

EX PONTO II

I

The news of Caesar's triumph even here
Has reached (where languid Notus' weary breeze
Is scarcely felt). I've never looked for cheer
In Scythia ; now this locality's
Less hateful to me. I at last can see
Clear sky now that the clouds of all my woes
Have burst: I've cheated fate. Though Caesar be
Averse to granting joys to me, he chose
To grant one to us all. The gods also,
To gain our blithe grace, while their feasts take place, 10
Ban sadness. I'd embrace this joy, even though
He should forbid it (who would have the face
To say this surely raves). When Jupiter
Floods fields with useful rain, tough burrs will grow
Along with crops. I, too, a useless burr,
Can feel the fruitful power and, although
Against his will, I'm aided. I take part
In Caesar's pleasure: nothing in that home
Is private. Thank you, Fame, since you impart 20
That victor's pomp to one who's far from Rome,
Imprisoned here. From you I ascertain
That countless races gathered recently
To see our Caesar: Rome can scarce contain
Her guests (she who enfolds the entity
Of the vast world in her great walls). Although
For days Auster hailed copiously, you say,
The sun serenely shone with celestial glow,
Matching the people's aspects on that day,
And loudly honouring those he acclaimed,
The victor gave them gifts of soldiery: 30
Before he donned the multicoloured, famed
Vestments, upon the smoky sanctuary
He scattered incense in chaste mitigation
Of his father's justice, which contains a shrine
Forever in his heart. Happy ovation
Pursued him on his way; a dewy shine
Of roses lit the streets; before him there
Were silver copies of the enemies'
Crushed walls, with portrayed men, martial hardware,
At random plied up high, hostilities 40

In deep woods, rivers, mountains. From the gold
 Of sunburned spoils, the Roman forum, too,
 Turned golden and so many chiefs, I'm told,
 Bore chains about their captive necks that you
 Would almost think them *all* our enemies.
 Most, pardoned, kept their lives, even Bato,
 Their field-marshal. Why should I, when one sees
 Our foes gain godly mercy, not also
 Think Caesar's wrath can shrink? I also heard,
 Germanicus, that towns under your name 50
 Were carried and that these, so goes the word,
 No walls or arms or skilful site could claim
 To keep secure. Gods grant you years! The rest
 Will you supply, so your integrity
 I served by long life. My prayer shall be blest:
 Some weight's attached to prophets' augury.
 My prayers were heard. You'll scale, as champion,
 Tarpeia's citadel, a joyful sight
 For Rome, with wreathed steeds. Looking upon
 Your ripe acclaims, your father will delight, 60
 Seeing the joy he granted to his own.
 Prime of our youth in war and peace, hear me
 Now prophecy. This coup may be made known
 By me in verse if all my misery
 Is bearable, if Scythian darts don't stain
 My flesh or Getan swords demolish me.
 If, while I live, your bay adorns your fane,
 You will believe this double augury.

II

Lifelong respector of your house, Naso,
 To Euxine's left shore exiled, sends to you
 From the unconquered Getae this "Hello",
 Which once in person he was wont to do,
 Messalinus. If you read my name yet see
 My face no more and hesitate to scan
 The rest, alas! Yet read – along with me
 Don't oust my verse: In Rome they've earned no ban.
 Should Ossa carry Pelion, I yet
 Never thought my hand could touch the shining stars; 10
 No mad disciple of Enceladus' set,
 Against the mighty gods the arms of Mars
 I never moved: though they once felt the spear

Of rash Diomed, by me they were not maimed.
 My fault was grave, but, though it cost me dear,
 It struck me only, never having aimed
 At greater sin. But "timid" and "unwise"
 Must I be called: that fits me. I admit
 That, after Caesar's just wrath, in your eyes
 I am, quite fittingly, hard to acquit. 20
 To the Julian name so loyal, you deduce,
 That their distress is yours. Yet, though you'd clash
 While threatenbing angry wounds, you won't induce
 Alarm in me. The Pelian spear of ash
 Helped Telephus, Greek Achaemenides
 Was by a Trojan ship provided aid.
 Sometimes a temple-violator flees
 To an altar and not feel at all afraid
 To ask the wronged god's help. Unsafe? That's right.
 My ship, though, sails rough seas. Let others be 30
 On safety-watch: an utterly wretched plight
 Is safe, for then there's no anxiety
 For anything worse. The man who's quickly sped
 Along the brine, with both his arms stretched wide,
 Will grasp at thorns and rugged rocks; in dread
 Of preying hawks, a bird will hide,
 Exhausted, in a human breast. A doe
 Won't hesitate to seek a house nearby
 While fleeing, terrified, the canine foe.
 Kind friend, give comfort to me while I cry 40
 And do not shut against my timid pleas
 Your stubborn door. Favour these words of mine,
 Approaching with them Rome's divinities,
 Worshipped by you no less than the divine
 Tarpeian Thunderer, and plead for me,
 Although no cause is good that's in my name.
 Near death, both cold and ailing, I will be
 Redeemed by you, if ever. Take your aim
 For my debility and exercise
 That weight which love of our eternal king 50
 Has granted. In my favour eulogize
 (A glorious family trait, able to bring
 Succour to anxious clients) for in you
 Your father's eloquence lives: you are his heir.
 To this I turn but not that you may sue
 To champion me: defendants should not bear
 Defending if they own their guilt. Hear me!
 Should you plead fault or not? A wound, I deem,
 Like that, if it's past cure, security

Demands should not be touched. Be mum! This theme 60
 Has run its course; o would I could inter
 My own remains! As though I was misled
 By no mistake, then, that I may resume
 The life he gave to me, plead in my stead.
 When he's serene and peace is on that face
 That moves empire and world, beg that I be
 No meagre Getan spoil and earn a place
 That's mild in my exile of misery.
 Its' time for prayers. He's healthy and he sees
 The strength he gave to you, Rome, and his wife 70
 Guards hius bed safely. The extremities
 Of Rome his son extends; Germanicus' life
 Is outrun by his spirit and the power
 Of Drusus equals his nobility.
 The young men and young women, all the flower
 Of Caesar's house are in salubrity;
 Peace forced upon Paeonian, Dalmatian,
 The foot of Caesar prssed upon the neck
 Of Illyria, now made a servile nation.
 With placid face, upon his chariot's deck, 80
 His temples laurel-bound, see Caesar there!
 His loyal sons who've earned the soubriquets
 Bestowed on them, resembling that power
 Of brothers opposite within the gaze
 Of holy Julius, deserving, too,
 Of their own father. Uttermost delight
 Messalinus gives to these royal kinsmen who
 Should yield to none. An amatory fight
 Remains for what they spurn: he will bow down
 Before no-one. That day he'll venerate, 90
 Above all, when he sees the laurel crown
 Settled on honoured locks. O happy fate
 To see this triumph and the godlike face
 Of Caesar! The Suromatae *I* see,
 Not Caesar, and a peace-divested place,
 Its waters bound by frost's frigidity.
 But if you hear this, if my voice extends
 So far, please use your power to have mutated
 My place of banishment. Your father lends
His voice to this, a man I've venerated 100
 From early years, if his still eloquent shade
 Yet feels; your brother too, though he may dread
 Your saving me will injure him, has made
 This plea, the whole house too; it can't be said
 That you yourself could claim your coterie

Never included me: my *Art* apart,
 You often praised my flair, which now I see
 I misused. Oust my latest sin, that *Art*,
 And lo! My life will bring no degradation
 Upon your house. So may it thrive, defended 110
 By the gods and Caesars: make but supplication
 To that mild god, who's angrily offended
 (And rightly) that he spirit me away
 From Scythia's ferocity. I know,
 It's hard, but virtue seeks the harshest way;
 For such a worthy act the thanks will grow.
 No Polyphemus in his mammoth cave
 In Aetna, no Antiphates will her
 Your voice: our prince, if you a pardon crave,
 Is mild and lenient: although your ear 120
 May catch his thunder, yet the lightning's blaze
 Is absent. When he's launched a harsh decree,
 He's sad himself and retribution lays
 Upon himself; by my iniquity,
 However, was his mercy crushed: perforce
 His rage reached maximum strength. I, worlds away,
 May not beseech the god you love: endorse,
 Therefore, my message, be my priest, but, pray,
 Add to my prayers *your* prayers as well. But, please,
 Make this endeavour only if you think 130
 That it won't injure me. Apologies!
 Shipwrecked, I've constant fears that I will sink.

III

Your famous virtues, Maximus, are mated
 With your name, nor will you let your quality
 Yield to your noble birth: I've venerated
 You to the end – for how can my state be
 Different from death? – In not abandoning
 A friend in need, you do the rarest deed
 Of all in such an age. It's sickening
 To say but that it's true we must concede –
 The mob will value friendship while it pays.
 They care for gain not honour: loyalty 10
 Will stand or fall with fortune. He who'll praise
 All virtue as its own reward, you'll see,
 Is one in thousands. They have no regard
 For glory if a good deed lacks reward

And rue the act, and everything is barred
 From their enjoyment but returns. Afford
 Their minds with not a hope of increment
 And no-one will be helped. All men adore
 Their income, counting each emolument
 With anxious fingers. Like some venal whore, 20
 Each plies his trade. So I appreciate
 So much the more that you're not swept away,
 As in some all-destructive river's spate,
 By this iniquity we see today.
 None's loved but those whom fortune smiles:
 Her thunder scatters all. Lo, look at me,
 A man once safeguarded by miles and miles
 Of friends, his sails swelling auspiciously –
 Storms smash the cruel sea and I am left
 Shipwrecked; when others want all to suppose 30
 That they don't know me, while I lie bereft,
 You, barely two or three from all of those,
 Have offered aid and you were paramount,
 Their leader, not their comrade, qualified
 To give, not seek, example. For you count
 It good in loyalty to take my side
 For loyalty's sake, who said the one misdeed
 Of this exile was "error". Righteousness
 And gain don't mix, you say, and we have need
 To seek it for itself, even when largess 40
 Is absent. You believe its' base to thrust
 Away a friend who's pitied or betray
 One who is miserable. It is more just,
 Rather than let him drown, simply to lay
 Beneath his weary chin a helping finger.
 See what Achilles did for Patroclus
 After his death: this life in which I linger
 Is just like death, remember. Pirithous
 Had Theseus' company across the Styx.
 How far's my death from hence? Young Pylades 50
 Helped mad Orestes. No less madness sticks
 To my mistake. Accept, then, if you please,
 As you now do, praise due to mighty men
 And help a wretched one with all your skill.
 If I know you, if, as you were back then,
 You still remain and have your courage still,
 The more that Fortune bites you, you contend
 The more and, as is right, you take great pains
 That she'll not harm you. A brave foe will lend
 You bravery. Thus damages and gains

The same cause gives you. Maybe, though, you fear,
 Dear boy, that you're not good enough to be
 The comrade of that goddess of the sphere.
 Your wrecked ship's sails, with your tenacity,
 Though you'd not choose them, yet, such as they are,
 You manage them. So shattered that you'd think
 That she's about to fall, this does not bar
 Your holding back the wreckage from the drink.
 At first your rage was just nor more serene
 Than his who, vexed by me, was righteously 70
 Incensed. The mighty Caesar's wrath was seen
 Straight off as yours. But it was told me to me
 That when you heard the source of all my grief
 You groaned at my mistake, and at that stage
 You were the first to send me some relief
 And hope that one can turn aside the rage
 Of an injured god. Long friendship that began
 Before your birth affected you, to the rest
 A friend by circumstance but, to this man,
 By birth. I kissed you first when you were dressed 80
 In swaddling clothes. Your house was dear to me
 From earliest years: a longtime care am I
 To you. Your father, skilled in oratory
 And noble first encouraged me to try
 To publish poems, my talent's monitor.
 Your brother could not say when I adored
 Him first. But you I espoused earlier, for
 In any situation you afford
 Me favour – you alone. Last seen together
 By Elba where we wept sad tears of woe, 90
 You asked about my disrepute and whether
 The news was true: I wavered to and fro,
 In patent fear, between the truth and lies
 And, like the snow the wet South Winds liquesce,
 Tears of dismay cascaded from my eyes.
 Thus, seeing that the cause of my distress,
 My sin, may lie unseen through absolution,
 You see your old friend's grief and comfort me.
 With full remission, it's my resolution
 To thank you countless times. If I should see 100
 Only your vows, your mother has my prayer
 Once Caesar's safe. This prayer, I now recall,
 After the scent of incense filled the air
 Upon your altar, you made first of all.

IV

From frozen Hister let me chat with you,
 Atticus, true comrade. Do you still remain
 Regardful of a wretched friend or do
 Your cares grow weak? The gods have not denied
 So much for me that I can think it right
 For you to forget me. I continually
 Still picture you before me in my mind,
 Recalling serious talks, much jollity.
 The hours were much too swift, we'd often find,
 For our long chats, the days too brief and fast 10
 For all my words. Often a poem, brand-new,
 Came to your ears, my Muses' genius cast
 Before your judgment. What delighted you
 I thought had pleased the public; blessed prize
 For your critique! To have a friend review
 My poetry, I'd more than once revise.
 The arcades, for a, streets beheld us two,
 In theatres we'd deated side by side.
 Dear one, there was a love as strong in us
 As that which was accustomed to abide 20
 Between Achilles and Antilochus.
 I'd not believe that, even if you supped
 Of Lethe's cup, you'd from your heart delete
 All this. Long summer days will be abrupt
 As winter ones, her days as long, no heat
 Will Babylon have, Pontus will have no cold,
 The lily'll smell more fragrant than the rose
 Of Paestum long before your mind won't hold
 All this. My fate's not *that* black, I suppose.
 Lest my belief in you is false, however,
 And my conviction ill-advised, beware. 30
 Stand by your old friend in what way soever,
 But, that I may not burden you, take care.

V

My elegiacs and a wish I send
 That you are well, Salanus. Hear my plea;
 To prove you are, I trust that you, my friend,
 May read me safe and sound. Your dignity,
 A thing near-dead today, demands that I

Beseech you; though just moderately tied
 To me, they say that you lamented my
 Exile; reading these poems from the other side
 Of the world, you have, whatever their merit may be,
 Helped them by their approval. You had need 10
 To soften Caesar's rage, which he even he
 Would want if he but knew – a wish indeed
 So kind and so like you; it brings such cheer
 To me. You are more moved, it seems to me,
 By all my woes because I sojourn here.
 Trust me, throughout the world there cannot be
 A place that less enjoys Augustan peace;
 Yet versed composed amid fierce wars you read
 And favour; thus the talent I release
 From an impoverished stream you praise and feed 20
 One rill and make great streams. I'm gratified
 By your review, although you may suppose
 That wretched men cannot be satisfied
 With what they do. While I try to compose
 On humble themes, however, I possess
 A talent equal to each meagre text.
 Lately when I heard news of my success,
 I ventured to endeavour for my next
 Project, a massive theme. Its gravity
 And splendour overwhelmed and its weight 30
 Defeated me – therein you'll value me
 For taking on the work; the rest's prostrate
 Before the subject. Should this book reach you,
 I say that it should gain your custody.
 Even without my suit, this you would do.
 Thus may your kind indulgence be for me
 A modest spur. I've now earned your acclaim –
 Your heart, though, is more white than virgin snow,
 Than milk: admiring others, all the same
 You've earned praise, too, your deeds not lying low, 40
 Your eloquence. He to who Germany
 Bestowed a name, youth's leader, shares with you
 His studies. You, by your ability,
 And character (his old comrade, one who
 Has loved him long) have earned his approbation.
 You soon had taught him fiery oratory.
 He found his own words through your intonation.
 You ceased, and mouths born in mortality
 Were silent for a while, then up he rose,
 A youth who's worthy of the Julian race, 50
 Like Lucifer from the East, and in this pose,

In silence, both his posture and his face
 Said "orator", his graceful robe induced
 A hope for eloquence. A short delay –
 And then that godlike mouth of his unloosed
 Such words you'd think gods spoke in such a way
 And that this is a princely forcefulness,
 So noble were his words. Though his esteem
 You've gained, topping the heavens, nevertheless
 An exiled writer's poetry you deem 60
 Worth reading. Possibly there's harmony
 In your twin intellects, each to his own.
 The peasant loves the farmer, soldiery
 Their general, the sailor's always shown
 His liking for the swaying vessel's guide –
 You're diligent and love the Pierides;
 Gifted yourself, in *my* gift you take pride.
 Our callings differ but they spring indeed
 Out of the selfsame sources: liberal art
 We both adore. The thyrsus you have not, 70
 I've tasted of the bay, but, that apart,
 In both of us a fire burning hot
 Should live: my verse gains from your rhetoric
 Its muscle while your words receive their glow
 From what I write. You think my verses stick,
 Therefore, to your pursuit, and rightly so,
 And that the rituals of our shared campaign
 Should be preserved, and therefore may that friend
 From whom you win such reverence remain
 Your own, I pray, until the very end 80
 Of your whole life, and may he come to be
 Commander of the world and hold the rein
 Which has fallen heir to: that's the plea
 That all the citizens and I maintain.

VI

Sad verse goes to Graecinus from Black Sea,
 Penned by Naso, who used to, face-to-face,
 Talk to him. Thus may speak a refugee:
 My letter has a tongue in talking's place
 Or I'd be mute. A foolish comrade's sin
 You, as you should, reprove and prove to me
 That I deserve more than the state I'm in.
 Right, but your censure comes too tardily;

Be easier on one who has confessed.
 When sailing past Ceraunia, sails upright 10
 To dodge the vicious rocks, that time was best
 To censure me. Now shipwrecked, shedding light
 On how I should have steered will not help me.
 So aid a weary swimmer – don't regret
 Supporting him. You don't, and here's my plea –
 Support him still, and may your kin be set
 Far from all harm – your mother and your spouse,
 Your brothers; as you pray with voice and heart,
 May all your deeds find favour with the house
 Of Caesar. For to take no single part 20
 In aiding an old friend in misery
 Will cause you shame: you must not now retreat –
 Be firm; a ship in peril on the sea
 Must not be left unaided; don't unseat
 A friend, don't follow chance and don't disclaim
 A wretched comrade, for it was not thus
 With Orestes and his pal; you'd say the same
 Of loyal Theseus and Pirithous,
 Admired before our time and to be still
 In days to come. The theatres all resound 30
 In homage. When a friend has suffered ill
 You've aided him and therefore are you bound
 To rank with men like these. Your piety
 Deserves acclaim and thanks will not be mum –
 Your name shall echo in posterity.
 Stay but unswerving to your weary chum,
 Graecinus, and that impulse will remain
 For long. Though you this service do for me,
 Sped by a breeze an oar I still retain;
 No swift steed, spurred, receives no injury. 40

VII

My note, sent from the scarce-subdued Getae,
 Would first salute you, Atticus, then be
 Solicitous of your health and ask if I
 Move you whatever your activity.
 Doubtless I do, and yet my dread of woe
 Will often make me picture groundless fear.
 Pardon this undue dread – please let it go.
 A man will shrink from seas that yet are clear
 Once shipwrecked. Fish once injured by a hook

Imagine brass-bound barbs in every bit 10
 Of food. Often a lamb will take a look
 At a far-distant dog and flee from it,
 Believing it a wolf, unwittingly
 Shunning the shepherd's care. The softest touch
 A wounded limb avoids, anxiety
 Breeds fear of empty shadows. I am much
 Assailed by hostile Fortune and therefore
 Think only gloomy thoughts. It's clear my fate,
 Holding its course, will travel, all the more,
 Familiar ways. The gods, I speculate, 20
 Keep kindness from me: they can hardly be
 Beguiled. She plans to ruin me. Although
 She once was fickle, now her constancy
 Works for my downfall. Trust me, if you know
 That I'm a tell-truth (while my ills are clear,
 I may not be thought so), you'll count more corn
 Of Cinyphus, the thyme-blooms that appear
 In lofty Hybla, all birds that are borne
 Upon the air, fish in the sea, be sure,
 Than is the sum of my unhappiness 30
 On land and sea. The world does not endure
 A grimmer race than Getae; nonetheless
 They grieved my woes. To try to log all these
 In verse is to create an Iliad.
 No need to fear you, then, whose loyalty's
 Been proved so often, but because, when sad,
 A man's a frightened thing, because the locks
 On happiness's door have kept me out.
 My grief's a habit now; and just as rocks
 Are grooved by constant drops, so from the clout 40
 Of Fortune I continually ache:
 Another wound can scarcely find a place.
 Assiduous employment cannot make
 A ploughshare thinner, nor a chariot's trace
 Make Appia more worn than is my heart
 More beaten by misfortune; there is no
 Apparent helping hand; by liberal art
 Have many sought renown: oppressed by woe
 By my own gift I perished. In the past
 I lived a sinless, happy life, and yet 50
 To me it offers, now I am downcast,
 No succour. Often grievous faults will get,
 Through friends' prayers mercy: all support for me
 Is mum. Some folk, when in distressful pain,
 Will be abetted through proximity:

I was not there when this vast hurricane
 Fell on me. Who would not dread Caesar's rage
 Even when mute? Tacked to my punishment
 Were angry words. The seasons can assuage
 One's exile: cast to sea, I underwent 60
 Arcturus and the dangerous Pleiades.
 Mild winters often serve a ship: my prow
 Bore harsher seas than that of Ulysses.
 The loyalty of friends could have somehow
 Eased my distress: a treacherous crowd has grown
 Rich by my spoils: a placid deportation
 Depends upon location: there's no zone
 Grimmer than this. To live close to your nation
 Means much. I'm confined in a distant land,
 A distant world. Your laurel, Caesar, shows 70
 Peace even to exiles: here the Pontic strand
 Lies unprotected from her neighbouring foes.
 It's sweet to till one's fields: the enemy
 (Barbarians all) will not allow the earth
 To be upturned. The sky's tranquillity
 Helps body and soul: the coast here knows no dearth
 Of constant cold. Sweet water gives delight
 Unenviable: mixed with a salty sea
 March-water is my drink. There is a blight
 Of everything. Yet intrepidity 80
 Conquers that everything: it yet supplies
 The frame with strength. To stomach such a weight,
 One must be firm of purpose: otherwise,
 If one should let the nerves capitulate,
 One falls. Even the hope that Caesar's spleen
 May be allayed eventually stops me
 From craving death and waning. You have been
 No small part of my solace, though you be
 So few: your loyalty has stood the test
 Through my misfortunes. Please, I beg of you, 90
 Keep on, don't quit my vessel, do not rest,
 Preserving me and your convictions too.

VIII

Great Cotta, I received just recently
 Two Caesars – gods you sent me: to complete
 The gift was Livia there to make it three.
 Blessed silver with whom gold could not compete,

Although you were rude metal once, now you're
 Divine. No greater gift could you confer –
 Three deities arriving on my shore!
 To see gods! Think them present! As it were
 To hold discourse with true divinities!
 So far as you could manage. There am I, 10
 No in some backwoods but, just as I please,
 I stroll though Rome as once I did. I spy
 The Caesars' faces as before: this prayer
 I never thought would be fulfilled; I greet
 The deity again. Nothing, I swear,
 Even if I returned, could be so sweet.
 What do my eyes lack but the Palatine?
 A worthless place sans Caesar! When I see
 That god, then I see Rome; for in him shine
 His nation's traits. Are they deceiving me 20
 Or do my eyes see anger in that stare?
 Do I see something grim and threatening?
 Worthier than the whole world anywhere
 Can show, exonerate me, check the sting
 Of your just vengeance. Pray exonerate me,
 Our generation's never-ending fame,
 Whose prudence gives him world supremacy.
 By Rome, whom you revere with more acclaim
 Than your own self, to the gods, eternally
 Attentive to your prayers, by her who shares
 Your bed, your only peer, who does not feel 30
 Our might a burden, by your son who wears
 Your badge of virtue, who's clearly your real
 Issue (his goodness proves it), finally
 By your grandsons who are worthy both of you
 And of their father, serving each decree
 Of yours with giant strides, I beg you to
 Lighten my pain in but the smallest way
 And shorten it; locate me far from here,
 From Scythian enemies take me away
 And, if it's right, Caesar who is most near 40
 To Caesar, let your godhead not exclude
 My prayers. In terror may wild Germany
 On conquering horses and in servitude
 Be borne, and may your father live to be
 Nestor, your mother Sibyl, and may you
 Be long their son, and you, a spouse who's right
 For such a mighty man, not listen to
 My overtures with stubborn ear; so might
 Your spouse be safe, grandsons and offspring too,

Your good sons and their wives, and may you miss 50
 But Drusus whom stern Germany took from you.
 Soon may his brother, in revenge for this,
 Drive his white steeds while in his purple dressed.
 Kind gods, grant me my timid prayers: let me
 Gain something face-to-face. At Caesar's hest
 The gladiator wins security;
 No small aid does he bring. I'm aided too,
 Since I may see you all, for in one home
 All three appear. How happy are they who
 Don't see mere copies but real gods now come 60
 Before them. Evil fate took this from me –
 I cherish, then, their likenesses in art.
 Thus men know gods kept in obscurity
 High in the air and thus Jupiter's part
 Is taken by the copy they adore.
 Don't put these copies, which will be with me
 Forever, in some place that you abhor.
 I'd sooner lose my head, no longer see,
 My eyes gouged out, than have you snatched away,
 Rome's gods: you'll be the port of my exile, 70
 My altar. I will clasp you every day
 That I'm besieged by Getans - all the while
 As eagles, standards, I will follow you.
 Am I deceived? Does profligate desire
 Mock me? Or is there hope that I may view
 A better home? His image shows less fire,
 His lips seem to consent to what I say.
 May my forebodings, full of fearfulness,
 Prove true and may our deity's wrath, I pray,
 Although it's justifiable, grow less. 80

IX

Scion of kings, Cotys, whose noble lines
 Extend back to Eumolpus, if you've heard
 Through rumour that I lie in the confines
 Of a distant land, sweet youth, allow a word
 Of suppliance and, if you have the power
 (You have indeed), succour a refugee.
 Fortune – in this one thing I don't feel sour –
 Has given you me, reft of hostility
 In only this. Upon your gentle strand
 Receive my shipwreck, do not let the ocean 10

Be safer than your land. To lend a hand
 To one who's fallen is a regal notion –
 It fits such men as you. It's congruous
 In your position - mighty though that be,
 It hardly matches with your animus.
 No better cause can power ever see
 Than when ensuring prayers achieve their aim.
 Your shining birth desires this - a deed
 Of godlike excellence. This is the claim
 Of Eumolpus, famed founder of your seed, 20
 And Erichthonius before him. You
 Share this with gods – you hear our every prayer.
 Why should we grant the usual honours to
 The gods if we now rob them of their care
 To help? If Jove presents to us dead ears,
 Why slay a victim in his sanctuary?
 If angry seas will not allay my fears,
 Why should Neptune receive incense from me?
 If she neglects a husbandman's vain pleas,
 Why should a pregnant sow's guts be supplied 30
 To Ceres? Hairy Dionysus sees
 No goat's slit throat if vintners are denied
 The trodden must. We pray for Caesar's reign
 Because his statecraft is exemplary.
 Thus men and gods through favour greatness gain,
 Each lending aid. You, pray, grant remedy
 To one within your camp, worthy offspring
 Of a worthy father. Man's service to man
 Is aptly pleasant: there's no better thing
 For one who seeks a courtesy. Who can 40
 Approve Antiphates or castigate
 Alcinous? No Cassandrian he
 Who is your father, nor the reprobate
 Who in Pherae held sway tyrannically
 Nor he who in his very own creation
 Roasted Perillus: warlike, unsubdued,
 And yet in peacetime with no inclination
 For carnage. A devoted attitude
 Towards the study of each liberal art
 Softens one's nature, ousting cruelty. 50
 No king has taken them more to his heart
 Nor is in studies of humanity
 More drilled. Your verse bears witness: with your name
 Deleted, I'd deny that they were penned
 By a Thracian youth, nor could I ever claim
 An Orpheus lived on earth. Your talents lend

Pride to the Bistones. When time demands,
 You take up arms and steep yourself deep red
 In enemy gore, your trained to use your hands
 To throw the javelin and turn the head 60
 Of your swift steed, and when you've given thought
 To your father's tasks and now may take a break,
 That dreamy idleness may not be sought
 Up to the stars the Muses' path you take.
 This, too, unites us somewhat: the same rite
 We worship. Bard to bard, I reach for you
 In prayer that, now exiled, I may delight
 In Thracian loyalty. I journeyed to
 Pontus no cut-throat nor a poisoner:
 My verses *are* my own: I have committed 70
 No wrong that law condemns; one weightier,
 Nevertheless, to you must be admitted.
 Don't ask about it – but a foolish work
 I have composed; my hand, then, is to blame.
 Don't ask if I've sinned more – my faults all lurk
 Beneath my *Art* alone. But, all the same,
 The penalty was mild – expatriation.
 Since I'm deprived of Rome, I pray, ensure
 That, since I live adjacent to your nation,
 In a detested place I am secure. 80

X

Macer, do you suspect this wax impress
 Hid Naso's words? If this ring doesn't show
 Its master wrote this letter, can you guess
 These characters are my own? Or don't you know
 What many lengthy years have snatched away?
 Can you no longer these old symbols see?
 Forget both gems and hands so long as they
 Don't sever all the care you had for me.
 You owe this to our long association
 (You are not unknown even to my wife) 10
 And verse, with which more canny penetration
 Than I you wrote – you never in your life
 Were guilty of my *Art* (and rightly too)
 You sing what deathless Homer left unsaid
 So that the Trojan War may gain from you
 The final touch. Naso contributed
 The *Art of Love*, less wise, and pays the fine

Of his instruction. But some rites there are
 Shared by us bards, though each a separate line
 Pursues: and I believe, though you are far 20
 From me, recalling them you'd wish to be
 My comforter. Under your sway I've seen
 The splendid Asian cities, Sicily,
 Mount Etna's flames giving a splendid sheen
 To heaven, by Typhon regurgitated
 Beneath her, Henna's lakes, and Palicus,
 All sulphurous, and the amalgamated
 Streams of Cyane and of Anapus.
 Nearby's the nymph who Elean waters flees,
 Running beneath the sea. Here have I spent 30
 Almost a year. Ah, the disparities
 Of there and here. How small the complement
 Of times we saw all this, while you gave me
 Delightful journeys. Whether we ploughed the main
 In a painted boat or travelled rapidly
 In carriages, the discourse we'd maintain
 Would often make the trip seem short indeed,
 Our words, if added up, more numerous
 Than were our steps; often our talk would need
 More time, even summer hours leaving us 40
 With more to say. That we have braved the sea
 And thanked its gods, shared deeds and pleasantries
 Unshameful is no small thing. Though I be
 Elsewhere, while you reflect on things like these,
 At any time I'll be before your eye
 As though you'd just beheld me. As for me,
 Though under heaven's pivot, way up high
 Above the seas, yet I will always be
 Able within my heart to see you there –
 The only way I have – and converse, too, 50
 With you in frigid Pontus' icy air,
 So, though you do not know it, here are you.
 You're standing by my side, though far away;
 Hither you come from Rome at my decree;
 Since Rome's the happier land, please, pay for pay,
 In Rome return your memory of me.

XI

Rufus, here is some hurried poetry
 From him who wrote the far-from-happy *Art* ;

Though worlds away beside the Euxine Sea,
 I keep the memory of you in my heart.
 Sooner would I forget my very name
 Than banish from mind my faithfulness
 To you: I'd sooner cast my mortal frame
 Into the winds than have my thankfulness
 Obliterated. I cherish that flow
 Of tears across your cheeks when with chill grief 10
 My own were arid: I cherish also
 Your offering to my sad heart relief
 And to your own as well. All praise is due
 To my wife, though she's enhanced by what you say,
 And I rejoice that to my wife are you
 The same as Castor to Andromache,
 Hector to Julus, and she strives to be
 Your peer in virtue, proving by her mode
 Of life she's of your consanguinity.
 Those things which she would do without a goad 20
 She does more fully now that she's acquired
 A guarantor in you. A mettlesome steed
 Which strives to win the prize will, if he's fired
 With stimulation, strives with greater speed.
 Besides, you carry out with faithful care
 An absent friend's directions, unoppressed
 With any burden. May the gods repair
 Your pains since I myself have not been blessed
 With that ability. This they will do
 If they see pious deeds; and may you be 30
 Long in rude health (as it's your virtue's due),
 O admirable glory of Fundi.

