



Horace: Odes  
and  
Carmen Saeculare

translations by  
colin john holcombe

ocaso press 2014

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## INTRODUCTION

Like Virgil, Quintus Horatius Flaccus came from undistinguished provincial stock. He was born in 65 BC to a freedman in Venusia, southern Italy, who gave his son the best education his limited means could aspire to, sending him to Rome at the age of twelve and then to Athens. When twenty-one, without a day's military training, the young man enlisted as an officer in the Republican army, apparently serving without disgrace until the defeat at Philippi. With the general amnesty that followed, Horace returned to Rome and took a modest post in the Treasury, which he retained for seven years. In the spring of 38 BC Horace was introduced by Virgil to Maecenas, and was nine months later admitted into his celebrated circle of writers. Horace was otherwise unknown, but seems to have divided his time between Treasury duties, love affairs, reading widely, lampooning the famous, and wandering round the poorer and more colourful parts of Rome. Around 35 BC he collected his compositions in a first book of *Satires*, which exhibits the urbanity, quiet humour and common sense that distinguish his best work. A second book of *Satires* was just as accomplished, employing lively hexameters for easy dialogue with himself and his own affairs.

The following *Epodes* (30 BC), criticising the lack of civic duty among contemporaries, was marred by flatness and artistic vulgarity, however, perhaps in an effort to flatter Maecenas, who had given Horace a farm in the Sabine Hills some fourteen miles from Rome. It was a substantial affair, with eight slaves and five tenant properties attached, and the financial independence allowed Horace to work in his own manner. Seven years later, in 23 BC, when he was forty-two, Horace collected the eighty-eight pieces in three books or scrolls of what he will always be remembered for: the *Odes*.

Other Roman poets, notably Plautus and Catullus, had imitated the Greek lyric verse forms, but no one before had used them so widely or successfully. Horace adapted the forms for the social life of Augustan Rome, and his *Odes* were not generally on ambitious themes: no epics or extended disquisitions, but 'occasional poems' on friendship, love, conviviality, patriotism, morality and day-to-day incidents, all treated with a wise and slightly self-deprecating modesty that Horace made his own. Repeated constantly are the uncertainty of life, the need for moderation, and the joys of tranquillity and contentment. Horace has therefore none of the depths and brooding pity of Virgil. Beside Catullus, he seems flat and tame. But Horace appeals to a wider circle than either, and his 'golden mediocrity' produced a sane, balanced and often pleasing self-honesty in phrases that have served as proverbs to the educated classes ever since. The *Odes* received tributes from Persius, Juvenal and Statius, and had indeed become a school text by the second century AD. Moreover, though Horace lacked the independence and status to wholly speak his mind, the repeated tributes to Augustus, which become less nuanced in the fourth book, may nonetheless reflect a genuine respect for the reconciliation and social reconstruction the emperor instigated after the excesses of the civil wars. Most importantly, and for which he has been read for two millennia, Horace achieved a charm, polish and lapidary dexterity in the *Odes* that is peculiar to him but also an example of Latin verse at its best.

The *Odes* were addressed to specific recipients, the more important of whom can be identified, though Horace may not have known them well. The compositions were probably read to Maecenas and friends, and perhaps amended as that cultivated and influential circle suggested. Some scholars have suggested that Horace was musical, and that the pieces were written for musical performance, but there is little evidence for this view and the interpretation is contested. Nonetheless, for all the preparation and the prestigious contacts, the reception

of the first three books seems to have disappointed their author. Horace wrote no more odes for the next six years, but produced his first book of *Epistles* (c. 21 BC), verse letters on philosophic matters, even as the political atmosphere grew darker. Maecenas fell from power. Virgil died, and then Tibullus and Propertius.

Matters improved in 17 BC, however, when Augustus, after consulting the Sibylline Books, decided to stage the secular games in Rome. Horace was commissioned to write the commemorative song recited by a chorus of young boys and girls, a considerable honour that made his reputation. Around 11 BC he brought out a second book of *Epistles*. Augustus also came to spend more time in Rome, and some friendship developed between emperor and his corpulent admirer. Horace was asked to write on the victories of Augustus' stepsons, Drusus and Tiberius, and to consider dedicating a work to the emperor. So appeared the fourth and last book of *Odes*, in 11 BC. An interesting but unambitious study of the poet's art, *Ars Poetica* (10-8 BC), closed off his creative life, and Horace died in 8 BC, a few weeks after the death of Maecenas, beside whom he was buried on the Esquiline.

The Greek forms were never fully naturalised into Latin, and the *Odes* inspired few later poems that Romans thought worthy of mentioning or preserving. On the wider scene, however, Horace has proved one of the lasting influences on European poetry — in its themes and approaches, how poetry should be written and judged. Horace was still imitated in Latin compositions until recent times, but his absorption into vernacular English was firstly via the Italian Petrarch and the French Pleiades group (and so to the Elizabethan poets), and then in the eighteenth century (the Augustan school of poets who stressed polish and correct diction in moralizing social comment). Revivals occurred in the later nineteenth century as a reaction to Romantic excesses, and again in the twentieth

with the New Formalists and the like. The flood of translations in recent years point to his continuing popularity.

It was Horace who helped define the proprieties of European poetry, and so deserves to be translated by its norms, as indeed he was until the last few decades, in great profusion. Complete renderings of the *Odes* into English exceeded one hundred even seventy years ago, and there have been many translations since, some in traditional styles, more in the experimental styles of Modernism, and many more aiming to give a pleasing rendition of the prose sense. I have returned to that earlier concept of literary translation, of attempting to convey as much as the English verse tradition allows of Horace's beauty, style and content, reintroducing his felicities into English as Horace imported Greek felicities into Latin. What is most characteristic of the *Odes*, their jewelled phrasing and rhythmic variety, is beyond capture, but some of Horace's concision, polish and pithy common sense should be apparent in these rhymed stanzas that echo the individual Latin measures.

Pronunciation of Latin proper names is a vexing problem, and more so is their representation in unquantitative English verse. I have generally used the British and older pronunciations, and have shown the preferred pronunciation by a bar or accent over the stressed vowel (e.g. *Sīmonides*) when the matter is not indicated by the iambic metre of the translation. A vowel that needs to be pronounced, though not stressed, is shown with two dots (e.g. *Temp̄ē*).

To capture Horace's style, I have also adopted his method of composition, of fitting phrases to measures, though the practice is foreign to most poetry written today. The measures employed in the thirteen stanza shapes belong to more limited English forms, however, to cadenced varieties of the iambic metre, where the rhyme needed for shaping does not exist in the original. Such measures can only encompass the Latin at

some distance, therefore, particularly where the short Sapphic measure is concerned, but the renderings are generally close, and any significant departures from the Latin — where I have been unable to fully express the prose sense, or have rounded out what is only implied in the Latin — are indicated in the accompanying *Notes*. Many books and now Internet sites provide academic and/or literal translations, moreover, and the more helpful of these are listed in the *References*. As fuller treatments can also be readily found elsewhere, the *Notes* are kept to factual matters: theme, measure and proper names.

## LIBER PRIMVS

### I

Maecenas atavis edite regibus,  
o et praesidium et dulce decus meum,  
sunt quos curriculo puluerem Olympicum  
collegisse iuuat metaque feruidis  
euitata rotis palmaque nobilis 5  
terrarum dominos euehit ad deos;  
hunc, si mobilium turba Quiritium  
certat tergeminis tollere honoribus;  
illum, si proprio condidit horreo  
quicquid de Libycis uerritur areis. 10  
Gaudentem patrios findere sarculo  
agros Attalicis condicionibus  
numquam demoueas, ut trabe Cypria  
Myrtoum pauidus nauta secet mare.  
Luctantem Icariis fluctibus Africum 15  
mercator metuens otium et oppidi  
laudat rura sui; mox reficit rates  
quassas, indocilis pauperiem pati.  
Est qui nec ueteris pocula Massici  
nec partem solido demere de die 20

## BOOK ONE

### One

Maecenas, of true regal stock the heir:  
a friend to glory in, a strength to trust.  
While some in charioting make play of dust  
Olympus showers on them as they fare  
on red-hot axles, skimming post, to rise  
as palm-won heroes that the gods acclaim,  
those wanting triple-honours urge their name  
on wavering citizens and win the prize.

Another wants his granaries to store  
the wheat hoed up from father's Libyan field:  
to dreams of Áttalus he'll never yield,  
nor fearfully relinquish native shore,  
on Cyprian oars to cross Myrtonian seas.  
And yet one trembling village merchant braves  
the winds of Africus, Icarian waves,  
to call return to his own soil and ease

most admirable of courses — staying till,  
ashamed of poverty, he mends what's his  
and ventures forth again. And one there is  
of hoarded Massian vintage drinks his fill

spernit, nunc uiridi membra sub arbuto  
 stratus, nunc ad aquae lene caput sacrae.  
 Multos castra iuuant et lituo tubae  
 permixtus sonitus bellaque matribus  
 detestata. Manet sub Ioue frigido 25  
 uenator tenerae coniugis inmemor,  
 seu uisa est catulis cerua fidelibus,  
 seu rupit teretis Marsus aper plagas.  
 Me doctarum hederæ præmia frontium  
 dis miscent superis, me gelidum nemus 30  
 Nympharumque leues cum Satyris chori  
 secernunt populo, si neque tibus  
 Euterpe cohibet nec Polyhymnia  
 Lesboum refugit tendere barbiton.  
 Quod si me lyricis uatibus inseres, 35  
 sublimi feriam sidera uertice.

**Measure:** First Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Dedication to Maecenas: Horace's aims.

**Details:** Triple honours were the highest offices in Rome: consul, quaestor and praetor. Attalus was one of the kings of Pergamum, i.e. immensely rich. Myrtonian was the stormy gulf between Crete and the Peloponnesus, where Icarus drowned. Africus was the southwest wind off Africa. Massian refers to the upland region separating Latium from Campania, which was noted for its fine wines. Arbute is the strawberry tree. Euterpe was the Muse of music and Polyhymnia that of sacred poetry, hymn and dance.

and under arbute lies the whole day round,  
or where soft founts of sacred waters fall.  
Still others love the camp-life, trumpets' call,  
though this to mothers has a hateful sound.

A hunter under frozen skies forgets  
the bride at home when hounds have scented deer  
or some rampaging Marsian boar comes near  
to breaking through the tapered hunting nets.

For me, it's ivy on the learned brows  
that elevates. A cool, sequestered glade  
is mine, where Nymphs and Satyrs, unbetrayed  
to man, have song and dance. If flute may rouse

Euterpe's breath, and Polyhymia's love  
not hinder me but tune the Lesbos lyre,  
by you I'm lifted to the poets' choir  
and hold my head among the stars above.

The rendering has many small departures from the literal. The 'to trust' is my addition, for example: the Latin is 'my sweet glory and defence'. The Latin of stanza 8 stresses more the distance of the world of Horace, Nymphs and Satyrs from that of common men. The 'by you I'm lifted to the poets' choir' is strictly 'but if you insert me among the lyric poets'.



Two

Such snow and hail has Jove hurled down  
upon our sacred hills, defied  
with his fierce hand, that this vast town  
lies terrified.

And people too, lest Pyrrha's time  
should come again with monstrous sights  
when Proteus had his sea herds climb  
the mountain heights.

Then fish were hoisted high in elms  
where naturally the pigeons roost,  
and on those swirling liquid realms  
were red deer loosed.

We've seen the turbid Tiber's tide  
hurled back from wild Etruscan brine,  
raze royal tomb and throw aside  
the Vestal shrine.

Unlawfully the river rose  
as though of Ilia's wrongs it drank,  
to inundate within its throes  
the whole left bank.

Audiet cuius acuisse ferrum,  
quo graues Persae melius perirent,  
audiet pugnas uitio parentum  
rara iuuentus.

Quem uocet diuum populus ruentis 25  
imperi rebus? Prece qua fatigent  
uirgines sanctae minus audientem  
carmina Vestam?

Cui dabit partis scelus expiandi  
Iuppiter? Tandem uenias precamur, 30  
nube candentis umeros amictus,  
augur Apollo,

siue tu mauis, Erycina ridens,  
quam Iocus circumuolat et Cupido,  
siue neglectum genus et nepotes 35  
respicis, auctor,

heu nimis longo satiate ludo,  
quem iuuat clamor galeaeque leues,  
acer et Mauri peditis cruentum  
uoltus in hostem, 40

siue mutata iuuenem figura  
ales in terris imitaris, almae  
filius Maiae, patiens uocari  
Caesaris ultor.

Though fewer for each father's fault,  
the children hear the angry ghosts,  
though better were it steel assault  
the Persian hosts.

What gods can populace address  
when empire round them threatens fall?  
Or virgins when their Vesta less  
will hear their call?

Who, given our great crimes and harms,  
can Jove appoint to intervene?  
Pray, clouded though his shining arms,  
Apollo's seen,

or laughing Erycina blest  
with circling Cupid, to reflect  
your care for children, founder, lest  
their gross neglect

take from your long campaigns. Beset  
by clamour, helmet, armed embrace  
of Moorish enemy, you met  
each bloodstained face.

As Maia's gentle son, revenge  
with unfurled wings his severed breath:  
in human fashion now avenge  
our Caesar's death.



Flee not above, but with your kin,  
the people of Quirinus, stay.  
Nor let the tempest of our sin  
drive you away.

Be first and father, still provide  
our lavish triumphs: let the Mede  
be humbled in his horseman's pride,  
and, emperor: lead.

### III

Sic te diua potens Cypri,  
sic fratres Helenae, lucida sidera,  
uentorumque regat pater  
obstrictis aliis praeter Iapyga,  
nauis, quae tibi creditum 5  
debes Vergilium; finibus Atticis  
reddas incolumem precor  
et serues animae dimidium meae.  
Illi robur et aes triplex  
circa pectus erat, qui fragilem truci 10  
commisit pelago ratem  
primus, nec timuit praecipitem Africum  
decertantem Aquilonibus  
nec tristis Hyadas nec rabiem Noti,  
quo non arbiter Hadriae 15  
maior, tollere seu ponere uolt freta.  
Quem mortis timuit gradum  
qui siccis oculis monstra natantia,  
qui uidit mare turbidum et  
infamis scopulos Acroceraunia? 20  
Nequicquam deus abscidit  
prudens Oceano dissociabili  
terras, si tamen impiae  
non tangenda rates transiliunt uada.

Three

May that powerful Cypriot queen,  
and stars of Helen's brothers, brightest seen,  
let he whose breath the winds have been  
make none but Iäpygas intervene

and bring the ship beneath your care  
that carries Virgil making half my soul  
on to his Attic landfall there,  
and thence return him safely home and whole.

With oak and brass so triple bound  
was heart of first who ventured forth  
across an ever-dangerous sound  
where fighting southwest tempests meet with north.

Not Aquilōnibus's blast  
he feared, nor Notus winds, nor Hyades,  
who was the master of the vast  
expanse of Adriatic's restless seas.

What form of death could he have feared  
who met the deep-sea monsters calm, dry-eyed,  
as too the hazards when he neared  
the infamous Ceraunia's rock-strewn tide?

For all the seas that providence  
has set between the lands, they nonetheless  
pass boldly over, here to thence:  
each bound of modesty to far transgress.

Audax omnia perpeti	25
gens humana ruit per uetitum nefas;	
audax Iapeti genus	
ignem fraude mala gentibus intulit;	
post ignem aetheria domo	
subductum macies et noua februm	30
terris incubuit cohors	
semotique prius tarda necessitas	
leti corripuit gradum.	
Expertus uacuum Daedalus aera	
pennis non homini datis;	35
perrupit Acheronta Herculeus labor.	
Nil mortalibus ardui est;	
caelum ipsum petimus stultitia neque	
per nostrum patimur scelus	
iracunda Iouem ponere fulmina.	40

**Measure:** Second Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Prayer for Virgil: man's over-adventuring spirit.

**Details:** The Cyprian queen was Venus, from whom Caesar's family claimed descent. Helen's brothers were the stars Castor and Pollux. The 'he' in line 3 is Aeolus, the god of winds, and Iapygas a wind employed by ships sailing to Athens. Aquilon was the north wind and Auster the south wind. Hyades were the seven stars in Taurus, associated with rainy weather. Hadrian is the Adriatic Sea. Ceraunian is a rocky promontory jutting into the Ionian Sea. Prometheus (son of Iapetus in the Latin) stole fire for men and was chained to a pillar as punishment, his liver continually eaten by an eagle. The legendary craftsman and inventor Daedalus fashioned waxen wings for himself and son Icarus to escape

Daring all, each one of us  
must rush on heedlessly in some desire  
that, recklessly, Prometheus  
accommodated with his sinful fire.

But once that gift had gained its sway,  
and more, pressed all to service, earth's hurt face  
declined to fever and decay,  
when fate would quicken what was death's slow pace.

Daedalus surmounted air  
unlawfully, with feathers mocked the ease  
with which through Acheron would fare  
the burly arm of toiling Hercules.

What won't the soul of man defy  
in loftiness to reach the heavenly vaults?  
He vaunts his folly to the sky  
and meets with Jove's reproving thunderbolts.

from Crete, but Icarus flew too close to the sun, when the wax melted and the boy fell into the sea and drowned. There are the usual small departures from the Latin. 'Hyades' should be 'sad Hyades', and 'restless' should be 'able to stir up or still'. The 'each one of us' is my invention: the Latin continues the implied man. The 'mocked the ease' is my addition. The 'meets with Jove's' is strictly 'won't let Jupiter put aside'.

## IV

Soluitur acris hiems grata uice ueris et Fauoni  
trahuntque siccas machinae carinas,  
ac neque iam stabulis gaudet pecus aut arator igni  
nec prata canis albicant pruinis.  
Iam Cytherea choros ducit Venus imminente luna 5  
iunctaeque Nymphis Gratiae decentes  
alterno terram quatiunt pede, dum grauis Cyclopum  
Volcanus ardens uisit officinas.  
Nunc decet aut uiridi nitidum caput impedire myrto  
aut flore, terrae quem ferunt solutae; 10  
nunc et in umbrosis Fauno decet immolare lucis,  
seu poscat agna siue malit haedo.  
Pallida Mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas  
regumque turris. O beate Sesti,  
uitae summa breuis spem nos uetat inchoare longam. 15  
Iam te premet nox fabulaeque Manes  
et domus exilis Plutonia, quo simul mearis,  
nec regna uini sortiere talis  
nec tenerum Lycidan mirabere, quo calet iuuentus  
nunc omnis et mox uirgines tepebunt. 20

**Measure:** Third Archilochean.

**Theme:** Hymn to springtime, and the awakening of erotic desire.

**Details:** Favonius was the west wind. Cythera was an island off the Peloponnese, by legend the birthplace of Venus. Faunus was the Roman

Four

With spring's Favonian winds, the bitter cold retires.

Dry keels are hauled across the sands.

The flocks no longer keep to fold, nor ploughman fires,  
and frost is gone from meadow lands.

Cytherean Venus leads the dancing Graces where,

with Nymphs beneath the pendant moon,

they move with tripping feet: the Cyclopean lair  
has Vulcan beat his heavy tune.

It's fitting we with myrtle wreath the shining brow,

or with what flowers the fields may boast,

to Faunus give beneath the groves of shading bough  
the kid or lamb that pleases most.

As pale at poor man's home as at the tower of kings,  
impartial death will make his call:

in life's brief span we need not look to distant things  
when, Sestus, night oppresses all

in Pluto's home of fabled shades. In those bare halls

no throw of dice gives wine by turn,

nor awe of Lycidas, whose tenderness enthrals  
the boys, not soon make virgins burn.

god of the woods, later identified with Pan. Vulcan was the god of destructive fire. Sestus was a fellow combatant at Philippi. The 'beats his tune' is literally 'visits his forge', and 'fabled shades' is Manes in the Latin.

## V

Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa  
perfusus liquidis urget odoribus  
    grato, Pyrrha, sub antro?  
    cui flauam religas comam,  
simplex munditiis? Heu quotiens fidem           5  
mutatosque deos flebit et aspera  
    nigris aequora uentis  
    emirabitur insolens,  
qui nunc te fruitur credulus aurea,  
qui semper uacuum, semper amabilem           10  
    sperat, nescius aurae  
    fallacis. Miseri, quibus  
intemptata nites. Me tabula sacer  
uotiuam paries indicat uida  
    suspendisse potenti  
    uestimenta maris deo.                       15

**Measure:** Fourth Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Femme fatale Pyrrha.

**Details:** The name 'Pyrrha' itself suggests a red-gold hair. A rather free rendering, where lines in stanzas 3-4 are conflated and reordered. The 'penance' is only implied. Votive was a bronze tablet hung on temple walls to give thanks for a danger past or prayer fulfilled

Five

What slim, rich-scented youth, on roses lain,  
now courts you, Pyrrha, in the grotto's shade?

Why fasten each blonde skein  
of hair into that modest braid?

Unless for one who learns that gods may change,  
and even faith must meet adversities  
when sudden storm clouds range  
across the dark, tempestuous seas.

Yes, he will love you in those golden hours,  
for ever beautiful in that rapt gaze.

But swift the light wind lours  
on innocence in that soft haze.

Your looks deceive him and outdazzle day  
but more through grief the powerful sea god roves.

With votive hung, I pay  
my penance in these storm-drenched clothes.

## VI

Scriberis Vario fortis et hostium  
uictor, Maeonii carminis alite,  
quam rem cumque ferox nauibus aut equis  
    miles te duce gesserit.  
Nos, Agrippa, neque haec dicere nec grauem                   5  
Pelidae stomachum cedere nescii,  
nec cursus duplicis per mare Vlixei  
    nec saeuam Pelopis domum  
conamur, tenues grandia, dum pudor  
inbellisque lyrae Musa potens uetat                         10  
laudes egregii Caesaris et tuas  
    culpa deterere ingeni.  
Quis Martem tunica tectum adamantina  
digne scripserit aut puluere Troico  
nigrum Merionen aut ope Palladis                             15  
    Tydiden superis parem?  
Nos conuiuia, nos proelia uirginum  
sectis in iuuenes unguibus acrium  
cantamus, uacui siue quid urimur  
    non praeter solitum leues.                                     20

**Measure:** Third Asclepiadean

**Theme:** Unworthy to praise Agrippa or heroic events.

**Details:** Lucius Varius Rufus was a Roman poet who helped Horace gain entry into the Maecenas circle of writers. Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa was Octavian's boyhood friend and admiral, the victor at Actium and a powerful man unpopular with the aristocracy. Pelops was cooked as a dish for the gods by his father Tantalus, but brought back to

Six

Let one so brave and conquering be penned  
as Varius out-of-Homer styles demand,  
where mix of soldiers, ships and horse commend  
the generalship that you command.

That's not for me, Agrippa. Such great things  
as famed Achilles' rage, or the extent  
of wily Ulysses' sea voyagings,  
or Pelop's house's dark descent

are far beyond my modest gifts. The Muse,  
so favourable to lyre, forbids me fail  
in Caesar's praise or yours: so I would chose  
a stouter bard to tell your tale.

For who could fill the worthy Martian frame,  
or Meriones daubed with Troy's dark sweat,  
or Tydides that in Athena's name  
to all the gods was equal yet?

Of festivals I sing, where girls will fight  
the pretty boys with fingernails pared down,  
a recreation that is far too slight  
be love a fire or passing frown.

life by Hermes. Tydides (also Tydeus) was one of the famous seven  
against Thebes, when the sons of Oedipus quarrelled over the succession.  
Meriones was a Greek warrior at the siege of Troy.

## VII

Laudabunt alii claram Rhodon aut Mytilenen  
aut Ephesum bimarisue Corinthi  
moenia uel Baccho Thebas uel Apolline Delphos  
insignis aut Thessala Tempe;  
sunt quibus unum opus est intactae Palladis urbem 5  
carmine perpetuo celebrare et  
undique decerptam fronti praeponere oliuam;  
plurimus in Iunonis honorem  
aptum dicet equis Argos ditesque Mycenae:  
me nec tam patiens Lacedaemon 10  
nec tam Larisae percussit campus opimae  
quam domus Albunae resonantis  
et praeceptis Anio ac Tiburni lucus et uda  
mobilibus pomaria riuus.  
Albus ut obscuro deterget nubila caelo 15  
saepe Notus neque parturit imbris  
perpetuo, sic tu sapiens finire memento  
tristitiam uitaeque labores  
molli, Plance, mero, seu te fulgentia signis  
castra tenent seu densa tenebit 20

## Seven

Let some of Ephesus and Mytilenë sing,  
of Rhodes or Corinth with its double seas:  
say which of Bacchic Thebes or Delphi's Isle is king,  
or like the Thessaly at Tempë please.

Some have no purpose but to celebrate  
Athena's city with their endless songs:  
for all their olive leaves must laud their own proud state,  
and praise to Juno equally belongs

in tales of Argos horses or Mycēnae's gold.

Yet not for me that stubborn Spartan ground,  
nor green Larissa's wealth, forever told,  
but Alunëa's cavern sound,

the headlong Arnio, and orchards well endowed  
with fruits, the Tibur groves the bright streams drain,  
where Notus comes to clear away the cloud  
with light and not torrential rain.

And so, my own friend Plancus, you must plainly try  
to cut your life of sadness with good wine,  
whether it be camps you seek, where standards fly,  
or shade where the Tibur branches intertwine.

Tiburis umbra tui. Teucer Salamina patremque  
 cum fugeret, tamen uda Lyaeo  
 tempora populea fertur uinxisse corona,  
 sic tristis affatus amicos:  
 'Quo nos cumque feret melior fortuna parente,                    25  
 ibimus, o socii comitesque.  
 Nil desperandum Teucro duce et auspice Teucro:  
 certus enim promisit Apollo  
 ambiguam tellure noua Salamina futuram.  
 O fortes peioraque passi  
 mecum saepe uiri, nunc uino pellite curas;                    30  
 cras ingens iterabimus aequor.'

**Measure:** First Archilochean.

**Theme:** To Plancus: a celebration of Rome on the Tiber.

**Details:** Lucius Manatius Plancus was consul in 52 BC, and may have helped secure an amnesty for Horace after Philippi. Ephesus is on the west coast of modern Turkey, at the mouth of the river Caÿster, and Mytilene is on Lesbos. Thebes in Boetia was an important city by Mycenaean times, but more removed from Greek politics in Horace's day. Mycenae was Agamemnon's city, and Larissa was the chief city of Thessaly. Albunea was a grotto or temple to Sybil overlooking the Tibur, an ancient Sabine town on the Arnio some 30 km east-northeast of Rome. Tempë was a beautiful gorge through which the river Peneius enters the sea in Thessaly. Teucer, the son of Telamon, king of Salamis, was banished by his father on his return from the Trojan War because he had failed to prevent his half-brother Ajax being killed. The 'forever told' is my addition.

When Teucer fled from Sālamis and father's frown,  
though flushed with wine as well, foreseeing ends,  
he still had poplar leaves thick-wreathed about his crown,  
and so could say to his now saddened friends:

'Wherever fortune bears us, far from parent's ills,  
will earn us better prospects than were his.

Do not despair, for Teucer's wise as Teucer wills:  
unerringly Apollo promises

that scenes may change, and Sālamis may come again  
to soldiers who have suffered worse with me.

Drown cares with wine: come drink with me. Tomorrow, men,  
we cross again that boundless sea.'

## VIII

Lydia, dic, per omnis  
te deos oro, Sybarin cur properes amando  
    perdere, cur apricum  
oderit Campum, patiens pulueris atque solis,  
    cur neque militaris 5  
inter aequalis equitet, Gallica nec lupatis  
    temperet ora frenis.  
Cur timet flauum Tiberim tangere? Cur oliuum  
    sanguine uiperino  
cautius uitat neque iam liuida gestat armis 10  
    bracchia, saepe disco  
saepe trans finem iaculo nobilis expedito?  
    quid latet, ut marinae  
filium dicunt Thetidis sub lacrimosa Troia  
    funera, ne uirilis 15  
cultus in caedem et Lycias proriperet cateruas?

**Measure:** Greater Sapphic.

**Theme:** Love's conquest of Sybaris.

**Details:** Campus was the Tiber flood-plain pasture bounded by the Pincian, Quirinal and Capitoline hills, used for army musters and exercise. The Lycians were allies of Troy, and the reference is to Achilles who hid on the island of Scyros to escape conscription into the Trojan War.

## Eight

Lydia, by the gods above,  
why do you burden Sybaris with so much love?

He, once tolerant of sun  
and dust, the sunny width of Campus seems to shun.

Nor does he latterly so ride  
with close companions, nor his Gallic courser guide  
by tugging at that iron bit.

Why does he fear the Tiber's flood, no more submit

his arms it seems to wrestler's oil  
than viper's blood, though formerly dark-bruised with toil?

Past all the boundaries he has thrown  
the discus piece and javelin, and famous grown.

But, as Achilles in his pride  
before the grief-soaked walls of Troy, he needs must hide,  
lest manly tunic for him yield  
a prompt conscription into Lycia's killing field.



Nine

You see Soracte in its whitened state,  
and glistening, suffocated under snow:  
the woods oppressed beneath that stifling weight  
have ice-packed streams that do not flow.

So heap the hearth with logs to keep off cold,  
that warmth and cheerful company combine,  
and, Thaliarchus, bring the four-year-old  
diota of good Sabine wine.

In all that follows, trust the gods, for they  
have settled winds' and former tempests' roar.  
Now both the cypress tree and ash of grey  
are still, and do not tremble more.

No matter morrow has but fleeting things,  
accord as good whatever's gained by chance,  
nor scorn the sweet delight that loving brings,  
or youthful spirits at their dance.

While life is green, before white hair concede  
to pressing worries, find the Campus place,  
and, whispering softly at the hour agreed,  
receive that evening's tender grace.

There, with her merriment now adding charm,  
you'll find her in the shaded corner tryst.  
She'll take the lover's token from her arm,  
or with a finger will resist.



Ten

Descent of Atlas, Mercury

I sing, who shaped our mortal race  
with speech and wrestling, beautifully  
in new-found grace.

You, messenger of Jove and gods,  
are lyre's inventor, skillful cheat  
who hides the theft and charms the odds:  
a happy feat.

Where are my cattle, wretched child?  
So called Apollo, thundering on.  
But at your antics there he smiled,  
his quiver gone.

You helped the Trojan king retire  
with gifts. Escaping Greeks between  
the Thessalonian camp and fire,  
he passed unseen.

With golden wand you guide to rest  
the virtuous souls, and so bequeath  
your peace to gods who are as blest  
as those beneath.

## XI

Tu ne quaesieris (scire nefas) quem mihi, quem tibi  
finem di dederint, Leuconoe, nec Babylonios  
temptaris numeros. Vt melius quicquid erit pati!  
Seu pluris hiemes seu tribuit Iuppiter ultimam,  
quae nunc oppositis debilitat pumicibus mare 5  
Tyrrhenum, sapias, uina liques et spatio breui  
spem longam reseces. Dum loquimur, fugerit inuida  
aetas: carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero.

**Measure:** Greater Asclepeadian

**Theme:** Seize the day.

**Details:** Leuconoe is a pseudonym or fictional name. The Babylonians were famous astrologers. The 'poor are still its credulous descendents' is a rather emphatic rendering of 'trust as little as possible in what's to come', made for rhythmic purposes, and to round off the piece properly.

Eleven

Don't ask of gods, Leuconoë: for no one knows  
his length of years, but bears his pains as in the past.  
Not Jove nor Babylonian reckonings disclose  
if many winters wait for us, or this be last.

Forever Tyrrhenian Seas oppose the pumice shore:  
so mix your wine, and limit hopes as best you may.  
For even as we're speaking, time fleets on, and poor  
are still its credulous descendents. Seize the day.

## XII

Quem uirum aut heroa lyra uel acri tibia sumis celebrare, Clio? Quem deum? Cuius recinet iocosa nomen imago aut in umbrosis Heliconis oris	5
aut super Pindo gelidoue in Haemo? Vnde uocalem temere insecutae Orphea siluae arte materna rapidos morantem fluminum lapsus celerisque uentos,	10
blandum et auritas fidibus canoris ducere quercus. Quid prius dicam solitis parentis laudibus, qui res hominum ac deorum, qui mare ac terras uariisque mundum	15
temperat horis? Vnde nil maius generatur ipso nec uiget quicquam simile aut secundum; proximos illi tamen occupabit Pallas honores.	20

Twelve

What man or hero will you name,  
now Clio, on your flute or lyre?  
What god shall echo's voice proclaim  
in playful fire?

What shadowed slopes of Helicon,  
cool Haemus vale or Pindus hill  
has woods to listen, blindly on  
to Orpheus still,

who by his mother's gift of song  
held back the streams and every breeze,  
and had his whispers even draw along  
the listening trees?

We praise you, Father, first who fends  
for gods and mortals, who is found  
in earth and sky and seas, and sends  
the seasons round.

One mightier still may none beget,  
no like or equal can be known,  
though next to him has Pallas set  
her warlike throne.



I'd not leave Liber's praise unsaid,  
nor yet the virgin hunter, ever foe  
to animals, nor Phoebus wed  
to his sure bow.

Nor Hercules, nor Leda's twins,  
as one for boxing, one for horse.  
When once at sea the starlight wins,  
reduced in force,

the whelming waters turn to spray  
and trickle down the rocky steep,  
the storm clouds fly, and wild affray  
turns still and deep.

Of Numa's quiet reign I'll tell,  
of Romulus, or Tarquin's pride  
in axes, younger Cato's spell,  
who nobly died.

Or Regulus' and Scauros' name,  
and he opposing Carthage gave  
his life, Fabricius's claim —  
for all were brave.

Here Camillus too I see  
and Curius, with unkempt look:  
where ancient farm and poverty  
was life's hard book.

Crescit occulto uelut arbor aeuo fama Marcelli; micat inter omnis Iulium sidus, uelut inter ignis luna minores.	45
Gentis humanae pater atque custos, orte Saturno, tibi cura magni Caesaris fatis data: tu secundo Caesare regnes.	50
Ille seu Parthos Latio imminentis egerit iusto domitos triumpho siue subiectos Orientis orae Seras et Indos, te minor laetum reget aequus orbem: tu graui curru quaties Olympum, tu parum castis inimica mittes fulmina lucis.	55  60

**Measure:** Sapphic.

**Theme:** Praise of Augustus.

**Details:** Clio was the Muse of history. Helicon was in a mountain in Boetia sacred to the Muses. Pindar was the Greek lyric poet from Thebes. Haemus was a legendary king of Thrace. Orpheus was the famous musician, poet and prophet who attempted to rescue his wife Eurydice from the Underworld. Athene Pallas was the goddess of wisdom, law and justice. Hercules, son of Zeus, was the divine hero, famous for his strength and adventures. Leda's twins were Castor and Pollux. Numa Pompilius and Tarquin were among the legendary kings of Rome. Romulus was one of the twin brothers founding Rome.

Marcellus ever quietly sung  
as trees will grow, the Julian light  
that shines as moon among  
the stars of night.

Descent of Saturn, given you  
was Caesar and the human race:  
take care of us, keep Caesar too  
in second place.

Against the conquered Parthians  
that threaten Rome, he leads us on  
in triumph: distant skies find Indians  
and Seres gone.

Rule with justice here, and shake  
Olympus with your heavy horse,  
that through the groves your lightning take  
its threatening course.

The younger Cato was the Roman statesman Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis, a noted orator and opponent of Caesar. Marcus Antilius Regulus was a Roman statesman and general in the First Punic War. Marcus Aemilius Scauros acted as Roman ambassador in the war with Jugurtha. Camena Egeria was a prophetess but also the spouse of Numa. C. Fabricius was a Roman ambassador to Pyrrhus. F. Furius Camillius was an early dictator of Rome. Marcus Curius was consul during negotiations with Pyrrhus. Marcellus was consul and general in Rome's battles with Hannibal. (These names are largely decorative: Horace's grasp of Roman history wasn't good.) The Parthians were the rulers of present-day Iran. The rendering attenuates the Latin a little. Literally, the 'listening still' is 'listening blindly still', and the 'I'll tell' should be 'shall I tell', etc.

### XIII

Cum tu, Lydia, Telephi  
ceruicem roseam, cerea Telephi  
    laudas bracchia, uae, meum  
feruens difficili bile tumet iecur.  
    Tunc nec mens mihi nec color  
certa sede manet, umor et in genas                     5  
    furtim labitur, arguens  
quam lentis penitus macerer ignibus.  
    Vror, seu tibi candidos  
turparunt umeros inmodicae mero                     10  
    rixae, siue puer furens  
inpressit memorem dente labris notam.  
    Non, si me satis audias,  
speres perpetuum dulcia barbare  
    laedentem oscula, quae Venus                     15  
quinta parte sui nectaris imbuit.  
    Felices ter et amplius  
quos inrupta tenet copula nec malis  
    diuolsus querimoniis  
suprema citius soluet amor die.                     20

**Measure:** Second Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Jealousy and the need for constancy in affections.

**Details:** The identities of Lydia and Telephus are not known, and may be poetic fictions. The 'nectar' is strictly 'one fifth part of the nectar'.

## Thirteen

But when it's Telephus you praise —  
those snow-white arms of his, that rosy neck —  
terribly, Lydia, you raise  
a hurtful rage in me that's hard to check.

Then not my feelings nor the skin  
remain unchanged, for soon a stealthy tear  
runs down my cheek, and deep within  
a smoldering fire returns that's ever near.

I'm driven mad to even think  
of gleaming shoulders bruised in drunken fray,  
or lips a boy's rough love-bites sink  
mementos into with his frenzied play.

So, if you'll listen: constancy  
you cannot hope from one who's barbarous grown  
as snatch from mouth so savagely  
the nectar Venus values as her own.

Thrice or more are happy tales  
of those no quarrelsome, hard words betray:  
a true love's bond that never fails  
till funeral obsequies close off our day.

## XIV

O nauis, referent in mare te noui  
fluctus. O quid agis? Fortiter occupa  
portum. Nonne uides ut  
nudum remigio latus,  
et malus celeri saucius Africo 5  
antemnaque gemant ac sine funibus  
uix durare carinae  
possint imperiosius  
aequor? Non tibi sunt integra lintea,  
non di, quos iterum pressa uoces malo. 10  
Quamuis Pontica pinus,  
siluae filia nobilis,  
iactes et genus et nomen inutile:  
nil pictis timidus nauita puppibus  
fidit. Tu, nisi uentis 15  
debes ludibrium, caue.  
Nuper sollicitum quae mihi taedium,  
nunc desiderium curaque non leuis,  
interfusa nitentis  
uites aequora Cycladas. 20

**Measure:** Fourth Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Ship of state.

**Details:** Pontus was the northern part of Asia Minor, including the south coast of the Black Sea and extending south to Cappadocia. The Cyclades were a group of some thirty islands in the southern Aegean Sea. The piece was possibly written in 30 BC, when Rome was facing many dangers.

## Fourteen

Fresh waves will drive you further out to sea,  
so ship, make haste to have the haven yours.

For now you drift; we see  
your sides stripped clean and lacking oars.

Fierce gales from Africa have struck the mast,  
the sail-yards groan, and now you lack the rope  
to hold the rigging fast.

The hull indeed can barely cope

with lash of seas. Nor are your sails intact,  
no gods to call to and protect your goods,  
though built of pine, in fact  
a daughter of those Pontic woods.

No family can save you, nor can name,  
or painted timbers quell the sailor's fear  
at being sport the same  
of winds through which he'll wildly steer.

Where once was weariness, this heart will merge  
regret with care concerning these.

Forgo the seas that surge  
between the glittering Cyclades.

XV

Pastor cum traheret per freta nauibus  
Idaeis Helenen perfidus hospitam,  
ingrato celeris obruit otio  
uentos ut caneret fera

Nereus fata: 'Mala ducis aui domum 5  
quam multo repetet Graecia milite,  
coniurata tuas rumpere nuptias  
et regnum Priami uetus.

Heu, heu, quantus equis, quantus adest uiris 10  
sudor! Quanta moues funera Dardanae  
genti! Iam galeam Pallas et aegida  
currusque et rabiem parat.

Nequicquam Veneris praesidio ferox  
pectes caesariem grataque feminis  
inbelli cithara carmina diuides; 15  
nequicquam thalamo grauis  
hastas et calami spicula Cnosii  
uitabis strepitumque et celerem sequi  
Aiace: tamen, heu serus, adulteros  
crines puluere collines.

Fifteen

When that false shepherd had across the deep  
conveyed his Helen in the Trojan boat,  
Nēreus lulled unwilling winds asleep  
that all this omen note:

'Great punishment you're bringing back this hour,  
for Greeks, fresh congregated, will forestall  
these wedding hopes, and have old Priam's power  
from this dark moment fall.

Alas, such tragedy for men and horse,  
what deaths you bring upon the Trojan shores,  
now chariot, shields and swirling plumes endorse  
fierce Pallas's hard laws.

For all that Venus keeps you from mistake,  
no songs will save you, nor what girls assume  
that comb and lyre achieve, nor can you take  
quiet refuge in your room

from Cretan arrows, uproar, heavy spears,  
with Ajax following, as he must there  
now add, too late, alas, to growing fears  
that dust begrime your hair.

Non Laertiaden, exitium tuae 20  
 gentis, non Pylum Nestora respicis?  
 Vrgent inpauidi te Salaminus  
     Teucer, te Sthenelus sciens  
 pugnae, siue opus est imperitare equis, 25  
 non auriga piger; Merionen quoque  
 nosces. Ecce furit te reperire atrox  
     Tydides melior patre,  
 quem tu, ceruus uti uallis in altera  
 uisum parte lupum graminis inmemor, 30  
 sublimi fugies mollis anhelitu,  
     non hoc pollicitus tuae.  
 Iracunda diem proferet Ilio  
 matronisque Phrygum classis Achillei;  
 post certas hiemes uret Achaicus 35  
     ignis Iliacas domos.'

**Measure:** Third Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Prophecy of Nereus.

**Details:** Helen refers to the abduction of Helen by Paris that began the Trojan War, in which fought Ulysses, Pylia Nestor, Tercer, Sthenelus, Meriones and Tydides. Nereus was an ancient sea god, the son of Pontos and the Oceanid Doris of the Nereids. There are several departures from the Latin. The 'from this dark moment fall', 'right the score' and 'growing fears' are my additions.

Ferociously they come to right the score:  
Ulysses and Pylia Nestor too,  
the fearless Tercer, Sthenelus, all sure  
to wreak their steel on you.

The last commands fierce chariot and horse,  
and Meriones will not take his ease,  
and, drawn more furiously from father's source,  
there comes son Tydides.

You'll fly immediately as does the deer  
at catching sight of wolf. You will be gone  
despite your lover's vows, in full career  
flee wildly, heedless on.

Achilles' anger gives but short delays,  
for, after certain winters, women face  
the fires of stern Greek armies that erase  
each Trojan dwelling place.'

XVI

O matre pulchra filia pulchrior,  
quem criminosis cumque uoles modum  
pones iambis, siue flamma  
siue mari libet Hadriano.

Non Dindymene, non adytis quatit 5  
mentem sacerdotum incola Pythius,  
non Liber aequae, non acuta  
sic geminant Corybantes aera,  
tristes ut irae, quas neque Noricus  
deterret ensis nec mare naufragum 10  
nec saeuus ignis nec tremendo  
Iuppiter ipse ruens tumultu.

Fertur Prometheus addere principi  
limo coactus particulam undique  
desectam et insani leonis  
uim stomacho apposuisse nostro. 15

Irae Thyesten exitio graui  
strauere et altis urbibus ultimae  
stetere causae, cur perirent  
funditus inprimeretque muris 20  
hostile aratrum exercitus insolens.

Conpesce mentem: me quoque pectoris  
temptauit in dulci iuuenta  
feruor et in celeres iambos

Sixteen

Lovelier than lovely mother's claims  
to beauty, treat my verses as you please:  
commit these wild, strange ravings to the flames  
or drown them in our Hadrian seas.

Not Cybelë's covortings blared around  
the priests inhabiting the Pythian shrine,  
or even Corybant's clashed cymbal sound,  
or Bacchus's most gross design

can pain like anger: not the wrecking sea,  
consuming fire, the sword from Noricum —  
not even our great Jove can be  
as terrible as it's become.

Prometheus, on being forced to add  
of every creature known some primal part  
to our poor makeup, chose the lion, mad  
and furious, to make our heart.

It was such anger brought Thyestës low,  
and is the reason powerful cities fall,  
and why with harnessed plough the home of foe  
is levelled out till not a wall

be left. Restrain the tempest, let me tell  
how once, when youthful feelings swelled my breast,  
that driving passion maddened me as well  
and turned my verse to bitter jest.

misit furem. Nunc ego mitibus  
mutare quaero tristia, dum mihi  
fias recantatis amica  
opprobriis animumque reddas.

25

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Request for renewed friendship.

**Details:** Cybele was the mother-goddess of Anatolia, commonly attended by ecstatic worshipers (Corybants) with drumming and dancing. Pythian is a reference to Pythian Apollo, whose shrine was at Delphi. Noricum was a Roman province in the eastern Alps. Thyestes incurred Zeus' displeasure by committed adultery with Aerope, daughter of Catreus, king of Crete. Prometheus stole fire for men and was chained to a pillar as punishment, his liver continually being eaten by an eagle.

But with that madness past I would repeat  
we two should act again the good friend's part,  
and since the sour words once are changed to sweet,  
I'd ask you to return my heart.



## Seventeen

Lycaiän pleasures Faunus won't disdain,  
who haunts Lucretilis and the retreats  
that keep my wandering goats from wind and rain  
and equally from summer heats.

Among arbutus and the wild thyme here  
they wander carelessly up hills and brakes:  
nor need the mates of smelly he-goats fear  
viridian and poisonous snakes.

Nor yet the kids the warlike wolf, but drink  
of sparkling Tyndaris while valley loans  
to upland Ustica the songs that sink  
to tinklings on the pebbled stones.

The gods protect the Muses: well they know  
that song and piety are near allied,  
that promptly will the horn of plenty flow  
with honours of the countryside.

And far from dog-star heat you'll celebrate  
in measures echoing the Teian lyre.  
Penelope and Circe bound in fate:  
for one man only burned their fire.



Here you need not fear lest Mars invade  
the realms of Semele's Thyonian son,  
but pour out cups beneath the cooling shade  
of Lesbos wine that injures none.

There is no violence a girl need fear  
from hand of someone drinking to excess,  
for no cruel Cyrus watches, hovering near  
to strip her of her wreath or dress.

## XVIII

Nullam, Vare, sacra uite prius seueris arborem  
circa mite solum Tiburis et moenia Catili;  
siccis omnia nam dura deus proposuit neque  
mordaces aliter diffugiunt sollicitudines.

Quis post uina grauem militiam aut pauperiem crepat? 5

Quis non te potius, Bacche pater, teque decens Venus?

Ac ne quis modici transiliat munera Liberi,

Centaurea monet cum Lapithis rixa super mero

debellata, monet Sithoniis non leuis Euhius,

cum fas atque nefas exiguo fine libidinum 10

discernunt auidi. Non ego te, candide Bassareu,

inuitum quatiā nec uariis obsita frondibus

sub diuum rapiam. Saeua tene cum Berecyntio

cornu tympana, quae subsequitur caecus amor sui

et tollens uacuum plus nimio gloria uerticem 15

arcanique fides prodiga, perlucidior uitro.

**Measure:** Greater Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Praise of wine.

**Details:** Probably addressed to Alfenus Varus, a noted legal scholar. Liber was a Roman god of wine and fertility, later identified with Dionysus.

Catilus was the son of Amphiaraus who, with two brothers, built Tibur, a Sabine town some 30 km east-northeast of Rome: Euhius and Bassareus are their Greek names. The Lapiths and Centaurs quarrelled at the wedding feast of Peirithö and Deidameia (Hippodameia). Sithonian is Thracian, and refers to their drinking excesses. Berecynthian refers to Cybele.

## Eighteen

Plant nothing, Varus, till you've set out sacred vines  
before the walls of Catilus in Tibur soil.

For life is hard for those who never drink, and wines,  
the god insists, will mitigate our cares and toil.

Who in his cups complains of war or poverty,  
but will of father Bacchus and sweet Venus think.  
And, lest with Liber's gifts we flout propriety,  
the Centaur-Lapith quarrel over unmixed drink

should warn us of Sithonian rage. Eūhius hates  
the passions' licences our being drunk conceives.  
Nor would I, fair Bassareus, assign you fates  
against your will, or show what's hidden under leaves.

Be gone, you Berecyntian horn and warlike drum.  
Such self-aggrandisements are victories that pass  
to prattlings soon enough, and dubious faiths become  
in time transparent, mysteries but seen through glass.

## XIX

Mater saeua Cupidinum

Thebanaeque iubet me Semelae puer

et lasciuia Licentia

finitis animum reddere amoribus.

Vrit me Glycerae nitor

5

splendentis Pario marmore purius;

urit grata proteruitas

et uoltus nimium lubricus aspici.

In me tota ruens Venus

Cyprum deseruit, nec patitur Scythas

10

aut uersis animosum equis

Parthum dicere nec quae nihil attinent.

Hic uiuum mihi caespitem, hic

uerbenas, pueri, ponite turaque

bimi cum patera meri:

mactata ueniet lenior hostia.

15

**Measure:** Second Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Revived love for Glycera.

**Details:** Cupid's mother was Venus. Semele was the daughter of Cadmus of Thebes: she gave birth to Bacchus after being seduced by Zeus.

Glycera is probably a fictional character, though the name appears in Menander and elsewhere. Parthian and Scythian refers to rulers of what is now Iran and the Russian steppes. Vervain (Verbana) is a common herb.

## Nineteen

With Cupid's mother comes desire,  
by Theban Semelë's own offspring led,  
and with a fierce and lawless fire  
revitalizes what I counted dead.

Glycēra's brightness burns in me.  
More beautiful than Parian marble, gone  
to impudent audacity  
is loveliness I dare not look upon.

So Venus moves from Cyprus shores  
and comes in swelling majesty for me,  
who may not speak of other wars,  
of Parthian or Scythian cavalry.

Of living turf then make a shrine,  
heap up the vervain, boys, and frankincense,  
that, with a bowl of last year's wine,  
she'll come less vehemently, at all events.



Twenty

Come, drink this homely Sabian stuff  
in ill-made cups, created too  
when theatres could not have enough  
of clapping you.

Maecenas, knight, whose praises ran  
across paternal river banks,  
when hill that hosts the Vatican  
would echo thanks.

Accept this Caecubum as mine,  
as this Calenian winepress wills:  
it comes not of Falernian wine,  
nor Formian hills.



Twenty-one

Diana's gifts the tender virgins tell,  
of Cynthian's unshorn god the young men sing.

Latona too, that well  
beloved of Jove in everything.

So sing you those who love the leaves and streams,  
and Álgidus of icy parenthoods,  
the Erymanthus themes  
and Gragus with its verdant woods.

And sing of Tempë too, you youths, the Isle  
of Delos where Apollo rose in fire,  
his shoulder quivered while  
his brother Mercury held lyre.

And so will Caesar now convey those prayers  
who, having banished abject famine, wars  
and plague, still onward fares  
to Persia and the British shores.



Twenty-two

No man whose life is free of sin  
needs Moorish spear or warfare's craft  
in, Fuscus, bow or javelin,  
or poisoned shaft,

though path be sultry Syrtës shoals,  
or wild, unfriendly Caucasus,  
or where the famed Hydaspës rolls,  
becalming us.

Unarmed, beyond my Sabine farm,  
one day I saw a wolf ahead,  
but at my song of Lalage's charm  
the creature fled.

One worse than wild Apullia's woods  
can rear it was, and seemed indeed  
of Juma's Numidian neighbourhoods  
where lions breed.

So put me down where all consists  
of emptiness, no summer's breeze  
envigorates, where gloom and mists  
invade the trees.

Or lands made lifeless with the heat,  
sun's chariot tumbled from above:  
a laughing Lalage, voice still sweet,  
I'll hear and love.

## XXIII

Vitas inuleo me similis, Chloe,  
quaerenti pauidam montibus auis  
matrem non sine uano  
aurarum et siluae metu.

Nam seu mobilibus ueris inhorruit 5  
aduentus folliis, seu uirides rubum  
dimouere lacertae,  
et corde et genibus tremit.

Atqui non ego te, tigris ut aspera  
Gaetulusue leo, frangere persequor: 10  
tandem desine matrem  
tempestiua sequi uiro.

**Measure:** Fourth Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Invitation to Chloë.

**Details:** The Gaetolian lion inhabited Libya and had a fierce reputation.

The last line is a little free: the Latin simply says 'you are ripe for a mate'.

Twenty-three

You would avoid me, Chloë, like a fawn  
that wants the anxious mother it has lost —  
through hills, in terror borne,  
as trees are by the tempest tossed.

At every rising breeze it stops or starts  
and fears the spring's first rustling through the trees:  
if briars a lizard parts  
it trembles at the heart and knees.

No tiger or Gaetolian lion I,  
whose fearsome violence won't abate:  
now leaving mother, why  
not take me as your willing mate?

## XXIV

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus  
tam cari capitis? Praecepte lugubris  
cantus, Melpomene, cui liquidam pater  
uocem cum cithara dedit.

Ergo Quintilium perpetuus sopor 5  
urget? Cui Pudor et Iustitiae soror,  
incorrupta Fides, nudaque Veritas  
quando ullum inueniet parem?

Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit,  
nulli flebilior quam tibi, Vergili. 10

Tu frustra pius, heu, non ita creditum  
poscis Quintilium deos.

Quid si Threicio blandius Orpheo  
auditam moderere arboribus fidem?  
Num uanae redeat sanguis imagini, 15  
quam uirga semel horrida,

non lenis precibus fata recludere,  
nigro compulerit Mercurius gregi?  
dorum: sed leuius fit patientia  
quicquid corrigere est nefas. 20

**Measure:** Fourth Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Lament for Quintilius.

**Details:** Melpomene was a Muse, first of singing and then of tragedy. The

Twenty-four

Why be modest in our weeping when  
immoderate was his hold on us? Inspire  
our grief, Melpōmenē: the sire of men  
has given you clear voice and lyre.

So on Quintilius is endless sleep.  
When will such honesty and faith combined  
in virtuous loyalty, and that with deep  
integrity, his equal find?

So many good men weep now for his death  
and none more generously than, Virgil, you:  
but what you beg of gods is wasted breath  
and not what we were given to —

nor could, suppose we played the Thracian lyre,  
still more entranced the trees than Orpheus did,  
for never can that empty shade acquire  
new breath when Mercury has bid

us join those dark assemblies, though they often  
at Hell's unfastening gates make last appeal.  
Patience will help us, and a little soften  
the wrong our grief has yet to heal.

critic Quintilius Varus was a friend of Virgil and is mentioned in Horace's  
'Art of Poetry'. Orpheus was the legendary musician, poet and prophet  
who attempted to rescue his wife Eurydice from the Underworld. The 'new  
breath' is literally 'blood' in the Latin, and the last line is 'correct what's  
wrong'.



Twenty-five

Youths come less often than before  
to shake your shutters, toss a stone,  
disturb your sleep, now you and door  
keep house alone.

Once both were welcoming enough.  
But less and less will listening reap  
'Your lover dies', or some such stuff,  
'Does Lydia sleep?'

And you will see yourself the crone  
when shouts from revellers are strewn  
down alleyways, and storms bemoan  
but changing moon.

For now no more will love's hot flame  
revive to keep the mares on heat,  
though you will feel it just the same  
in worn-out beat

for young companions, hopes still twinned  
with myrtle and with ivied lairs —  
things withering in the cold east wind  
that winter shares.



Twenty-six

As Muses' friend, why should I care what grief  
and fear the winds pour in the Cretan Sea?

And who yields fealty to the wintry chief  
of Scythian lands is naught to me.

The horror that on Tiridatës lours  
concerns me not, but that free spirit led  
by untouched springs and sunny wealth of flowers  
that serve to deck my Lamia's head.

But tributes, sweet Pipleä, stay in vain  
if you aren't there and of your sister's throng —  
to give with plectum in the Lesbos strain  
a blessing worthy of its song.



Twenty-seven

Why fight with cups that should betoken joy?  
Give up these turbulent and Thracian ways  
    where Bacchus blushes as a shamefaced boy  
    at these unneeded, bloodied frays.

The Persian scimitar is out of tune  
when oil-lamps keep their vigil over wine.  
    With comrades quit your brawling, and assume  
    an elbowed poise as you recline

and rest. If I'm to truly drink as well  
of fierce Falernian, instruct our guest  
    to have Opuntian Megylla's brother tell  
    us how the wounding arrow made him blest.

He hesitates? It's not on other terms  
that I would willingly confound my brains.  
    Whenever passion's foremost, truth confirms  
    a frank nobility, where Venus reigns.

So who is it? Yes, and come now, tell the truth,  
and whisper safely in our ears her name.  
    What, that wild Charybdis? You, poor youth,  
    are worthy of a nobler flame.

Quae saga, quis te soluere Thessalis  
magus uenenis, quis poterit deus?

uix inligatum te triformi

Pegasus expediet Chimaera.

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Joys and dangers of wine.

**Details:** A bantering exchange that reproves the party for adopting Thracian manners, where drinking ends in brawls. The characters are fictional, though the Greek name Megylla suggests a prostitute. Charybdis was the feared monster taking the form of a whirlpool in the Strait of Messina. The winged horse Pegasus generated from the blood of Medusa, after Persius cut off her head. The Chimaera was a triple-headed monster that caused havoc in Lydia until Bellerophon, mounted on Pegasus, and, given a golden bridle by Minerva, put an end to its life. 'where Bacchus blushes as a shamefaced boy' is my expansion of the Latin, which simply says 'modest Bacchus'.

No witch of Thessaly can bring relief;  
I doubt a god would entertain your plea,  
nor from that feared Chimaera's threefold grief  
could Pegasus have set you free.

## XXVIII

Te maris et terrae numeroque carentis harenae  
    mensorem cohibent, Archyta,  
pulueris exigui prope latum parua Matinum  
    munera nec quicquam tibi prodest  
aerias temptasse domos animoque rotundum                     5  
    percurrisse polum morituro.

Occidit et Pelopis genitor, conuiuia deorum,  
    Tithonusque remotus in auras  
et Iouis arcanis Minos admissus habentque  
    Tartara Panthoiden iterum Orco                                 10  
demissum, quamuis clipeo Troiana refixo  
    tempora testatus nihil ultra  
neruos atque cutem morti concesserat atrae,  
    iudice te non sordidus auctor  
naturae uerique. Sed omnis una manet nox                     15  
    et calcanda semel uia leti.

Dant alios Furiae toruo spectacula Marti,  
    exitio est auidum mare nautis;  
mixta senum ac iuuenum densentur funera, nullum  
    saeua caput Proserpina fugit.                                 20

Twenty-eight

Whatever cast of earth or seas or countless sands  
you once surveyed, Archytas, now you boast  
no more than one small tumulus we see in lands  
that border on the dull Matinian coast.

You ranged the sky's circumference in quest  
of heaven's high mysteries, but still you fare  
as Tantalus, that died, who was the gods' own guest,  
and old Tithonus wasted into air,

and Minos given Jovian lore. See: Tartarus  
retains Euphorbus still, twice sent to Hell,  
though witness, carrying shield in Trojan times, and thus,  
you note, with nothing more of death to tell

that on his skin and nerves it held its sombre power.

He was not trivially in nature read,  
you will allow, but still awaited that last hour  
to take the gloomy journey all must tread.

The follower of Mars his own fierce furies sees,  
and sailors drown by greedy waves' design.  
Both youth and age combine in funeral obsequies,  
and no one's locks are spared by Proserpine.

Me quoque deuexi rapidus comes Orionis  
 Illyricis Notus obruit undis.  
 At tu, nauta, uagae ne parce malignus harenae  
 ossibus et capiti inhumato  
 particulam dare: sic, quodcumque minabitur Eurus      25  
 fluctibus Hesperii, Venusinae  
 plectantur siluae te sospite multaque merces,  
 unde potest, tibi defluat aequo  
 ab Ioue Neptunoque sacri custode Tarenti.  
 Neglegis inmeritis nocituram  
 postmodo te natis fraudem committere? Fors et      30  
 debita iura uicesque superbae  
 te maneant ipsum: precibus non linquar inultis  
 teque piacula nulla resoluent.  
 Quamquam festinas, non est mora longa; licebit      35  
 iniecto ter puluere curras.

**Measure:** First Archilochean.

**Theme:** Death comes to all.

**Details:** Archytas was a fourth century Greek mathematician and philosopher. The Matinian coast was the Italian coast of the Adriatic near the modern-day Mattinata. Tithonus was given immortality but not unchanging youth. Proserpine was queen of the Underworld (Tartarus). Notus was the south wind, and Orion sets in November, when storms batter the Illyrian (Albanian) coast. Jove helped Minos write the laws for his kingdom of Crete. Panthoides (untranslated) refers to Pythagorus who claimed to be a reincarnation of the Trojan Euphorbus, entering a temple to reclaim the shield the warrior had left there. Tarentum (now Taranto) was a coastal city in what is now Puglia, southern Italy, which was under the protection of Neptune.

I too, in Notus winds, and by Orion led,  
was lost in waters off Illyrian lands.  
I beg you, sailor, cast on my unburied head  
and bones, a sprinkling of those spiteful sands.

So while the Eastern wind may scourge Italian shores  
and far inland Venusian woods molest,  
you will be safe and benefit from Jove's fair laws  
as rich Tarentum is by Neptune blessed.

If truly you'd avoid a crime whose punishment  
will fall on children still to come, then let  
the laws of rightful fate insist that you repent  
lest undue arrogance should claim you yet.

Unwanted consequences come if I'm dismissed,  
and left unmourned for here: though hurrying on,  
reflect: I need but brief oblations. Three mere fists  
of wind-spent dust to cast, and you are gone.

The rendering is a little free in places. The 'dull' is strictly 'unimportant', for example, 'Proserpine' should be 'savage Proserpine', and 'I need but brief oblations' should be 'no offering will release you'. 'Tantalus' is 'Pelop's father' in the Latin.



## Twenty-nine

If envious, Iccius, who would be set  
on Arab riches, or would try your steel  
on Saba's kings who rule unconquered yet,  
make warlike Medes hard fetters feel,  
  
enjoy some fine barbarian girl who's fair  
and comes as slave from lover you have slain,  
or have a palace youth with perfumed hair  
who's holding out the bowl you drain,  
  
be one brought up to wield his father's bow  
in distant Serian lands — then who shall say  
that falling rivers may not uphill flow  
or Tiber change its course one day,  
  
since one who surely promised better things  
leaves fine Panaetius' books unread,  
forgoes the school of Socrates, but clings  
to suit of Spanish mail instead.

XXX

O Venus regina Cnidi Paphique,  
sperne dilectam Cypron et uocantis  
ture te multo Glycerae decoram  
transfer in aedem.

Feruidus tecum puer et solutis  
Gratiae zonis properentque Nymphae  
et parum comis sine te Iuuentas  
Mercuriusque.

5

**Measure:** Sapphic.

**Theme:** Prayer to Venus.

**Details:** Venus had important cult centres in Cyprus. Cnidus was a Greek city in Asia Minor that later submitted to Cyprus and then Athens. Paphos was a coastal city in southwest Cyprus. The rendering is a condensation of the Latin, lacking the 'profuse of incense' (sweet) at Glycera's shrine and 'with open robes' for the Graces. The 'impetuous youth' is Cupid.

Thirty

Of Cnidus and of Paphos queen,  
quit your chosen Cyprus shores,  
at sweet Glycēra's shrine be seen:  
and, Venus, cause

impetuous youth to hasten too,  
and Nymphs and Graces, Youth that be  
now lost for looks by lacking you,  
and Mercury.



Thirty-one

What of Apollo does the poet ask,  
what blessings do the new-poured wines entreat?

Not famed and rich Sardinian realms that bask  
in uplands of unending wheat.

Not India's gold or ivory, nor yet  
contented flocks that through Calabria stray,  
nor fields where silently the waters fret  
and like the Lyris wear their strength away.

Let those whom fortune favours prune the vine  
with sharp Calenian bill, so he who's sold  
his Syrian merchandise to purchase wine  
can gladly drain his cup of gold.

Blessed he who thrice or more each year has sent  
his ships in safety on Atlantic seas:

I'm one with chicory made more content,  
or chives or olives. Latona, these

I'd ask in relishing what now remains:  
a mind that's vigorous, a body strong,  
old age that no humiliation stains,  
and gifts to serve the lyre's song.



## Thirty-two

If I have fashioned in my shade  
some trifle of a year or two,  
let praise of Italy be paid  
in lyre anew.

Alcāeus turned your strings — a man  
much famed for daring, and for war,  
who through the ocean tempest ran  
his boat to shore,

and sung to Bacchus, Muses there,  
and Love with Cupid often viewed,  
to Lycus too, with raven hair  
and eyes dark hued.

So Phoebus on that tortoiseshell  
is welcome at Jove's feasts. And you  
whose power can heal, help me as well  
make music true.

### XXXIII

Albi, ne doleas plus nimio memor  
inmitis Glycerae neu miserabilis  
descantes elegos, cur tibi iunior  
    laesa praeniteat fide.

Insignem tenui fronte Lycorida 5

Cyri torret amor, Cyrus in asperam  
declinat Pholoen: sed prius Apulis  
    iungentur capreae lupis

quam turpi Pholoe peccet adultero.

Sic uisum Veneri, cui placet imparis 10

formas atque animos sub iuga aenea  
    saeuo mittere cum ioco.

Ipsum me melior cum peteret Venus,  
grata detinuit compede Myrtale

libertina, fretis acrior Hadriae 15

    curuantis Calabros sinus.

**Measure:** Third Asclepiadean.

**Themes:** Capriciousness of love.

**Details:** Albi refers to the Roman poet Albius Tibullus, but the other characters are fictional. The Hadrian sea was the Adriatic, and Calabria is the southernmost or 'toe' of Italy. The 'headlands' is strictly 'bay' in the Latin.

### Thirty-three

Why all this grief, Tibullus? Must we groan  
at yet more miseries in verse to know  
how faithlessly has cruel Glycēra thrown  
you over for some younger beau?

The lovely Lycoris for Cyrus burns  
but he for sour Pholoë's mad instead.  
Yet no more than the gentle roe deer yearns  
for wild Apulia wolves to wed

than she will suffer such an ill-matched mate.  
It's thus that laughing Venus loves to yoke  
continually the high with low estate  
in heavy chains: a heartless joke.

On me the call seems milder — Myrtalē,  
a manumitted slave — that Venus makes:  
a girl that's harder than the Hadrian sea  
that on Calabrian headlands breaks.

## XXXIV

Parcus deorum cultor et infrequens,  
insanientis dum sapientiae  
consultus erro, nunc retrorsum  
uela dare atque iterare cursus  
cogor relictos: namque Diespiter 5  
igni corusco nubila diuidens  
plerumque, per purum tonantis  
egit equos uolucrumque currum,  
quo bruta tellus et uaga flumina,  
quo Styx et inuisi horrida Taenari 10  
sedes Atlanteusque finis  
concutitur. Valet ima summis  
mutare et insignem attenuat deus,  
obscura promens; hinc apicem rapax  
Fortuna cum stridore acuto  
sustulit, hic posuisse gaudet. 15

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Power of Jove and Fortune.

**Details:** Atlas refers to the mountainous chain in north Africa, and Taenarus was in the Peloponnese. Lines 1-2 are a somewhat free: the Latin is 'a scant and infrequent worshiper of gods who wandered in his own mad wisdom'.

Thirty-four

No confidant of gods, and all too few  
the wisdoms garnered by this frenzied mind:  
yet I'm compelled to trim my sails anew  
and take the course I left behind.

For Jove the mighty, who is god on high,  
and will with thunderous lightning bolts arrive —  
his horse and chariot divide a sky  
that may be cloudless even, drive

with furious agitation through the world,  
shake rivers on to Styx and thence to dread  
Taenārus headlands, have a terror hurled  
on Atlas's last mountain head.

So Jove has power to bring the mighty down  
and raise the most obscure to lofty heights,  
to have shrill whirring Fortune snatch a crown  
and set it where it most delights.



Thirty-five

O Goddess, you who lovely Antium guide,  
and can indeed stoop down to raise the low  
to prominence and regally decide  
the triumph should be funeral show:

to you the farmer prays, who's tilling soils:  
to you the sailor, that your ruling saves  
the fraught Bithynian craft that, threatened, toils  
across the high Carpathian waves.

You the Dacian and Scythian hordes  
are wary of. And warlike Latium,  
with towns where mothers of barbarian lords,  
and rich-robed tyrants also come

to fear you, lest neglect has pillars fall,  
and war's incitements undo people's trust:  
to arms, to arms, the fevered hotheads call,  
and state lies shattered in the dust.

A grim Necessity precedes you still,  
with scaling hook and spike and wedge you're fed,  
and must the carried copper vessels fill  
with heavy pools of molten lead.



Yet Hope and Loyalty are by your side,  
their hands still swathed in white, and friends believe  
when, dressed in mourning, from the pride  
of foes' great halls you take your leave,  
  
and pass the multitude of perjured whores  
who, scattering, fall off when the wine runs dry,  
and friendship plainly false, which sees no cause  
to bear a common yoke thereby.

But guard our Caesar as he goes once more  
to distant Britain. Let the Red Sea bear  
its feared respect for us, and still ensure  
our fresh recruits bring order there.

Alas, how gross are scars and wickedness  
among dead brothers in this iron time.  
What hand holds back from errant sinfulness  
when young men, good for any crime,  
  
make sport of gods, defiling shrines alike?  
But you, who sharpen swords on anvils, beat  
out such bluntness firmly, that they strike  
the Arab and the Massagete.

There are a few departures from the Latin. A 'mistress of the sea' is missing from the second stanza. The 'rich-robed' is strictly 'in royal purple'.



Thirty-six

As incense and as songs afford,  
and with the bullock's blood devoutly blessed,  
protecting our Numida lord:  
he's come both safe and sound from furthest west.

Now in returning he bestows  
whatever gratitude a comrade can,  
but most to Lamia he owes  
the praise: they grew together boy to man,  
and changed their togas that same day.  
So set a marker down for that advance,  
nor let the wine-jar long delay  
but we to Salian measures promptly dance.

No Bassus fall to Damilis  
for all the wine she deftly tosses back,  
nor be in anything remiss,  
not lily, rose or common parsley lack.

Every wandering eye will rest  
on Damilis, but none of them can part  
her from her newly chosen guest  
she holds as tight as ivy to the heart.

The 'gratitude' is strictly 'bestowing kisses'.



Thirty-seven

Now is the time to celebrate, good wine  
to drink and with a dancing measure tread  
a recognition round the priestly shrine:  
by couch lay out the Salian spread.

Till now it was improper to uncork  
our casks of wine, the Caecuban laid down  
the while that crazed and frenzied queen would talk  
of ruin for our Roman town.

Corrupted by her base, corrupting throng  
of followers she let herself be fooled  
by hope's deliriums. It was not long  
before that riotous frenzy cooled.

For scarce one ship of hers escapes the flames  
when Caesar brings the full disaster home:  
the waste of Mareotic wine she blames  
when, close pursued, she flees from Rome —

indeed from Italy in haste rows on  
as dove before a closing falcon flies,  
or hunter-harassed winter hare that's gone  
beneath the cold Haemonian skies.

Caesar planned to have that monster chained  
but she, who chose to be more nobly dead,  
displayed no woman's fear of sword, disdained  
to be to distant countries fled.

ausa et iacentem uisere regiam	25
uoltu sereno, fortis et asperas	
tractare serpentes, ut atrum	
corpore conbiberet uenenum,	
deliberata morte ferocior:	
saeuis Liburnis scilicet inuidens	30
priuata deduci superbo,	
non humilis mulier, triumpho.	

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Celebration for the victory of Actium.

**Details:** The ode commemorates the victory on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 31 BC of Octavian over the forces of Antony and Cleopatra, which ended the civil wars of the late Roman Republic, and indeed the Republic itself. Salian refers to priests of Mars Gradivus, known for hard drinking. The Mareotic Lake was a landlocked body of water behind Alexandria: its surrounds were famous for wine. Haemonia was the ancient name for Thessaly. The Liburnians inhabited the northeastern Adriatic coast in what is now Croatia: their galleys would perhaps have conveyed Cleopatra to a triumph in Rome.

The translation is a little free in places. There is no 'celebration' in the Latin of the first stanza, for example: it is only implied, and the 'full disaster' is strictly 'real fear'.

Unmoved, in ruined palaces she stares  
around and, while her calm composure reigns,  
would drink of those fierce snakes whose venom bears  
a final darkness to her veins.

Fierce death decided on, for, unconveyed  
by stern Liburnian ship, she'd not appear  
as common woman led but one who stayed  
unhumbled by our triumph here.

XXXVIII

Persicos odi, puer, apparatus,  
displicent nexae philyra coronae,  
mitte sectari, rosa quo locorum  
sera moretur.

Simplici myrto nihil adlabores  
sedulus, curo: neque te ministrum  
dedecet myrtus neque me sub arta  
uite bibentem.

5

**Measure:** Sapphic.

**Theme:** In praise of rustic simplicity.

**Details:** The 'we two' is 'servant and I' in the Latin.

Thirty-eight

No Persian titles, boy, for me,  
nor garlands in the lime tree's shade:  
forgo your chasing round to see  
the rose bloom fade.

The myrtle unadorned will do  
quite admirably, and common vine  
give shaded arbour where we two  
shall drink our wine.

# LIBER SECVNDVS

## I

Motum ex Metello consule ciuicum  
bellique causas et uitia et modos  
    Iudumque Fortunae grauisque  
    principum amicitias et arma  
nondum expiatis uncta cruoribus, 5  
periculosae plenum opus aleae,  
    tractas et incedis per ignis  
    suppositos cineri doloso.

Paulum seuerae Musa tragoediae  
desit theatri; mox, ubi publicas 10  
    res ordinariis, grande munus  
    Cecropio repetes coturno,  
insigne maestis praesidium reis  
et consulenti, Pollio, curiae,  
    cui laurus aeternos honores  
    Delmatico peperit triumpho. 15

Iam nunc minaci murmure cornuum  
perstringis auris, iam litui strepunt,  
    iam fulgor armorum fugacis  
    terret equos equitumque uoltus. 20

## BOOK TWO

One

With wars that date from our Metellus days,  
the causes, stages and the foul intrigues,  
the all-too deadly game that fortune plays,  
the first in friendship's treacherous leagues,

the blood that stains our uncleansed weapons red,  
invoking danger still and more distrust,  
you walk as one who cautiously must tread  
when fire is close beneath the crust.

Forbid the darker Muse be long away,  
but, once your public duties don't engage,  
reveal your own great gifts and write a play  
to grace the tragic Attic stage.

You who gained the troubled client's gaze,  
support forever in the Senate's cause,  
Pollio, your lasting victor's bays  
were worthy of Dalmatian wars.

How well your writing brims with very sound  
of horns and trumpets and the furious pace  
of clash and cavalry when all around  
is fear in horse and soldier's face.



I seem to hear great leaders, ever proud,  
that war's not unbecoming dust has stained:  
continually are lands to conquest bowed,  
but Cato's warlike soul's unchained.

Though Juno and the favouring gods' retreat  
from Africa leave unavenged the slights,  
the victors' grandsons are obliged to meet  
in full Jagurtha's funeral rites.

What field's not fattened with the blood of Rome,  
what won't of evil strife these graves relate?  
The news in Persia still, so far it roam,  
is Italy's a ruined state.

What gulf or mourning stream is mute on wars?  
What sea's not coloured with that Daunian flood  
of wretched slaughter? Show me shores  
not inundated with our blood.

But still, unless a wealth of joy you'd fling  
away for that dull Cean's dirge of wrong,  
come, Muse, and in love's deeper cavern sing  
with me a lighter strain of song.

Jagurtha, an African king, held out against Roman forces until defeated by Marius and Sulla. In stanza seven, Horace is referring to Jagurtha's 104 BC death in Rome, imagining the Romans killed subsequently in Africa will have to placate his ghost. Cean is an allusion to Simonides of Ceos.

## II

Nullus argento color est avaris  
abdito terris, inimice lamnae  
Crispe Sallusti, nisi temperato  
splendeat usu.

Viuet extento Proculeius aeuo, 5  
notus in fratres animi paterni;  
illum aget pinna metuente solui  
Fama superstes.

Latus regnes audum domando  
spiritum quam si Libyam remotis 10  
Gadibus iungas et uterque Poenus  
seruiat uni.

Crescit indulgens sibi dirus hydrops  
nec sitim pellit, nisi causa morbi  
fugerit uenis et aquosus albo 15  
corpore languor.

Redditum Cyri solio Prahaten  
dissidens plebi numero beatorum  
eximit Virtus populumque falsis  
dedocet uti 20

Two

Silver, Sallust, is a dream  
if left in earth, and you traduce  
its worthwhile gifts if it not gleam  
from temperate use.

In acting for his brothers' needs  
so Prōculeius earned his name,  
and far-winged time to him concedes  
undying fame.

More comes from mastering our greed  
than joining south to northern shores,  
or having Punic towns accede  
to common cause.

Indulgence makes the dropsy grow;  
no patient overcomes his thirst  
unless he quell that watery foe  
and torpor first.

Phraātēs has Armenia's throne  
with plaudits from the common herd.  
Fastidious, Virtue will disown  
each tainted word.

uocibus, regnum et diadema tutum  
deferens uni propriamque laurum  
quisquis ingentis oculo inretorto  
spectat aceruos.

**Measure:** Sapphic.

**Theme:** An admonition against excessive wealth.

**Details:** Sallust, addicted to fine living, was the owner of rich mines in the Alps. Proculeius was a close friend of Augustus and Maecenas. The 'Punic towns' are Carthaginian settlers on the north and south coasts of the Mediterranean. Phraates was restored to the Parthian throne in 25 BC. There are several compressions. The 'a dream if left in earth' is more strictly 'has no colour when left unknown in the greedy earth'. The 'joining south to northern shores' is fuller in the Latin: 'joining Spain to distant Libya'. The 'Restoring that alone will keep' should be 'Restoring on him alone will keep'.

Restoring that alone will keep  
what crown and lasting bays enhance  
for those who show, at treasure heap,  
no yearning glance.



### Three

Be constant: let not troubles overcloud  
the mind, nor yet your joy good sense deny:  
of present happiness be not so proud,  
for, Dellius, you too must die—

and whether gloomy be your days on earth,  
or through each festive season you recline  
complacently upon the restful turf  
to drink your good Falernian wine.

Why do large pines and white-leaved poplars merge  
their shades in welcome darkness overhead?  
Why do the ever-hurrying streams converge  
to make one winding river bed?

So tell them bring us wine, bestow the scent  
in which the all-too-temporary roses live,  
the while this world and coming time relent  
of those dark threads the Sisters give.

You'll leave the pleasant fields you bought,  
the villas yellow Tiber's banks contained,  
and to successors go unwished, unsought,  
the heaped up riches you have gained.

Diuesne prisco natus ab Inacho  
nil interest an pauper et infima  
de gente sub diuo moreris,  
uictima nil miserantis Orci;  
omnes eodem cogimur, omnium  
uersatur urna serius ocius  
sors exitura et nos in aeternum  
exilium impositura cumbae.

25

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Certainty of death.

**Details:** Dellius is generally taken to be the political turncoat Q. Dellius, well known to Maecenas but probably not to Horace. Inachus was the son of Oceanus and Tethys, reputed to have founded the kingdom of Argos. A few departures from the Latin: the 'overcloud' is my image, Horace uses 'steepness'. The 'coming' of 'coming time' is my addition, as is the 'unwished, unsought'.

No matter whether of Inachus born,  
live rich, or otherwise, born poor as well,  
or in the open under heavens' scorn,  
your fate is unremitting Hell.

For all in Charon's boat are pent,  
like lots our lives are whirled in that dark urn:  
in time emerging, to be onward sent  
perpetually, without return.



Four

You love a servant girl: why not  
now, Xanthias? For long ago  
as slave to famed Achille's lot  
fell Briseis so.

Tecmessa's looks enslaved her lord,  
great Ajax, son of Telamon.  
And Agamemnon, triumphing, adored  
the girl he'd won

from roughest arms when Troy gave way,  
and Hector's opportune decease  
made Pergamon an easy prey  
to wearied Greece.

Perhaps blonde Phyllis has a tale  
of wealth for new-found parents. Odds  
she's royal blood, where tears bewail  
her household gods.

Not from common rank has come  
such selflessness. You may be sure  
no shameful mother made the sum  
of one so pure.

Bracchia et uoltum teretisque suras  
integer laudo: fuge suspicari  
cuius octauum trepidauit aetas  
    claudere lustrum.

**Measure:** Sapphic

**Theme:** Universality of love.

**Details:** Bantering ode addressed with affectionate irony to a Phocian Xanthias, possibly a Greek name for one of Horace's friends. Briseis was made captive by Achilles when he took the city of Lyrnessus. Tecmessa was the daughter of a Phrygian king taken as loot by the Greeks near Troy (Pergamon). She was given to Ajax, son of Telamon. Cassandra fell to Atrides (Agamemnon), and was murdered with her lord back in Mycenae by Clytemnestra. Phyllis may or may not be a real name. The Latin is a little fuller: Briseis is described as 'white-skinned', the household gods are 'cruel', 'all her parts' is strictly 'arms, face and shapely ankles'.

In truth I judge her unsurpassed  
in all her features. Have no fear  
a rival though in one well past  
his fortieth year.



Five

Her neck is not yet ready for the pull  
of yoke, nor in coupling to enact  
her duty to the all-too-heavy bull  
so brutal in its mating act.

The thoughts of heifers are on verdant grass,  
of running carefree with their calves at play,  
on cooling streams, immersed till heat may pass  
in willow groves the length of day.

Forgo your passion for a fruit that's yet  
unripe. For autumn in its varied hue  
will come in time, and ripening grapes will set  
in clustered purple depths for you.

And you she soon will chase as seasons start  
to add the years to her they take from you.  
Yes, soon is Lalage hastening to the part  
where glances tell her mate what's due.

Not shy as then Pholoë was, nor white  
of shoulders Chloris even, but in truth  
as moon resplendent on the sea at night  
that shows Cnidian Gyges' youth,

quem si puellarum insereres choro,  
mire sagacis falleret hospites  
    discrimen obscurum solutis  
    crinibus ambiguoque uoltu.

**Measure:** Alcaic

**Theme:** Patience.

**Details:** Lalage, Pholoe and Chloris are fictional characters or pseudonyms. The ode urges patience, but the enigmatic and much discussed last stanza, which alludes to the concealing of young Achilles among the female attendants of Deodamia on Scyros, and his unmasking by Odysseus, adds a note of erotic confusion, here very freely translated in the last line: the Latin simply says 'bringing ambiguity'.

who, if you put among a choir of girls,  
the wisest stranger could not tell apart:  
the mix of hidden manliness and curls  
that's so confusing to the heart.



Six

You'd go to Gades, Septimus,  
to Spain not used to iron laws,  
through Syrtës, dangerous to us,  
brave Moorish shores?

It's Tibur founded by the Greeks  
I'd much prefer when old, a pause  
from roads and seas and all that speaks  
of endless wars.

If fate will never understand,  
then sweet Galaesus, pastures swelled  
with useful sheep, the Spartan land  
Phalānthus held.

Happiest would be some far recess  
with honey as Hymettas yields,  
and olives good as those that bless  
Vēnafrum's fields.

With Jove's mild winters, forward springs,  
and Aulon slopes that vinyard shapes,  
without the envy richness brings  
Falernian grapes.

Ille te mecum locus et beatae  
postulant arces; ibi tu calentem  
debita sparges lacrima fauillam  
uatis amici.

**Measure:** Sapphic.

**Theme:** Friendship.

**Content:** A short poem of friendship addressed to Septimus, clearly a close but unidentified acquaintance of Horace. Gades is modern Cadiz; Syrtes were the dangerous shoals off the Libyan coast; Hymettus was a mountain southeast of Athens; Aulon lay above Tarentum, a Spartan colony in southern Italy, bordered by the river Galaesus; Venafrum was a Samite city on the borders of Latium with Campania; and Tibur (now Tivoli) was an ancient town some 30 km east-north-east of Rome. The 'understand' is strictly 'give'. The last two lines are very condensed: the Latin says: 'sprinkle tears on the glowing ashes of the poet and friend'.

So come: to heights I will retire  
as blessed for both. Here at the end  
let fall a tear on vatic fire  
that was your friend.



## Seven

By Brutus often led down danger's track  
the days his army won our battle-cries,  
that now, as citizen, has brought you back  
to Italy's own gods and skies.

That Pompey, first of comrades, found  
imbibing wine the length of long days sent:  
must I remember how our hair was bound  
with leaves and glistening Syrian scent?

With you I also fought at Philippi,  
until from valour parted, and my shield,  
when caught up in that headlong tumult, I  
succumbed to fear and fled the field.

It is to Mercury that I give thanks,  
who swiftly led me through the clouds of war  
where you, who faced advancing hostile ranks,  
seemed lost into that raging shore.

So give to Jupiter the feast he's owed,  
and rest the wearied limbs that battle knew  
beneath the laurel branches, where is stowed  
the wine that's set aside for you.

Obliuioso leuia Massico  
ciboria exple, funde capacibus  
    unguenta de conchis. Quis udo  
    deproperare apio coronas  
curatue myrto? Quem Venus arbitrum                   25  
dicet bibendi? Non ego sanius  
    bacchabor Edonis: recepto  
    dulce mihi furere est amico.

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Welcome return.

**Details:** A simple piece welcoming the return of a fellow soldier from the battle of Philippi, where Horace fled the field. Brutus and Pompey were rivals of Caesar in the late Republic civil wars. Mount Massicus in Campania was famous for its wine, and the Edoni were Thracians noted for heavy drinking.

Fill up large cups of Massic wine, and pour  
a long forgetfulness in perfumed reds.

Say who's to weave the herb and myrtle for  
the dew-fresh garland round our heads.

Who'll win of Venus by the dice, be game  
to act as master of the drink, and lend  
to these, my Edon Bacchus rites, the same  
fond thankfulness in greeting friend?



## Eight

Had you been a wit the worse  
for lies you told: a blackened tooth  
or nail, Barinë — curse  
for such untruth —

I might believe that all was paid.  
But in that faithless head you are  
to youths more beautiful, arrayed  
as shining star,

who swears by mother's ashes, seas  
of stars that hold their silent breath,  
by heavens, gods — divinities  
unmoved by death.

It's droll to Venus; Nymphs must smile,  
and Cupid, cruel to lover's hearts,  
on bloodied stone through all this while  
is sharpening darts.

The young are grown for conquest, such  
is slavery that serves for you.  
Nor do old lovers leave, though much  
they threaten to.

Te suis matres metuunt iuuencis,  
te senes parci miseraeque nuper  
uirgines nuptae, tua ne retardet  
aura maritos.

**Measure:** Sapphic.

**Theme:** Dangerous feminine charms.

**Details:** a playful tribute to the femme fatal 'Barine'. Again the Sapphic form requires some rephrasing or condensing of the Latin. The 'recent wives', for example, is strictly 'virgins recently married', and the 'in dallying husbands find anew the flame survives' is 'your gold (i.e. radiance) causes husbands to linger'.

So mothers fear for sons, as do  
their thrifty fathers: recent wives  
in dallying husbands find anew  
the flame survives.



## Nine

The stormclouds do not empty every day  
to innundate the fields, nor do the wars  
of Caspian winds retain unbroken sway,  
nor on the far Armenian shores

does ice accumulate throughout the year,  
nor in the heavy winds forever heaves  
Gargānus forest oak, nor fear  
the ash trees gales will strip their leaves.

Will grief, dear Valgius, be ever spent,  
that loss of Mystes will at last be done —  
nor emulate the evening star's ascent  
that's lost into the rising sun?

The thrice-aged Nestor was not so misled  
as mourn Antilochus his whole last years,  
nor sisters on the Phrygian Troilus shed,  
or family, their endless tears.

Let's have no more effeminate complaints  
but praise Augustus Caesar's trophies — how  
Niphates' snowy peaks are no constraints,  
and Persian rivers now allow

Medumque flumen gentibus additum  
uictis minores uoluere uertices  
    intraque praescriptum Gelonos  
    exiguus equitare campis.

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Put sorrow aside.

**Content:** A complex piece despite the surface transparency. Rufus Valgius was a poet and respected literary critic who wrote elegies on the loss of his 'boyfriend' Mystes. Nestor, the aged king of Pylos, was accompanied by his son Antilochus to the siege of Troy, where the son met his death. Troilus, son of Priam and Hecuba, was killed by Achilles. Niphrates were mountains in Armenia, and Gelonians were a tribal people in northwestern Scythia. The 'are no constraints' is my addition, and 'now allow us passage over' is only implied: the Latin simply says: 'with diminished flow'.

us passage over, and that nation's force  
are with Gelonians subdued by Rome,  
and where they freely exercise their horse  
confined by us to their small home.

X

Rectius uiues, Licini, neque altum  
semper urgendo neque, dum procellas  
cautus horrescis, nimium premendo  
litis iniquom.

Auream quisquis mediocritatem 5  
diligit, tutus caret obsoleti  
sordibus tecti, caret inuidenda  
sobrius aula.

Saepius uentis agitur ingens  
pinus et celsae grauiore casu 10  
decidunt turres feriuntque summos  
fulgura montis.

Sperat infestis, metuit secundis  
alteram sortem bene praeparatum  
pectus. Informis hiemes reducit 15

Iuppiter, idem  
summuet. Non, si male nunc, et olim  
sic erit: quondam cithara tacentem  
suscitat Musam neque semper arcum  
tendit Apollo. 20

Ten

Sense, Lucinius, isn't gross  
neglect of coming storm, nor, cause  
for worry, sailing on too close  
to dangerous shores.

Consider more the golden mean —  
not in some hovel hide away,  
nor spiting all, in wide demesne  
make rich display.

The tallest pine strong winds will test,  
high towers falls heaviest, and, like  
as not, it is the mountain's crest  
that lightnings strike.

The soul that's best prepared for fate  
will hope in hardship, doubt success.  
If Jupiter brings winter's state  
he next will bless

by fetching spring. It's not for long  
that evil lasts, and you should know  
Apollo brings the Muse's song  
as bends his bow.

Rebus angustis animosus atque  
fortis appare; sapienter idem  
contrahes uento nimium secundo  
turgida uela.

**Measure:** Sapphic.

**Theme:** Golden mean.

**Details:** Advice to take the middle course. Licinius Murena, the brother-in-law of Maecenas, was executed for conspiring against Augustus in 22 BC. The 'It's not for long that evil lasts' is strictly 'if evil now it will not be thus'.

Acting strong and brave will serve you well,  
but be aware of this world's gales:  
when all too full are winds, they tell  
you take in sails.



Eleven

Why must you ponder what each warlike race  
of Spain and Scythia may yet intend,

Are not the Hadrian Seas sufficient space,  
Harpinus, that you still would spend

your time in fretful thoughts when grace and youth  
are both departing? Dry old age will keep  
you from affections soon enough and, truth  
to tell, from long contenting sleep.

Not forever do spring's flowers last,  
nor blushing moon reveal the selfsame face.

Why must you have your speculations cast  
their gloom into the mind's dark space?

Why not recline here carelessly, beneath  
the towering pine and plane, to perfume wed  
Assyrian use, or place some simple wreath  
of roses round the greying head?

Respect for Bacchus dissipates the care  
that otherwise consumes us. Wise it seems  
to cut our rich Falernian wine and share  
its fervour with the tumbling streams.

Quis deuium scortum eliciet domo  
Lyden? Eburna dic, age, cum lyra  
maturet, in comptum Lacaenae  
more comas religata nodum.

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Make best use of the present time.

**Details:** Quinctius (untranslated) Harpinus is an unidentified man of wealth. Hadrian seas were the Adriatic. Though 'scortum' means prostitute, the name Lyde suggests a hetaere, a luxury callgirl, teasingly asked to present herself in modest Spartan style. The 'wise it seems to cut' is strictly 'which boy will rapidly quench'.

Who'll call the costly Lydë girl, and dare  
her leave the house, and hasten here the while  
with ivory lyre in hand, and with her hair  
done up in modest Spartan style?



## Twelve

You'd not expect the long Numantian wars  
to tunes of cithara be sweetly wed,  
still less harsh Hannibal whose Punic cause  
    had turned the seas to purple red.

Nor Centaur drinking parties, nor in truth  
drunk Hylaeus, nor Hercules, whose arm  
in conquering the gross Tellurian youth  
    both shook the earth and threatened harm

to glittering Saturn's house. It's best you spoke  
in prose, Maecenas, of our Caesar's feats,  
and Rome's dread enemies that felt the yoke  
    when dragged in triumph through our streets.

Quite otherwise the Muses bid me sing  
of your Licymnia's voice, her eyes' bright hue  
and faithful love that speaks of everything  
    so admirable between you two.

None look upon her chorus lead askance,  
as foremost ever in what wits will say  
or, interlink of arms, when women dance  
    to celebrate Diana's day.

Num tu quae tenuit diues Achaemenes  
aut pinguis Phrygiae Mygdonias opes  
permutare uelis crine Licymniae,  
    plenas aut Arabum domos  
cum flagrantia detorquet ad oscula                   25  
ceruicem aut facili saeuitia negat  
quae poscente magis gaudeat eripi,  
    interdum rapere occupet?

**Measure:** Third Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Charms of Lycimnia.

**Details:** In the form of a recusatio, the poem is a compliment to Lycimnia, who may be the wife of Maecenas or simply a fictional character. Numantia was a settlement in north-central Spain. The Lapiths were a mountain people in Thessaly who fought with the centaurs at the wedding of their king Pirithoüs. Hylaeus was a centaur. Tellurian refers to the battle of the giants, where Hercules killed earth's children. Phrygia is now central Turkey, and Archaemenid gold refers to the fabulous wealth of ancient Persia.

So would you give up, tell me, one sweet hair  
for all of rich Arabia's storied wealth,  
or opulence that Phrygia offers there,  
or Archaemenid gold itself?

If gently she, whose neck will never slake  
your burning kisses, should deny your due,  
then do not ask of her, but simply take  
what she will promptly snatch from you.



## Thirteen

An evil day they chose to plant this tree:  
those sacrilegious hands are much to blame  
for this attempt to ruin posterity  
and bring the regions round to shame.

He broke his father's neck, and, like enough,  
has spilt the blood of guest inside a room  
in deepest night, or conjured some such stuff  
of Colchis spells and evil's doom

upon this earth. For he conspired with all  
to have the innocence of fields instead  
produce a treacherous tree trunk, one to fall  
on this, its blameless master's head.

To things they should avoid men give no thought.  
It is of Bosphorus he's most aware,  
the Punic sailor, and will count as naught  
the hidden dangers everywhere.

The soldier thinks of Persian arrows, their  
retreats: the Persian of Italian force  
and chains — and none seems properly aware  
how gluttonous is death. My course



had come to lands of Proserpine too near,  
to Áeacus, who in the judgement hall  
will seat the pious ones, for I could hear  
sad Sappho on her lyre becall

the shabby practices of local girls,  
and you, Alcāeus, as your plectrum draws  
on sailor's sorrow, and the more unfurls  
the pain of exile and of wars.

The shades are listening, marvelling as both  
compel a reverence, but most of all  
that close-packed crowd preferred to hear was growth  
of war that caused the tyrants' fall.

No wonder that the hundred-headed beast  
lets drop immediately his jet-black ears,  
and ever twisting hair of snakes at least  
must waver when that song appears.

Prometheus and Tantalus are yet  
released by such sweet music from the woe  
of endless torments, and Orion's let  
the timid lynx and lion go.

for men and was chained to a pillar as punishment, his liver continually  
eaten by an eagle. Orion was a mighty hunter.

## XIV

Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume,  
labuntur anni nec pietas moram  
    rugis et instanti senectae  
    adferet indomitaque morti,  
non, si trecenis quotquot eunt dies,                     5  
amice, places inlacrimabilem  
    Plutona tauris, qui ter amplum  
    Geryonen Tityonque tristi  
compescit unda, scilicet omnibus  
quicumque terrae munere uescimur                     10  
    enauiganda, siue reges  
    siue inopes erimus coloni.  
Frustra cruento Marte carebimus  
fractisque rauci fluctibus Hadriae,  
    frustra per autumnos nocentem                     15  
    corporibus metuemus Austrum:  
uisendus ater flumine languido  
Cocytos errans et Danai genus  
    infame damnatusque longi  
    Sisyphus Aeolides laboris.                     20

## Fourteen

How Postumus, Postumus, the years must fleet  
away. No piety for one short hour  
can smooth out wrinkles from our brow, or meet  
death's indomitable power.

Nor would three hundred head of bulls a day  
sate Pluto's greed. Three-bodied Geryon  
he still retains, and Tityos must stay  
by that sad river everyone

in time must cross. Indeed that's each of us  
enjoying riches that this wide earth yields:  
whether kings or those least prosperous  
of humble farmers tilling fields.

No one can temper Mars's enmity,  
nor threat from Adriatic's breakers' roar,  
nor when abroad in autumn's ocean be  
unthreatened by the South Wind's draw.

In time we'll gaze on winding Cocytus,  
on ill-famed Danaus daughters in its coils,  
and on Aeolus' son, that Sisyphus  
condemned to endless toils.

Linquenda tellus et domus et placens  
uxor, neque harum quas colis arborum  
te praeter inuisas cupressos  
ulla breuem dominum sequetur;  
absumet heres Caecuba dignior 25  
seruata centum clauibus et mero  
tinguet pauimentum superbo,  
pontificum potiore cenis.

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Death is inevitable.

**Details:** Postumus is an unidentified and possibly fictional character. Geryon was a fearsome monster killed by Hercules. Tityos was punished for attacking Latona by having his liver constantly fed to a vulture. Cocytos separates mortals from the Underworld. The fifty daughters of Daunus were sent to Hades for killing their husbands, and Sisyphus, the son of Aeolus, Homeric ruler of the winds, was condemned to forever roll a boulder uphill as punishment for his numerous acts of trickery. Caecuban, the best of Roman wines, came from Amyclae in coastal Latium.

We'll leave our loving wife and home and earth,  
nor have one tree we planted follow us and be  
    memorial to its short-lived owner's worth  
    beyond that hated cypress tree.

A worthy heir will drink your Caecuban  
fine vintage guarded by a hundred keys,  
    and likely stain the tiles with costlier than  
    the wine a Pontiff's table sees.



Fifteen

We'll shortly see these ostentatious, vast  
estates leave little ground for men to plough  
as ornamental ponds have far surpassed  
the Lucrine Lake. The plane trees now

supplant the elms where branching vine stems wove  
their stems, and myrtle flowers and violet bed  
suffuse their perfume through the olive grove  
that kept a previous owner fed.

To give from our fierce sun a welcome shade,  
the branching laurel groves have much profaned  
the prudent life that long-haired Cato made,  
or Romulus had once ordained.

On widespread common ground their homes would show  
a virtuous modesty: on venturing forth  
no private citizen would find a portico  
in tens of measures, shading north.

Nor did the laws allow the simple turf  
be scorned for altars, nor had so much grown  
our gross indulgence on the cided earth  
at public cost in rarest stone.

XVI

Otium diuos rogat in patenti  
prensus Aegaeo, simul atra nubes  
condidit lunam neque certa fulgent  
sidera nautis;

otium bello furiosa Thrace, 5

otium Medi pharetra decori,

Grosophe, non gemmis neque purpura  
uenale neque auro.

Non enim gazae neque consularis  
summuet lictor miseros tumultus 10

mentis et curas laqueata circum  
tecta uolantis.

Viuitur paruo bene, cui paternum  
splendet in mensa tenui salinum  
nec leuis somnos timor aut cupido 15  
sordidus aufert.

Quid breui fortes iaculamur aeuo  
multa? Quid terras alio calentis  
sole mutamus? Patriae quis exul  
se quoque fugit? 20

Sixteen

It's calm the sailor asks for, caught  
in foreign seas, the moon as yet  
obscured by clouds, and stars report  
no path to set.

Peace Thracians seek, hard battles fought,  
and Parthians will not condemn  
a peace that, Grosphus, is not bought  
with rank or gem.

No wealth or lictor's polished wit  
will lift a mind oppressed by gloom  
and misery in thoughts that flit  
round panelled room.

He'll live the best who lives on least,  
where father's polished silver keep  
their place, where cares nor love of feast  
disturb his sleep.

Why then accumulate such things  
our short lives through? What do we gain  
in scorching lands when exile brings  
ourselves in train?

Scandit aeratas uitiosa nauis  
 cura nec turmas equitum relinquit,  
 ocior ceruis et agente nimbos  
     ocior Euro.

Laetus in praesens animus quod ultra est                   25  
 oderit curare et amara lento  
 temperet risu: nihil est ab omni  
     parte beatum.

Abstulit clarum cita mors Achillem,  
 longa Tithonum minuit senectus,                                 30  
 et mihi fors an, tibi quod negarit,  
     porriget hora.

Te greges centum Siculaeque circum  
 mugiant uaccae, tibi tollit hinnitum  
 apta quadrigis equa, te bis Afro                                 35  
     murice tinctae  
 uestiunt lanae; mihi parua rura et  
 spiritum Graiae tenuem Camenae  
 Parca non mendax dedit et malignum  
     spernere uolgens.                                                 40

**Measure:** Sapphic.

**Theme:** Contentment with our lot.

**Details:** The Parthians of Persia were skilful archers. Eurus was the unfortunate east wind. Pompeius Grosphus was a wealthy Sicilian. Parca (untranslated) were the three goddesses of destiny, i.e. Fates. Tithonus was given everlasting life but not youth. A rich purple dye was obtained from the murex of the eastern Mediterranean and African shores.

Concern corrupts the ship, is fast  
as horseman or the deer: it springs  
up furiously as tempest's blast  
that Eurus brings.

Why not forego all anxious thought  
of what will come? A smile is best  
to meet adversities, for naught  
comes wholly blessed.

Achilles chose life's brevity,  
Tithonus age, though lost youth too.  
Perhaps the hour has given me  
what's not for you.

You have rich cattle, mares to pull  
your chariot: they call to you,  
who are apparelled in rich wool  
of purple hue.

From truthful Fates I gain  
a modest farm, and, I confess,  
an ear for music, and disdain  
for enviousness.

There are the compressions usual with the Sapphic. 'Parthians' is strictly 'Parthians adorned with quiver' in the Latin; the 'rank or gem' is 'gems, purple or gold'; the 'truthful Fates' is 'Parcae, the not deceitful'.



## Seventeen

Why reproach me with a plaintive sigh?  
It cannot please the gods, and still less me  
if you become the first of us to die,  
my pillared, true nobility,

Maecenas. No, it would be half my soul  
that went. Why should the part remaining stay  
no longer loved by you or even whole?  
Indeed such happenings on that day

would promptly kill us both. No empty speech  
I make, but, as you lead, then let us go  
as friends together would, both each in each,  
on that last journey far below.

You'd see that no Chimaera's fiery breath,  
nor Gyas' hundred hands that rose again  
would ever part us, who are bound till death  
as Justice and the Fates ordain.

But whether Libra then, or Scorpio  
the fierce, was potent at my natal hour,  
or Capricorn, the ruler, governing flow  
of seas round Italy, the power



of stars that drew us close was ever strange.  
But while blest Jupiter protected you,  
and out of Saturn's baleful look and range  
of hurtful destiny withdrew

the threat when people packed the theatre out  
and three times broke into a wild applause,  
on me instead a tree trunk fell, no doubt  
to crack my skull, had not the cause

of Mercury's old Faunus served, and checked  
its course. Be sure, I beg you, to repay  
your temple votive now, and I'll elect  
to find a humble lamb to slay.



## Eighteen

No ivory or gold emboss  
the splendid panels of the house I own,  
Hymettian timbers do not cross  
from arch to pillars hewn of rarest stone

from Africa. I'm not the heir  
of Áttalus and so not nobly blest  
with palaces and women, their  
rich dependency in purple dressed.

Stout faith I have, an active mind  
that makes the wealthy call on one who's poor.

No gods I press, nor will he find,  
that powerful friend of mine, I crowd his door

with fresh demands. Beyond my one,  
plain Sabine farm I need no further gift:  
each day is from an earlier won  
and new moons, waxing, to their waning shift.

You put out marble to be cut,  
forget the grave and sepulchre are yours;  
in building houses that abut  
the seas will push out thence the very shores

summouere litora,  
 parum locuples continente ripa.  
 Quid quod usque proximos  
 reuellis agri terminos et ultra  
 limites clientium 25  
 salis auarus? Pellitur paternos  
 in sinu ferens deos  
 et uxor et uir sordidosque natos.  
 Nulla certior tamen  
 rapacis Orci fine destinata 30  
 aula diuitem manet  
 erum. Quid ultra tendis? Aequa tellus  
 pauperi recluditur  
 regumque pueris, nec satelles Orci  
 callidum Promethea 35  
 reuexit auro captus. Hic superbum  
 Tantalum atque Tantali  
 genus coerces, hic leuare functum  
 pauperem laboribus  
 uocatus atque non uocatus audit. 40

**Measure:** Hipponactean.

**Theme:** Vanity of earthly riches.

**Details:** Attalus refers to one of the rich kings of Pergamum in Asia Minor. Hymettus was a mountain southeast of Athens. Tantalus served his son Pelops as a dish to the gods and was punished by having to stand beneath a tree whose fruit ever eluded his grasp. Pluto (Orcus in the Latin) was the god of Underworld and punisher of broken oaths. Prometheus stole fire for men and was chained to a pillar as punishment, his liver continually eaten by an eagle. The 'new moons, waxing, to their

to Baiae's roaring waves. Not blessed  
enough with mainland coast, you overleap  
your neighbour's properties that pressed  
their limits close to yours. And these you keep,

evicting tenants, humbling them —  
the wife, the husband and their household gods  
clutched close, and children you condemn —  
to painful wretchedness. By all the odds

no greater certainties a lord  
can know than halls of greedy Pluto's reign,  
however wealthy, nor afford  
more certain limits: therefore, what's to gain?

For sons of kings the land begets  
its freedom as for poor. No gold beguiles  
the Orcus ferryman, nor lets  
Prometheus return, for all his wiles.

Proud Tantalus he holds, and son  
in Pelops, yet may kindly condescend,  
when called or not, with course near run,  
to help the poor attain their labour's end.

waning shift' is an expansion of the Latin, which simply says 'new moons  
go on to wane'. The 'Stout faith I have and active mind' is strictly 'Faith I  
have, and a bountiful vein of talent'.



Nineteen

Bacchus in remote and rocky ways

I saw (believe me, those of later years).

Nymphs were learning there his words of praise,  
and goat-hoofed Satyrs pricked up ears.

Evoe! A heart of terror and despair

was mine in revel with the Bacchus god.

Evoe! O spare me, Liber, you must spare  
me from his dreaded ivied rod.

It's right to sing of that Bacchantes throng,

the milk accompanying, the rich wine drunk

in such a river: to renew the song  
as honey flowed from hollow trunk.

It's right we sing the honour of your spouse,

that Ariadne, throned in stars, and then

the wreck of Pentheus's royal house,  
Lycurgus ruined, the Thracian.

You guide the rivers and the barbarous sea,

and on the distant summits, drinking there,

oblige Bistonian women, harmlessly  
to fasten vipers in their hair.



But when a shameful group of Giants would attack  
the realms of father Jupiter, you wore —  
to hurl the overweening Rhoetus back —  
a dreadful lion's tooth and claw.

Of jest, deceit and dance you take your fill.  
That's hardly suitable for combat's cause,  
but in the battle, just the same, you still  
were mediating peace and wars.

Cerberus has wagged his tail to greet  
you, guiltless with your golden horn. Among  
his friendly acts he licked your turning feet  
and ankles with his triple tongue.

XX

Non usitata nec tenui ferar  
penna biformis per liquidum aethera  
    uates neque in terris morabor  
    longius inuidiaque maior  
urbis relinquam. Non ego pauperum                     5  
sanguis parentum, non ego quem uocas,  
    dilecte Maecenas, obibo  
    nec Stygia cohibebor unda.  
Iam iam residunt cruribus asperae  
pelles et album mutor in alitem                     10  
    superne nascunturque leues  
    per digitos umerosque plumae.  
Iam Daedaleo ocior Icaro  
uisam gementis litora Bosphori  
    Syrtisque Gaetulas canorus                     15  
    ales Hyperboreosque campos.  
Me Colchus et qui dissimulat metum  
Marsae cohortis Dacus et ultimi  
    noscent Geloni, me peritus  
    discet Hiber Rhodanique poter.                     20

## Twenty

As bard of double form, I will not feign  
a languid, common flight across the sky,  
nor will I, lingering on this earth, remain  
the sport of every envious eye.

I'll leave our cities here. Yes, even I,  
who have but humble parentage, who call  
you dearest friend, Maecenas, shall not die  
and to confining Lethe fall.

Indeed my ankles show a roughened skin  
while upwards to a snow-white bird I've passed:  
abundant downy plumage hems me in,  
and so are hands and shoulders cast.

Melodious, more known than Icarus,  
the son of Daedalus, I'll hear the strains  
of Syrtës and of murmuring Bosphorus,  
and Hyperborean icy plains.

Well known to Colchians and Dacians,  
who feign no fear of Roman troops, I've grown,  
as to Gelonians. Hibernians  
will learn, and those who drink the Rhone.

Absint inani funere neniae  
luctusque turpes et querimoniae;  
conpesce clamorem ac sepulcri  
mitte superuacuos honores.

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Future immortality.

**Details:** Lethe (Styx in the Latin) was one of the five rivers of Hades. The legendary craftsman and inventor Daedalus fashioned waxen wings for himself and son Icarus to escape from Crete, but Icarus flew too close to the sun: the wax melted and boy fell into the sea and drowned. Syrtes were the dangerous shoals off the north African coast. The Colchian and Dacian regions were areas of the Black Sea and part of modern-day Romania and Moldova respectively. The Hyperboreans were a legendary race of Apollo worshippers in the far north. Gelonians were a part Greek-speaking tribe who occupied northwest Scythia.

So let no empty funeral dirge be sung  
for me, or suchlike clamour. I'd prefer  
no thing superfluous or false among  
the honours shown my sepulchre.

There are a few departures from the strict Latin. 'Bosphorus'  
should be 'Bosphorus shores'; 'Hyperborean icy plains' should  
simply be 'Hyperborean plains'; 'Hibernians' will learn' should be  
'Hibernians will learn from me, the expert'.

## LIBER TERTIVS

### I

Odi profanum uolgus et arceo.

Fauete linguis: carmina non prius

audita Musarum sacerdos

uirginibus puerisque canto.

Regum timendorum in proprios greges, 5

reges in ipsos imperium est Iouis,

clari Giganteo triumpho,

cuncta supercilio mouentis.

Est ut uiro uir latius ordinet

arbusta sulcis, hic generosior 10

descendat in campum petitor,

moribus hic meliorque fama

contendat, illi turba clientium

sit maior: aequa lege Necessitas

sortitur insignis et imos, 15

omne capax mouet urna nomen.

Destructus ensis cui super impia

ceruice pendet, non Siculae dapes

dulcem elaboratum saporem,

non auium citharaequecantus 20

## BOOK THREE

One

Not for me: I hate the common throng.  
Pray silence for the Muse's priest, and hear  
how well my hitherto unnoticed song  
has captured every youthful ear.

However feared by subjects, leaders are  
beneath great Jove, who put the Titans down,  
and yet that victory, though famed afar,  
was made but with an eyebrow's frown.

One plants his vineyards out in greater state  
than can another over neighbouring earth.

While one descends to Campus candidate  
and claims he has the nobler birth,

another has more followers, or fame,  
yet still the Ineluctable will turn  
to judging high and low, and take a name  
impartially from that great urn.

To him, above whose threatened head a sword  
must hang, Sicilian feasts will never bring  
delightful tastes, nor pleasures lutes afford,  
nor even songs the plain birds sing



bring restful peace, for all it is that sleep  
may in the house of some poor labourer stay,  
or over shaded banks where breezes keep  
unruffled watch through Tempë's way.

And he who only longs for what he needs  
is not disturbed by raging seas, nor dies  
the moment harsh Arctūrus sets, nor heeds  
how powerful stars of Haedus rise.

Nor will his vineyards fall to flattening hail,  
his farm to weather's treachery, nor will  
the rain affect the trees, or dry fields fail  
in dog-star heat, or winter's chill.

As fish can sense the channel narrowing  
when dams pile up, and all the through-ways filled  
with piled-up rubble that the workers bring  
where yet the lord disdains to build,

so Fear and Menace claim the highest place  
that was the lord's, and darkest cares will force  
themselves on bronze-clad trireme, or embrace  
the seat behind him on his horse.

Quod si dolentem nec Phrygius lapis  
nec purpurarum sidere clarior  
    delenit usus nec Falerna  
    uitis Achaemeniumque costum,  
cur inuidendis postibus et nouo  
sublime ritu moliar atrium? 45  
    Cur ualle permutem Sabina  
    diuitias operosiores?

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** On simple happiness.

**Details:** 'Fauete linguis' was a religious injunction: be silent, etc. Tempë was a beautiful gorge through which the river Peneius enters the sea in Thessaly. The star Arcturus, in the constellation of Bootes, is the fourth brightest in the sky and carried various meanings. The stars of Haedus threatened storms and rainy weather. Phrygia was a west-central part of Anatolia, in what is now Turkey. The Jove in stanza two is a tribute to Augustus, perhaps in mock solemnity: the emperor was often flattered in this way. The 'dies' is my addition: in the Latin the 'he' is simply disturbed by the setting of Arcturus.

But if good Phrygian marble won't confine  
our grief, nor purple brighter than the stars,  
nor vintage of our fine Falernian wine,  
nor perfumes from the plains of Fars,

why should I labour, building some vast hall  
with columns others want and suchlike stuff?  
Why should I change my Sabine valley's call  
to burdened when I have enough?



Two

Once bred to hardship, let the boy advance  
until his wartime training take its course,  
and check with cavalry and deadly lance  
the Parthians' ferocious horse.

Wide skies and constant perils forge a life  
that's fit for action. When from walls on high  
a warring tyrant's daughter or a wife  
look down at him, how much they'll sigh:

'Alas that any bridegroom, new to war,  
provoke the lion, for its fierce reply  
will make the battleground a waste of gore  
for all at arms.' But yet to die

for one's own country is both sweet and just.  
Retreat won't spare the coward, though he run  
exposing back and knees, for in disgust  
comes death to strike the fearful one.

Repugnant to his honour stands defeat:  
he keeps unsullied his high conduct still,  
nor does he waver, varying to meet  
the populace's changing will.

Virtus, recludens inmeritis mori  
caelum, negata temptat iter uia  
coetusque uolgaris et udam  
spernit humum fugiente pinna.

Est et fideli tuta silentio 25

merces: uetabo, qui Cereris sacrum  
uolgarit arcanae, sub isdem  
sit trabibus fragilemque mecum  
soluat phaselon; saepe Diespiter  
neglectus incesto addidit integrum, 30  
raro antecedentem scelestum  
deseruit pede Poena claudo.

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Martial valour.

**Details:** Ceres was the goddess of agriculture and fertility. The Parthians were the rulers of present-day Iran. Lines 19-20 are strictly 'nor does he take up axes (symbols of office) at the choice of the changeable mob'. The 'good are often counted one with thieves' is strictly 'counfounds the sinful with the sound'.

Such death will earn a pathway to the stars  
denied the multitude, and virtue brings  
contempt for this moist earth that only mars  
the paean on its upward wings.

A silence loyally kept is its reward,  
and he who Ceres' secrets would reveal  
will never find a roof of mine afford  
him home, or loose the fettered keel.

The good are often counted one with thieves,  
which late-come Justice even then confounds.  
But if revenge fall short, she rarely leaves  
the criminal whose steps she hounds.



Three

No vengeful public wanting what's perverse  
will shake the man to his own purpose true:  
nor will a threatening tyrant's face reverse  
a steadfast mind, nor winds that hew

their fiercest passage through the Hadrian seas.  
Not Jove himself, with lightning's hand displayed  
across the heavenly realms he oversees:  
their fall would leave him unafraid.

So Pollux was, and wandering Hercules  
attained those shining heights where effort led.  
There equally shall Caesar takes his ease  
and nectar stain those lips with red.

For you were, Bacchus, worthy of that course  
with untamed necks of tigers, charioting on,  
as Romulus, possessing Mar's own horse,  
escaped the shades of Ácheron.

Juno, in the council of the gods, declared  
that Ilium to her was as the dust.

'So has that false and sinful judgement fared  
when left to foreign woman's lust.



For citizens and chaste Minerva were  
in debt to me, as was Laōmedon.

But those who would deceive a god incur  
gross penalties, and so are gone

both famed adulteress and her faithless guest.  
Nor more does Priam's house, at ten-year cost,  
attempt to stem the fierce Achaean zest  
for slaughter. Hector's aid is lost

to warfare tolerated far too long.

What point has anger now? Nor have I scorn  
belatedly for grandson of a wrong  
who was of Trojan priestess born

to Mars. No, send him back and show him grace  
to enter in these realms of light, to draw  
on sweetest nectar, and to take a place  
among the peaceful ranks before.

Let exiles happily, though far from home,  
adopt what hearth they want, though there should be  
between the Trojan realms and lands of Rome  
sufficient width of roaring sea.



Let cattle walk where Priam and his son  
have died, unpunished have the wild beasts breed,  
and make the Capitol of marble won  
by arms hold cowed the conquered Mede.

A name that's rightly feared to furthest shores  
extend now from the Straits of Hercules  
to where the Nile in irrigation pours  
its riches out, and labour sees

no need for gold, but finds it better left  
concealed within the earth than have rude hands,  
extracting all, declare a realm bereft  
of rightful good. Whatever lands

will mark the widest boundaries of the earth,  
are therefore Rome's by might, from where  
the shifting maze of solar fires have birth  
to places lost in rainy air.

And so I prophesy, with this aside:  
they be not overconfident, nor joy  
in ostentatious piety or pride,  
nor build again the roofs of Troy.



With Troy's revival would good fortune die  
and fresh disaster follow earlier rout,  
    be sure as Jove's own wife and sister I  
    would lead victorious armies out.

If three times more her walls of bronze should rise  
then thrice Apollo sees her overborne.

    By Argives three times more the city dies  
    and captives thrice their menfolk mourn.'

Enough of this, my Muse. My playful strings  
to such great arguments do not belong.

    So stop attempting these more heavenly things,  
    and lessening them to trivial song.

feelings general in Rome when Octavian became Augustus in 27 BC and signalled the effective end of the Republic.

The 'unpunished have the wild beasts breed' is strictly 'unpunished have the beasts conceal their young', and the 'of marble won' is simply 'gleaming' in the Latin.



Four

Come throned Calliope, and from the sky  
descend and pipe a drawn-out melody,  
or otherwise with Apollo's lute reply  
and with your own clear voice decree

we hear you. Do we? Now the song begins  
to lead me with its haunting tunes. It seems  
I wander sacred groves wherever winds  
will murmur with the running streams.

For once in childhood, from Apulia's care  
and under fabled Vultur's shadowed eaves  
I slept in weariness from play, and there  
the wood-doves covered me with leaves

fresh shaken down: a wonder none explains  
the length of Acherontia's eagle's nest,  
from Bantia's woods to rich Forentum plains  
that with wide meadowlands are blest.

And there I slumbered safe from bears and snakes  
my head with laurel and sweet myrtle crowned,  
a fearless child whom seeming nothing wakes  
and by the gods kept warm and sound,



so clearly of the Muses: wholly yours  
in Sabine Hills, the cool Praeneste way,  
by Tibur slopes, or cloudless Baiae's shores  
or anywhere I chose to stray.

A friend of sacred fountains, choral dance,  
escaping rout of Philippi, set free  
from falling trunk, from Palinurus' chance  
of death at sea off Sicily.

How happily I'd cross, in such safe hands,  
the raging Bosphorus: nor would I fear  
to press on through the burning desert sands  
that border Syrian shores. To drear

and hostile Britain go, would see the horse  
whose blood the wild Cantabrians drink, would haste  
to see Gelonian quivers and would course  
across the watered Scythian waste

unharm'd. For you it is among Pierian caves  
commune with great Augustus, who must rest  
his wearied troops in cities, though much craves  
to put his great task down. You blest

uos lene consilium et datis et dato  
 gaudetis, almae. Scimus ut impios  
     Titanas immanemque turbam  
     fulmine sustulerit caduco,  
 qui terram inertem, qui mare temperat           45  
 uentosum et urbes regnaque tristia  
     diuosque mortalisque turmas  
     imperio regit unus aequo.  
 Magnum illa terrorem intulerat Ioui  
 fidens iuuentus horrida bracchiis               50  
     fratresque tendentes opaco  
     Pelion imposuisse Olympo.  
 Sed quid Typhoeus et ualidus Mimas  
 aut quid minaci Porphyryon statu,  
     quid Rhoetus euolsisque truncis               55  
     Enceladus iaculator audax  
 contra sonantem Palladis aegida  
 possent ruentes? Hinc audus stetit  
     Volcanus, hinc matrona Iuno et  
     nunquam umeris positurus arcum,               60

and gentle spirits who sweet words bestow,  
delighting in them, know that heavenly vaults  
were at the Titans' threatened overthrow  
struck down by heaven's thunderbolts.

For Jove it is who rules the stormy seas,  
the silent earth, the worlds of darkness: all  
those there are subject to his wise decrees,  
gods and mortal men withal.

On him what mighty terror they'd impose:  
the brothers, monsters with those bristling arms  
when onto shaded high Olympus rose  
rough Pēlion. What wild alarms

there were, but could the mightiest prevail:  
Porphýrion, or Mimas, Týphoeus?  
Or could the more alarming Rhoetus scale  
those heights? Encēladus

who hurled uprooted trees against Minerva's  
shield? On one side eager Vulcan stands:  
against him mother Juno and Patera's  
god, that one of Delos lands



who's never found without positioned bow  
on shoulder, bathing his unloosened hair  
in crystalline Castalian dew that grow  
in Lycian woods and thickets there.

Unthinking strength will fall by its own weight,  
and gods advise more temperate use, impress  
on us their hatred of that wakened state  
intent on its own wickedness.

For witnesses of this let Gyas show,  
the hundred-handed, with Orion named  
as chaste Diana's dissipated foe,  
who was with arrow felled and tamed.

Earth, heaped with monstrous children, mourns  
for offspring Orchus sent, by thunderbolts  
to pallid realms below. No fire suborns  
fierce Etna's hunger yet, or halts

the vultures feasting on while liver last  
of criminally licentious Tityos,  
and still three hundred shackles pinion fast  
the adulterer Pirithoüs.

Tityos was punished for attacking Latona by having his liver constantly fed to a vulture. The hundred-handed Gyas was the son of Uranus and Gaius who helped Zeus overthrow the Titans. The Castalian spring was on Parnassus. Pirithoüs went with Theseus to carry off Proserpina, but Hercules could only save Theseus.

V

Caelo tonantem credidimus Iouem regnare: praesens diuus habebitur Augustus adiectis Britannis imperio grauibusque Persis.	
Milesne Crassi coniuge barbara turpis maritus uixit et hostium, pro curia inuersique mores! consenuit socerorum in armis sub rege Medo Marsus et Apulus anciliorum et nominis et togae	5      10
oblitus aeternaeque Vestae, incolumi Ioue et urbe Roma? Hoc cauerat mens prouida Reguli dissentientis condicionibus foedis et exemplo trahenti	     15
perniciem ueniens in aeuum, si non periret in miserabilis captius pubes: 'Signa ego Punicis adfixa delubris et arma militibus sine caede' dixit	   20

Five

Though heaven's thundering makes Jove our king,  
defeats of Persians and of Britains go  
to make Augustus through his conquering  
a god among us here below.

When Crassus' soldiers took barbarian wives —  
against our customs, as the Senate goes —  
the men grew old, their fighting lives  
in service to their fathers' foes.

Though Marsians and Apulians forget  
the Roman toga, shield and Vestal flame  
in service to a Persian ruler, yet  
our Jove protected Rome the same.

It was just this that Regulus foresaw  
when he denounced the peace that spelt disgrace:  
he knew the dangerous precedent would draw  
down ruin on an unborn race

if pity for those captured men prevailed.

'Our swords surrendered with no lifeblood shed,  
and in the Punic shrines our standards trailed:  
all this my eyes have seen', he said.

'derepta uidi; uidi ego ciuium  
retorta tergo bracchia libero  
portasque non clausas et arua  
Marte coli populata nostro.  
Auro repensus scilicet acrior 25  
miles redibit. Flagitio additis  
damnum. Neque amissos colores  
lana refert medicata fuco,  
nec uera uirtus, cum semel excidit,  
curat reponi deterioribus. 30  
Si pugnat extricata densis  
cerua plagis, erit ille fortis,  
qui perfidis se credidit hostibus,  
et Marte Poenos proteret altero,  
qui lora restrictis lacertis 35  
sensit iners timuitque mortem.  
Hic, unde uitam sumeret inscius,  
pacem duello miscuit. O pudor!  
o magna Carthago, probrosis  
altior Italiae ruinis!' 40

'The city gates of foes left open wide,  
and pinioned slaves that were our countrymen,  
and still the fields we sowed with salt provide  
abundant harvests once again.'

'You think a man bought off with gold will pull  
his weight thereafter and more keenly fight?  
The very shame unmans him: can the wool,  
once purple dyed, return to white?'

'For when expelled, true bravery forgets  
the ruined soul from which it's driven out.  
No more will deer released from hunting nets  
return to fight another bout

than one who's parleyed with his treacherous foes,  
and suffered manacles and feared the worst  
can then revive, and bravely trade his blows  
that Carthage once again be cursed.'

'He's one who's ignorant of how life was,  
in shame would mix up peace and war, and hence  
increase the mounting Punic threat because  
of Italy's crass decadence.'



But Regulus, however, so it's said,  
put kisses of his wife and child aside,  
attention fixed upon the ground instead,  
unselfishly by action tried

to be example of a country's need,  
which then the wavering Senate could not make.  
Against whatever grieving friends would plead  
he chose what none would undertake.

He knew what barbarous torture was in store  
but, in eluding those who'd stop him go,  
he only seemed to hurry on the more  
to noble banishment, as though

at last, with tedious court case spoken for,  
he now could leave the litigants and fare  
on to meadowed Vēnafrum, or  
Tarentum with its Spartan air.



Six

However guiltless of your father's crimes  
you Romans still must make amends: restore  
the fallen images that smoke begrimes,  
rebuild the temples as before.

You may well rule the small, but will condemn  
yourselves opposing gods' supremacy.  
The outcome's theirs, and your neglect of them  
will bring much harm to Italy.

Twice Pācorus and Monāeses  
resisted our ill-omened arms, to foil  
our talk of rightful conquest, and increase  
the Roman torques in paltry spoil.

How close destruction came: the city neared  
demise by civil unrest and deceit —  
from Dacians, for arrows rightly feared,  
and from the Ethiopian fleet.

Our age so large with wickedness has first  
defiled the marriage bed, descent and home:  
the source of sure disaster, which then cursed  
the fatherland and men of Rome.

Motus doceri gaudet Ionicos  
 matura uirgo et fingitur artibus,  
     iam nunc et incestos amores  
     de tenero meditatur ungui.  
 Mox iuniores quaerit adulteros 25  
 inter mariti uina, neque eligit  
     cui donet inpermissa raptim  
     gaudia luminibus remotis,  
 sed iussa coram non sine conscio  
 surgit marito, seu uocat institor 30  
     seu nauis Hispanae magister,  
     dedecorum pretiosus emptor.  
 Non his iuuentus orta parentibus  
 infecit aequor sanguine Punico  
     Pyrrhumque et ingentem cecidit 35  
     Antiochum Hannibalemque dirum;  
 sed rusticorum mascula militum  
 proles, Sabellis docta ligonibus  
     uersare glaebas et seuerae  
     matris ad arbitrium recisos 40

The young girl learns the lively Grecian dance,  
delighting in it till performance sends  
her off on sinful ways, to more enhance  
that forwardness her presence lends

to husband's dinner groups. She searches round  
for younger partners, loosing virtue's mask  
when lights are distant, looking at a bound  
to grant the sinful things they ask.

With spouse complicit with it there or not,  
some peddler soon becomes the latest flame.  
Or some Hispanic captain follows, hot  
to pay his passage fee to shame.

Not so the youths of older parentage  
that stained the Punic Sea with blood, for all  
that Pyrrhus and Antiochus could wage  
fierce war, as could cruel Hannibal.

But yet our countrymen were rustics, trained  
to turn the Sabine furrow with the hoe,  
to haul back home the logs their effort gained,  
commanded by stern mothers so.

portare fustis, sol ubi montium  
mutaret umbras et iuga demeret  
bobus fatigatis, amicum  
tempus agens abeunte curru.

Damnosa quid non inminuit dies?

45

aetas parentum, peior auis, tulit  
nos nequiores, mox daturos  
progeniem uitiosiore.

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Roman reverses and the decline in moral fortitude.

**Details:** Pacorus and Monaeses illustrated Roman failures in the east. The Parthian king Monaeses defeated Antony in 36 BC, and Pacorus may refer to the defeat of Crassus in 53 BC. Victories over the Dacians and Egypt (Actium) were hard-fought battles, as were those against Hannibal in the Punic Wars. Pyrrhus, the Greek general and statesman, was a fierce opponent of early Rome. Antiochus is one of the many kings of Seleucia with whom the Romans struggled for ascendancy over the Macedonian kingdoms.

The rendering is a little free in places. The 'What won't the detrimental days not curse?' is strictly 'What do the detrimental days not diminish?'

With them the weary bullocks found reprieve  
in seeing shadows from the mountains fall,  
and sun from charioting then take its leave  
and bring a welcome rest to all.

What won't the detrimental days not curse?  
Evil as our parents were, that ill  
is like to make our generation worse,  
and children more corrupted still.

## VII

Quid fles, Asterie, quem tibi candidi  
primo restituent uere Fauonii

Thyna merce beatum,  
constantis iuuenem fide

Gygen? Ille Notis actus ad Oricum 5  
post insana Caprae sidera frigidas  
noctes non sine multis  
insomnis lacrimis agit.

Atqui sollicitae nuntius hospitae,  
suspirare Chloen et miseram tuis 10  
dicens ignibus uri,  
temptat mille uafere modis.

Vt Proetum mulier perfida credulum  
falsis inpulerit criminibus nimis  
casto Bellerophontae 15  
maturare necem, refert;

narrat paene datum Pelea Tartaro,  
Magnessam Hippolyten dum fugit abstinens,  
et peccare docentis  
fallax historias monet. 20

## Seven

Why weep for Gyges when Favonian airs  
will bear him homeward in the spring, his store  
of rich Bithynian wares  
to sell, and faithful as before —

Astēria? Beneath the Goat's crazed star  
the east wind drove him on to Ōricum.  
For him all sleep is far;  
with tears for her he's overcome.

Not so his hostess Chloë. No, she sends  
a charming messenger to tell the blaze  
her husband's presence lends:  
she tempts him in a thousand ways.

She tells him how a faithless woman's breath  
with lies and stratagems pushed Proteus on  
to plot too fast a death  
for rashly chaste Bellērophon.

And warns how Peleus was all but killed  
by shunned Magnessian Hippōlyta.  
But still these stories build  
to nothing, no inamorata

Frustra: nam scopulis surdior Icari  
 uocis audit adhuc integer. At tibi  
     ne uicinus Enipeus  
     plus iusto placeat caue;  
 quamuis non alius flectere equum sciens                   25  
 aeque conspicitur gramine Martio,  
     nec quisquam citus aeque  
     Tusco denatat alueo,  
 prima nocte domum claude neque in uias  
 sub cantu querulae despice tibiae                         30  
     et te saepe uocanti  
     duram difficilis mane.

**Measure:** Fourth Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Constancy.

**Details:** Favonian refers to the west wind. Bithynia was a Roman province in northwestern Asia Minor. Oricum was a Greek city in the northern part of Epirus (now southern Albania). Peleus, the father of Achilles, repulsed the advances of Astydameia (Magnesian Hippolyta), the wife of Acastus who, being told that Peleus had seduced Astydameia, tried to have Peleus killed by Centaurs. Bellerophon, the most skilled equestrian of his day, met the jealous Proteus the son-in-law of Iobates, king of Lycia, on his travels. Peleus sent him to kill the Chimaera, but certain death was averted by Athena, who provided a golden bridle to ride the horse Pegasus.

there for him. Let's, Astēria, discuss,  
while Gyges stays as is Icarian stone,  
    how near is Enipēus,  
    improperly so charming grown.

No one's his equal on the Field of Mars,  
or so considered, with his well-trained horse.  
    None more, in swimming, spars  
    with Tiber on its hurtling course.

So best your doors be shut and locked when late,  
and at his plaintive pipings do not show.  
    He calls you obdurate?  
    Then let him ever find you so.



Eight

March's Kalends come, to man unwed.  
What should we do with flower-hung scene?  
What on fresh turf, where coals glow red,  
does incense mean?

As you will know, in both tongues skilled,  
I am a Bacchus devotee,  
recalling time when well-nigh killed  
by falling tree.

And so when festive time draws near  
I draw a pitch-sealed jar again,  
pour contents from the consul year  
of Tullus then.

Let's celebrate the length of day,  
while lights, Maecenas, flicker yet  
for friend's escape, and send away  
all noise and fret.

Discount what cares the city sends:  
the Dacian army is no more,  
and even the Parthian descends  
to civil war.

seruit Hispanae uetus hostis orae  
Cantaber sera domitus catena,  
iam Scythae laxo meditantur arcu  
cedere campis.

Neglegens ne qua populus laboret,  
parce priuatus nimium cauere et  
dona praesentis cape laetus horae,  
linque severa.

25

**Measure:** Sapphic.

**Theme:** Maecenas' birthday.

**Details:** Kalends were the first day of the month in the Roman calendar. Bacchus was the Roman god of wine and intoxication, often equated with Dionysus. Lucio Volcacio Tullo was consul in 33 BC. Dacia was modern Bulgaria and Moldova. The Parthians ruled what is now Iran. The Cantabrians were a Celtic people occupying northern Spain. The content is a little compressed to meet the Sapphic metre: 'incense' is 'box of incense' in the Latin, the 'Dacian army' is 'Cotiso's Dacian army', 'fare with happy things' is 'forget stern things', etc.

Cantabrians along the coast  
are slaves, and so accept their chains.  
Of arrows Scythians no more boast  
but leave their plains.

As private citizen forbear  
all city talk and what it brings,  
that passing hour may better fare  
with happier things.

## IX

'Donec gratus eram tibi  
nec quisquam potior bracchia candidae  
ceruici iuuenis dabat,  
Persarum uigui rege beatior.'

'Donec non alia magis 5  
arsisti neque erat Lydia post Chloen,  
multi Lydia nominis,  
Romana uigui clarior Ilia.'

'Me nunc Thressa Chloe regit,  
dulcis docta modos et citharae sciens, 10  
pro qua non metuam mori,  
si parcent animae fata superstiti.'

'Me torret face mutua  
Thurini Calais filius Ornyti,  
pro quo bis patiar mori, 15  
si parcent puero fata superstiti.'

'Quid si prisca redit Venus  
diductosque iugo cogit aeneo,  
si flaua excutitur Chloe  
reiectaeque patet ianua Lydiae?' 20

Nine

'When this youth, in loving you  
so candidly around your neck would fling  
his fond, warm arms, he was, it's true,  
the more contented than is Persia's king.'

"And when no other names could catch  
with fire, nor Chloë after Lydia came,  
then Lydia's happiness would match  
the strength of Roman Ilia's famous name."

'Now Thracian Chloë is my treasure:  
skilled in words, as of the lyre she plays.  
For her I'd die, if that girl's measure  
were full of spirited and happy days.'

"I too have found another mate  
to burn for: Calais, who's Ornýtus' son.  
For him I'd die twice over, fate  
awarding him the same full days to run."

'Suppose we two, to love returned,  
were brought beneath that brassy yoke once more,  
and he who had his Lydia spurned  
would show the golden Chloë to the door?'

'Quamquam sidere pulchrior  
ille est, tu leuior cortice et inprobo  
    iracundior Hadria,  
tecum uiuere amem, tecum obeam lubens.'

**Measure:** Second Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Lovers' reconciliation.

**Details:** The speakers are probably Horace and a former lover here called Lyde. Chloe and Calais may be pseudonyms. Thrace occupied what is now western Turkey, southern Bulgaria and eastern Greece. Thurii was the city of Lucania on the Tarentine Gulf, i.e. in southernmost Italy.

The rendering is somewhat free, aiming for tone more than correctness. The 'spirited and happy days', for example, is strictly 'if the Fates spare her and her spirit outlasts me'. Similarly line 16. The 'mild and faithful' continues the starlight image, but the Latin is simply 'his love is beautiful as starlight'.

“His love is as the starlight, mild  
and faithful: you are cork bark, never true  
but as the Adriatic, wild:  
yet gladly I would live and die with you.”



Ten

Not, Lycë, if you drank the furthest Don,  
were bound to cruel husband, could you more  
inflict the Aquilōnibus upon  
    this one who's prostrate at your door.

You hear how door is creaking, how the grove  
within your courtyard bends as strong winds blow,  
and how the pure divinity of Jove  
    still glazes over fallen snow.

Venus is not enamoured of disdain:  
the rope may slip although the wheel still turn.  
You're not Penelope with suitors slain,  
    nor yet Etruscan, proud and stern.

Though prayers won't move you, nor this offered will,  
or whitened skin that's tinged with violet,  
or husband lost to Pierian beauty, still  
    your suppliant pleads mercy yet.

And warns you, still unbending as the oak,  
as amiable as is the Moorish snake,  
he'll not forever bear this threshold's yoke  
    nor falling rain — for heaven's sake!

## XI

Mercuri, — nam te docilis magistro  
mouit Amphion lapides canendo —  
tuque testudo resonare septem  
    callida neruis,  
nec loquax olim neque grata, nunc et                     5  
diuitum mensis et amica templis,  
dic modos, Lyde quibus obstinatas  
    applicet auris,  
quae uelut latis equa trima campis  
ludit exultim metuitque tangi,                             10  
nuptiarum expers et adhuc proteruo  
    cruda marito.  
Tu potes tigris comitesque siluas  
ducere et riuos celeres morari;  
cessit inmanis tibi blandienti                             15  
    ianitor aulae  
Cerberus, quamuis furiale centum  
muniant angues caput eius atque  
spiritus taeter saniesque manet  
    ore trilingui.                                                     20

Eleven

Come, Mercury, by whose learnt spell  
Amphion moved the Theban stones,  
make seven strings on tortoiseshell  
return sweet tones

that, once unsought, at wealthy boards  
and temples now are wanted near  
and far, where Lydä well affords  
to lend an ear.

She gambols as a three-year old  
that's fearing still the married state  
and passion, where the years unfold  
to no strong mate.

You lead the tigers and the trees;  
you hold the streams in check; in you  
with Cerberus at Hades sees  
that gate yield too.

A hundred snakes protect that head;  
the breath's infected by such sores  
that still its poisonous froth is sped  
from three-tongued jaws.



Both Īxion and Tityos  
at such a song put harsh cares by,  
and Daunus daughters saw no loss  
as jars ran dry.

Tell Lydē all is not fulfilled  
at once, but much delayed is blame:  
however full those jars were filled  
they leaked the same.

So Hell's most guilty occupants:  
what worse could loving husbands feel  
when faithless wife her love recants  
with chilling steel?

Yet one was worthy of her state  
and tricked her father splendidly:  
let all in truth commemorate  
how girls should be.

'Get up, my husband, lest you stay  
asleep forever: father brings  
you peril through my sisters' way  
of evil things.



Not like the lioness that's felled  
its prey and tears at it I'd be,  
nor have you hurt or ever held  
by lock and key.

And if that earns my father's hate  
that he'd confine or banish me  
to far Numidia, that state  
I too will see.

So take whatever path you will,  
with night and love in amity;  
let carved words on my tomb be still  
lamenting me.'

As is usual with the Sapphic, there are many approximations to an exact rendering. The 'near and far' is my addition. The 'Cerberus' is strictly 'Cerberus the monstrous doorkeeper', for example, and the 'put harsh cares by' is 'unwillingly put harsh cares by'.

## XII

Miserarum est neque amori dare ludum neque dulci  
mala uino lauere aut exanimari metuentis patruae  
uerbera linguae.

Tibi qualum Cythereae puer ales, tibi telas  
operosaeque Mineruae studium aufert, Neobule,  
Liparaei nitor Hebri,

simul unctos Tiberinis umeros lauit in undis, eques  
ipso melior Bellerophonte, neque pugno neque segni  
pede uictus;

catus idem per apertum fugientis agitato grege                    10  
ceruos iaculari et celer arto latitantem fruticeto  
excipere aprum.

**Measure:** Ionic.

**Theme:** Unhappy Neobule.

**Details:** Neobule was engaged to the poet Archilochas, but the name here refers to a fictional character or pseudonym. Winged Cythera's boy is Cupid. The Chimaera was a triple-headed monster that caused havoc in Lydia until Bellerophon, mounted on Pegagus, and given a golden bridle by Minerva, put an end to its life.

## Twelve

How miserable are girls allowed no play,  
nor drink of sweet dark wine, but fear all day  
a lashing from their uncle's tongue.

Neobulë however much you work, and stay  
with quiet Minerva, wool is snatched away  
by Cytherēa's boy. How young

and oiled is Hebrus for the Tiber: on  
a horse that's better than Bellērophon:  
how do those feet and fists compare?

You'll note how skilled he is in spearing deer: they pour  
in startled herds. The thicket-lurking boar  
he comes at when it's unaware.

### XIII

O fons Bandusiae splendidior uitro,  
dulci digne mero non sine floribus,  
    cras donaberis haedo,  
    cui frons turgida cornibus

primis et uenerem et proelia destinat. 5

Frustra: nam gelidos inficiet tibi  
    rubro sanguine riuos  
    lasciui suboles gregis.

Te flagrantis atrox hora Caniculae  
nescit tangere, tu frigus amabile 10  
    fessis uomere tauris  
    praebes et pecori uago.

Fies nobilium tu quoque fontium  
me dicente cauis impositam ilicem  
    saxis, unde loquaces 15  
    lympphae desiliunt tuae.

**Measure:** Fourth Asclepiadean

**Theme:** Fountain of Brandusia.

**Details:** Bandusia is a natural spring in rural Italy, possibly Apulia. The rendering is rather free. The Latin of the 'Tomorrow bring' is 'Tomorrow I bring', for example, and for the 'wandering weary flocks of sheep' the Latin says simply 'wandering flocks'.

## Thirteen

Surely these Bandusian waters bid  
for wine or flowers, being crystal clear?

Tomorrow bring a kid,  
where on its tender brow appear

the buds that bid for love or sovereignty  
in vain: this offspring of the playful herd  
will redden streams and be  
the sacrifice we have preferred.

To you the raging dog-star has to yield  
and cannot vanquish: it's a cool you keep  
for bullocks in the field  
and wandering weary flocks of sheep.

So stay then memorable: your fountain shows  
loquacious waters in their babbling spate,  
as from the cavern grows  
the ilex I shall celebrate.

## XIV

Herculis ritu modo dictus, o plebs,  
morte uenalem petiisse laurum,  
Caesar Hispana repetit penatis  
victor ab ora.

Vnico gaudens mulier marito 5  
prodeat iustis operata sacris  
et soror clari ducis et decorae  
supplice uitta

uirginum matres iuuenumque nuper 10  
sospitum. Vos, o pueri et puellae ac  
iam uirum expertae, male nominatis  
parcite uerbis.

Hic dies uere mihi festus atras  
eximet curas; ego nec tumultum  
nec mori per uim metuam tenente 15  
Caesare terras.

I, pete unguentum, puer, et coronas  
et cadum Marsi memorem duelli,  
Spartacum si qua potuit uagantem  
fallere testa. 20

Fourteen

Like Hercules, O men of Rome,  
defying death, the laurels' cause,  
comes conquering Caesar home  
from Spanish shores.

May wife rejoice in one as he,  
who, having gifts of gods repaid,  
now shines with sister, equally  
adorned with braid

as mothers now whose children fare  
on safely. You of either sex,  
unmarried, still in peace forbear  
from words that vex.

A happy day. I celebrate  
how fears are banished at their birth.  
No civil war or threats await  
this Caesar's earth.

So, boys, with garlands celebrate,  
and vintage that remains to us  
from Marsian Wars, or from the late  
seen Spartacus.

Dic et argutae properet Neaerae  
murreum nodo cohibere crinem;  
si per inuisum mora ianitorem  
fiet, abito.

Lenit albescens animos capillus  
litium et rixae cupidos proteruae;  
non ego hoc ferrem calidus iuuenta  
consule Planco.

25

**Measures:** Sapphic.

**Theme:** Return of Augustus.

**Details:** Hercules, son of Zeus, was the divine hero, famous for his strength and adventures. Spartacus was a Thracian gladiator who helped lead the third great slave revolt. Lucius Munatius Plancus was consul in 42 BC. The translation is rather freely ordered.

Näaera call, with right goodwill,  
well perfumed, with her high-piled hair:  
but if with surly doorman still  
    then leave her there.

That's something I would not ignore  
with Plancus consul: then I'd fight  
with fiery argument, but that's before  
    my hair was white.



## Fifteen

Dear wife of Ībycus the poor,  
it's time to quit your wretched mincing round  
in impudence you're noted for:  
you'll soon be dead, remember, under ground.

You run with other girls to put  
the glittering stars themselves beneath a cloud.  
Yours is not Pholoë's foot,  
who have a daughter, Chloris, one allowed

to chase her lovers to their doors.  
Bacchante-like, the drum's arousing beat  
has made her love for Nothus pause  
no more than does the she-goat fierce on heat.

Come, be your age, wear woollen clothes  
that good Lucēria fashions. No more lyre,  
or perfumes of the deep red rose,  
and from that drinking to the dregs retire.



Sixteen

Those grim bronze towers, the thick oak doors,  
the watch-dog's vigilance and surly bite  
might well have given libertines some pause  
    who'd call on Danaë at night —

except that Jupiter, and Venus too,  
would scorn the anxious guard, Acrīsius:  
the path was safely open, well they knew.

    With servants who were amorous

for gold, a streaming god could slip restraints  
far more than lightning bolts will break through stone,  
and as the Argive auger's house acquaints  
    us with, a greed that's too much grown

brings grief in train. The Macedonian knew  
how wealth bursts city gates, how states will sell  
themselves, how gifts of gold the seas subdue,  
    ensnaring captains there as well.

In truth, as wealth accumulates, so will  
our cares and want of it. That being man's  
propensity, I kept my place, Maecenas, still  
    foremost of Equestrians.



The more a man denies himself, the more  
the gods will richly furnish him. In this, denied  
most things, I leave the monied camp for poor,  
deserting those well satisfied.

I am the glorying lord of wealth I spurn  
as though I hid in barns such rich repute.  
Whatever swift Apulian harvests earn,  
I am of such quite destitute.

Pure water from the streams, a copse or two,  
a confidence in produce from my fields:  
I am more blessed than that great ruler who  
gained all that fertile Libya yields.

Calabrian bees don't bring me honey, nor  
does the Laestrygōnian wine laid down  
secrete for me its mellow sweetness, or  
the wool from Gaul make my renown.

Yet all in all I have enough: I know  
that if I needed more you'd not refuse.  
I count how far each item has to go,  
and keep my wants to what I use.

quam si Mygdoniis regnum Alyattei  
campis continuem. Multa petentibus  
desunt multa; bene est cui deus obtulit  
parca quod satis est manu.

**Measure:** Third Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Value of contentment.

**Details:** Danaë, the daughter of King Acrisius of Argos, was shut up in a tower to prevent the prophecy being fulfilled that her offspring would kill Acrisius. Zeus came to her in a shower of gold, Persius being born of the union. Equestrians, a class of noblemen immediately beneath senators, were given a more managerial and military role by Augustus. The 'Macedonian' is a reference to Phillip II, who conquered Greece. The Laestrygonians were a race of giant cannibals, but Horace was probably referring to Sicily. Calabria is the southernmost part of Italy. Mygdonia was a part of Thrace, later conquered by Macedon, and Lycia was a rich kingdom in what is now the southern Turkish coast. The 'Libya' is 'Africa' in the Latin text.

Join Lydian kingdoms to Mygdōnian plains:  
so grows the greed for more extensive lands.  
Desire for more gains less, and who complains  
of what gods give with careful hands?

## XVII

Aeli uetusto nobilis ab Lamo —  
quando et priores hinc Lamias ferunt  
denominatos et nepotum  
per memores genus omne fastos,

auctore ab illo ducis originem, 5  
qui Formiarum moenia dicitur  
princeps et innantem Maricae  
litoribus tenuisse Lirim,

late tyrannus — cras foliis nemus  
multis et alga litus inutili 10  
demissa tempestas ab Euro  
sternet, aquae nisi fallit augur

annosa cornix. Dum potes, aridum  
conpone lignum; cras Genium mero  
curabis et porco bimenstri 15  
cum famulis operum solutis.

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Tribute to Aelius Lamia: prepare for storms.

**Details:** Lucius Aelius Lamia was a partisan of Cicero and praetor in 43 BC. Formiae (now Formia) was an Italian city located between Rome and Naples. Liris was one of the principal rivers of Italy, flowing from the Apennine into the Tyrrhenian Sea below Mintuno, where Marica (a nymph and mother of Latinus) had a shrine.

## Seventeen

Aēlius Lamia, a noble son  
of that illustrious Lamus parentage,  
of ancient Lamiae who well have won  
a name on our recorded page.

Your ancestor, they say, was that brute king  
who built the walls of Formiae, where still  
the waters of the welling Lyris cling  
to shores of Mārica, and spill

out far and wide. Tomorrow, you should know,  
an Eastern gale arrives: the leaves will throng  
the woods, as weeds the shore, unless the crow,  
that harbinger of rain, prove wrong.

So pile up firewood as the days predict,  
and bring your servants in from coming cold,  
and there, tomorrow, drink your wine umixed  
and roast a piglet two months old.

The 'bring your servants in from coming cold' is rather free: the Latin says  
'release your servants from their labour'.



## Eighteen

Beloved of Faunus, Nymphs who run  
across the boundaries of my farm,  
now keep, as blest beneath the sun,  
my stock from harm.

And I will mark the parting year  
with offered kid and bowls of wine  
so, friend to Venus, there appear  
fresh smoke from shrine.

To grassy fields the neighbours come,  
and in December join the flocks,  
a joyous festival with some  
long rest for ox.

My lambs the wolf will circle round  
and woods return to leafless states,  
the ditcher gladly dig the ground  
of land he hates.

**Details:** Faunus was the Roman god of the woods, later identified with Pan. There are the compressions usual with the Sapphic rendering: the 'stock' should be 'young stock', 'December' should be '9<sup>th</sup> December', 'ox' should be 'communal ox', and 'dig' should be 'dig in triple measure'.

## XIX

Quantum distet ab Inacho Codrus, pro patria non timidus mori, narras, et genus Aeaci, et pugnata sacro bella sub Ilio.	
Quo Chium pretio cadum mercemur, quis aquam temperet ignibus, quo praebente domum et quota Paelignis caream frigoribus, taces.	5
Da lunae propere nouae, da noctis mediae, da, puer, auguris Murenae. Tribus aut nouem miscentur cyathis pocula commodis?	10
Qui Musas amat imparis, ternos ter cyathos attonitus petet uates, tris prohibet supra rixarum metuens tangere Gratia nudis iuncat sororibus.	15
Insanire iuuat... Cur Berecyntiae cessant flamina tibiae? Cur pendet tacita fistula cum lyra?	20

## Nineteen

From Codrus on to Īnachus  
you tell: of service done when country calls,  
and how the line of Áeacus  
had fought at Ilium's far-hallowed walls.

But not what Chios wine is sold  
at, nor who'll warm it, where we'll drink our fill,  
nor when the Pāelignian cold  
will leave: on these you're unavailing still.

Let's toast the midnight moon in wine,  
and with Murēna augur, boy, we'll test  
if three good measures or to nine  
of wine to water mixtures be the best.

Of three times three the poet sings,  
who loves odd-numbered Muses, so the one  
avoiding quarrels Graces bring  
to naked sisters, sees that three has won.

I'm given to raving boisterously,  
but tell me why the Berecyntian flute  
we hear no music from, but see  
the pipe and lyre together hanging mute?

Parcentis ego dexteras  
odi: sparge rosas; audiat inuidus  
dementem strepitum Lycus,  
et uicina seni non habilis Lyco.

Spissa te nitidum coma, 25  
puro te similem, Telephe, Vespero  
tempestiua petit Rhode:  
me lentus Glyceræ torret amor meae.

**Measure:** Second Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Invitation to a banquet celebrating Murena's election as augur.

**Details:** The Murena referred to may be A. Terentius Varro Lucius Murena, but the identification isn't certain. Augurs were important priests and officials in the Roman world. Codrus was the last of the semi-mythical kings of Athens, and Inachos was the first. King Aeacus, the son of Zeus and Aegina, was the father of Peleus and Telamon. Celebrated for justice, he became one of the judges of the dead. The Paelignians were a race that lived in south-central Italy in what is now the Abruzzi region. The temperate 'one' is one of the Graces, named so in the Latin, but unspecified. Berecynthian refers to Cybele.

There are a few compressions: 'naked sisters' is 'sisters when when linked and naked'. The 'boisterously' is my addition. The 'evening star' should be 'pure evening star'.

I hate a careful hand that spares  
but single rose, but Lycus, even more  
with envy, hates the noisy airs  
of pretty neighbour he is too old for.

Telephus, of your bright hair  
will Rhoda, fully ripened, never tire.

You stay her evening star, and fair  
Glycēra burns in me with slothful fire.



Twenty

Avoid it, Pyrrhus: can't you see  
Gaetulian's lion's cub brings grief  
to combatants? For soon you'll flee  
as does the thief,

while she advances through the ranks  
of boys for fair Neārchus, stirs  
the contest, whether triumph's thanks  
be yours or hers.

While you make arrows for the fight,  
she sharpens teeth, and means you harm.  
But battle judge will choose aright,  
bare foot on palm.

About his perfumed shoulder play  
cool winds. Like Ganymede he seems,  
or Nīreus, even, snatched away  
from Ida's streams.

and beautiful youth, was abducted by Zeus. Nereus was the eldest son of Pontus (Sea) and Gaia (Earth), but Horace may be referring here to a later tradition where Nereus is the watery consort of Venus. Ida refers to the sacred mountain of that name, either in Crete or the Troad region of Turkey. There are the usual compressions. The 'Gaetulian's lion's cub brings grief to combatants' conflates two sentences: 'dangerous to provoke the Getulian lioness's cub' and 'fleeing violent conflict'.



Twenty-one

Whether, winejar born the year as me  
in Manlius's consulship, you bring  
    laughs, complaints or quarrels, lunacy  
    in love or sleep in everything.

Whatever festival that Massic juice  
will mark, it's worthy of that happy day.  
    Come, Corvinus, bid us now produce  
    a mellower vintage. I obey.

No one imbued with words as Socrates  
would be so virtuous to decline:  
such vintage would the elder Cato please,  
    who warmed, they say, when into wine.

To dullest wits you give your gentle force,  
and lift the cares of wise men so they see  
    when through the brain their secret thinkings course,  
    for such are wine's sweet pleasantries.

You bring fresh hope to minds distressed,  
and to the poor belief in better things:  
    through you he's not by soldiers' weapons pressed  
    nor by the threatening crown of kings.

Te Liber et si laeta aderit Venus  
segnesque nodum soluere Gratiae  
    uiuaeque procucent lucernae,  
    dum rediens fugat astra Phoebus.

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** To a wine jar.

**Details:** L. Manlius Torquatus was consul in 65 BC, the year of Horace's birth. Marcus Valerius Messalla Corvinus was the patron of Horace's fellow poet Tibullus, and much addicted to wine. Cato the Elder was a soldier, author and orator, whose life epitomised the ancient Republican virtues. Liber was a Roman god of wine and fertility, later identified with Dionysus. Phoebus was Apollo, i.e. the sun. 'I obey' is my addition.

Here Bacchus and consenting Venus stay,  
and Graces slow to loose their knot. The night  
will see the oil-lamps winking on till day  
and Phoebus put the stars to flight.



Twenty-two

Virgin haunting hill and grove,  
who aid when childbirth is begun,  
who, thrice-called, saved and ever strove  
as three in one.

To pine that shades my farm I bring,  
and ever will in annual trust,  
the blood of boar that's practising  
its sideways thrust.



Twenty-three

If, Phīdylē, as each new moon is born  
to skies above you'd raise your up-turned palm,  
or would to Lares offer new-threshed corn,  
or suckling pig, they'll come no harm

from mildew that infects the wheat, nor brute,  
hard Southerlies that flatten vineyards, nor,  
when it is difficult, with heavy fruit,  
your yearlings crop prove all too poor.

But since the destined victim in the snows  
of Álgidus, by oak and ilex fed,  
or one that in the Alban meadow grows,  
will stain the priestly axe-blade red,

there is no need to have requests prevail  
with slaughterd sheep and prayers to heavenly powers.  
Give dues to little images, and trail  
there rosemary and myrtle flowers.

If hands that tend the altar are sincere,  
for all no lavishness the altar stain,  
the hostile household gods will surely hear,  
fed sacred corn and winnowed grain.

**Details:** Lares were the guardians of hearth, home and surrounding fields. Algidus was in the Alban hills, 20 km southeast of Rome.

XXIV

Intactis opulentior  
thesauris Arabum et diuitis Indiae  
caementis licet occupes  
terrenum omne tuis et mare publicum:  
si figit adamantinos 5  
summis uerticibus dira Necessitas  
clauos, non animum metu,  
non mortis laqueis expedies caput.  
Campestres melius Scythae,  
quorum plaustra uagas rite trahunt domos, 10  
uiuunt et rigidi Getae  
inmetata quibus iugera liberas  
fruges et Cererem ferunt  
nec cultura placet longior annua  
defunctumque laboribus 15  
aequali recreat sorte uicarius.  
Illic matre carentibus  
priuignis mulier temperat innocens  
nec dotata regit uirum  
coniunx nec nitido fidit adultero; 20

Twenty-four

It hardly matters you possess  
the wealth Arabia or India sees,  
or heap up stoneworks to excess  
upon a land in common or the seas,

if grim Necessity but drive  
her admantine-hard wedges in your head.

Vainly will your spirit strive  
if fear should trammel up your life instead.

Better the life the Scythians lead  
on steppelands where they pull their moving home  
or be the hard Geteaän breed  
who crop their cereals from common loam.

No allocations mark off soil,  
and cultivation's never more than one year's space,  
but each in turn performs his toil  
and finds another then to take his place.

Unselfishly, and as their own,  
the women bring up children lacking home,  
nor need impoverished husbands groan  
how wives must rule them or their lovers roam.



The greatest dowry they possess  
is parent's virtue and strict chastity.

On others' rights they don't transgress:  
for sin is wrong, and death its penalty.

If anyone would have us starved  
of civic strife, impiety or murder, see  
a Father of the City carved  
beneath commissioned statue, let him flee

unbridled licence, win his fame  
among posterity, for we must spite  
true manliness and, to our shame,  
pretend to worship what is far from sight.

What point have lamentations when  
transgressions aren't contained by punishment?

What use are statutes when again  
from gross hypocrisy we can't relent?

It seems that boundlessly we spread  
from torrid zones as far as frozen north:  
nothing deters us, on we head,  
in cunning trade and sail to venture forth

uincunt aequora nauitae?  
 Magnum pauperies obprobrium iubet  
 quiduis et facere et pati  
 uirtutisque uiam deserit arduae.

Vel non in Capitolium 45  
 quo clamor uocat et turba fauentium  
 uel non in mare proximum  
 gemmas et lapides, aurum et inutile,  
 summi materiem mali,  
 mittamus, scelerum si bene paenitet. 50

Eradenda cupidinis  
 prauis sunt elementa et tenerae nimis  
 mentes asperioribus  
 formandae studiis. Nescit equo rudis  
 haerere ingenuus puer 55  
 uenarique timet, ludere doctior  
 seu Graeco iubeas trocho  
 seu malis uetita legibus alea,  
 cum periura patris fides  
 consortem socium fallat et hospites, 60

across the stormiest seas at will,  
for nothing's more depised than poverty.

In everything it drives us till  
we leave the uphill paths of decency.

Though gifts to Capitol will keep  
their vast attraction for our clamouring folk,  
let's pitch into the nearest deep  
the gold and all those precious stones that woke

the greed in us. That matter fills  
our thoughts, so let's repent of sin that finds  
itself the source of just those ills  
that would pollute our poor, untutored minds.

Let's notice how no youth today  
can keep the saddle long but fears to hunt,  
and in his callowness must play  
at games or some unwanted, silly stunt.

When ordered he will act the fool  
with Grecian hoops or cheat at dice — all crass  
amusements while his father pool  
from undone friends and partners some great mass

indignoque pecuniam  
haredi properet. Scilicet improbae  
crescunt diuitiae, tamen  
curtae nescio quid semper abest rei.

**Measure:** Second Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Curse of riches.

**Details:** Getae were a Thracian tribe living north of the Haemus range. The Scythians were a nomadic Saka people living on the central Eurasian steppes. The 'lovers roam' is strictly 'shining lovers'. The 'from gross hypocrisy we can't relent' is an expansion of the Latin 'manners of no use', and the 'or some unwanted, silly stunt' is my addition, as is 'or it owes'.

of profit to enrich an heir  
unworthy of it. Yet, though fast it grows,  
illicitly, the future there  
has always something missing or it owes

XXV

Quo me, Bacche, rapis tui  
plenum? Quae nemora aut quos agor in specus  
uelox mente noua? Quibus  
antrum egregii Caesaris audiar  
aeternum meditans decus 5  
stellis inserere et consilio Iouis?  
Dicam insigne, recens, adhuc  
indictum ore alio. Non secus in iugis  
exsomnia stupet Euhias,  
Hebrum prospiciens et niue candidam 10  
Thracen ac pede barbaro  
lustratam Rhodopen, ut mihi deuio  
ripas et uacuum nemus  
mirari libet. O Naiadum potens  
Baccharumque ualentium 15  
proceras manibus uertere fraxinos,  
nil paruum aut humili modo,  
nil mortale loquar. Dulce periculum est,  
o Linaee, sequi deum  
cingentem uiridi tempora pampino. 20

**Measure:** Second Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Song to Bacchus.

**Details:** Rhodope was a range of mountains in what is now Greece and Bulgaria. Maenads were the ecstatic followers of Dionysus. Naiads were water nymphs presiding over springs, rivers and bodies of fresh water.

Twenty-five

Where, Bacchus, are you taking me,  
who now, so full of you, must know again  
the mind's new, quickening agency,  
as through the forest grove or rocky den

I'm sounding Caesar's praises till  
they're heard by Jove, his councils, those among  
the stars in rightful glory. Still  
a fresh accomplishment remains unsung.

The wondering Maenad does not sleep,  
but from the mountain top in snowy Thrace,  
or at the Hebrus' tumbling leap,  
will see the pure, cleansed Rhodōpē a place

of barbarous footfalls, though I too admire  
wild river banks and echoing forest stand.

Naiäds' master, you inspire  
the Maenads pulling ash trees up by hand.

So nothing trivial shall be mine,  
Lenaëus, passing, born of self-conceit,  
yet, wreathed with fresh leaves of the vine,  
to follow such a dangerous god is sweet.

XXVI

Vixi puellis nuper idoneus  
et militavi non sine gloria;  
nunc arma defunctumque bello  
barbiton hic paries habebit,

laeuom marinae qui Veneris latus 5  
custodit. Hic, hic ponite lucida  
funalia et uectis et arcus  
oppositis foribus minacis.

O quae beatum diua tenes Cyprum et  
Memphin carentem Sithonia niue 10  
regina, sublimi flagello  
tange Chloen semel arrogantem.

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Slighted lover.

**Details:** Memphis was the ancient capital of Lower Egypt, and Sithonian refers to its Thracian (i.e. Macedonian) rulers. The 'narrates' is my addition, and the 'both' is 'facing' in the Latin.

Twenty-six

I served my sweethearts well enough till now  
and not without magnificence was blest.

No more, for sea-born Venus will endow  
my lyre and weapons with but rest.

Enough. Yes, bring the torch-lights flaring round:  
against what left-protecting wall narrates  
I'll set up bow and crowbar to confound  
the enemy at both its gates.

You have rich Cyprus in your rulership,  
and Memphis lacking chill Sithonian yoke:  
at Chloë's arrogance raise high your whip  
and trounce her with a single stroke.

XXVII

Impios parrae recinentis omen  
ducat et praegnans canis aut ab agro  
raua decurrens lupa Lanuuino  
fetaque uolpes;

umpat et serpens iter institutum, 5  
si per obliquom similis sagittae  
terruit mannos: ego cui timebo  
prouidus auspex,

antequam stantis repetat paludes  
imbrium diuina auis inminentum, 10  
oscinem coruum prece suscitabo  
solis ab ortu.

Sis licet felix, ubicumque mauis,  
et memor nostri, Galatea, uiuas,  
teque nec laeuus uetet ire picus 15  
nec uaga cornix.

Sed uides quanto trepidet tumultu  
pronus Orion? Ego quid sit ater  
Hadriae noui sinus et quid albus  
peccet Iapyx. 20

Twenty-seven

May wicked screech-owl's raucous shriek,  
Lanuvian she-wolf soon pup-hung,  
provide the sinful what they seek,  
and vixen young.

Like arrow let the adder dart  
across the road and add to cares  
of frightened horse. To all who start  
I offer prayers

and eastwards call up waterbird  
that lives in standing pools, detain  
the raven, harbinger and heard  
invoking rain.

Be happy in what place you go  
to, Galatēä. Here I say  
no bird that's sinister or crow  
will bar your way.

Orion flickers down to rest,  
and dark the Adriatic sea.  
Storms from out the clear blue west  
rise treacherously.

Hostium uxores puerique caecos  
sentiant motus orientis Austri et  
aequoris nigri fremitum et trementis  
uerbere ripas.

Sic et Europe niueum doloso 25  
credidit tauro latus et scatentem  
beluis pontum mediasque fraudes  
palluit audax.

Nuper in pratis studiosa florum et  
debitae Nymphis opifex coronae 30  
nocte sublustri nihil astra praeter  
uidit et undas.

Quae simul centum tetigit potentem  
oppidis Creten: 'Pater, o relictum  
filiae nomen pietasque' dixit 35  
'uicta furore!

Vnde quo ueni? Leuis una mors est  
uirginum culpae. Vigilansne ploro  
turpe commissum an uitiiis carentem  
ludit imago 40

Let wives and children of our foes  
still feel the force of Southerlies,  
find dark the shores as heavy blows  
will pound the seas.

Europa in her snow-white form  
had loved the bull's deceiving pose,  
but sees in depths such monsters swarm,  
when pale she grows.

So one who'd barely left the fields,  
there weaving flowers for Nymphs' delight,  
sees nothing now: the dark sway yields  
but stars' faint light.

She says, upon the hundred-citied isle  
of Crete, deprived of father's trust,  
'I am no daughter now but vile,  
repellent lust.

Whence have I come, where am I sent?  
No single death for sins like mine.  
Am I awake and innocent,  
or do I pine



for sins that send me endlessly  
through gates towards the dreaming powers?  
How better are these wastes of sea  
than wreaths of flowers?

If met again I would be glad  
enough to strike immediately  
those monster's horns that one time had  
entrammelled me.

I've left my gods, and shamelessly  
keep Orcus waiting for my grave,  
would, powers hear me, nakedly  
roam lion's cave.

Before much sickness wither me,  
or cheeks be drawn and sallow hued,  
while still I'm beautiful, I'd be  
the tiger's food.

My father urges me: "Why wait  
now, vile Europa? Easily  
your sash will help you to your fate  
on that ash tree.



Or if the jagged rocks attract,  
come, trust the winds' and currents' pull.  
If not a servant girl in fact  
and carding wool,

be royal blood, in bondage led  
a slave to savage mistresses.'" Among  
those taunts came Venus, laughing, said,  
boy's bow unstrung

and girl there wronged enough, 'Refrain  
from such admonishment. You hate  
the bull, but tenderly again  
he takes his state.

So no more tears. As wife you wear  
Jove's wealth and his unconquered fame:  
a whole new continent will bear  
Europa's name.'

## XXVIII

Festo quid potius die  
Neptuni faciam? Prome reconditum,  
Lyde, strenua Caecubum  
munitaeque adhibe uim sapientiae.  
Inclinare meridiem 5  
sentis ac, ueluti stet uolucris dies,  
parcis deripere horreo  
cessantem Bibuli consulis amphoram?  
Nos cantabimus inuicem  
Neptunum et uiridis Nereidum comas, 10  
tu curua recines lyra  
Latonam et celeris spicula Cynthiae;  
summo carmine, quae Cnidon  
fulgentisque tenet Cycladas et Paphum  
iunctis uisit oloribus;  
dicetur merita Nox quoque nenia. 15

**Measures:** Second Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Neptune's holiday.

**Details:** Diana was the virgin goddess of the chase: she and Apollo were born to Latona on mount Cynthus in Delos. Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus was co-consul with Caesar in 59 BC. Cnidus was an ancient settlement in Asia Minor, and is now Tekir.

Twenty-eight

What's best on Neptune's holiday  
but, Lydē, broach our treasured old reserve  
of Caecuban without delay,  
extracting wisdom from its own preserve?

See, the midday hour is past  
and yet you're slow to make the cellar trip,  
to bring the winejar that was last  
laid down in Bibulus's consulship.

And so we'll sing in turn to him:  
Neptune with the green-haired Nēreïds,  
while you on curving lyre can hymn  
Latona and the moon-beam's arrowed threads.

We'll sing to Venus — Paphos sees  
her drawn by trains of swans, to her belong  
Cnidus and the Cycladēs —  
and round the night off with a well-earned song.

XXIX

Tyrrhena regum progenies, tibi  
non ante uerso lene merum cado  
    cum flore, Maecenas, rosarum et  
    pressa tuis balanus capillis

amdudum apud me est: eripe te morae                     5  
nec semper udum Tibur et Aefulae  
    decliue contempleris aruom et  
    Telegoni iuga parricidae.

Fastidiosam desere copiam et  
molem propinquam nubibus arduis,                     10  
    omite mirari beatae  
    fumum et opes strepitumque Romae.

Plerumque gratae diuitibus uices  
mundaeque paruo sub lare pauperum  
    cenae sine aulaeis et ostro                             15  
    sollicitam explicuere frontem.

Iam clarus occultum Andromedae pater  
ostendit ignem, iam Procyon furit  
    et stella uesani Leonis  
    sole dies referente siccos;                             20

Twenty-nine

Come, Maecenas, to my house: a jar  
of mellow, untouched wine awaits you there:  
for such a famed descent fresh roses are,  
and balsam too to scent your hair.

Leave whatever fruitless thinking yields.  
and pointless brooding by the Tibur's side.  
Forget for once Aefula's sloping fields  
and heights of that great parricide.

Forgo as well fastidiousness, the rise  
of riches to the lofty clouds, take home  
no thought of that amazing fume that lies  
upon the wealth and noise of Rome.

A change from riches often proves enough  
with things a poor man's house can yet allow:  
the lack of purple, tapestries and suchlike stuff  
may smooth the wrinkles on the brow.

Cepheús, the father of Andromeda  
now glows, which Prōcyon's fierce rage repeats.  
The sun, with Leo frenzied in each star,  
is threatening fast return of heat.

iam pastor umbras cum grege languido  
riuomque fessus quaerit et horridi  
dumeta Siluani caretque  
ripa uagis taciturna uentis.

Tu ciuitatem quis deceat status 25  
curas et urbi sollicitus times  
quid Seres et regnata Cyro  
Bactra parent Tanaisque discors.

Prudens futuri temporis exitum  
caliginosa nocte premit deus 30  
ridetque, si mortalis ultra  
fas trepidat. Quod adest memento

componere aequus; cetera fluminis  
ritu feruntur, nunc medio aequore  
cum pace delabentis Etruscum 35  
in mare, nunc lapides adesos

stirpisque raptas et pecus et domos  
uolentis una, non sine montium  
clamore uicinaeque siluae,  
cum fera diluuies quietos 40

For now the shepherd with his flock of sheep  
goes listlessly in search of shading trees  
and streams of rough Sylvanus, though they keep  
no whisper of a wandering breeze.

You brood on politics, the Seres threat,  
or Bactria that Cyrus ruled, and on  
what rumours Rome be entertaining yet  
or plots emerging from the Don.

A wise god, though, will surely bury what  
the future holds in night's obscurity,  
and smile at agitated mortals not  
content to take how things will be.

Be reconciled to life, the middle stream  
of some great river that is gliding on  
towards Etruscan shores, where it may seem  
a roil of pebbles, huge rock gone

with homes and flocks together borne along,  
reverberating from the forest trees  
to mountain walls, while echoes throng,  
and deluge troubles tributaries.

inritat amnis. Ille potens sui laetusque deget cui licet in diem dixisse: 'Vixi': cras uel atra nube polum Pater occupato	
uel sole puro; non tamen inritum, quodcumque retro est, efficiet neque diffinget infectumque reddet quod fugiens semel hora uexit.	45
Fortuna saeuo laeta negotio et ludum insolentem ludere pertinax transmutat incertos honores, nunc mihi, nunc alii benigna.	50
Laudo manentem; si celeris quatit pinnas, resigno quae dedit et mea uirtute me inuoluo probamque pauperiem sine dote quaero.	55
Non est meum, si mugiat Africis malus procellis, ad miseras preces decurrere et uotis pacisci, ne Cypriae Tyriaeque merces	60

He who rules himself is one allowed  
to think he's truly lived, tomorrow bring  
whatever our great Father wants: black cloud  
the skies or sun in everything.

Whatever's happened is not made untrue  
by our ignoring it, nor can the mind  
erase events, or alter, or undo  
the trace the moment leaves behind.

For fortune's ever savage: it will seem  
unquestionably she plays a haughty game:  
one day and she will bring me her esteem  
and next we'll see some other name.

I praise her while she's here, but when I see  
her quickly flap her wings I thenceforth live  
in plain-spun virtue and dull honesty,  
for all the dowry she could give.

Yet when the tempest roars from Africa  
and strains the trader's mast, it's not for me —  
no trade with Cyprus or with Syria —  
to pray my wealth survive the sea,

addant auaro diuitias mari;  
tunc me biremis praesidio scaphae  
tutum per Aegaeos tumultus  
aura feret geminusque Pollux.

**Measure:** Alcaic.

**Theme:** Invitation to Maecenas.

**Details:** Aefula was an old Latium settlement. Telegonus killed his father Odysseus, and was known as the founder of Tusculum, a city southeast of Rome. Praeneste (now Palestrina) was in the same region. Cepheus married Cassiopeia and was the father of Andromeda: it is a white-hued star of magnitude 2.5, well known to the ancient world. Procyon is the brightest star in the Canis Minor constellation. Bactra was an area south of the Amu Darya, part of Persia once ruled by Cyrus the Great. Sylvanus was the Roman deity of woods and fields. Cator and Pollux were the heavenly twins born of Leda (as were Helen of Troy and Clytemnestra).

The rendering is little free in places: the 'famed descent' is 'descended from Etruscan kings', the 'great parricide is named as Telegonus, and the 'to pray my wealth survive the sea' is in fact 'to pray my wealth survives or be added to the greedy sea'.

but simply hope that breezes carry me,  
with Pollux brothers keeping me afloat  
across the perilous Aegean Sea  
on no more than a two-oared boat.

XXX

Exegi monumentum aere perennius  
reglaliq̄ue situ pyramidum altius,  
quod non imber edax, non aquilo impotens  
possit diruere aut innumerabilis  
annorum series et fuga tempoum. 5

Non omnis moriar multaue pars mei  
vitabit Libitinam; usque ego postera  
crescam laude recens, dum Capitolium  
scandet cum tacita virgine pontifex.  
Dicar, qua violens obstrepiť Aufidus 10

et qua pauper aquae Daunus agrestium  
regnavit poplulorum, ex humili potens,  
princeps Aeolium carmen ad Italos  
deduxisse modos. Sume superbiam  
quaesitam meritis et mihi Delphica 15  
lauro cinge volens, Melpomene, comam.

**Measure:** First Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Poet's immortal fame.

**Details:** the famous ode in which Horace makes his bid for immortality. Libitina is the Roman goddess of burials and death. The silent (vestal) virgin and Pontifex (chief priest) appeared in religious festivals on the small hill of Rome that forms the Capitol. The Aufidas (now Ofanto) was the most important river of southern Italy and flowed through Daunus, a region of north Apulia where Horace was born. Melpomene was a Muse, first of singing and then of tragedy. A few phrases are compressed. The 'rain' is 'devouring rain' in the Latin, for example, and 'virgin' is 'silent virgin'.

## Thirty

A monument more durable than brass  
I've raised, and loftier than the regal towers  
of pyramids, that neither north wind's powers  
nor rain can batter down — for all there pass

the long unheeded passage of the years,  
or time itself. I shall not wholly die:  
my praise will Libitina's self defy  
while virgin on the Capitol appears

beside our Pontifex. Such sights evoke  
the powers from humble parentage, from where  
the Áufidas with roarings fills the air,  
and Daunus rules by stinting simple folk.

By me, Melpōmenē, our verse was led  
to replicate Aeōlian song. High praise  
is yours, well merited, and Delphic bays  
of laurel willingly adorn this head.

## LIBER QVARTVS

I

Intermissa, Venus, diu  
rursus bella moues? Parce precor, precor.

Non sum qualis eram bonae  
sub regno Cinarae. Desine, dulcium  
mater saeua Cupidinum, 5  
circa lustra decem flectere mollibus  
iam durum imperiis: abi,  
quo blandae iuuenum te reuocant preces.

Tempestiuus in domum  
Pauli purpureis ales oloribus 10  
comissabere Maximi,  
si torrere iecur quaeris idoneum;

namque et nobilis et decens  
et pro sollicitis non tacitus reis  
et centum puer artium 15  
late signa feret militiae tuae,  
et, quandoque potentior  
largi muneribus riserit aemuli,

Albanos prope te lacus  
ponet marmoream sub trabe citrea. 20

## BOOK FOUR

One

I beg and beg you, back again  
from battles interrupted, Venus, make  
me not of good Cinara's reign,  
but, savage mother of such loves, forsake

this one of fifty years who's grown  
more cautious of your sweet commands, and mind  
the younger players who have sown  
their fond entreaties you return and find

a worthier recipient.

Paulus Maximus's house indeed  
has surely one to more content  
the owner of such regal wings. Concede

he's young and handsome, nobly born.  
He's good with anxious clients, cannot hide  
his hundred talents, wouldn't scorn  
to bear your army standards full and wide.

He laughs at gifts the rivals make,  
and when successful will erect in proof  
a statue by the Alban Lake  
to you in marble under citrus roof.



Think what perfumes will recruit  
the senses, lyres will play, and in among  
the tuneful Berecynthian flute  
the songs of reedy pipes make good their tongue.

There the tender virgins will entreat  
your heavenly powers, and twice a day be found  
the youthful boys whose soft white feet  
in triple Salian measure beat the ground.

I've lost desire for girl or boy,  
nor have the hopes that mutual trust endows.

Long drinking bouts I don't enjoy,  
nor coronals of freshly gathered flowers.

So why, Ligurinus, are sent  
at times these poor, thin tears to shame the cheek,  
or tongue that was so eloquent  
turn stumbling dumb at what it used to speak?

And why in dreams — for nothing bars  
the ways I hold you — will I watch your flight  
through waters or the plain of Mars  
until, hard-hearted one, you're lost to sight?

The last two lines are strictly 'across the plain of Mars and over winding waters, hard-hearted one' — i.e. the 'you're lost to sight' is only implied.

## II

Pindarum quisquis studet aemulari,  
Iulle, ceratis ope Daedalea  
nititur pinnis, uitreo daturus  
nomina ponto.

Monte decurrens uelut amnis, imbres 5  
quem super notas aluere ripas,  
feruet inmensusque ruit profundo

Pindarus ore,  
laurea donandus Apollinari, 10  
seu per audacis noua dithyrambos

uerba deuoluit numerisque fertur  
lege solutis,  
seu deos regesque canit, deorum  
sanguinem, per quos cecidere iusta  
morte Centauri, cecidit tremendae 15

flamma Chimaerae,  
siue quos Elea domum reducit  
palma caelestis pugilemue equomue  
dicit et centum potiore signis  
munere donat, 20

Two

He who'd be as Pindar fêtes  
himself with feathers and with fame  
to fall like Daedalus in straits  
that gain his name.

The mountain torrent's voice is his,  
one gorged with rain to overflow  
its course, Iullus: one that is  
inestimable still.

He well deserved Apollo's crown,  
who made new words, audaciously  
in dithyrambs to fling them down,  
of old rules free.

Divinities and their descent  
he speaks of, where the centaurs came  
to rightful deaths, the deed that spent  
Chimaera's flame.

Palms won he speaks, of gods of old,  
how homeward hero had outdone,  
by horse and boxing, deeds extolled  
in statues won.



He weeps for young man snatched from bride,  
and honours strength and virtue's gold,  
begrudging all great spirits' pride  
    in Hell's dark hold.

Strong winds lift up the Dircean swan  
for him, Antonius. With me  
it's more the fashion carried on  
    by humble bee,

the small Matinian, that roves  
among the thyme with toil and thanks,  
still labouring between the watered groves  
    of Tibur's banks.

You, the greater poet, make  
for Caesar yet another wreath,  
who climbs the slopes, draws in his wake  
    brute tribes beneath.

No finer on this earth discern  
the gods and even Fate of old,  
nor could they should the years return  
    to age of gold.

Concines laetosque dies et urbis  
 publicum ludum super impetrato  
 fortis Augusti reditu forumque  
     litibus orbum.  
 Tum meae, si quid loquar audiendum,                     45  
 uocis accedet bona pars, et: 'O sol  
 pulcher, o laudande!' canam recepto  
     Caesare felix;  
 teque, dum procedis, io Triumphe!  
 non semel dicemus, io Triumphe!                             50  
 ciuitas omnis, dabimusque diuis  
     tura benignis.  
 Te decem tauri totidemque uaccae,  
 me tener soluet uitulus, relictas  
 matre qui largis iuuenescit herbis                             55  
     in mea uota,  
 fronte curuatos imitatus ignis  
 tertius lunae referentis ortum,  
 qua notam duxit niueus uideri,  
     cetera fuluus.                                                     60

**Measure:** Sapphic.

**Theme:** Unequal to praising Augustus in the appropriate manner.

**Details:** An influential ode written as 'a tribute through imitation' in the headlong Pindar style. Iullus Antonius was the second son of Mark Antony and his third wife Fulvia. The legendary craftsman and inventor Daedalus fashioned waxen wings for himself and son Icarus to escape from Crete.

You'll sing of joy and civic games  
when great Augustus comes; you'll sing  
of order when no quarrel shames  
our governing.

And I in turn, as should be done  
at greatness with us, will have raised  
my voice in joy: 'O glorious sun.'  
'One worthy praised!'

When shouts of Triumph! mark the long  
processionals, it won't suffice  
to hear it once but have all throng  
to sacrifice.

I'll find a tender one year old —  
ten bulls are called for and their cows—  
one fattened in the pasture's fold,  
to make my vows:

so imitate in clear reprise  
of snowy white the horns arrayed,  
as moon upon its third night's rise  
holds dusky shade.

The Matinian coast was the Italian coast of the Adriatic. Elean refers to the Olympic games, and Dircean swan to the acts of Zeus in impregnating Dirce and Leda. Tibur was the modern Tivoli. The original is generally a little fuller in details than this rendering.

### III

Quem tu, Melpomene, semel  
nascentem placido lumine uideris,  
illum non labor Isthmius  
clarabit pugilem, non equus impiger  
curru ducet Achaico 5  
uictorem, neque res bellica Deliis  
ornatum foliis ducem,  
quod regum tumidas contuderit minas,  
ostendet Capitolio;  
sed quae Tibur aquae fertile praefluunt 10  
et spissae nemorum comae  
fingent Aeolio carmine nobilem.  
Romae principis urbium  
dignatur suboles inter amabilis  
uatum ponere me choros, 15  
et iam dente minus mordeor inuido.  
O testudinis aureae  
dulcem quae strepitum, Pieri, temperas,  
o mutis quoque piscibus  
donatura cycni, si libeat, sonum, 20

### Three

Melpōmenē, my Muse, whose eyes  
continually, from birth, have blessed this course,  
you know that Isthmian feat denies  
him fame as boxer, that no prancing horse

will draw triumphal chariot,  
nor one he is whose deeds of war have swelled  
the crowds to Capitol: he's not  
the victor with the Delian crown that's quelled

the threatening menaces of kings,  
but one the waters know, leafed banks along  
of fertile Tibur, one that brings  
to prominence his own Aeōlian song.

So if I'm worthy of that name  
in Rome, the first of cities, am among  
that choir of its great poets' fame  
and not so vulnerable to envy's tongue,

Pierian girl, whose melody  
commands the tortoiseshell and, should you wish,  
the voice of singing swans, and be  
adopted wholesale by the silent fish,

totum muneris hoc tui est,  
quod monstror digito praetereuntium  
    Romanae fidicen lyrae;  
quod spiro et placeo, si placeo, tuum est.

**Measure:** Second Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** To Melpomene.

**Details:** Melpomene was a Muse, first of singing and then of tragedy. Isthmian refers to the Panhellenic games held on the Isthmus of Corinth. Delian was the victor's crown, and Pierian refers to the spring on Mount Olympus, sacred to the Muses. Tibur, the modern Tivoli, was an ancient Sabine town on the Arnio, some 30 km east-northeast of Rome.

so bless me with these Roman lyres,  
and seen as such by passers-by: the cause  
of all that pleases and inspires  
in me, if so it does, is wholly yours.



Four

As did the agent of the thunderbolt,  
whose rule of wandering birds our Jove decreed,  
or once obedience to the heavenly vault  
was shown by snatching Ganymede,

he came: with youth and native vigour, cast  
untried and lately from the nest, this one,  
the winds of spring instruct, restraint now past,  
how new-plied efforts would have won

a sweeping terror, much as tempest shakes  
the sheepfold of its flocks, in action led  
to fierce, tumultuous fights with giant snakes,  
or as the lion freshly bred

whose tawny mother teaches how to kill.  
A roe deer, unsuspecting, grazes round:  
the prey that untried jaws may take, and will —  
for such the Vindelici found

with Drusus warring under Rhaetian heights.  
(Their custom was to use the battleaxe  
as Amazonians brandish in their fights  
with right hand only — facts

dextras obarmet, quaerere distuli,  
nec scire fas est omnia — sed diu  
lateque uictrices cateruae  
consiliis iuuenis reuictae  
sensere, quid mens rite, quid indoles 25  
nutrita faustis sub penetralibus  
posset, quid Augusti paternus  
in pueros animus Neronis.  
Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis;  
est in iuuenis, est in equis patrum 30  
uirtus neque inbellem feroces  
progenerant aquilae columbam;  
doctrina sed uim promouet insitam  
rectique cultus pectora roborant;  
utcumque defecere mores, 35  
indecorant bene nata culpae.  
Quid debeas, o Roma, Neronibus,  
testis Metaurum flumen et Hasdrubal  
deuictus et pulcher fugatis  
ille dies Latio tenebris, 40

I've not established, nor would try to: none  
should seek omniscience or heaven's thought.)

But soon the hordes, which everywhere had won,  
by strategies a young man brought

were felled, and forced to recognize what mind  
and character Augustus had imbued  
his Neros stepsons with, and promptly find  
what father's hopes the house renewed.

From good are born the good, from brave the brave.  
As bulls and horses of their fathers speak:  
for no ferocious eagle nurtures slave,  
nor pigeon but the soft and meek.

Instruction only acts on what is there,  
on rectitude that lives within the breast,  
and grievous moral failure has no share  
in what was nobly born and blest.

For witness, see Metaurus river, Rome,  
and what you owe the Neros, that defeat  
of Hasdrubal, for afterwards our home  
was less assailed by gloom, and sweet



were smiles in Latium that day, the first  
since Hannibal destroyed our towns — with ease  
of fire consuming pine woods, or that cursed  
East wind upon Sicilian seas.

At length all changed. Our youth was not devoid  
of strength and industry, and could afford  
to have what Punic turmoil had destroyed  
in shrines to Roman gods restored.

Yet still the wretched Hannibal declared:  
‘In those weak deer, which are the natural prey  
of wolves, we’re chasing those who, running scared,  
would count it gain to turn away.

Despite their course from burning Troy’s decease  
with gods and children and their aged folk,  
and onward tossed about Etruscan seas  
to Italy, they are as oak

with dark-green leaves upon Mount Álgidus  
that fights its felling by the two-edged axe.  
Implacably, they’re now opposed to us,  
and draw their strength from new attacks.



No less in grief the cut-down Hydra reared  
its heads when conquered by Alcides' hand:  
to date no greater monster has appeared  
in Colchis or in Theban land.

The very drowning in the deep restores  
their former loveliness. They strive for fame  
and glory, worsting freshest foes in wars  
that even spouses speak their name.

No glorious tales I'll send to Carthage now.  
From me and family all hope is sped:  
With fortune fallen, what will times allow  
with Hasdrubal, my brother, dead?

There's nothing Claudian power will not achieve  
with powerful Jove's protection on their side.  
Through all the dangerous perils wars conceive  
a strong, sagacious mind will guide.'

The Latin is often a little fuller. The 'Punic tumult' is 'wicked Punic tumult', for example, but the 'no ferocious eagle nurtures slave, nor pigeon but the soft and meek' is an expansion of the Latin, however, from 'no ferocious, warlike eagle will produce doves'.

V

Diuis orte bonis, optume Romulae  
 custos gentis, abes iam nimium diu;  
 maturum reditum pollicitus patrum  
 sancto consilio redi.

Lucem redde tuae, dux bone, patriae; 5  
 instar ueris enim uoltus ubi tuus  
 adfulsit populo, gratior it dies  
 et soles melius nitent.

Vt mater iuuenem, quem Notus inuido  
 flatu Carpathii trans maris aequora 10  
 cunctantem spatio longius annuo  
 dulci distinet a domo,  
 uotis ominibusque et precibus uocat,  
 curuo nec faciem litore dimouet,  
 sic desideriiis icta fedelibus 15  
 quaerit patria Caesarem.

Tutus bos etenim rura perambulat,  
 nutrit rura Ceres almaque Faustitas,  
 pacatum uolitant per mare nauitae,  
 culpari metuit fides, 20

## Five

Born of bounteous gods, too long away,  
who best defend the tribe of Romulus:  
to wise assemblies come, make no delay  
but swift return as promised us.

Brave leader, let us have your countenance  
illuminate this land again, as spring-  
time sunshine brightens every forward glance  
and makes the days more welcoming.

As mother with her omens, vows and prayers,  
recalls the son dispersed by Southerlies—  
a year from home and safety, on he fares  
across the wide Carpathian seas.

She ever looks for him, and will not turn  
her face from that long curving line of sea—  
so does this country for its Caesar yearn  
in rapt, profound fidelity.

Prosperity and Ceres give increase,  
and cattle wander happily through fields;  
now peacefully the sailor crosses seas,  
and trust to its correction yields.

nullis polluitur casta domus stupris,  
mos et lex maculosum edomuit nefas,  
laudantur simili prole puerperae,  
    culpam poena premit comes.  
Quis Parthum paueat, quis gelidum Scythen,      25  
quis Germania quos horrida parturit  
fetus incolumi Caesare? Quis ferae  
    bellum curet Hiberiae?  
Condit quisque diem collibus in suis  
et uitem uiduas ducit ad arbores;              30  
hinc ad uina redit laetus et alteris  
    te mensis adhibet deum;  
te multa prece, te prosequitur mero  
defuso pateris et Laribus tuum  
miscet numen, uti Graecia Castoris              35  
    et magni memor Herculis.

No house for lechery stands reviled,  
the law and customs thwarting each event.  
The father sees his image in the child,  
and guilt receives prompt punishment.

Who'll brood upon that wild Iberia,  
or savage Germany with its children armed,  
what freezing Scythia or Parthia  
plot if Caesar stay unharmed?

Among the hills each man attends to vines  
and fastens branches to the widowed tree,  
then, at a second course, is pleased with wines  
and praises your divinity.

He sets out bowls of wine and so will add  
your name to prayed-to household deities,  
as Greeks remembering gods were often glad  
of Castor and great Hercules.

'Longas o utinam, dux bone, ferias  
praestes Hesperiae!' dicimus integro  
sicco mane die, dicimus uidi,  
cum sol Oceano subest.

40

**Measure:** Third Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Return, Augustus.

**Details:** The twin brothers, Romulus and Remus, founded Rome. The Carpathian Sea probably refers to the eastern Mediterranean: the island of Karpathos lay 47 km southwest of Rhodes. Iberiai, Parthia and Scythia are modern Spain, Iran and the central Eurasian steppes respectively. Ceres was the goddess of crops and fertility. Castor and Pollux were twins born to Leda and Zeus, and Hercules, son of Zeus, was the divine hero, famous for his strength and adventures.

'With you as noble leader is begun  
an endless peace', we say. From dawning light  
we wet parched lips with wine until the sun  
across the ocean leaves our sight.

A few approximations: the 'trust to its correction yields' is 'trust  
shinks from censure' in the Latin, and the reference to Germany  
in stanza 7 is to the savage offspring that it breeds.

## VI

Diue, quem proles Niobea magnae  
uindicem linguae Tityosque raptor  
sensit et Troiae prope uictor altae

Pthius Achilles,

ceteris maior, tibi miles impar,

5

filius quamuis Thetidis marinae

Dardanas turris quateret tremenda

cuspidē pugnax.

Ille mordaci uelut icta ferro

pinus aut impulsā cupressus Euro

10

procidit late posuitque collum in

puluere Teucro;

ille non inclusus equo Mineruae

sacra mentito male feriatos

troas et laetam Priami choreis

15

falletet aulam;

sed palam captis grauis, heu nefas, heu!

nescios fari pueros Achiuis

ureret flammis, etiam latentem

matris in aluo,

20

Six

The god whose power Niobe's brood  
and Tityos have felt. That one  
who all but lofty Troy subdued,  
    who ever won.

In you Achilles met his peer.  
For all that Thetis blood had gone  
to arm him, he but shook his spear  
    at Ilion.

As pine before the axe, or like  
the cypress at the East Wind's gust,  
he fell, and felt his body strike  
    the foreign dust.

No Teucrians tricked with horse,  
false tribute to Minerva's shrine  
while Priam's celebrations course  
    through dance and wine.

How wickedly, how great the sin:  
he would have sent his captives on —  
both mothers and the lives within  
    to death's flames gone —



had Jove not answered to your plea,  
nor lovely Venus heard your calls,  
which made Aeneas oversee  
well-omened walls.

One Thalia was never loath  
to tutor, one in Xanthus dews  
would bathe, Agýieus: as both,  
defend my muse.

Phoebus gave me vatic fire,  
the skill in singing, poet's name,  
as noble youths made up a choir  
of fathers' fame:

Now all beneath the goddess' sway,  
whose bow no deer or lynxes cheat,  
observe the Sapphic, and obey  
my finger's beat.

You praise Latōna's son and sing  
of rites that fill the waxing moon  
that speeds prosperity, would bring  
the rich months soon:

Nupta iam dices: 'Ego dis amicum,  
saeculo festas referente luces,  
reddidi carmen docilis modorum  
uatis Horati.'

**Measure:** Sapphic.

**Theme:** Invocation to Apollo.

**Details:** Many of the proper names refer to incidents and characters in the Trojan War: Ilion (Troy), Argives (Greeks,) Teucrians (Trojans), Aeneas (legendary Trojan founder of Rome), Xanthus (river of Troy) and Thalia (one of 32 Nereids who mourned the death of Achilles). Indeed, from the marriage of Thetis (a sea nymph) to the Greek hero Peleus came Achilles (the Greek hero) but also the Trojan War. Homer's Illiad also mentions Niobe, the daughter of king Tantalus, who was punished for excessive pride by the loss of all her children: they were killed by Apollo and Artemis. Agyieus was the Greek epithet of Apollo, who was Latona's son. Tityos was punished for attacking Latona by having his liver constantly fed to a vulture. Carmena (not translated here) was the Roman goddess of poetry. Daunian refers to Italian, or, more strictly, Apulia, Horace's birthplace, which was formerly known as Daunia.

observe the married chant a song  
beloved of gods, for 'From that day  
recalled, to Horace still belong  
the words we say.'

.

The rendering is much compressed in places. 'The god whose power  
Niobe's brood and Tityos have felt' is strictly 'God, you who punish Niobe's  
many children and avenger of the words of Tityos, the ravisher, has felt'  
The 'One Thalia was never loath to tutor' is strictly 'Phoebus the musician  
and teacher of the lyricist Thalia', and so on. The rendering conveys the  
sense but not all the details.

## VII

Diffugere niues, redeunt iam gramina campis  
    arboribus comae;  
mutat terra uices et decrescentia ripas  
    flumina praetereunt;  
Gratia cum Nymphis geminisque sororibus audet         5  
    ducere nuda chorus.  
Immortalia ne speres, monet annus et alium  
    quae rapit hora diem.  
Frigora mitescunt Zephyris, uer proterit aestas,  
    interitura simul                                                 10  
pomifer autumnus fruges effuderit, et mox  
    bruma recurrit iners.  
Damna tamen celeres reparant caelestia lunae:  
    nos ubi decidimus  
quo pater Aeneas, quo diues Tullus et Ancus,             15  
    pulis et umbra sumus.  
Quis scit an adiciant hodiernae crastina summae  
    tempora di superi?  
Cuncta manus auidas fugient heredis, amico  
    quae dederis animo.                                                 20

## Seven

The snows are fled away, the fields new grassed,  
and trees are filled with leaves' rebirth.

The streams, diminishing, flow quietly past,  
and in its turn is changed the earth.

In blatant nakedness the Graces play,  
and with the Nymphs are chorusing:  
recall, as hour and year remove the day,  
in time there passes everything.

Cold melts before the western winds, and spring  
is soon on summer's traces, then  
comes autumn with its ripe fruit scattering,  
and lifeless winter's chill again.

Though moon on moon makes good the heavens' waste,  
we go on deathward still, and must  
with Tullus, and with Ancus lie, and haste  
with good Aeneas into dust.

Who knows what time we have, if gods on high  
will add tomorrow to our wealth?  
Take all the hand can hold, for why deny  
your soul what heir will grasp himself?

Cum semel occideris et de te splendida Minos  
fecerit arbitria,  
non, Torquate, genus, non te facundia, non te  
restituēt pietas;  
infernīs neque enim tenebris Diana pudicū 25  
liberat Hippolytū,  
nec Lethaea ualet Theseus abrumpere caro  
uincula Pirithoo.

**Measure:** Second Archilochean.

**Theme:** Life passes ineluctably.

**Details:** Aeneas was the legendary first king of Rome, Tullus Hostilius the third and Marcus Ancus the fourth. Minos was one of the three judges of the underworld. Hippolytus was the chaste son of Theseus, with whom his wife Phaedra fell in love. Theseus and Pirithoüs tried to abduct Persephone, queen of the underworld, but only Theseus escaped imprisonment. The identity of Torquatus (if any) is not known.

The rendering is a little free in places. The 'recall as hour and year remove the day, in time there passes everything' is strictly 'the year and the hour snatch the sustaining day away and warns you not to hope for undying things'. The 'dust' is 'shadows and dust' in the Latin, and the 'why deny your soul what heir will grasp himself' is 'all you give to your own soul will escape the grasping hand of heirs' in the Latin.

When you are dead, Torquatus, and must meet  
the courts that splendid Minos holds, no stir  
of eloquence, or family, or good may cheat  
that fate, or make you as you were.

Diana left the pure Hippolytus  
where hell with darkness ever reigns.  
Nor from best-beloved Pirithoüs  
could Theseus loosen Lethe's chains.

## VIII

Donarem pateras grataque commodus,  
Censorine, meis aera sodalibus,  
donarem tripodas, praemia fortium  
Graiorum neque tu pessuma munerum  
ferres, diuite me scilicet artium 5  
quas aut Parrhasius protulit aut Scopas,  
hic saxo, liquidis ille coloribus  
sollers nunc hominem ponere, nunc deum.  
Sed non haec mihi uis, non tibi talium  
res est aut animus deliciarum egens. 10  
Gaudes carminibus; carmina possumus  
donare et pretium dicere muneri.  
Non incisa notis marmora publicis,  
per quae spiritus et uita redit bonis  
post mortem ducibus, non celeres fugae 15  
reiectaeque retrorsum Hannibalis minae,  
non incendia Carthaginis impiae  
eius, qui domita nomen ab Africa  
lucratus rediit, clarius indicant  
laudes quam Calabriae Pierides, neque, 20

## Eight

I'd give my bowls and bronzes happily  
to comrades, Censorinus: you would see  
that tripods, prizes of the mighty Greeks,  
would not be least of them. If willing speaks  
and there were truly wealth that favoured us  
it would be something by Parrhasius,  
some painted hero or divinity,  
or work perhaps of Scopas statuary.  
But I have no such things to give, and know  
your mind and rank reject luxurious show.  
It is for poetry you chiefly live,  
and that is something worthy I can give.  
It's not in marble, publicly inscribed,  
events of our dead leaders there described  
that life and breath brought back will celebrate,  
nor rout of Hannibal, our threatened fate  
redound on him, impious Carthage burnt.  
Indeed the famous name of one was earned  
by African adventures: what reward,  
Calabrian muse, if books did not record

si chartae sileant quod bene feceris,  
 mercedem tuleris. Quid foret Iliae  
 Mauortisque puer, si taciturnitas  
 obstaret meritis inuida Romuli?  
 Ereptum Stygiis fluctibus Aeacum 25  
 uirtus et fauor et lingua potentium  
 uatum diuitibus consecrat insulis.  
 Dignum laude uirum Musa uetat mori,  
 caelo Musa beat. Sic Iouis interest  
 optatis epulis impiger Hercules, 30  
 clarum Tyndaridae sidus ab infimis  
 quassas eripiunt aequoribus rates,  
 ornatus uiridi tempora pampino  
 Liber uota bonos ducit ad exitus.

**Measure:** First Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** In praise of poetry.

**Details:** Lucius Marcus Censorinus was consul in 39 BC during the Second Triumvirate. Parrhasius was an acclaimed Athenian painter and Scopas an equally well-known architect and sculptor. Hannibal was the great Carthagian general in the Second Punic War. Ilia was the mother of the legendary founders of Troy, Romulus and Remus. Aeacus was the mythological king of Aegina, and Tyndareus was an ancient Spartan king whose wife, Leda, was seduced by Zeus in the form of a swan. The Calabrian Muse — strictly Muses, of southern Italy — is/are unnamed. The last line is strictly 'brings vows to a pleasing exit', i.e. the ministrant is only implied.

the feat? What could we know of Romulus,  
the line of Mars and Ilia down to us,  
had envy silenced them to want of praise?  
It's strength and favour of the poet's gaze  
that snatches Áeacus from Stygian streams  
and sets him in the blessed isles. So seems  
it equally the Muse's praising breath  
that keeps the worthy hero from his death.  
As Muses please the skies, and Hercules  
at Jove's much-sought-for table takes his ease,  
so in Tyndāreus are stars that snatch  
the vessel from the storm-tossed ocean's catch,  
and Bacchus wreathed in vine leaves grants  
the good in prayers of all true ministrants.



Nine

Believe that one whose birthplace oversaw  
the thunderous Áufidus can still apply  
the lyric gifts not widely heard before  
in words that will not wholly die.

Though Maeōnian Homer holds the loftiest place  
in fame, in no way dimmed is Pindar's fire.  
There's still the Cean Sīmonides' grace,  
Alcāeus, Stesichorus' lyre,

and then Anacreon with pleasing tales  
to tell, and love that girl of Lesbos sings  
with passion still, for Sappho never fails  
to animate Aeōlian strings.

Lacāena Helen's not the only one  
seduced by some adulterer's gleaming hair,  
his gold-embroidered clothes, be even won  
by manners or companions there.

Not the first to bend the Cretan bow  
was Teucer. Troy besieged was not unique,  
nor Idōmeneus be first to go  
to war of whom the Muses speak.



Nor Sthenelus. Nor were fierce Hector's woes,  
nor yet Deiphobus's one sole stake  
in earth's unhappiness, and heavy blows  
have many borne for kinsfolk's sake.

Brave men before great Agamemnon died,  
but all are cast into unending night —  
no men have wept for them, or ever sighed,  
who had no sacred bard recite

their deeds. How much in tomb will separate  
the brave from buried sloth? But still you'll find  
however, Lollius, I'll celebrate  
your name and ever keep in mind

your high accomplishments. For you possess  
a head for all affairs, and so can cite  
what truly matters, through the changing press  
of good and evil, judge aright.

You punish equally the fraud and fool,  
are not complicit with the wealth that moulds  
itself about a greedy will. Nor is your rule  
a twelve-month consulship, but holds



its tenure as an honest magistrate  
that puts the good above expediencies,  
who scorns the wrongful bribe, and will straight-  
way deal with threatening enemies.

Who is the happy man? It's not the one  
possessed of overflowing wealth, but he  
who, knowing what the high gods give, has won  
the claim to use them temperately.

Great poverty he knows as fortune sends,  
but fears his own dishonour worse than death.

The last he's not afraid of: for his friends  
and country will give up his breath.

Teucer, a famous archer, fought with the Greeks (who included Sthenelus, led by king Agamemnon) against the Trojans although he was the nephew of King Priam. Deiphobus was the son of Priam, and may have married Helen after the death of Paris. Anacreon was a Greek poet noted for hymns and drinking songs.

There are many small departures from the Latin. The stanzas with proper names are particularly compressed, and such work-arounds as 'threatening enemies' for 'through opposed crowds' are fairly general. The 'You punish equally the fraud and fool' is strictly 'punishing greedy fraud and restraining excess expenditure'.

X

O crudelis adhuc et Veneris muneribus potens,  
insperata tuae cum ueniet pluma superbiae  
et, quae nunc umeris inuolitant, deciderint comae,  
nunc et qui color est puniceae flore prior rosae  
mutatus Ligurinum in faciem uerterit hispidam,  
dices, heu, quotiens te speculo uideris alterum:  
'Quae mens est hodie, cur eadem non puero fuit,  
uel cur his animis incolumes non redeunt genae?'

5

**Measure:** Greater Asclepiadean

**Theme:** Beauty passes.

**Details:** Ligurinus is probably a fictional character, but may be a pseudonym for some prostitute from Liguria.

Ten

O ever cruel, unconscionable, by Venus led:  
an unexpected plumage crowns that lofty head.  
The hair that fell about your shoulders has been shorn,  
and rich complexions which had threatened to suborn  
the rose are changed, Ligurinus, to roughened skin.  
When mirror shows too well the altered state you've in,  
you'll say, 'Why wasn't mind today the one back then?  
Why can't these untouched cheeks return to bloom again?'



Eleven

With jar of Alban wine that's nine  
years old, and parsley from our garden plot,  
I'll weave the garlands, Phyllis, twine  
the ivy got

to decorate that shining head.  
Buffed silver decks the house, a wreath  
of vervain altar, and a lamb will shed  
its blood beneath.

So all's a bustle here, and folk,  
both boys and girls, now run to light  
the fire and fan its flame through smoke,  
where we invite

you come and celebrate the Ides  
of April, as we pay our due  
to sea-born Venus, which divides  
the month in two.

One sacred to me, nigh as dear  
as my own birthday, since the way  
Maecenas marks each passing year:  
a solemn day.

Telephum, quem tu petis, occupavit  
non tuae sortis iuuenem puella  
diues et lasciuia tenetque grata  
    compede uinctum.

Terret ambustus Phaethon auaras 25

spes et exemplum graue praebet ales  
Pegasus terrenum equitem grauatus  
    Bellerophontem,

semper ut te digna sequare et ultra  
quam licet sperare nefas putando 30

disparem uites. Age iam, meorum  
    finis amorum

(non enim posthac alia calebo  
femina), condisce modos, amanda  
uoce quos reddas; minuentur atrae 35  
    carmine curae.

**Measure:** Sapphic.

**Theme:** Invitation to Maecenas.

**Details:** Alban refers to the Alban hills, where Horace had his farm.

Telephus is a pseudonym or fictional character. Phaëthon was the young son of Helios and Klymene unwisely allowed to drive his father's chariot. It veered out of control, scorching the plains of Africa, until Zeus killed the boy to prevent further mishap. Bellerophon, mounted on Pegasus, killed the composite monster Chimaera.

Let Telephus you loved be gross  
ambition only: he remains  
with some young girl who holds him close  
in beauty's chains.

So therefore think of Phaëthon,  
who fell, and Pegasus: a ride  
refused, to earth Bellērophon  
saw man allied.

It all comes down to seemliness;  
what's not allowed will add its cost.  
Indeed the same as I confess  
in love I lost.

(No woman makes me now rejoice  
and burn for love), but, come, let's play  
and sing until that pleasing voice  
chase cares away.

There are the usual small departures from the Latin. The cryptic  
'to earth Bellerophon saw man allied' is strictly 'oppressed by  
being of the earth', i.e. being an earthly rider. The last stanza  
section in brackets is strictly 'I'll burn for no woman after you'.



## Twelve

The winds from Thrace, the sweet spring's harbinger,  
through calmer seas and swelling topsails blow,  
while in their thawing fields the rivers stir,  
unburdened with their winter snow.

The swallow comes and builds her nest, to sing  
of Itys ever in her sad lament,  
the house of Creops and that lustful king,  
and of his barbarous punishment.

Now sheep with shepherd in soft pastures lie  
and sing a Pan-delighting melody.  
To him all flocks are dear that occupy  
the shaded hills of Arcady.

It is the season, Virgil, bringing thirst,  
but if you'd taste the sweet Campanian vine,  
my follower of noble youth, then first  
exchange some nard for our good wine.

A modest onyx box of nard secures  
the jar Sulpicius' store reports:  
enough to give us hope, and maybe cures  
of recollection's bitter thoughts.

Ad quae si properas gaudia, cum tua  
uelox merce ueni; non ego te meis  
inmunem meditor tinguere poculis,  
plena diues ut in domo.

Verum pone moras et studium lucri, 25  
nigrorumque memor, dum licet, ignium  
misce stultitiam consiliis breuem:  
dulce est desipere in loco.

**Measure:** Third Asclepiadean.

**Theme:** Come regardless.

**Details:** Itys and Creops (ancient Athens) refer to the legend of Philomela, who, after being raped by her sister's husband (Tereus, the barbarous king of Thrace), had her tongue cut out to prevent her speaking. Philomela wove the incident into a tapestry, which her sister (Procne) understood. Procne killed her son (Itys) by Tereus and served him up as a meal. To escape Tereus' vengeance, the gods turned Philomela into a nightingale and Procne into a swallow. Sulpicius may refer to Sulpicius Galba, a well-known merchant of the day. Campanian: strictly 'pressed from Cales', a town in the southern Italian province of Campania. The Virgil here may refer to someone unknown, rather than the famous poet, who was by then dead, but could also refer to an invoked spirit of Virgil, here translated as 'interval'. The 'harbinger' is strictly 'companions' in the Latin.

If keen, then come in haste. I would not switch  
a wine-soaked interval for some plain thing.  
It's not as though my house were over rich,  
and I replete with everything.

Quit business cares and dallying: come, drink,  
for all too quickly death's dark shadow rules.  
Mix sober sense with silliness, and think  
it's sometimes sweet to play the fool.

### XIII

Audiuere, Lyce, di mea uota, di  
audiuere, Lyce: fis anus, et tamen  
uis formosa uideri  
ludisque et bibis impudens  
et cantu tremulo pota Cupidinem 5  
lentum sollicitas. Ille uirentis et  
doctae psallere Chiae  
pulchris excubat in genis.  
Importunus enim transuolat aridas  
quercus et refugit te quia luridi 10  
dentes, te quia rugae  
turpant et capitis niues.  
Nec Coae referunt iam tibi purpurae  
nec cari lapides tempora, quae semel  
notis condita fastis 15  
inclusit uolucris dies.  
Quo fugit Venus, heu, quoue color, decens  
quo motus? Quid habes illius, illius,  
quae spirabat amores,  
quae me surpuerat mihi, 20

## Thirteen

The gods have heard me, Lycë, heard my prayers:  
but though you're growing old, we still must see  
    high beauty's preening airs:  
    you drink and flirt outrageously.

You'd woo young Cupid with a quavering voice,  
but he's entranced by Chia's plump, fresh cheeks.  
    She's musical; for choice  
    he'd have how youthful beauty speaks.

In scorn he flies on past the withered oak,  
and with revulsion sees such disrepair.  
    Such teeth will love evoke,  
    or wrinkles, or that whitish hair?

No gowns of Cōän purple nor rich gems  
repair what's shut away of passing days.  
    Time naturally condemns,  
    and does so in the public gaze.

So where has Venus gone, and, gods above,  
that warmth of colour and its moving wealth?  
    Where's she who breathed of love,  
    and took me from my very self?

felix post Cinaram notaque et artium  
gratarum facies? Sed Cinaræ breuis

annos fata dederunt,

seruatura diu parem

cornicis uetulae temporibus Lycen,

25

possent ut iuuenes uisere feruidi

multo non sine risu

dilapsam in cineres facem.

Measure: Fourth Asclepiadean.

Theme: Beauty passes.

Details: Lyce, Cinara and Chia or pseudonyms or fictional characters.

Coan refers to the Greek island of Kos, where silks were dyed a rich purple. The 'and must so remain' is my addition.

And one so happy when your rival went:  
Cinara died who had such charming ways.

Her time was quickly spent,  
which left a Lycë for the days

on days she'd linger here an aged crow  
for ardent youth to laugh at and disdain,  
much as torches go  
to ashes and must long remain.



Fourteen

What titles and memorials can senator  
and citizen, Augustus, celebrate  
your many virtues with, through them implore  
the highest honours of the State?

Across all realms the sun can oversee  
you're titled greatest prince, a title earned  
in wars — a power the Vendelici, free  
till late of Roman laws, have learned.

With your own army valiant Drusus beat  
the unconquerable Genauni, then the flights  
of swiftly moving Breuni, whose defeat  
was in defended Alpine heights.

In turn the elder Nero entered on the fight  
and, with the favouring omens plain to all,  
defeated and so put to headlong flight  
the hordes of Rhaetians. That vast fall

received its rapturous approbation when  
he daunted minds, exhausting combatants  
who grappled with our free and dauntless men —  
as will the Auster winds advance



across the tumult of a tempest's surge,  
when Pleiades are seen as clouds retire.

He turned towards the bristling ranks to urge  
his neighing horse then on through fire,

as will, with bull-like power, the Áufidus  
pour on the wide Apulian Daunus fields  
its swift-loosed flood of waters, furious  
to scorn what cultivation yields.

By this had Claudius destroyed the ranks  
of mailed barbarians as wind blasts dross,  
and mowing down their front and backward flanks,  
gained victory with hardly loss

in troops you trained — indeed a strategy  
the friendly gods approved of, on the date  
that Alexandria in the past would see  
the palace and the harbour gate

thrown open to you, now renewed by fate  
transposed these fifteen years, as fortune stared  
on this your next campaign, that looked-for state  
of victory as on you fared.



towards Cantabria, unconquered yet.  
You keep the Medes and Indians far from home,  
and fleeing Scythians: the guardian set  
on Italy and mistress Rome.

All hear you: Nile that has its hidden source,  
the Hister and the Tigris, the sea that roars  
with monsters whelming on its restless course  
around Britannia's far-off shores.

To death-defying Gauls your valour spoke  
and to Iberians in their hard land too,  
and even slaughter-rapt Sygambri folk  
put down their arms in awe of you.



Fifteen

Phoebus struck his lyre when I would sing  
of war and conquered cities: thus he keeps  
my small, intrepid sail from venturing  
across the vast Tyrrhenian deeps.

It is your reign, great Caesar, that at last  
brings fields their plenty, and to Jove restores  
the standards lost to Parthians, shuts fast  
the Janus temple built to wars.

It's checked the recklessness of those who'd spurn  
good sense in government, it's banished crimes,  
agrees with multitudes who fondly yearn  
for arts' illustriousness, which times

before made Rome and country's famous name  
go forth in majesty, with powers to awn  
a world from Hesperides to the same  
bright sun that rises with the dawn.

While Caesar guards the state, no strife upsets  
the peace, nor anger fabricate its sword:  
no town makes enemies and none begets  
the wretchedness of such discord.



No one who drinks from Danube or the Don  
defies the Julian law — not roving bands  
of Getae or the treacherous Persians on  
to those who rule the Seres lands.

For, be it mundane work or holiday  
that Bacchus merriment will oversee,  
we still with offspring and our wives will pray  
to gods at first, appropriately,

and then our tongues and Lydian pipes employ,  
as did our fathers in the days before:  
and sing of chiefs, Anchises, and of Troy,  
who are the people Venus bore.



## Centennial Ode

May Phoebus of the shining air,  
Diana of the sylvan shade,  
prized and honoured, grant the prayer  
we here have made

this holy time. Let gods above  
respect the words the Sibyl wills,  
and chosen youths, and those who love  
our seven hills.

You nourishing, triumphal sun,  
whose fiery wheels will lead you home  
to birth again, ensure that none  
will outshine Rome.

Mothers when their time is near  
must look to have Ilithyia true.  
If Genitalis called, then hear:  
Lucina too.

Goddess: nurture them and bless  
the rites of Senate giving bride,  
ensure that marriage laws' largesse  
may still preside



on festivals' return by right,  
that ten years by eleven long  
of cycle three times day and night,  
    give games and song.

May truth in oracles, the Fates,  
preserve abiding fortunes, more  
link destinies to those glad states  
    that were before.

Let earth of crops and cattle crown  
the brows of Ceres with her corn,  
have Jove with winds send sweet rain down  
    for those unborn.

Apollo, put your weapons by  
and to your suppliants draw near.  
Give, Luna of the starry sky,  
    to girls your ear.

And if our new-built Rome is yours,  
the remnant of that Trojan war,  
who won their passage to these shores,  
    let that ensure



survival that Aeneas brings,  
who from Troy's flames gave Roman kind  
a path unharmed, outweighing things  
there left behind.

Instruct in virtue our young ways,  
and give to age its smiling peace,  
that progeny, wealth and glory's blaze  
have fullest lease.

Grant Venus and Anchises when  
from sacrifice of heifers flow  
their victories, and mercy then  
show fallen foe.

The Mede now dreads our powerful hand,  
as Indians and Scythians will our steel,  
they look across the seas and land  
to make appeal.

Let Honour, Faith and Modesty  
return, neglected Virtue show  
with Peace her loveliness, and see  
rich Plenty flow.



Phoebus and nine Muses, you,  
the Augur with resplendent bow,  
relieve our weary body too:  
your aid bestow.

Make altars of the Palatine  
extend Rome's powers, and let there be  
advance in Latium, and Lustra seen  
eternally.

Have the Aventine give ear,  
and Álgidus, Diana's care,  
so, with our fifteen elders, hear  
the children's prayer.

May Jove and gods still kindly gaze  
as we with chorused words of men  
from Phoebus' and Diana's praise  
turn home again.

expiation and sacrifice. The Aventine was one of the seven hills of Rome, and Algidus was in the Alban hills, 20 km southeast of Rome. Many rephrasings and attenuations have been made to meet the exacting Sapphic measure. Stanza 6 is so compressed to be almost unintelligible, for example, but so is the Latin. In general, the sense and imagery are preserved but not all the less important details.

## VERSE MATTERS

### General

Latin lyric poems were probably spoken and not sung, though some, like Horace's *Odes* 1.10 and 21, may have been written for musical accompaniment.

Translators generally arrange the *Odes* of Horace in four-line stanzas after the German scholar August Meineke, who noticed that most texts are divisible by four. The arrangement works well for most but not all poems. *Ode* 4.8 has 34 lines, for example, though some believe lines 17 and 33 are spurious. More importantly, the content or grammatical structure is not always neatly packaged by the four lines, and in a few cases (e.g. III 12) seems closer to a three-line composition.

However fashioned, any transcription of the *Odes* can only be an approximation. Latin has to be interpreted, i.e. words rearranged and prepositions added to be intelligible in an uninflected language like English, and that rearrangement destroys the literary fabric. In the *Odes*, moreover, the fabric is built of memorable phrases carefully arranged in Greek measures, where words are clearly chosen for their sonic properties, and then woven into sentences in far-from-usual speech patterns. Free verse, the usual medium of contemporary poetry, is not appropriate for so artificial a style, and syllabic verse has little shaping power.

Any rendering should ideally convey in the English tradition what Horace conveys in the Latin. The style nearest to his in English is the eighteenth-century verse of the Augustan school, but that now seems rather stilted: a restricted vocabulary, poeticisms, and frequent word inversions needed to meet the rhyme requirements of limited stanza forms. What

I have done here, Modernism notwithstanding, is re-employ those cadences, metrical devices and aural subtleties in more free-running lines that are nonetheless organized in rhymed stanzas individually reflecting the Latin measures. Poeticisms I have avoided, taking the prose meanings directly from the Latin, but what does still appear is the occasional reversal of normal word order: it is required to meet the demands of cadence and rhyme, but also echoes Horace's sometimes difficult syntax. The result is a reasonable indication of the sense, shape and appeal of the originals, but not of their compact phrasing or quantitative metres, which English, by its nature, cannot emulate.

## Measures

Some of Horace's *Odes*, like I 11 and I 18, use the same measure throughout: these are called stichic. In general, however, Horace's uses combinations of measures, his favourite combinations being the Alcaic, Sapphic and five types of the Asclepiadian.

The **Alcaic** strophe runs:

x — u — — / — u u — u x  
 x — u — — / — u u — u x  
 x — u — — — u — x  
 — u u — u u — u — x

Where — is a long syllable, u is a short syllable, and x is a space for a long or short syllable. The caesura is designated /. Two short syllables can often substitute for one long syllable, and vice versa.

Horace uses the Alcaic for his more weighty and dignified poems. The effect, as L.P. Wilkinson {13} puts it, is to create the sensation of a gathering wave in the first two lines, a thundering fall in the third, and a rapid, often delightfully

smooth, backwash in the fourth. The translation here adopts a 5 5 5 4 for the Alcaic measure, where 5 indicates a pentameter and 4 a tetrameter line. The ryme scheme is abab. Ode III.2:

*Once bred to hardship, let the boy advance  
until his wartime training take its course,  
and check with cavalry and deadly lance  
the Parthians' ferocious horse.*

The **Sapphic** runs:

— u — — — / u u — u — x  
— u — — — / u u — u — x  
— u — — — / u u — u — x  
— u u — x

The Sapphic is the lightest of Horace's strophes in this translation. The measure lends itself to neat stanzas with rather end-stopped lines — a feature which Horace exploits in the Centennial Ode.

No fixed stanza is an ideal fit in every case, but to contrast the Sapphic clearly with other measures, I've aimed for the most concise stanza possible: 4 4 4 2, rhymed abab. That often requires some compression and attenuation of meaning, but it seems better to slim down than pad out the next stanza shape available, which is 5 5 5 2. The gain is a lapidary terseness, as here in I.2:

*Such snow and hail has Jove hurled down  
upon our sacred hills, defied  
by his fierce hand, that our vast town  
lies terrified.*

The Greater Sapphic, a larger measure, is employed in Ode I. 8:

— u u — u — —  
— u — — — u u — / — u u — u — —

The translation adopts 4 6 4 6 stanza for this measure, rhymed aabb:

*Lydia, by the gods above,  
why do you burden Sybaris with so much love?  
He, so tolerant of sun  
and dust, the sunny width of Campus seems to shun.*

The five Asclepiadean measures (their numbering differs between authorities, as is the case with the Archilochean) are broadly similar:

The **First Asclepiadean** is stichic throughout:

— — — u u — / — u u — u x

The first Asclepiadean imparts a proud and dignified movement, and Horace uses it three times, all of them commemorating his poetic achievement. The translation adopts 5 5 5 5 stanza for this measure, rhymed abba. Ode I .1

*Maecenas, of true regal stock the heir:  
a friend to glory in, a strength to trust.  
While some in charioting make play of dust  
Olympus showers on them as they fare*

The repeated choriamb (— u u —) in the **Greater Asclepiadean**

— — — u u — / — u u — / — u u — u x

can echo the continual pounding of the sea (e.g. in I 11 immediately below). The translation adopts a 6 6 6 6 stanza for this measure, rhymed abab:

*Forever Tyrrhenian Seas oppose the pumice shore:  
so mix your wine, and curb your hopes as best you may.  
For even as we're speaking, time fleets on, and poor  
are still its credulous descendents. Seize the day.*

The **Second Asclepiadean** runs:

— — — u u — u x

— — — u u — / — u u — u x

— — — u u — u x

— — — u u — / — u u — u x

A rapid metre Horace uses for the excitement of poetic success (IV 3), Bacchic ecstasy (III 25) and the abandon of a wild party (I 36 and III 19). The translation adopts a 4 5 4 5 stanza for this measure, rhymed abab:

*So if I'm worthy of that name  
in Rome, the first of cities, am among  
that choir of its great poets' fame,  
and not so vulnerable to envy's tongue:*

The **Third Asclepiadean** runs:

— — — u u — / — u u — u x

— — — u u — / — u u — u x

— — — u u — / — u u — u x

— — — u u — u x

A calm and sedate measure that Horace uses for Ode IV 5, which commemorates the blessings of Augustus' rule. The translation adopts a 5 5 5 4 stanza for this measure, rhymed abab:

*Bounteous son of gods, too long away,  
who best defend the kith of Romulus;  
from wise assemblies, come, make no delay  
but swift return as promised us.*

The **Fourth Asclepiadean** runs:

— — — u u — / — u u — u x

— — — u u — / — u u — u x

— — — u u — x

— — — u u / u x

The third line pulls the movement up short, often giving the line emphasis or special focus. The translation adopts a 5 5 3 4 stanza for this measure, rhymed abab, as in Ode I 5:

*What slim, rich-scented youth, on roses lain,  
now courts you, Pyrrha, in the grotto's shade?  
Why fasten each blonde skein  
of hair into that modest braid?*

There are several other strophes, employed occasionally by Horace.

The **Ionic** is used in Ode 3.12:

u u — u u — — u u — — u u — —  
 u u — u u — — u u — — u u — —  
 u u — — u u — —

The translation adopts a 5 5 4 stanza for this measure, rhymed aap bbp ccq ddq.

*How miserable are girls allowed no play,  
 nor drink of sweet dark wine, but fear all day  
 a lashing from their uncle's tongue.*

The **First Archilochean** (also called the Alcmanic) is used in Odes I 7 and 28:

— u u — u u — / u u — u u — u u — x  
 — u u — u u — u u — x

The translation adopts a 6 5 6 5 for this measure, rhymed abab:

*Let some of Ephesus and Mytilene sing,  
 Rhodes or Corinth with its double seas:  
 say which of Bacchic Thebes, or Delphi's Isle is king,  
 or like the Thessalonian Tempē please.*

The **Second Archilochean** is used in Ode IV 7:

— u u — u u — / u u — u u — u u — x  
 — u u — u u x

The translation adopts a 5 4 5 4 stanza for this measure, rhymed abab:

*The snows are fled away, the fields new grassed,  
and trees are filled with leaves' rebirth.*

*The streams, diminishing, flow quietly past  
and in its turn is changed the earth.*

The **Third Archilochean** is used in Ode I 4:

— x x — x x — / x x — u u — u u — x

— — u — u / — u — u — x

The translation adopts a 6 4 6 4 stanza here, rhymed abab:

*With spring's Favonian winds, the bitter cold retires.*

*Dry keels are hauled across the sands.*

*The flocks no longer keep to fold, nor ploughman fires,*

*and frost is gone from meadow lands.*

The **Hipponactean** is used in Ode II 18:

— u — u — u x

u — u — u / — u — u — x

The translation adopts a 4 5 4 5 stanza for this measure,  
rhymed abab:

*No ivory or gold emboss*

*the splendid panels of the house I own,*

*Hymettian timbers do not cross*

*from arch to pillars hewn of rarest stone*

Horace is not entirely consistent in his choice of measures: he uses the Sapphic for the long and serious poem of I 2, but the Alcaic for the slight Ode III 26. The love poems are nearly all

in the graceful Asclepiadic measures, but the stately Alcaic is employed in the simulation of Bacchic frenzy in II 19.

As will be seen below, comparing the two languages, the English stanzas are only broadly consonant with the Latin measures. They are generally shorter in their number of syllables, and employ rhyme that has no counterpart in the Latin. In syllable counts (approximate in the Latin measure because of syllable substitution) the comparisons are as follows, set out as : Name of Measure: approximate number of syllables in Latin measure : *number of syllables in English stanza*:

Alcaic : 11 11 9 10 : 10 : 10 10 10 8

Sapphic : 11 11 11 5 : 8 8 8 4

Greater Sapphic : 7 15 7 15 : 8 12 8 12

First Asclepiadean : 12 : 10

Greater Asclepiadean : 16 : 12

Second Asclepiadean : 8 15 8 12 : 8 10 8 10

Third Asclepiadean : 12 12 12 8 : 10 10 10 8

Fourth Asclepiadean : 12 12 7 7 : 10 10 8 8

Ionic : 15 15 7 : 10 10 8

First Archilochean : 17 11 17 11 : 12 10 12 10

Second Archilochean : 17 7 17 7 : 10 8 10 8

Third Archilochean : 17 11 17 11 : 12 8 12 8

Hipponactean : 7 11 7 11 : 8 10 8 10

English measures larger than the hexameter of twelve syllables were not employed because such measures are exceptionally difficult to handle. In general, the choices were

rationalized from trial and error, a procedure aiming for stanzas that were recognizably distinct from one another, relatively concise, but which also gave sufficient line space for the prose sense to be properly conveyed. As is often the case, this ad hoc approach has created some inconsistencies. An English line of 10 syllables was needed to represent a Latin line of 11 syllables in the First Archilochean measure, for example, but only 8 English syllables sufficed for the Sapphic rendering. On the basis of the table above, the Second Archilochean could also be expected to need a larger stanza, but in fact the 10 8 10 8 stanza proved sufficient for the task. In summary, the syllable count of the Latin measure is only one aspect of the matter: also important is the complexity of the thought being expressed, the supporting details and the specific characteristics of the two languages applying in a particular case.

Each English form adopted is therefore only what on balance proved acceptable: there were always some unsatisfactory fits to any choice. Expanding the First Asclepiadean to a 6 6 6 6 measure allows a translation more faithful to the Latin of Ode 3.30, for example:

I've reared a monument more durable than brass  
and loftier than the pyramids, those regal towers  
that not devouring rain, nor yet unbridled powers  
of north wind's storms can batter down — for all there pass

immeasurably the long succession of the years,  
and fleeting time itself. I shall not wholly die,  
but find my praise will Libitina's self defy  
while silent virgin on the Capitol appears

beside our Pontifex. Such echoings evoke  
the powers that come from humble parentage, from where  
the fierce Áufidas with its roarings fills the air,  
and Daunus, stinting water, rules her simple folk.

By me, the first devising, Latin verse was led  
to replicate Aeolian measures. High praise  
is merited, Melpōmenē: for you the bays  
of Delphic laurel willingly adorn this head.

But other odes rendered in this measure (I.1 and IV.8) appear  
inflated. Similarly, expanding the Second Archilochean of Ode  
IV.7 as a 5 5 5 5 measure allows a fuller rendering of stanzas  
4 and 5 but makes other stanzas say more than the Latin  
perhaps warrants:

The snows are fled away, the fields new grassed,  
and trees now flourish with their leaves' rebirth.  
The streams, diminishing, flow quietly past  
and fresh-apparelled is the new made earth.

In blatant nakedness the Graces play,  
and happily with Nymphs are chorusing.  
Recall, as hour and year thin out the day,  
immutably there passes everything.

Cold melts before the western winds, and spring  
is soon upon the summer's traces, then  
comes autumn with its ripe fruit scattering,  
when lifeless seems the winter's chill again.

Though moon on moon makes good the heavens' waste,  
we go on deathward just the same, and must  
with Tullus, and with Ancus lie, and haste,  
with good Aeneas, into dreams and dust.

Who knows what time we have, if gods on high  
will add tomorrow to our fleeting wealth?  
Take all the hand can hold, for why deny  
your soul what heir will vainly grasp himself?

When you are dead, Torquatus, and must meet  
the court that splendid Minos holds, no stir

of eloquence, or family, or good may cheat  
that fate, or take you back to what you were.

Diana left the pure Hippolytus  
she loved where night with Hades ever reigns,  
and not from best of friends Pirithoüs  
could Theseus remove the Lethean chains.

And so on. Measures so expanded also encroach on the shapes  
set aside for others, suggesting that the English measures  
adopted in this collection may be close to an optimal balance  
of possibilities.

The larger hope of this translation is for a pleasing version that  
encourages us to appreciate again the excellences of the  
original through the shaping lens another literary tradition. We  
read the past through the languages of the present, moreover,  
so that some shaping mechanism is always present, whether  
we use verse or non-verse. The verse here is traditional,  
rather than some version of Modernism, because it is  
traditional verse, with its greater variety and resources, that  
still commands the wider readership.

For easy reference, these are the measures and the  
corresponding stanzas adopted, where the hexameter is shown  
as 6, the pentameter as 5, etc.

- I.1 First Asclepiadean 5 5 5 5
- I.2 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- I.3 Second Asclepiadean 4 5 4 5
- I.4 Third Archilochean 6 4 6 4
- I.5 Fourth Asclepiadean 5 5 3 4
- I.6 Third Asclepiadean 5 5 5 4
- I.7 First Archilochean 6 5 6 5
- I.8 Greater Sapphic 4 6 4 6
- I.9 Alcaic 5 5 5 4

- I.10 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- I.11 Greater Asclepiadean 6 6 6 6
- I.12 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- I.13 Second Asclepiadean 4 5 4 5
- I.14 Fourth Asclepiadean 5 5 3 4
- I.15 Third Asclepiadean 5 5 5 4
- I.16 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- I.17 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- I.18 Greater Asclepiadean 6 6 6 6
- I.19 Second Asclepiadean 4 5 4 5
- I.20 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- I.21 Fourth Asclepiadean 5 5 3 4
- I.22 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- I.23 Fourth Asclepiadean 5 5 3 4
- I.24 Third Asclepiadean 5 5 5 4
- I.25 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- I.26 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- I.27 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- I.28 First Archilochean 6 5 6 5
- I.29 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- I.30 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- I.31 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- I.32 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- I.33 Third Asclepiadean 5 5 5 4
- I.34 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- I.35 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- I.36 Second Asclepiadean 4 5 4 5
- I.37 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- I.38 Sapphic 4 4 4 2

- II.1 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- II.2 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- II.3 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- II.4 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- II.5 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- II.6 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- II.7 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- II.8 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- II.9 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- II.10 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- II.11 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- II.12 Third Asclepiadean 5 5 5 4
- II.13 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- II.14 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- II.15 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- II.16 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- II.17 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- II.18 Hipponactean 4 5 4 5
- II.19 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- II.20 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
  
- III.1 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- III.2 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- III.3 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- III.4 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- III.5 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- III.6 Alcaic 5 5 5 4
- III.7 Fourth Asclepiadean 5 5 3 4
- III.8 Sapphic 4 4 4 2
- III.9 Second Asclepiadean 4 5 4 5
- III.10 Third Asclepiadean 5 5 5 4
- III.11 Sapphic 4 4 4 2

III.12 Ionic 5 5 4  
III.13 Fourth Asclepiadean 5 5 3 4  
III.14 Sapphic 4 4 4 2  
III.15 Second Asclepiadean 4 5 4 5  
III.16 Third Asclepiadean 5 5 5 4  
III.17 Alcaic 5 5 5 4  
III.18 Sapphic 4 4 4 2  
III.19 Second Asclepiadean 4 5 4 5  
III.20 Sapphic 4 4 4 2  
III.21 Alcaic 5 5 5 4  
III.22 Sapphic 4 4 4 2  
III.23 Alcaic 5 5 5 4  
III.24 Second Asclepiadean 4 5 4 5  
III.25 Second Asclepiadean 4 5 4 5  
III.26 Alcaic 5 5 5 4  
III.27 Sapphic 4 4 4 2  
III.28 Second Asclepiadean 4 5 4 5  
III.29 Alcaic 5 5 5 4  
III.30 First Asclepiadean 5 5 5 5

IV.1 Second Asclepiadean 4 5 4 5  
IV.2 Sapphic 4 4 4 2  
IV.3 Second Asclepiadean 4 5 4 5  
IV.4 Alcaic 5 5 5 4  
IV.5 Third Asclepiadean 5 5 5 4  
IV.6 Sapphic 4 4 4 2  
IV.7 Second Archilochean 5 4 5 4  
IV.8 First Asclepiadean 5 5 5 5  
IV.9 Alcaic 5 5 5 4  
IV.10 Greater Asclepiadean 6 6 6 6  
IV.11 Sapphic 4 4 4 2  
IV.12 Third Asclepiadean 5 5 5 4  
IV.13 Fourth Asclepiadean 5 5 3 4  
IV.14 Alcaic 5 5 5 4  
IV.15 Alcaic 5 5 5 4

Carmen Saeculare: Sapphic 4 4 4 2

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