

REMEDIA AMORIS

One look at my poem's name and Cupid said,
 "It seems that someone here would have me dead."
 But don't accuse your bard of wrong – I bore
 Your banner, Captain Love, in many a war.
 No Diomedes I, who, with his spear,
 Wounded your mother whom you love so dear.
 (Lord Mars's steeds returned her to the sky).
 There may be other tepid youths – not I;
 I ever was a lover, and if you
 Should ask me what it is that now I do, 10
 The answer's still "I love". You're not betrayed,
 Nor are my poems; a different Muse has made
 No change in theme from my most recent 'art',
 Sweet boy. Who burns with love for his sweetheart,
 Let him be glad and give his bark full sail
 With favourable winds. But if some male
 Is plagued by his girl's tyranny, then he
 Should benefit from my art's remedy.
 No-one should round his neck a noose create
 And hang himself for love – a sorry fate! 20
 Why plunge a vicious sword into one's breast?
 Peace you hold dear and slaughter you detest.
 Let him who plans self-murder in love's name
 Renounce the deed, and you'll be free of blame.
 You are but young – play should be all your joy.
 Then play. A gentle reign befits a boy.
 Your stepfather's domain is sword and spear:
 To him the bloody spoils! He holds them dear.
 But you should cultivate your mother's skill,
 Which we employ with never a fear of ill. 30
 For not through any of her arts – not one –
 Did any mother lose her loving son.
 Let doors be battered in nocturnal spat,
 Let many a laurel-wreath be draped thereat,
 Let youths and bashful maids in secret meet,
 And artfully suspicious husbands cheat,
 Let the barred lover at his mistress' gate
 Now coo, now curse, now weep his wretched fate.
 Such woes no charge of murder will inspire,
 Your torch fits not the greedy funeral pyre. 40
 Bright Cupid shook his wings at this and said,
 "Your poem has my approval. Forge ahead."
 Young men whose love has ever met with lies,
 Give ear to my commands. Learn to be wise.

I taught you love and now I bring you balm –
 The hand that wounds can also furnish calm.
 Both good and noxious herbs in earth repose,
 The nettle lies no distance from the rose.
 Telephus was wounded by a Pelian ash –
 That selfsame weapon remedied the gash. 50
 But, girls, my words to men apply to you;
 I arm one camp, I arm the other too.
 If some of my advice does not apply
 To you, its lessons still can edify.
 To douse fierce flames – that is my aspiration,
 And free the heart from any tribulation.
 My lessons would have saved Phyllis's neck,
 And she'd have often made that nine-times trek,
 On her high peak Dido would not have died
 While watching Trojan ships exploit the tide. 60
 Medea had not her babes put to the sword,
 Who slew her kin in vengeance on her lord.
 And Tereus, though enamoured, at my word
 Would not have sinned and turned into a bird.
 Pasiphaë would drop her taurine beau,
 And Phaedra's tawdry love would promptly go.
 Why, Helen would with Menelaus stay
 If I taught Paris. Troy would stand today.
 Foul Skylla having read my word, instead,
 Nisus, that hair would stay upon your head. 70
 Away with gloomy thoughts, men, in my care,
 So may you have smooth sail and weather fair.
 You should have read me when you learned love's ways -
 And should you also in the coming days.
 I plan to free all hearts from Cupid's tether.
 Support me, let us operate together.
 Phoebus, I pray, founder of poesy
 And medicine, with your wreath inspire me.
 Bard and physician equally attend
 (To both practitioners you are a friend). 80
 While possible and while your pangs are weak,
 Yet undesired, a toehold you must seek.
 So crush, while it is young, that faulty seed
 And let your horse recoil and not proceed.
 Delay abets, to tender grapes gives heat,
 Makes from the merest husk the healthy wheat.
 The tree which offers shade for yards around
 Was just a shoot when first put in the ground.
 A plant one's hand could quickly tear away
 Will grow to leafy loftiness one day. 90

You love a woman? Quickly! Use your brain,
 Remove your neck from off that yoke of pain.
 Observe the rule: too late the medication
 When ill's been strengthened through procrastination.
 Make haste, don't dally; if not primed today,
 Tomorrow you will worsen the delay.
 Love's tricky and postponement lends him vigour;
 Each coming day seems best as freedom's trigger.
 You see few rivers stem from mighty sources,
 As most accumulate from several courses. 100
 If you had known the sin that was to be,
 Myrrha, you had not turned into a tree.
 I've seen a wound once capable of ease,
 But after time fall victim to disease.
 Since we delight to snatch at love's elation,
 "Tomorrow will not change my situation,"
 We say. Meanwhile a subtle flame takes root
 And so the tree thrusts up its evil fruit
 Yet higher. But, the time for cure now past
 And that old love within the heart stuck fast, 110
 My work is harder, but, though called too late
 To succour, I'll not leave you to your fate.
 The son of Poias, clever with the bow,
 To amputate the foot which pained him so
 Should not have balked. Yet, cured at last, they claim
 He stopped the Trojan War with his true aim.
 I sped to cure a nascent malady;
 But, late, a laggard remedy you'll see.
 Put out the fires at an early date.
 You cannot? Then when they start to abate. 120
 When passion's at the height, yield to its course;
 It's difficult to hinder any force.
 He's foolish who could swim from side to side
 And yet perversely strives against the tide.
 A rash man who in love is still a student
 Rudely rejects the counsels of the prudent.
 I'll better fare when I may treat the pain
 And have my charge hear reason. He's not sane
 Who'd stop a mother's weeping on the day
 Of her son's funeral. That is not the way! 130
 Once she has wept and given way to grief,
 To her distress my words will bring relief.
 In healing opportunity is king:
 Wine always is a profitable thing
 Aptly applied; inaptly, one may die.
 And more, the flames of love may multiply

And you may help them through obstructiveness
 If in untimely fashion you progress.
 So when a cure seems likely through my art,
 I urge you not to take a slothful part 140
 In life; sloth brought love, now acts as its nurse;
 It causes joy, yet nourishes that curse.
 With sloth removed, fruitless is Cupid's bow,
 His torch held in contempt, snuffed out, brought low.
 As wine the plane-tree cheers, the poplar rain,
 As swamp-reeds joy from muddy ground attain,
 So sloth is dear to Venus. You'll be free
 If you keep busy (Love *hates* that, you see).
 Inertia, too much sleep, gambling and booze
 Immoderately taken make one lose 150
 One's energy, though there's no wound to show,
 Then in slips Love, an all-unlooked-for foe.
 He's torpor's friend and industry he loathes –
 Reform your vacant mind. Don vigour's clothes.
 Try politics, try law, seek out some friends,
 Stroll through some camp which to the city lends
 Such luster; or take up a soldier's life –
 Cupid will not be equal to such strife.
 The fleeing Parthian, our new-conquered foe,
 Must see, in Parthia, Caesar's standards go. 160
 Cupid and he alike must conquered be
 So that our household gods twin trophies see.
 Wounded one time by an Aetolian lance,
 Venus entreats her lord now to advance.
 Aegisthus once seduced a ruler's wife;
 Why? You may ask. Simple! An idle life.
 The other men in endless conflict fought
 (All Greece her troops to holy Troy had brought).
 If he craved strife, no-one was there to fight,
 If lawsuits, no defendants were in sight. 170
 Avoiding total sloth, at love he played;
 So Cupid came to Argos, so he stayed.
 The culture of the earth may gladden too;
 Such pains will cure the pains of love for you
 (Or any other). Make your bulls endure
 The heavy yoke upon their necks and, sure,
 The crooked ploughshare will the stubborn soil
 Unloose; let sowing barley be your toil:
 That field will give much back in interest.
 Behold the straining boughs with apples blest 180
 (Their tree can scarce contain the heavy mass
 Which she produced); behold the fertile grass

On which graze sheep; behold again the brook
 Whose pleasant babble captivates; and look,
 The she-goat does the rocky slopes explore
 And to her young returns with ample store;
 The shepherd plays upon his rustic reeds,
 His colleague-dogs, a zesty crew, he leads.
 Elsewhere a lowing starts on that high ground,
 A mother grieves her offspring can't be found; 190
 Bees flee when smoke is blown into their home
 That baskets may bear off the honeycomb.
 The fall brings apples; summer's harvest-gold;
 The spring's for flowers; fire brightens winter's cold.
 At last the farmer gathers in each vine
 And stomps beneath his feet the fledgling wine.
 Again, he binds the new-mown grass in heaps
 And with a wide-toothed rake the ground he sweeps.
 You too may grow herbs in a moistened plot;
 To gently irrigate can be your lot. 200
 Then comes the grafting work; splice tree to tree
 So each with borrowed foliage you may see.
 Your heart once captured by these pleasant things,
 Love, powerless, departs on feeble wings.
 Or cultivate the chase: Diana's sphere
 Has oft made Venus basely disappear.
 Go hunt the hare with some keen-sniffing hound
 Or spread your hunting-nets on leafy ground.
 Harass in diverse ways the trembling deer
 Or else impale the wild-boar on your spear. 210
 At night you'll sleep, not burdened by love's woes,
 Your limbs unshackled with a sweet repose.
 A milder craft is sparse reward to get
 With snaring birds by lime or by the net,
 Or hide beneath a rod of brass your bait
 For some poor fish to gobble up (sad fate!).
 With tricks like these, while you unlearn your passion,
 You'll quite deceive yourself in covert fashion.
 Though bound by solid chains, go far from hence
 And in long journeys gain experience. 220
 You'll weep, you'll iterate your loved one's name,
 You'll halt repeatedly but, all the same,
 Your urge to go must outrun vacillation.
 Stand firm, teach laggard feet acceleration.
 Don't pray for rain, the Sabbath-Day defy,
 And that black day, the eighteenth of July.
 Don't ask the miles you've gone but what remain;
 No lame excuse to stay near your domain!

Don't count the minutes, don't keep looking round,
 Just flee: in flight the Parthian's safety's found. 230
 My counsel's harsh? It is, I must confess,
 But health entails enduring much distress.
 When ill, alas, I have drunk to the lees
 Foul draughts, food was withheld despite my pleas.
 To cure your frame, to fire and steel you're slave,
 Denying dry lips water which they crave.
 To cure your mind, what pain will not suffice?
 And yet the mind commands a higher price.
 The yoke at first will chafe bulls hitched together;
 Swift-footed steeds likewise will loathe the leather. 240
 To leave your household gods perhaps brings pain,
 Yet leave: too soon you'll yearn for home again;
 No household god, just love will call you back,
 Exalted words concealing your sad lack.
 Once on the road, you'll countless comforts see –
 Comrades, the lengthy trek, the scenery.
 Only to leave is not enough: stay far
 Till flames grow weak and merely ashes are.
 But if, irresolute, back home you dash,
 Fierce Love his rebel arms will with you clash. 250
 However long your absence, back you'll speed,
 All thirsty for your love and full of need,
 And all the time that you have been abroad
 Will be as nought – no cure will it afford.
 Don't think the harmful herbs and magic art
 Of Thessaly can any cure impart.
 That method's banned: Apollo is revealing
 In this inspired poem but risk-free healing.
 No shade from out its sepulchre I'll coax,
 No crone will split the earth with evil hoax, 260
 No crops shall transmigrate from field to field,
 The sun to sudden darkness shall not yield.
 As always, Tiber flows to the sea each day;
 As always, snowy steeds the Moon convey.
 No incantations shall relieve your heart,
 No sulphurous fumes shall cause love to depart.
 What good to you, Medea, those plants of Phasia,
 Loath as you were to leave your home in Asia?
 What good your mother's herbs, Circe, that day
 Fair winds wafted Ulysses' ships away? 270
 You tried your best to keep your wily guest,
 Yet with full sail he swept off to the west.
 You tried your best to make Love's flames depart,
 And yet he stayed, unwanted, in your heart.

You changed men into beasts of every fashion,
 Yet could not change the laws of your own passion.
 They say that when Ulysses planned to go,
 You tried to stop him with these words of woe:
 "I will maintain no more my former dream
 That you would marry me. Yet did I seem 280
 Unsuitable to be your wife, as one
 Who is a goddess, daughter of the Sun?
 Don't go, I beg – I crave a little space.
 What lesser bounty can my prayers embrace?
 Behold the sea – it must engender fear;
 A fairer wind will afterwards appear.
 Why flee? No Troy's uprisen here again,
 No Thracian king to agitate your men.
 Here's love, here's peace, the only casualty
 Myself; this land will your dominion be." 290
 At this, Ulysses' vessels cleared the bay,
 And south winds bore her fruitless words away.
 Yearning, she to her wonted spells returned,
 Yet still her passion no less fiercely burned.
 So if you would be remedied by me,
 Don't put your trust in charms and sorcery.
 But if you absolutely must remain,
 How you should pass the time let me explain.
 Your best release is: break the chains whose thrall
 Is torture and be pain-free once for all. 300
 Him with the fortitude for such a mission
 I praise and say: "You need not my tuition."
 But you who can't forget and still are fraught
 With hopes of happiness, you must be taught.
 Often recite the things she did to you;
 All her deficiencies you must review.
 She's bled me white; in scandalous offence
 She's forced me to sell up my residence.
 She swore her love but broke that oath; foreshore
 Occasions was I left there at the door! 310
 She dotes on others – I'm her enemy.
 Some pedlar spends his nights with her, not me.
 Let these things disaffect you through and through
 And germinate the seeds of hate in you.
 Strive, too, for eloquence. Your agony
 All by itself will lead to oratory.
 My fondness fastened on a girl of late;
 My feelings she did not reciprocate.
 I cured myself with my own remedies.
 Poor doctor with the symptoms he would ease! 320

To list her faults nonstop was beneficial,
 And soon my convalescence was official.
 "How ugly are her legs," I would declare,
 And yet there was no lovelier a pair.
 "Her arms aren't beautiful," I'd say of her,
 And yet, to tell the truth, they surely were.
 "How short she is." She wasn't. "Has her claws
 In me for gifts." This was the major cause.
 Both good and bad are neighbours. In a trice
 A virtue we will designate a vice. 330
 Where possible, assume good points are bad –
 By this slim margin let yourself be had.
 She's plump? Then say "obese." She's dusky? "Black."
 Slim? "Skinny." Let each virtue seem a lack.
 If she's not artless, say she wants for shame,
 If virtuous, then "artless" is her name.
 Is there some quality she lacks? Then pray
 That she that very quality display.
 Has she a deaf ear? Press her, then, to sing.
 Get her to dance if dancing's not her thing. 340
 Make her talk often if her speech is dire.-
 She's never learnt to play? Bring out the lyre.
 Her gait's bad? Make her walk. She's pimple-haunted?
 Let clothes not hide them. No, let them be flaunted.
 Bad teeth? Then make her laugh. Deficient eyes?
 Tell her such dismal stories that she cries.
 It helps if, suddenly, at break of day,
 Before her paint's applied, a call you pay.
 Trinkets allure; gold-layered jewellery
 Conceals – herself's the least of what you see. 350
 Through this to her it's hard to find a way –
 Thus wily Love, with gold, leads all astray.
 This shock will show her vulnerability;
 Through her deficiencies she'll ousted be.
 Yet do not trust too much this plot I've laid –
 Men fall for figures artlessly displayed.
 But schedule your approach (it's no disgrace)
 When she's applying warpaint to her face.
 A thousand hues you'll see in sundry kits
 Plus wool-grease dripping on her tepid tits. 360
 They smell like King Phineus's food and drink:
 My gorge has risen often at the stink.
 And now to sex to make love fly away,
 All aspects of my theme we must survey.
 My modesty forbids much here, but you
 Must guess what I can't utter – that will do.

My books, you see, were criticized of late,
 My Muse declared a wanton reprobate.
 So, though the world rejoices in my art,
 Yet one or two will play the censor's part. 370
 Great Homer was demeaned by jealousy –
 Zoilus, this became your quality.
 Troy's vanquished gods were brought here by your thunder,
 Vergil, and yet your poems were torn asunder
 By heathen tongues; Jove's lightning-bolts, cold air
 And jealousy all seek the summits rare.
 Critics, who through my poems feel some sting,
 Think! – there's a special role for everything.
 Great wars are best served by six marching feet.
 Do these fit words that dance to Cupid's beat? 380
 The tragic buskin aptly suits grand passion
 But comedy demands a modest fashion.
 Let loose the useful iambs on the foe,
 The swift ones or the ones that limping go.
 Let winsome Elegy Love's arrows trill;
 Let flighty girls indulge their fickle will.
 The Hymnist cannot take Achilles' part;
 Cydippe hardly matches Homer's art.
 Thais will play Andromache? Who'll buy it?
 Andromache Thais? She shouldn't try it. 390
 Thais is mine; my words of love are free;
 No matrons here; Thais belongs to me.
 If love-themes and my Muse meet face-to-face,
 I've won – the prosecution's lost its case.
 Sharp jealousy, begone! Folk honour me;
 That fame shall grow – just let my metrics be!
 Slow down; leave me alone and you'll have grounds
 For further grief – my wit for verse abounds!
 My fame and all its accolades are fine;
 My horse is barely at the starting-line! 400
 As noble epic much to Vergil owes,
 For Elegy to me the credit goes.
 Enough of jealousy; jerk hard the rein,
 Poet. The race is on. Keep to your lane.
 So when she seeks your youth in copulation
 And now's the promised night of confrontation,
 Lest you're seduced by passion, at full bore,
 Make sure you sleep with someone else before.
 If your first joy is on another spent,
 To later contact some ennui is lent. 410
 I blush, and yet – when you come to coition,
 Contrive the most unflattering position.

This is not hard: few women can face fact,
 That some things *can* disfigure in the act.
 Yet open all windows, for light can maim
 By showing imperfections in her frame.
 As soon as you the finish-line have crossed,
 And mind and body both have paid the cost,
 While you the recent intercourse regret
 And have no plans to touch another yet, 420
 Then keep in mind her each and every spot
 And fix your eyes on every flaw she's got.
 These words some may call scant, yet, separately,
 What's useless is, in bulk, a remedy.
 Snakes poison bulls a hundred times as big,
 And little dogs can often catch wild-pig.
 Think numbers! Build my precepts more and more,
 For many words will make a healthy store.
 But, since as many traits as frames we see,
 Don't trust your judgment irresponsibly. 430
 Some deed which fails to shock you may, in fact,
 Be thought by someone else a heinous act.
 A naked frame immodestly displayed
 Has in the past Love's hasty footsteps stayed.
 A girl arising from cavortings wild
 Has shown a couch with filthy stains defiled.
 These things affect you? Then you love in jest;
 A tepid flame is burning in your breast.
 Only let Cupid draw a tighter bow
 And, wounded, you'll want further cures to know. 440
 What of the man who has observed, while hidden,
 Her "menstrual acts" (a custom quite forbidden)?
 Ye gods, did I supply such information?
 It works, but don't essay investigation.
 A brace of mistresses will serve your turn;
 With more you're further fortified, you'll learn.
 As your emotions dash between the two,
 Your alternating loves will balance you.
 As countless streamlets can great rivers tame,
 So, crushed by one log, dies the lambent flame. 450
 Great ships more than one anchor must supply,
 Nor can one hook an angler satisfy.
 Who over time a double comfort keeps
 Will gain the total victory it reaps.
 You give yourself, alas, to just one lover
 And you must one more ladyfriend discover.
 With Procris Minos doused Pasiphaë's flame,
 Who, crushed by this new wife, old news became.

That Alcmeon might not spend his life-span
 In thrall to Phegeus' daughter, clever man, 460
 He took Callirhoe into his bed;
 Oenone would have Paris's flames fed
 Until her dying day, had Helen not
 With Cupid's arrows his affection got.
 The wife of King Tereus had charms galore,
 But her imprisoned sister-in-law had more.
 No more examples now! They tire me.
 Each love by some new love will ousted be.
 The mother of many grieves more the death of one
 Than she who mourns that of her only son. 470
 Don't think that I'm inventing concepts new
 (O that I had the talent so to do!)
 Agamemnon saw this (how could he *not* see?
 All Greece was under his supremacy!);
 He loved his slave-girl, yet the holy seer
 Her father roamed the town with many a tear.
 Why weep, mad man? They're matched. Though you implore,
 You only hurt the maiden all the more.
 Achilles urged Calchas to set her free,
 And thus she soon rejoined her family. 480
 "There's one," the king said, "just as fair of frame;
 But for syllable, her name's the same.
 Achilles, if he's wise, will give her me;
 If he is not, he'll feel my mastery.
 If one of you, my men, denounce this act,
 My absolute command's a naked fact.
 If I, a king, have none to share my bed,
 Then let Thersites govern in my stead."
 She was the consolation that he needed,
 And this new love the former superceded. 490
 So take a second, like the king, and see
 That your relationships divided be.
 Where can you find these girls? Read my last book
 And there'll be maidens everywhere you look.
 If my advice is sound and mortals may
 Through Phoebus get some use from what I say,
 Though you, poor soul, may burn like Etna, it's best to seem as ice, so counterfeit,
 Appear restored, don't let her see your pain
 And laugh aloud, though tears would fall like rain. 500
 But don't effect a sudden separation –
 I don't urge such a taxing situation.
 Dissimulate, pretend you're not unmanned;
 Thus will you truly do what you have planned.
 To keep from drinking, I have feigned repose,

But soon I fell into an actual doze.
 I've also laughed at that deluded man
 Who simulated passion but then ran
 Into his own pitfall – the very bait
 The hunter used himself has sealed his fate. 510
 By practice does love come and so depart –
 To be heart-whole, assume a scatheless heart.
 She's summoned you; the scheduled night is here;
 You're at the door; it's locked; but have no fear.
 Now dawn is come; forbear to criticize;
 Show not a hint of anguish in your eyes.
 Your coolness then will banish her disdain.
 This gift, too, from my expertise you'll gain.
 But fool yourself, don't put an end to it;
 The horse will often kick against the bit. 520
 Ignore the gain – thus gain it proves to be;
 The bird evades the nets which all may see.
 Don't stand for smugness, brook no mockery;
 Be bold – thus find her malleability.
 The door is open; leave, though she insist
 You stay; say you may not show for your tryst.
 For pain is bearable when speedily
 A wise man finds his way to ecstasy.
 These rules are surely not too hard for you.
 I play the part of the procurer too. 530
 Men vary; then so will my skills; we see
 A thousand ills - a thousand cures there'll be.
 Some must be treated with the doctor's blade;
 For many, too, some herbs are ready-made.
 You're weak, you cannot leave, in chains you're bound ,
 And cruel love has forced you to the ground.
 Stop struggling; the winds will bear your boat
 And, bidden by the current, thither float.
 To slake the thirst with which you burn apace,
 Right at the river's centre sink your face. 540
 But drink more than your fill; assuage your gut,
 Then quaff yet more and cause your gorge to glut.
 Enjoy your girl – none will prohibit you –
 All through the night and through the daytime too.
 Satiety will cure you – seek it out;
 When abstinence seems likely, brook no doubt,
 But wait till you are sated through and through
 And visiting her holds no joy for you.
 Suspicion also nourishes romances;
 Stamp out that fear and thus increase your chances. 550
 Who fears a rival stealing his girlfriend,

Him even Machaon's medicine may not mend.
 Of two sons will a mother love more dear
 The soldier whose campaign she needs to fear.
 Close by the Colline Gate a temple lives
 (His name Mt. Eryx to this temple gives);
 There dwells Lethaeon Love, who hearts restores
 While he cool water on his torches pours;
 There young men pray to learn how to forget,
 And girls who in some harsh liaison fret. 560
 He said to me (here I confess confusion:
 He spoke indeed? No! Doubtless an illusion):
 "You who both give and take love's agonies,
 Add to your store this further precept, please.
 Let each attend his wounds and he'll recover;
 God gave some sort of grief to every lover.
 Who fear the Bank, Exchange and that 'first day'
 Is tortured by the sums he has to pay.
 Your father's harsh? Hold to your litany
 And keep in view that harshness constantly. 570
 A poor man dwells with an ill-dowried mate;
 Let him believe she shares his wretched fate.
 A fertile vine stands on your fecund farm;
 Fear as it grows the sun will do it harm.
 One's ship is bound for home; let him suppose
 An angry sea as on the rocks she goes.
 One man is tortured by the constant fears
 He harbours for his soldier son, your tears
 Are for a marriageable daughter. Who
 Exists who hasn't countless grounds for rue? 580
 Paris, to turn your love to bitter hate,
 You should have thought about your brothers' fate."
 He spoke some more, then vanished from my side
 (The dream, if dream it was, had surely died).
 What must I do? Abandon ship, I own,
 Compelled to enter thoroughfares unknown.
 Lovers, avoid all solitary places;
 Where should you go, then? Seek out friendly faces.
 For barren spots will just turn up the heat;
 So cultivate each person that you meet. 590
 Lone man, sad man – before your eyes, you see,
 The image of the girl you left will be.
 And night is bleaker than the sun-blest day –
 The friends are gone who keep your grief at bay.
 Embrace discourse and keep an open door,
 Don't drop your tearful face towards the floor.
 Orestes had Pylades – such a friend

Should you – no light assistance will he lend.
 The lonesome woods were Phyllis's downfall;
 They caused her death – she had no friends at all. 600
 With flaming hair like that mad gathering
 Which every two years Dionysus sing,
 She strained her eyes and gazed across the sound
 And lay, exhausted, on the sandy ground.
 "Faithless Demophoon!" Her fruitless cry
 To those deaf waves choked on a sobbing sigh.
 A narrow path in dim obscurity
 Was where she used to stroll down to the sea.
 On this ninth trip, "He'll pay for this," she said,
 And to her girdle sadly bent her head, 610
 Then eyed the branches, then shrank from the act,
 Then moved her fingers to her neck, then backed
 Away. Would you had been with friends! If so,
 The woods, in joy, had let their foliage grow.
 With the example of this girl of Thrace,
 Sick man, sick woman, shun a quiet place.
 A youth who'd read and followed each decree
 Was now upon the cusp of sanctuary.
 He met some ardent lovers and regressed –
 Once more were Cupid's darts aimed at his breast. 620
 Avoid contagion should your love cause woe;
 For even cattle are affected so.
 Look on one marred and you'll catch his condition;
 Thus many folk are wounded by transmission.
 And into fields whose turf's parched by the sun
 A streamlet from a nearby brook may run;
 Unless we quit all lovers, love, unseen,
 Will likewise run (though fools we've always been!).
 Another, almost cured, was overtaken
 By nearness; meeting her he could not brook. 630
 The scar, not wholly formed, gaped wide again;
 My skills were useless in the face of pain.
 A neighbour-passion's hard to remedy;
 It's better to eschew proximity.
 Don't walk the same streets where she may be found
 And never duplicate her social round.
 Reheat a lukewarm heart with memories?
 No, if you can, tread other haunts than these.
 A groaning board won't curb your appetite
 And lively fountains will your thirst incite; 640
 The bull who's seen the cow is hard to hold;
 Who'll shield the mare glimpsed by the stallion bold?
 You've followed my advice, you're near the shore,

But do not merely leave her – no, there’s more;
So bid goodbye to mother, sister, nurse,
Yes, every member of her universe.
Receive no slave nor any abigail
Who’ll in her name, yet falsely, bid you ‘Hail’!
By no means seek to know her latest deed;
Be strong; a silent tongue is what you need. 650
Though, with good cause for ending the romance,
You utter your complaints at every chance,
Resist; in silence will you best repay,
And thus may you all fancy cast away.
Keep mum; don’t keep repeating that it’s over;
Who tells the world he loves not IS a lover.
A fire’s best extinguished by degrees;
A slow release your safety guarantees.
A torrent’s fiercer than a constant rill,
Yet brief; the other has an endless spill. 660
Let love evaporates into the air
And gently, by degrees, expires there.
Yet her you once adored you must not hate,
For this is too uncivilized a trait.
No, just be unconcerned, for at the end
That shows that you are barely on the mend.
A man and maid ill-matched are quickly foes;
Not even lawyers like such suits as those.
One may accuse yet still enamoured be;
When hate is gone, Love quits the courtroom, free. 670
Once in a dispute I advised a man
Whose wife reclined the while on her divan.
From out his mouth there spewed harsh words, then he,
For her appearance, sought some surety,
Demanding that she leave her resting-place;
She did; and, struck dumb when he saw her face,
He dropped his book, he dropped his tablets too,
Embraced her and declared “I yield to you!”
So let her keep her gifts – don’t litigate;
Small loss a greater profit may create. 680
But if by chance you meet, recall the gear
That I have given you and keep it near.
Warrior, the battle’s nigh, the fight is on;
Crush with your weaponry the Amazon.
Now let your rival to your heart be laid,
Her hard thresholds, the perjured vows she made.
If you’re to visit her, don’t comb your hair
Or let your clothes confer a rakish air.

Don't try to please her, for she's out of reach;
 Let her be just a pebble on the beach. 690
 I'll tell you what chief hazards we must face;
 Let each of you perceive his special case.
 We hope for love – that's why we're slow to part –
 Credulity comes from a prideful heart.
 Don't trust her words (they're always insincere),
 The oaths she swears you never should hold dear.
 Don't be affected if a woman cries -
 Those tears are caused by reddening the eyes.
 Lovers are prey to great chicanery,
 Like pebbles tumbled by the raging sea. 700
 Don't give the reasons why you want to leave,
 And grieve alone – don't let her see you grieve.
 Don't list her wrongs – she'll plead them to your face
 And thus will prove she has a stronger case.
 The silent man is staunch; but one's abuse
 Is asking for a rational excuse.
 I will not, like Ulysses, steal a bow
 And plunge its darts into a river's flow,
 Nor will I lop off Cupid's gleaming wings
 Or slack his bowstring while my poesy sings. 710
 Lo, Phoebus! Lyre and quiver ring out clear;
 His marks I recognize; Phoebus is here.
 Are fleeces daubed in Spartan vats worth less
 Than those with Tyrian purple dyed? Oh yes!
 Then contemplate, as well, the truly fair –
 You'll feel ashamed of her when you compare.
 Two goddesses could dazzle Paris' eyes,
 But Venus showed herself and took the prize.
 Compare her traits and skills, not just her face;
 Let not your love your estimate efface. 720
 My next advice is minimal, yet I
 And many more have profited thereby.
 Don't read again the letters that you got –
 Such actions make the firmest hearts grow hot.
 It's hard but throw them all upon the fire
 And say "Behold, my ardour's funeral pyre."
 Althaea's brand caused Meleager's end –
 False words, then, to the flames, undaunted, send.
 If possible, put her portraits aside.
 Why suffer? That's how Laodamia died. 730
 Locales can hurt, so shun the places where
 You coupled; certain misery lurks there.
 "This is the house, through there for sleep we went,

And here's where we a night of passion spent."
 Love is refreshed this way, new wounds appear;
 The smallest things compel the weak to fear.
 Put sulphur in some barely tepid ash –
 From tiny sparks a mighty flame will flash;
 So, if you can't avoid love's every lure,
 Those fires, once nought, will blaze again for sure. 740
 The Argive vessels must have wished to give
 A wide berth to Cape Capheneus and live,
 But, Nauplius, in vengeance for your son,
 With your false fire you wrecked them, every one.
 Once Scylla's past, the sailor jumps with glee –
 So shun the spots where you reached ecstasy.
 Let these your Syrtis be and stay well clear,
 Don't haunt these Thunder-Heights, don't venture near.
 Here is your fierce Charybdis, who spews out
 The waves she's gulped – a giant waterspout. 750
 Some cures don't work however they're applied,
 But oft by chance they'll make you satisfied.
 King Neptune's bull, had Phaedra few resources,
 Would not have spooked Hippolytus's horses.
 Iros was single, Hecale too. Wherefore?
 He was a pauper, she had little more.
 With indigence your love can't nurtured be;
 Don't think, though, of embracing penury.
 But don't frequent the theatre, not before
 Your passion has relinquished your heart's core. 760
 The lute, the pipe, the lyre, the rhythmic dances,
 The songs will give that heart unmanly fancies.
 Stage lovers there abound; what plagues you still
 Is recreated by the actor's skill.
 It must be said: love-poets are taboo
 (I put, alas, myself on that list too!)
 Avoid Callimachus, for he's no foe
 Of love; Philetas, too, who may cause woe.
 I profited in love from all the verse
 Of Sappho, and Anacreon did no worse. 770
 Don't read Tibullus nor that versifier
 Whose Cynthia is his poem's theme entire.
 Who can read Gallus and just walk away?
 My poems have something tender, too, to say.
 If Lord Apollo's not deceiving me,
 A rival most affects our malady.
 But do not conjure up another man;
 Think that she lies alone on her divan.
 Orestes loved Hermione all the more

Once she had knocked upon another's door. 780
 Menelaus, all alone you left for Crete
 And even on returning dragged your feet.
 Then Paris... Now you hate to be alone;
 Another's love increased that of your own.
 Briseis gone, Achilles wept with grief,
 For she brought pleasure to the Argive chief.
 He'd reason for it, truly: Atreus' son
 Did only what a real man would have done.
 Like me – and I'm no cleverer than he.
 This was the crux of their controversy; 790
 "She's chaste," he on his sceptre testified;
 He thought it no constraint, for he had lied.
 Pass by your ex's residence, I pray you,
 And may your feet comply and not betray you.
 You shall, if you're but strong; go forth; you need
 To put the spur to your swift-footed steed.
 "There lurk the Lotus-Eaters," you may roar,
 "And there the Sirens." Ply both sail and oar.
 That rival who once caused you misery -
 No longer think that he's an enemy. 800
 But say hello, though hate may still remain;
 When you can kiss her, then you're well again.
 A true physician, I'll dispense to you
 Food to avoid and what you must pursue.
 All onions, whether from a Libyan farm,
 Roman or Megarian, cause you harm.
 The stimulating cole-wort, too, evade,
 And everything for sexual congress made.
 And rue, good for the eyes, you'll find worthwhile
 And everything not made for love's sweet smile. 810
 And what of Bacchus' gifts? you ask of me.
 I'll set you straight with startling brevity.
 Wine stirs up love, unless you overdrink
 And then into a drunken stupor sink.
 Wind feeds yet kills a fire, a gentle breath
 Can nourish flames, a larger brings their death.
 No drink or lots, then (to remove all woe);
 The rest that's in between will be your foe.
 That's it. Strew garlands on your weary prow;
 Our journey's done, you've reached the harbour now.
 Give to this holy bard your sacred prayers.
 Men, women, you are cured from all love's cares.

