

TIBULLUS I

I

Let others pile up golden wealth and till
Their many acres, making themselves ill
With constant toil, their enemies hovering
About their land while martial trumpets ring
And drive off sleep; and let my poverty
rant me an idle life while constantly
My hearth is warm. I will tend in my land
My tender vines and with a ready hand
Grow splendid apples. Let my hope not flee
But bring me heaps of fruit and furnish me 10
With ample grapes. For homage I will pay
Where old wreathed stones are found in the roadway
Or stumps left in the fields; what each year brings
I'll place before the god as offerings.
Golden Ceres, from my land may there be
A crown of corn to grace your sanctuary.
And in my orchards may a watchman stand,
A ruddy Priapus to clear the land
Of frightened birds with his sharp hook. And you,
My guardian Lars, accept your bounty, too, 20
From my poor field, once able to provide
Much more. In those times one calf purified
So many bullocks. One small lamb is all
My meager plot can offer. Let one fall
While rustic youths will stand around the shrine
Ad shout, "Grant us our harvest and fine wine."
I'll be content to live here modestly
And not stray far from home; beneath a tree
I'd shun the burning Dog-Star, by the flow
Of a passing river; happily I'd hoe 30
And with my whip urge on my tardy pair
Of oxen; to my home I'd gladly bear
An orphan lamb or kid. My scant flock shun,
Robbers and wolves; choose from a larger one
Your prey. Each year I'm wont to purify
My herdsman and with milk I satisfy
Calm Pales. From my poor board, deities,
And earthenware don't spurn to welcome these
My gifts. The farmers of antiquity
Made earthen cups from clay. Prosperity 40
And harvests that my forefathers possessed
I do not want. As long as I can rest

Upon a couch, a small crop will suffice.
 For as I lie there, it is very nice
 To hear soft breezes and in a warm embrace
 Cradle my girl or, when chill tempests race
 About us, sleep sound by the fireside.
 Let him be justly rich who can abide
 Sea-storms and dismal rain. As many pearls
 And gold let perish as the tears that girls 50
 Would shed should I go travelling abroad.
 It's right, Messalla, that you wield your sword
 By land and sea to flaunt the spoils you gained;
 In my fair mistress' fetters I am chained:
 A guardian at your harsh doors here I sit.
 My Delia, I do not mind one bit
 To be acclaimed; as long as I abide
 With you, I'll be completely satisfied
 If you would call me lazy. Let me gaze
 On you as to the ending of my days 60
 I come and hold you to me as I die,
 While you will weep as on the pyre I lie
 And kiss me. Yes, you'll weep because your heart
 Is not hard steel. Nobody will depart
 Dry-eyed, no man nor maid. I pray you, spare
 Your tender cheeks and your unloosened hair,
 But do not vex my ghost. Let us, meanwhile,
 Make love as long as Fate will on us smile.
 Soon murky Death will come, his head well-hidden,
 And useless old age – for it is forbidden 70
 To love and make sweet talk when hairs are grey.
 Now is the time for Venus, while we may
 Break doors and quarrel. Marshal of this field
 Am I, an excellent warrior. So wield
 Your power, banners and war-trumpets, elsewhere
 And dole out wounds to those who have a care
 For wealth: for wealth and hunger I disdain
 While I'm secure with my small heap of grain.

II

More wine! Relieve new grief! My weary eyes
 Let sleep invade! Let no-one galvanize
 My brain with too much booze, while listlessly
 Sad love lies. For a heartless custody
 Restricts my girl: her firm door's locked. O door
 Whose lord is harsh, may vicious rainstorms pour
 And batter you! May the bolt of Jupiter, sent

By his decree, find you. Cone, door, relent
 And open fo me only, overcome
 By my complaints, and let the hinge be mum. 10
 Excuse my madness: be it on my head.
 You must remember all the things I pled
 While hanging garlands on your post. Don't be
 So tame, my Delia: do not timidly
 Deceive your guards. Be bold: the bold succeed
 With Venus' help. She backs all youths who need
 To make a new foray or girls who yearn
 To escape. Through her, her acolytes will learn
 To tiptoe from a lover's bed.. It's she
 Who'll tutor you to get out silently. 20
 She'll teach you telling nods and how to conceal
 Such things to all, but only those who show
 Their vigour and those not afraid to go
 To a lover late at night . As anxiously
 I wander through the darkling city, she
 Saves me from all attacks, all robbers, too.
 She offers sanctuary to any who
 Are lovers, for they must not suffer fright
 Of ambushes. A bitter winter might 30
 Won't harm me, nor will rain. Such drudgery
 Is nothing just as long as I may see
 Delia bar the door and, that I may
 Go to her, gently tap-tap. Turn away,
 Both men and women: Venus wants to hide
 Her thefts. So do not make us terrified
 With clattering feet or pester us for a name
 Or hold up close to us a torch's flame.
 If anyone should see us, unaware,
 Let him conceal it and solemnly swear 40
 That he's forgotten us: a snitch will see
 That Venus is the direct progeny
 Of turbulent sea. His tale no husband, though,
 Will not believe - a witch once told me so.
 Her drawing down the skies I have espied
 And she has turned a rapid river's tide
 With spells and cleft the earth and lured the dead
 Out of their graves and from the warm pyre's bed
 Called down its bones and with a hissing sound
 Held the infernal bands, and I have found 50
 Her bid them then return to the earth below
 By sprinkling milk and, when she wishes, lo!
 She drives clouds from dark skies and she brings snow
 To a humid world, while she – it's rumoured so -

Has Medea's evil herbs (and only she),
 And the ferocious hounds of Hecate
 She alone has tamed. For me some harmonies
 Has she composed to serve your trickeries:
 Thrice sing them, then thrice spit. What has been said
 About us he'll not credit; if in bed 60
 We're caught, he'll not believe it even so.
 Don't sleep with other men, for then he'll know
 About each one, but nothing about me.
 Do I believe her? Well, she certainly
 Said she could make my passions all subside
 With spells and herbs, and then she purified
 Me with her torches, and in a quiet night
 She sacrificed a puller to delight
 The magic gods. "Don't drive my love away,"
 I begged of her, "but let it always stay, 70
 A mutual thing." I would not wish that you
 Should leave my side. That man's of iron who
 Could be your lover but would foolishly
 Prefer the spoils of war and soldiery.
 So let him lead his captured hordes and place
 His camp on captured soil, and let him face
 The world on his swift steed, in silver and gold
 All decked, as long as in my arms I'll hold
 You, Delia, in some mountain hideaway,
 I and my oxen and my flock. And may 80
 I sweetly sleep on rugged ground. For why
 Should I on Tyrian sheets prefer to lie
 And weep all night, no mistress by my side?
 For what's the point? No sleep will be supplied
 By feathers, painted bedspreads, in my ear
 Soft tinkling of water. O I fear
 I've injured Venus and the penalty
 I must now pay for my iniquity
 With my foul tongue. Will everybody say
 I stole up to the shrines and took away 90
 The garlands? If I did, I'd willingly
 Prostrate myself before the sanctuary
 And kiss the holy threshold suppliantly
 On hands and knees and striking miserably
 My head against the sacred post. And you
 Who snigger at my woes, be careful, too:
 A god won't always smite but one. For I
 Have seen man laugh at young lads' love, but by
 And by submit their necks, quite ancient now,
 To Venus' noose and quietly practise how 100

To flatter while arranging with their hand
 Their hoary hair, quite unabashed to stand
 Before his sweetheart's door or ferret out
 News from her servant as she goes about
 The market-place. Young men and boys infest
 Their space and each one spits upon his breast.
 Venus, spare me. I've served you every day:
 Don't bitterly burn your harvest, then, I pray.

III

Messalla, while across the Aegean Sea
 You sail, I hope that you'll remember me,
 You and your friends. I'm in the unknown land
 Of Phaeacia, sick. Black death, retrain your hand,
 Hold off, I pray. My mother is not here
 To take my blackened bones upon the bier
 And hold them close; my sister may not steep
 Me with Assyrian frankincense and weep
 With unkempt locks. Delia is away
 As well: she, when I left home, so they say, 10
 Consulted all the gods. From the acolyte
 She took three lots; my future looking bright,
 He said, I would return. However, she
 She kept on brooding on my odyssey.
 My final orders given, I gave her
 Solace but anxiously tried to defer
 My coming home. It's omens, I would say,
 It's flights of birds, it's Saturn's holy day
 That keeps me. Setting out, I've often told
 Myself that tripping over the threshold 20
 Was ominous. Let no-one ever go
 Away when Love's unwilling, or he'll know
 That God prevents him. Delia, my sweet
 What good's your Isis, or the bronze you beat
 So often, to us both? Why purify
 Yourself at worship so that you may lie
 In a pure bed? So, goddess, give me aid -
 I've seen so many works of art displayed
 Within your temples showing us your skill
 In healing -that my Delia may fulfil 30
 Her vows and, bound in linen, take her seat
 Before your sacred doors and then repeat
 Her praise of you, her tresses flowing free,
 Conspicuous in that Pharian company.
 May I my household deities also praise

With monthly incense. In the olden days
 Life was much better under the command
 Of Saturn, long before the entire land
 Was filled with lengthy roadways! The pine-tree
 Had not yet been transformed to scorn the sea, 40
 Sails billowing in the wind. The sailor then
 Had not yet sought out foreign businessmen,
 Loading his ship with the merchandise he'd bought.
 The brawny bull had not yet then been taught
 To bear the yoke, men did not yet restrain
 Horses with curbs, the husbandmen's terrain
 Unmarked with stones, and houses were without
 A doorway, and the oaks themselves would spout
 Honey, and ewes would voluntarily
 Bring to the shepherd udders totally 50
 Bursting with milk. No battle, anger, war,
 No craftsman had a hostile passion for
 Sword-making. Now, know Jupiter's sovereignty,
 Slaughter is constant; death can come by sea
 Or countless other ways. Cease, lord, I pray.
 Nor lies nor blasphemy cause me dismay,
 But if my time is up, at my gravesite
 Let someone set a stone and on it write:
 HERE LIES TIBULLUS. CONQUERED CRUELLY
 BY DEATH, WHO FOLLOWED, OVER LAND AND SEA, 60
 MESSALLA. But, since tender Love holds me
 So dear, into the Elysian greenery
 Venus shall lead me. Dance and song live there
 While sweetly-singing birds flit everywhere;
 In untilled land lies cinnamon; every field
 Can fragrant roses favourably yield;
 Young men and tender maidens are at play,
 And Love establishes a constant fray
 Between them. Every lover there, mown down
 By greedy death, now wears a myrtle crown. 70
 But criminals in deepest darkness lurk,
 Hemmed by black rivers gurgling in the murk.
 Tisiphone, fierce serpents in her hair,
 There fumes; an impious mob runs everywhere.
 Black Cerberus, snakes in his mouth, barks there
 Before the bronze gates where he makes his lair.
 There Jupiter's tempter, Ixion, is rotating
 Upon a whirling wheel, thus expiating
 His crime, and over seven acres spread,
 Tityos lies, whose black entrails are fed 80
 To greedy birds; there too is Tantalus,

Enclosed by swamp, for water ravenous -
 It mocks his thirst. Danaus' progeny,
 For slandering Venus' power, constantly
 In leaky jars bear water. It's my prayer
 That those who spurned my loves should languish there,
 Those who would banish me to soldiery.
 But you, I pray, remain in purity.
 But may that diligent crone ever abide
 Chastity's guardian, staying by your side. 90
 May she tell stories, light her lamp and pull
 Long threads from the distaff; busy with her wool,
 May the girl find sleep at last. The suddenly
 I'll come (let none announce me!) and you'll see
 Me there before you, as from high above.
 Then, barefoot, run to me, Delia my love,
 Your long hair mussed. May white Dawn come, I pray,
 On rosy horses bringing back the day.

IV

"Priapus, may you have a canopy
 Against the sun and snow: what faculty
 Makes you a magnet for fair lads? For you
 Have no right beard, your hair's untidy, too,
 Naked in winter's cold and in the dry
 Days of the Dog-Star," I said. In reply,
 Holding his scythe, the rustic said to me,
 "O do not trust that gentle company
 Of boys – they always for a love that's true
 Offer a cause. One lad will content you 10
 With his equestrian ability,
 Another with his skill to cleave the sea
 With snowy breast; this one because he shows
 Great bravery; that one because the rose
 Upon his cheeks speaks of his chastity.
 But if at first he spurns you, do not be
 Upset: in time the lion learns to obey,
 In time soft water rubs the stone away.
 On sunny hills time ripens grapes, time's aid
 Sets stars upon their course. Don't be afraid 20
 To swear: the winds bear Venus' pefjuries
 And scatters them across all lands and seas.
 Thanks, Jove: he quashed their power – mad love might swear
 With passion anytime and anywhere.
 Diana with her arrows this allows,
 Minerva with her hair spurns lovers' vows.

If slow, you're lost, though. How fast does the day
 Go flitting by you, disinclined to stay.
 How fast the earth loses its purple hue,
 The lofty poplar its fair greenery, too! 30
 How sad the aged steed's infirmity,
 Who scored at Elis many a victory!
 I've seen youths, persecuted by the fears
 Of age, regret the flight of halcyon years.
 Cruel gods! The snake its skin sheds annually,
 But beauty's quickly quashed by destiny.
 None else but Bacchus and Phoebus, with their hair
 Unshorn, stay young. Whatever your boy may care
 To try, give in. Indulgence wins the day
 Always in love. Therefore don't say him nay 40
 To journey with him, how so long it be,
 The Dog-Star parching meadows torridly,
 Although the rainbow covers up the sky
 With rusty hue, threatening rain by and by.
 If he would go by boat, then you should be
 The pilot, undertaking drudgery
 That's strange to you; and if he would pursue
 Beasts in the yawning dales, it should be you
 Who totes the nets; if he in sport would fight
 With you, attempt to make your movements light: 50
 To let him win, show him your exposed side.
 He'll soften then, and you won't be denied
 Sweet kisses. He will snatch, but later when
 You ask for a kiss, he will indulge you then,
 And maybe hang upon your neck. It's sad
 But nowadays such arts can scarce be had:
 Young boys now ask for gifts, He who began
 To teach venality in love, that man
 Should be pressed down with stones. So, idolize
 The Muses, lads, and poets who are wise; 60
 And don't let golden gifts ever outweigh
 The Muses: Nisus' hair will always stay
 Purple in poetry. Shining ivory
 Would not, without the help of poetry,
 Grace Pelops' shoulders. He who's chosen by
 The Muses will, while stars are in the sky,
 While rivers run and while the earth can still
 Grow oaks, live on, but he who has no will
 To hear the Muses, he who makes a trade
 Of love, insisting that he must be paid, 70
 Should follow Ops's chariot, wandering
 Around three hundred cities, butchering

His limbs in the Phrygian mode. Venus would see
 Some flattery, for she likes the misery
 Of tearful begging." This to Titius
 I was to sing: his wife was mutinous,
 However, and forbade him to recall
 My words. Let him obey her, then. But all
 Of you with skilful catamites who make
 Your life a misery must therefore take
 Me as your master. Each lad has his skill:
 Consult me, then, you who are treated ill:
 My door's open to all. There'll come a day
 When loyal youths will seek me out and pay
 Attention to love's pupils. Marathus
 Is torturing me – he's o so ponderous!
 I have b=no skill, no tricks. Therefore, boy, knock
 It off lest I become a laughing-stock.

80

V

"I'm taking the break-up well, " I'd harshly say:
 That boast of mine is now so far away.
 I'm driven by a swift top skilfully
 Whipped by a boy. Therefore ferociously
 Scorch the wild beast that he may never crow
 Hereafter: crush his boasting. Spare me, though,
 By our shared couch, by love and by the head
 Laid close to mine. When you lay, almost dead,
 I snatched you from the brink, they say, by prayer
 And with pure sulphur took the greatest care
 To bathe you, once the crone had sung her charm;
 And letst her savage dream should bring her harm
 I expiated them; three times I sptayed
 Grain on her. In the night I nine times prayed
 To Trivia, a wool headband around my brow
 And in a loose tunic. I did that! Yet now
 Another holds you, gaining benefit
 From all my prayers. When you were once more fit,
 I thought I'd live my life delightedly,
 But Heaven said no. "A farmer I will be",
 I reckoned, " and my Delia'll guard my store
 While it is threshed upon the threshing-floor
 In the hot sun and watch the grapes for me
 In foaming troughs and tread vigorously
 The white must; she will count the flock, have fun,
 As mistress of the house, with the babbling son
 Of one of our slaves and bounce him on her knee.

10

20

She'll know to give the god of agronomy
 Grapes for the vines, ears for the harvest and
 Meal for the flock. All those who work the land 30
 She'd rule and care for everything while I
 Would let her, and Messalla would drop by
 To whom my Delia would from off the tree
 Give apples in his honour. Busily
 She'd make and serve him dinner" Prayers like these
 I dreamed up, which are wafted in the breeze
 From the fragrant East. Solace I sought in wine
 So often but my grief was turned to the brine
 Of tears. In another's arms, when joy was near
 Venus would then remind me of my dear 40
 And leave me. Then the lady, leaving too,
 Would curse me, saying that my Delia knew
 Black arts. My girl, though, does this silently,
 Her beauty and her tender arms round me
 And fair hair saying it for her. It was so
 With the sea-green Nereid Thetis long ago,
 Transported to Peleus of Thessaly
 Upon a dolphin's back. It tortured me
 To have a wealthy rival court my dear;
 A cunning bawd turned up and brought me near 50
 To death. May she eat uncooked food and swallow
 Foul gall; may dead souls flit about and follow
 That bawd, lamenting their sad destiny.
 Forever many a screech-owl dolefully
 Sing from her roof. In agony, bereft
 Of food, may she seek bones that have been left
 By wolves and grass in graves, while scampering
 Unclothed throughout the cities, bellowing
 And trailed by vicious dogs. These things I'll see:
 It was ordained, for a divinity 60
 Is given to each lover; the goddess
 Of love is rankled by this lawlessness.
 Ditch now the teachings of that greedy shrew:
 it's gifts that conquer love. Forever you
 Will have a poor man give a helping hand
 And show the way among the crowded band
 Of Romans; seek out fields clandestinely
 And take your sandals off. Alas for me,
 I sing in vain. For no words can subdue
 The door – it must be knocked at. As for you, 70
 Though you b aster now, you fear my fate:
 On her swift wheel will Chance always rotate.
 Right now there's someone standing doggedly

Before that door and waits repeatedly,
Then runs away, pretends to go home, then
Runs back and stands before the door again
And coughs. Love's up to something: while you may,
Act! For your skiff's already in the bay.

VI

O love, you always tempt me flatteringly,
Though later you're full of acerbity
And gloom. Why? Does a god delight to lure
A man? Your nets are set for me and, sure,
At night my clever Delia's fondling
Some man. She then denies the entire thing:
It's hard, though, to believe her, for of me
She tells her spouse the same. I wretchedly
Have schooled her to elude her guards: I'm caught,
Alas, by my own skill – she's now been taught 10
To make up reasons that she might abide
In bad alone and cause the hinge to glide
In silence. Herbs and juices I have stressed
She use to lose those marks that I've impressed
On her. Unwary spouse, look out for me
And for your cunning god's iniquity.
See that she doesn't chat with youths, beware
Her lounging, runic loose and throat all bare.
Watch crafty nods, wine-tracks that fingers smear,
Love-noes upon the table. Ever fear 20
Her frequent absences, when she might stress
Her need to venerate the blest goddess,
Which men may not. Trust me to go behind
Her to the shrines: I'll not fear to go blind.
While feigning to check out her ring's design,
I often touched her hand and I with wine
Would often knock you out. I soberly
Would water drink and claim a victory.
Forgive my foolish trick, for the command
Had come from Love. The gods would never stand 30
Aortal thwarting them. Oh yes, that's right,
I'm not ashamed to say: all through the night
Your dog plagued me. What point is there to be
Wed to a gorgeous wife? Why have a key
If you can't keep your goods? Your Delia takes
You in her arms but suddenly she fakes
A headache, sighing for some beau. Let me
Keep watch on her: her cruel savagery

I will not dodge nor will I shame to wear
 Chains on my feet. Back off, you men whose hair 40
 Is cleverly coiffed, and you whose clothes flow free
 And loose, all whom we meet, lest guilt should be
 Your lot. God ordered this, and the priestess
 Predicted it in her great holiness.
 When moved by war-lust, she will not show fright,
 In madness, of fierce flame or of the bite
 Of lashes. She herself will violently
 Slash at her arms with a two-fold axe, quite free
 Of harm, the goddess splashed with blood, her side
 And breasts impaled. What has been prophesied 50
 By the goddess she will chant: "I warn you, spare
 The girl whom Love protects; you must beware
 Of later punishment. If you should lay
 A hand on her your wealth will fly away,
 Just like my blood, just like this ash a gust
 Of wind will scatter. She said you, too, must
 Be punished, Delia; but if you agree
 That you have sinned, may she show leniency.
 Not for yourself I spare you: no, my rage
 Is conquered by your mother's golden age. 60
 At night she brings me to you, fearfully
 Joining our hands; she's waiting there for me
 At the door; she hears me from afar; long live
 You, sweet old lady; my own years I'd give
 To you, were it allowed. I'll evermore
 Love you for your own self as well as for
 Your daughter, for she yet is family,
 Whatever she does. So teach her chastity,
 Though no headband her stylish hair may crown
 Nor are her feet hid by a matron's gown. 70
 Be harsh with me; let me not idolize
 A girl without her going for my eyes.
 If she thinks I have sinned, held by the hair
 May I be dragged out in the open air.
 I'd not strike you, but if such savagery
 Came to my mind, I'd wish to handless be;
 And don't be chaste through cruel fear but stay
 Faithful to me even when I am away.
 A faithless girl, crushed by senility,
 Shall weave her twisted thread unsteadily 80
 And tie it to the loom that she has rented
 And make sure what's been drawn is documented.
 A fearing band of youths will come and see
 Her there and tell her that deservedly

Old folk are troubled. Venus, too, will see
 Her weep and warn that infidelity
 Brings gall. But let such harsh words overtake
 Others, but come, my Delia, let us make
 A pact to be love's archetypes today
 And still be so when we are old and grey. 90

VII

The Fates sang their predictions If this day,
 Winding their fatal threads which no god may
 Untie – this day when the Aquitanian land
 Would feel Rome's force, crushed by a mighty band
 Of soldiers. Roman youth now knows
 New triumphs and the leaders If their foes
 In chains; Messalla, with your laurel crown,
 Your ivory chariot throughout the town
 Bears you, drawn by bright steeds. I, too, may boast
 Of your great honour: witness, then, the coast 10
 Of the Santini, Tarbellian Pyrenees,
 Arar, the rapid Rhone' as well as these,
 Mighty Garonne, the black Loire. Should I sing
 Cydne, of you, through shoals meandering
 In silence? Or Mt. Taurus as he pokes
 Up to the clouds and feed the unshorn folks
 Of Cilicia? Or the dove in unscathed flight
 And sacred to the Syrians? Or should I
 Tell you of Tyre as she looks out from on high 20
 upon the boundless main, the first to be
 Taught to entrust her ships to storms at sea?
 Or how the fertile Nile, when fields lie dry,
 Will burst its banks? In what far lands and why,
 O Father Nile, has your source been concealed?
 Because of you there isn't any field
 That pines for showers. You are celebrated
 By barbarous folk, Osiris venerated
 As well; the bull of Memphis they were taught
 To mourn. Before all other gods he wrought 30
 The iron plough and stirred the tender earth
 And with his seeds the unturned soil gave birth;
 He plucked the fruit from trees unknown till then;
 Staking the tender vines he taught to men,
 And scything grass. He gave to rustic feet
 The task of pressing juices passing sweet
 Out of the vines. That wine taught men to sing,
 Their untaught limbs in rhythm gambolling.

To farmers toiling hard day after day
 Bacchus gave means to chase their gloom away. 40
 He gave repose to troubled men, although
 Their shackles jangled. You don't suffer so,
 Osiris, for in dance you spend your days,
 In songs and gentle love and wit bouquets
 Of flowers, with berries round your brows; a gown
 Of saffron to your tender feet flows down;
 Garments of Tyre and sweet flutes that are played
 To aid our song and a light basket made
 For sacrificial rites. Come, then, with me -
 With games and dance hallow your deity 50
 And douse his brows with wine; his shining hair
 Moist with perfume; soft wreaths let him wear
 Upon his head and neck. In deference
 This very day I'll give you frankincense
 And Attic honey-cakes. May Fate bestow
 A child on you that this your deeds will grow
 Yet further as he shows his piety.
 Nor may your road-construction ever be
 Kept mum by those the land of Tusculum keeps 60
 Or ancient Alba Longa. Gravel heaps,
 Piled by your wealth, you spread, then skilfully
 With stones combined them. Your proficiency
 The farmer sings of when he comes from Rome,
 Returning late, but safely, to his home,
 For long may we your day of birth revere,
 And may it brighter grow from day to day.

VIII

Lovers' sweet words and nods you can't concealed
 From me, though I've no lots that may reveal
 The facts, no entrails, no birds to foresee
 Events in song: Venus has taught it me,
 Tied up in magic knots and cudgelled well.
 Don't feign: for Love provides a crueller Hell
 To those who yield to him unwillingly.
 Why do you comb your hair so carefully
 In several different styles? Why do you stain 10
 Your cheeks with rouge or trim your nails? In vain
 You change your clothes and strap your sandals tight.
 She's still attractive, though she greets you quite
 Unmade-up, while no time-consuming carefully
 Has been devoted to her shining hair.
 Has some old bawd in the tranquillity

Of night beguiled you with her witchery
 And pallid herbs? Well, chanting can transfer
 Crops from a neighbour's fields and will deter
 An angry snake; chanting can even try
 To tempt the Moon to come down from the sky 20
 And would succeed were not an echo sent
 Of sounding bronze. Why do I, though, lament
 That chants and herbs harm me? The fair don't need
 The aid of any witchcraft. But, indeed,
 there's harm in touching, lengthy kisses, too,
 And lying thigh to clinging thigh. But you
 Must not torment your boy, for Venus brings
 Reproof for that. Nor must you ask for things:
 Let old men give you gifts that you may treat
 Their cold limbs with your soft embrace and heat 30
 Them up. Dearer than gold's a youth, his face
 Shining and smooth, nor will your fond embrace
 Be spoiled by a rough beard. If you should lay
 Your white arms aon his shoulders, then you may
 Despise the wealth of kings. A stealthy night
 Of love has Venus schemed, the boy, in fright,
 Stroking your breasts as you, with many a sigh,
 Match kiss for moistened kiss as there you lie
 And bear his love-bites. Jewels have no aid
 For her who sleeps alone, a cold, old maid, 40
 Desired by none. We long to challenge time
 And bring back love, but now our hair's like rime.
 Then we want good looks, feigning youth with care
 By rubbing a nut's green rind into our hair;
 While you still have the bloom of youth, make hay,
 For on such rapid feet it slips away.
 Don't torture Marathus: what good's in this,
 Trouncing a boy? No, on old men, young miss,
 Be harsh! Spare tender lads, I pray: though they
 Aren't at death's door, their bodies will turn grey 50
 With too much passion. Often he'll complaints
 About his absent girl while tears will rain
 On all. He says, "Why spurn me? For the guard
 Could have been duped: the god won't make it hard
 For lovers to deceive. Venus is sly
 (I know her well): she tutors how to sigh
 Softly and kiss without a sound; although
 It's midnight I can use my stealth to go
 To disengage the lock. What benefit
 Has technique if a cruel girl will quit 60
 Her bed and spurn her lover? Should she swear

But quickly break her vow, with many a care
 I spend a sleepless night. 'She's coming now,'
 I tell myself, and every sound I vow
 Is her own feet." Don't weep, boy: she is still
 Unmoved, and yet your weary eyes you fill
 With tears. Be warned – the gods hate vanity:
 Your incense, then, is pointless, Pholoë.
 Marathus once mocked sad lovers heedlessly,
 Quite unaware of the proximity
 Of holy vengeance and – or so they say -
 He laughed at grieving tears and feigned delay
 In love games: now he hates pomposity
 And padlocked doors. You'll pay a penalty
 Unless you banish pride. I'm sure you would
 Recall that moment if you only could.

70

IX

If in my love you planned to injure me,
 Why did you swear an oath, then secretly
 Break it? Should you your perjury secrete,
 It yet arrives at last on silent feet.
 Gods, spare him: it's allowed the fair to flee
 Rebuke for harming a divinity
 Just once. The farmer, that he may expand
 His wealth, will yoke his team and plough his land,
 A strenuous toil; seeking commodities,
 Unsteady ships will sail the windy seas,
 Led by the stars; my lover is fixated
 With gifts, but may they be disseminated
 And turned to ash and and water. Then he'll pay
 The penalty, his beauty swept away
 By dust, his hair by countless breezes churned
 Which, with his face, will by the sun be burned,
 His faltering feet drained by long treks. "With gold
 Don't taint your looks," so often you've been told
 By me: "that often brings calamity.
 To that man whose love of prosperity
 Leads him to mistreat love Venus is stern.
 Impale me rather with a sword and burn
 My hair and horsewhip me. If you have plans
 To sin, don't hide them: there's a god who bans
 Such things. A silent slave he's pleasantly
 Allowed to guzzle wine and babble, free
 From harm; some people talking in their sleep
 He's suffered to let out what they should keep'

10

20

From folks." My tears in speaking thus I rue;
 That at your delicate feet myself I threw 30
 I blush. You swore to me you'd not have sold
 Your faith for gems or any amount of gold,
 Note even for Campania or the care
 Of Bacchus, Falernia's field: you'd have me swear,
 With words like these, that Heaven's stars don't glow
 Above us and that rivers do not flow.
 You even wept – I, who could not betray
 Another, then wiped all those tears away,
 Believing you. Whyever would you do
 This if you did not love a girl? Like you, 40
 May she be fickle! Often, late at night,
 I'd your escort, carrying your light,
 Lest you be heard and often, thanks to me,
 She'd come to you quite unexpectedly
 And hide behind the closed door. How distraught
 Was I then, for I foolishly had thought
 That I was loved; although caught unawares
 I might have been more wary of your snares:
 I sang your praises in my ecstasy,
 Though now ashamed of all my poetry 50
 Addressed to you. Would it had all been cursed
 With flames of fire or in a stream immersed.
 You who would sell your looks for a high price,
 Begone! But you who've led your lad to vice
 With presents, may your wife mock you, scot-free
 With constant tricks and when her lover she
 Has tired out in secret, overcome
 With sleep. May she lie by you, bum to bum,
 A sheet between you. May there every day
 Be signs upon your mattress that betray 60
 Another's presence, and may your house be
 Forever open to the company
 Of lustful men; and may it not be said
 Her horny sister ever took to bed
 More men or drank more wine. Folk often say
 She headed drinking bouts till break of day.
 No girl employed the night better than she
 Or dreamed up more positions. Greedily
 Your wife has learned it all. But you, you twit,
 When she makes unknown moves, don't notice it. 70
 Does she arrange and comb her gossamer hair
 For you, you think? Is it because you're fair
 She wears gold rings or garments made in Tyre?
 For some young men, not you, is her desire

To flaunt her looks.
 Your wealth and property
 Is used for *him*. But not unpleasantly
 She does this – a sophisticated lass
 A fould and gouty old man would bypass.
 My boy has slept with him: I would accept
 The fact that he is able to have slept 80
 With fierce wild beasts. Did you, then, have the gall
 To sell my sweet talk, did you set your stall
 And hawk my kisses, madman? Tese you'll shed
 When another lad will win me in your stead
 And tulle in your domain illustiously.
 May I delight then in your penalty
 And ay a golden palm-tree sanctify
 Deserving Venus, telling all what I
 Have suffered: THIS PALM-TREE IS DEDICATED
 BY ME, TIBULLUS, NOW EMANCIPATED 90
 FROM TREACHEROUS LOVE. I ASK OF YOU, GODDESS,
 THAT YOU LOOK ON ME WITH WARM-HEARTEDNESS.

X

Who first produced vile swords? How fierce was he,
 How adamant! He gave humanity
 The means of slaughter, war, a shorter way
 To death. Was he unworthy, though? I say,
 Since he gave us what was supposed to kill
 Wild beasts but we used to occasion ill
 To me. The cause is greed! When beech-cups stood
 Before one's place, nobody understood
 The point of war. There was no castle-keep,
 No stronghold and the ram would safely sleep 10
 Among the ewes. Back then, the misery
 Of arms I'd not have known nor tremblingly
 Heard trumpets; now, though, I am forced to go
 To war. Perhaps already there's a foe
 Prepared to pierce my flank. Lars, keep me free
 From him, you who, when in my infancy
 I ran before your feet, nursed me. Don't shame
 About your wooden form – you looked the same
 In my grandfather's house. More piety
 Prevailed then when s wooden deity, 20
 Dressed meanly, stood upon a scanty shrine.
 He was appeased with offerings of wine
 Or wreaths of wheat-ears. Once a man had prayed
 And had his wish fulfilled, honey-cakes he laid

Before him with his little daughter who
 Bore the pure honeycomb. Lars, I beg of you,
 Banish bronze weapons...
and from a full sty
 I'll sacrifice a rustic sow, which I
 Will follow, purely garbed, and I shall bear
 The baskets, myrtle-bound, while in my hair 30
 there shall be myrtle, too. Thus may you be
 Content: may someone else his enemy
 Subdue and flaunt his deeds, as in my place
 I drink, and on the table he may trace
 His camp in wine. Is it not lunacy
 To cause black death in war? Clandestinely
 Its threats appear on silent feet. No field
 Of corn, no wine Death brings. Her only yield
 Is cruel Cerberus and he who guides
 The pallid mob of dead souls as he glides 40
 Across the darkling Styx: with burning hair
 And battered cheeks they sail. But we should care
 To praise the man who, with his family,
 In his small hut till seniority
 Has dwelt. His flock of sheep he tended there,
 The lambs his son, and his wife would prepare
 Hot water for the weary. Would that I
 Could live thus, telling tales of days gone by,
 My locks now greying. Meanwhile may peace be 50
 In fields, for pure peace in antiquity
 Brought oxen to the plough. The vines by peace
 Were fed, the farmers storing the increase,
 So that the fathers might pour out the wine
 For his own son. How did the hoe and ploughshare shine! -
 But cruel arms dwell in obscurity -
 From the wood, the rustic, not quite soberly,
 Drives back home with his kin. But then Love's war
 Is kindled and his wife the broken door
 And her torn locks laments. She weeps that he
 Has bruised her tender cheeks. He equally 60
 Rues his mad power. Wanton love supplies
 Bad words to quarrels and, indifferent, lies
 Between the angry pair. That man's like stone
 Who beast his girl: he'll topple from their throne
 The gods. Let it be adequate that he tear
 Her thin dress from her limbs or claw her hair
 Or make her weep. So, four times blest is he
 Who makes his sweet girl weep. But he who'll be
 Brutal, well, let him bear the pike and shield

And be from gentle Venus far afield.
Kind peace, come, hold the wheat-ear; as you gleam
In white upon us, let your apples teem.

70