such frequent loans. It seems you do not change  
From your erstwhile profession: you make dough  
Just as before, but you make dust also.

XVII

TO SEXTUS

I took your case – we set two hundred grand.  
Why only give me half of what we planned?  
“The facts weren't set down and you lost the case.”  
You owe me more than ever: I lost face.

XVIII

TO CURRINUS

You'd have the public read you, and therefore  
Vie with me or be my superior.  
Your love for your old friend is so immense,  
However, that you rate my eminence

Above your own. So Vergil never tried  
To match Horace although he could have vied  
With Pindar's metres, and successfully;  
He bowed to Varius in tragedy  
Although perhaps he had a greater skill  
With tragic tones. There's many a friend who will  
Give gold, possessions, land, but that man's rare  
Who has the will his genius to share.

XIX

Cinna would like to show impoverishment.  
And the result? He's truly indigent.

XX

TO VARUS

You write two hundred lines a day, yet you  
Speak none. You have no wit, and yet – you do.

XXI

TO PHOSPHORUS

Bring back the day: why joyfulness delay?  
Now Caesar's coming home: bring back the day.  
Rome begs you. Does calm Boötes' slow wain  
Convey you that you now come back again  
So tardily? You might have taken out  
Cyllarus from Leda's starry band. No doubt  
Castor himself will lend you his own horse.  
Why hold the eager Titan in his course?  
Xanthus and Aethon want the reins and, yes,  
Aurora wakes. The halt stars, nonetheless,  
Won't yield to glowing light, and now the moon  
Would see Ausonia's chief. Come, Caesar, soon,  
At night. Let all the stars stand still, and when  
You're here, delight won't thwart the people then.

XXII

You, Gallicus, invite me to a feast  
Of boar but offer me a different beast –  
A pig – attribute "hybrid", then, to me  
If I'm the butt of your duplicity.

XXIII

TO RUSTICUS

You think I am an over-gluttonous beast  
For beating Cook by reason of his feast.  
Too slight a cause for punishment? Well, look,  
What reason do you want to beat a cook?

XXIV

TO DOMITIAN

If in my shy wee book I supplicate



For something, if it's not too bold, donate  
It me, or if not, then allow the plea  
At least: for Jove feels no indignity  
At prayers or incense. Should an artist mould  
Features divine in marble or in gold  
You may not say he makes divinities –  
He who does that is he who offers pleas.

XXV

TO OPPIANUS

You came just once to me when I was ill:  
To see you much will be a bitter pill.

XXVI

The thief in eastern fields by Ganges' course,  
Escaping, pale, on his Hyrcanian horse,  
Has not as many tigresses espied  
As now, Germanicus, have been inside  
Your Rome, nor can she count her own delights.  
Your stadium clearly tops all Indian fights  
And all the wealth and all the opulence  
Of conquering Bacchus – for that god went hence  
And, when the Indians came under his sway,  
A mere dyad of tigers led the way.

XXVII

TO GAURUS

Who gives presents to you, a rich old man  
Is saying, "Die" – concede this if you can.

XXVIII

TO A TOGA

Fine gift of an eloquent friend, which flock would be  
Your choice as famed and glorious guarantee?  
Was the Apulian verdure of that gent,  
Spartan Phalanthus, your emolument,  
Grown just for you where Nature's fruits are drowned  
And the Calabrian waters may be found?  
Did Baetis, Spanish shepherd, cleanse you too  
Upon the back of an Iberian ewe?  
Or has your wool known cleft-filled Timavus,  
Drunk by star-dwelling, pious Cyllarus?  
No Spartan dye, no Miletos for you.  
Lilies, and privets not yet fallen too,  
You top, and Tibur Mountain's ivory.  
The Spartan swan, the Paphian doves will be  
Inferior to you, as is the prize  
Pulled out of Eastern shoals: although it vies  
With virgin snow, it gleams less brilliantly  
Than its Parthenius. The tapestry  
Semiramis wove in proud Babylon  
I'd like less. Should I Athamas' gold put on,  
Should Phrixus give me Aeolus's son,  
I'd fancy myself less. What laughs would run  
Through Rome if my worn cloak should stand in line

With this new toga from the Palatine.

XXIX

A man composing distichs, as I'd guess,  
Would please his readers by his pithiness.  
But, tell me, what is pithiness's goal  
If it composes an entire roll?

XXX

Our Caesar's game had gained the highest fame  
In Brutus' time. See how it grasps the flame,  
That hand, and relishes the penalty  
(The fire is dumbstruck by his bravery!).  
Prizing his right hand's noble death, he sees  
It all: it revels in these obsequies;  
His *left* hand was denied this punishment  
But, fiercer still, it would have gone, hell-bent,  
Into that weary hearth. I have no care  
To comprehend, after a deed so fair,  
Its crime: it is sufficient to have been  
Cognizant of the hand that I have seen.

XXXI

Dento, you hardly make a nice admission  
Who, now you have a wife, make a petition  
For fathers' rights. Weary our chief no more  
And go at last back to your native shore.  
So far from her and so long, maybe  
You'll find you have four sons, and not just three.

XXXII

ARATULLA

A winsome dove which floated in still air  
Fell on her lap as she sat on her chair.  
What would have happened had she not remained,  
Without a guardian, and had not deigned  
To fly, as had been likely? If it may  
Be fitting that a loving sister pray  
For better things and if a prayer may move  
The world's lord, then perhaps this may prove  
Her brother's herald from the Sardinian strand,  
An exile on his way back to this land.

XXXIII

TO PAULUS

From off a praetor's crown you send a leaf  
To me and call it (stretching my belief)  
A bowl. Your platform with this film was spread  
Just now (now washed away with the pale red  
Of saffron). Did a minute quantity  
Fall from a leg of your divan, maybe,  
Scraped off by a cunning slave? This thing's aware  
Of a gnat far off a-fluttering in the air,  
Puffed onward by a tiny butterfly's wing;  
The smallest lamp's heat will uphold the thing;

A minute drop of wine falls on it – gone!  
A nut is smeared with this on January One  
(A shabby client with a little cent  
Offers it as a gift). The filament  
Of pliant Egyptian beans you'll find more slight,  
And lily leaves beneath the strong sun's light  
Are thicker as they fall; no spider goes  
Through webs so slender and no silkworm knows  
A task so light; Fabulla's face comprises  
More compact chalk; the swelling bubble rises  
With greater substance in the water; and  
A stronger bladder-net serves as a band  
For knotted hair; Batavian pomade  
Is stronger too; swans' chicks are overlaid  
With this; and on a crescent-plastered brow  
Such patches sit. Why send this anyhow?  
Why not a tablespoon? A snail-pick? – I  
Am aiming my suggestions way too high –  
Why don't you send a snail-shell? Finally,  
Why must you send a single thing to me?

XXXIV

You say you have a piece of silver you  
Insist's a Mysian relic of virtue,  
Quite genuine. Another shaped it? So?  
That guarantees that it's an antique? No.

XXXV

TO A MARRIED COUPLE

Vile couple with a similarity  
In all things! How come that you don't agree?

XXXVI

The royal Pyramids feel free to flout;  
Barbaric Memphis these days leaves them out  
Of conversation. Next to the Palatine  
Her toil seems very small. Nothing can shine  
More brightly in the world. Could it not be  
The Seven Hills rose as one entity?  
Ossa and Pelion was less a height;  
It pierces Heaven so that, in its might,  
Hidden by shining stars, its sunlit brow  
Echoes to the clouds below, already now  
Quite sated with Apollo's mystic power  
Before Circe upon the dawn's first hour  
May view her fathers rising face. And yet  
This palace, Lord, whose pinnacle is set  
Among the stars, one with the firmament,  
Is hardly with its lord equivalent.

XXXVII

TO POLYCHARMUS

Because you gave his bond back, do you now  
Think Caietanus has a hundred thou?  
"He owed it," Keep your bond, man, and commit  
In trust to him point zero five of it.

XXXVIII

TO MELIOR

A man who with firm piety bestows  
His gifts on one who from his bounty grows  
Perhaps will try to get them back. However,  
If after burial one should endeavour  
To gift a name, what more should he procure  
Than lessening of sorrow? Being pure  
Is very different from just seeming thus.  
Fame knows your gift – you are solicitous  
That buried Blaesus' name will never pass  
By generously donating to a class  
Of scribes who venerate his memory,  
Yourself to honour his nativity.  
This ageless gift, while there is life, will last  
After your own mortality has passed.

XXXIX

TO DOMITIAN

There's been no place to grace the Palatine  
With revels of the board and feasts divine:  
Here you may quaff your godly nectar and  
Drink of the mixture blent by Ganymede's hand.  
Though late, be Jove's own guest, I beg of you:  
If you are restless, Jupiter, come too.

XL

You guard no garden nor proud vinery  
But a thin wood from which your entity  
Once sprang and may again. Hands off, say I  
In warning. Leave this copse to fortify  
Its master's hearths, for if it ever fell,  
Remember, Priapus, *you're* wood as well.

XLI

TO FAUSTINUS

Athenagoras regrets not sending me  
His usual winter gifts. Well, let me see  
If he regrets in very truth this act:  
*I* have regrets, at least, and that's a fact.

XLII

TO MATHO

If a greater dole has not (as oft the case)  
Corrupted you to canvass for the grace  
Of wealthier men, a hundred baths will be  
Allowed you through my generosity.

XLIII

FABIUS AND CHRESTILLA

He buries wives, she husbands: with them dead,  
The funeral-torch warns of a marriage-bed.  
Match these survivors, Venus: thus they'll pay –  
One burial will carry both away.

XLIV

TO TITULLUS

Live, man! It's late! Although you started out  
Under a pedagogue, without a doubt  
It's late! You don't live even now you're old,  
Poor man, but wear away every threshold  
On client business, at the break of day,  
Drenched with the city's kisses, on your way  
You rush, before the For a, Mars's shrine,  
The statues of the horses and divine  
Augustus's colossus, mud-besprayed,  
At every business hour. Pilfer, raid,  
Hoard, own: forget all this! With piles of dough  
Let your high chest adopt a yellow glow,  
Each month's one-hundred-page accounts lay bare:  
"There's nothing left for me", your heir will swear.  
And when you're lying on your bier, so high  
(Your pyre's stuffed with paper), standing by,  
The weeping eunuchs, brazen-faced, he'll kiss,  
And then your son (whether you approve of this  
Or not), though mourning, will that very night  
Take into his own bed your catamite.

XLV

TO FLACCUS

Terence from Etna's shores returns to me:  
A milk-white pearl must mark the memory;  
A jar (a hundred consulships have made  
It smaller) must be poured in bright cascade,  
Though heretofore quite dull and slowly strained  
Through linen. Has a merrier night ordained  
My table? When has wine so justly earned  
Been granted me for warmth? When I have learned  
That Cyprus has returned you, too, to me,  
There'll be as good a cause for revelry.

XLVI

TO CESTUS

Your youthful grace is as your modesty,  
You top Hippolytus in chastity.  
Diana would your presence set her heart  
Upon to swim with her and to impart  
Your wisdom, and you'd be the choice, intact,  
Of Cybele over Attis, that's a fact;  
You might have won the bed of Ganymede,  
Though, being chaste, just kisses you'd concede  
Unto your lord. Happy the bride who'll be  
The first to rouse you from virginity.

XLVII

Part clipped, part shaved, part plucked are you, it's said.  
Who could imagine this one single head?

XLVIII

Crispinus does not know whom he arranged  
To have his Tyrian mantle while he changed  
And donned his toga. He who has it, be  
A sport and give it back. This is the plea  
Not of Crispinus but his cloak. Not all  
Pull off a purple robe, the colours pall  
Except on dainty shoulders. If to loot  
Is pleasing to you and to nab a suit  
By sneaky means attracts you, to escape  
One's notice, choose a toga, not a cape.

XLIX

Blind Asper loves a maid – she's fair, I'm sure –  
But loves more than he sees of her allure.

L

As great, they say, as was the victory feast  
When all the giants fell, as great. At least,  
As was the night that Jove resolved to dine  
With all the gods and Fauns could call for wine  
From Him, so great the feast of victory  
For you, o Caesar, when our ecstasy  
Aroused the gods themselves. The every knight,  
The mob, the senators, could take delight  
In fine ambrosial fare with our own chief.  
Great things you promised, great beyond belief,  
And yet gave more! A promise you had made  
For a dole, but then a banquet you purveyed.

LI

Whose work is on the bowl? Myron? Or Mys?  
Did Polycleitus have a hand in this?  
Or Mentor? For it has no hue of lead:  
No cloudy mass, it has no cause to dread  
The fire. Its yellow ore has brilliancy  
Surpassing genuine amber. Ivory,  
Pure white, with this fine silver can't contend.  
The technique to the matter will not bend"  
So does the moon go round her orb, who glows  
So bright. The golden fleece that Phrixus knows  
Adorns that goat (his sister would be borne  
By him more gladly). He would not be shorn  
By a Cinyphian barber; you'd agree  
To have him crop your vine, Lyaeus. See,  
Winged Cupid sits beside him, playing a strain  
From Pallas' pipes; across the tranquil main  
Arion thus was borne, a happy care,  
Upon the dolphin, in this silverware,  
So matchless, Cestus (no-one else but you  
Out of the multitude of servants who  
Attend your master) pour the nectar fit  
For me: Cestus, mix Setine into it,  
For you're the banquet's pride: the very goat,  
The very boy appear to thirst. I vote

That Rufus' letters give the numbers for  
Our measures: for he was the donator  
Of such a costly gift: if promised bliss  
For Telethusa comes, I'll, for my miss,  
Reserve myself by drinking all your four  
Measures; if she should doubt, I'll drink three more;  
If she forsake her lover, I'll drink then  
To both your *nomen* and your *cognomen*.

LII

TO CLASSCIANUS

A barber, young and yet more dexterous  
Than even was old Nero's Thalamushis face to pare,  
Who shaved the Drusi, once, his face to pare,  
I lent to Rufus. Seeing to each hair,  
The mirror guiding him, he rouged the flesh  
And on the close-cropped hairs began afresh  
And clipped them all again – so finally  
A barber with a beard returned to me.

LIII

TO CATULLA

The vilest maid, though greatest in allure,  
I'd have you less attractive or more pure.

LIV

TO DOMITIAN

You give so much and shall give so much more,  
Victor of chiefs whose future has in store  
More virtue yet; it's not for your largesse  
We love you, but the opposite, we confess.

LV

Just like the roar heard in the Massylian wild  
When countless lions woodland wastes beguiled  
And pallid shepherds called back to their steads  
The startled bulls, the sheep out of their heads  
With dread, so was the terror in the sand.  
Surely a herd, you say? No, one beast, and  
A beast whose laws all lions would respect,  
Whom marble-clad Numidia would elect  
To crown. The glory, o the dignity,  
When he rose up to his extremity,  
Gracing his neck – that brown and winding mane!  
His broad chest ripe for lengthy spears! To gain  
Such joy by noble death! Whence came so great  
A boon from your woods, Libya? Was he late  
Of Cybele's yoke perhaps? Could it be true  
This animal descended here to you  
By Titus sent from Leo's constellation  
Or by your sire, o leader of our nation?

LVI

TO FLACCUS

Old times now yield to new and with her king  
 Rome waxes greater, yet you're wondering  
 Why Vergil's talent we no longer see  
 Nor any poet who's as great as he  
 In sounding war. Let Maecenases thrive  
 And Vergils, for your fields Vergils alive  
 Will give you. Tityrus lost his property  
 Nearby ill-starred Cremona: heartsick, he  
 Wept for his stolen flock: the Tuscan knight  
 Dispelled foul poverty whose instant flight  
 He ordered with a smile. "Be wealthy and  
 Become the greatest of the bardic band.  
 Even love my Alexis." That boy stood  
 At his master's board, his looks strikingly good,  
 And poured out with a hand so marble-fair  
 The black Falernian, yet had a care  
 To taste first with his lips so rosy-red  
 A wine that might turn even Jupiter's head.  
 Fat Galatea left the inspired man  
 Of letters and, with sunburnt harvest tan,  
 Thestylis. He created "Italy"  
 And wrote "Arms and the man" immediately –  
 The man who recently bewept a Gnat  
 In untrained voice, laboriously at that.  
 Why speak of Marsi or of Varii,  
 Fine bards, whose names a harsh eternity  
 It's take to list? Would I be a Maro  
 With Maecenas's help? No – Marsus, though.

#### LVII

While on his tomb Picens spat out all three  
 Of the teeth within his head; these fragments he  
 Collected, then he made a pile of soil  
 And buried them. His heir won't bear the toil  
 Of gathering his bones one day: this deed  
 He's done himself so there will be no need.

#### LVIII

#### TO ARTEMIDORUS

Your mantles are so thick they're nudging me  
 To call you Sigaris quite fittingly.

#### LIX

This man content with just one eye d'you see,  
 One vile brow resting on vacuity?  
 Don't underrate this prime thief, sharper hands  
 Had not Autolycus. So if he lands  
 Chez vous as guest, be careful: he'll whip through  
 Your house, a one-eyed man seeing with two.  
 Tense servants lose dessert-spoons, cups as well,  
 While many napkins in his warm lap dwell  
 Unseen; a gown from your elbow he knows  
 Just how to snatch, and often off he goes  
 Wearing two cloaks; a sleeping slave's done out  
 Of his still-burning lamp. If still without,  
 With cunning skill he'll circumvent the slave  
 And rob him of his indoor shoes, the knave.



LX

TO CLAUDIA

You'd level with Colossus, I should think,  
If you by one and one half feet should shrink.

LXI

TO SEVERUS

Charinus rages, green with jealousy,  
And searches for high branches on some tree  
To hang himself: it's not because I'm read  
And praised all over, nor because I'm spread,  
Both bossed and cedar-oiled, wherever Rome  
Rules, but because I have a summer home  
Outside the city and mules carry me,  
But mules not hired (as they used to be).  
What curse to give him? I shall tell you what:  
May *he* have mules, a summer home – the lot.

LXII

PICENS

He writes his poems on the reverse – “Alack!  
When I do this, the god, too, turns his back.

LXIII

AULUS

He loves Alexis, Thestylus, and may  
Love my friend Hyacinthus. Go away  
And doubt he loves poets themselves. No, it's  
That this man love the poets' favourites.

LXIV

TO CLYTUS

To get a gift you're born eight times a year  
(Of just three or four Kalends you steer clear,  
I think). A wave-worn pebble on the shore  
Is not more smooth than is your face; what's more,  
Your hair is blacker than a mulberry  
About to fall; your trembling delicacy  
Outdoes a feather or perhaps a lump  
Of newly-clotted milk, your breasts as plump  
As those a virgin bride keeps for her man,  
Yet you seem old already: for who can  
Believe that Priam reached so great an age,  
Or Nestor? Let us have a decent gauge  
To judge this theft of yours. But if you must  
Still play your game, not satisfied with just  
One date of birth per year, then I must say  
That you have *never* seen the light of day.

LXV

Where widely gleams Regiving Fortune's shrine  
Once was a blissful space: Caesar, so fine  
In the dust of Northern war, shed blazing light  
From off his countenance: here, dressed in white,  
Belaurelled, Rome with voice and gesture hailed  
Her chief. A second bounty has prevailed  
To show its worth: there has been sanctified  
An arch which vaunts over the losing side.  
Two chariots, countless elephants we see,  
Gold Caesar standing in ascendancy.  
Appropriate for your triumphs is this dome –  
A wholly fitting entry into Rome.

LXVI

TO THE MUSES

Bring pious incense, sacrifices, too,  
For your dear Silius to Augustus, do.  
Caesar, our first and only champion,  
Now that a consulship's been placed upon  
That man's son, those twelve axes' restoration  
Demands and bids the noble resonation  
Of the lictor's rod upon the poet's door.  
For his delight there lingers something more –  
A third consul and the nobility  
Of purple. Although sacred dignity  
Caesar bestows upon his son-in-law  
And Pompey (three times peaceful Janus saw  
Their names enrolled), yet Silius prefers  
Repeated consulships he thus confers.

LXVII

TO CAECILIANUS

The fifth hour's not yet been announced and yet  
You're here, my guest; adjournment's barely set  
At the fourth hour (still hoarse with litigation),  
Still Flora's games engender enervation  
In the wild beasts. Callistus, hurry, get  
The unwashed servants here and have them set  
The table. Sit. You want *warm* water, though  
The *cold*'s not come; the kitchen's cold as snow  
And shut, the hearth's not lit. Come at daybreak  
Instead; for why should the fifth hour make  
You linger longer here? For can't you see  
That you're too late to break your fast with me?

LXVIII

TO ENTELLUS

Who's seen the orchards of Corcyra's king  
Will choose the rural whereabouts that ring  
Your house. Lest jealous winter sears your vines  
And cold eats up the hope of Bacchus' wines,  
Your vineyard blooms through glass of limpid sheen -  
The lucky grapes are roofed yet still are seen:

Thus girls in silk, thus pebbles in a stream  
That's quite translucent. What won't nature scheme  
For minds? The barren winter is induced  
To bear whatever autumn has produced.

LXIX

TO VACERRA

Just poets who're deceased do you admire.  
Sorry – to please you I will not expire.

LXX

As great as placid Nerva's oratory  
Is his restraint, and yet his modesty  
Restrains his strength and genius. Although  
He'd gulp down sacred Parmessis and so  
Relieve his thirst, he'd choose a thirst instead  
That's diffident and his poetic head  
Wreath with a slender crown nor give full sail  
To his repute. Yet not a man can fail  
To know he's the Tibullus of these days  
Who keeps in mind the learned Nero's lays.

LXXI

TO POSTUMIANUS

You sent four pounds of silver plate to me  
Ten years since, in winter's inclemency;  
I hoped for more (for gifts should stand or grow),  
And then there came two further pounds or so,  
Years Three and Four gifts far inferior  
Delivered, then Year Five sent just one more,  
Septimius's too; Year Six reduced  
Me to an eight-inch dish; Year Seven produced  
A half-pound cup; a spoon, two ounce at most,  
Was Year Eight's present; then Year Nine could boast  
A snail-pick lighter than a needle, then  
Year Ten has nothing for me: start again.

LXXII

Though not yet purple-smart, nor with the bite  
Of pumice smoothed, you'd follow in the light  
Of Arcanus, book, whom gorgeous Narbo (where  
Is learned Votienus) bids repair  
Back to the laws and yearly occupation:  
You must seek out, with equal supplication,  
That very friend and see that very land.  
Would that *I* were my book! That would be grand!

LXXIII

Rufus, than whom none is more pure of heart  
Or more sincere, if you wish to impart  
To my Thalia strength and energy  
And poems that shall live in eternity,

Give me a loved one: Cynthia made of you  
A bard, wanton Propertius; Gallus, too,  
Had inspiration – lovely Lycoris;  
Tuneful Tibullus had fair Nemesis  
For his renown; Lesbia was your Muse,  
Learned Catullus; Mantua won't abuse  
My verse nor Paelignum if you confer  
An Alexis or Corinna for my spur.

LXXIV

An oculist before, now gladiator,  
As doctor you performed what you did later.

LXXV

A LINGONIAN

Lately returning to his tenement  
(By the Covered and Flaminian Ways he went)  
At night, he caught his big toe: thereby he  
Put out his ankle and immediately  
Fel flat out on the ground. What could be done?  
How could he move? This giant had but one  
Small slave, so skinny he could scarcely bear  
The tiniest lamp. Then out of the thin air  
Chance came to help the wretch. Four slaves came by  
Carrying a common corpse (a thousand lie  
In paupers' graves); the weak slave, in faint tones,  
Begged them to leave the pile of lifeless bones  
Wherever they might wish. The loads are switched,  
He's lifted high and in the coffin pitched,  
A giant crammed into a narrow bier.  
It seems, Lucanus, there's an instance here  
Of one of many to whom it may be said  
Quite accurately, "Oh Gaul who are dead!"

LXXVI

"There's nothing I would rather hear," you say,  
"Than the unvarnished truth." Each single day  
When you recite your poems or when you plead  
A case, you say that this is what you need.  
I can't refuse: the truest truth, it's clear,  
Gallicus, is that you're not prepared to hear.

LXXVII

Liber, of all my friends the sweetest care,  
Who should with deathless roses everywhere  
Live at all times, if you are sapient,  
Your hair should glisten with emollient  
From Assyria; be wreathed, make ebony  
Your crystal glass with superfluity  
Of old Falernian; may your soft divan  
Be warm with wantonness, for any man  
Who lived like that died in his middle age:  
His ordered span achieved another stage.

LXXVIII

The sports which a Phlegraean victory

Or Bacchus' Indian pomp would yearn to see  
Stella presented as an honour due  
To the conquest in the North, yet ( a true-blue  
And modest!) thought it small. The affluence  
Of Hermus, crammed with gold, whose effluence  
Flows out of Western Tagus too, falls short  
For him. Each day provides a different sort  
Of gift. The wealthy cord will never wane,  
Upon the people great largesse will rain:  
From sudden clouds the token brings delight,  
The bounteous stub allows a wild-beast fight,  
Each bird finds safety in a lap – by lot,  
Lest he be torn apart, his owner's got  
Beforehand. Why should I relate each race,  
The thirty prizes? (not in every case  
Do consuls grant them). What's most glorious,  
O Caesar, is that you are here with us.

LXXIX

TO FABULLA

Your every girlfriend's ugly or else old  
And uglier than crones, and out they're rolled  
By you at parties, theatres. Colonnades.  
You're beautiful and girl-like by such aids.

LXXX

TO DOMITIAN

You bring to us the wonders of our past  
Forefathers and allow old times to last;  
Ancient contests from Latium you renew,  
We're treated to noble fist-fighting, too.  
Old temples are honoured while you're in state  
And under a worshipped Jove we adulate  
The Cot. You innovate and yet renew:  
What is and what has been is owed to you.

LXXXI

GELLIA

Not Dindymene's mystic liturgy,  
Nor yet Osiris' bull, not, finally,  
Gods or goddesses does she swear by. It's  
Her pearls! She kisses them, hugs them to bits,  
Calls them her siblings, loves them with more fire  
Than the two sons she bore. If something dire  
Caused her to lose them, she would then proclaim  
She couldn't live an hour more, poor dame.  
What boon could crafty Annaeus Serenus,  
Papirianus, with his hand now gain us!

LXXXII

TO DOMITIAN

You're given pesky pleas, my lord; I too  
Am giving something of my poems to you.  
And why? Because I know a god has leisure

For business *and* the Muses and gets pleasure  
From this mere wreath. So with your bards please bear:  
We are your glory and your former care.  
Though oak and Phoebus' bay are fit for you,  
Receive a civic crown of ivy too.

## BOOK IX

### I

The year is given winters thanks to Janus,  
Summers Augustus, autumns Domitianus;  
Subservient Rhine shall give a soubriquet  
Of great renown to the resplendent day  
Of German Kalends. The rock of our king,  
Tarpeia, shall survive; with sprinkling  
Of incense and with prayers, in supplication,  
The matron shall perform propitiation  
For holy Julia, and the Flavian race,  
In towering glory, will remain in place  
With sun and stars and Roman light. What He,  
Unconquered, has endowed is heavenly.

### II

#### TO LUPUS

You're poor to friends, but to your girl you're not:  
Only your cock has no complaints. She's got  
Obese on cunt-loaves, that adulteress;  
Your guest eats black meal. Setine wines liquesce  
And warm her chilliness; we drink instead  
Black poison in a Corsican jar; her bed  
(Not yours exclusively) has been obtained  
Through Dad's estate; your comrade, now disdained,  
Furrows another's fields; the slut is gay  
In Indian pearls, but while you poke away,  
Your client's put in clink; her litter's borne  
By Syrian slaves – eight of 'em – but, forlorn,  
Your poor friend will be laid upon a bier  
For paupers. Cybele, castrate each queer  
That you might find: no, here's, upon my life,  
A todger that is worthy of your knife.

### III

#### TO DOMITIAN

Should you wish to reclaim what you've bestowed  
Upon the high gods, though in their abode  
A massive auction would be held whereby  
They would be forced to sell their goods, the sky  
(And Atlas!) would be bankrupt – there'd not be  
A twelfth to settle liability.  
How could the temples on the Capitoline  
Be paid for? How the glory, so divine,  
Of the Tarpeian oak-crown? How could she  
Who rules with Jove turn up the currency  
For her two temples? Pallas I pass by –  
She's your confederate. And why should I  
Speak of Alcides, Castor, Pollux, or  
The Flavian shrines new-fabricated for

The Latian heaven? Patience, Lord of All:  
Jove's treasure-chest has not the wherewithal.

IV

TO AESCHYLUS

For two gold pieces Galla can be had –  
And more if two more pieces you should add.  
Why do you pay her ten? Her sucking's not  
Worth that. What is, then? Her silence, that's what.

V

TO PAULA

You want to marry Priscus. Good for you!  
You're wise. He doesn't want *you*. He's wise too.

VI

World's father and supreme Rhine-conqueror,  
The cities thank their modest governor;  
They'll have their numbers: it's no felony  
These days to breed. No mental agony  
Is suffered by the boy for manhood lost  
When he the dealer's skilful art has crossed,  
The prostituted child from his poor mum  
Does not receive the wretched modicum  
The haughty pimp's to get. The modesty,  
Which once, before your time, one did not see  
Even in the marriage-bed, because of you  
Is starting to appear in brothels too.

VII

TO AFER

When you returned from Libya, to say  
"Hello" I tried for five days straight – each day  
"He's busy", "He's asleep". Enough, my friend:  
"Hello" is out. Goodbye. This is the end.

VIII

TO DOMITIAN

It is as though it were a little thing  
To prostitute our males with pandaring –  
The pandar *owns* the crib; for, snatched away  
From Mother's breast, the infant now must stray  
And beg for coins: young bodies suffer so.  
Ausonius would not bid them undergo  
Such villainy – he came to young men's aid  
Lest they by wild libido should be made  
Quite barren. Boys, youths, old men worshipped you  
Before today, now infants love you too.

IX

TO BITHYNICUS

Fabius has left you nothing – it was he  
To whom you gave six thousand annually,  
As I recall. No man cost him so dear.  
Don't kvetch – he's left to you six grand a year!

X

TO CANTHARUS

You gladly dine with others but you shout  
And threaten everyone and flail about.  
Discard your animus, I caution you:  
You can't be free and yet a glutton too.

XI

A name born with the violet and the rose  
(The year's best part's so named), which you may nose  
As Hyblan and as Attic flowers, whose scent  
Is like the phoenix' and more redolent  
Than the sweet nectar; Attis would prefer  
This name, and he who serves the Thunderer;  
If you should call it in the Palatine, why,  
The Venuses and Cupids would reply –  
This noble, soft and delicate name I craved  
In my smooth verse to speak but you behaved,  
Syllable, with defiant stubbornness.  
Yet poets may 'Eiarinos' express,  
But they are Greeks – to them nothing's forbidden –  
*Their* 'a' is long *or* short: from us that's hidden;  
Romans may not be so flexible  
Who worship Muses less adaptable.

XII

If named for fall, I'd be Oporinos,  
If winter's gloomy sky, Chimerinos;  
If named for summer's month, Therinos I'd be:  
The man who is named after spring, who's he?

XIII

Your name the season of the budding year  
Bespeaks, when bees of Cecrops lay waste here  
And there brief spring: a name that Venus' quill  
Should write in colour: it's the joyful will  
Of Cytherea to embroider it;  
Letters made up of Indian pearls are fit  
To set it down; the gem of the Heliades  
On fingers rubbed should mark it, and the 'V's  
Of cranes in flight should start it; it should be  
In Caesar's house alone eternally.

XIV

This man who is your guest – d'you think that he  
Is the epitome of loyalty?  
He likes boar, mullet, oysters, tripe, not you.  
If I dined like you, he'd be my friend too.

XV



CHLOE

Upon her seven husbands' tombs the rat  
Inscribed "My doing". What's more plain than that?

XVI

His counselling glass and his sweet locks this boy  
Has dedicated to the god of Troy;  
He is the very favourite of all  
His master's boys, he whom we 'Vernal' call.  
Happy the land whom such a gift's decreed!  
She would not choose the locks of Ganymede!

XVII

Revered grandson of Latona, who has fed  
Sweet magic to the distaff and brief thread  
Of the Fates, your boy from Latium's town has sent  
These locks his master praised as fulfillment  
Of his vows, and to this consecrated hair  
He's added a bright disc which will declare  
His beauty. Guard your youthful bloom lest he  
With long locks than with short locks fairer be.

XVIII

TO DOMITIAN

I have a tiny country-house (I pray  
I'll have it long while still under your sway),  
A small one in the city, too, I own.  
A curved pump, though, lifts up, with many a groan,  
The water from the shallow vale and slakes  
The thirsty gardens. Tj dry dwelling makes  
Complaint no moisture freshens it (quite near,  
However, Marcia babbles in my ear.  
The water that you'll give my house shall be  
A shower of Jove or Castaly's spring to me.

XIX

TO SABELLUS

You praise that gourmet's baths line after line.  
You do not want to bathe – you want to dine.

XX

TO DOMITIAN

This spot, which knew our prince's early days,  
Lies open, yet with marble and gold inlays  
Is being covered. You are truly favoured  
For having heard his infant cries and savoured  
His crawling hands and held them. From fight here  
The holy house showed all folks, far and near,  
What Rhodes, what pious Crete showed to the sky.  
Cybele's priests with rattling arms stood by  
To guard him, arms that Phrygians, demi-men,  
Could wield: but you the lord of all gods then  
Protected: thundebolt and aegis were

The substitute for sword and buckler.

XXI

TO AUCTUS

Artemidorus now has sold his range  
But has a slave; Calliodorus, in exchange,  
Now owns the former; who is richer now?  
One has someone to love, one has his plough.

XXII

TO PASTOR

You think perhaps I want prosperity  
With the same end as the community  
And ignorant rabble – that the Setine ground  
May wear away my hoes and that the sound  
Of fettered slaves ring on the Tuscan land,  
And that a hundred round tables may stand  
On Libyan tusks and tinkling plate of gold  
Adorn my couches and my lips enfold  
Nothing but crystal, my Falernian  
Making the snow turn black, and Syrian  
Slaves in Canusian wool endeavouring  
To hold my litter up, a constant ring  
Of natty clients circling my chair,  
A tipsy guest hot for my slave so fair  
You wouldn't barter him for Ganymede,  
And that a mud-bespattered mule proceed  
To soil my Tyrian clothes, my horse led on  
By a Massylian rod. Oh no, it's none  
Of these, I swear by each divinity.  
What then? Building and generosity.

XXIII

TO CARUS

You're gleaming with the Virgin's golden hue:  
Where is the prize Athene gave to you?  
"Our lord's face shines with marble everywhere:  
My wreath, unbidden, transferred to his hair."  
The Alban olive makes the pure oak green –  
On that unconquered brow she first is seen.

XXIV

TO CARUS

While shaping royal features, who is he  
Who's outshone Phidias's ivory  
With Latian stones of marble? Here is seen  
The world's face, here is Jupiter Serene:  
Thus does he thunder in a cloudless sky.  
Not only has Athene from on high  
Given you a crown, but she has granted you  
The effigy of your praised master, too.

XXV

## TO AFER

While I watch Hyllus pouring wine for you  
You eye me with a troubled look. What do  
You see so sinful? Merely to watch one  
Sweet servant is so bad? We see the sun,  
Stars, temples, gods. Should I, then, just not see,  
Ass though a Gorgon had just offered me  
A cup, assaulting both my eyes and face?  
Hylas could scrutinize without disgrace  
Fierce Alcides, and Mercury could play  
With Ganymede. If you're prepared to say  
"No guest must eye sweet boys when he's with us"  
Send Phineas or, maybe, Oedipus.

## XXVI

### TO COSMUS

Who sends to eloquent Nerva poetry  
Will give you celadine unguent; that same he  
Will offer to a Paestan gardener  
Violets and white privets and confer  
Honey of Corsica to a Hyblan bee.  
A humble Muse, though, has some charm; we see  
Cheap olives will enhance a sea-bass meal.  
Don't wonder that my Thalia can feel  
Fear of your judgment when her bard she knows  
Is merely moderate. The story goes  
That even Nero feared your carping tongue  
When he some wanton theme essayed while young.

## XXVII

### TO CHRESTUS

Your balls are shaved, your cock is very like  
A vulture's neck, there's not a single spike  
Of hair upon your legs, your shiny top  
Is like an arse for hire, you cruelly crop  
Your pale lips, yet you chat of Curii,  
Camilli, Numae, Anci, Quintii  
And hairy thinkers cited everywhere.  
You bluster, threaten loudly, curse and swear  
And quarrel with the theatre and our age.  
Now if some queer, whilst you are in this rage,  
Free from his tutor, with his swollen rod  
Now sprung by some bright chap, you give a nod  
And lead him off; I am ashamed for you  
And what that puritanical tongue can do.

## XXVIII

I am Latinus, darling of the stage  
And games, your favourite and all the rage:  
I could have Cato's partiality  
Or cause to laugh the stern Fabricii  
And Curii. But nothing of my own  
Derives from theatre: by my art alone  
Am I thought 'of the stage'. I could not be  
Loved by my master without decency.  
That god can look into my very soul.

Why then, you may assign to me the role  
Of laurelled Phoebus' sponge, while Rome can tell  
That everywhere I serve her Jupiter well.

XXIX

TO PHILAEINIS

As old as Nestor, have you hastily  
Been hustled off to Pluto's territory?  
Euboean Sibyl's age is greater than  
Your own duration by a three-month span.  
That great tongue silent now! Serapis' crowd,  
A thousand slave-marts couldn't be as loud,  
Nor curly boys at dawn on classroom seats  
Nor Strymon's cranes the river-bank repeats  
In echo. Who will now with Thessaly's wheel  
Draw down the moon, what madam now will deal  
In beds? Earth, lightly lie! May soft sand pall you  
So that no burrowing dog may chance to maul you.

XXX

ANTISTHIUS RUSTICUS

He died on Cappadocia's savage strand.  
Grim crime committed by a guilty land!  
His wife Nigrina brought him back to port,  
Thinking the lengthy journey was too short.  
The envied tomb the sacred urn received,  
While she considered she'd been twice bereaved.

XXXI

VELIUS

Hoping in Caesar's Northern wars to enrol,  
He vowed this bird to Mars for him. The toll  
Of monthly orbs was barely eight, when He  
Now claimed the vow was due. Then happily  
The goose sped to the altar, which received  
Its humble victim. Have you all perceived  
Eight coins in its open beak? These lay  
But lately in its guts. Caesar, I say  
(For silver, not blood, a prophecy affords)  
It teaches us there is no need of swords.

XXXII

I want a willing girl, who walks around  
In her mantilla, who's already found  
My slave for sex, who can be had for just  
One shilling, one who satisfies her lust  
On three at once. A bumpkin's cock suffices  
A dame who talks too big and asks high prices.

XXXIII

TO FLACCUS

At any baths where you can hear applause  
Be sure Maron's John Thomas is the cause.

XXXIV

At thre tale of his Idaean tomb (all lies)  
Jove laughs and on the Pantheon casts his eyes;  
Quite flush with copious nectar he reclines,  
His chalice to his son Mars he consigns,  
Looks at Diana who is sitting by  
Apollo (Hercules is also nigh,  
And Mercury), and says: “You’ve given me  
A monument at Gnosso. Now you see  
That it is so much more and so much better  
To be the sovereign Caesar’s own begetter.

XXXV

TO PHILOMUSUS

You always earn your meal thus: you enact  
A lot of things that you’ve made up, as fact.  
You know Pacorus’ counsel, and the amount  
Of Rhenish and Sarmatian troops can count,  
The Dacian leader’s orders you unseal,  
See victory before it comes for real,  
Know when in Syene Egypt suffers rain,  
How many ships from Libya cross the main,  
Whose brows the Julian olives will adorn,  
Who’s destined for Jove’s chaplets. Now I warn  
You: no more craft! You’ll dine with me today  
With one condition – no more news, I pray.

XXXVI

The other Jove’s pet, Ganymede, had seen  
Earinos whose locks had lately been  
Cut off and said: “Great lord, I beg of you,  
What Caesar’s cup-boy has let me have too.  
Already my long hair the down conceals;  
Already Juno calls me man with peals  
Of laughter.” “Sweetest boy,” Jove then replied,  
“It’s not by me that you must be denied  
But need. My Caesar has a thousand such  
And his great halls can barely hold so much  
Celestial beauty. Should a razor free  
Your boyhood, who would mix my drink for me?”

XXXVII

TO GALLA

Though home, in the Subura you’re arrayed  
And quite a distance hence your hair is made,  
Your teeth (just like your silks) you lay aside  
At night, in countless caskets you abide,  
You don’t sleep with your face, you use that brow  
To wink which has been brought to you just now  
At dawn; you don’t respect that cunt of yours

(Which you might call one of your ancestors).



You promise lots, though; deaf is my John Thomas;  
Though it's one-eyed, it sees you, I can promise.

XXXVIII

TO AGATHINUS

Though you are adept at your dangerous game,  
Your shield won't fall. You shun it – all the same  
It follows you across the yielding air  
And settles on your foot, back, finger, hair.  
Although the stage is saffron-slippery and  
Swift winds won't let the awning fitly stand,  
It raids the lad's limbs safely, though ignored,,  
And wind and water can no ill afford  
The pro. In many ways you try to miss  
Yet can't. Art's needed for achieving this.

XXXIX

This day marks Caesar's very first day on earth,  
Which Cybele would have chosen for Jove's birth.  
Caesonia, my friend Rufus' wife, whom he  
Reveres, was born this day. No maid but she  
Owes more to her who bore her. Now her mate  
Two grantings of his prayers may celebrate:  
It is his destiny this very day  
To show affection in a double way.

XL

To Rome from Egypt Diodorus went  
To claim the Alban crown. Philaenis sent  
A vow that for her husband's homecoming  
She, like an innocent girl, would suck that thing  
That even the chaste Sabine women suck.  
The ship was split and, pitched into the ruck  
Of waters tempest-tossed, he swam to land  
To claim that vow. A tardy husband and  
A slow! If my girl had thus vowed for me  
On land, I'd have turned back immediately.

XLI

You think it's nothing that you never screw  
But, when you're horny, make your left hand do?  
It's not, believe you me, it's quite a sin,  
So large that you can barely take it in.  
Horatius did it once and triplets got,  
Mars, too, and Ilia gave him twins. The lot  
They would have lost if, strangling their gland,  
They'd left their filthy pleasure to their hand.  
Trust Nature when she says, "O Ponticus,  
Your fingers lost you a homunculus."

XLII

TO APOLLO

Be rich in Mysian fields and take delight  
In aged swans, and may the erudite  
Nine Sisters serve you; may no untruth spring

From the Delphic priestess; may the Palatine ring  
With love and worship; let it be agreed  
By Caesar when you ask it that you cede  
The consulship to Stella. Then, with cheer,  
A debtor to my vow, I'll lead a steer  
With golden horns up to the rustic altar.  
The beast is on this earth. Why do you falter?

XLIII

HERCULES

There does he sit, stretching a lion's skin  
To make the hard stones soft, a large god in  
A little bronze; with upturned face he gazes  
Upon the stars he bore; his left hand blazes  
With strength, his right with wine; this work of fame  
Is not a new one, neither can it claim  
A Roman chisel; this of which I speak  
Shows you the noble bounty and technique  
Of Lysippus. This deity was displayed  
At Alexander's board, he who's now laid  
In a world he quickly conquered; Hannibal swore  
By him at Libyan shrines when not much more  
Than a child; he quashed fierce Sulla's mastery;  
Vexed by the fickle courts' loud raillery,  
He's now content to have a domicile  
That's private. And, just as he for a while  
Was entertained as mild Molorchus' guest,  
His godhead has the learned Vindex blessed.

XLIV

Lately I asked Vindex whose faculties  
And happy toil created Hercules.  
He nodded slightly, laughed (wouldn't you know it?)  
And said, "You don't know Greek, and you a poet?  
The base gives us his name." And there I read,  
'Lysippus" I'd thought 'Phidias" instead.

XLV

TO MARCELLIANUS

You lately bore the chill inclemency  
Of the north while soldiering, and you could see  
The sluggish stars of Thrace; Prometheus' stone  
And the famed mount you're near. You'll hear the moan  
Of the old man from the great rocks echoing  
And say tat he was harder than the thing  
Itself. Add "Who has such austerity  
Is worthy to create humanity."

XLVI

GELLIUS

He's always building; here it's entrance floors,  
There buying bolts and fitting keys to doors,  
Always repairing windows everywhere;  
For anything but building he's no care.  
Say he's been asked for money by a friend,

He says to him, “I’m building” – that’s the end.

XLVII

TO PANNYCHUS

You talk of cryptic Plato and of Zeno,  
Democritus, every philosopher we know  
From grimy busts as though your predecessor  
Was Pythagoras, although you’re the possessor  
Of just as long a beard, but you, old chum,  
Keep a stiff beard within a tender bum  
(The smelly rarely do, and it’s a shame  
For hairy men). You, who can clearly claim  
To know the origins and reasoning  
Of all our schools, there is just one wee thing:  
Can you tell me what creed you comprehend  
Involving someone’s todger in your end.

XLVIII

TO GARRICUS

When by your head and all solemnity  
You promised that out of your property  
I’d get one-fourth, I trusted you (for why  
Shatter one’s dream?), in anticipation I  
Gave constant gifts, a boar of which was one,  
So heavy you would think that Calydon  
Had raised it. Instantly, though, you invited  
The folk and Senate; still now the benighted  
Rome belches up my boar. Would you believe  
Not even at the last did you receive  
Me as a guest? You didn’t give to me  
A rib or even send a tail. So, see,  
Can I expect that one-fourth of your store?  
I didn’t even get a twelfth of boar.

XLIX

This toga, of which my books so often tell,  
Whose readers fully learned and love so well,  
Was once ‘Parthenian’, the great bequest  
Of a poet; thus conspicuously dressed  
Was I a knight while it was new and gleamed  
With glossy wool and commonly was deemed  
Deserving of its giver’s name. These days  
It’s just a crone and now could hardly raise  
A feeble, tottering beggarman’s attention:  
Why, you’d now call her ‘snowy’. The extention  
Of days and years take everything away.  
Now, not ‘Parthenian’, she’s mine today.

L

TO GAURUS

You think my genius weak because I pen  
Poems pleasing in their briefness. True. But then,  
In twice six books you pompously create  
The wars of Priam. Does that make you great?  
My Brutus’ boy, my Langon live today.  
Though great, you have a Giant made of clay.



LI

Against your brother's will, you always prayed  
To be the first to die – now you've been paid.  
He envies you: although he was the younger,  
To beat you 'cross the Styx he had a hunger.  
So you dwell in lovely Elysium  
Nor do you want him now; if Castor's come  
Out of the sky instead of Pollux, then  
You counsel him not to return again.

LII

TO QUINTUS OVIDIUS

Your April First's one month ahead of me;  
Believe me, I love both quite equally,  
Both lucky, which we should commemorate  
With fewer stones! One gave to me a mate,  
The other gave me life, and, of the two,  
More came to me than what gave life to you.

LIII

TO QUINTUS

I wished to give a gift on your birthday;  
With an imperious word you said me nay.  
I must obey. But let's have something we  
Both want to happen: you give one to *me*.

LIV

TO CARUS

If olives from Picenum were to fatten  
Thrushes for me or I may snares could flatten  
In Sabine woods or if my lengthened stick  
Could catch its small prey, or if I could pick  
Birds off with lime, then, before any other  
Relation, be he grandfather or brother,  
My kin would give the accustomed offering  
To you. My pasture, though, is flourishing  
Only with piping sparrows and a throng  
Of useless starlings and the finches' song.  
The farmer answers here the magpie's cry,  
While there the kite soars high into the sky  
In search of prey. Therefore I send to you  
The humble gifts (it's all that I can do)  
Out of my avian store. You always be,  
Should you accept these things, kinsman to me.

LV

TO FLACCUS

On Kinsman's Day, an avian butchery,  
Preparing thrushes occupying me  
For Stella and for you, into my head  
Came a large crowd, as ponderous as lead,  
Each man convinced that he's my dearest friend.

I planned to give to two, yet to offend  
More men's not safe and I'd have much to pay  
For giving many gifts. The only way  
That I may get their pardon is to send  
Thrushes to neither him nor you, my friend.

LVI

SPENDOPHOROS

His master's armour-bearer, he has gone  
To Libyan cities: Cupid, let him don  
*Your* arms, with which young men and girls you slay,  
Yet in his tender hand a smooth spear lay  
As well. Cuirass, shield, helmet I assign  
To you; that he may safely toe the line  
Of battle, leave him naked! Not one dart  
Nor sword nor pike could injure any part  
Of Parthenopaeus when he did not don  
A helmet. There is nobody – not one –  
Who, wounded by this youngster, will not die  
Of love. This man for whom such favours lie  
In wait is blessed. While yet bright youth, come home:  
Let Libya not make you a man, but Rome.

LVII

Hedylus' cloaks are worn so smooth that none  
Can rival them – not a Corinthian  
Vase-handle, not a leg that has been polished  
By a decade of chains, nor yet a near-demolished  
Mule's mottled neck nor the Flaminian Way's  
Deep ruts, the shining pebbles on the bays,  
A hoe that's burnished by the Tuscan vines,  
A lifeless pauper's toga (how it shines!),  
A slow cart's shaky wheel, the flank, rubbed sore,  
Of a bison, or the tooth of a feisty boar,  
Now elderly. But there is one thing, mind:  
Worn smoother than his cloaks is – his behind!

LVIII

SABINUS

Nymph, queen of the holy lake, whose shrines, so pure,  
Are all his sacred gifts, built to endure,  
May Umbria, rich in hills, always adore  
Your founts, and may your Sassina love them more  
Than Baiae. Take my gift with brow serene,  
My anxious verses. Be my Hippocrene.  
“Whoever his own poetry donates  
To these nymphs' shrines the verses' fortune states.”

LIX

MAMURRA

In the Saepta long and many times he wandered,  
Where golden Rome's great opulence is squandered,  
Inspecting and devouring with his gaze  
The pretty boys, not those the outer bays  
Display but those whose rostrum forms a screen

For where they're kept and who are never seen  
My folks like me. Content he had laid bare  
The tables and round table-tops; right there  
He had the high-hung, glistening ivory brought,  
Then measured out a six-seat sofa wrought  
In tortoiseshell four times, then, with a groan,  
Said, "It won't fit the citrus-board I own –  
Too small." Then with his nose he sniffed about  
Corinthian bronzes, and even ruled out  
Polyclitus' very statues, then he claimed  
The crystal vases he had seen were maimed  
By a piece of glass that had been lodged inside,  
Marked down ten agates and set them aside,  
Weighed ancient tankards, also anything  
In cups that had the mark of Mentor's zing,  
Counted the emeralds in some gold- work chased  
And every larger pearl that had been placed  
In a snow-white ear, a genuine sardonyx  
He sought in every table, tried to fix  
A price for ample quartz, and then at last  
With the eleventh hour having passed,  
He purchased just two tankards for a cent  
And, toting them himself, away he went.

#### LX

#### SABINUS

When in Paestan fields you first saw light  
Or those of Tibur, whether the soil shone bright  
In Tusculum with you, or in a plot  
In Praeneste a farmer's wife first got  
You from the ground, or in the countryside  
Around Campania you were her pride,  
To boost your charm, let him imagine this:  
My country manor saw your genesis.

#### LXI

Tartessus holds a well-known building where  
Rich Corduba woos serene Baetis, so fair;  
With native ore the fleeces are ocherous,  
And gold pervades the flocks of Hesperus.  
Right in the centre, dwarfing everything,  
Stands Caesar's plane-tree, densely burgeoning;  
Planted by Caesar, Lord of Victory,  
From just a shoot it grew; it seems to be  
Aware of its creator and grows green,  
Its limbs seeking the stars; often are seen  
A late-night pipe scaring that sacred place:  
A Dryad, through the lonely fields at night,  
Evading Pan, will nestle there in fright  
Beneath the rustic leaves; when Bacchus went  
Off on a spree, there was a fragrant scent  
Around the house, and brighter was the shade  
With spills of wine, the blushing flower was made  
To fall from yesterday's wreath; no-one could see  
The roses that were his. Great Caesar's tree,  
Beloved of gods, don't fear the steel or flame.  
You well may hope an honourable name  
Will fasten to your leaves eternally:  
Not Pompey's hands have set you here, you see.

LXII

Because Philaenis night and day's decried  
In garments that have been in purple dyed,  
She's not ambitious nor with pride is stiff:  
It's not the hue she likes, no, it's the whiff.

LXIII

TO PHOEBUS

All of the queers invite you out to dine.  
A cock-fed guest, I think, is hardly fine.

LXIV

DOMITIAN

The face of Hercules he deigned to don  
And gave the Latian Way a shrine, whereon  
The traveller to the Trivian grove may read  
The eighth milestone from Mistress Rome; indeed  
Once worshipped both prayers and offerings,  
Alcides, now the lesser deity, sings  
His praises to the greater; one petitions  
The latter for great wealth, one has ambitions  
For honours, while the former, at his ease,  
One importunes for trivialities.

LXV

ALCIDES

O worthy to be owned by Jupiter  
Now that our Caesar's lovely face you wear,  
If you had had that face and guise when you  
With your bare hands vicious colossi slew,  
People would not have seen you undergo  
Fierce slavery beneath the tyrant foe,  
Eurystheus; you'd have tamed *him*; Lichas, too,  
The treacherous, would not have brought to you  
The artful gift; the Oetaean funeral-pyre  
Would have evaded you and easily  
Would you have reached your father's majesty,  
Promised to you; and haughty Omphale  
Would not have forced the woollen drudgery  
On you; you'd not have seen the Stygian hound  
Or Styx itself; now Juno's favour's found,  
Your Hebe loves you too; and if some day  
A nymph sees you, she'll send Hylas away.

LXVI

TO FABULLUS

Your wife is fair, pure, young, so why's the due  
Of triple issue been conferred on you?  
What you solicit from our lord and god  
You'll give yourself, if you can raise your rod.

LXVII

## TO AESCHYLUS

All night I had a wanton wench, and she  
Granted outstanding naughtiness to me.  
Tired out by countless ways I asked if she'd  
Allow the 'boy-trick' – promptly she agreed.  
I asked for something hotter – instantly  
She guaranteed it, the voluptuary!  
Yet pure to me! To you she'll not be thus  
If you agree on terms nefarious.

## LXVIII

To us what are you, wretched teacher, who  
Are hated by your boys and maidens too?  
The cocks have not yet crowed: already blows  
And menacing words upon them you impose.  
Anvils on brass resound so heavily  
When smiths beat out a lawyer's effigy  
Upon a horse: there's less noise at the games  
When its own crowd the Thracian shield acclaims.  
We neighbours don't expect to sleep all night:  
*Some* lack of sleep's a trifle, dusk to light  
Is hard. You mouthy man, dismiss your boys!  
Take for your hush what you take for your noise!

## LXIX

## TO POLYCHARMUS

When doing it, you end up with a shit.  
What do you do when you're receiving it?

## LXX

Once Tully said, "O customs! O the times!"  
When Catiline the very worst of crimes  
Was planning (Caesar had in dreadful war  
Engaged with Pompey, tragic civil gore  
Staining the ground). Why state this axiom  
Today? What has aroused your odium?  
No captains' rage, no maddened steel is here;  
We can enjoy unbroken peace and cheer.  
Our "manners" don't our "times" make base to you,  
Caecilianus. No, it's yours that do.

## LXXI

A lion from the Massylian prominence  
And a ram have made a startling confidence.  
You may observe them in one pen, each beast  
Partaking of his meal; they will not feast  
On woodland fruits or tender herbs: they share  
A fresh young lamb their hunger to repair.  
Nemea's lion, Helle's ram – what right  
Have they to make high heaven shine so bright?  
If sheep and wild beasts reach to heaven's station,  
These two also deserve a constellation.

## LXXII

## TO LIBER

Wreathed with a Spartan crown, as you rebuff  
With Latian arm the Grecian fisticuff,  
When in a basket you send me some meat,  
Why not a flask to make the meal complete?  
But had you sent a gift which would agree  
With 'Liber', well, you know what that would be!

## LXXIII

You stretched out ancient hides with your own jaw,  
Old, muddy shoe-soles, too, you used to gnaw:  
Now your dead patron's country-home's your base  
In Praeneste (I'd think it a disgrace  
If you'd an *attic*). Hot Falernian wine  
You drink from crystal, now you intertwine  
With your lord's Ganymede. But, foolishly,  
My parents taught mere literature to me.  
Why do I need grammatic scholarship  
Or rhetoric? Her books let Thalia rip  
And break her worthless pens, because a shoe  
Can give that to a cobbler like you.

## LXXIV

## CAMONIUS

His picture shows only the effigy  
Of a child – an infant's form is all we see.  
His manly features have been left unbrushed:  
His father feared to look on lips now hushed.

## LXXV

Nor rubble not hard flint nor burnt brick (this  
Was utilized once by Semiramis  
To build vast Babylon) did Tucca use  
To build his bath, no, he preferred to fuse  
Pine timbers and the havoc of the grove  
That, in his bath, he might the ocean rove.  
The lavish man built warm and costly ones,  
Constructed of all sorts of marble stones  
Carystos found, and those from Phrygia  
Which Synnas sent him and, from Africa,  
Nomas and green Laconian. Yet – no trees  
For wood! Then put the cold one under these!

## LXXVI

This is the face of my Camonius:  
His childish face and infant form were thus.  
It waxed mature in twice one-twenty weeks  
And grew a manly beard upon its cheeks.  
The down, once-shaved, had newly seen the knife  
When one of the three Fates begrudged his life  
And cut the thread on wool spun speedily,  
His ashes sent from alien territory  
To his father. Lest this picture speak alone,  
In these my poems he'll be more nobly shown.

## LXXVII

PRISCUS

Which banquet's best? He writes so fluently:  
He's often charming, lofty too, but he  
Is always learned. What *is* the most pleasant?  
It is the one where there's no piper present.

LXXVIII

TO PICENTINUS

She's buried seven mates, now she's *your* wife.  
Se wants to follow them, upon my life!

LXXIX

TO DOMITIAN

Once Rome the chiefs' henchmen could not abide  
Nor yet their mob nor Palatinate pride:  
Now all your people love you so that their  
Own households are to them a second care.  
So gentle-hearted, such great deference,  
Such calm and in their looks such reticence.  
Such is the palace's mood that none displays  
His own but rather Lord Domitian's ways.

LXXX

A pauper, starved, wed someone old and rich.  
Now Gellius feeds her and relives his itch.

LXXXI

TO AULUS

A verse fan praised my books, and yet they're not  
Well-crafted, says a poet. Well, so what?  
I'd rather have my table's delicacies  
Please not the kitchen but the invitees.

LXXXII

TO MUNNA

A seer said you would die soon: I conceive  
He wasn't lying. For, lest you should leave  
Some wherewithal behind you when you die,  
You squandered all your patrimony, aye,  
Two mill in less than one year frittered away!  
That's surely dying soon, would you not say?

LXXXIII

TO DOMITIAN

Of the great marvels, Caesar, of your shows,  
Which all surpass the spectacles of those  
Old chiefs, our eyes (but more our ears) allow  
We owe you: readers are just watchers now!

LXXXIV

TO NORBANUS

To Caesar you showed your fierce loyalty  
While fighting impious frenzy; I, quite free  
From harm beneath Pieria's shade, who woo  
Your friendship, have tossed out these books for you.  
The Rhaetian read you me on foreign shores,  
The North too knew my name. You've said I'm yours  
So often, not denying your old friend.  
Now all these poems I've written, at the end  
Of six long years which heard you read them through,  
At last your author offers them to you.

LXXXV

TO ATILIUS

When Paulus is unwell, then he invests  
With abstinence not Paulus but his guests.  
Your sudden, fake poor health – well, so it goes –  
Paulus, has made my meal turn up its toes.

LXXXVI

SILIUS

He grieved his son Severus' death (so young!),  
This double-master of the Latin tongue,  
Then I complained to Phoebus and The Nine.  
"I too lamented Linus – he was mine,"  
Said Phoebus. Glancing at Calliope,  
His sister who stood closely by him, he  
Said to her, "You too have a wound." Observe  
Caesar and Jupiter. With impious nerve,  
His Lachesis hurt either Jove. When you  
May know that even gods are subject to  
The Fates inflexible, then you can see  
We can't accuse the gods of jealousy.

LXXXVII

TO LUPERCUS

I've tossed off seven cups of Opimian wine  
And, blinking, lie among these draughts of mine  
When, with some document, you come to me  
And say, "I've just set Father's servant free.  
Sign please." Tomorrow, friend, will be more pleasant.  
My ring just seals up flasks of wine at present.

LXXXVIII

TO RUFUS

When out to snare me, you'd be forwarding  
Presents, but now you've got me – not a thing.  
To hold me, keep them coming. Boars may fly,  
If they have been ill-nourished, from the sty.



LXXXIX

TO STELLA

Do you with harsh rules force your guests to pen  
Some verses? “You may write some bad ones, then.”

XC

TO FLACCUS

In flowery meadows you’re reclining, where  
You see the runnels sparkling here and there,  
Where pebbles are projected by the pond,  
Your troubles all sent packing far beyond  
This sphere. With ice you strain the darkened wine  
While wreaths of blushing flowers your brows entwine.  
May you possess a bum-boy all your own  
And have the chastest mistress who will groan  
For you. Immortal Cyprus, I entreat,  
Beware when in the torrid summer’s heat  
The threshing floor the crackling harvest brays  
And Leo’s mane reflects the sultry days.  
Send back this young man, Paphian divine,  
Unharm’d and see that March’s Kalends shine  
In loyalty to you, and may one bring,  
With beast, wine, incense, many an offering  
Up to your spotless altars, there to make  
A multi-portioned sacrifice of cake.

XCI

If called to dine in either stratosphere,  
To Caesar’s or to Jove’s, though stars were near  
And Palatine were far, I would retort  
Unto the gods, “See one who is the sort  
To banquet with the Thunderer. *I’m* bound  
By my own Jupiter *here* – upon the ground.

XCII

TO CONDYLUS

You say you’ve been so long a slave, but you  
Don’t know your gains nor what bad things accrue  
To those you serve. Your common mat supplies  
Sound sleep, your master never shuts his eyes  
All night on down. A-tremble from cock-crow,  
So many masters he salutes; you, though,  
Don’t even greet *him*. “Hey, you owe me. Pay,”  
Says Phoebus, and then Cinnamus. No way  
Will any thus address *you*. Do you fear  
The torturer? Gout spasms, like a spear,  
Shake him: he’d rather bear, instead of them,  
A thousand blows. You don’t, in the a.m.,  
Throw up or feed on cunts. Would you not be  
Yourself than Gaius, multiplied by three?

XCIII

TO CALACISSUS

Come on, boy, pour the deathless wine for me,  
An older jar's three stoops. Who shall it be  
Of all the gods for whom I order you  
To pour twice that? "Caesar," you say, "that's who."  
Ten times let roses wreath our brows that he  
Who laid the shrine of such nobility  
For our blessed lineage may now appear  
To us. Now kiss me twice five times right here  
So that there may be brought before our face  
The very name that Caesar brought from Thrace.

XCIV

HIPPOCRATES

He gave me a draught drugged with a Sardinian base,  
The impudent man, then asked me to my face  
For mead. Not even you were such an ass,  
Glaucus, I think, who bartered gold for brass.  
Has any ever sweet for bitter sent?  
Let him have it if it's with hellebore blent.

XCV

ATHENAGORAS

Before his marriage he was Alphius,  
But now his name has changed to Olphius.

XCVb

TO CALLISTRATUS

Is 'Athenagoras' his real name? you quiz.  
I'm buggered if I know who that man is.  
Imagine, though, I told you a real name:  
Not I but Athenagoras is to blame.

XCVI

DR. HERODES

He took a ladle from a patient. "What,"  
He said when caught, "you fool, don't be a sot."

XCVII

TO IULIUS

My dearest friend, because all Rome reads me,  
There's someone who's bursting with jealousy.  
Because I'm pointed out in company,  
There's someone who's bursting with jealousy.  
Because I've got from Caesar the Law of Three,  
There's someone who's bursting with jealousy.  
I've got a town-house and farm property –  
There's someone who's bursting with jealousy.  
I'm popular, a frequent invitee –  
There's someone who's bursting with jealousy.  
I'm liked, my works rated among the first –  
As far as I'm concerned, he's free to burst!

## XCVIII

The vineyard crop has not failed utterly,  
Ovidius: there's some utility  
In all that rain. Coranus profits so –  
He's made a hundred jars – of H<sub>2</sub>O.

## XCIX

### TO ATTICUS

Marcus Antonius loves my Muse, if we  
Can trust his greeting letter. Marcus! He  
Of cultured Tolosa's undisputed fame,  
Whom Quiet, Peace's nursling, may acclaim  
As hers. Go, book (for you can surely bear  
Long journeys) and my absent friendship swear.  
Now if a buyer sent you, I confess,  
You'd be a poor gift, but you may assess  
Your monetary worth at a higher rate  
Because another sends you. Let me state:  
A flowing fountain has a better taste  
Than water taken from some stagnant waste.

## C

You summon me for three denarii:  
“At dawn and in your toga visit me,  
Wait for me in the lobby, after that  
Stay close, precede my litter, have a chat  
With widows (ten or so).” Well, this I wear  
Is cheap, indeed, and old, and very spare,  
I must confess, but, Bassus, listen to me,  
I can't be bought for three denarii.

## CI

### TO THE APPIAN WAY

O greatest glory of all Latin ways  
And glorified by Caesar with the gaze  
Of Hercules: if you desire to scan  
Alcides' deeds, append: the Libyan  
He overcame, the golden apples won,  
The girdle of the pelt-clad Amazon  
Released, killed the Arcadian boar, secured  
The lion's skin, the fleet-foot stag procured  
Out of the woods, the very heavens cheated  
Of Stymphalian birds, then with his hound retreated  
From Styx, curtailed the Hydra's mortal span,  
Bathed western oxen in Etrurian  
Rivers. Such was the lesser god. Now hear  
The greater god's exploits (whom men revere  
At Alba's height's sixth stone). The Palace he  
Wrested from a malignant sovereignty;  
For his own Jove, while still a boy, he fought  
His earliest wars; though he'd already caught  
The reins of Julian power, he forewent  
The rule and, in his own world, was content  
To be the third; he was to pulverize  
Three times the Danube's treacherous horns; the flies

Upon his sweating horse he washed away  
With Getic snow; often averse to hold  
A triumph, from the farthest Northland's cold  
He gained a victor's title; he bestowed  
To gods their shrines, to folk a moral code,  
Rest to all weapons, fame that will not die  
To the *Gens Iulia*, stars to the sky,  
Garlands to Jove. Such great activity  
As this deserves more than the deity  
Of Hercules; so let our god confer  
His features on Tarpeian Jupiter.

## CII

### TO PHOEBUS

You're reimbursing my five hundred thou:  
I'd rather that you loaned a hundred now.  
Brag elsewhere of your empty charity:  
What I cannot pay you belongs to me.

## CIII

What, has another Leda now produced  
Two clones to be your servants? Was she "goosed",  
A naked Spartan maid? Pollux's face  
We see in Hierus and one may place  
Castor's on Asylus; both lie, be sure,  
In Tyndaris, their sister. Such allure  
In Amyclae, where once a lesser boon  
Defeated two goddesses, would quite soon  
Have kept Helen in Greece, while back to Troy  
Would Paris have repaired with each twin boy.

## BOOK X

### I

If, since postponed, I seem too long a book,  
Read just a few. I'll be a small one. Look,  
Sometimes my page ends with a few short lines:  
Make me as brief, then, as your mind inclines.

### II

Too hurried earlier, my tenth book's pains  
Reminds me of the work that slipped the reins.  
You'll read some lines you know yet recently  
Revised; the new part's larger: reader, be  
Gracious to both (you are my livelihood).  
When Rome gave you to me, "No greater good,"  
Said she, "can I bestow on you. You'll flee  
Ungrateful Lethe's sluggish tributary,  
Surviving in the better part of you.  
The wild-fig splits Messala's marble in two,  
At Crispus' broken steeds the muleteer  
Laughs boldly: writings of a balladeer  
Are unimpaired by theft and Time's a friend,  
These monuments alone don't have an end."

### III

## TO PRISCUS

A home-slave's insults, biting raillery,  
A hawker's tongue spouting scurrility,  
Which any broker of a shattered batch  
Of Vatinian glass would not pay for one match,  
A skulking poet scatters to and fro  
As *mine*. Can you believe this? It's as though  
A parrot could converse just like quail  
Or Canus yearned to make the bagpipes wail.  
Ill-fame, forsake my books, which gemmed esteem  
Transports up the sky on wings that gleam.  
Why strive to be well-known so evilly  
When keeping quiet is completely free?

## IV

You read of Oedipus and Thyestes,  
That dark man, Colchian witches, Scyllas – these  
Are nought but monsters. What's the good to you  
Of captured Hylas, Parthenopaeus too,  
Attis, sleepy Endymion? Or the lad  
Stripped of his wings? Or else the boy who had  
Dislike for sensual waves? This futile rot  
In wretched books gives you precisely – what?  
Read what Life claims to be her property.  
Harpies, Centaurs and Gorgons you'll not see  
In here: my pages devour of mankind.  
But you, Mamurra, have no wish to find  
Your own conduct or know yourself: indeed  
Callimachus's *Aetia* you should read.

## V

A foe of stole or purple, wounding men  
Whom he should honour with his impious pen,  
Should roam the city's streets, a refugee  
Of bridge and hill, and plead for charity,  
Last of the hoarse-voiced beggars who beseech  
For a dog's crust of vile bread. May the long reach  
Of December, winter's wet and the archway  
Now barred against him stretch by many a day  
His wretched chill. May he regard as blessed  
Those carried off to their eternal rest  
On Orcus' bier. And when his final hour  
At last arrives, may he from dog-packs cower,  
Flapping with rags at noxious birds. May he  
Not yet through death escape more penalty,  
But, now chastised by cruel Aeacus,  
Now by the massive stone of Sisyphus,  
The restless, overwhelmed may he, bone-dry  
Near Tantalus's waves, be wearied by  
Those fables; when the Furies say, "Confess!"  
His conscience will provoke "I wrote them, yes."

## VI

They're happy to whom Fortune's urn displays  
Our prince with Northern suns and stars ablaze.  
When shall we see the plain and every tree  
Alight, when every windowcase shall be  
Blessed with a dame? When shall that sweet delay,

The dust in Caesar's wake, the Flaminian Way  
Show Rome to us? And when shall we see you,  
Men of equestrian class, and you Moors who  
Are painted and wear Nilish dress, when Rome  
Shall with one voice cry loudly, "Does he come?"

VII

TO THE RHINE

Father of Nymphs and rivers which partake  
Of Thracian frosts, may limpid waters make  
You ever happy: may you never feel  
An insolent ox-driver's cruel wheel  
Upon your head; your golden horns redeem  
And flow on either bank Roman stream;  
Return our Trajan back unto his nation  
And Rome: this is Lord Tiber's invocation.

VIII

PAULA

She wants to marry me – I've not the will:  
She's old. I *would* if she were older still.

IX

Eleven syllables! Eleven feet!  
A flowing wit, not obstinate but neat!  
That's what I write, I, Martial, who am known  
To Roman readers and in every zone  
Under the sun. Why, pray, such jealousy?  
The horse Andraemon's better known than me.

X

TO PAULUS

Belaurelled axes usher in your year,  
And you each dawn a thousand thresholds clear.  
What can I do? Why are you leaving us,  
The mob of Numa, very copious?  
Am I to call that man my lord and king  
Who barely sees me? You do that same thing  
(But much more flatly!). Shall I tail a chair?  
You'll even carry one and strive to bear  
It first through all that mud. Am I to stand  
When one declaims? You're up and with each hand  
You pop your lips. What can a pauper do  
When he's debarred from being a client too?  
It's clear the purple garments you put on  
Have driven out the toga that we don.

XI

TO CALLIODORUS

Of Theseus And Pirithous constantly  
You talk and think that you yourself must be  
Pylades' peer. I'm buggered if you've got  
The right to hand that man a chamberpot

Or feed Pirithous' pigs. "Five grand  
I gave a buddy, "you then tell me, "and  
(Substantial gift!) a toga that has been  
Just three or four times laundered clean."  
Did Orestes give his friend aught from his store?  
Who gives (however many) denies more.

## XII

### TO DOMITIUS

You're going to Apollo's Vercellae  
And to Aemilia and the fields that lie  
By Phæthontic Po – I bid farewell  
Quite willingly, though I could never dwell  
In happiness without you. But the fee  
I pay for missing you is that you're free,  
Even for one summer, from the city's yoke.  
Go then, I pray, and ravenously soak  
Up all that sun. How handsome you'll appear  
While you're abroad, and when you come back here  
You'll not be recognized a pallid crew  
And all your white-faced friends will envy you  
Your cheeks. Your tan, though, Rome will soon erase,  
Though on return you had a Nilish face.

## XIV

### TO COTTA

Though lolling slaves your coach conveys, and though  
A Libyan outrider perspires so  
In endless trails of dust, and although lots  
Of baths look out upon your throw-spread cots,  
Although your sea-baths pale with nard, Setine  
Filling your crystal cups, although divine  
Venus did not repose on softer stuff:  
At night you haunt the doorstep, sleeping rough,  
Of a capricious mistress, while your tears  
Bedew the unfeeling door which never hears  
Your poor heart's endless sighs. What, must I tell  
Why things are bad with you? Because they're well.

## XIV

### TO CRISPUS

You say you love my friends whole-heartedly.  
What do you do to make this verity?  
When I once asked you for a five-grand loan,  
You told me no, although your coffers froan  
With more than they can hold. When did you ever  
Give me a peck of beans or wheat? Right! Never!  
A bailiff, though, cares for your property  
In Egypt. Have you ever sent to me  
The smallest toga during winter's cold?  
Eight ounces of silver plate? May I be so bold  
As to state no reason for your amity  
Exists except – you fart in front of me?

XV

APER

He killed his rich wife with his archery,  
But just in play. He plays proficiently.

XVI

TO GAIUS

If promising is giving, as you say,  
I'll trounce you with my gifts. So take, I pray,  
The wealth of Astur's mines, what's excavated  
Out o rich, golden Tagus, what's located  
In Indian seaweed, treasures of the nest  
Of the Phoenix, evil Tyre's very best  
Stored in Agenor's cauldron: please take, then  
(For that's your style) the bounties of all men.

XVII

Muse, you'd deprive Macer of his tribute  
For the Saturnalia, but it's no boot -  
*He* asks for it; he says that there must be  
The usual jokes and no despondency  
And grumbles that my flippancies aren't there.  
At present, though, he has the time to spare  
And read surveyors' lengthy notes. But see,  
What will you do if Macer then reads me?

XVIII

MARIUS

He wants no dinner guest, he doesn't send  
Presents, gives no collateral, does not lend –  
He's blessed with nothing. Yet it does not matter –  
There's never lack of crowds of folk to flatter  
A worthless friend, Well, Rome, o dearie me,  
How cretinous your toga-wearers be!

XIX

TO THALIA

Go, take my book, not skilled, not serious,  
And yet sufficiently punctilious,  
To eloquent Pliny: a trek not wearisome,  
Across Subura, where you finally come  
To Esquiline: immediately you'll see thence  
Damp Orpheus high above his audience,  
Admiring beasts, the Monarch's avian  
Possession, who snatched up the Phrygian  
And took him up to Jupiter; close to these  
Is Pedo's modest house, whose graven frieze  
Presents a smaller eagle. Do not choose  
An inappropriate time, full up with booze,  
To knock upon the door of eloquence.  
He spends whole days in studious diligence,  
And for the Centumviri fashioning  
What later times will have the right to sing



As equal to the works of Cicero.  
Far safer, then, at lamplight time to go –  
*Your* hour, when Bacchus rages, when the rose  
Is queen supreme and when in liquid flows  
One's hair. At such a time, it seems to me,  
Even strict Catos will read my poetry.

XX

The Spaniard Salo draws one to the strand  
So packed with gold, though in my native land  
Th dizzying hilltop homes I'd rather see –  
You are the cause of this, so dear to me,  
From earliest years, your friendship cultivated  
Through boyhood. I was never captivated  
In all of Spain more than by you, my friend,  
None fitter for the love that I extend.  
I even could, with you, admire the steads  
Of arid Carthage and the Scythian shed.  
If this fondness is mutual, Manius,  
In all the world, Rome is the place for us.

XXI

Why write, I ask, what even Modestus  
Can barely understand, nor Maranus?  
Your books do not require a reader, man,  
But an Apollo. Cinna's better than  
Virgil, say you. Thus let your poems be lauded  
By all means: let my verses be applauded  
By commentators, Sextus, so the store  
Of commentators will be missed no more.

XXII

Why do I with a smeared chin go around  
And with a daubing on my lips, though sound,  
Of white lead? That's my question, Philaenis.  
Well, I would rather not give you a kiss.

XXIII

Antonius Primus in his life's calm span  
Has seen fifteen Olympiads, happy man,  
And, looking back on all those days and years,  
Of Lethe's nearing waters has no fears.  
No day in his recall has misery  
Or harshness, nothing irks his memory.  
A good man widens his own life, and zest  
Recalling former times means life twice blest.

XXIV

My birthday on the first of March, more rich  
Than all the other firsts, a day on which  
Even girls send gifts to me, your altars now  
Receive the cakes and incense that I vow  
The fifty-seventh time. May I make bold  
That you add eighteen years that, not *too* old  
Or dull with age, my life's three courses past,  
I reach the Elysian maiden's woods at last.  
Should I this Nestorean age acquire,

I will not even one more day desire.

XXV

MUCIUS

You saw him in the arena recently,  
His hand thrust in the fiery flame: if he  
Seems patient, tough and brave to you, your mind  
Resembles an Abderan's. For you'll find,  
When told, the vicious tunic near you, "Go,  
Insert your hand," it's better to say "No."

XXVI

VARUS

In Egypt with your vine-rod recently  
You were renowned and held the captaincy  
Over a hundred men, and yet, in vain  
Pledged to Quirinus, here you now remain  
On the Lagaeon shore, a refugee.  
With my wet tears it was not granted me  
To wash your cold limbs nor a rich bouquet  
Of frankincense on your sad pyre to spray.  
Eternal song, though, keeps your name for you  
Always. False Nile, can you deny this too?

XXVII

TO DIODORUS

The Senate's called to feast at your birthday,  
And almost every knight. To each you pay,  
Out of your dole, three hundred coins. It's said  
By all men, though, that you were never bred.

XXVIII

TO JANUS

Fair father of the glorious earthly sphere,  
The first to be explored, who once, right here,  
Where populous Rome wore down her passageways,  
Inhabited a meaner house, these days  
Your threshold's hung with Caesar's offerings,  
Four-faced, four-forumed. Grateful for such things  
As these great gifts, your iron gates safeguard,  
O holy one, with locks forever barred.

XXIX

TO SEXTILIANUS

The gift which in December you'd convey  
To me you sent your mistress; on my day  
Of birth the toga you'd have given me  
Has bought a dinner-gown of green; they're free,  
These days, those filles de joie of yours: you screw  
By courtesy of my largess to you.

XXX

Warm Formiae, sweet shore, when he takes flight  
From cruel Mars's town, each irksome plight  
Discarding wearily, you, over all,  
Apollinaris chooses. He won't call  
His blameless wife's sweet Tibur quite as sweet  
Nor Tusculan nor Agidan retreat;  
Praeneste, Antium he won't admire  
Nor Circe's coaxing promontory desire,  
Nor Dardan Caieta nor yet Liris,  
The Latian nymph Marica, Salmacis,  
In Lucrine washed. Here does a gentle breeze  
Stir Ocean's face, not lifeless are the seas:  
A painted boat is carried by their surge  
And helpful wind, just as, when she would purge  
The heat she loathes, a maiden wafts her fan  
Of purple so the healthful cold air can  
Be used. The fishing-line won't seek its catch  
In the distant sea: rather, the fish will snatch  
The line (one sees them from above) that's cast  
From bed or cot; if Nereus feels the blast  
Of Aeolus, the table, full of all  
Manner of provender, laughs at the squall:  
Th pond yields up the turbot, bass home-grown,  
The dainty moray swims up to his own  
Master, the usher summons up a choice  
Grey mullet, when the old ones hear his voice,  
They show themselves. But when does Rome permit  
Such joys? How many Formian days remit  
Within one year some leisurely concession  
To one tied to the financial profession  
In Rome? O blest doormen, and bailiffs too!  
Your masters *get* this: it *belongs* to you.

XXXI

TO CALLIODORUS

You traded for twelve hundred yesterday  
A slave, that you might dine well once. I say  
You didn't dine well: no, for at your feast  
A mullet was trhe chief display, a beast  
Of four pounds. That's no fish at all, you swine.  
That is a man, a man on whom you dine.

XXXII

TO CAEDICIANUS

Whose face, you ask me, on my painting's worn,  
Which I with rose and violet adorn?  
Marcus Antonius Primus in his prime:  
An old man sees himself here in his time  
Of youth. Could art show character and mind  
There'd be no lovelier work in all mankind.

XXXIII

TO MUNATIUS GALLUS

You best the Sabines of antiquity  
In artlessness and in your probity

You put to shame the old Athenian:  
I pray that, by the steady union  
Of your daughter, modest Venus tolerates  
Your father-in-law's illustrious estates  
Still being used by you. Thus, if my verse  
Some evil-minded envy were to curse  
As poisonous, avert that grudge from me,  
As now you do, and stress that nobody  
Who's read writes thus. My books approve this view:  
Pardon the man, denounce the defect too.

XXXIV

TO TRAJAN

The gods give you your just deserts and see  
That it's bestowed in perpetuity!  
You who restore the plundered patron's code  
(No freedman's exiles here!) the power we owed  
To keep the client safe. It's given you:  
Now you may be allowed to prove it too.

XXXV

SULPICIA

May all the girls who wish to gratify  
One man, all husbands who would satisfy  
One girl read her. She does not make her matter  
Medea's fury nor the grisly platter  
Of Thyestes; Scylla and Charybdis, she would guess,  
Never existed; honest tenderness  
She speaks of, play, endearments, raillery.  
Good judges of her work will say that she  
Is the most rascally, the most discreet:  
I'd think these jests, in Numa's stone retreat,  
Once were Egeria's too. You would, I'm sure,  
Had been more learned, Sappho, and demure  
With her as fellow-student or if she  
Had been your guide: if coy Phaon could see  
You side-by-side it's you with whom he'd stay.  
In vain: Calenus being sneaked away,  
The wife of Jupiter she'd never be,  
Nor that of Bacchus, nor Apollo's she.

XXXV

What Marseilles's vile smoke-rooms accumulate,  
Whatever jars their age appropriate  
Out of that fire, Munna, come from you:  
Your wretched friends you send this toxic brew  
By sea, by endless roads; the price is high  
As well, one which would be accepted by  
Falernian crocks, or Setine ones as well,  
Dear to their cellars. I think I can tell  
Why for so long a while lacks you. Why?  
It's so that you don't drink your own supply.

XXXVI

TO MATERNUS

Most diligent student of every sort  
Of litigation, king of the Latian court  
Through truthful words, if you have some transaction,  
To your old friend and townsman's satisfaction,  
With the Spanish sea - . Or rather do you wish  
To pull up filthy frogs and needle-fish,  
So straggly, upon Laurentium's strand  
Instead of sending back the captive and  
Mere three-pound mullet to his rocky lee?  
To eat a large shellfish from Sicily  
And tasteless (the *main course!*) or else a fish  
Smooth-coated, shell-cased, rather than a dish  
Of oysters that don't envy those abiding  
In Baiae, which house-slaves, without a hiding  
From their masters, eat? You'll drive into your toils  
A stinking vixen, clamouring. Foul spoils  
Will bite your hounds: while there the dripping line  
Just rising from the fishy deep will mine  
My hares. So while I'm speaking, empty nets  
The angler brings; the boasting huntsman gets  
A badger: all the seafood that you eat  
Comes from the Roman market. I repeat:  
If in the Spanish main you've some transaction,  
To your old friend and kinsman's satisfaction –

XXXVIII

TO CALENUS

O fifteen rapturous years the gods awarded  
To Sulpicia and you, duly recorded!  
Each night and day marked on the Indian shore's  
Sweet pebbles! O what squabbles, o what war  
Of Venus has your blessed bed and lamp,  
With Nicerotian redolence quite damp,  
Beheld! You've lived three lustra, the amount  
Of your life's span, your married days you count  
Alone. If Atropos were to confer  
Upon you what you long have asked of her –  
One more day – you would choose it rather than  
Four times the longitude of Nestor's span.

XXXIX

Lesbai, in Brutus' consulship you say  
That you were born. You lie. The light of day  
You saw at first in Numa's reign? You jest  
Again, for sure! For as your years attest,  
And as we've heard a lot of people say,  
You were created from Promethean clay.

XL

To me it's been reported constantly  
Of my own Polla being secretly  
Entangled with a nancy-boy. Well, I  
Unmasked them *at it*, and, Lupus, they lie!

XLI

TO PROCULEIA

In January you your aged spouse  
Desert, declaring “You may keep your house.”  
What’s wrong? Your sudden spleen you’ll not explain.  
I’ll tell you – he was praetor: I maintain  
That Cybele’s purple robe would set you back  
A hundred thousand, even should you slack  
In outlay, Plebs one-fifth of that. Divorce?  
Oh no, it’s clever bargaining, of course.

XLII

TO DINDYMUS

The down upon your cheek is barely there –  
Your breath, the sun, the slightest breeze may wear  
The soft fluff off. A quince that’s ripening  
Has such a film: a maiden’s fingering  
Will make it shine. Five hard kisses from me  
Upon your cheek and I will bearded be.

XLIII

TO PHILERAS

Your seventh wife’s being buried in your ground.  
No man with better harvest may be found.

XLIV

TO QUINTUS OVIDIUS

You’re off to Britain over emerald seas:  
Do you the Numan hills, Nomentan ease  
Dismiss? Do not your fields and fireside  
Hold back an old man? Joy you put aside:  
But Atropos does not ignore her thread,  
And every hour is scored against your head.  
You will have shown to your dear friend (and who  
Could disapprove of such a thing?) that you  
Hold loyalty above your life; I pray,  
Return to your Sabine state and stay  
A lengthy while and make sure that you tend  
To your own self as well as to each friend.

XLV

If my small books are delicate and sweet  
And if my flattering pages seem to treat  
Of eulogy, you think it tasteless, choosing  
To gnaw a rib, although thereby you’re losing  
The Laurentian boar I’m offering. If you  
Are quite content with vinegar, then do  
Drink Vatcan: it seems your stomach’s far  
From in affinity with my wine-jar.

XLVI

You’re anxious, Matho, every time you speak  
To make your utterings elegant and chic.  
Say something that is good occasionally,  
Or middling, or – unsatisfactory.

XLVII

TO MARTIAL

Sweet friend, what makes life better? Property  
Not gained by toil but left in legacy;  
A permanent hearth, kind soil, no litigation,  
A toga rarely worn, quiet contemplation,  
A free man's strength, sound body; openness  
With tact, congenial friends, a simpleness  
In entertaining, pleasant guests a night  
Not bibulous but free from every plight;  
A sleep to make the darkness brief; and may  
You be content with what you are and pray  
For nothing else: and for that endless night  
May you have neither dread nor appetite.

XLVIII

TO STELLA, NEPOS, CANIUS, CEREALIS AND FLACCUS

The eighth hour is announced by Isis' mob,  
The guard returns, another takes its job;  
Now baths are tempered, while the hour before  
Was much too humid and the sixth was more  
Appalling yet with Nero's undue heat.  
Can you make it? Now, my couch can seven seat,  
We're six, add Lupus. Mallows here you may  
Consume, which will a queasy gut allay,  
And various riches of my garden's fruits,  
Sent by my bailiff's wife; young leeks' cropped shoots,  
Squat lettuce, mint that makes one eructate,  
And rocket; sectioned eggs will consummate  
The rue-spiced lizard-fish, and there shall be  
A paunch that drips with the salinity  
Of tunny-fish. Good food! This little feast  
Will be one course – a kid, a hapless beast  
Snatched from a savage wolf, meatballs that need  
No carver's knife, beans, on which craftsmen feed,  
And tender sprouts. A chicken I will add,  
A ham on its fourth meal, and when you've had  
Enough, I'll serve ripe apples. Wine that's pure  
From a Nomentan jar, at six mature  
In the second of Frontinus's consulships.  
To crown it all, jests shall fall from our lips,  
Lacking all gall, a freedom that won't dread  
The morning, nothing that you'd wish unsaid.  
And let there be talk of the Green and Blue;  
My cups won't make a blabber out of you.

XLIX

TO COTTA

You drink from amethyst, drenched totally  
In black Opimian, yet you give to me  
A Setine just put down. "Gold cup?" you say.  
A leaden wine in golden cups? No way.

L

Let Victory break choice palms in misery;  
Beat, Kind Regard, your breast; and, Decency,

Don other clothes; into the savage fire,  
Sad Glory, cast your crowned locks; sin so dire!  
Dead, robbed of youth, you yoke the jet-black steeds  
So soon, that goal whereto your chariot leads  
(So fast! So brief a course!) - please tell me, why  
Even to your life itself was it so nigh?

LI

By Phoenix' ram the Tyrian bull's surpassed  
And winter flees the other Twin; at last  
Earth, trees put on their garb; the fields all smile;  
But o Faustinus, for so long a while  
You're robbed of Rome. O suns! O tunicked ease!  
O grove! Anxur resplendent in its seas,  
The firm-packed sandy shore, the couch that marks  
Not just one water, seeing here the barques  
Of river, there of sea! And yet nowhere  
Are three warm baths, there are no theatres there  
(Marcellan or Pompeian); you can't see  
The four joint for a nor the sanctity  
Of Jove's own temple, nor the ones which glow  
Near their own heaven! You are wearied so,  
I guess, that to Quirinus you might state:  
Keep what is yours, what's mine, though, reinstate.

LII

NUMA

He saw the eunuch Tethys toga'd: yes,  
And called him a condemned adulteress.

LIII

SCORPUS

Rome, I'm that clamorous Circus' famous,  
Your short-lived pet. I'd not advanced too far  
Beyond twice twelve when, envious of me,  
The goddess Lachesis, each victory  
That I had had computing, my life's span  
Decided was that of an aged man.

LIV

TO OLUS

You lay a good table, covered, though. Well, you  
Are daft. That way, I'd have good tables too.

LV

MARULLA

When weighing with her fingers a hard knob  
(She takes her time when she is on *this* job!)  
She calls out pounds, sixths, scruples. When this thing,  
Post-work and –wrestling flops down, mimicking  
A slackened strap, she says it's much less weighty.  
That's not a hand. No, that's a steelyard, matey.



LVI  
TO GALLUS

You order me to serve you every day,  
Thrice, four times up your Aventine. I say  
Cascellius draws or mends a tooth decayed;  
Hyginus, hairs you burn out that have made  
Scarred eyes; a uvula that's suppurating  
Fannius removes sans knife; humiliating  
Slave-brands Eros wipes out; they say Hermes  
Is quite a Podalirius when he's  
Treating a hernia: who'll remedy  
The broken men? Won't you enlighten me?

LVII

Sextus, you used to send to me a pound  
Of silver plate, but now it has been downed  
To half, and pepper too. I never buy  
My pepper, Sextus, at a price that high.

LVIII

TO FRONTINUS

When I sojourned in Anxur's calm retreat,  
A nearer Baiae and a country-seat  
Along the coast, the grove not yet frequented  
By plaguey cicadas when we're tormented  
By flaming Cancer, and the waterway,  
I had the recreation then to pay  
Allegiance to the wise Pierides  
With you. Now massive Rome gives me no ease  
And wears me out. When will there be for me  
One day? I'm tossed upon the stormy sea  
Of Rome. I waste away in toilsome pain,  
A stubborn piece of earth do I maintain,  
Suburban soil, and keep a house near you,  
Divine Quirinus. None's a lover who  
Pays visits day and night. Such losses ill  
Befit a bard. I swear I love you still,  
By the gods and the Muses' sacred rites, although  
As a client I'm a careless so-and-so.

LIX

If one page bears one theme, you pass it by:  
Shorter, not better, is your taste. If I  
Serve you a fine meal culled from every store,  
You only want a dainty, nothing more.

LX

MUNNA

Used to two students in his academy,  
He begged from Caesar for the Law of Three.

LXI

Here lies in early gloom Erotion

Who in her sixth cold winter has passed on  
(A cruel fate!). Successor to my land,  
Let her small ghost have rites at your own hand  
Each year: and for that deed may your roof-tree  
Prosper and grow in perpetuity,  
And may no harm reach those whom you hold dear,  
And may this stone alone evoke a tear.

LXII

Spare your flock, teacher; may your long-haired class  
Of boys attend you and may many a lass\  
Adore you, may none have a greater band –  
No maths teacher, no teacher of shorthand.  
The flaming Lion roasts the glaring days,  
The blistered crop's made ripe by July's haze.  
The Scythian's hide, by bristling lashes pranked,  
Where Marsyas of Celaene was spanked,  
The scary rods, the teachers' pride – may all  
Leave off and may they sleep until the fall  
If boys in winter are in good condition,  
They'll certainly improve their erudition.

LXIII

The marble that you read is small, I grant,  
O traveller; the pyramids, however, shan't  
Outlast it nor the stones of Mausolus.  
Twice was my life at Roman Tarentus  
Approved and till my death lost nothing; and  
Ten children Juno gave me, all at hand  
To close my eyes (I had five girls, five boys).  
In marriage, too, I had the rarest joys  
Of high distinction, and my chastity  
Assigned just one male private part to me.

LXIV

TO POLLA

Should you my books pick up, don't with a frown  
Confront my jests. *Your* poet, the renown  
Of Helicon, our Muse, when he would sing  
Wild wars with his Pierian trumpeting,  
Unblushingly could say, "If I'm not queer,  
O Cotta, then what am I doing here?"

LXV

TO CHARMENION

You boast that you're Corinthian, and none  
Deny it; yet, since I'm a citizen  
Of Tagus, and a Spaniard and Celt,  
Why call me brother? Have you ever felt  
We look alike? Your locks are curled and sleek;  
My stiffened locks, though, of Hispania speak;  
You daily depilate, your utterance  
Is feeble, mine's more strong: the difference  
Of dove and eagle's not as great as that,  
Or of a timid doe and jungle cat.  
And therefore do not call me brother, mister,

Lest in a counterstroke I call you sister.

LXVI

TO THEOPOMPUS

Who was so harsh and insolent a man  
To make you be cook? Whoever can  
Allow a kitchens' grime your face to maim,  
Your hair polluted by a greasy flame?  
Who'll hold the crystal glasses in your stead,  
And ladles? Who'll mix the Falernian red  
And with his hand give it a sweeter savour?  
If such an end as this unhappy favour  
Remains for shining serving-boys, then, look,  
Let Jupiter make Ganymede his cook.

LXVII

PLOTIA

Pyrrha's daughter, Nestor's stepmum, she  
Whom as on old crone Niobe would see,  
Grandma to Laertes, and Thyestes'  
Mother-in-law and Priam's nurse, now she's  
Outlived the crows; with bald Melanthion she  
Lies dead at last, consumed with lechery.

LXIX

You're not from Rhodes or Mitylene or  
From Ephesus; Patrician Street is your  
Abode; your swarthy mother, never dyed  
With make-up, was Etruscan, and, beside,  
Your sturdy dad's from the vicinity  
Of Aricia, and yet you pile on me,  
In Greek, "My lord", "My honey" and "My life".  
For shame! You're from Egeria (Numa's wife!),  
Hersilia too. These terms are for a cot,  
And one in which a lover who is hot  
With lust lies with his mistress? You'd be pure  
And matronly when speaking? Your allure  
Falls short when you with wriggling hips display  
Such lewdness. Laelia, although you may  
Learn all the rules of Corinth totally  
By heart, you still will not a Lais be.

LXIX

TO POLLA

You guard your husband, but he doesn't station  
His guard for you. A spousal transmutation!

LXX

TO POTITUS

Wise man, because I've barely, in one year,  
Put out one book, you cause me to appear  
As litigant in a case for sloth. It's juster  
For you to be amazed that I can muster

One book at all. Days often slip away.  
I greet my friends before the break of day,  
Although not one of them returns my call.  
Many I compliment: none, none at all,  
Reciprocates. I seal a document  
At light-bearing Diana's shrine. I'm sent  
This way the first hour, then another way  
Four later. Consuls, praetors may waylay  
Me with their escort. Or I listen to  
A poet all day long. A lawyer you  
Cannot refuse nor any grammar teacher  
Nor rhetorician if he should beseech ya.  
At the tenth hour I bathe, exhausted quite,  
Then my allowance. When's there time to write?

LXXI

You pray your parents meet a happy end  
And long, and therefore read with love, my friend  
These few brief words. Rabirius has here  
Within this earth interred two shades so dear –  
A fairer lot the old have never seen.  
Their sixty years of marriage one serene  
And final night has ended. Just one pyre  
Commits two shades into the final fire.  
He seeks them, though, as having scanty years.  
There's nothing more dishonest than these tears.

LXXII

In vain, o Flatteries, you come to me  
With wretched, shameless words. No-one will see  
Me calling someone lord or god. There's no  
Place for you in the city. Therefore go  
Off to the turbaned Parthians, you base,  
Suppliant, crawling things. Go on and place  
Your lips against the soles of kings who smear  
Themselves with paint. There is no master here,  
A leader, sure, a trusted senator,  
The best of all, who is the reason for  
Unvarnished Truth, with her unperfumed hair,  
Returning from her Stygian home. Beware,  
O Rome, beneath this prince – think carefully:  
Do not say now what you said formerly.

LXXIII

TO MARCUS

There comes a welcome pledge of amity –  
My eloquent comrade's forwarded to me  
An Ausonian toga, which Apicius  
Would gladly use (though not Sulpicius),  
Maecenas too, Caesar's equestrian,  
Worth less if coming from another man:  
A sacrifice gains favour if not hewn  
By all, but it's from you. I would as soon  
Love my own name as this. But I must say  
That there is something having greater sway  
And sweeter than the name: that it was sent  
Through the care and thought of one who's eloquent.

LXXIV

Rome, spare the weary client-complimenter!  
 How many times must I, dab in the centre  
 Of toga'd escorts, earn in one whole day  
 My worthless brass when other folk will pay  
 To Scopus fifteen sacks full up with gold  
 For coming first? I would not be so bold  
 To claim the Apulian fields for recompense  
 For my wee books (that doesn't quite make sense).  
 The spicy Nile has no allure for me,  
 Nor Hybla, nor the Setine grape you'll see,  
 So dainty, on the apex of that height  
 Which has thw Pomptine marshes in its sight.  
 You ask me what I wish for? I reply  
 That what I *really* want is some shuteye.

LXXV

GALLA

She asked for twenty grand before and I  
 Confess that wasn't huge. The year's gone by:  
 "You'll give ten grand?" It seemed to me that she  
 Was asking me for more than formerly.  
 Six months went by: she asked for two - I said,  
 "I'll give you one," but she turned this down dead.  
 Two or three months - "Four hundred sesterces?"  
 These I denied to her - "A fourth of these?"  
 This seemed excessive too. A pittance made  
 Of twenty-five pence gave me a patron's aid.  
 She wanted that. "That sum I have supplied  
 To my slave," I said to her. Well, could she slide  
 Much further down than that? She did. And so  
 She bid herself for nothing. I said no.

LXXVI

Never did Carus do a more shameful thing  
 Than dying of fever - which was maddening  
 Itself. For it should at the very least  
 Have been a quartan one, that vicious beast  
 And deadly; it was surely only fair  
 That it be left to its own doctor's care.

LXXVIII

Macer, you're off to Salona-by-the -Sea;  
 An with you there will be rare loyalty,  
 And love of right and power, which, when again  
 It comes to us with justice in its train,  
 Will be the poorer. Happy citizen  
 Of that gold-manufacturing land of men,  
 You'll send yor governor back to us one day  
 With empty pockets and you'll bid him "Stay  
 A little!" and you'll speed him with a tear,  
 Dalmatian, when he leaves to come back here.  
 I seek the Celt and fierce Hiberian  
 While missing you. But any page which can  
 Reach you which has been written on with stalk  
 From fishy Tagus will of Macer talk:  
 May I be read among the bards whose verse

Is from an earlier age: may I seem worse  
Than few of them, and may Catullus be  
The only bard you rate better than me.

LXXIX

Right at the fourth milestone has Torquatus  
A palace, also Ortacilius  
Has bought a tiny field in this same spot.  
Of variegated marble-stone his hot  
Baths has Torquatus built – they shine so bright!  
Ortacilius raised a geyser. On his site  
A laurel-grove was placed by Torquatus:  
A hundred chestnuts? Ortacilius!  
The latter was a local vestryman,  
The former being consul, no less than  
That consul in his own evaluation.  
And so, in my considered estimation,  
As one big ox once burst a small frog, he  
Will by Torquatus wholly punctured be.

LXXX

EROS

He weeps when looking at the scarred murrine  
On cups, or slaves, or p'raps a rather fine  
Citrus-wood table, heaving a deep groan  
That he can't have the Saepta for his own,  
All paid for and lugged home for him to see.  
How many do the very same as he!  
The greater part of them dry-eyed, deride  
His tears but have tears of their own inside.

LXXXI

PHYLLIS

At dawn two came to fuck her, each athirst  
To see her in the altogether first.  
She said she'd yield to both at once and, yes,  
She did: one raised her foot and one her dress.

LXXXII

TO GALLUS

If my discomfort has utility  
In your affairs, at dawn I'll toga'd be  
Or midnight, and the blasts, both harsh and loud  
From the North I'll bear and suffer each storm-cloud  
And every snowfall. But if you don't gain  
One farthing by my groans and servile pain,  
Spare me my grief, leave off this drudgery  
Which doesn't help you and distresses me.

LXXXIII

TO MARINUS

You gather up your scanty locks and hide  
Your shiny scalp with hair from either side.

The wind, though, blows them back, your naked head  
Ringer here and there now by great curls instead.  
You'd think that Hermeros of Cyde stood  
Between two lovely boys, you surely would!  
Please have the goodness to confess to me  
That you are old, in plain simplicity,  
So finally you'll be *one* man! I swear  
There's nothing worse than a bald man covered with hair.

LXXXIV

TO CAEDICIANUS

Amazed that Afer doesn't go to bed?  
You see the girl he's dining with? 'Nuff said.

LXXXV

LADON

Now old, this Tiber captain bought some grounds  
Close to his precious stream. The Tiber pounds  
His fields so many times and overflows  
Its banks with wintry tides. Then he'll oppose  
The flood with his old boat, quite useless now  
And standing high upon the bank. And how?  
By filling it with stones. And in this way  
He can avert the mighty Tiber's sway.  
Who could believe a boat that sank could bring  
Assistance to the man who owned the thing?

LXXXVI

LAURUS

None's so inflamed by his new girl than he  
Is roused by playing ball. Most expertly  
He played when in his prime. Now sapped by time  
And playing ball no more, he's just a prime...!

\LXXXVII

O duteous Rome, commemorate, I pray,  
The eloquent Restitutus' natal day –  
October First! In every tongue, all prayers,  
Speak happy words. Keep mum, legal affairs!  
We keep a birthday. Wax, pray, absent be,  
And needy clients. Let the jollity  
Of cold December have wet serviettes  
And useless three-leaved tables. Oh, and let's  
Let rich men vie in generosity  
And let Agrippa's pompous tradesman be  
The bringer of Cadmean cloaks, and, yes,  
The man who's charged with midnight drunkenness  
And brawling should his barrister supply  
With dinner-suits. A girl disparaged by  
Her husband's a successful plaintiff? She  
Should give real sardonyxes -personally.  
Let old admirers of their own forebears  
Give Phidian chased plate, the huntsman hares,  
The bailiff kids, the anglers the prey  
That's plundered from the sea. And so, if they

Each sends hi own particular gift to you,  
What, Restitutus, will a poet do?

LXXXVIII

TO COTTA

You follow all the trials and you take  
Even the note-books. You are wide-awake.

LXXXIX

TO POLYCLITUS

Your Juno (noble work!) has brought you fame  
Which even Phidias would love to claim,  
Its beauty such as would have subjugated  
Those goddesses who had been evaluated  
On Ida with swift judgment. Jupiter  
Could have *your* Juno if he'd not loved *her*.

XC

TO LIGEIA

Why shave an aged coozie? Why do you  
Stir up your defunct body's residue?  
Such pranking fits young girls (you can't appear  
Even a crone); such action – do you hear? –  
In Hector's mother cannot even be  
Appealing, only in Andromache.  
You blunder if you think this is a quim  
(No cock will swear it has some charm for him).  
So come, if you have any modesty,  
Don't shear a lion that has ceased to be.

XCI

ALMO

He's flaccid with his eunuchs everywhere:  
Yet he complains his Polla cannot bear.

XCII

TO MARIUS

You celebrate a quiet life with me,  
One of age-old Atina's citizenry –  
These two plane-trees I now commend to you,  
A raw wood's gory, and the holm-oaks too,  
Of the Fauns, the altars of the Thunderer  
And of unkempt Silvanus, those that were  
Built by an unskilled bailiff, often sprayed  
With blood of lambs or kid, the goddess maid,  
Diana, of the sacred shrine, and he  
Who his chaste sister's hospitality

Accepts, Lord Mars, who rules my natal day,  
And dainty Flora's laurel-grove, which way  
She ran from Priapus. Should blood or balm  
Be what toy choose to please my small field's calm



Divinities, you'll say, "Wherever he  
May be, your Martial, though he absent be,  
Behold, with me he will with his right hand  
Make sacrifice to you. This understand,  
Imagine he is here and grant to each  
What either of these comrades may beseech.

XCIII

TO CLEMENS

If you are first to see Venetia's shore,  
Its fields decked with vined trellis, I implore,  
Take these my poems, unpublished, yet arrayed  
In purple wrapper, see that they're conveyed  
To Sabina of Atesta. As the rose  
When it's first plucked delights both eyes and nose,  
Just so the paper pleases when unspoiled,  
Because it's new and by the chin not soiled.

XCIV

My orchards are not by a Massylian beast  
Kept safe, Alcinous' grounds don't in the least  
Avail; my garden, though, has sanctuary  
And blossoms with many a Nomentan tree,  
And my poor apples dread no thief. Here are  
My yellow fall fruits grown in Subur-ah!

XCV

Your husband, Galla, sent right back to you  
The child you bore; your lover sent it too.  
It seems to me that they, without a doubt,  
Both say that they were never up your spout.

XCVI

You often wonder why I on and on  
Talk about distant folk, I who have gone  
Into old age in Latium and groan  
For gold-producing Tagus and my own  
Salo, and on the grounds of my fertile  
Abode look back. That country makes me smile  
Where few means render riches and the yield  
That's scant is luxury. This way the field  
Is fed, that way it feeds; here one cold spark  
Scarce feeds the fireplace, but there the dark  
Is quelled by mighty flame; the market here  
Can make you bankrupt, while hunger is dear,  
While here one's table's hid by the rich store  
Of one's own fields; here four togas or more  
Wear out in summer, there just one will do  
For four whole autumns. Go, then, man, and woo  
Great kings, where one place proffers to you what  
A friend of yours, Avitus, just cannot.

XCVII

TO NUMA

The slender pyre ready for the flame,

The weeping wife with myrrh and cassia came,  
Grave, bier, anointer were prepared. Then you  
Selected me as heir and then – pulled through.

XCVIII

TO PUBLIUS

A slave more sensual than the sodomite  
Of Ida pours my Caecuban, more bright  
Than daughter, mother, sister, wife, as she  
Reclines at table. You want me to see  
Your lamps, old citrus-tables, standing square  
On legs of ivory? As I lie there,  
Lest you suspect me, show me from your mass  
And squalid stead some scruffy, silly-ass,  
Short-haired and puny little men. You will  
By spite like this be made to feel quite ill:  
You really can't possess, it's plain to see,  
Such morals and such slaves concurrently.

XCIX

JULIUS RUFUS

If these features of Socrates had been  
Those of a Roman, we would all have seen  
That self-same face, each separate lineament  
That Julius Rufus' *Satires* represent.

C

Why mix your books with mine, you fool? Why do  
You want a book, you wretch, at odds with you?  
Why shepherd wolves and lions. Why restyle  
An owl and make of it an eagle? While  
You may have one swift –all well and good –  
Yet what you run on is a leg of wood.

CI

TO GABBA

Shoud you from River Styx return, old man,  
Augustus's favoured comedian,  
If Trajan's man were caught in jesting duel  
With you, someone will say: "Be quiet, fool!"

CII

TO AVITUS

You're controverting the paternity  
Of Philinus, who's a man of celibacy?  
Ask Gaditanus - he can answer you,  
Composing nothing yet a poet too.

CIII

Co-townsmen of the craggy mountainside  
Of Augustan Bilbilis, the hurrying tide  
Of Salo circling you, does the great fame

Of Martial please your soul? For I became  
Your glory and repute. Verona could  
Not owe Catullus more: indeed she would  
Accept me as her own quite equally.  
It's four and thirty years since, without me,  
You offered Ceres rustic cakes, while home  
Has been for me the walls of splendid Rome:  
The Italian realm has turned by hair quite grey.  
If with a kindly heart you were to say  
I'm welcome, then I'd come, but if you lack  
That spirit and grow harsh, I can go back.

#### CIV

Go, Flavus' fellow-traveller, go, book  
Far 'cross the sea, and may the water look  
With kindness upon you so you might  
With favourable winds seek out the height  
Of Spanish Tarraco: you'd swiftly drive  
To high Bilbilis; soon you will arrive  
At the fifth stage, perhaps, at your Salo.  
What do I ask? I ask that, as you go,  
You greet my friends (so few of them, one fears,  
And never seen in four and thirty years)  
And intimate to Flavus now and then  
That he should find for me a pleasant den  
At a beneficial price, not too much work  
To keep it clean, to make your father shirk.  
That's all. I hear the blustering skipper yell  
And chastise the delay. And now a swell  
Much kinder than before I can espy  
Unfastening the harbour. So goodbye.  
You know, I think, that there is not a ship  
One passenger can hold back from its trip.

#### BOOK XI

##### I

Where are you off to, idle book, pranked out  
In such uncommon purple? I've no doubt  
It's to Parthenius. Well, off you go!  
Come back unread, for he peruses no  
Real books, but just petitions; he's no leisure  
For Muses or he'd have the time for pleasure  
At home. Do you not think you're happy quite  
If lesser men in you will take delight?  
Go to nearby Quirinus' portico,  
For Pompey doesn't have a mob that's so  
Bone idle, and Agenor's daughter too,  
And Argo's spotted chief. There are a few  
Who may unroll my ludicrosities,  
Fit just for worms, and find something to please,  
But only after bets and idle prattle  
That circulates on every chariot battle.

##### II

Grim frowns, the austere brows of stern Cato,  
The daughter of ploughman Fabricius, go!  
You too, disguised Conceit, Propriety,  
And what in private we would never be.

“Ho! Saturnalia!” my verses say  
And, Nerva, under your command we may  
With pleasure keep it sacred. Puritan  
Who like to read, learn the grammarian,  
Rough Santra, off by heart: I’ve naught, you see,  
To do with you. This book belongs to me.

### III

It’s not just urban sloth that takes delight  
In my Muse: my epigrams do not alight  
On vacant ears. A rough centurion thumbs  
Through them as Geta’s frosty weather comes  
To his army camp. And Britain, they say, sings  
Them too. So what? My wallet of these things  
Knows nothing. What could my immortal verse  
Create, what battles could my Muse rehearse  
With trumpet-blasts, if, now our deity  
Is back. Maecenas could return to me.

### IV

O Phrygian rites and sacred deities  
Whom Aeneas, Troy’s heir, preferred to seize  
Over Laomedon’s wealth doomed for the flame,  
And Jove, depicted in the endless fame  
Of gold, now for the first time, Juno too,  
Minerva (wholly his) and, Janus, you  
Who made a three-time consul of our lord,  
I piously beg, be Nerva’s loyal ward  
And the Senate’s; by his principles alone  
Pray let it live and Nerva by his own.

### V

#### TO TRAJAN

Both you and Numa honoured truth and right,  
Yet he was poor. It could be quite a fight  
Not to trade principles for wealth and be  
Numa, though besting numerous Croesi.  
If all the illustrious ancients came again,  
Elysium denuded of its men,  
Camillus champion of liberty,  
Unconquered, would greet you with piety,  
You’ll offer gold up to Fabricius  
And he’ll accept it from you; and Brutus  
Beneath your sovereignty will celebrate  
And bloody Sulla will capitulate  
To you; the Great One will an lly be  
In private life, and all his property  
Will Crassus give you. Even Cato, were  
He brought from Hell, would be a follower.

### VI

On the old sickle-bearer’s festal days,  
When gambling’s king, you will my languid lays  
Allow, capped Rome. I think you’ve smiled; and so  
I may, it’s not taboo. You pale cares, go;  
Whatever comes to mind, let me without  
Grim meditation, show it. Boys, pour me

Half wine, half water (what to Nero gave  
Pythagoras); now, Dindymus, my slave,  
Blend them, and often: sober, I can't write  
A thing; and as I drink, the combined might  
Of fifteen bards will help me; now kiss me  
With kisses of Catullan quantity:  
If I get the amount he wanted sent,  
Catullus' sparrow I'll to you present.

## VII

### TO PAULA

At least you won't to your dim husbands say,  
When keen to see your lover far away,  
"Caesar requires me at dawn to go  
To his Alban villa" or "Circeii". No,  
That tactic's out. Now under Nerva's reign  
You may be a Penelope – again  
You're clearly foiled by your inveterate bent  
And itch. Poor dear, what will you do? Invent  
A sickly friend? Your husband sticks like glue  
And visits brother, mum and dad with you.  
What clever ruses, then, will you conceive?  
Some other wanton may make him believe  
That she's hysterical and wants to sit  
In Sinuessa's lake. Well, this is it =  
You act much better, when you want to ball,  
By favouring to tell your husband all.

## VIII

### TO SABINUS

The puff of balm that yesterday's phial breathes out,  
The final flutter from a curved jet-spout;  
The whiff of apples in their winter crate  
Maturing, and the scent the fields create  
With burgeoning springtime leaves, and of a dress  
Of silk when taken from a Palatine press,  
Of amber heated by a maiden's hand,  
A broken jar, on someone's distant land,  
Of dark Falernian, or a grove of bees  
Brought here from Sicily; as well as these,  
Of Cosmus' every alabaster box,  
Gods' shrines, a coronet spilled from the locks  
Of some rich man. Why speak of each? They're not  
Sufficient. Mix them all and then you've got  
The kisses of my boy and dawn. Do you  
Desire to know his name? I'll tell you true  
If just the kisses make you ask. And so  
You swore. O, it's too much you want to know.

## IX

### MEMOR

Jove's leaves exalting, this fine theatre man  
Is breathing here through art Apellean.

## X

## TURNUS

He brought to Satire great capacity.  
Why not to Memor's poems? Fraternity.

### XI

Away, boy, with this chaliced crockery  
And warm Nile's embossed glasses. Give to me  
Cups worn by ancient lips, washed by an aide  
With short hair. Ancient honour should be paid  
Once more to our board. For you it is OK  
To drink from jewelled cups, who feel you may  
Break Mentor's handiwork and turn that art  
Into a chamberpot to please your tart.

### XII

#### TO ZOÏLUS

May you be granted even a *seven*-sons' law  
Just as no-one assigns you a maw or paw.

### XIII

#### PARIS

O traveller who tread the Flaminian Way,  
Don't shun this noble marble stone, I pray.  
Rome's joy, Nile's wit, incarnate art and grace,  
A playful joker who has found a place  
As the distress of Rome and of its cheer,  
Each Venus and each Cupid, remains here.

### XIV

Don't bury the dwarf farmer, heirs: for he  
Would choke on earth however light it be.

### XV

#### TO APOLLINARIS

Some of my booklets Cato's wife could read  
Or the grim Sabine dames; let this one breed  
Laughter from first to last and conquer all  
The other books in smut, so let it fall  
Down drunk on wine and never be too shy  
To smear on Cosmus' ointments and to lie  
With boys, love girls, and to meander when  
It speaks of the appendages of men  
Whence we are born, the fathers of us all.  
Why, even sacred Numa used to call  
Them *cocks*. These poems are Saturn's, you must see,  
And don't reflect my own morality.

### XVI

O over-prudent reader, please depart;  
I write for those who cherish witty art.  
My pages with Priapean verse cavort  
And with a dancer from Cadiz consort,

Beating her drum. Your cock, time and again,  
Will stiffly nudge your cloak, though even men  
Like Curius and Fabricius bow to you  
In prudery! My naughtinesses, too,  
Girls in their cups will read, though they may be  
Patavian ladies. Blushing rosily,  
Lucratia, seeing Brutus, dropped my book.  
Leave, Brutus – now she'll take another rlook.

XVII

TO SABINUS

My book's not all for reading in the night:  
You'll material also for daylight.

XVIII

TO LUPUS

You gave to me a suburban estate –  
My window holds one bigger. Can you rate  
This holding an estate? One plant of rue  
Will make Diana's grove and barely do  
To shield a shrill cicada's wing, confer  
Upon an ant just one day's provender;  
A sleeping rose's petals cover it,  
In which you'll find that no more grass will fit  
Than will green pepper or a Cosmean leaf.  
Within this grove it's stretching the belief  
To say a cucumber could lie down straight  
Or a snake stretch out; it won't accommodate  
With food one caterpillar; gnats will die  
Once they have eaten up the willow. I  
Possess a mole to plough the ground and dig;  
Mushrooms can't swell, nor violets grow, the fig  
Can't split. A mouse despoils my boundaries,  
Which makes my manager with terror freeze  
As at the Calydonian boar; my yield,  
Brought by the claw of Procne from the field,  
Lies in the swallow's nest; though standing there  
Sans scythe and prick there's no room anywhere  
For Priapus. Hardly a small snail-shell  
Is needed for the wine; the must as well  
Needs just a pitch-sealed nut. Well, you have erred  
But only by one letter in one word:  
For at the time that you gave me fee,  
A feed's what I'd prefer you'd given me.

XIX

TO GALLA

Why won't I marry you You're bright. My hammer  
Will oftentimes commit a breach of grammar.

XX

Read six wanton Augustan lines, snide guy,  
Who read all Latin with a jaundiced eye:  
"Glaphyra's fucked by Antony: for that  
Has Fulvia devised a tit-for-tat –

That *I* fuck *her*. Fuck Fulvia? How come  
If Manius begged me to invade his bum?  
Am I to do it? If I'm wise, no way.  
'It's fuck or fight,' she says. I have to say  
My life is less important than my dong.  
So sound the trumpets! Caesar, for every song  
In my lewd books you've vindicated me:  
For you speak with a Roman clarity.

XXI

LYDIA

She's built as broadly as the rump we see  
Upon some bronze equestrian statuary,  
As the swift hoop with tinkling rings, the wheel  
That the extended springboards often feel  
When acrobats leap on them, or, again,  
The worn-out shoe that's soaked with mud and rain,  
The ample net for wandering thrushes waiting,  
The awning when the South Wind starts abating  
On Pompey's stage, a bracelet that just might  
Slip from the arm of some sick sodomite  
Who's got consumption, or a pillow, p'raps,  
Stripped of Leuconian stuffing, the old chaps  
That you might see a starveling Briton wear,  
A Ravennan pelican's filthy throat. I swear  
They say I fucked her in a pool. For me,  
It seems the pool itself was the fuckee.

XXII

White-cheeked Galaesus' tender lips you bruise,  
You lie with Ganymede (that's hardly news).  
This too much - enough! At least don't stir  
Your rod with jerking hands (sin heavier  
With tender boys than what your yard may do);  
That hand makes you a man, and quickly too:  
Now comes a goatish smell, fast-growing hair,  
A beard to startle mothers; now you care  
No more to bathe in broad daylight. It's clear  
That man is split by nature – one part here  
Is for the women, one part there for men.  
That's how it works! Well, use your own part, then.

XXIII

On any terms would Sila marry me –  
I don't want her at all. And yet when she  
Kept on, I said, "As dowry you shall bring  
A million in gold – a little thing!  
What could be less? Nor will I roger you  
Upon our wedding night; we shall have two  
Different beds; and you will not complain  
When I embrace my mistress, and again,  
If bidden you will send your maid to me  
A wanton slave will kiss me (and you'll see  
It all), whether he's mine or yours. You'll dine  
With me but, lest your garment touches mine,  
We'll lie apart. You'll kiss infrequently  
And never on your own authority,  
But like an aged mother, not a bride;



So, Sila, if you can all this abide  
And find there's nothing you can't go through,  
Then there's a husband waiting here for you.

XXIV

TO LABULLUS

I walk you home, to all your babbling  
I lend an ear, while praising everything  
You say and do. How many lines of verse  
Could have been penned in all that while? A curse,  
You must admit, that what in every part  
Of Rome is read, what senators know by heart,  
What's sought by strangers, by the knights not mocked,  
Praised by the lawyers, by the poets knocked –  
Is lost because of you. Can nay man  
Endure it? Is it fair? That while you can  
Increase your clientele, my books abate?  
In thirty days I'm able to create  
Barely one page. This is what comes about  
When poets feel the need for eating out.

XXV

LINUS

That pole of his, known to girls everywhere,  
Has failed to stand. Then, tongue, beware.

XXVI

TELESPHORUS

My pleasant solace and my soothing care  
(No peer in kissing breathing anywhere),  
Kiss me with lips that old Falernian  
Has moistened, give me cups less brimming than  
Before because of your own mouth. If you  
Should add the ecstasy of love so true  
To all of this, then I could not deny  
With Ganymede Jove is less blessed than I.

XXVII

TO FLACCUS

You're made of iron if your cock can stand  
After your girl solicits you to hand  
Her six fish-pickle helpings, or maybe  
Two cuts of tunny, or a lizard of the sea  
(A bunch of grapes she thinks she doesn't deserve):  
In a dark crockpot her maid will blithely serve  
Her anchovy sauce which she straightway gulps down;  
All decency aside and with a frown  
She begs five greasy skins so she can sew  
A tiny mantle. Let my mistress go  
And ask me for a pound of nard-and-myrrh,  
Two sardonyxes, emeralds. Let her  
Choose nought but prime silk from the Tuscan road,  
Or let her beg, as if they were a load  
Of pence, a hundred coins of gold. Now, please,

Do you believe that I would give all these  
To a girl? No, I don't long for such largess,  
But that a girl is worthy of them? Yes.

XXVIII

NASICA

Doc Euctus's Hylas this "lunatic"  
Attacked and buggered. I don't think he's sick!

XXIX

TO PHYLLIS

When you begin to frig with ancient paw  
My flaccid cock, your fingers rub me raw:  
For when you say "my mouse", "my flame" to me,  
I need at least for my recovery  
Ten hours, I think. You don't know flatteries:  
Say, "Here's a hundred thousand sesterces,  
The well-tilled acres of some Setine land."  
Some wine, a townhouse, servants would be grand,  
Decked dishes, tables. Fingers I don't need:  
It's frigging such as that which is my creed.

XXX

TO ZOÏLUS

You say that barristers and men of verse  
Have stinking breath. A sucker, though, smells worse.

XXXI

CAECILIUS

To gourds he's like an Atreus: as if he  
Were butchering Thyestes' progeny  
He mangles them and cuts them up into  
A thousand pieces. Starightaway will you  
Eat them as appetizers; they'll be set  
With first and second courses; further yet,  
Third course will have them; later on one sees  
Them as dessert. The baker, out of these,  
Makes boring cakes, and many types of sweets,  
And hence the cook makes various mincemeats  
(You'd think them beans or lentils), counterfeit  
Blood-puddings and mushrooms, perhaps a bit  
Of tunny's tail or sprats. The manager  
Chimes in with various flavours to confer  
Capellian sweetmeats to a leaf of rue  
(The cunning chap!). And thus he's able to  
Fill plates, side-dishes, polished saucers and  
His deep-set bowls. He thinks that this is grand,  
Quite sumptuous and elegant that one penny  
Is laid out to provide courses that many.

XXXII

TO NESTOR

No toga, fire, bug-filled bed you own,  
No mat that's been with thirsty rushes sewn,  
No servant, young or old, maid, infant, no  
Lock, key, dog, cup. To seem a pauper, though,  
And designated thus is all your aim,  
To find among the populace a name.  
No! You self-flatter with vain dignity,  
For having nothing isn't poverty.

XXXIII

More often after Nero's death, the Green  
Is victor and with many prizes seen.  
Now, grudging envy, say that Nero beat you.  
The Green, though, was the one who did unseat you.

XXXIV

APER

He's bought a house – an owl, though, wouldn't care  
To live in it. It's dark and old, this lair.  
Urbane Maro owns land next door, so, though  
He'll dine in splendour, he will not lodge so.

XXXV

TO FABULLUS

You call three hundred guests, strangers to me;  
When I decline your hospitality  
You're gobsmacked and you fight with me and moan.  
It's hardly pleasant, though, to dine alone.

XXXVI

With a white stone Gaius Julius marks this day,  
Called back by these my prayers: I have to say  
I'm glad that I despaired, as though the Fates  
Had cut the thread; the man less celebrates  
Who has no fears. Hypnus, you laggard, pour  
Falernian. Such vows of mine call for  
An aged jar: let's drink five, six and eight  
Measures and these three names incorporate.

XXXVII

TO ZOÏLUS

You're pleased to set your jewel on one whole pound  
Of gold and your sad sardonyx confound?  
That ring adorned your legs just recently:  
A weight like that and fingers don't agree.

XXXVIII

TO AULUS

Some twenty grand just bought a muleteer.  
A heavy price? No, for he couldn't hear.

XXXIX

## TO CHARIDEMUS

You rocked my cradle, were my constant friend  
And boyhood guardian. Now black hairs descend  
From my shaved beard and darken my napkin,  
My girl complains my lips now prick her skin;  
To you I haven't grown at all: at you  
My bailiff shrinks in fear, my treasurer too,  
And all the house you panic. As for me,  
No play, no wooing, zero liberty  
While you're allowed free license. You complain,  
Grab, keep a watch, breathe heavy sighs and cane  
(Your anger cannot stop you). If I wear  
A purple cloak or brilliantine my hair,  
You shout, "Your dad never did that, you know."  
With furrowed brow you count my cups as though  
The jar had been from your own cellar. Mum!  
I cannot bear a freedman who's become  
A Cato. That I have now grown into  
A man my mistress will impart to you.

## XL

## LUPERCUS AND GLYCERA

He loves this beauty, he's her sole conductor  
And lover. Kvetching sadly he's not fucked her  
In six whole months, he told one who asked for  
The reason for it that her teeth were sore.

## XLI

## THE SHEPHERD AMYNTAS

Of the fame and fatness of his herd so rapt  
In pride, keen to oblige that flock, he snapped  
The branches and the foliage, then took  
Off after all the booty that he shook.  
The unhappy grove his father would not keep  
From dire ruin, on the funeral heap  
Committing all his timber doomed to die.  
O Lygdus, let Iollas who lives nearby  
Keep his swine fat: it is enough for me  
If you correctly note the quantity.

## XLII

## TO CAECILIANUS

You want spry epigrams? A theme that's dull  
Is what you're wanting. Is it possible?  
Hyblan and Hymettian honey you wish to see  
And give Corsican thyme to Attic bees.

## XLIII

You caught me in a boy and yelled at me,  
"I've got an ass as well, man, can't you see?"  
This to lewd Jove did Juno often say!  
Yet with the adult Ganymede he lay.  
His bow put down, Hercules raped Hylas.

Do you believe that Megara had no ass?  
Phoebus was racked when Daphne ran away:  
A Spartan lad, though, would the flames allay.  
Briseis often turned, yet Hercules  
Preferred his smooth boyfriend. And so, wife, please  
Don't give male names for what you have and so  
Think that you have two coozies down below.

XLIV

Childless and rich and very old are you;  
But do you think that every friendship's true?  
Some are – those when you're young and those when poor.  
New friends love death when you are at its door.

XLV

TO CANTHARUS

Whatever numbered cubicle you see,  
If boy or girl shows curiosity,  
With door, drapes, lock you won't be satisfied –  
No, greater secrecy must be supplied:  
The smallest chink's smeared over, eyelets, too,  
A cheeky needle stitches up for you.  
None has a tender modesty so great  
As you, be he a pederast or straight.

XLVI

TO MAEVIUS

Except in sleep, you cannot raise your peg,  
And you've begun to dribble down your leg;  
You beat that shrivelled cock till you're quite dead  
And still it will not lift its lifeless head.  
In cunts and bums you look for satisfaction.  
In vain! Look up – there aged cocks find action.

XLVII

LATTARA

Why does he shun all baths where girls parade?  
So's not to fuck. Why in Pompeian shade  
Does he not stroll in idleness? And why  
Does he Isis's Temple pass right by?  
So's not to fuck. And why, his body yellow  
With Lacedaemonian ointment, does this fellow  
Plunge in the Virgin's icy stream? So's not  
To fuck. Although this man can surely blot  
Out women from his life, yet he will suck  
A cunt. Why does he so? So's not to fuck.

XLVIII

SILIUS

Owning a home of eloquent Cicero,  
He honours now the monument of Maro.  
No other heir or owner of his house  
Or of his tomb would either man espouse.

XLIX

SILIUS

One man there was, a poor one, to revere  
Virgil's sad bones and holy name. The dear  
Departed he would save and glorify,  
No less a bard himself, too, by the by.

L

You're always plundering me in my obsession:  
Such guile to get my goods in your possession!  
Your lying maid weeps that you've lost right here  
A mirror, jewelled ring or, from your ear,  
A pearl. Filched silks are turned to gain one day,  
The next an empty casket you display  
Of Cosmus' perfume; black Falernian  
In a crumbling jar you crave so that you can  
Hire you some gossiping witch to purify  
Your dreams; and now you pressure me to buy  
A two-pound mullet or a huge sea-bass,  
A dinner is arranged by some rich lass,  
A friend of yours, chez toi. Please let there be  
Some modesty and in the end please see  
Some right, some justice. I deny to you  
Nothing – Phyllis, deny me nothing too.

LI

The column which the girls of Priapus  
Adore's no greater than what Titius  
Possesses. In his spacious baths will he  
Perform ablutions with no company  
To bother him. And yet this massive knob  
Leaves little space for him to do the job.

LII

TO IULIUS CEREALIS

You'll dine well at my house: if you've no date  
That's better, come. You may arrive for eight.  
We'll bathe together just before we dine:  
You know Stephanus' baths are close to mine.  
You first will have a lettuce that will let  
Your bowels move, then next some shoots you'll get  
Of leeks, a tunny then, a salted dish,  
That's larger than a little lizard-fish,  
Yet garnished too with eggs in leaves of rue;  
And more eggs moderately roasted, too,  
A hunk, as well, of ripe Velabran cheese  
Plus olives that the cold Picenian breeze  
Has brushed. Now that will whet your appetite.  
You want to know the rest? So that you might  
Show up, I'll lie: there'll be fish, mussels, tripe,  
Fat farm- and marsh-birds (creatures of this type  
Not even Stella serves except on rare  
Occasions). There's yet more I pledge. I swear  
I won't recite a word all night, though you  
Will read to me your "Giants" poem straight through

Or maybe you'll your "Pastorals" impart  
To us, which rivals deathless Virgil's art.

LIII

CLAUDIA RUFINA

Though sprung from woad-stained Britons, nonetheless  
She has a Latin soul. What gracefulness!  
Italian mothers could this lady claim  
As theirs, and Attic ones would so the same.  
Gods, bless her – she's borne children to her spouse,  
Her constant man, so, gods, pray, bless her house!  
She hopes they'll wed, though she's still young. Therefore  
May it please all the gods that evermore,  
Content with just one spouse, she'll feel the joys  
That comes with being mother of three boys.

LIV

Out of your filthy pocket, wicked cur,  
Give back the ointment, cassia and myrrh  
Smelling of death and incense from the pyre,  
Half-burned, and, snatched from off the funeral fire,  
The cinnamon. Your sinful hands compete  
In misdeeds, through instruction, with your feet.  
I'm not surprised that you're a thief today  
Who heretofore have been a runaway.

LV

TO URBICUS

So Lupus urges you to be a father?  
Ignore him: there is nothing he'd not rather  
Have happen. For a legacy-hunter's art  
Is *Seem to wish from what's far from your heart*.  
He prays you won't do what he asks. Let's say  
Cosconia says a baby's on the way:  
He goes as pale as one who *is* with child.  
But so that you may seem to be beguiled  
By his words, expire in such a way that he'll  
Believe that you've become a dad for real.

LVI

TO CHAREMON

Stoic in love with death, do you require  
That I your mind should worship and admire?  
A broken-handled jug, a hearth lukewarm  
And melancholy and the outward form  
Of a bare truckle-bed, a beggar's rug,  
A day/night toga (short) and many a bug  
Create that virtue. O brave soul who're able  
To do without black bread upon your table,  
Red vinegar's dregs and straw! Imagine your  
Pillows are stuffed with Gallic wool; what's more,  
A close-napped purple binds your couches, see  
In your mind's eye a boy who recently  
Mixed Caecuban and stunned your diners' eyes  
With rosy lips and now beside you lies:

You'll crave three times the span of Nestor's years,  
Missing no moment as each day appears.  
In hardship one can spurn life easily:  
He's strong, though, who can live in poverty.

LVII

You wonder that I send you poetry,  
Learned Severus, when your company  
I seek at dinner? Full is Jupiter  
Of ambrosia and nectar. We prefer  
To give him entrails raw and wine that's new.  
The gods have granted everything to you -  
Well then, if you don't want what you have got,  
What's there to stop you giving back the lot?

LVIII

TO TELESOPHROS

You see I'm tortured, wanting it. Well, you're  
Asking a lot: imagine I'd demur:  
Could I? Unless, when I say "Yes", I swear  
An oath, you snatch away from me that pair  
Of buttocks, which allowed much liberty  
To me. What if my barber said to me,  
His razor poised, "Release me! Where's your purse?"  
I'd promise. That is no barber – worse,  
A highwayman. Fear is a powerful force.  
But when the razor's packed away, of course  
I'll break his arms and legs. I'll nothing do  
To you, however, but, when I am through  
My masturbating, then my cock will tell  
Your grasping avarice to go to hell.

LIX

CHARINOS

Each finger sports six rings. He doesn't doff  
Them when he sleeps, nor does he take them off  
When bathing. Why's he do that, then? You cry.  
He doesn't have a ring-case, *that* is why.

LX

Who is the better lover? Chione  
Is prettier, but Phlogis, may I say,  
Is itchy – and her itch could elongate  
Old Priam's tool and will not tolerate  
Nestor to be so aged; every man  
Would want his girl to have it – one that can  
Be cured not by Hygieia but Kriton.  
Chione's passive – you'll not hear her moan,  
Who might as well be marble or not there.  
So, gods, if we're allowed so great a prayer  
And you are willing to bestow the same,  
Then may you grant us that Chione's frame  
Be grafted onto Phlogis and enrich  
Chione with the other's mighty itch.

LXI



NANNEIUS

With his tongue a husband, an adulterer  
With his mouth, than call-girls' faces filthier:  
When sluttish Leda saw him fully bare  
From a Suburan window, then and there  
She closed the brothel, opting now to kiss  
The middle of him, not his top. And this  
Is he who used to enter any part  
Of nether flesh and with his skilful art  
Foretell with confidence what would come out –  
A boy or girl (Rejoice, you cunts: no doubt  
*Your* work is done), but he can't make his tongue,  
His screwing tongue, erect, for while he clung  
To the tumescent womb and heard the cry  
Of bairns, that greedy part was rotted by  
A most unseemly malady, so he's  
Not pure *or* impure, thanks to this disease.

LXII

So Lesbia swears she never fucks for free.  
True. When she wants a fuck, *she* pays the fee.

LXIII

TO PHILOMUSUS

You watch me bathing and continuously  
Ask why I have smooth, large-pricked boys with me.  
I'll field your question without any fuss:  
They're there to poke those who are curious.

LXIV

TO FAUSTUS

I *don't* know what is in your letters to  
Those girls but *know* what they *don't* write to *you*.

LXV

TO IUSTINUS

You call six hundred folk to celebrate  
Your birthday, and among them (*not* of late)  
Was I, not last of all, and welcome, too.  
The same solemnities tomorrow you  
Will hold again: today a crowd there'll be,  
Your birthday shall tomorrow be for me.

LXVI

You're an informer, slanderer, fellator,  
A cheat as well, a master-gladiator,  
A pimp. Vacerra, I must say it's funny  
All this has not earned you a heap of money.

LXVII

You give me nothing while you're still alive,

But you assure me that, if I survive  
Yourself, you'll give me something. You're not scant  
Of reason – you know, Maro, what I want.

LXVIII

TO MATHO

You ask small things of great men, yet you've got  
Nought from them. Shame on you! Ask for a lot!

LXIX

The amphitheatre's trainers fostered me,  
Wild in the woods, in domesticity  
Gentle, a huntress, Lydia by name,  
Most true to my master Dexter, who would claim  
He'd choose me over Erigone's hound  
Or that which is by Dicte's race renowned  
And followed Cephalus to Heaven's height  
Where dwells the goddess, Bringer of the Light,  
Not taken by long years or fruitless age  
As was Argos, in lightning, foaming rage  
A wild boar bit me, one as large as you  
Once bred, Calydon, or Erymanthus too.  
No matter though too soon to Hades' sate  
I'm sent – no nobler end could yet be made.

LXX

TO TUCCA

The slaves you purchased for a hundred g –  
Could you sell them? Have you the bravery  
To sell your "masters"? Can their wheedling,  
Chat, frank complaints, their necks that bear the sting  
Of your toothmarks not move you? Shame! Raise high  
Their shifts and see their groins. There you may spy  
Their cocks, manipulated by your hand.  
If money pleases you, then sell your land,  
Your silver-plate, murrine, house, tables too.  
Go sell your old slaves – they will pardon you –  
Your father's; keep your boys, sell everything,  
You wretch. Without a doubt it's squandering  
To buy them in the first place, don't you know?  
You squander so much more to sell them, though.

LXXI

Telling her aged husband she is mad,  
Leda regrets that she needs to be had;  
"My health's not worth the act," I head her cry  
In misery. "I would prefer to die."  
"Please don't curtail your youth," he begs of her,  
Allowing what he can't do to occur.  
Then – whoosh! – come male quacks, female quacks depart.  
Up go her legs! A rigid healing art!

LXXII

NATTA

‘A sodomite’s pippin’ he calls his phallus:  
Compared with that, Priapus is a Gallus.

LXXIII

You’ll always come at my request, you swear,  
Lygdus, appointing when we’ll meet and where.  
In fruitless need long have I lain in bed,  
My hand so often serving in my stead.  
False boy, what curse for such deserts is made?  
To carry a one-eyed mistress’s sunshade.

LXXIV

Rhaetian Baccara commended his dick  
To the care to a certain healer of the sick:  
The two are for a girl in rivalry.  
Baccara soon a Gallic priest will be.

LXXV

TO CAELIA

Your slave bathes with you in a brass-bound suit.  
I ask you why – he plays nor lute nor flute.  
You’ve no desire, I think, to see his knob.  
Why go, then, to the bathhouse with the mob?  
Are we just eunuchs? Lest you seem something  
Resentful, please undo his fastening.

LXXVI

TO PAETUS

“Give me ten grand – two hundred thou from me  
Bucca has lost.” Don’t let the villainy  
Of others injure me: two hundred thou  
Composedly you lose – so, lose ten now!

LXXVII

VACERRA

All day in all the closets he will sit –  
He has an urge to dine and not to shit.

LXXVIII

TO VICTOR

Enjoy female embraces; things unknown  
To it your cock must learn; the red veil’s sewn  
For your intended: she is getting set,  
Your new bride; soon her razor she will whet  
For your young boys. Just once she’ll let you screw  
Her ass, while trembling at that lance, so new,  
And that first pain: mother and nurse will not  
Allow this more than once, saying: “You’ve got  
A wife there, not a boy.” What troubles, then,  
You’ll have if it remains an alien,  
That cunt of hers! Commit your new trainee  
To a Suburan brothel-mistress – she

Is bound to make a man of you; for surely  
A woman still intact instructs but poorly.

LXXIX

At the tenth hour I reached the first milestone,  
Convicted now of sloth. Your fault alone! –  
It's not the road's, nor is it mine. You see,  
Your own mules, Paetus, you dispatched to me.

LXXX

TO FLACCUS

Blessed Venus' golden shore, seductive gift  
Of honoured Nature, though I may uplift  
In praise a thousand Baiaes, all the same  
I could not praise sufficiently its fame.  
However, Martial I prefer. A prayer  
For both of them would hardly be quite fair.  
But if this boon should please the gods on high,  
O what a pleasure – Martial *and* Baiae!

LXXXI

The eunuch Dindymus annoyed Aegle  
(He shared her with an old man); there she lay,  
Quite dry. One man is weak and one is old:  
Each pines but all their labour leaves her cold.  
And so she prays to Venus for all three:  
“Make one young, make the other butch for me.”

LXXXII

PHILOSTRATUS

Returning home from bathing one twilight  
To rental digs he imitated quite  
Elpenor by a savage death: he tripped  
Down a long staircase. Nymphs, if he had sipped  
Not Sinuessa's but *your* waters, he  
Would not have risked such vunnerability.

LXXXIII

TO SOSIBIANUS

The rich, the childless only dine for free  
Chez vous: no better rental will we see.

LXXXIV

You've no desire quite yet for the Stygian shade?  
Have sense! Avoid this barber! Knives were made  
Less sharp that cut white arms when the frenzied throng  
Runs madly to the strains of Phrygian song,  
Thick hernias more gently by Alcon  
Are severed, as is each and every bone.  
Poor Cynics, Stoic chins let this man pare,  
Expose steeds' necks beneath the dusty hair  
Of manes. Just let him, on the promontory  
Of Scythia, scrape poor Prometheus – he

Will call his torturer to his bare torso,  
That bird; Pentheus will to his mother go  
In flight, and to the Maenads Orpheus  
On hearing the sharp steel of Antiochus  
Ring out. These scars you number on my chin,  
The sort you would expect to be found in  
A clapped-out boxer's face, an angry wife  
Did not occasion in domestic strife:  
It was this man's accursed piece of steel  
And hand. A goat's the only beast with real  
Intelligence: a beard he sports through life  
So he may always shun Antiochus' knife.

LXXXV

Starblasted during cunnilingus, screwing,  
Zoilus, is what you will now be doing.

LXXXVI

TO PARTHENOPACUS

To soothe your throat vexed by a hacking cough  
That's unrelenting, your G.P. reels off  
Nuts, honey, sweet cakes as a remedy –  
Whatever cures a child's petulancy.  
Yet all the day and night you hack away:  
It's not a cough you have – it's greed, I'd say.

LXXXVII

TO CHARIDEMUS

When rich, you fucked young lads, no girl to you  
Was known for quite a time. Now you pursue  
Old hags. What constraints has poverty!  
It causes heterosexuality.

LXXXVIII

TO LUPUS

Charisianus says that sodomy  
For many days had been beyond him. He,  
When lately friends demanded what could be a  
Reason for this, responded, "Diarrhoea".

LXXXIX

TO POLLA

Why send me laurels that you've not caressed?  
Roses that you have mangled would be best.

XC

You don't like gentle poems, but those which tear  
Through bluffs and lofty cliffs are more your fare,  
And you would say that this tops Hmer's lines:  
"Lucilius' prop, Metrophanes, reclines  
Beneath this earth; amazed you read "terrene  
Frugiferous" or what you might have seen

In spewed-out Accian or Pacuvian verse.  
Chrestillus, do you want me to rehearse  
The poems of your ancient bards? Well, I'll  
Be damned if you don't know a penile style.

XCI

Canace, Aeolis' child, lies buried here,  
Who left this earth while in her seventh year.  
The crime! You traveller, so quick to cry,  
Don't mourn the briefness of the life gone by.  
Death's form's more sad than death itself: her face  
Was by a foul disease, which took its place  
Upon her tender mouth, was devastated,  
So the remorseless scourge obliterated  
Her very kisses, and the funeral pyre  
Received but remnants of her mouth. Less dire  
A path this rash demise should have preferred.  
And yet the channel of each winsome word  
Was closed by hasty death lest harsh goddesses  
Should be persuaded by her sweet addresses.

XCII

TO ZOÏLUS

Men say that you are vicious. Well, they lie.  
You're not at all – no, you are Vice, say I.

XCIII

The poet Theodorus' edifice  
Where he composed burned down. Do you like this,  
Muses, Phoebus? You gods, what have you done?  
Both house and master did not burn as one.

XCIV

Your overflowing malice and your flak  
About my books all over I choke back.  
O poet who is circumcised, you're wise.  
This, too, I pardon – when you criticize  
My poems, you plunder them: you're wise there too,  
You roundhead poet. It is *thus* you *do*  
Torment me – that, Jerusalem-born, you plough  
My boy, circumcised poet. No, you vow  
By Jupiter's temple that it is not thus.  
No way! Cut poet, swear by Antiachus.

XCV

TO FLACCUS

When some fellators' kisses cross your path  
Think that your head's been plunged into a bath.

XCVI

TO A GERMAN

Here's Marcia, not Rhine: why push aside  
The boy so rudely from so rich a tide?  
It is not right that citizens should be

Thrust churlishly aside, barbarity,  
So this victorious fountain may allay  
The thirst of one who's under Roman sway.

XCVII

TO TELESILLA

A four-a-night man, yet four years won't do  
For me to do it even once with you.

XCVIII

TO FLACCUS

You can't escape a kisser. They pursue,  
Deatin you, press on you, meet up with you  
Wherever, here and there, at any time.  
No use your sickly sores, scabs caked in grime,  
Foul ulcers, bright-red pustules, lips appended  
With oily cream, an icicle suspended  
From a frozen nose. They kiss you when you're hot,  
They kiss you when you're cold and when you've got  
A kiss prepared for her you are to wed.  
If you should put a cowl about your head,  
You won't escape, a veil round your sedan  
Won't be of any service, no more than  
A litter (usually closed): through any rift  
A kisser bores. The *consulship* won't shift  
These folk, the tribuneship, the clamorous lector  
With his six lordly rods: this kissing victor  
Will climb to where you're sitting way up there  
Declaring statutes. He's just everywhere.  
You're flushed, you weep, you yawn, go for a swim,  
You take a shit – nothing will hinder him.  
There's just one remedy and it is this –  
Select as friend one you don't want to kiss.

XCIX

TO LESBIA

I've often seen when from your chair you rise,  
Your wretched clothes begin to sodomize.  
Both hands attempt to pluck them off, you cry.  
You groan, you wrench: they are constricted by  
Your massive buttocks, your Symplegades,  
And into that huge rump begin to ease  
Themselves. You'd cure this foul deformity?  
You shouldn't rise *or* sit, it seems to me.

C

Flaccus, I do not want a skinny lass  
Whose arms would fit my rings, whose scraggy ass  
Scrapes me, whose knees jab, from whose lumbar zone  
A saw is seen protruding, whose ass-bone  
Is like a spear. Do not conclude from that  
I want a mountain: I like flesh, not fat.

CI

TO FLACCUS

You saw Thaïs, that skinny chick? I swear  
That you saw something that just wasn't there.

CII

TO LYDIA

You've great skin tone but no expression. True,  
That was well said. That's so – as long as you  
Stay mum and lie as mute as any face  
Of wax or pigment, but you will misplace  
That tone as well when speaking. More abuse  
From speech no other woman can produce  
Than you. Don't let the aedile hear or see  
You. Talking pictures are a prodigy.

CIII

TO SAFRONIUS

You sound and look so modest that I'm rather  
Amazed that you've contrived to be a father.

CIV

TO HIS WIFE

Leave or adopt my ways: no Numa I,  
No Curius, Tattius. Pleasant nights go by  
For me in drinking healths. You quickly rise  
From drinking water, sadness in your eyes.  
Darkness you like: I love to play (as may  
My lamp attest) and sweat it out till day.  
Breast-bands and tunics, dark robes and such stuff  
Hide you: no woman can be nude enough  
For me when bedded. I'm attracted by  
Coaxing dove-kisses: those from you that I  
May hope for are the sort you'd give your granny  
At dawn. You never think to shake your fanny  
Or talk to me or oscillate my vine;  
It's just as if you were preparing wine  
And incense. Phrygian slaves would masturbate  
Behind the doors whenever Hector's mate  
Rode him, and while Odysseus lay asleep  
And snored, the chaste Penelope would keep  
Her hand there. Anal sex you'll not permit.  
Cornelia to Gracchus granted it,  
Julia to Pompey, Porcia to Brutus. Juno  
Was Ganymede to Jupiter, as you know,  
Before that Trojan servant mixed sweet wine.  
Well, if austerity suits you just fine,  
Then all day long Lucretia you should be;  
When night falls, though, I want Thaïs with me.

CV

Once a full pound, a fourth now you relay me.  
At least a half, Garricus, prithee pay me.

CVI



## TO VIBIUS MAXIMUS

Read only this if you've time to say "Hi":  
For you, although you are a busy guy,  
Aren't too industrious. You'll skip these, too,  
These mere four lines? How sensible of you!

### CVII

## TO SEPTICIANUS

You send my book, quite unrolled, back to me  
As though you'd read the thing entirely.  
You've read it all, I know, it's true, hooray!  
I trust you. I read your five books that way.

### CVIII

Reader, with such a long book you may be  
Quite satisfied, and yet you want from me  
A few more distichs. Yet my boys request  
Their rations and Lupus his interest.  
Reader, pay me. You're keeping mum and you  
Pretend that you don't understand? Adieu.

## BOOK XII

### I

The nets and the Molossian hounds don't fill  
The air with barking and the wood is still  
Because no boar's been found. Well, now you may,  
Priscus, use up some leisure-time to pay  
Attention to my little book. It's summer  
And spending time this won't be a bummer.

### II

## TO HIS POEMS

You went to coastal Pyrgi recently:  
Go by the Sacred Way, since it's dust-free.

### III

O foreign book, once used to being sent  
Quite recently from Rome, now you are bent  
*To* Rome from gold-producing Tagus' race  
And stark Salo, streams native to that place,  
My mighty land. No stranger shall you be,  
No visitor - that great fraternity,  
Your kin now sleep upon the lofty height  
Of Remus. Go, then (for you have the right)  
To that new, honoured temple, where you'll see  
A shrine, restored to the sodality  
Of Pieria. Or, if you wish, repair  
To the Subura's boundary, for there  
You'll find my consul's house, and down that way  
Is eloquent Stella's dwelling, wreathed in bay,  
Famed Stella, thirsting ever for the stream  
Of Ianthis, and the Castalian fount agleam

In pride with glassy torrent where, it's said,  
The Muses often drank. He. To be read,  
Will to the Senate, the community,  
The equestrians confer you, nor will he  
Peruse you with his cheeks completely dry.  
And yet why do you want a title? Why?  
Just let them read a verse or two, or three,  
The world will say that you belong to me.

#### IV

What Maecenas, of royal ancestry  
And an equestrian, turned out to be  
For Flaccus and for Marius and Maro,  
Illustrious bard, Priscus Terentius, so,  
As says this chattering fame, these old reports,  
Have you been to the nations of all sorts  
And Rome and me. My genius you design  
And all the power I show in every line  
Has come from you. It's you who've given me  
The free man's right tot inactivity.

#### V

#### TO NERVA

From my last two books' too-long toil I here  
Shorten the twelfth - a brief one shall appear.  
Let those you've given leisure read yet more:  
Perhaps you, too; read them, though, I implore.

#### VI

#### NERVA

Most mild, he has attained the Ausonian Hall.  
Now Helicon is available to all:  
Staunch fealty, happy Grace and chastened Power  
Return: long-lasting Terrors from this hour  
Are gone. Rome and all nations pray that we  
May always have such leaders, and may he  
Live long. A blessing on that heart (so rare)  
And on those manners, which Numa could wear  
Or Cato happily. An increment  
In meagre pay, protection, largesse (sent  
But rarely by kind gods) – these are allowed,  
And rightly so. But when we all were bowed  
Beneath a cruel chief and times for us  
Were trying, you dared to be virtuous.

#### VII

#### LIGEIA

If she's as many years as hairs we see  
On her entire head, well, then, she's three.

#### VIII

Rome, goddess of each nationality,  
Who has no peer or second, joyfully  
While calculating Trajan's future stages

Of life just lately through so many ages  
Saw in so great a chief a valorous,  
Young, warlike soldier, so she said to us  
While glorying in so fine a lord: “You who  
Rule Parthians, Seres, Thracians, Getae, too,  
Sauromatae, Britanni, come, for here  
I show to you a Caesar, never fear.

IX

Most gentle Caesar, Palma regulates  
Our Spaniards, and Peace beyond our gates  
Enjoys the undisturbed supremacy  
And for such kindly liberality  
We joyously give thanks: for you have shown  
To Roman folk those manners of your own.

X

AFRICANUS

A millionaire whose hounding still goes on.  
Excess is given to scores, enough to none.

XI

TO THE MUSE

Greet our Parthenius; who more copiously  
Drinks from the Aonian stream? Whose clarity  
Upon the lyre is greater as it pours  
From Pimpla’s cave? No-one Phoebus adores  
From the Pierian company more than you.  
If he has any leisure-time (yet who  
Are we to hope for this?), request my lays  
Be passed to Caesar with a little praise  
For my weak, small book: let these words be said  
(Just five of them): “This book by Rome is read.”

XII

TO POLLIO

You’re all assurance when you’ve drunk all night:  
At dawn, no follow-through. Drink at first light!

XIII

TO AUCTUS

Rich men think anger is a kind of gain:  
To hate is cheaper than to give, it’s plain.

XIV

Your rapid hunter use but sparingly  
And don’t go after hares so violently.  
The huntsman often has atoned his prey  
And been knocked down from off his mettled bay,  
Never to remount. Yes, even a plain may seize  
A nman: no ditch, mound, rocks, and yet plane-trees  
\Deceive. There’s always someone who will show

Such sights to you but let him be brought low  
With a lighter fate. If a perilous risk delights,  
Let us on boars of Tuscany set our sights.  
You like rash rides? Well, then, Priscus, beware:  
They'll often break a rider, not a hare.

XV

On the Palatine we see such scintillation,  
All given to the gods. In fascination  
At Scythian flames of emerald and gold  
Jove stares, amazed at all those toys which hold  
A haughty king's distressing luxury.  
Here there are cups quite fitting, we may see,  
For Jove and for his Phrygian serving-boy.  
We all, with Jupiter, great wealth enjoy,  
Yet (shame to recognize it!) recently  
We all, with Him, lived in great poverty.

XVI

You sold three fields, then purchased for your anus  
Three lads: you fuck three fields, then, Labienus.

XVII

TO LAETINUS

After so many days why groan you so  
And question why this fever does not go  
Away? It travels with you everywhere,  
It bathes with you, while mushrooms are its fare,  
Tripe, oysters, boar; it's tipsy on Setine  
Often, Falernian too, and drinks the wine  
Of Caecuba but when it has been strained  
Through snow, and it reclines, with balsam stained  
And wreathed with roses; on a feather-bed,  
A purple one, it sleeps; since it is fed  
So well and lives with you in luxury,  
You'd rather it seek Dama's company?

XVIII

TO JUVENAL

In loud Subura you are restlessly  
Meandering or treading possibly  
The hill of Queen Diana, and you're fanned  
By sweaty clothes through thresholds of the grand,  
Both Caelii tiring you as on you go:  
After so many years of winter's snow,  
My Bilbilis sought and accepted me,  
A rustic now, Bilbilis, proud to be  
The land of gold and iron. I idly bum  
Around Platea and Boterdum  
(Such uncouth Spanish names!), a pleasant sweat,  
It's such a long and rascal sleep I get  
Which often is not even broken by  
The third hour, and now I indemnify  
The constant sleeplessness of many a year  
(Full thirty); and the toga's unknown here;  
When asked for, the first tunic was supplied

From off a broken chair. The fireside,  
When I rise, with great oak-logs welcomes me,  
Culled from a wood in the vicinity;  
On it the bailiff's wife puts many a pot.  
The huntsman, whom in some dark, sylvan spot  
You'd wish to spend an hour or two, comes then.  
The smooth-shaved bailiff gives food to the men  
Then asks if he may cut his long hair. I  
Could like this live and like this surely die.

XIX

AEMILIUS

At the baths he eats eggs, lettuce, mackerel:  
"I'm not dining at home," his pals he'll tell.

XX

Why's Themison no wife? You ask me, mister.  
Fabullus. I'll explain – he has a sister.

XXI

TO MARCELLA

Who'd think you lived in iron-bound Salo  
Or that you were a Spaniard? You are so  
Sweet-natured, rare. If that the Palatine  
Once heard you, it would utter, "You are mine."  
One from Subura cannot vie with you  
Nor from the Capitoline. No beauty who  
Is foreign will be anxious to deride  
One who is fit to be a Roman bride.  
You bid my yen for Regent Rome abate:  
You all alone a Rome for me create.

XXII

TO FABULLUS

How ugly is one-eyed Philaenis? Thus:  
If she were blind, she'd be more beauteous.

XXIII

TO LAELIA

You boldly buy your teeth and hair. Ahem,  
What will you do for an eye? You can't buy *them*.

XXIV

TO IUBATUS

O chaise, whose solitude is amiable,  
More pleasant than a coach or curricule,  
Eloquent Alienus' gift to me,  
A lovely one! Here you have liberty  
To say whatever there is in your head.  
By no black Libyan driver am I led  
Nor high-girt runner – no mule anywhere,

No neighing nags. O if there were, to share  
Our secrets, Avitus, I'd fear no spy.  
And thus a very happy day goes by!

XXV

TO TELESINUS

If I ask you, without security,  
For cash, "I'm indigent," you say to me.  
But if my farm's my pledge, you then *can* lend.  
The credit you won't give a long-time friend  
You'll give my trees and cabbages? Look here,  
Carus informed against you – never fear,  
Put up my farm. You seek a comrade who  
Will share your exile: well, my farm will do.

XXVI

A senator, you tread, at early light,  
Six hundred thresholds, making me, a knight,  
Seem lazy: I don't dash from break of day,  
Getting a thousand kisses on the way.  
Thus you appoint our consuls and invest  
Provincial governors. While you divest  
Me of a night of sleep to undergo  
The morning's mud, what do I look for? Lo,  
My foot is sticking from a broken sandal,  
A sudden storm appears, my slave (the vandal  
Has filched my cloak) refuses to appear  
When called, another slave my frozen ear  
Approaches with "You are an invitee  
To Laetorius' table." Twenty per? Not me:  
I'll starve! You earn a province, while *I* earn  
A meal. Same work, but *not* the same return.

XXVII

Saenia, you say that footpads ravished you:  
Those footpads, though, declare it isn't true.

XXVIII

TO CINNA

You drink eleven measures, I drink two.  
That we don't drink the same wine bothers you?

XXIX

TO PONTIUS

Hermogenes was such a napkin-thief  
As Massa was a swindler. In brief,  
Though you may hold his left hand while you eye  
His right he still will find a way to pry  
A napkin loose: thus is a clammy snake  
Sucked by a stag's breath, thus does Iris take  
Incipient rain. Of late when people begged  
Release for hurt Myrinus, *four* he pegged.  
The white one that the praetor planned to throw  
He pilfered. Fear of theft forced folk to go

Without one, so he pilfered from the table  
The tablecloth, and he was even able,  
When this was absent also, to unseat  
The couches' frills and filch the table's feet.  
The burning sun beats on the Games – when *he*  
Turns up, the awning's drawn back instantly.  
The sailors, should he at the quay appear,  
At once roll up the canvases in fear.  
The bald, belined priests, the timbrelled throng  
Flee if Hermogenes should stand among  
The faithful. While napkins he never brings  
To feasts, he always takes one of the things.

XXX

Aper abstains; that's immaterial  
To me. I praise a slave thus, not a pal.

XXXI

This matted shade of bending vines, these trees,  
These fountains, these refreshing streams, these leas,  
Rosebeds twice-blooming Paestum can't eclipse,  
Herbs green in January, free from the nips  
Of frost, tame eels that swim in tanks, the white  
Dove-cote that houses birds that are of quite  
The self-same hue: my lady's gifts you see:  
Marcella gave this tiny realm to me,  
This house, when I returned after a spell  
Of thirty-five years. I could Alcinous tell,  
If Nausicaa the gardens of her father  
Offered to me, "My own estate I'd rather."

XXXII

TO VACERRA

O infamy of the first day of July,  
I've seen your baggage, not left high and dry  
Through three years' unpaid rent, which then was carried  
By the redhead, seven-curved woman that you married,  
Your massive sister and your white-haired mother.  
I thought them Furies out of Pluto's smother.  
You followed them, hungry and cold, more ashen  
Than old boxwood, an Irus (modern-fashion!).  
You'd think Aricia's hill had gone elsewhere.  
Off went a truckle-bed, one leg not there,  
A two-legged table, lantern, corbel bowl,  
A broken chamberpot which through a hole  
Was peeing; and a flagon's neck that lay  
Beneath a brazier, greenish with decay;  
Salt pickerel and worthless sprats as well  
Were nosed out by a jug's offensive smell –  
A seaside pond could not pollute the breeze  
Like that. A portion of Tolosan cheese  
There was, a four-year crown of fleabane, black,  
Garlic-and-onion ropes which these days lack  
Their wares, your mother's potsherd filled quite full  
With filthy resin (whores use it to pull  
Their hairs out). Why seek lodgings and deride  
All rent-collectors when you can live free?  
The Beggar's Bridge fits such activity.

XXXIII

LABIENUS

Gardens he sold for slaves. Now what remains  
Is just a pile of figs for all his pains.

XXXIV

TO IULIUS MARTIALIS

Thirty-four summers with you I have spent,  
If I remember rightly, sweet times blent  
With bitter; if you totted up the score  
With stones of different hue, you'd find more white  
Than black. If you'd avoid the cursèd bite  
About the heart and some asperity,  
Make sure too much familiarity  
You do not foster; less will be your joy  
But there'll be fewer things that will annoy.

XXXV

TO CALLISTRATUS

As though we were frank pals, you're always sayin'  
That you have been debauched. You're not as plain  
As you would have us give you credit for.  
The man who blabs of such things hides yet more.

XXXVI

TO LABULLUS

There is no-one but you who gives a mate  
A tiny cloak, two or four pounds of plate,  
A frigid toga and, now and again,  
Some clinking sovereigns, which will remain  
Through two months. You're not good, trust me. So what?  
To say true, you're the best of a bad lot.  
Bring back the Pisos and the Memmii,  
The Senecas, as well, and the Crispi  
(The early ones): you will become *tout de suite*  
The worst of a good lot. Would you for swift feet  
Be glorified? Why, then, go and outdo  
The Tigris and Passerinus, that man who  
Has such a nimble mind. You say there's no  
Glory in outstripping a burro.

XXXVII

You're obviously proud of your large nose.  
A large nose I approve – not *polypose*.

XXXVIII

TO CANDIDUS

Both day and night this man gads here and there  
On women's chairs, notorious everywhere –  
Sleek hair, skin dark with creams, of purple sheen,



Soft mouth, broad breast, smooth shanks – he’s often seen  
Attending on your wife officiously;  
But have no fear - no fornicator he.

XXXIX

Sabullus, I hate you ‘cos you’re a belle:  
A belle, for sure, disgusting, though, as well.  
Things bellicose I’d opt for over you.  
I’d like you just to languish belle-like too.

XL

TO PONTILIANUS

You lie and I believe you, you reel of  
Bad poems, I praise them: when you quaff, I quaff:  
You fart, I feign some deafness: when we play  
At draughts, you beat me: one thing I can say  
You do without me – there I’m mum. For me,  
However, you can nothing guarantee.  
“I’ll treat you well when I am dead.” But I  
Want nothing. Notwithstanding, please just die.

XLI

TO TUCCA

To be a glutton’s not enough for you:  
You would be called one and appear one too.

XLII

The brawny Afer took in matrimony  
Bearded Callistratus by that decree  
By which a virgin’s married to a male.  
The torches shone before him while a veil  
Obscured his face. Thalassus, there at hand  
Were your blessed songs. A dowry has been planned.  
No more of this, o Rome, would you not say?  
Should we hope he’ll be in the family way?

XLIII

TO SABELLUS

Too much persuasive verse you have declaimed  
With carnal themes, the kind that’s been disclaimed  
By Didymus’ gods as known to them, the kind  
That Elephantis’ lewd books never mined –  
New modes of sex which may perhaps be sought  
By filthy fuckers or by foul rakes wrought,  
Ménages à cinque, multiple bondage too,  
The kind of kinky things that one may do  
After the lamp is out. They’re trifling  
Because your flair is such a special thing.

XLIV

TO UNICUS

Your name is close to me in blood, your soul  
Is allied to my studies; though your roll  
Of verse yields to your brother only, still  
You have his genius, your pious will  
Exceeding his. You'd have an equal part  
As gay Catullus in his Lesbia's heart;  
Winsome Corinna, after Ovid, might  
Have clung to you; if it was your delight  
To spread your sails, the winds were there. But you  
Prefer the shore, as does your brother too.

XLV

Your temples and your hairless head were covered,  
Apollo, by a kid's skin. He discovered  
A happy thing to say about a god,  
Phoebus, who said – that your head was well-shod.

XLVI

TO CLASSICUS

Gallus and Lupercus sell their verse.  
Say, then, that are not insane, or worse.

XLVII

You're difficult and easygoing too,  
Both pleasant and unmannerly are you  
At the same time: this quandary you give –  
Without you, and yet with you, I can't live.

XLVIII

If you serve boar and mushrooms typically  
And don't think they're my choice, then you'll see me  
Chez vous: if you imagine, though, that I  
Will soon be rich and wish I'd testify  
That for five Lucrine oysters you'll inherit  
My wealth, goodbye. Your meal, though, has great merit:  
Tomorrow there'll be nothing, though, indeed  
Today, or any minute, that will feed  
A sad, degraded mop-stick sponge or a dog  
Or else a potsherd serving as a bog  
Upon the road. So this is the upshot  
Of mullets, hares, sow's udders – you have got  
A bilious aspect and two aching feet.  
No spree like those at Alba nor the meat  
From the Capitol and Pontiff feasts would be  
Worth it for me. If the god himself gave me  
Nectar, it would turn vinegar or wine as weak  
As Vatican. So other guests please seek  
As master of the board, who may delight  
In all that splendour: let my friend invite  
Me for some hasty morsels: for, I say,  
I like a dinner which I can repay.

XLIX

Linus, the guardian of the long-haired mob,  
Whom Postumilla marked out for the job

Of keeping all her gems, gold-plate, her wine,  
Her lovers, as the lord of all her fine  
Possessions, may your patrons opt for you  
Over all others since you've proved so true:  
Please aid, I pray, my wretched lunacy  
And negligently guard occasionally  
What eat away at my sad heart – I pray  
Constantly for my bosom to display  
Those large and snow-white twins, a lovely scene –  
No, no, not striplings, no, it's pearls I mean.

L

Plane-, laurel-groves and groves of airy pine,  
A bath not made for one man, you confine  
For your sole use: a hundred columns stand  
And form a colonnade so lofty, and  
The alabaster underneath your feet  
Gleams bright, and horses' speedy hooves repeat  
A clatter on your drive, and everywhere  
A babbling stream; long halls lie open there;  
But nowhere is a place for food or sleep.  
O what a splendid house you do *not* keep!

LI

TO AULUS

You wonder why it's easy to deceive  
Fabullinus? Well, all good men are naïve.

LII

TO SEMPRONIA

Here Rufus lies, whose brows were often bound  
With the Muses' crown, whose voice too could confound  
Dismayed defendants. In respect of you  
His very ashes burn with love so true.  
Your story's sweetly in Elysium  
Narrated - even Helen was struck dumb  
By your assault. You left your ravisher  
(A happy outcome); then consider *her* –  
When sought again she would not join her man.  
A Trojan love-tale Menelaus can  
Both hear and smile at; for your ravishment  
IS Phrygian Paris pardoned. When you're sent  
One day to the realm of pious folk below,  
Within the Stygian halls there will be no  
More noted spectre. All the ravished maids  
Are not looked at askance among the shades  
By Queen Proserpina, but loved: she'll bless  
The love you have displayed with kindness.

LIII

Though wealthier far than is the rarest Roman,  
Paternus, you dole out your cash for no man.  
You brood on all those gems, as, poets say,  
Did that great dragon as it kept away  
Thieves from the Scythian grove. The impetus  
(You often say) is a son usurious

Beyond belief. Are you, then, searching out  
Numbskulls and morons you may fill with doubt  
And rob of each and every faculty?  
You've always fathered such depravity.

LIV

TO ZOÏLUS

Red-haired, dark-faced, short-footed and half-blind –  
If good you are a portent, we will find.

LV

The man who bids you give yourselves for free,  
Girls, is a model of improbity.  
Don't kiss, don't fuck for nothing. Such a creed  
Does Aegle live by, selling, in her greed,  
Herself (well, let her – kisses are adored  
So much!); she sells them – can you well afford  
Her wares? "A pound of Cosmian cream! She'll say,  
Or "Eight new-minted sovereigns!" That way  
They won't be mute or grudgingly bestowed  
Or with a closed mouth. But a gracious code  
Observe! - though she won't kiss for nothing, she  
Allows the licking of her snatch for free.

LVI

TO POLYCHARMUS

You're ill ten times a year or even more:  
This doesn't hurt you but it makes *us* sore:  
Each time you're cured, for gifts from friends you call.  
A shame on you! – be ill now once for all.

LVII

TO SPARSUS

Why do I seek Nomentum frequently,  
My little fields, my unkempt property?  
For poor men Rome is hardly the location  
To spend their time in quiet contemplation:  
Teachers won't give us rest as daybreak's seen,  
Bakers at night, the hammers in between  
Of coppersmiths. Upon his filthy board  
The idle money-changer clinks his hoard  
Of Nero's coins; there is the burnished hammer  
On Spanish gold-dust making such a clamour  
On worn stone; and Bellona's raving pack  
Won't cease; of shipwrecked sailors there's no lack,  
Their bodies swathed, with tales to tell to you;  
Taught by his ma to beg you'll find Jew;  
Blind sulphur-merchants. Who the hours can count  
Of sleep that's lost will tell you the amount  
Of clashing pots in which these Romans deal,  
When the eclipsed moon by the magic wheel  
Of Colchis is assailed. Nothing you know  
Of this, nor could you, since you revel so  
In Cerealis' mansion which looks down  
On mountain-tops. The country in the town

Have you, a Roman dresser for your vines  
(Falernian hills produce no plentier wines),  
Enough room for your curricule to run  
Within your boundary; there is no sun  
Unless you let it in; profoundest sleep  
And quiet. Here the passersby all keep  
Me from my rest with laughter; right here Rome  
Is present at my bedhead in my home.  
When I crave slumber, tired out with care,  
Then it is to Nomentum I repair.

LVIII

TO ALAUDA

Your wife says you like maidservants, while she  
Likes litter-bearers. Such equality!

LIX

Back recently from fifteen years elsewhere,  
Rome kisses you as often as the fair  
Lesbia didn't kiss Catullus. You  
Are robbed by all about, the farmer too,  
With bristly, goatish kisses. On each side  
The weaver, fuller, cobbler, whose own hide  
He's just now kissed, one lame man, one half-blind,  
One with a chin disease; you even find  
A sucker, one fresh from a licking visit.  
This isn't worth returning for, now is it?

LX

March One, the day I first beheld the light  
And of the star-bound sun first caught a sight,  
If at green altars in the country you  
Will be ashamed to be adored, you who  
Received my worship here in Rome, excuse  
Me that upon my birthday I refuse  
To be a slave. To pale on such a day  
Lest Sabellus lack warm water, that there may  
Be strained wine for Alauda, anxiously  
To squeeze the turbid Caecuban; to be  
Constantly on the go at one's own board  
Her, there and everywhere, to greet a hoard  
Of guests, to rise and tread the marble floor  
Colder than ice. What reason is there for  
Enduring this? If your patron were to say  
That so you must, then you would say him nay.

LXI

TO LIGURRA

You fear that I will write some verse that's keen  
Upon you, wishing that you may be seen  
As worthy of that fear. In vain your fear,  
In vain your aspiration too. Look here,  
Although lions of Libya may assail  
A bull, a butterfly is safe. Prevail,  
If you are anxious to be read about,  
Upon a poet in some dark redoubt,

A drunk who writes with coarse charcoal and a bit  
Of crumbling chalk (folk, as they take a shit,  
Will read such poems as these). My brand nohow  
Is likely to be marked upon your brow.

LXII

Great king of ancient heaven, an age bygone,  
Under whose realm there was no labour, none,  
Just idle rest; no undue tyranny  
Of thunderbolts (nor did humanity  
Deserve them); then the earth, not torn apart  
By excavation to its very heart,  
Kept all its wealth: to Priscus' solemn feast  
Come, gracious and happy – your own rites at least  
You should attend, You're bringing him back home  
After five winters occupied in Rome,  
Great father. As a Roman market shows  
Its wares, see how great cheer and honour glows  
For you. See tokens on the generous board,  
Alloffered uo to you, Saturnus, lord:  
No stinginess. To rener greater praise  
And value to such worth, the man who pays  
You honour is a man abstemious  
And a father. But (in your December thus  
May you be always loved), o Lord Sublime,  
May he enjoy these days for many a time.

LXIII

TO CORDUBA

Oil-full Venafrum has less wealth than you,  
You rival all the jars of Istria too,  
The sheep of white Galaesus you excel,  
Unhelped by cheating blood or fish's shell;  
Your flocks are tintured with a natural gold:  
I beg you that your poet may be told  
To feel some shame and never more recite  
My poems for free. The bullet I would bite  
If a good bard did this, whom I could give  
Like anguish back. A bachelor may live  
An untouched debachee, a sightless one  
Can't lose what he deprives you of. There's none  
Worse than a naked thief, none more intact  
Than a bad versifier – that's a fact.

LXIV

TO CINNA

You've made a servant, who is prettier than  
Your rose-cheeked slaves, a cook. You greedy man!

LXV

When lovely Phyllis gave herself to me  
The livelong night and very bounteously,  
I pondered what to give her at daybreak –  
A pound of Cosmus' or Niceros' make,  
A heavy weight of Baetic wool, again  
Ten yellow minions who are not yet men

And with the stamp of Caesar. But then she  
Embraced my neck and kissed me wheedlingly  
As lingeringly as married doves entwine  
And started to request a jar of wine.

LXVI

TO AMOENUS

You bought a townhouse for a hundred g  
And long to sell even though it well may be  
Far less. But you'd the purchaser ensnare  
With cunning – for your shack is lying there  
Showily cloaked in riches - couches well  
Inlaid with priceless, gleaming tortoiseshell,  
Of Moorish citrus-wood pieces both rare  
And weighty, piles of gold- and silverware  
Upon a fancy sideboard, there located  
Lads by whom I'd love to be dominated.  
“Two hundred grand, it's worth no less,” you keep  
On saying. Furnished thus, it's going cheap.

LXVII

Came Mercury upon the Ides of May,  
Diana in August on the selfsame day,  
October's Ides did Virgil consecrate,  
So may you often these Ides celebrate  
And those too, you who hold as reverent  
The Ides of Virgil the magnificent.

LXVIII

Dawn client, who made me quit Rome, go court  
Great ones if you are wise. I'm not the sort  
For bitter lawsuits, no attorney I:  
I'm lazy and I'm getting old and my  
Companions are the Muses. I confess  
That I like sleep and dilatoriness,  
Which great Rome disallowed me; tracks I'll make  
Back home if evenr here I'm kept awake.

LXIX

TO PAULUS

Just like your cups and art, each friend that you  
Are blessed with is an object of virtue.

LXX

When a bow-leggèd, home-born functionary  
Brought in some towels to Aper recently  
And of his small toga the guardian  
Was one-eyed biddy, and the ruptured man  
Who keeps the oil gave out a drop, then he  
Was a harsh judge of insobriety.  
“Break all the cups, pour all that wine away”  
(A new-bathed knight was drinking it that day).  
But a old uncle left a hundred grand  
To him and now he knows not how to stand  
When leaving those warm baths. What mastery

Is to be found in cups of filigree  
And just five long-haired slaves! When he was poor,  
He didn't have a thirst, that is for sure.

LXXI

TO LYGDUS

There's nothing, when I ask, you won't reject.  
Once there was nothing I could *not* expect.

LXXII

TO PANNYCHUS

A small farm hidden by the tombs you bought  
And a cottage with a shored-up roof, ill-wrought,  
And now your legal practice you resign,  
Your booty and small but certain sign  
That your worn gown's paid off. Then, when you made  
Your living as a lawyer, you would trade  
In millet, beans and barley. Now behold!  
A farmer, you now buy the things you sold.

LXIII

You say that I'm your heir. I'll give this credit,  
Catullus, only when I've actually read it.

LXIV

TO FLACCUS

While crystal from a nilish argosy  
Is coming to you, please accept from me  
Cups from the Flaminian Circus. Well, are they  
More 'dreadnought' or the people who convey  
Such gifts? Cheap vessels have a two-fold use:  
Cups in relief no robber will seduce,  
Nor will hot water crack them. Worth a mention  
Is when guests drink, attendants feel no tension  
And shaky hands don't fear a slip. And think  
Of further usefulness – that you will drink  
A health out of these vessels if you see  
That you will have to break them subsequently.

LXXV

Polytimus chases girls; unwillingly  
Hypnus admits his masculinity;  
Secundus' ass is *glans*-fed; womanish  
Is Dindymus but it is not his wish  
To be so; Amphion might have been born  
A girl. Well, I would have their prideful scorn,  
Their haughtiness and their inconstancy  
Than have a dowry of a thousand g.

LXXVI

It's possible for twenty pence to score  
A jar of wine, a peck of corn for four.  
A husbandman is drunk and overfed



And yet he nothing owns, let it be said.

LXXVII

AETHON

With many prayers to Jove up on his feet,  
Eyes lifted, on his toes, out on the street  
Before the Capitol, he let one go.  
Men laughed – the Father of the Gods was so  
Offended, though, for three days running he  
Made him dine in, and this atrocity  
Made the poor man, whe he was to depart  
To the Capitol, go to the bogs and fart  
Ten, twenty times. Despite this great foresight,  
He greeted Jupiter with cheeks pressed tight.

LXXVIII

TO BITHYNICUS

I wrote nothing against you, man, and yet  
You'll make me swear. I'd rather pay the debt.

LXXIX

You asked – I gave you much, nay, even more  
Than what you, Atticilla, asked me for.  
And yet you keep on asking all the same.  
He who refuses nothing's easy game.

LXXX

So he may not the worthy "worthy" call,  
Callistratus ends up by praising all.  
To whom no man is villainous, who can  
Appear to him to be a decent man.

LXXXI

UMBER

In winter and at Saturn's feast did he,  
Although a poor man, send a cape to me.  
He sends me capers nowadays in lieu:  
For meantime he's become quite well-to-do.

LXXXII

MONOGENES

You can't avoid him at the baths, despite  
Your every artifice. He grabs hold tight  
Of the warm handball ambidextrously  
Often to score to you the catches he  
Has made. The flaccid wind-ball from the grime  
He gives back to you. Now if by this time  
He's bathed, he has his slippers on. You may  
Take up your towels – if you do, he'll say  
They're whiter far than snow, when actually  
They're dirtier than an infant's bib would be.  
You comb your scanty hair – this man meanwhile

Will say it's in an Achillean style.  
He'll toast you from a smoky flagon's lees  
And wipe your brow. Whatever this man sees  
He praises. Finally, bored by this pest  
To bits, you'll say, "Come, be my dinner guest."

LXXXIII

FABIANUS

He scoffed at hernias, and recently  
All scrotal men were scared of him, for he  
Railed against swollen ruptures, as no man –  
Not even two bards like Catullus – can.  
And then at Nero's baths the wretched bum  
Took one look at himself, and now he's mum.

LXXXIV

TO POLYTIMUS

I didn't want to violate your hair,  
Though pleased to be an answer to your prayer,  
New-barbered Pelops, shorn but shining bright,  
Now can your wife see all that ivory's white.

LXXXV

TO FABULLUS

Queers' mouths smell, do they? Of what, then, d'you think,  
If true, do the mouths of cunnilinguists stink?

LXXXVI

You've thirty boys, as many girls. But you  
Have one cock which won't rise. What will you do?

LXXXVII

COTTA

He twice complained he'd lost his indoor shoes,  
While bringing with him one attendant who's  
His only servant. Now he's thought about  
This thing (so wise and clever!) and worked out  
How he less often may this loss repeat –  
He ventures out to dinner in bare feet.

LXXXVIII

Tongilianus has a nose, I'm not  
Denying it. But that is *all* he's got.

LXXXIX

TO CHARINUS

You bind your head with wool - a strange affair!  
Your ears are not the cause: no, it's your hair.

XC

Aloud, Maro vowed for his old, old friend,  
Who burned with fever, if Styx did not send  
For him, that he would make an offering  
To mighty Jove. The doctors start to bring  
A verdict of a sure recovery.  
He prays now not to pay the guarantee.

XCI

Although, Magulla, you have got a whore  
And a couch in common with your husband, more  
I'd like to know: no cupbearer? You sigh:  
You fear the wine-cup, that's the reason why.

XCII

TO PRISCUS

You often ask what sort of chap I'd be  
If I were rich and powerful suddenly.  
Such prophecies does any have a mind  
To make? If you become a lion - what kind?

XCIII

Lbulla has been able to discover  
A method whereby she may kiss her lover  
In front of her own spouse – repeatedly  
She kisses her dwarf fool: immediately  
The lover snatches him, all slobbering-wet  
With kisses, and gives him more kisses yet  
And hands him back to her, who smiles away.  
The husband is much more the fool, I'd say.

XCIV

TO TUCCA

An epic I was writing; then you too  
Began one: I desisted so that you  
Would not appear a rival. Then my Muse  
Transferred herself to the tragedian's shoes:  
You too now donned the robe of tragedy.  
Then Horace's strings I plucked: you snatched from me  
That quill too, zealous man. Satire I try:  
You labour hard to be Lucilius. I  
Sport with light elegy: you do the same.  
What lesser art *is* there? I start to frame  
Some epigrams: and now you seek my fame  
In that area too. Choose what you don't  
Wish to pursue (for if it is your wont  
To want all, you're not modest). If there be  
Something you do not want, leave it for me.

XCV

TO INSTANTIUS RUFUS

Read Musaeus' filthy books, as rude  
As Sybaritic ones, and those with lewd,  
Though witty, themes; make sure, though, that your girl

Is with you lest your lustful hands may curl  
Around your shaft, lest you should find yourself  
A womanless husband, left upon the shelf.

XCVI

You know your husband's constant, you avouch  
No other woman violates your couch;  
Why, then, you fool, are you tormented so  
That your houseboys form his seraglio?  
Their passions' short, then gone. I'll show how true  
It is that boys can contribute to you  
More than to him; that you alone should be  
His only woman they can guarantee"  
They give what, as a wife, you would deny  
To give. "I do it anyway," you cry,  
"Lest he should stray." Not the same thing!: a fig  
From Chios I would have and not a big  
And coarse one. Lest you doubt what this imports,  
*Yours* is the latter. Wives and other sorts  
Of girls must learn their limits: grant to boys  
Their male parts' use but utilize *your* toys.

XCVII

TO BASSUS

Although your wife is young and scholarly,  
Rich, noble, chaste, not liable to be  
Desired by a wicked husband, you  
Just break your balls, continuing to screw  
Long-haired young fellows who have been acquired  
By your wife's dowry. Whe your cock, that's hired  
For several thousand, is returned to her,  
It droops and even at her winsome purr  
Is unaroused nor is it made to stand  
Erect when requisitioned by your hand.  
Feel shame at last or we shall litigate:  
Your cock's not yours – you've traded it, old mate.

XCVIII

Baetis, an olive crown encircling  
Your hair, you dip in waters sparkling  
Your golden fleece; you're worshipped by Pallas  
And Bacchus; your ships are allowed to pass  
Across the seas by Tiber; may there be  
Kind omens for instantius to see  
Your shores; may the people fare as well  
As they fared last year. He can surely tell  
How bothersome it will be to replace  
Macer; a burden measured one can face.

BOOK XIII

I

So that a gown may cover tunny-fry,  
And olives may be sheathed, lest fear to die  
Of hunger takes the filthy beetle, see.  
O Muses, that the Nile's papyrus be  
Destroyed (my loss!); lo! Topsy winter days

Call for new wit. No die of mine assays  
To vie with mighty weapons; *ace* and *sice*  
Don't shake my ivory box: *my* box of dice  
And gambling-nuts comprise my paper: I  
Get any loss nor any gain thereby.

## II

Ypu have a critic's nose, a nose indeed  
That Atlas surely wouldn't Have agreed  
To carry. Mock Latinus if you please,  
You can't say more against my pleasanries  
As I myself have said. One tooth that gnaws  
Another hardly satisfies. Your jaws  
Require flesh if you would be replete.  
Don't waste your time but keep your venom's heat  
For pompous folk. This work of mine, I know,  
Is nothing. Yet not altogether so  
If you to me should with an honest ear  
And not too sober countenance appear.

## III

This whole collection of my GIFTS in one  
Slim volume just four sesterces will run  
You up. You think that's pricey? Take two off it  
And the bookseller still will make a profit.  
Give them to guests instead of gifts if you  
Are indigent as I. The titles, too,  
Of what you read you'll have: what in this book  
You find's not to your stomach overlook.

## IV

### INCENSE

So that Germanicus may very late  
The residence of Heaven dominate  
But rather here on earth command and live,  
To Jove this pious frankincense pray give.

## V

### PEPPER

If a bright, wax fig-pecker with plump thighs  
Should fall to you, add pepper if you're wise.

## VI

### WHEAT-WATER

I'll send wheat-beer, a rich man maybe mead.  
But if he won't, you'll buy it for a need.

## VII

### BEANS

If you've pale beans bubbling in an earthen pot,  
You may turn down your well-heeled hosts – the lot.

VIII

WHEAT

Flavour your common jars with Clusine stuff  
Frm porridge-oats and, when you've had enough  
At dinner and when they are empty, you  
May drink from out of them a wine that's new.

IX

LENTILS

Nile lentils, Pelusine, accept from me,  
Cheaper than wheat but dearer than beans, you see.

X

FLOUR

Flour's traits and uses you can't count, for look!  
It's handy for the baker and the cook.

XI

BARLEY

Receive from me something your muleteer  
Will not give to his mules (you will not hear  
A word from them!). I give this, it's so true,  
To the innkeeper as a gift, and not to you.

XII

CORN

Three hundred pecks from Libyan crops do I  
Send you that your suburban land won't die.

XIII

BEET

That the insipid beet, that is the savour  
Of artisans at noon, may have some flavour  
To satisfy the guests about to dine.  
The cook so often asks for pepper and wine.

XIV

LETTUCE

The lettuce seds to come right at the end  
Of dinner, now it's first. Why's that, my friend?

XV

SMOKELESS WOOD

If at Nomantum near to me you till a  
Farm, you rustic, send wood to my villa.

XVI

TURNIP

Look, turnips that enjoy the winter's chill;  
Of these in Heaven does Romulus eat his fill.

XVII

A BUNDLE OF CABBAGE SPROUTS

In case at these pale sprouts you may be seen  
Repelled, lety soda-water make them green.

XVIII

CUT LEEKS

Tarentine leeks smell strong, so when you eat  
Their shoots, make sure you kiss with lips that meet.

XIX

HEADED LEEKS

The finest leeks from Aricia's woody glades!  
Upon their white stems look at those green shades.

XX

FRENCH TURNIPS

French turnips from Amiternum's fruitfulness!  
Nursia's round ones you can eat for less.

XXI

ASPARAGUSES

Moist Ravenna's succulent stalk is not, you'll see,  
More scrumptious than the wild asparagi.

XXII

HARD-SKINNED GRAPES

Not fit for wine, for Bacchus worthless, too,  
Though you don't drink, I'm nectar to you.

XXIII

CHIAN FIGS

It's like the old wine Setia sends to you;  
It carries in itself new wine, salt too.

XXIV

QUINCES

In quinces in Attic honey before you lay,  
“These honey-apples taste so fine,” you’d say.

XXV

PINE CONES

We’re Cybele’s fruits: so, traveller, off you pop  
In case upon your wretched head we drop.

XXVI

SERVICE BERRIES

WE berries tighten bowels too quick to shit,  
To your catamite than to yourself more fit.

XXVII

A STEM WITH DATES

A gold date’s given on the First of January –  
However, by a man of penury.

XXVIII

A JAR OF SMALL SYRIAN FIGS

These Syrian figs in a twisted jar that we  
Have sent, if they were larger, figs would be.

XXIX

A JAR OF DAMASCENE PLUMS

Take aged plums, and wrinkled, from abroad,  
Which to hard guts a laxative afford.

XXX

CHEESE FROM LUNA

Stamped with the ‘Etruscan Luna’ crest, this cheese  
Will feed a thousand times your functionaries.

XXXI

A VESTINIAN CHEESE

You want a frugal breakfast free of meat?  
Then from Vestinium here’s a cheesy treat.

XXXII

SMOKED CHEESE

Cheese does not drink all heat, all smoke, but cheese  
From Velabris has piquant properties.

XXXIII

CHEESE FROM TREBULA



We're Trebulan; two qualities we boast –  
You can enjoy us moistened or on toast.

XXXIV

BULBS

Your wife is old, your limbs are numb, then break  
Your fast with only bulbs for Venus' sake.

XXXV

LUCANIAN SAUSAGES

The daughter of a Picenian sow, I come;  
Surround white porridge with myself – yum yum!

XXXVI

A SMALL BED OF OLIVES

From presses of Picenum come to you,  
They start our meals and terminate them too.

XXXVII

CITRONS

These fruits are from the garden of Corfu  
Or the Masylian snake – now sent to you.

XXXVIII

BEESTINGS

Beestings, taken from kids that can't yet stand,  
Their mother's first milk, now to you I hand.

XXXIX

A KID

This wanton, useless to the vine, must nod  
To penance; though a kid, he's harmed the god.

XL

EGGS

White liquid round the yellow yolks! Now, please,  
Let Spanish mackerel sauce now flavour these.

XLI

A SUCKING PIG

Milk-fed by a lazy mother, set before  
Me this, rich man, and eat a massive boar.

XLII

## POMEGRANATES AND JUJUBES

Not out of Libyan boughs, I send you these  
But rather they're from my Nomentan trees.

XLIII

DITTO

Culled from suburban boughs, they're sent to you,  
Home-grown. With Libyan ones what would you do?

XLIV

TRIBE

If it's not yet quite tripe it's hard to tell  
As living milk causes the pap to swell.

XLV

FOWLS

If I had Libyan birds or else Phasian,  
You'd get them, but see – birds from my own station.

XLVI

EARLY PEACHES

Though worthless on our mother branches, we're  
Now on adoptive branches and held dear.

XLVII

PICENIAN LOAVES

With its white nectar it increases so  
As do light light sponges placed in water grow.

XLVIII

MUSHROOMS

Silver and gold, a toga or a cloak  
Are sent with ease, but mushrooms are no joke.

XLIX

FIG-PECKERS

Sweet grapes and figs both nourish me the same,  
So why does not the grape give me my name?

L

TRUFFLES

Through mother earth we thrust our tender crown  
And from the mushroom stand but one rank down.

LI

A DECADE OF THRUSHES

You like a crown if roses and rich cream?  
A crown of thrushes preferable I deem.

LII

DUCK

Serve a duck whole; just in the neck and breast  
Does it taste good: the cook can have the rest.

LIII

TURTLE-DOVES

‘Bye, lettuce, ditto, snails; if I can bite  
A fat dove, I won’t spoil my appetite.

LIV

GAMMON OF BACON

To Spanish gammon I’m so partial am  
Or else Menapian: let gourmets eat ham.

LV

HAM

It’s fresh: call friends and don’t procrastinate.  
I hate a ham that’s past its sell-by date.

LVI

WOMB

You like a chaste sow’s womb? Well, as for me,  
I’d choose a womb that teems with progeny.

LVII

EGYPTIAN BEAN

You’ll scoff at this and its tenacious strands  
While pulling those harsh threads with teeth and hands.

LVIII

GOOSE’S LIVER

A liver bigger than a large goose? So  
You’ll ask in wonder, “Where did this thing grow?”

LIX

DORMICE

Throughout the winter months I hibernate  
And, fed on only sleep, I put on weight.

LX

RABBITS

The rabbit lives quite snug in burrowed ground:  
His foes from him his secret paths have found.

LXI

HEATHCOCKS

Of all bird flavours we've put to the test  
They say Ionian heathcocks are the best.

LXII

FATTED FOWLS

On sweet meal heans are fattened easily,  
And in the dark. What devious gluttony!

LXIII

CAPONS

Lest he grow thin through overuse of phallus,  
They take his balls. Then he's indeed a Gallus!

LXIV

DITTO

The hen to her impotent husband futilely  
Succumbed. Well, he belongs to Cybele!

LXV

PARTRIDGES

At Italian tables rarely seen, but you'll  
Quite often see it playing in the pool.

LXVI

DOVES

Don't eat the tender dove: it's blasphemy  
If you're involved in Venus' liturgy.

LXVII

WOOD-PIGEONS

A ring-dove checks and blunts one's potency:  
Don't eat it if you lean to lechery.

LXVIII

"YELLOW BIRDS"

The yellow bird's duped by the cane and net,

When grapes with unfledged must are swelling yet.

LXIX

CATTAE

Pannonian cattae Umbria won't award  
To us: Pudens, though, sends them to his lord.

LXX

PEACOCKS

Upon its spread, bright wings you like to look.  
How *could* you give it the savage cook?

LXXI

FLAMINGOES

My red wing christens me; my tongue's the choice  
Of gluttons. What, then, if it had a voice?

LXXII

PHEASANTS

The Argo first transported me; before  
That time than Phasis I knew nothing more.

LXXIII

GUINEA-FOWLS

The geese of Rome did Hannibal feed on, yet  
That savage birds of Carthage never ate.

LXXIV

GEESE

They saved Jupiter's Temple-on-the-Hill.  
Stunned? By a god it was unconstructed still.

LXXV

CRANES

The letter's lines you'll discombobulate  
Nor will the whole message accelerate  
Across the open skyway if you will  
Just one of Palamedes' fliers kill.

LXXVI

WOODCOCK

Woodcock or partridge? Well, we taste the same.  
Partridge is dearer – thus the tastier game.

LXXVII

The swan sings sweetly with his failing breath,  
The very minstrel of his looming death.

LXXVIII

PORPHYRIANS

Nmed for a huge bird yet so very wee!  
Same name as he of the Green confederacy.

LXXIX

LIVE MULLET

It bretahes its own sea-water and grows slow  
And dull. Give it fresh water – watch it go!

LXXX

MURRIES

Big murries swim in the deep Sicilian  
But cannot plunge when roasted by the sun.

LXXXI

TURBOTS

Despite the latitude of its own dish,  
In every case it's narrower than this fish.

LXXXII

OYSTERS

Drunk with the Lucrine, I've just come to you,  
And, though I'm rich, I want a fine sauce too.

LXXXIII

PRAWNS

Blu Liris, in Marica's wood, of us  
Is fond: we're from there, and we're copious.

LXXXIV

PARROT-WRASSE

A parrot-wrasse, a lean fish from the deep!  
Its guts taste good – the rest, though, you can keep.

LXXXV

TILAPIA

Nile's markets scramble for you; each gourmet  
Of Pella thinks of you as non-pareil.

LXXXVI

SEA-URCHINS

Its knife-edged shell may prick you viciously:  
When this is shed, how tender it will be!

LXXXVII

PURPLE MUSSELS

Cloaks dyed with our blood, thankless man, do you  
Put on; that's not enough: you eat us too.

LXXXVIII

GOBIES

In Venice sumptuous feasts abound, and yet  
With a goby you your appetite will whet.

LXXXIX

SEA-BASS

Soft, white, it haunts Timavus' estuary,  
Fed on fresh water and salt of the sea.

XC

GILTHEAD

Those only merit praise and a big fee  
Who eat just Lucrine shell-fish by the sea.

XCI

STURGEON

Send it to Palatine feasts: an offering  
So rare to those ambrosial banquets bring.

XCII

HARE

Of birds the thrush, of quadrupeds the hare,  
If I may judge, are each the topmost fare.

XCIII

BOAR

This bristly terror, by an Aetolian spear  
In Calydon brought down – such a one is here.

XCIV

DOES

Beware boars' teeth; his horns protect the buck.  
Soft does? To be just prey is our bad luck.

XCV

## ORYX

Not quite the meanest quarry to be found  
Of morning beasts, it's cost me many a hound.

## XCVI

## STAG

Is this Cyparissus's stag, tamed by his straps,  
Or is it rather Silvia's, perhaps?

## XCVII

## THE WILD ASS'S MILK-FOAL

While young and fed just by his mother, so  
He's called (though not for long) *lalisio*.

## XCVIII

You hope she'll fall from off the crag where she  
Now stands, eyeing the hounds in mockery.

## XCIX

## GAZELLE

Your child will have it as a pet from you:  
The rabble with its togas make it shoo.

## C

## WILD ASS

A lovely ass is here; now, elephant quest,  
Away: it's time to give togas a rest.

## CI

## VENAFRAN OIL

Its berry has distilled this oil: each bit  
Of ointment, when applied, will smell of it.

## CII

## FISH-SAUCE OF THE ALLIES

A still-live mackerel's first blood made this stuff:  
It shows its dignity and costs enough.

## CIII

## A JAR OF TUNNY-FISH SAUCE

A tunny's daughter from Antipolis!  
If of a mackerel, you would not get this.

## CIV

## ATTIC HONEY



To you the ravaging Hymettan bee  
Sends from Pallas's woods nobility.

CV

SICILIAN HONEYCOMBS

When giving these, produced in high Hybla,  
You may declare that they're from Attica.

CVI

RAISIN WINE

A Gnosian wine, produced in Crete and sent  
To you, which is mead for the indigent.

CVII

PITCH-FLAVOURED WINE

It should not exert your credulity  
It's Viennese: Romuklus sent it me.

CVIII

MEAD

With Attic honey jelled, no wonder, man,  
That Ganymede mixed this Falernian.

CIX

ALBAN WINE

From Caesar's vaults these grapes are mild and light,  
Proud of themselves, there on the Julian height.

CX

SURRENTINE WINE

Don't use gold or murrine cups if you care  
For this, which offers its own earthenware.

CXI

FALEERNIAN WINE

From Sinuessa: laid by in whose year?  
Which consul? None. For then there were none here.

CXII

SETINE WINE

On Pomptine plains Setia looks down, on high:  
From her small city – aged amphorae.

CXIII

## FUNDANIAN WINE

Made in Opimius' year - a fall so fine:  
The consul squeezed the must and drank the wine.

## CXIV

## TRIFOLINE WINE

I'm not of Bacchus' earliest quality,  
I must confess, but I'll the seventh be.

## CXV

## CAECUBAN WINE

At Amyclae by Fundi it has been  
Lavishly ripened: marsh-born, it grows green.

## CXVI

## SIGNINE WINE

It squeezes loosened guts, so, lest that you  
Check them too much with this, don't overdo.

## CXVII

## MAMERTINE WINE

If Mamertine that's way over the hill  
Is given to you, call it what you will.

## CXVIII

## TERRACONIAN WINE

Trraco yields only to Campanian vines:  
This produce can compete with Tuscan wines.

## CXIX

## NOMENTAN WINE

Nomentum gives to you this wine of mine:  
If Quintus loves you, you'll drink one more fine.

## CXX

## SPOLETAN WINE

You will prefer the crusted Spoletine  
To drinking flagons of Falernian wine.

## CXXI

## PAELIGNIAN WINE

Vintners send this Marsic Paelignian.  
It's dense: don't drink, give it to your freedman.

CXXII

VINEGAR

This jar of Egyptian vinegar don't malign:  
It was more worth your scorn when it was wine.

CXXIII

MASSILIAN WINE

When a hundred clients say farewell to you,  
You can regale them with this smoky brew.

CXXIV

CAERETAN WINE

You'll think Nepos is serving Setine. He  
Won't give it to the mob, but just to three.

CXXV

TARENTINE WINE

Let wool-rich Aulon, blessed with many a vine,  
Give you his precious fleeces, me his wine.

CXXVI

UNGUENT

Neither unguent or wine to heirs surrender:  
Keep those for your own use; leave legal tender.

CXXVII

A CROWN OF ROSES

Caesar, forced crowns the winter may endow  
To you. The rose was Spring's: it's yours, though, now.

BOOK XIV

APOPHORETA

I

While knight and lordly senator rejoice  
In dinner-dress and while Jove's fitting choice  
Is freedom's cap and, with dice-box ashake  
In his own hand, the home-slave doesn't quake  
Before the aedile, when he sees the cold  
Of the approaching winter-time, take hold  
Of these alternate lots of well-to-do  
And indigent. Each give your gifts. Say you,  
"They're toys, they're stuff, p'raps even less." Look here,  
That's patent. Who denies a thing so clear?  
Bit what, on boozy days, am I to do,  
Saturn, those days that Jupiter gave to you  
For heaven? Should I write of Thebes or, say,  
Of Troy, of wicked Mycenae? "No, play

With nuts,” you say instead. No ifs and buts,  
I’m telling you I’ll hold on to those nuts.

II

Wrap up this book wherever you wish: just two  
Verses sum up each epigram, Should you  
Enquire of me, “What are the headings for?”  
Well, if you like, read *them* and nothing more.

III

CITRUS-WOOD TABLETS

If not cut thinly, we were meant to be  
A noble weight for Libyan ivory.

IV

FIVE-LEAVED TABLETS

Our master’s glad court’s warm with immolation –  
Our waxen wood gave him high commendation.

V

IVORY TABLETS

Lest waxen tablets dim your failing sight,  
Write your black letters on this ivory’s white.

VI

THREE-LEAVED TABLETS

You won’t say these are cheap gifts on that day  
Your girlfriend writes that she is on the way.

VII

PARCHMENT TABLETS

Think these are wax, though parchment called. Thus you  
Will rub out when you wish to write anew.

VIII

VITELLIAN TABLETS

Although a girl’s not read these tablets yet,  
She all the same knows what they want to get.

IX

THE SAME

We’re wee, though you believe we’re billets-doux.  
You’re wrong. Such tablets ask for money too.

X

BIGGER SHEETS

You will not think these sheets are useless, sir,  
When blank sheets are sent by a scribbler.

XI

LETTER-SHEETS

Close pal or slight acquaintance? In the end,  
This paper will address both as “Dear friend.”

XII

IVORY MONEY=BOXES

Only to put gold cash in these is good:  
Put silver cash in inexpensive wood.

XIII

WOODEN MONEY-BOXES

I’ll gift to you what’s left of all this pelf.  
That’s nothing? Then you’ll have the box itself.

XIV

IVORY KNUCKLE-BONES

When each face on the bones is different,  
You then will say my gift is excellent.

XV

DICE

To be fewer than the bones we all desire,  
But also let the stakes be often higher.

XVI

THE LITTLE TOWER DICE-BOX

My hand jiggles the bones and tries to score  
By cheating, gaining prayers and nothing more.

XVII

GAMING-BOARD

Here one can win with double-sixer throws;  
There an opposing piece falls to two foes.

XVIII

NUTS

Small stakes and hardly crippling are nuts  
Which often, though, will serve on schoolboys’ butts.

XIX

## CASE FOR WRITING MATERIALS

You've won this case – so put some pens inside.  
*We* gave the rest, *you*, lesser things provide.

XX

## DRAUGHT PIECES

If you wil play the “robbers” war game, these  
Will be your soldiers and your enemies.

XXI

## STYLE-CASE

If you should give this style-case to your boy,  
Its iron style will prove it's no cheap toy.

XXII

## TOOTHPICK

Mastick is better, but if pointed wood  
You do not have, a quill's almost as good.

XXIII

## EARPICK

If you've persisitent itching in your ear,  
An instrument for ills like that is here.

XXIV

## GOLD HAIRPIN

Lest moistured locks your gleaming silks impair,  
Let this fix and hold up your knotted hair.

XXV

## COMBS

When not a hair is found, what's it to do,  
This many-toothed box-wood that's give you?

XXVI

## HAIR

Chattian foam makes German tresses flair;  
You'll look more well-turned-out with captive hair.

XXVII

## SOAP

You'd dye your old, white locks? Receive from me  
Mattiacan balls. Why would you hairless be?

XXVIII

## SUNSHADE

Defence from too much sun, you'll find this shade,  
Even in strong winds, will be worthy aid.

## XXIX

## BROAD-BRIMMED HAT

In Pompey's theatre with me you'll be seen.  
Strong winds don't give the populace a screen.

## XXX

## HUNTING-SPEARS

Wild boars they take, they wait for lions and  
Pierce bears, so long as you've a steady hand.

## XXXI

## HUNTING-KNIFE

Your elongated spear's loss you deplore?  
This short knife closely takes a massive boar.

## XXXII

## BELT AND SWORD

A soldier's flourish, this will signify  
Great honour, worthy to grace a tribune's thigh.

## XXXIII

## DAGGER

Its rounded groove marked with a narrow ring,  
The Salo's chilly waters heard it sing.

## XXXIV

## SICKLE

Our lord's sure peace can gentler work endow  
To me – a soldier's once, a farmer's now.

## XXXV

## SMALL AXE

When an auction was held in great despondency  
To settle debts, this brought four hundred g.

## XXXVI

## BARBERS' INSTRUMENTS

These are for cutting hair; this gadget seeks  
To pare long nails, that one will shave your cheeks.

XXXVII

BOOKCASE

Unless you give me books that are select,  
Both moths and savage bookworms I'll collect.

XXXVIII

BUNDLES OF PENS

For writing, Memphis yields these handy pens;  
But thatch your roof with reeds from other fens.

XXXIX

BEDROOM LAMP

I know what goes on in your bed, but come,  
Do anything you wish – I will be mum.

XL

CANDLE

By lot you've won the lamp's handmaid, who'll be  
Your watcher and dispel obscurity.

XLI

MANY-WICKED LAMP

Though many shows I give and have on me  
So many wicks, I'm called *one* lamp, you see.

XLII

TAPER

I'll make for you a night illuminated –  
The lamp from your slave's been appropriated.

XLIII

CORINTHIAN CANDELABRUM

Long named from candles, I. The oil-lamp, though,  
Won't know our thrifty sires of long ago.

XLIV

WOODEN CANDELABRUM

You see I'm wood; unless you oversee  
The light, a great lamp will be made of me.

XLV

FEATHER-STUFFED BALL

With feathers stuffed, it's looser than the follis  
But it is less compact than the hand-ball is.



XLVI

THREE-CORNERED-GAME BALL

Letf-handers you can match? I'm yours. You say  
You can't/ You moron, give it back, I pray.

XLVII

BLADDER-BALL

Leave, youngsters: easeful age is more my speed.  
This should be played by young *and* old indeed.

XLVIII

SCRIMMAGE BALLS

With empty industry the catamite  
Tries to make big his neck wth main and might  
By swiftly catching at this scrimmage ball  
Inside Antaeus' dusty wrestling-hall.

XLIX

DUMB-BELLS

Why waste one's arms on silly dumb-bells when  
Digging a vineyard better engages men.

L

SMALL CAP

Lest wrestlers' dirty oils should slither in  
Your sleek locks, place on them this cap of skin.

LII

SCRAPERS

From Troy! Use the curved blade; your towels that way  
Will at the launderers less sooner fray.

LII

HORN OIL-FLASK

On a steer's forehead lately was I born:  
You thought I was a real rhinoceros horn.

LIII

RHINOCEROS-HORN OIL-FLASK

Just seen in our arena, this is it  
That made a bull into a counterfeit.

LIV

SMALL RATTLE

If a tiny slave cling to you in his prattle  
Of grief, then let him agitate this rattle.

LV

WHIP

This whip won't help, though you lash constantly,  
If you are of the Mauve confederacy.

LVI

TOOTHPASTE

Whast am I to you? Let young girls use me:  
I don't brush teeth acquired by currency.

LVII

BEHEN-NUT

Homer nor Virgil speak about this, but  
I'm made of unguent and of ehen-nut.

LVIII

SALTPETRE

You're rural? My Greek name you don't know. Come,  
I'm nitre-froth. You're Greek? Aphronitrum.

LIX

OPOBALSAM

The juices and the balms of balsam-trees  
Attract me; see, unguents of men are these.  
Young wives, in matrimony's early days,  
Exhale Cosmus's exquisite bouquets.

LX

BEAN-MEAL

To one with wrinkled gut a welcome sight,  
If he goes to the baths in broad daylight.

LXI

HORN LANTERN

I lead the way, a gold lamp with fenced flame;  
Secure and small within my heart's the same.

LXII

BLADDER-LANTERN

If not of horn am I less dim? Does he  
Who meets me think I must a bladder be?

LXIII

REED-PIPE

Why laugh at me, of reed and wax combined?  
The first pipe ever made was of this kind.

LXIV

PIPES

The drunken piper's spittled instrument hums  
(One pipe or two), while bursting our eardrums.

LXV

WOOL-LINED SLIPPERS

Your boy's not there and you'd don your house-shoes?  
Your foot itself you for a slave may use.

LXVI

BOSOM-BAND

With a bull's hide you'd hold your bosom in:  
Your breasts won't get inside this piece of skin.

LXVII

PEACOCK'S FEATHER FLY-FLAP

A peerless bird's proud feather can avert  
The pesky flies from nibbling your dessert.

LXVIII

RHODIAN PASTRY

Don't strike the teeth of an offending slave:  
Make him eat this from famed Rhodes – he'll behave.

LXIX

FLOUR PRIAPUS

You're hungry? Then eat this. Though you may bite  
His very cock itself, you'll be upright.

LXX

PIG

A "good Saturn" you'll have, for, acorn-nourished,  
Among the foaming boars he lived and flourished.

LXXI

OX-TAIL BRUSH

Your dress is soiled with yellow dust? This tail,  
So light, will remedy this with gentle flail.

LXXI

SAUSAGE

This sausage reached you at midwinter's phase,  
Then me before Saturnalia's seven days.

LXXII

PARROT

You'll teach me others' names: I learned to say,  
Autodidactic, "O Caesar, good day."

LXXIV

CROW

You greeting crow, why are you thought a sucker?  
Into your head there's gone not any fucker.

LXXV

NIGHTINGALE

Philomela weeps for incestuous Tereus' wrong,  
Once a mute maiden, now a bird of song.

LXXVI

MAGPIE

I greet you, master, with a lucid word:  
Did you not see me, you'd say I'm no bird.

LXXVII

IVORY CAGE

If you've a bird like that adored so well  
By Catullus' Lesbia, here let him dwell.

LXXVIII

MEDICINE-CHEST

A doctor's equipage, a medicine-chest,  
A gift Paccus would that he possessed.

LXXIX

WHIPS

Play, wanton slaves, *just* play, and they will be  
For five days kept secure with lock and key.

,

LXXX

CANES

Though masters love us, by boys we're much hated,

Via Prmotheus wood much celebrated.

LXXXI

WALLET

Let no nude rogue make me his stray scraps bear  
Nor let me sleep with cynics – that’s my prayer.

LXXXII

BROOMS

Brooms once were wanted, palms trees can attest.  
But now the sweeper’s given them a rest.

LXXXIII

IVORY SCRATCHER

To scratch your shouldrr-blades this hand will do  
When nasty fleas or something worse bite you.

LXXXIV

WOODEN BOOK-HOLDER

So that your books your clothing will not fray,  
This fir will see that they last many a day.

LXXXV

COUCH OF PEACOCK-VEINED CITRUS-WOOD

This by the name of the plumaged peacocok goes,  
Most beautiful, once Argus, now Juno’s.

LXXXVI

SADDLE

Hunter, on your swift steed place this: bareback,  
You’ll find that haemorrhoids invade your crack.

LXXXVII

SEMI-CIRCULAR COUCH

S-shaped with crescent tortoiseshell inlaid:  
Come, all who are my friends – for eight it’s made.

LXXXVIII

BUFFET

You think a female shell is part of me,  
A land-turtle? I’m male and from the sea.

LXXXIX

CITRUS-WOOD TABLE

From Atlas and a fruitful tree, behold  
This wood. Less dear are gifts of gold.

XC

MAPLE TABLE

I'm neither from Moorish wood nor veined,  
Yet gourmet diners I have entertained.

XCI

IVORY TUSKS

They bear huge bulls – you ask if they are able  
Also to hold a Libyan work-table?

XCII

A FIVE-FOOT RULE

Of oak, marked off in lengths and pointed, this  
Finds often a contractor's artifice.

XCIII

ANTIQUE CUPS

Not chiselled by a Roman and not new:  
Mentor produced them and drank from them, too.

XCIV

DREADNOUGHT CUPS

Plebeian goblets, chased, we have no care;  
We're cheap; hot water will not crack our ware.

XCV

CHASED GOLD BOWL

Though noble, red, Galician, more than this  
I glory in my art: I'm made by Mys.

XCVI

VATINIAN CUPS

Cobbler Vatinius' cup, his souvenir -  
His nose was longer, though, than this one here.

XCVII

GOLD-INLAID DISHES

Thos large gold-inlaid dishes do not slight  
With a small mullet – two pounds or more's alright.

XCVIII

ARRETIAN DISHES

Do not despise them overmuch, say we:  
To Porsena Tuscan pots were luxury.

XCIX

BASKET

From painted Brits I come, a foreigner,  
Though Rome now says that I belong to her.

C

PANACIAN CROCK

You know genteel Catullus' land? You'll see  
You've drunk Rhaetian from my crockery.

CI

MUSHROOM BOILERS

Though mushrooms gave me such a noble name,  
I'm a slave to early greens, such is my shame!

CII

SURRENTINE CHALICES

Not sprung of common clay, accept from me  
A smooth and embossed piece of pottery.

CIII

STRAINER FOR WINE AND SNOW

With my snow, I advise, strain your Setine:  
Then dip your linen bags in poorer wine.

CIV

BAG FOR STRAINING SNOW

How to strain snow my linen also knows:  
No colder water from your strainer flows.

CV

SMALL JUGS FOR TABLE SERVICE

Water both hot and cold may here be found:  
If you've a raging thirst, don't mess around.

CVI

EARTHENWARE JUG

A jug, red and wide-handled! Here Fronto  
The Stoic for cold water used to go.

CVII

## TANKARDS

We're loved by all the Satyrs , and the lord  
Of wine, God Bacchus, gives us his accord,  
And the drunk tigress who's been educated  
To lick her master's feet, wine-saturated.

## CVIII

### SAGUNTINE CHALICES

Take these clay cups! Your servant, without fear,  
May distribute and guard what you see here.

## CIX

### JEWELLED CHALICES

The fiery gold of Scythian gems shines here!  
How many fingers has that cup laid bare?

## CX

### DRINKING-FLASK

Drink, wanton, from this chalice, jewel-blent  
(By Cosmus made), if scented wine's your bent.

## CXI

### CRYSTAL-CUPS

You fear to break them? Then you will: hear this –  
You err if you're too tense *or* too remiss.

## CXII

### GLASS SPRINKLER

From Jove, this pours much water to combine  
With alcohol: this one will give you wine.

## CXIII

### MURRINE CUPS

If you drink warm wine, this murrine will favour  
Blazing Falernian with better flavour.

## CXIV

### CUMAEAN DISH

Chaste Sibyl sends this from her place of birth  
To you, this dish, red with Cumaean earth.

## CXV

### GLASS CHALICES

The flair of Egypt: yet the artisan,  
In adding more, has often spoiled his plan.



CXVI

FLAGON FOR ICED WATER

Spoletine wine or Marsian wine suits you:  
What does boiled water's noble coolness do?

CXVII

THE SAME

Of water fresh from snow taking one's fill,  
And not of snow itself, is thirst's main skill.

CXVIII

THE SAME

O servant, with Massilia's smoke decline  
To mix the snow – it'll cost more than the wine.

CXIX

EARTHEN CHAMBERPOT

My fingers snap – my slave to my decree  
Is slow – my pillow's mistress, then, to me.

CXX

SILVER SPOON

I'm *ligula* to all important men,  
Yet dim grammarians still insert an 'en'.

CXXI

SNAIL-PICK

I'm useful both for snails and eggs. You know  
Why I am rather called a snail-pick, though?

CXXII

RINGS

Once frequent gifts, we're now a rarer sight.  
Happy is he whose friend's a self-made knight.

CXXIII

RING-CASE

Oiled fingers often lose a heavy ring,  
But in my cahrage you will not fear a thing.

CXXIV

TOGA

“World-masters, toga'd race” Romans can claim

To be through him, who gave our great lord fame.

CXXV

THE SAME

If you can lose your morning sleep, you'll wear  
Your toga out and often gain your share.

CXXVI

WARM WRAPPER

A poor man's gift but not a poor man's gear:  
A stand-in for a cloak I offer here.

CXXVII

BROWN CLOAK OF CANUSIAN WOOL

Very like turbid mead, the gift you hold  
Should make you glad: it will not soon grow old.

CXXVIII

BROWN CLOAK

From Gaul a Santonian cloak you may now don:  
Some long-tailed monkeys wore them earlier on.

CXXIX

RED CLOAKS OF CANUSIAN WOOL

Rome more in brown, Gaul more in red are clad:  
This colour pleases both soldier and lad.

CXXX

LEATHER JERKIN

You may set out in sunny skies, but let  
Some leather cover you should it turn wet.

CXXXI

SCARLET MANTLES

You favour blue? Green? Why take scarlet, pray?  
Don't, by these lots, become a runaway.

CXXXII

CAP

If possible, I'd send whole cloaks: instead  
I only send you something for your head.

CXXXIII

BAETIC MANTLES

My wool's not fake; the same do I abide.  
Let me thus please: by my own sheep I'm dyed.

CXXXIV

STOMACHER

Bind my girl's swelling breasts, o stomacher,  
That there I may take hold and cover her.

CXXXV

DINNER SUITS

For us no courts, no bail-bonds!: all they ask  
Is "lie on painted couches" – that's our task.

CXXXVI

WARM CLOAK

Smooth clothes in winter don't help much, but note –  
My wool is going to warm your overcoat.

CXXXVII

WHITE MANTLES

Use us in the amphitheatre, where you might  
See chilly togas under cloaks quite white.

CXXXVIII

TABLECLOTH

Wool cloths your noble citrus-wood may screen:  
On my round tables one large 'O' is seen.

CXXXIX

LIBURNIAN HOODS

You don't know how to match your cloak with me?  
Put it on white, take it off green – you'll see.

CXL

CILICIAN SOCKS

Not wool gave these but a goat's beard: so rest  
Your foot inside this Cinyphian nest.

CXLI

HOLIDAY GARMENT

Yor toga gladly rests five days, while you  
May clothe yourself in this as is your due.

CXLII

COMFORTER

If I send you an invite to hear me  
Recite my poems, let this set your ears free.

CXLIII

PATAVIAN TUNICS

This triple-thread gear uses much wool: a blade  
It takes to cut tunics so thickly made.

CXLIV

SPONGE

It handily wipes tables, lightly swelled  
After the water has been quite expelled.

CXLV

FELT JERKIN

So white, so lovely is my wool that you  
May want to wear me during harvest too.

CXLVI

PILLOW

Anoint your hair with Cosmus' unguent well  
And, when you've done it, your pillow will smell  
Of it, ad when the fragrance leaves your hair,  
Within the feathers it will still be there.

CXLVII

FELT COVERLETS

Your spread id bright with purple brocade: it's silly  
When you've an aged wife who leaves you chilly.

CXLVIII

BLANKETS

That sacking on your bare bed not appear,  
We sisters, knit together as one, are here.

CXLIX

SCARF

I fear large tits; for me a young girl's best –  
My linen then enjoys a snowy breast.

CL

DAMASK COVERLETS

From Memphis: Babylon's needle has today  
Been overpowered by the Nilish sley.

CLI

GIRDLE

If under my sweet burden, though I'm long,  
Your belly swells, I'll be a narrower thong.

CLII

SQUARE WOOLLEN RUG

The country of Ctullus (elegant man!)  
Will send us blankets: we are Paduan.

CLIII

APRON

Let the rich give tunics: I'll gird you before.  
I'd give both gifts if I had hoards in store.

CLIV

AMETHYST-DYED WOOL

Since Sidon's shell-fish blood has filled me full  
Of drunkenness, why'm I called sober wool?

CLV

WHITE WOOL

Apulia's best, for second quality  
It's Parma; Altinum is Number Three.

CLVI

TYRIAN WOOLS

Paris gave us to Helen, of less worth  
The purple of Leda, she who gave her birth.

CLVII

POLLENTINE WOOLS

This land gives mourning fleeces, black in hue;  
Its native chalices it sends us too.

CLVIII

THE SAME

Indeed my wool is very sad in hue;  
But it is fitting for attendants who  
Are close-cropped, those not of the very best  
But summoned to attend to every guest.

CLIX

LEUCONIAN BED-STUFFING

Bed-girth too near your pillow? Why don't you  
Take wool shorn from Leuconian cloaks? They'll do.

CLX

CIRCENSIAN BED-STUFFING

Chopped-up marsh reed is called Circensian  
Bed-stuffing, the poor man's Leuconian.

CLXI

FEATHER

The feathers of Amyclae, which the swan  
Gives from his inner down, now rest upon.

CLXII

HAY

Steal from your mule and swell that rustling nest  
Of a mattress: hard beds don't provide pale rest.

CLXIII

BELL

Stop playing! Hear the warm baths' bell! What? No?  
Washed in the Virgin only, home you'll go.

CLXIV

QUOIT

Off, boys! The burnished Spartan weight takes wing.  
Let it no more than once be trespassing.

CLXV

LYRE

It brought Eurydice back, but Orpheus! – he  
Lost her through doubt and impetuosity.

CLXVI

THE SAME

Often hissed off at Pompey's stage, it would  
Entice woods and stop wild beatsts where they stood.

CLXVII

PLECTRUM

Don't raise an angry blister on your thumb!  
Grace your sweet lyre with a white plectrum.

CLXVIII

HOOP

A tire! Gift of great utility!  
To boys a hoop, but still a tire to me.

CLXIX

Vociferous rings an ample hoop adorning?  
Yes, so folk meeting it receive a warning.

CLXX

GOLDEN STATUE OF VISTORY

Without a drawn lot this is given to  
The man to whom the Rhine bestowed the true  
Nomenclature of conqueror. Boy, then,  
Pour with Falernian a toast of ten.

CLXXI

CLAY IMAGE OF “BRUTUS’ BOY”

This statue’s fame is easy to discover:  
For Marcus Brutus was this stripling’s lover.

CLXXII

CORINTHISN-BRONZE LIZARD-SLAYER

O do not kill that lizard, treacherous lad,  
Although at your hands death would make him glad.

CLXXIII

PICTURE OF HYACINTHUS

The Oebalian stripling turns his dying eyes  
From off the quoit that he must now despise –  
It was Apollo who had been to blame  
For this mischance, to his distressful shame.

CLXXIV

MARBLE HERMAPHRODITUS

Although this being, entering the spring,  
Was of the male sex, yet, on exiting,  
He was two-gendered: of his father blessed  
With something, of his mother – well, the rest.

CLXXV

PICTURE OF DANAË

Zeus, why did Danaë receive her price  
From you? Leda, unbought, to you was nice.

CLXXVI

GERMAN MASK

The mask of a red-haired Batavian,

A potter's freak, to boys a bogey-man.

CLXXVII

CORINTHIAN-BRONZE HERCULES

The child throttles two snakes without a glance.  
Now might the Hydra fear his youthful hands.

CLXXVIII

CLAY HERCULES

I'm fragile: do not spurn me, though: no shame  
Is felt by Alcides to bear my name.

CLXXIX

SILVER MINERVA

Brave maid, you have your helmet and your spear,  
No aegis, though. "It's Caesar's. It's not here."

CLXXX

PICTURE OF EUROPA

Better to have changed into a bull somehow,  
High Jove, when Io was for you a cow.

CLXXXI

MARBLE LEANDER

Daring Leander in the swelling foam  
Cried, "Drown me, waves, for I'm returning home."

CLXXXII

CLAY STATUETTE OF A HUNCHBACK

Prometheur made this for the earth one day  
While drunk, I think – *he* played with Saturn's clay.

CLXXXIII

HOMER'S "BATTLE OF THE FROGS"

Read over Homer's tale of frogs: learn how  
To smooth, with my gewgaws, your wrinkled brow.

CLXXXIV

HOMER IN PARCHMENT HANDBOOKS

The *Iliad* and Ulysses, Priam's foe,  
In many-folded skins, are lying low.

CLXXXV

VIRGIL'S GNAT



Read, clever man, the *Gnat* of fine Maro –  
Don't leave off dice for "Arma virumque cano."

CLXXXVI

VIRGIL IN PARCHMENT

Great Maro in a parchment that's so brief!  
His very face one sees on its first leaf!

CLXXXVII

MENANDER'S THAÏS

Here he first touched the love-games of young men:  
Thaïs, not Glycera, was his mistrees then.

CLXXXVIII

CICERO IN PARCHMENT

If this is your companion when you go  
On trips, think it a trek with Cicero.

CLXXXIX

PROPERTIUS IN A SINGLE VOLUME

As his fine youthful theme, Cynthia owed  
Her fame: no less, though, she herself bestowed.

CXC

LIVY IN PARCHMENT

Prolific Livy circumscribed you've got  
In tiny skins: my shelves can't take the lot!

CXCI

SALLUST

Here's "Crispus" (as says every learned man),  
The Number One Roman historian.

CXCII

OVID'S METAMORPHOSES IN PARCHMENT

This mass of many pages may be seen  
To hold the books of Ovid – all fifteen.

CXCIII

TIBULLUS

Wild Nemesis consumed him and he deemed  
It good that he at home was not esteemed.

CXCIV

LUCAN

Some say that I'm no poet but that's not  
What the bookseller says – he thinks I'm hot.

CXCV

CATULLUS

What tiny Mantua owes to Virgil so  
Much great Verona must Catullus owe.

CXCVI

CALVUS' POEM ON THE USE OF COLD WATER

Of springs and rivers' names each folio  
Realtes: they'd better swim these waters, though.

XCXVII

DWARF MULES

You'll fear no fall off them: it has been found  
One's seated almost higher on the ground.

XCXVIII

GALLIC LAPDOG

The antics of this puppy dog from Gaul?  
A whole page is too short to tell them all.

XCXIX

ASTURIAN JENNET

This little horse moves with a tick-tock pace  
At speed and comes from a gold-yielding race.

CC

GREYHOUND

This swift hound hunts for his master and, with care,  
Will bring, unwounded by his teeth, a hare.

CCI

WRESTLER

Not 'cos he wins but 'cos he can resign  
I like him (and he knows 'wrestle-recline').

CCII

MONKEY

I can dodge spears in my direction hailed:  
If I'd a tail, I'd be an ape long-tailed.

CCIII

## GIRL FROM GADES

She itches and she jerks at such a rate  
She makes even Hippolytus masturbate.

CCIV

## CYMBALS

They mourn Attis, the boy of Cybele:  
Her priests will sell them in extremity.

CCV

## YOUNG SLAVE

A naturally smooth young boy I'd like to own  
For whose sake no young girl will make me groan.

CCVI

## GIRDLE

Boy, twina around your neck love's very core,  
A girdle that's from Venus' lap, what's more.

CCVII

## THE SAME

Imbued with Venus' nectar, please acquire  
This girdle, which would set her Jove on fire.

CCVIII

## SHORTHAND-WRITER

The words speed fast, the hand speeds even more:  
The tongue's not done, the hand completes the chore.

CCIX

## SEA-SHELL

Let the sea-shell make smooth the papyrus:  
The reed-pen will run on with little fuss.

CCX

## MONSTER

His dullness is not sly, it tells no lies:  
He who is just wise enough *is* wise.

CCXI

## RAM'S HEAD

You cut the ram of Phrixus' throat: did he  
Who gave you a tunic rate this, cruelty?

CCXII

#### DWARF

You'd think him Hector seeing just his head:  
But, standing up, he's Hector's son instead.

#### CCXIII

#### BUCKLER

Less conqueror than one who's wont to yield,  
To you a buckler, to a dwarf a shield.

#### CCXIV

#### COMIC BOY ACTORS

No-one's "The Hated" in this company;  
Each, though, "The Twice Deceiving One" could be.

#### CCXV

#### SINGER'S CLASP

To comics and to harpists what do you  
Ensure? "That they've a more expansive screw."

#### CCXVI

#### HAWK

A predator, he's the fowler's minion now,  
Miffed that the birds will serve as his chow.

#### CCXVII

#### CATERER

Say how many guests you'll have and quote the price!  
Don't say another word! It's there in a trice!

#### CCXVIII

#### BIRD-CATCHER

You can snare birds with canes *and* bird-song, and  
The clever reed grows in the silent hand.

#### CCXIX

#### BRAVERY OF A BULLOCK

Poor lawyer writing poems for nothing, see -  
Accept the heart you yet possess from me.

#### CCXX

#### COOK

A cook needs more than art; I don't deserve  
A slavish taste but that of him I serve.

CCXXI

GRIDIRON WITH SPITS

Let a cutlet on your grated gridiron sweat,  
A foaming boar upon your long spits set.

CCXXII

BAKER

He'll make a thousand sweet shapes: frugal bees  
Exert themselves this man alone to please.

CCXXIII

RICH DAINTRIES

The baker's making breakfast for the boys –  
Rise! Birds of dawn now make a joyful noise.



























