

PROPERTIUS III

I

Callimachus! Philitas! There you lie!
I pray you, let me see your gravesite. I
Shall be the first. From an unsullied spring
I come as priest and Italian mysteries bring
In Grecian dances. In what cave, I pray,
Did you together spin each delicate lay?
What was your dance? What water did you quaff?
You bard who write of warfare's strife, be off!
Let pumice smooth my verse that I may rise,
Buoyed by my reputation, to the skies, 10
With, on garlanded steeds, my progeny,
The Muse, and let my little Loves with me
Be borne upon a chariot, at the rear
A throng of birds. Why try to be my peer
In speed? A narrow road has been decreed
To reach the Muses. Rome, although indeed
You will be praised by many poets who
Will sing of Bactra, our new province, you
Will, when our wars are over, look upon
What I on virgin paths from Helicon 20
Have brought. Delicate garlands, Muses, now
Bestow upon your poet: for my brow
Won't fit an epic crown. What the envious horde.
Won't give me while I live, Fame will afford
Doubly: for everything is magnified
After one's death: a man's name, once he's died,
Sounds greater. Otherwise, none would be aware
Of the treacherous Trojan Horse or the warfare's
Of Achilles and Scamander, which was begot
By Jove, Simois, too; the chariot 30
Befouling Hector thrice; Deiphobus
Would not be talked about, nor Helenus;
No-one would know that Paris had put on
Polydamas's armour; Ilion,
No-one would know that Grecian victory.
Homer, your bard, has seen that destiny
Enlarged his reputation. Likewise, I
Shall find my fame enhanced a time goes by
By future Romans when I'm dead and gone,
And the tombstone my mourners set upon 40
My bones will be preserved by the decree
By Phoebus who has countenanced my plea.

II

Let me return now to that melody
 Of mine that fills my girl with ecstasy.
 They say that Orpheus tamed wild beasts and stayed
 Sqift rivers with his Thracian lyre and made
 Cithaeron's boulders form a wall; a sound
 Caused Galatea to turn her steeds around
 Beneath fierce Etna – it was the melody
 Of Polyphemus singing. Then should we
 Marvel, if we have won the approbation
 Of Bacchus and Apollo, a whole nation 10
 Of girls adore my words? Therefore, if I
 Don't own a house with pillars rising high
 Of first-class marble, if no ivory gleams
 Upon the ceiling and no golden beams
 Support my house, if my .fruit-trees don't stand
 Comparison with Phaeacia's timberland,
 With no man-made caves fed by Marian mains,
 Nevertheless Calliope remains
 Unweary of the dancing I inspire,
 The Muses are my friends, my verses fire 20
 My readers. Happy is she I eulogize
 In poetry. I will memorialize
 Your looks in every poem that I write!
 The costly pyramids with their splendid height,
 Jove's heavenly Elean temple and the great
 Tombstone of Mausolus – all have a date
 With death! They'll lose their fame through fire and rain
 Or fall beneath the ages' silent strain.
 But time won't crush my talent or my fame:
 Oh yes, a deathless glory I can claim. 30

III

In Helicon's soft shade I dreamt I lay,
 Where flows the Hippocrene, and hoped to play
 My lyre and of old Alba's kings to sing,
 A mighty task; already to that spring
 I' put my puny lips (where thirstily
 Our father Ennius had drunk when he
 Sang of the Curian brothers when they fought
 The Horatii, the royal trophies brought
 In Aemilius' ships, if Fabius' famed delay,
 Of the battle of Cannae, a dreadful day, 10

Gods answerng prayers, the gods of hearth an home
 Expatriating Hannibal from Rome
 And a cackling goose that brought security
 To Jupiter when Phoebus noticed me
 Beside his cave in the Castilian stand,
 Hi instrument of gold beneath his hand:
 "Madman," he said, "why are you by this stream?
 Who ordered you to pen a heroic theme?
 Don't reach for glory here: small wheels must go
 Upon soft meadows so that you my throw 20
 Your book on a bench which some lone girl may scan
 When passing time while waiting for her man
 Why veer off from one path that's been decreed
 For you? Your little vessel has no need
 To be weighed down. Kep one oar in the sea,
 One in the sand – you'll be in jeopardy
 Out there! Then with his ivory quill he showed
 To me a new path on the mossy road.
 Here was a green cave lined with ornaments, 30
 An image of Silenus made of clay
 And a pipe on which Arcadan Pan would play;
 And Venus' doves, a flock that I adore,
 Who thirstily down from the heavens soar
 To drink of the Gorgon's fountain; tenderly,
 Each with her own responsibility,
 The Muses work, each on her own forte:
 One gathers ivy for her wand, her lay
 One tunes upon her lyre, one with each hand
 Plants wreaths of roses. Then one of their band 40
 Touched me (it looked to be Calliope):
 "On white swans will you always happily
 Be borne; the sound of a galloping martial steed
 Won't summon you and yo will have no need
 Of trumpets nor will you care on what field
 Strife is prepared; so let the Teutons yield
 To R ome and let the barbarous Rhine turn red
 With Suebi, carrying the mangled dead
 In sorrowing streams. Wreathed lovers will you sing
 In their wine-sodden midnight dallying 50
 On some threshold, that, wishing to subdue
 Stern husbands, men would be informed by you
 To charm forth girls who've been in custody
 Within therr home. Thus spoke Calliope.
 With that spring water she moistened my lips -
 Water from which Philitas once took sips.

IV

Divine Augustus plans hostilities
 Against rich India, sailing the pearl-filled seas.
 Rewards are great: for nations gfar away
 Will give you triumphs, so beneath his sway,
 Though late, Euphrates and Tigris will flow;
 The Parthian trophies now will get to know
 Our Jove. Well-tried in warfare, ships, now spread
 Your sails. You warrior-steeds, be at the head!
 My omens all are fair. Avenge the Crassi!
 Away, and honour Roman history! 10
 Father Mars and virgin Vesta, may that day
 Arrive before I'm struck with deagth, I pray.
 Great Caesar's chariot I long to see
 Laden with spoil, beneath their weaponry
 The captive chiefs, their cavalry's captured spears,
 The trousered soldiery's bows, the people's cheers
 Halting the horses. On my sweetheart's breast
 I'll watch all this and take an interest
 In the captured cities' names! Protect your line,
 Venus: may Aeneas' scion ever shine. 20
 Theirs be the spoil who earned it: as for me
 It'll be enough to cheer him joyously.

V

We lovers worship peace: the hostility
 I urge with Cynthia is enough for me.
 No rich soil of Campania do I till
 With countless oxen; I don't have my fill
 Of wine from jewelled goblets; I, however,
 Don't panyt for hateful gold nor have I ever
 Collected fused bronze from the final day
 Of Corinth. O Promtheus' primal clay,
 How unfit for his artistry! For he
 Was careless with our hearts and did not see 10
 He'd left our bodies with too small a space;
 He should have formed the mind in the first place.
 We're tossed far out to sea and seek a foe,
 Waging war after war. You will not go
 Moneyed, across the Styx. Oh no, you fool,
 You'll travel naked to Acheron's pool.
 Victor and vanquished mingle equally:
 Captured Jugurtha, next to you you see
 The consul Marius. The beggar-man

Dulichian Irus is no different than 20
 King Croesus: when one's life has been enjoyed,
 That's the best time to slip into the void.
 When young I happily worshipped at the shrine
 Of the Muses, dancing with them; now with wine
 I bind my mind, spring roses ever twined
 Aroiund my head, and when I have declined
 In years precluding love, black locks now white,
 Then may I in cosmology delight
 And learn what god controls the worldly sphere,
 And how the moon will wax, wane and appear 30

Each month, her horns constricted once again,
 How all the cloud afre always full of rain,
 How winds control the sea, what with its roar
 The East Wind chases, whether, furthermore,
 One day the universe will crash and sink
 And why the coloured rainbow bends to drink
 The rain, why Pindus' peaks in Thessaly
 Quake, why the sun's orbs show his misery
 With black-draped horses, why the Bootes
 Is slow to turn his team, why the Pleiades 40
 Unite in thick-set firs, why the sea
 Will never go beyond its boundary,
 Why the year has four parts, if there are gods who dwell
 Beneath the earth and if there are in Hell
 Penances, like the rolling rock, the wheel
 And thirst and whether Alcmaeon must feel
 The Furies, Phineus hunger, whether there
 Are frenzied, jet-black snakes in Tisiphone's hair,
 Whether the cur with three heads, Cerberus,
 Guards the infernal cave and Tityus 50
 Is hemmed in with nine acres, or maybe
 It's a false tale to bring despondency
 To human folk and there can be no dread
 Beyond the grave. Be this, when I am dead,
 My fate; you who in warfare revel more,
 Bring Crassus' standards back! Even the score!

VI

What hsave you seen in my sweetheart? Tell me,
 Ad then you may expect delivery,
 O Lygdamus, from her. For one should tell
 The truth: a slave, through terror, should be well
 Believed. So what you can recall begiN

Gto tell me from the start – I'll take it in.
 Don't dupe me, filling me with baseless cheer
 By saying what you think I want to hear.
 You saw her weep, her hair in disarray?
 There was no mirror on the bed, you say? 10
 Herm letter-case lay at the foot, her dress
 Hung from her delicate arms in her distress?
 There was a jewel on her snow-white hand?
 The house was sad, sad was thw servant band
 Spinning the wool, as she did, then she fried
 Her eyes with wool, and plaintively she cried
 Reproaches of me? "Is this pay that he
 Vowed for you, Lygdamus? For perjury
 There's punishment even with a minion
 As witness. "Can he leave me though I've done 20
 Nothing to merit it and keep a thing
 Whose name does not merit my mentioning?
 Is he glad that I waste away in bed
 Alone? Hell, Lygdamus, when I am dead
 Then let him jump for joy. Her victory
 Is not through winning ways but evilly
 Usinh her spells. He's being drawn instead
 By the whirligig and the wheel woven with thread.
 He's being inveighed by the sorcery
 Of the bane-filled toad and by the wizardry 30
 Of dried snakes' bones and screech-owls' feathers found
 In tombs and a woollen band that once had bound
 A buried felon's head. I swear to you,
 O Lygdamus, if what I dream is true,
 He'll pay a late but ample penalty
 Before my feet, for cobwebs he shall see
 Twined on hi empty bed, and as he lies
 With her in love, Vnus shall close his eyes."
 If Cynthia in all sincerity
 Made her complaint, take this report from me, 40
 Weeping: despite my wrath, I'm not untrue,
 Wracked on the selfsame fiery flames as you:
 I have been celibate for twelve days, I vow.
 Then if we can be reconciled somehow
 From such great conflict, Lygdamus, I'll see
 That for these services I'll set you free.

VII

Money, you make us anxious every day,
 Bringing untimely death; you make us pay

For our misdeeds with cruel food; your head
 The embryos of wretchedness has shed.
 You battered Paetus in a raging sea
 As he was making for the sanctuary
 Of Pharos' port. Still young, the poor lad lost
 His life, pursuing you, and now he's tossed
 About as fish-meal. But if he had been
 Content to plough his father's fields and seen 10
 My words as weighty, he'd still live and be
 A happy farmer: he'd be poor maybe
 But having nothing else that he might groan
 About. He did not want to hear the moan
 The tempest made or cause a blistering
 Of his soft hands upon the rope's rough sting;
 No, on a cedar or a terebinth bed
 With coloured pillows could he lay his head.
 The pitiless night beheld him desperately
 Grasping a narrow spar and lucklessly 20
 Gulping the water. Nails then torn away
 While he yet looked upon the light of day,
 He died. But as his mouth by the black sea
 Was closed in death, he cried out tearfully:
 "Aegean gods and winds and waves that press
 Me down, whither in my unhappiness
 Do you destroy my youth? My boyish locks
 I brought into your straits: now on sharp rocks
 I shall be dashed! Neptune, god of the sea,
 Has raised his trident and made mince of me. 30
 But may my corpse be cast on Italy's sands
 And be delivered to my mother's hands."
 The waves then sucked him down. But why, my friend,
 Do you dwell on your youth? Why, at your end,
 Speak of your mother? No divinity
 Lives in the sea. Your funeral liturgy
 Your mother can't perform or bury you
 In your ancestral plot. So now your due
 Is seagulls hovering over your remains
 And your tomb has become the watery lanes 40
 Of the Carpathian Sea. North Wind, the bane
 Of ravished Orithyia, what did you gain
 From Paetus? Neptune, what have you to gloat
 About over the wrecking of his boat?
 It carried blameless men. O progeny
 Of Nereus, you five-score nymphs of the sea,
 And Thetis, who have felt a mother's woe,
 Why could you not have placed your arms below

His chin? (he would have been light in your hands).
 Sea, give him up. And you, unworthy sands, 50
 Cover him as you will that sailors may,
 Whenever passing by his tombstone, say,
 "Even in the valorous can you cause dread."
 Go, ships, weave ruin. That Paetus is dead
 Man is to blame. Not only is our doom
 On land but now the sea may be our tomb,
 Thanks to our skill. Should people go aboard
 A ship who wish to make a trip abroad?
 Say, what does he deserve whose native land
 Is not enough for him? He must withstand 60
 The winds, however many ships are made:
 No ships grow old and sailors are betrayed
 Even by harbours. Though your ropes are tied
 To rocks in nightly storms, they still subside,
 Strands frayed. For there are shores that clearly know
 The incident of Agamemnon's woe,
 Argynnus' death.[Agamemnon did not weigh
 Anchor when this youth drowned, and this delay
 Caused Iphigenia's sacrifice.] The sea
 Spreads traps for greedy men – infrequently 70
 Will they enjoy success there. Shivering shocks
 Shattered the Grecian fleet upon the rocks
 Of Caphereus. Ulysses wept that he
 Had lost so many comrades to the sea
 Where his accustomed insidiousness
 He found had rendered him quite powerless.
 I'll never sail the seas, fierce North Wind: I
 Before my mistress' door must idly lie.

VIII

I revelled in the brawl we had last night,
 Your mad invective by the lantern's light:
 But come now, tear my hair and scratch my face
 With your fine nails and threaten to erase
 My eyes with fire, tear my tunic, strip
 My body bare! When, crazed with wine, you flip
 The table over and full goblets throw
 Sat me, these actions all are signs that show or has by her side
 Your passion: for no woman smarts without
 Being in love. A woman who will spout 10
 Frenzied abuse is grovelling at the feet
 Of mighty Venus. Whether in the street
 She raves like a Maenad or has by her side

A horde of escorts or is terrified
 By frequent nightmares or is in distress
 At some girl's portrait, and unhappiness
 I can interpret well – these things show me
 That they are often signs of certainty
 In love! A love that can't lead to a brawl
 Cannot be thought of as pure love at all; 20
 Cold girls I'd give my foes; let my peers see
 The bites upon my neck; let bruises be
 A sign I've had a girl. I want to mope
 In love or see you mope; I want to hope
 To see my tears or yours when secretly
 You twitch your brows in silent chat with me
 Or trace out messages that can't be spoken.
 I cannot stand dreams which are never broken
 By sighs: my wish is ever to be pale
 And at my angry mistress' mercy quail. 30
 In war Paris's passion burn more bright,
 And he could bring to Helen sweet delight;
 The Greeks advanced and Hector manfully
 Resisted, while Paris was mightily
 Engaged in loving strife. I'll always fight
With you or *for* you, taking no delight
 In peace. Rejoice! In looks you have no peer:
 You'd grieve if it weren't so, but have no fear -
 You can be proud! But you, sir, who a net
 Have woven round my bed, I pray you get 40
 In-laws within your house eternally
 To plague you! And if you have chanced to see
 A night of love with her, it isn't that
 She loves you but that we have had a spat.

IX

Maecenas, knight of the Etruscan family
 Of kings and keen within your boundary
 Of rank to keep, why force me to create
 A massive sea of verse? I do not rate
 Huge sails – my little boat's too small for these.
 To bear too great a load, then on one's knees
 To fall and then to leave is just not right.
 We all have different talents: not one height
 Is scaled by all to win the accolade.
 Lysippus left all sculptors in the shade 10
 With lifelike statues; Calamis touches me
 With fine steeds. Apelles' supremacy

Is in his "Venus", while Parrhasius
 Is in his miniatures illustrious,
 And Mentor represented scenes of men;
 And Mys the slim acanthus; before then,
 Phidias moulded Jove in ebony;
 Praxitles showed Athenian mastery;
 Some athletes win the Olympic chariot-race,
 While other athletes run to win first place. 20
 One man likes peace, one war. We all pursue
 Our natural bent. Maecenas, it is you
 Who are my guide in life and I am driven
 To better you, as well. Though you have given
 Out justice as a magistrate and gone
 Through cruel Parthian spears and, nailed upon
 Your wall, are many trophies, and you're strong
 With Caesar's aid and riches all year long
 Pour in, you shrink back self-effacingly
 And choose to furl your sails. Sagacity 30
 Like this will match Camillus's of old
 And everywhere your story will be told.
 My sails don't billow through the swelling sea:
 A little stream's where you'll discover me.
 I'll shun the loss of Cadmus' citadel
 And Thebes razed to the ground, nor shall I tell
 Of Phoebus' forts, the Gates of Pergamum
 And the tenth spring which saw the Greek ships come
 Back home, nor the walls, built by the God of the Sea,
 Crushed by Greek ploughs and Pallas' artistry., 40
 The Trojan Horse. No, I'll be satisfied
 If with Philitas I can coincide
 Or match Callimachus. Let me inflame
 Both boys and girls and may they all acclaim
 Me as a god! With you as guide, I'll sing
 Even Jove's armour and the threatening
 Of Heaven by those two Titans, high upon
 The mountains of Phlegra – Eurymedon
 And Coeus; those wolf-suckled regal twain
 And Rome's walls which, when Remus had been slain; 50
 Were built I'll sing, and the high Palatine
 Where cattle graze. This genius of mine
 Shall grow as you command; your cavalcade
 Of triumph I'll extol on its parade
 From shore to shore, and Roman weaponry
 That crushed Pelusium, and Antony
 Who slew himself. Your gentle reins apply
 And be the patron of the verse that I

Hve just begun, and give me inspiration
As on my chariot speeds. Such exaltation
You give to me; because of what you do
I shall be known as one who followed you.

60

X

I wondered why the Muses came to pay
A visit here upon the break of day.
They flocked my bed and gave a sign to me
That this dy marks the anniversary
Of Cynthia's birth; with a propitious sound
They clapped three times. May this day roll around
With not one cloud, no wind, and may the sea
Not threaten. May I see no misery
Tomorrow. May Niobe, turned to stone,
Not weep, and may the halcyons make no moan, 10
And may Procne cease to bewail her son.
Born with fair auguries, my darling one,
Rise and do worship. First, though, wash away
Sleep from your eyes and bind in fine array
Your shining hair, and then put on that dress
That first had rendered me quite powerless.
Garland your brows and pray your beauty may
Abide forever and always hold sway
Over me. Then pour incense of the wreathed shrine
And see that an auspicious flame will shine 20
Throughout the house; let's turn our thoughts upon
The table; let the night go speeding on
Among our cups. Let saffron's scent invade
Our nostrils. May the raucous pipe be made
Exhausted by our all-night dancing feet.
Let wicked, witty words be indiscreet.
Let us no think of sleep as we carouse
And let the echoing noise we make arouse
The neighbouring street: and let the augury
Of dice decide which of us – you or me - 30
Receives more blows from Venus' knavish lad.
When many hours have fled and we have had
Much drink and now the ceremonies of the night
Venus prepares, let us perform each rite
Of your anniversary and honours pay
In love to bring an end to your birthday. XI

Why wonder why a woman governs me
And drags away a man in slavery

Under her sway? Why do you seek to taunt
 My reputation with a false complaint
 Of cowardice because I cannot burst
 My bonds or break the yoke? A sailor's first
 In forecasting the winds. A soldier's dread
 Is learnt by being wounded. I have said
 Such things when I was young. Now learn to be afraid
 By reading me. The witch of Colchis made 10
 Her fire-breathing bulls to go below
 An adamant yoke and scattered seeds to sow
 Armed warriors in the soil, and she closed tight
 The guardian serpents' fierce jaws that she might
 Be sure Aeson acquired the Golden Fleece.
 There was one time when all the ships of Greece
 Were by Penthesilea, on horseback,
 Assailed with arrows and, when she pushed back
 Her golden helmet to reveal her face,
 She made a victim by her shining grace 20
 Of the conqueror. To Lydian Omphale,
 Who bathed in Gyges' lake, celebrity
 Was granted through her beauty – such renown
 That Hercules, who'd set the pillars down
 Upon the globe that he had pacified,
 Turned his brute hands to women's work and plied
 The spinning-wheel. Queen Semiramis founded
 Babylon and built a brick wall that surrounded
 The city, where two chariots could be sent
 Against each other on the battlement 20
 And never graze a wheel on either side.
 The river Euphrates she caused to glide
 Straight through her citadel, and Bactra she
 Ordered to bow beneath her mastery.
 Why now call gods and heroes into court?
 On himself and his house has Jupiter brought
 Much shame. What of her who caused us shame in war,
 Who screwed her very slaves, demanding for
 Her foul congress all Rome. You guilty land,
 Alexandria, ever ripe for treason, and 30
 Memphis, so often bloodstained at our cost
 When Pompey on the sand three triumphs lost,
 Of your deceit we'll never be washed clean.
 It had been better had his funeral been
 On the Phlegraean Fields or had to cede
 To his father-in-law. That harlot queen, indeed,
 Of foul Canopus, of King Philip's line
 The one disgrace, once failed to undermine

You with her canine god, and tTiber faced
 Nile's threats and the Roman trumpet was teplaced 40
 By the rattling *sistrum*; she our galleys trailed
 With her barge-poles; her ugly gauze she nailed
 On the Tarpeian Rock and gave decrees
 Amid our arms and Marius' effigies.
 Although Tatrquinius's axes you have split
 In pieces, tell me what's your benefit
 In tainting one who owns a splendid name.
 Have we been preordained to bear the shame
 A woman brings? Rome, sing your triumphs! Pray
 Augustus may live on for many a day! 50
 Yet to the timid, wandering Nile you flew,
 But Roman fetters bound you; later you
 Applied the sacred asps and the numbing gall
 Went on its hidden path to your downfall.
 "With such a man you needn't have feared me,
 Rome", said she, quite sunk in ebriety.
 Set high on seven hills, Rome rules the world
 And there she stands, not destined to be whirled
 To ruin by men. The gods built her, and they
 Guard her. While Caesar sees the light of day, 60
 They'll not fear Jove. Where now is Sapio's fleet,
 Camillus' standards, Bosporus' defeat
 At Pompey's hands? What profit's to be gained
 From Hannibal's spoils, the trophies we attained
 From conquered Syphax or King Pyrrhus' fame
 Shattered by us, or Curtius whose name
 Is known for his leap into an empty space;
 Spurring his steed, Decius galloped apace
 To break the enemy's lines; and Cocles Way
 Marks how Horatius Cocles saved the day 70
 By cutting through the bridge; there was, as well,
 A man named for a raven; Phoebus will tell
 O enemies turned in flight; in just one day
 And end was made to a war of vast array.
 Docking or leaving, hold the memory,
 Sailor, of Caesar on the Ionian Sea.

XII

Postumus, how could you leave your sweetheart,
 Galla, in tears, to play a soldier's part?
 Is glory from trouncing the Parthian foe
 So great when she implores you not to go?
 Curse all of you who thirst for gain in life,

Who'd rather fight than have a faithful wife!
 Tired out, you'll use your helmet as a cup,
 While cloaked, and from a foreign stream lap up
 Its water, madman, and she'll waste away,
 Meanwhile, while hearing trivial hearsay, 10
 In fear your valour deals a fatal blow
 Or that the arrows of the Parthian foe
 Or the mailed warrior gloat at your decease
 Or that an urn may bring back but a piece
 Of you to mourn for: yes, they come back thus
 Who perish in those lands. You, Postumus,
 Were many times blest with Gala's chastity!
 Another girl, through your integrity,
 You warrant. When a woman feels no fear
 And can discover wanton ways right here 20
 In Rome, what will she do? But do not fret:
 Bribes won't corrupt your Galla – she'll forget
 Your cruelty. A Ulysses you'll be
 Wkth such a splendid girl. No misery
 Did Ulysses have from such a long delay,
 The night he burned Polyphemus's eye away,
 A ten-year siege, the death of the Cicones
 When Ismara had been seized, the guileful ways
 Of Circe, the lotus, and the herbs which held
 Men captive and Charybis who both swelled 30
 And ebbed successively; quite undeterred
 Was he by Lampetie's loud-bellowing herd
 And those spits (she was the progeny
 Of the Sun and grazed them for him)! so was he
 When jilting Aeaea's queen; then, tossed around
 In sea-storms night and day, he finally found
 The dark halls of the silent dead, then rowed
 By deaf oarsmen into the moist abode
 Of the Sirens, and once more with his ancient bow
 He killed the suitors, thus resolved to go 40
 To sea again. Nor was it all in vain
 Because Penelope would then remain
 A faithful wife. Galla's fidelity
 Is greater than that of Penelope.

XIII

Why are girls whom we fancy moved by greed,
 Making our gains complain about their need?
 It's clear – the path of luxury is too free:
 The shell of Venus comes from the Red Sea.

The Indian ant brings gold from down below
 Inside her mines; to Cadmean Tyre we owe
 Those crimson tints; our cinnamon we procure
 From Arab millers. Even the cloistered, pure
 Dames who seem scornful, like Penelope,
 Are stormed by these. With the prosperity 10
 Of spendthrifts decked, matrons now walk around
 And flaunt dishonour's spoils. No-one is bound
 By shame to ask - or give - or, if there be
 Some hesitation, then a certain fee
 Will banish it. The law's uniquely blest
 That deals with Eastern husbands laid to rest.
 When on her steeds Aurora, flaming red,
 Appears. For when upon one's final bed
 The final torch is laid, the pious band
 Of wives, their hair awry, around him stand 20
 In hope to follow him as they all vie
 For death, because not to be let to die
 Is shameful. Those who die the flames consume
 As scorched lips kiss their man and seal their doom.
 Our brides are faithless: in all Italy
 There's no Evadne, no Penelope.
 The country youth lived peaceful and serene
 In past days when their libving they would glean
 From trees and harvest! Quinces they would shake
 Off branches, bramble-berries they would take 30
 In panniers, violets pick and lilies bring
 Back home in wicker baskets, carrying
 Grapes that were yet clothed in their greenery
 And perhaps a bird plumed in a variety
 Of colours. With these gifts those rustic men
 Would purchase kisses in a hidden glen
 From lasses. Under a fawn's pelt they would lie,
 The grass their bed. A pine-tree up on high
 Would offer happy shade. It was no sin
 To see a goddess naked. Leading in 40
 His well-fed ewes, the ram, without the aid
 Of a shepherd, brings them back into the shade
 Of the fold. Divinities, who have the care
 Of all our fields, your altars used to share
 Kind words: "Visitor, whoever you may be,
 You will pursue in my locality
 The hare or bird, and whether you apply
 Rods or a hound, call Pan (for that is !)
 From my crag to be your friend." Alas, today
 The groves are bare, shrines have been swept away. 50

Gold is our god, now loyalty can be sold,
 And justice, and the law now chases gold;
 Soon conscience will be gone. Charred gates betray
 Brennus' foul deed when he opposed the sway
 Of Phoebus. Mound Parnassus then vibrated
 His laurel summit and disseminated
 Great snows upon the Gallic soldiery.
 Polymestor sank to bribery
 And took in Polydorus as a guest
 And slew him. That Eriphyla might be dressed 60
 With golden bracelets, Amphiaras fell
 Upon his steeds into a chasmic Hell,
 Unseen since then. Accept this prophecy,
 Proud Rome – you're doomed by your prosperity!
 It's true, but none will hear; that prophetess
 Spoke words the Trojan took as valueless.
 She said Paris was sealing Phrygia's fate
 And that the horse would dup them – but too late!
 Troy and her father should have lent an ear:
 In vain! The gates, through her, had spoken clear. 70

XIV

Sparta, I love your many athletic rules,
 But most of all the merits of your schools
 For training maids, for they may exercise
 Quite naked, though before males wrestlers' eyes,
 When balls are rapidly thrown from hand to hand,
 Sticks ring against their hoops. A maid may stand,
 Dust-covered, at the goal while suffering
 Harsh damage in a fight where everything
 Is legal. She will bind the thonged glove fast
 To her arms and in a circle she will cast 10
 The heavy discus far into the air;
 Her father's hounds she'll follow, with her hair
 Stiff with hoar-frost, along the lengthy crest
 Of Taygetus; she gives her steeds no rest;
 Sword on her tawny thigh, her head she'll screen
 With hollowed bronze – a sight that has been seen
 Once in the warlike Amazonian throng
 Who, with their breasts exposed, would bathe among
 Thermodon's streams; like Castor and Pollux, too,
 On Eurotas's banks, one of them due 20
 To be a non-pareil equestrian,
 The other one a boxing champion.
 Helen, her bosom bare, bore arms, it's said,

With them, in front of them not turning red
 With shame. Therefore the Spartan law prevents
 The parting of all lovers and consents
 That they be close in public. None need be
 Concerned to keep her under lock and key
 Or fear a cruel spouse. No messenger
 Is needed – you may freely speak with her 30
 With no delay. She sports no Tyrian wear
 To lure you; you're not vexed because her hair
 She's always scenting. But when a Roman girl
 Goes out, she's hemmed in by a positive whirl
 Of guards, so that no finger may get through
 Even to touch her; you'd have much to do
 To choose a look or find the words to say
 To her; a lover here must grope his way.
 Ome, had you used the fighting policy
 Of Soarta, you'd be dearer far to me. 40

XV

As I would hope never to have again
 Tumultuous love and never feel the pain
 Of waking without you, may no-one hear
 Gossip of me; when on my funeral bier,
 I'd love you still. When once I had been freed
 From boyhood's garb and I was free to heed
 Love's ways, Lycinna taught my naive heart,
 Won without gifts (alas!): she played her part
 On those first nights. It's nigh three years since then
 And I can scarce remember even ten 10
 Words shared between us. Your love buried all
 And since you, no girl's held me in sweet thrall.
 Don't vex guiltless Lycinna: your great pique
 Will not retreat. Of Dirce let me speak -
 Witness her deed: with groundless jealousy
 She showed her anger at Antiope
 For sleeping with her husband. Oh! She tore
 Her lovely hair, that queen, and she would score
 Her tender face. How often did she weigh
 Her mad down with harsh tasks and make her lay 20
 Her head upon the stony ground; as well,
 She'd leave her in foul darkness, there to dwell,
 Denying her even water. Jove, won't you
 Aid poor Atitiope who has gone through
 So much? She's cruelly chained. If god you be,
 Your girl should not endure such slavery:

Whom else but you can she entreat? However,
 With all her strength, unaided, did she sever
 The chains the queen had placed on her. The she
 Ran to Cithaeron's citadel timidly. 30
 Her couch was harsh with scattered frost that night;
 The Asopus' noisy swell filled her with fright;
 So he was convinced the queen was close behind.
 Her tears found Zethus cold, Amhion inclined
 To pity when from home he was expelled.
 As when the seas their great waves have dispelled
 And east and South Winds cease to wage their war
 And the sands no longer howl upon the shore,
 The poor girl sank and fell. Her progeny
 Perceived their fault and filial piety 40
 Won out, though tardy. You, old man, who earn
 The right to guard the sons of Jove, return
 Those young men to their mother; these boys bound
 Dirce so that she might be dragged around
 Beneath a fierce bull's head. Antiope,
 See Jupiter's hand in all of this: Dirce,
 You're pleased to know, is drawn along and led
 To many deaths. Zethus's fields are red
 With blood and Amphion's paeon of victory
 Is sung on Aracynthus' promontory. 50

XVI

Mid-night my mistress sent a note to me
 To meet her at Tibur immediately,
 Where white peaks show twin towers, and the Anio
 Falls into spreading pools. I do not know
 What I should do. Commit myself to steal
 In darkness, in the fear that I may feel
 A ruffian's hands on me? But if through fright
 I put her off, an enemy of the night
 Will wound me less than tears. I went astray
 Once and for one whole year was sent away. 10
 She's merciless! There's no-one who'll maltreat
 True lovers: so they may direct their feet
 Safely where Sciron lurked. If they should go
 On Scythian shores, not one would land a blow
 Upon them. Who would be so villainous
 As to shed the scanty blood of one of us,
 Whom Venus guards? Our path by the moon's rays
 Is lit, the stars point out uneven ways,
 Love bears a torch, and fierec dogs turn away

Their gaping fangs: such travellers always may 20
 Be safe. If on this journey I should die,
 A death like that would be a worthy buy.
 She'll bring me garlands for my tomb and scent
 And sit as guardian of my monument.
 Ye gods, let her not choose a busy place
 Where people constantly their paths will trace!
 Lovers' tombs are desecrated. Let me lie
 In a distant spot enclosed by trees. May I
 Be buried in unmarked sand: I do not want
 My name remembered in a public haunt. 30

XVII

Now at your altar, Baccvhus, give to me
 A prosperous life along with harmony.
 You quell a furious mistress' scorn and take
 Away with unmixed wine a lover's ache.
 Lovers you join and sunder: wash away
 The mischief from my soul, Bacchus, I pray.
 For Ariadne shows up in the sky,
 That on your lynx-drawn chariot way up high
 She reached Olympus. This ill which has flamed
 A long time in my guts can only be tamed 10
 By death or wine, because a sober night
 Always plagues desolate lovers; hope and fright
 Torment their shifting minds alternatively.
 But, Bacchs, if your gifts will stimulate me
 And summon sleep, then I my vines will sow
 Anmd terrace all the hillocks row by row
 And keep the wild beasts' cropping teeth away
 As long a purple must may foam and spray
 Within myvats, and the fresh grapes aill stain
 The treading feet. As long as I remain 20
 On earth, I'll live through you, my reputation
 As our own poet gained. In my narration
 I'll tell of how your mother by a flame
 From Etna's bolt was struck, and thus you came
 Into the world, how Indian soldiery
 By Nysa's dancers had been forced to flee,
 And how Lycurgus had been driven mad
 Over the new-found vine; how three Maenad
 Bands (three of them!) tore Pentheus' corpse asunder;
 And how some Tuscan sailors vanished under 30
 The sea from a vine-clad ship, each one mutated
 Into a dolphin; how you were venereted

By Dia's sweet-smelling streams wherefrom your wine
Is drunk by Naxians. Your shoulders will shine,
Bearing your ivy clusters, and you'll wear
A Lydian turban which will crown your hair.
On your smooth nape the scented oil will pour,
Your flowing robe descending to the floor,
Covering your bare feet, and Thebes shall pound

The wanton drum and we will hear the sound 40
Of piping Pans. The mighty Cybele
Will, with her turret crown, accompany
The Idaean dance with cymbals, while before
The temple doors, a priest will duly pour
Wine from a bowl of gold. These themes I'll sing
Deserve no humble tenor, thundering
Like Pindar. Free me from this slavery
And salve with slumber my anxiety.

XVIII

Where dim Avernus bars the seas, which beat
Against the pools of Baiae's steaming heat,
Where Misenus of Troy lies in the sand,
Her trumpeter, and where that strip of land
That Hercules built rings out, where, at the sound
Of cymbals, kindly Bacchus travelled round
The cities of mankind – but since your sin
Shamed you, Baiae, what evil god's moved in? -
Marcellus gazed down at the Styx, and so 10
That noble spirit wanders to and fro
In Hell. His worthiness, his ancestry,
The best of mothers and his unity
With Caesar's house, the theatre's draperies,
But now seen by a throng, the auguries
Of cheers won't aid him. Not yet twenty-one,
He's dead: in such a short span Fate has done
So much for him. Dream on, then, visualize
Triumphs, see in your mind whole theatres rise
To hail you; the fold cloth of Pergamum's king 20
Surpass and set about bejewelling
Your clothes with Indian emeralds: all the same
The pyre will consume them. To that flame
Both rich and poor shall go. We all must tread
That evil path. The ferry of the dead
Is meant for everyone. We must appease
Three-headed Cerberus. Good looks don't please

Forever, luck runs out. Our destiny
 Is death, be it soon or late. Though cautiously
 A man may shut himself behind a wall
 Of bronze and iron, death will after all 30
 Drag the man out. Nireus was not rescued
 By his looks, nor Achilles by his fortitude.
 May Charon take your soulless corpse and place
 It wheer your spirit may be granted grace,
 Where Claudius and Caesar ceased to be
 Mortals and joined the heavenly galaxy.

XIX

You task me with men's lust persistently:
 Lust governs women more, believe you me.
 When you scorn decency, you can't contain
 Those things which took possession f your brain.
 A cornfield sooner will endure a flame
 And rivers backward flow to whence they came
 And Scylla and Malea grant a port
 To which a sailor safely may resort
 Than any man is able to suppress
 The course you run in all your wantonness. 10
 Witness the lady who endured the scorns
 Of the Cretan bull and put on the false horns
 Of a wooden cow; witness Tyro, afire
 For Enipeus, hungering in her desire
 To yield to him. Myrrha's iniquity
 Found her enclosed within a new-made tree,
 For she pined for her father. Do I need
 To speak of Medea and her dreadful deed?
 She losyt her man and consequently slew
 Her children in her wrath. Clytaemnestra, too, 20
 Was lecherous, for her adultery
 Covered Mycenae in ignominy.
 Scylla, for Minos' looks, you sheared away
 Your father's purple lock and thus his sway.
 She pledged this dowry to the enemy!
 Thus, Nisus, it was love that treacherously
 Unlocked your door. You maidens, yet unwed,
 I pray that you will earn a happier bed
 A fter your marriage-rites. Scylla was trailed,
 Suspended, from a Cretan hil that sailed
 Across the sea. As judge in Orcus, though
 Victorious, Minos was fair to the foe.

XX

He still recalls your beauty, do you say,
 Whom you saw from your bedroom sail away?
 To give you up for profit – cruel guy!
 Was Africa worth causing you to cry?
 How can you be so daft, imagining
 Vain pledges? Doubtless he is wearying
 His heart with someone else. You're really hot,
 You have Athena's skills and you have got
 Your grandfather's renown – it shines through you.
 Did you but have a lover who is true, 10
 Your house is blest. Sun, who extend your light
 In summer, shrink it! Let it soon be night!
 Stretch my first time! Moon, linger up above
 A little while for our first bout of love.
 How many hours will give way to my wooing
 Ere Venus spurs us to be up and doing!
 There are terms to be made, a pact to sign,
 Oaths to be sealed, with this new love of mine,
 While Love himself his signet will apply
 To those contracts which thus he'll ratify 20
 And Ariadne's woven crown will be
 Witness. When there's no fixed contingency
 Regarding love, no gods will then requite
 Two lovers who have shared a sleepless night,
 But soon our chains will be by lustfulness
 Broken: so let a lasting faithfulness
 Be guaranteed by those first vows one makes:
 Whoever violates those terms and takes
 Another lover, let all the despair
 Love brings descend on him, and let him bare 30
 Himself to nasty gossip, while at night
 One hopes his mistress' window is shut tight
 Against him: let love keep that man in thrall
 But may he not enjoy its fruits at all.

XXI

I must to Athens that the lengthy trip
 May free me from a harsh relationship.
 My love grows by my gazing steadily
 On her: on this. Love feeds primarily.
 I've tried all means to banish it, and yet
 By love I'm still unsleepingly beset.
 She snubs me often, then, just once maybe.

She lets me in; or, if she comes to me,
 She sleeps two feet away, fully attired.
 There's but one remedy: if I retired 10
 To somewhere overseas, then love shall be
 As far from all my thoughts as will be she.
 From sight. Up now, my friends, launch from the land;
 Decide by lots which oars by whom are manned;
 Hoist your propitious sails. The ocean's swell
 Is aided by the breeze. My fiends, farewell,
 Farewell, you Roman towers. However you
 Have treated me, my Cynthia, adieu!
 A recent guest of the Adriatic Sea,
 I must approach the sea-gods with my plea. 20
 My yacht, when I have crossed the Ionian strait,
 I'll rest at Corinth but not hesitate
 To struggle bravely on, where either sea
 Is held off by the isthmus. Finally,
 When I have reached Piraeus, I'll descend
 Theseus' long walls, and that's where I intend
 To boost my mind, at the Academy
 Of Plato or Epicurus' sanctuary
 Or maybe language studies I'll pursue 30
 Or read Demosthenes or savour you,
 Menander; or at least my eyes will be
 Ensnared by works of art, in ivory
 Of bronze created, or some masterpiece
 In paint. Time and the distance will decrease
 My silent heart's distress: or if I die,
 I'll die by fate and not be laid low by
 A shameful love; and when my end has come,
 It will afford me no opprobrium.

XXII

Tullus, for many years did you delight
 In chilly Cyzicus, where lies the bight
 Of the Propontis, and where Cybele
 Carved out a statue on a sacred tree
 Of vines, and where steeds of the ravisher
 Dis galloped? If perhaps you should prefer
 Helle and do not wish to think of me,
 Or if swan-famed Cayster you would see
 Or the river that meanders here and there;
 Or if you'd see Atlas high in the air 10
 Or else the Gorgon's head which Perseus cleft
 Or Geryon's stables or the witness left

In dust where Antaeus and Hercules
 Fought and the spots where the Hesperides
 Danced; though the Colchian Phasis you propel
 With oars and of the *Argo's* journey tell
 When on its maiden trip, its timbers shaped
 From pine, from the Symplegades escaped
 Thanks to its dove. These marvels all shall yield
 To Rome, where what is best in Nature's field 20
 Is placed. We're fit for war, not crime: the fame
 You've merited, Rome, feels not a whit of shame.
 We're strong in mercy, too: our anger shows
 Its conquering hand. Here, then, the Anio flows
 And the Clitumnus which has made its way
 From Umbria, and what will live for many a day -
 Marcus's aqueduct, the healing spring
 Which Pollux's horse once drank of, burgeoning
 Nemi, the Alban Lake. Here's no horned snake,
 No strange sea-monster and no chains that shake 30
 Upon Andromeda's body to redress
 Her mother's self-important monstrousness,
 No feast to cause the Sun to shake and turn
 Away; there no distant fires that burn
 For a mother's vengeful rage; mercilessly
 No Bacchae track down Pentheus in a tree
 There is no makeshift hind to liberate
 A Grecian fleet; Juno does not create
 Horns on a rival's head; you'll not find here
 Those trees which brought to Sinis' victims fear, 40
 Rocks wrecking Greeks, planks shortened cruelly,
 Inflicting death. Tullus, our Italy
 Is our dear mother. Thus your noble race
 Should qualify you for an honoured place
 In office. Here are citizens for you
 To influence and a rich prospect, too,
 Of offspring and, awaiting you, a life
 Crowned with the comfort of your future wife.

XXIII

My learned tablets, then, have gone astray
 Along with much great writing, worn away
 By me: though they're unsealed, it's clear that I
 Wrote them. They now have learned to mollify
 And win young girls, though I was not around.
 They did not gain esteem by being bound
 In gold: cheap wax and wood from the box-tree

Was all they were, yet they were true to me
 And did their job. Perhaps on them this note
 Is written: "Ah the bile comes to my throat" 10
 Because you stayed away, you idle man,
 Last night. Have you seen someone prettier than
 Myself? Or maybe slanders you have spread
 About me?" Or perhaps thereon is read:
 Come here today and we will while away
 The time and then, until the break of day,
 We will make love" - and all the drollery
 A chatty, willing girl might say to me
 When setting up a date. And now – oh dear! -
 On them the statements of some profiteer 20
 Are written which will then be pifeon-holed
 In heartless ledgers. I will proffer gold
 To him who brings them back: for who would care
 For wood instead of wealth? Boy, go somewhere
 Where there's a post – there place this bill of mine
 And write that I live on the Esquiline.

XXIV

Woman, you love your looks too well. I've made
 You overproud since first my eyes laid
 On you. My love this praise of you has thrown:
 I shame that through my verse your name is known.
 Praised your every charm: consequently
 Love took for real what you just *seemed* to be.
 While your complexion I have often said
 Was like the dawn, it was a bogus red:
 My family could not take this curse from me
 Nor could the sorcerers of Thessaly 10
 Wash it away, but I was forced to heal
 Myself, but not by cautery or steel
 But by y shipwreck on a desperate sea,
 For Venus then seized me and roasted me
 In a cruel cauldron. Then my hands were bound
 Behind my back. The harbour then was found
 By my wreathed ship, the Syrtes left behind,
 The anchor dropped. Then I retrieved my mind,
 Spent by the wild surge; now my wounds have healed.
 Good Sense, if you're goddess, now I yield 20
 To you. So many times those vows of mine
 Have lost their power at Jupiter's deaf shrine.

XXV

At banquets I became a laughing-stock,
And anyone could blab of me and mock.
Five years I served you faithfully, but now
You chew your nails, lamenting my lost vow.
I'm not moved by your tears. I used to be,
For they were always used for trickery,
Cynthia. I will depart in tears, and yet
Wrongs outlast tears. It's you who'll never let
A well-matched team run on. Threshold, adieu,
Still tearful at my words, and farewell, too, 10
You door who never burst apart despite
My angry fists. May old age make the sight
Of you an ugly one for all the care
You took to hide your years. Then may you tear
Your white hairs by their roots, by your own glass
Chide for your wrinkles. May some haughty lass
Scorn you now you're shut out and may you moan
That what you used to do, you, now a crone,
Have it now done to you! This in my verse
I prophecy for you this deadly curse. 20
May you anticipate with fearfulness
What's bound to happen to your loveliness!

