Without breath there is no life;
Without words there is no breath;
Without poetry there is no freedom;
No freedom? What’s left but death?
Author’s Note.

These poems were written as early as the 1980’s, and from that time up to and including the present. They are arranged in this volume in what is more or less the chronological order in which they were written; except with respect to the first portion of this collection, i.e. up to and including “Envoi”; in which (although still containing my earliest verse) they are not placed in such strict sequence. A good many of the poems have, at a later time, gone through some greater or lesser degree of rewording and reworking; and it’s not impossible I may still further re-do or revise some or other of what you have here.

My ideas and views on poetry and writing poems over these years have understandably gone through not inconsiderable change and development. Yet for all that I have learned and improvement made, I still seek to progress to someone and something better as an author; just as I would wish and hope to be true of you reading this is in whatever it is you do. This said, I have to think these poems are at least good enough, else why publish?

Please accept then what follows for what might prove your amusement, if not enlightened enrichment.

Wm. Thomas Sherman

Seattle, Washington
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THE ART OF POETRY

I.

Eyes open
in my heart and mind!
May ideas I find
uniting forms without,
with spirit within.
In a word,
let words begin!

The Muse cannot be forced,
she sings only when free.
But her voice
will come finally
to hearts overflowing,
seeking harmony.

Hers is a test of self-giving
to prove one’s spirit
is light enough,
the base world to transcend,
towards Truth
ever to ascend.

What is sung is not empty dreams,
but a call to perfection,
renewing people’s lives
whatever their direction.

II.

Though towers decay,
monuments crumble,
and castles fall into the sea,
Poetry and Truth live on
surviving mortality.

The Night is deep,
the Day does shine,
the world is round
and on proceeds time.
Filled with wonder
wrapped in rhyme,
try the rainbow to define;
put infinity into a line.

IMAGINATION

Boats green,
blue, yellow,
and red,
with white sails,
there’s one place
them you can see…
inside your mind
-- so go find.

**IN THE AFRICAN KINGDOM**

In the African kingdom
in the explosion of the sun
they sit on a fallen trunk,
amid the grass
while grains of sand
shout back sparkling.
Necks and shoulders gleaming,
sweat of the jungle breathing,
the tree tops’ shade cools
laughter in life’s foliage.

**CATS’ POEMS**

*Jeebo’s Poem*

I see the little birds
go tweet, tweet, tweet,
than to home I go,
to sleep, sleep, sleep.

*Timina Kitten’s Poem*

Mew! Mew! says Tim Kitten
my feet are black, my fur is striped.
I am a tiny, lovable cat,
but tough for all of that!

*Hindman’s Poem*

I take care of the two little cats
because I am big you see,
friend of animals and people alike
everyone loves to know me!

**HYDE PARK AFTERNOON**

What Spring brought so benignly,
Summer fervor rouses finely.
Leaves reflecting light glimmer
above a pond which shimmers.
Fountains gush forth with power,
to fall in resplendent shower.
In chairs folk recline, steaming in the heat,
others rest in a cool, shady seat
exploring the world in a magazine or book,
while ducks find shelter in a leafy nook.
Like the kayaks skimming the waters of the lake;
a fleet of geese leave ripples in their wake.
A jocund pup jogs with master alongside,
pulling the leash by which he is tied.
Horses trot, their noble heads high,
silhouetted against noon’s blue sky.
On through the day they prance.
and no less proudly, singing sparrows dance.
Grey pigeons coo and strut with not a care,
until a small boy scatters them in the air.
Flowers red and violet bloom,
which with fresh grass, fill the air with perfume.
Children on swings and ladders play,
while elders forget age, taking in day.

YOUTH AND ECSTASY

At a canter then a run
Ecstasy charges forth,
in glory rearing.
From the first
he reaches a wild speed,
this mount of fortune,
the moment’s flaming steed.

They makes their way
above the mortal air,
the rider exhilarated
beyond all care.
Leaping fast upon the winds,
upon the cloudy main,
letting fall to earth
all memory of pain.

Yet though his senses
from pleasure would burst,
he knows well from the first
that this momentum vernal
will not be eternal.
He knows these sights
these beautiful things
are ephemeral and temporary,
like songs one sings.

From out the corner
of speeding eyes,
he sees a lean shade,
upon a distant constellation,
Death pensive, waiting,
punisher of sin,
Death, not hesitating.

The starry rider throw a bold fist;
Death, for now, vanishes in a mist.

Twice elated the horseman bounds,
reaches a dizzy height
enjoying the ride
for the fleeting thing it is,
the sky now opens,
all of heaven seems his.

There he meets a golden maid
who with flowers and a kiss
sends him home reeling in bliss.

He gliding slows
into the sunset breeze
toward hills below;
thinking on the date,
he must return
to battle Fate.

**PEACE AT DUSK**

In a cottage, in a thicket,
at a hill slope’s edge,
whose sun was a candle
an old man lived.
Amongst fond toys and books,
he passed thoughtful years
witnessed the fall of snows
that hides hares and reveals owls;
beheld budding branches
wreathing beloved robins’ nests;
watched Summer beams,
hurry the fish in the brook,
or viewed darkening Autumn
lay gold and red across his doorstep.
Though the world was once in his hands,
he resigned himself happily to God’s,
and grateful of wonders,
treasuring memories,
strode the seasons of his soul.

**THE TYRANT**

The tyrant will do
one charitable deed,
just so he can steal from
a hundred in need.

He appears good
to conceal crimes and lies,
that he might better stifle
victims’ groans and cries.

All fair competition
he will avoid having to face,
then murder or maim
those who’d dare take his place.

Though his own ruin he creates,
mournful the suffering he leaves in his wake.

OBSTACLES

Life evolves
seeking to transcend
mechanical laws.
A spirit to breathe and love,
with obstacles
like greed and ignorance
of others needs,
we find ourselves
with saddening tragedies
which neither time,
or forgetfulness can erase;
which make us callous,
thoughtless and despairing.

THE DEATH OF THE MURDERED SAILOR

Winds unleashed,
waves whipped up,
the foam surging
crashing on black rocks,
in frenzy
as the fury of hell
converges on my soul.
Helpless below
the enraged storm;
my foundation,
once thick inches of stone,
now bubbles a lava cauldron,
seething with rage.
My mind’s sails burst
in thunder like a hurricane’s,
gusts shriek doom,
while I go mad
longing for the morrow.
Earthquakes crack open
chasms to an abyss,
and infinity looks on
devouring all being.
Horses bolt neighing in air,
lightening cast, nights howls,
from out the dripping mists
the unsought past appears.
Flapping gulls’ dance wildly,
under a darkened sky
now rent in two.
My soul bursts with visions
of futurity and gloom.
Yet I still yet see!
Yet I still yet hear,
one with a sunset,
violent and strange.
Blood flows burning,
yet now all cools
as the winds subside
into whispers and sighs.

TEMPEST FROM THE PAST

Seen from a quiet room
the Ages yawn,
exhaling a storm
amidst the sleeping morn.
Into the deserted streets run
native spirits, memories of sacrifice,
howling with the winds,
whose cries will sleep
when Justice returns
with Nature's lost peace.

ANCIENT LIVES

When thousands of years past
it was the present,
zephyrs whistled through
Lebanese cedars;
someone slapped a timbrel
to their hip,
moaning, longing.

From Luxor on a woven barge,
they sailed in steamy air
water lapping
the boat's sides.
Someone in the bow
dreamed that the sun
had raised his soul
up into the sky.

In the desert she sat
tending docile donkeys,
something to do
on her way through life.

In the temple of the god
fumes of incense arose
from a silver cup.
The priest had told the king
that two black ewes
need be slain,
and offered up
to appease defeat.
The ancient mourned
that the ancestors had been forgot
in a dusty street of Carchemish.
Weeping, coughing, alone he died
under the icy beams
of a midnight moon,
while next morning,
the world strolled by in silence.

Out of Jabbok they road
with letters from the all powerful
Assyrian king
to seal a bargain with the south.
Along the way, lions charged up
ripping bleeding lines
over the horse’s hinds.
One messenger was lost,
but the rest sped on.

The slaves of Akkad,
made the bricks,
with feet covered in clay;
then arose
to receive fruit
brought by a maid
from the valley.

For biting his nose off
ten shekels were fined.
Yet for only an accident,
it was instant death.
A curse was pronounced
and he was hung from a pole.

She wore tiny hippos
made of lapis lazuli
around her royal neck,
too young
for tomorrow.

With his charts before him
the astrologer
had been following
a flickering star,
by a bronze lamp’s flame.
Then in amazement it seemed
it had disappeared.
A grave omen this!
And solemnly scrawled
What he didn’t see
on his wet clay tablet.

The merchant proudly viewed
his completed tomb,
completed before he should die,
sniffing his emerald ring
that held perfume,
fingerling the ringlets
of his long beard;
as he awaited
the arrival of his friends.

The ship smashed up
upon a reef,
and a month’s harvest
of barley and grain
fed thousands of
round eyed fish,
while emptying
the belly of a town.

In Lagash,
Two slaves made love
inside the small hut,
to the sound of cooing
doves boxed in a cage.

Circling, the young princes
laughing
drove their gold plated
chariot cars forth.
Lifting spears in imitation
of sires in battle
or on the hunt,
they route an invisible enemy
across a flashing river.

In the cold stream,
the maidens of Kush
bathed, their feet and ankles
under the hot splendor of noon.
Stern faced the eunuchs kept an eye,
for wanton wayfarers.

Near the city square,
the old campaigner sat
with bandaged, festering arm
from whence a Hatti’s arrow
had been pulled.
Surely he thought,
what stories I can tell,
of valiant acts
of midnight raids;
of spears and shields
burnished in the blinding sun.

The women wailed;
their lord was dead!
A mournful procession
of veils and tears
following the bier
to its final resting shrine,
past a palace
where someone was born,
launched upon life’s puzzle.

They talked of planning
a murder
behind the granary doors,
as one came rushing late
into the secret meeting.
Fearful of getting caught
in conspiracy,
they yet are bent on revenge.

Through the mountains,
across the river gorge,
shepherds of Uratu
lead flocks of sheep and goats
in the chilly dawn.
Bells jingle,
a horn sounds,
while a future waits
of pastures rolling.

HYMN TO BEAUTY

Engulfed by shadow,
Beauty, I seek you.
I beseech you in your love
our falseness rend,
our blindness end,
sunlit clouds to roam
onward to your home.
Passion with art instill,
instruct in us good will.
Give us grace,
humility teach,
one day to reach,
that summit sublime,
the reason for time.

THREE SECRETS

I
Were there no gravity
we would all be free.

II
There is no up
There is no down
There is only
the all around.

III
The mind is an endless sky
filled with thoughts like stars.

**FUTILITY**

In an abandoned country house,
where the wind blows
through gaping windows
past glass strewn
upon the floor,
in the corner of a room
a grain of sand
is sent reeling into infinity.

**NIGHT REVERY**

A bracing sight ---
this bright racing night!
Clouds bath in moon’s
softest glow,
while rushing on the air they go!

Yet beyond this scene
are stars and worlds unseen,
silent, glistening sights
of blue, red, and silvery white.
And while these vapors
billowing on high,
glide wildly and wide
light dotted
valleys and hills below,
lie in hushed concord and peace.

Soon again those colors will shine --
gone the cries of lost souls in time,
echoing far across space,
at last in their resting place.

**ATTRACTION**

How do you do what you do?
How is it you of all get through
more than all fame, crowns,
or all the sounds of music do?

As if by some miracle
you draw me to you
with your voice and eyes,
make a strange spirit in me rise,
so that to lose my life
seems nothing at times,
if all I could have was you.
You steep me with wonder
in your presence and sight
that I would gladly drowned
in your sweet beauty’s light.
If I only knew you were good,
if I only knew you were true,
what wouldn’t I do for you?

BLISS

Roses of pink and orange hue
are like you,
and when near is your voice,
inside I rejoice.
Come garden of flowers
beside me be
and let me hear bliss.

TO A YOUNG GIRL

You radiate amid all the gray,
that hangs like brume
on a crest fallen day,
as a daffodil just brought to bloom,
with little help of solar rays,
glows in yellow glory
above the foggy haze,
in love’s timeless story.
Though all around is shrouded o’er dull,
you breathe a beacon of delight.
Instead of drowning your gleam to null
the rain of time makes you grow bright.
And though we cannot forever be,
your beauty proves eternity.

SONG

At the end of the storm,
when the wind is warm,
meet me my girl
by the rustling trees
watching changing shadows
of the deep, becalmed sea.
Enchanted night,
chasing the dawn,
you and I
will lie on this lawn
waiting for the sun to toss
it’s bright head in air
and wake again
my love so fair.
SPRING

Fragrant wysteria trees
in the month of May,
let forth a slow unseen spray
of perfume enticing me;
obscuring in my heart
what it is my mind sees.

Oh, delicate blossoms of the trees
whose branches toss gently in the breeze!
Wherefore do you tempt me
with hope it seems can never be?

LIFE WISH

Spring ephemeral has been here a while.
The sun, moon and stars pass the time,
and I know it all cannot last longer
than a dream.

I respire happily now
in things so beautiful, so free,
but weep thinking
it cannot always be this way.

THE WATERS OF LIFE

Rolling, turning
having no sides, no top, no bottom,
the sky around us
like some great enormous river,
in which we are atoms,
and galaxies, planets and stars,
are but glowing particles
drifting along, so slowly
as to be by us unseen.
Onward rolling, turning
to an infinite clock,
the wide breast of
the universal waters
flows even now.

Strange empty space,
scoffing, incomprehensible, unending,
suffusing all existence
in mystery -- and what possibility?

THE MERMAID'S TRANSFORMATION

Never ending to the eye
rolls the mighty surging sea,
set on by sun, moon and winds
heaving for all Ages
in all passion’s tumult.

In hollow depths below,
cycles of lives play out their briny span:
throbbing and pulsing blindly
to feed and procreate.
Yet there too a slow peace moves
soundless as an embryo,
where fish swim to and fro
through grasses waving
through pink coral sleeping
in waters cold and deep.

A mermaid awakes
arising from the sea weed and surf;
the wind whistling about her:
waves and wet hair
aglow in the sun’s
iridescent fire.

Then high above the stars appear,
and from beyond them
heavenly choir she hears
rapturous music
calling forth love most true.

The ocean feys blow on shrill pipes,
bellow on conches, crying out,
to arrest her ascension
to the celestial dimension.
Yet she succumbs not to fear
gives them no ear,
but yearns toward the sky,
hersoul lifted high,
changed, transcendent.

HEART’S REGRET

His heart’s zeal was for one alone
to only Laura was ardor shown.
Amy who loved him was ignored,
love her he would not afford.

Laura was aloof, coy,
yet cuteness itself to any boy.
Amy was gentle and meek;
more innocent you could not seek.

Where Laura was, where Laura went
was all John’s thought passion rent.
While sweet Amy kind he did forget,
but, like her, was caught in a net.
For Laura full of anguish he would be, 
days languishing was he, 
for her who saw him as fun, 
yet neglected the truer one.

Alone one night in bleak despair, 
he thought of her who was all his care, 
Laura, who deep fondness in him awoke, 
but not of her whose heart he’d broke.

Yet to fair Laura he meant very little, 
for all his raging she gave not a tittle. 
In hollow sorrow he then did shrink 
wishing deep from Lethe’s stream to drink.

In dejection to heaven he help implored 
praying aloud to his maker and Lord, 
humbling his spirit for solace to feel 
a miracle his sore heart to heal.

Asking forgiveness for his sin, 
he collapsed dazed by emotions within, 
when up he looked above him to see 
a good angel in air floating free.

Veiled by a mist, she smiled, 
at once both cheerful and mild. 
How strange this heavenly grace, 
wore the sweetness of Amy’s face.

A feeling overcame him throughout, 
a serene felicity to vanquish all doubt, 
that God had sent this vision 
to rescue him from grief’s prison.

What he saw he scarce believed 
though grateful was he to be relieved. 
But where was Amy forgot? 
Where was she who he’d loved not?

Gone where he could not her find 
save in memories of the mind. 
Yet from this girl who he had spurned 
a lesson for life was learned.

ROBINSON CRUSOE

Here I, Robinson Crusoe, lie 
in my thatched hut 
where the wind 
bloows in from the sea. 
I listen, forlorn 
of seeing another again, 
no one to hear from or greet 
save that Spirit from within.
Oh goodness of heaven,  
why then is there me,  
but to worship truth in stars on high,  
or love those unknown  
ever distant beyond the waves?  
Servant of your grace,  
grateful for your bounty,  
abundant is your kindness,  
but wherefore me?  
To worship and adore  
you who are life and creation,  
is the hope that is my rescue.  
Though alone I weep a soul apart,  
I am one with You,  
in your ineffable glory.

Oh kind star smiling on me,  
shining there with sweetest luster,  
oh rose, oh jewel glowing  
in the gentle blue sky,  
could I but reach you with my touch,  
what elation mine would be!  
Yet better is now the consolation  
of praising your Holy name;  
praying for those in need.  
May I lose myself  
in faith, purity and love;  
following your sacred purpose  
for lost friends  
one day to be found.

THIS DAY

There are days I feel a limit  
as a soaring bird must sense  
when gravity grasps it  
as if it were its own.  
Though each tendon burst  
to pass the aerosphere,  
in part because I breathe,  
I'm confined here;  
each day waiting,  
for blessedness to come  
and bring me strong wings  
to ascend Freedom's bounds.

But I remain aground,  
gnawed with pains  
cutting deep like an axe, wondering  
why more days should be wasted  
awaiting sorrows to be tasted?  
And surely I thought,  
death cannot be more than  
a trick of fear and unknowing.
But conscience took me aside,
and asked how could I
abuse hope and life,
and forsake the faith
that love will make all well?

Opportunities are never really gone
until freely given up.
And if after all troubles I can move,
I will still laugh, cry and love.
I will not singly moan the loss
of what is mere illusion
of all that is called real.
For once the lies that hypnotize
are shorn and rent,
and Time’s guise is removed,
all that is truly eternal
all of which we are that survives
all that is living and beautiful
all that is left
is God.

I resolved that though
struck by a hundred fold woes
yet still I should strive
and stay alive
for those I love.

Yet solitude can be too
much a burden that at times
one questions keeping on,
and comfort it is to know
there is such a thing as choice,
and we do not have to live.
But better to remember
the patient flower’s seed
resting in the earth’s darkness.
It drinks droplets
which the clouds downpour,
and then bid by love’s sun
rises from below,
its form changed
into new life.

LOVE IS LIFE

Love is life
and eternal love is eternal life.
Because there is a limit to
human love - humans are not perfect,
we must love God, who is perfect,
in order then to develop our power and ability
to love perfectly mere mortals.
Jesus is the greatest manifestation and embodiment of love,
therefore we love Him in order that we can love all.
God, Love, Nous, are the order and harmony
of the universe.
Without Love, how can there be true unity?
If human love is finite
it follows that human life is finite.

In order to love
we must be able to forgive.
Caring for others
is a manifestation
of our love toward God.
Yet no caring is so great,
as that love of God put in us,
to suffer willingly and forgive.

DREAM OF HEAVEN

She ponders the sounds
of bells chiming slowly,
gentle notes rising,
falling softly,
like her breath.
Music becomes a dream
and in thoughts she sees
friends laughing and playing
in an open field
where a golden sun
beams happiness unending.

EXPECTATION

In life’s wide canvas I saw you,
one among so many
in the midst and flurry of lives.
Passing through indifferent days and years
you leapt out to me from the colors moving,
blessing me with purpose.

If there were no separation
brought by faction, war and circumstance,
what joy could be ours I know,
raising each other up,
sharing with each other
the mutual wisdom
we possess of joy.

ENVOI

Away from the lightening flash
that illumines clouds
of a tempest distant,
the boatman stands
his vessel drifting
Toward the horizon’s reddening band,
remembering friends found and friends lost,
passing the twilight shore.
He feels his heart enrapt
with what was and is;
sees before him the gleam of stars
reflected in the swirling tide;
regards the world
with a serenity and calm
unfelt, unknown, before.

**URBAN CIVILIZATION**

Drab stone and mortar,
leaden, callous streets
gird round an energy
that has no soul;
has vigor, but is guarded
like a prison,
has bustle, but chokes your breath.

Is this the congested fate?
Too much it seems there is
no escape
from the polluted river
that rises by the hour,
by the minute,
by the ceaseless round of cars, traffic, buses,
vanishing around corners
flowing harshly
in the wailing, huffing tumult.

Hardly a second even to ask
if you are making your own decision,
you keep moving, moving
hoping that if and when you reach home
all will fall into place
in your only living space.

**BIRTH OF DREAMS AT DAWN**

When tremors of shade sigh moaning
and morning triumphant comes,
firelight of eternity,
with the winds taking hold of
the dark and the light,
zooming black and gold arrows
in the hour’s fancy,
pristine dawn is born,
born from out the shadows,
before easing gently
into the way-laying calumny of day.
Leaving the trees
to hop and fly
robins warble defiantly
the victory of the Almighty,
such a in insistent song
that clearly great joy contains.

Oh rousing, Oh happy birth
over rumbling and dread!
Oh bravest music which incites
the soul to dearest hope and dreaming!

TO YOU

Say you took a chance
of loving everything
and in the end were proved a fool;
made a clown of yourself
wagering wrongly,
and became a laughing stock of time,
and you were shown
a person worthy of derision
by those demons
that are able to contain all knowing
and play with men like toys,
I would stand by you
and be the loser with you.

I will not likely ever know you
who read this,
But I love you with belief
simply because you could love.
Surely, it is the wonder
of your searching and mine
that has created this world,
this very moment.

What we share is endeavor,
And because of you
I have let myself feel much happier.
Do then the same for yourself --
by me.

TEARS ON A SNOWY SEA

Alone on wide dark waters
breathing the moist icy air
tears surge up from
bottomless depths --,
alone, alone, so completely alone!
Frigid seas swelling,
a heart weeping,
an arctic breeze stirring,
a love yearning whispers,
my heart from its wandering
to joy complete and freedom unending:
joy complete and freedom unending
distant and far from you
in the cold blue night,
yet comforting and present
like a longed for embrace.

ASTRONOMY

They say what is in us
comes from stars.
Doesn’t it seem then
that if we look up
at the night sky,
that which glistens is you,
that which shines me?

The dark is endless seeming,
so menacing and strange.
Yet no matter how far
the telescope looks,
we will always find
color and light,
if we but see
with eyes of beauty,
that love which glows eternal
without and within.

THE FINCH SINGING

So affectionate is the tiny finch,
how his little song it smiles!
All the great world
seems hushed all around,
when the air is filled
with his “I love you” sound.

A dash of red
guilds feathers humble brown.
Yet such modesty
hides a golden sound!
For so happy, so assured,
is the music of that bird.

How I adore that baby song of love:
calls two, or three, perhaps four,
a plaintive yearning in each one,
then a merry warbling:
so innocent, yet so refined.
my heart laughs, yet respectfully.

A dash of red
guilds feathers humble brown.
Yet such modesty
hides a golden sound!
For so happy, so assured,
is the music of that bird.

Those poets wrote poems about
birds they loved.
I read those poems,
but missed the bird for the poem.

Yet when I actually saw,
When I actually heard,
It was clear to me then,
no poem can match the bird.
SUITES AND SONGS, ETC.
A Collection of seven Poems written for, or dedicated to, the very beloved and respected Sally Ann Howes.

First Suite.

I. To Sally Ann Howes
II. Of Names
III. Acis and Galatea
IV. Phillida and Colin
V. A Riddle and A Reply
VI. The Rose Song
VII. The Shepherds

Additional Poems:
An Understanding.
Last Request

To Sally Ann Howes

I was young, a child when I first saw you, yet I somehow missed you at that time.

Only lately, I saw you again and discovered how that, back then, I must have been something blind.

After when I came to dream, it was less than to see and hear you. In my heart and mind I think I know beauty, but not even in my memory, let alone imagination, can I adequately bring to mind, catch the full hues, suggest the breath, the bounds of your real loveliness.

It must be like love then when one’s feelings of wonder, (against one’s will!) are lifted aloft, making one dizzy from the height, like this kind of seeing and hearing.

Is this really mere mortal life? Did I not instead pass away in the night and awake in Heaven?

And yet if alive,
this debt to the Almighty and creation
for this joy and delight
is almost death to me even so.
The brightness and giving
of Spirit and Nature in you
causes me to blush and moan,
makes me feel spoiled,
so that the surprise and weight
of this debt is almost death to me even so.

The sun illuminating
flowers secluded in a garden;
The wind whispering and singing,
the leaves and flowers dancing,
just yesterday I felt like them.

Yet in trying to get on with
the hard business of life,
wanting to avoid distraction,
I had not been seeking this.

Some Remarks on this poem:
As is most appropriate with a poem or piece of music, it is not quite she sung that is being celebrated, rather it is most pure Grace, and Beauty. Yet in all fairness, Grace’s, and Beauty’s tasks to move and inspire us become almost nothing, for the artist, when the study is such as this. There are, I know, people who would dismiss this sort of idealistic perspective as not “real life.” But real life, as commonly spoken of is actually a broad generalization. Every rare now and then there are, in “real life,” people who just don’t seem always to fit because they are just too fine, too exquisite to us. In truth, they are too real. Yet since the day-to-day world is often so troubled and afflicted, it becomes all the more necessary (I find) to place the special thoughts and feelings such a person evokes in Heaven (via prayers, songs, or poems), or, else drawing them in more deeply into one’s heart. There is great joy and satisfaction to this since we know the person is, in some way, safe and secure there in these places, even if lost to those who perhaps can’t see them properly.

Of Names
If I am too familiar, please forgive it
since perhaps it isn’t you,
perhaps it is something about Life
that moves me,
but that in you
Life sings as sweetly as it ever once did,
is smiling as it ever once was.

I see laughers, friendships, loves
fallen off the years,
still present, still here in you
so that when you are gone
it seems life will be gone too.

When alone,
I will not say your name,
must call you something else,
lest sweet flowers called your names
be sullied by thoughts of the world.
But what then shall I call you?

What else, but Life?

**Acis and Galatea**

Galatea: But you must be one of my family.

Acis: I will serve you forever if you will always love what is good and true. Let Love, Beauty and Goodness be triumphant if but my part has been only to have served them.

And Let me then
dress you in music and song,
and when I am away from you,
I will always think
of that far song
which is our truest lives
in which we see can always see each other,
that perfect music, harmony,
gestures, glances, and motions,
which lives forever
though we are apart.

Oh Time flow more swiftly,
speed the tyrant’s departure
and make us free again.

**Philida and Colin: A Dialogue**

Colin: Yet can there be music when we are apart?

Philida: Not only can there, but there must be;
loud and resounding as any,
filling throughout the skies of Love
though it be of sadness insupportable.

Yet you know, you cannot be truly gone from me.
You are deep within my yearning for all joy.
How then can I forsake joy?

You must think of what you owe and in what our true unity lies.
For many years a flame which offered you vision
turned out to be false.
Yet in place of this comes
That which is Real and True
Always there, but away the while:
Love based in Goodness and Duty.
Think on these and I shall be with you.

Colin: But this is not enough,
better the darkest abyss of despair,
than to know less than
your present self
which is both Hope’s and Ecstasy’s raiment.

No, no, you still do not see.
You are as much as the whole world to me,
more than the whole world,
and all of time as well,
if only I but give you
the slightest mind.
So much is this
I must at times beg Heaven’s mercy.
Please a while longer.

*Phillida:* Yet stay then, and lay beside me. Soon I must go.

**A Riddle and A Reply**

**A Riddle**

This beauty of hers shames me too much.
What shall I do? I cannot possibly love her as much as the depth of it within me feels, else I will despoil my own affection with too easy zeal.
If beauty is something of value to love,
surely there are other ways to match beauty for love in this.
But what then if I free all people, do all good works, build every great tower, achieve every kind of benevolence to all? She will then be at my behest, and I no longer her slave.
But what then? Can the pride of any man’s achievement ever truly exceed in esteem and worth the world’s most beautiful woman?

**A Reply**

Who then shall see beauty?
And who shall protect her, and her children who are her all?
And what power has beauty without harmony?
And what harmony is there where there is mistrust and strife?
And who then holds the keys to unity and strife but you?

**The Rose Song**

Nestled rose bud
looking up from within
the sun setting aglow soft skin,
awaiting to awake to glory and me,
what day shall you bloom
to set again our hearts free?

I remember those days
which still thrill my soul,
held by no hesitation.
Children would sing laughing songs,
love was our destination.

And where to go to was now
not another time and place.
We were happy in the starry breeze,
the morning and the sunset’s kiss,
so overflowing, so pleased.

But the dark storms came.
How could we have known,
to have sailed past
the looming tempest’s blast,
before being tossed about,
dejected, downcast?

**The Shepherds**

*Thyris*: Is it true, as they say, that when they met words and music arose, indeed born, as if by a miracle?

*Menalcus*: Yes. For when he saw her with eyes properly open, his heart gained its true voice. The first word it spoke was her name.

*Thyris*: What was she to him then?

*Menalcus*: I think he saw a little lamb in her. For he cherished her deeply with the greatest love and gentleness.

*Thyris*: She was quite pretty wasn’t she?

*Menalcus*: Indeed.

*Thyris*: So now please tell me, what was it that happened?

*Menalcus*: There are powers in the world, both well meaning and not, which seek to distort love and what it is. For this reason pure and truest love must be very closely guarded and protected. But unfortunately times then were mean and heartless, and there was little time and opportunity for this. The world therefore could not long have them, and those attendants of Love, the young girls who waited upon her, then wept to see peace and liberty taken from their mistress.

*Thyris*: Yes, but how much can a person truly love another? Surely there is a limit?

*Menalcus*: Among mortals, you are correct. But in this instance neither was the fault hers or his. It was the world that brought about the separation.

*Thyris*: Hmm. (skeptical) The world was too hard on them? Perhaps you are mistaken. If what else you say is true, perhaps rather it was they who were too hard on the world. (pauses then sighs) What then shall we say of love?

*Menalcus*: The past is not for us to correct, but perfection may, with courage and faith, be sown into tomorrow. Believe this and those times of joy and wonder will even yet come again.

*Additional poems:*

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**An Understanding**

They could never compensate for woes.
Yet, at least in this my life,
I will ever have cause for bliss
If I can but let you to know
you are most truthfully
one of the best things
I have ever seen: simple as this.
But keep this to yourself
because the world
will never understand or believe my real meaning.

To think (if I had known you earlier)
I could have been some kind of friend.
Can’t I murmur smiling regret inside,
even if still grateful toward life and happy for others?

Many times love must away,
and one must wrestle with the world,
so that you are uncomfortably out of mind.
Yet I must not see too much of you,
because to see you is to desire you,
and such desire has no end.

It is Goodness and Beauty in you
I must love most, then yourself.
It is for you to live to be beautiful, by nature.
So only by what is pure, right, and true
may I possibly serve and adore you.

And you are Happiness.
And if happiness, which is you,
can be made more happy,
my happiness will be Joy.

And then say:
Love, Life, all Goodness: may I do my Duty,
May I be what you most need me to be!

Last Request

I asked the commandant who holds us prisoner if I could at least have her receive my letter and allow her some kind of reply. After all, I said, what with your killing us all, and life passing us by, surely this is a small request. He said he would permit no such letters.

Perhaps I can explain to you then.
It is not really necessary she love me,
circumstances are too strange I grant you.

Ordinary kindness, routine politeness is sufficient.
It’s just that I love loving her so much,
that few things else move me so.
She understands music
so I think she will understand this.

When I thought of making her happy,
everyone and everything she loves
had to be made richer
because she loved them
But if she loves them,
how can they ever be made richer?
They therefore should always be happy.

I wish someone would apologize to her for the way the world is.
I would do so myself, but as you can see…

I thought of her now and across all of time. 
Then it struck me like a revelation: 
she is radiant as the dawn.

What gall, what spite I cannot hear from her. 
I will therefore love her in my prayers. 
In my journey towards the Good, 
I yet have hope and faith 
to see her there. 
And while death is prepared, 
please tell her for me, 
with this kiss invisible she will know 
that she will ever live 
in the furthest reaches of my soul, 
a space not here but forever.
A Suite in addition to the First, written for Sally Ann Howes

Contents.

1. His Grief
2. Before Sunrise
3. A Miniature
4. Proceeding
5. Berries
6. True
7. There are Beauties

His Grief

Thanks to these photographs,
I think I have been cheated of my life.
So many things fate
(much too carelessly I think)
has tossed my way,
and with these pictures,
of course, it’s fate once again.
Just wonderful. Just great.
For now, as figures
in the great chronology,
I am not able
to have known or met
this woman, this girl.

How most certainly
blessed and fortunate
were those who did.
It can’t be denied.
All that I have now to ask is,
how am I live?

Before Sunrise

Not long before sunrise,
I went to leave food
for the small birds to find,
upon their waking.
To my surprise,
a gathering met me
so blustery, so free,
a stir rather tickling
so soon, so early.

Though houses stayed napping,
great winds set leaves flapping.
All of charcoal and black
was the sky high and back;
with diamonds gleaming alight
in every color, direction and sight:
chatting, humming,
whistling, some drumming.
Oh so much the trees longed,
to be swept up with the throng,
tossing about shades of desire,
as if to join the singing fire.
Then brisker than the air
was the absence of all care.
The howls into a hush glided;
all melody and din subsided;
clouds pale yellow, some orange-red,
one of them shouting, southward sped;
when behold, the horizon rolled,
turning the world into gold.

My goodness, I thought,
What pageantry! What play!
Do all these know her too in their way?
If so, more glad am I,
more glad than this sky.
And the next thing I knew,
I sang too.

A Miniature

Poise commanding,
meekness disarming,
eyes celestial,
that voice spectacular,
visions of your hair,
your cheerfulness,
small fingers perfect,
majestic limbs,
rising up in a bouquet
which enshrines
an unpretentious heart
most definitely
causing love.

A queen, yet a doll,
goddess, yet mouse!
Nature’s brilliance,
Life’s sweet too!

Inscription:
One could live
on memory,
did hearts not long so.

Proceeding

Remember I must
this most extraordinary liking,
first sprang up deep inside me,
and is like affection divine,
lighter than soul and breath,
yet mightier than the day itself.

Should shallow thoughts
lure me too much astray,
I am chastened by a very good angel,
who has as much as reminded me:
“Here now... it was by
this ethereal wisp within
That you were first smote.
If you really love this woman,
then to this fire be true.”

Cast upward
was a warming sun
whose rays shone
through my heart,
and reflected you back to me.
I then became some kind of mirror
who with silver pen,
is caught up
in a very agreeable daze
trying to write of
all flowers, all ribbons,
all jewels, all fountains,
all rainbows, all glimmering,
all wistfulness, all sighing:
glorious plans,
fondest dreams,
would over flow
with each yearning.

But what seemed most true,
was that I should cherish you.
For howsoever I might ever be prized,
You magnificent,
you incredible are always better.

Only let this
your very nice poet
be ever there for you,
(no matter how glum things are),
the most care free of rivers,
ever pouring forth
in orchards, bright forests and meadows,
to love you in all ways needed or wished.

You should ask:
“How can this be?”

Because, as I will tell you,
ineluctable glee is mine
every day and always,
since something within,
a blessing from Heaven
come unawares,
more than music,
more than light,
revealed you to me.

Berries

He: Once I saw swallows fluttering, along a fence. A mother was feeding her baby a berry. The round fellow was already out of the nest. But she still fed him through his mouth. Poetry, you know, can be fed to a person in kisses like this.

She: Yes, but I like how you write.

He: And I how you think. What are you thinking?

She: I was thinking how truly grand what’s little can be.

He: Like swallows?

She: That’s right! You’re right!

True

Isn’t apart sometimes together?
Isn’t together sometimes apart?
Isn’t this something of a dance?

What of all the tomorrows?
Who’ll say where time goes?
Will judgments never fail?

Having given it much thought,
I don’t really believe I could
be your only you, nor you my only mine.

Certainly often, and even for a life time,
but I’m not so sure one can really be
the satisfaction of another always.

A person can be love, harmony, and virtue,
which are what do satisfy us always,
yet who can fathom variety?

So should you love him (and not me),
then it is him you should love,
this I insist.

Indeed, stay as good as you are,
and if he’s not too bad,
I will love him well myself.

Perhaps a comrade
he’d turn out to be,
and lay down his life
as I would for he:
which is to say for you, true?

There Are Beauties

There are beauties,
we didn’t yet see,
and isn’t there too,
more still to be?

To give is the best thing,
to give is all living.
But do sometimes take,
as a way of your giving.

For you to love life,
like never before,
if I could but this,
I’d never want more.

I’d show you the mountains,
the misty air by the sea;
on the islands we’ll view
the moon over tea.

The seagull high soaring
sky and water rules,
while starfish and crab
swim in low pools.

Craggy, rock towers,
in the ocean still stand,
but an Indian long-boat,
lies cast on the sand.

Recall then that day,
as they wept the while,
though approaching the end,
to each other smiled.

For when times are lost,
and beauties can’t stay,
they remain inside us
awaiting someday.
SONGS, etc. written for Sally Ann Howes

Contents.

1. Flight and Home
2. Candid
3. Another
4. Small Smiling
5. When Music Comes
6. Appraisals

Additional Poems
Tiger Jack’s Escape
Everybody Sing
In the Past
Hope Along the Way

Flight and Home

In the longing and summit
of flesh and the spirit
are joys all easily see:
waves racing the shore,
passion which scales the heights,
clouds which float and fall free,
hearts even cry
if their loins are denied.

Yet when I saw her
I did not want to think this way,
it made me want to cry, she is so beautiful.

She is that golden flight and home,
something perfect, something higher,
yet touching the amiableness of earth.
She doesn’t know how beautiful she is.

Until her, life was something less.
Let me then be more.
In me it is a fault,
thinking I really know better than her,
let me learn from her own wisdom,
as I flatter myself she learns from me.

And though she say otherwise,
she is someone so grand.
Can I, no one, ask for the rainbow?
No, it’s best to wait for her in dreams.
But let love be where still it yet might.
May I, and humbly, with those glorious girls
who also love her, scheme
to see her always in the warmest embrace.
And if we’re out of sorts or the time is not right,
may we bury ourselves in far away night,  
rather than risk the slightest fall  
of that comfort and bliss,  
which are our all.

Candid

When all’s said and done,  
I can’t help loving you.  
So don’t blame me for it.  
Will you love me too?  
If so let’s go,  
I can think of so many heavens  
for such as might be us.  
If not this a compliment take,  
I’m not hung up about being so serious, so close.  
But it was dire to have just a little of you.

There are only two things  
In my life that makes me truly sad,  
losing the kids who died,  
and not hearing from you.  
Nothing else would I let myself weep for,  
but will do my duty like I told you I would.

But if I cannot hear from you,  
why is this world here?

Another

She is not all women,  
yet she’s all women to me,  
as the dear Lord,  
and by rights of the free  
he has given me,  
to make her.

It might have been another,  
I might have been her brother  
but only she is the one,  
and more beautiful is none.

We are not every day  
who we were, or who we’ll be.  
Mortals like us  
know who we love  
can’t always their way see  
we love when we can  
and we turn.

Some people suffer because  
that is now the way;  
people prosper  
that’s how it is.  
But now’s never really today,  
what really lasts is in us
is what’s good.

**Small Smiling**

Just look at those adorable eyes.
Why are they smiling so?
They couldn’t be more than four or five:
so small, so unknowing,
such overflowing, such glee.

Those eyes both show faith
but in what are they believing?

When you see such as these, so helpless or fragile,
how could you not think of caring so much,
they are so trusting, without fear,
who cares for these here?

Maybe all this is just a show for them,
and because we love them so.
But still there can be
a little happiness for you and me.

**When Music Comes**

Music’s not right
if things are all wrong,
like when we’re too busy,
or the mood is all gone.
Yet know though we’re deaf
and that feeling’s away,
music somewhere
goes on, and still plays,
every hour, every minute.
But when it again comes
what are two in it?

They are hillside arising
in a peak heaven kissing.
two stars colliding,
sending night missing,
more bright than the brightest sun,
love is like this
when music comes.

When music arrives
incense is whirling,
making fragrant the moment
of tender unfurling.
Yet though it can’t last,
and tomorrow ends song,
music we don’t hear
still plays, still goes on
every dear hour, every dear minute.
But when it again comes
what are two in it?
They are blue birds alighting
in a sky there and waiting...
two daffodils tossing,
blowing away hating,
whether we’re singing or we hum,
love is like this
when music comes.

**Appraisals**

As has been said
many times,
best treasures
are rarely seen
at true worth.

You know too
that playing the world
is sometimes fine.
Sometimes it isn’t.
It’s good for some things
and not good for others.

For all fine intentions,
the world in its spinning
can sometimes knock down
love between two friends.
They should avoid then,
and as best they may,
taking care to stay above it.

What you have
the world rarely has.
So don’t feel shy,
when dealing with it,
of pricing yourself too dear.
A man might sell all he had
just to get a special pearl,
when why look at you,
I think that’s what you are.

**Additional Poems**

**Tiger Jack’s Escape**

_For Sarah Lopez_

Kitty Kat started,
Did you hear?
Tiger Jack got caught in a pipe!
Did he get out?
Oh yes, he did.
He didn’t want
to be in that pipe.
That boy got stuck,  
but didn’t know how.  
Mewing till they came,  
he was so glad  
to get out!

**Everybody Sing**

*For Heather Ripley Glaisyer*

Clouds bearded frown,  
cold and frost bite,  
the sun is a prisoner,  
the ground’s still and white.

The sparrows in a bush  
though hidden now see,  
gather warmly together  
perched patiently.

Then one cries out:  
“Everybody sing!”

All at once,  
with “cheep, cheep, cheep,”  
how loudly it rings!  
The quiet can’t keep!

“Oh dearest my heart,  
what laughter you bring,  
no matter how gray,  
my life’s always Spring!  
For now then,  
and forever more,  
you are the one  
I will always adore!”

**In the Past**

*For Katy Burchell*

Velvety darkness descends  
bespeckled with gold  
of red candle light  
like dreams overcoming stillness,  
which look above and beyond years.  
You call to me as I seek you,  
yet I miss you in the dark,  
so up now after I fell,  
what’s now left to tell?  
The party was still going  
when we left with.  
the lamps hung alight,  
drunken stars fallen with night.  
Coming up on the sea air  
sand and grass  
when we got there,
glimping crystals like glass
that house beyond reach,
alone by the beach,
light as a feather,
now safe together.

Hope Along the Way

For Basilea

We are so rushed and driven on,
not enough time to know the value of it all:
except in halted moments
catching one’s breath in the hurry,
little time to look, little time to see,
till now we’re flung on in a flurry.
Oh how much more then
those pauses must savored be
because now in that moment is you,
and all this trepidation,
to fulfill obligation,
to get past pain,
all this now seems
so I can see you again.

And when you are only sometimes there what do I think?
You are there but you are not, and I think of music that moves,
I think of problems to solve, things that are curious or to me funny.
Yet in this somewhat thinking of you I know you’re not there.
Which is just as well, because you aren’t there.
Why should I die then more than is strictly necessary?
So I merely die as I do these days,
and this death must be just as one.

But then oh if you felt sad too,
I simply would not let you.
“You cannot be this way,”
I would say,
“you lift my hopes
you soar my day.
No, the only thing bad
is your being faraway.”

End of Suites and Songs.
CONVICTION AND ASSURANCE

What is it if
swans stroll sidewalks,
and eagles streets,
royal yet forlorn captives
of the wild man of the steppes?

*More* than shame, of course.
Not much better will it be if
such birds out fly us
in being so wonderful.

Until some hello,
be you as they,
and I will be too.

DEO GRATIS

With some prayer
having been put into it before hand,
I thank God,
that I now give thanks to Him better
than I did last year.

*True*, the improvement
wasn’t so ample.
But what sweetness there is
in even a little growth that way.

So, please dear Lord,
grant me by next year
to thank yet better.

DECLARATION OF A FREE SOUL

I was born happy and will be happy if I feel like it --
while doing the right thing as best I can, and as God gives me to.
Furthermore, I will endure no power in the world
frightening me with irrational fear;
or tell me that because certain people think such-and-such,
that such-and-such is necessarily so;
or tell me I don’t have the choice to believe what I want to believe;
or that I don’t have a choice in doing the right thing or not;
or that I can’t choose my thoughts when it comes to yea or nay.
I am honestly one of the happiest people in the world,
and if I am ever really unhappy,
it is invariably because people who embrace
or give into upside-down thoughts
most belligerently cause me problems.
OCCASIONAL PRAYER

Not mine,
but thy will be done, Lord
Make me good,
keep me from foolishness.
Give me humility
Grant me grace
May I be grateful
Ever loving greatly.
Like you dear Lord.
Amen.

TRUE INFINITE

You know this, but don’t know that.
If you’d known that (and not this) would you really be any different than you are?

It seems that how we deal with what we know (not so much what we know) that our real and
deepers selves can be affected. People, like atoms, will normally only change and interact on the surface. If
the heat of a given person’s love or desire is great enough, can our own nucleus, or core selves, be
affected?

We are not really what we know so much as what we love, and only in this sense would knowing
this, or not knowing that make any difference, that is to say if the knowing significantly affected what we
love. But it (or they) would have to really be something, now wouldn’t it?

Sometimes when this is there,
it is no longer really this.
If somewhere else,
it might become merely that,
or perhaps something better.
Place and role is everything.
In a different place everything
can or could become something else, but apparently not just anything.

Everything must stop at the infinite, and this includes all that ails you – even time and death.
Where then will we find the true infinite?

For the scientist and cognitive philosopher, the infinite, unless assumed to be a notion innate and
intuitive to us, can only be a logical, theoretical, or practical construct.

If not innate to us, this construct cannot be the true infinite.*

Religious faith, on the other hand, sees itself in a position to insist that the infinite is real and
might call or link it to God, Brahman, Nirvana, the Tao, li, bhakti, Christ’s love – all of which
understandably allow of wide interpretation and degrees of comprehension, and often times are expressed
by what they are not.

* Note. Some nominalist philosophers, such as Chrysippus, have distinguished between the
infinite versus relations or processes which go on infinitely: dismissing the reality of the former while
maintaining the feasibility of the latter.

So by this view, if you like it, the One (or else the universe) is not infinite or the infinite, but is
infinitely divisible.
TO LIFE ONCE MORE

Strewn across ages
like debris in a desert,
sacrifices made,
the babe laid,
the tears shed,
the prayers said,
lessons taught:
was all for naught?

Should we our hands up throw
because we don’t know?
Accept all as destroyed,
and settle some place in the void?
Or will Eternal light and grace
gather all in an embrace
who gave love their trust:
the caring, the abused, the just?

Oh but a revolution I’ll take up
to save all forgotten weeping,
yet humble to that Providence,
gently the course of things keeping,
asking courage, faith, and patience,
to keep our hearts from sleeping.

Oh you dull! You deceived!
Was not your birth
fresh and smiling
as any joy filled leaping?
And were you not loved
but didn’t know it?
Yet now have you
allowed yourself
to be mired in time,
mistaking time for life.

Awake, know your birth aright,
and live again anew!
Arise once more that Spirit
of all that’s Good and True!

THERE AREN’T WORDS

I am a lunatic
To love her so much.
But she is so cute
-- there just aren’t words.

I am a villain
To want to possess her.
But she is so lovely
-- there just aren’t words.

I dream and I long
Yet what good does it do?
She makes me write this
-- but there aren’t the words!

PRESENTS

I’d send her
a flowery bouquet
that glows so gay
that were it night
you’d think it was day;

and proud painted horses
on a toy carousel
playing music box music
to make her feel well.

And with
all this rest,
loud wheezing chimes
of baby birds
in a nest:

hearts full,
sounding
high,
to where
one day
birds fly.

MEANTIME

You don’t really need me,
nor I even you.

But oh so wonderful you are!
And you are so wonderful.

Only after I landed
did I realize
I’d been flying.

So if I don’t
another poem send
know I think of you
as someone
loved ever to no end.

But the noise,
things too dreadful to speak…
So let this sleep, 
it will keep.

(There’s no point now, 
now is there?)

**IF ONLY ONE PRAYER**

If I had only one prayer, 
It would be that those I love, 
whether they’re far or near, 
know there is always someone 
to whom they’re always dear.

If forlorn, forsaken 
I myself must be, 
So be it! 
Sinner as I am, 
God’s will be done, 
Lord have mercy!

Only let them always know 
They’re always adored 
And never for granted taken. 
Though memory sleep, 
May love ever awaken. 
Though our mind forget, 
May our heart be ever theirs. 
Keep them dear Lord 
In kind, most loving care.

**WEALTH**

The more a person is loved 
the more they are worth. 
But when we love 
the humble and good, 
the whole world 
is made more rich 
than all the riches it possesses.

Take delight at this instant 
in the sum of all pleasures goodly 
and all real happiness that’s ever been, 
and in your love of them 
all these goodly pleasures are yours, 
with joy enough for all beside.

Now, what now more could you ask, 
but true freedom and peace?
THE EMPTY FRAME

Instead of a picture
I put up an empty frame,
and now in it
I can see anything
(aside from nothing.)

THE AGE ACCURSED

Would that I died ten years ago
than to have seen what I have seen.
Such betrayal, such baseness,
such falseness, such cruelty!
Of good, there was very much and more.
But the stink, and rot of indifference
that ate and eats its way
into most everyone and everything --
Would that I’d died ten years ago
than to have known what I have known!
How blessed and at peace must it be
to have been spared this vile age!
The dead no more need remorse.
But Lord pity us who lived!

MAKE NO PEACE WITH HELL

What do you think
doing the right was ever for?
To please some dictator?
Doing the right and morals
are what make real happiness possible.
Though he glow with powers,
and look and sound like Jesus,
believe no angel or ghost.
And if he forces himself on you,
and will not leave,
when told to,
pray for his damnation.
Forgive all and everyone else,
bear your cross,
but, with sobriety and grace,
curse all lording spirits
that give the least hint
of threatening or bullying.
But you fear him you say,
Fear more giving in to him.
For he was never happy.
And how will you be so
if you live your life
according to him?
WHAT BUT?

If God manifested himself to sight,  
it must be as a blooming flower,  
for what is more beautiful?  
And if he was sound,  
what but the most heart  
soaring harmony?  
If an animal, then innocence and good nature.  
If as a man, then a hero and honest friend.  
If as a number, what number could he not be?  
And if as strength  
what but peace unending?

AMBUSCADE

Yes, of course  
it’s possible!  
My goodness!  
How dreadful  
and ungodly  
to think otherwise!  
Only you’ll have to  
take out those two angels.  
And to do that,  
you must arm yourself with  
justice, truth and reason;  
since swords,  
as you know,  
really do cut.

“ODE TO HELL,” or the Anti-Aircraft Battery Hymn

He glows a dazzling white  
from the blue on high  
surrounded by angels  
and smiling  
with a picture  
of a real lamb  
on his golden crest ---  
yet without  
the least shred  
or pulse  
of real heart,  
wisdom,  
humility,  
or humanity  
to be found in either himself  
or his angelic followers.  
Seen afar from deep space,  
they must look on the globe  
like an Emperor’s  
imperial entourage
proceeding majestically,
and across
the cloud adorned sky,
from
Los Angeles to Seattle;
and on their way
to spread the gospel of blind fear,
in thunderous
Dolby© Surround-Sound.
May his be the stink,
the rot,
the confinement,
the torture,
the poison,
the human rights abuse,
now and forever.
Amen.

TO AN ANGEL

When you took that bribe
In fear,
And sold that child
In tears,
Did you realize you
Were selling also
Your heart and soul?
Smog that glows,
Slave high in the sky,
Golden ghost,
Your life is a lie.
Time is on our side,
Because truth forever abides.
If then we are true,
And before we do,
You, coward, bully, will die.

IF IN THESE TIMES

And if in these times,
we missed out
on the world,
what did we
end up missing,
but insincerity,
betrayal,
phony baloney?
All you ever did
that was really worthy,
All you ever made,
You did it for someone else.
It could not have been
for yourself.
You may not believe it,
but somewhere,
apart from your problems,
there actually is a place
where there are no problems,
and with (believe it or not)
a place that is yours...
Only they way it is,
we’re under attack
for some reason,
so...
we’ll just have to deal with it.

DEBTS

He gladly threw in his lot
with the lying dead,
because as far as money,  
they were never in the red.  
But little did he realize,
when finally put to bed,
in order to pay them back
they would have his bloody head.

AMBITION

If you are unknown to fame
Make with Love your name,
For any star needs a fan.
That’s how the thing began.

Animals
Have been very good,
And some people too.
You can’t save all of them,
But you can save a few.
Make them a queen
Or crown them a king;
Wanting their happiness,
More than any other thing;
Wishing them safety to no end,
All their cares to mend.
For what is more worthwhile
Than to forever be a friend?

Or think how someone is forgot;
That someone sore needs caring.
How unbecoming! How ridiculous!
Now give up this self-staring!
Be you a heart than shines,
The very star of devotion:
For no hero is more fine
Who seeks in this promotion.
TO A FOOL

Not Life, but Hell’s to blame.
But you blame Life as if it were Hell!
Stop listening to Hell,
and start listening to Life!
Forswear the reign of finitude,
that spawn of evil, and prison of our hours.
Cease your cowardly lies and secrets,
and see and speak the eternal!
Paul was like you,
a fallen, murdering man.

Yet look, through courage,
what became of him!

As for waters of nectar,
and flowers from Heaven,
what good is all this,
if truth’s outlawed,
and the justice uneven?
And with skulls in the ground
of the people you killed,
how can you think
it was God whom this willed?

ON ENDURING TIME

They were so glorious
Yet now have fallen silent
In the valley left behind.
Will they come again?
Will this dry spell never end?
I knew him.
He had heaven to give,
But they would not let him live.
How much in the way of tears
Did it cost to get you here?
Yet what was all this,
To any weeping of his,
That we could not be happy
Without drowning in the sea?
Yet he was cast aside
As if he never was.
If you are like him,
God will survive in you
And you in Him.
We can’t always help in our time.
In our time we cannot always see.
In our time, we sometimes die.
In God’s time, God sees.
In God’s time we are and will be free.
THE MAN OF THE AGE

Give me that man
who will not criticize
a ghost, angel, or rich man,
because he’s afraid of them;
Give me a man
who will look to lights in the sky
before reasoning;
Give me a man who cannot think for himself;
but always turns to others
to find out what he thinks;
Give me that man who is so interesting
he is always forcing himself on people;
Give me a man who will join
in the persecution of attractive people;
Give me the man who has so much wealth
you know he has been up to no good;
Give me a man who will wear
a baseball cap with a death's head emblem,
and I’ll give you a man of the Age.

THE FLAG THAT’S TRUE

What did it matter,
Whether whole or in tatters,
As long as you waved
Against lying and false fears?

What difference was it
Exactly how you appeared,
If in the breeze you fluttered
Someone’s hope of being free?

How many stars,
How many stripes,
Whether white, red or blue,
What are these exactly,
If those with you
Stand for truth and being true?

You are there
Where there’s compassion,
Where people are fair,
Where people for love
Are willing to die.
Only there
Can it be said
That our standard flies.

From injustice and crime
You protect
Both the high and low.
Though beautiful it is,
This cloth
Is but your shadow.

May you never again
Be brought to bear
Against the friends
Of nature and the land,
But only those who betray them,
Spurn reason and law;
Who refuse to understand.

WISHFUL THINKING

I was so glad when he turned into the wolfman,
and ran running fast as his legs could take him,
far and away and over the hills,
ever to be seen or heard from ever again.

THE REASON

If we met,
It was truly in love.
But that love truly
Is now to love them,
So they can be happy
As we are,
Even more and by far
Than we are;
Giving them wonderful gifts
Such as were our lot,
From people who loved us:
Who’ll ne’er be forgot.

THAT BLEST MOOD

I can take,
I can leave you.
You are by chance,
yet not by chance,
like every other,
yet like none other,
here, but beyond reach.

Yet when I get home,
on grassy cliffs
above the bay
and all is finally still,
I’ll finally dream
my best dreams,
and my best dreams
are dreams of you.
FAREWELL

We blossom, ripe, and decay,
The music begins to stop,
All is passing away.
In looking back
On once resplendent day,
The memory of you which shined
Is now an image divine.
Oh, won’t you come again?

Yet powers are indifferent,
Callous and cruel.
Fate decrees what will be.
And sad it is to think that
Though birds sang merrily,
We’ll never meet again;
Heavens hoped for
Never known;
Adrift on an empty sea.

So in goodbye then,
Let me wish you the best poetry,
Because you are poetry to me.
For when I think of you --
Grottos, deserts, stars,
Forests, beaches --
You are so much
Of everything I see!
And if but in this twilight
There’s just a hint of melody,
I will in some wise know
Some of what was to be.

HE GAVE HIS HEART TO DEMONISM

He wears a mask to hide his face.
“The Phantom of the Opera knew no disgrace!
For how could such be
If his face they cannot see?”

He listens to an ancient ghost,
Whose gossip is his greatest boast,
Who every time he’s shown the door
Says he’s nothing to live for.

He gave his heart to demonism!
Rumplestiltskin is his name,
Being interesting is his game.
And if they don’t do these things a certain way,
He’s afraid he’ll go to Purgatory.
But Oh can anybody tell
Why he thinks there is no Hell?
He spies on you, he spies on me;  
From foreign terrorists we must be free.  
Religion, and magic are his favorite shows,  
And putting in your head a radio.

He gives our President just the plan  
To rid us all of terrorism.  
Then an anti-war protest orchestrates  
For the very plan he detonates.

*He gave his heart to demonism!* (etc.)

**THE PROMISE**

Some lands  
are old, beaten and sad;  
beaten and sad for ages,  
because of demons:  
brutal, scolding revenge.  
Love wrecked ---  
abandoned, still,  
now filled with silent sorrow.  
Oh melancholy,  
that sits on time’s porch  
looking out:  
a wind blowing through  
portals of years,  
the hollow of souls,  
yet longing, still longing  
clasping, still clasping,  
the still seed of life  
beneath the tyrant reign.

**DECEIT**

Dearest lamb,  
Did they not see?  
Did they not know  
The greatest good  
Is joy and innocence  
Beside you?  
Did they not know  
That in murdering Truth,  
Life’s murdered too?

And even to this day,  
Because of some lie,  
We still die:  
For only truth  
Has lasting breath.  
And ever was it.  
And is still now,  
That falsehood  
Brings us death.
CHRISTMAS POEM

The ocean is so deep and so wide,
it's thousand echoes have never known you.
It roars like a lion,
nor all of mankind does it care for.
You in the center of your world
mean nothing to it.
It roars like a lion.
What does the ocean care about the world of man?

Yet is such power greater than my love for you?

Our ship can seize the wind.
Like Pompey, we can even
clean the seas of pirates.
But without a lighthouse,
how would we get home?

A tongue of fire burns
false thoughts and pride in my mind.

I want you to be happy.
But only if you’re good.
The more good you are,
the more I want you to be happy.

A song for Christ.
A song for the innocent.
A Christmas song.
We adore you Oh Christ,
for by your holy cross,
you have set us free.
You were the one who suffered most,
let us praise and celebrate you.
You were the one who suffered most.
Let our greatest happiness be rejoicing for you.
May we bring you the best of the gifts you gave us.
You stood the test, who suffered the trial,
who were ever so good,
were abandoned by all
as happens to the innocent and murdered.
We are ashamed to celebrate with the liars,
and will have nothing to do with
the betrayers of good,
who march on to false riches and false laughter.
Because you who they murdered are real happiness:
the real happiness they don’t know.

Love beyond the obvious.
This broken pot.

This flower did not shake the universe,
but is a sign of he who does.
My cat is like a fine painting that moves,
yet no money follows her.

A part of the land,
they are like the land
and the land is like them and humble,
making grass baskets to sell to strangers.
How ever did such people
get so far out here in the jungle to live?
Now could we live as simply and as innocent.
They greet with a friendly face,
for nature has a friendly face.
But gods are cruel, man is cruel,
and so nature hides.

DESIRE ETERNAL

It seems there’s no way to speak,
so that words, like a bright sun,
would once and forever
drive away the murk
beclouding consciousness.

Defining seems often too confining.
For when we try to say
what we really mean,
words fall short,
are misinterpreted,
till even wisdom itself
is anonymous and forgot.

How long will you fix
to that burning star?
How long will you pine, broken heart,
resolved on regret till all ends?
For how long can you stay
dreams of life that pass away?

In the different folds of awakening,
we try to keep track of many things.
Yet like towers on a summer shore
a sea steadily draws them in.

Volant gold glides and slides
amidst cloud crevices in the sky,
as the earth swings its weight spinning,
so that the sun to us comes round again beaming
dynamic, celestial!

How goes this spiraling song
that we cannot come along?

Gods wake
from sleep ambrosial,
while we in their bodies
must carry on;
that they might
be alive to slumber in bliss.
Like cells flowing alive,
now suddenly dead,
we make up their
somnolent being.

Oh powers,
whose seconds are our centuries,
let us feel your real,
that ecstasy which time
has not yet to us revealed.
We who are mortals
will care for each molecule and cell
that works or goes
to keep this life together.
May fortune and truth bless us,
we cursed ignorant.
May reclining Justice
awake now forever!
May stars above us
hear our cries and laments!

Open up the welkin, rend the sky!
Exhibit that peace eternal
for which eager spirits long,
without which vision
we’d be people of mud only.
Give us then reasons for hope,
free of illusions,
identifying with the Ideal!

FORT CASEY U.S.A.

What battles were fought
the globe around
terror shaking the earth in war!
But Casey your mighty guns
ne’er saw the foe.
Why did they build,
such a stalwart fort well armed?
Indeed such peace is yours;
for having never fought
your victory is without peer!

SPARROWS

Gusts gathered,
then so strongly blew
that all the branches tossed wildly,
and the leaves
all shuddered and shook!
But Lord love them,  
they tightly clung on,  
and sang yet again,  
chirping in unison!  
From where such hope?  
From where such faith?  
All the world  
begins with these little ones,  
because for my life it does!  
Love give them a kiss on each cheek.  
They know only of one thing to sing.  
But one thing that’s true, true!

TO VAN GOGH, EMILY DICKINSON, ET AL.

Lament not me  
if I alone  
and neglected expire,  
since the best freedom  
ever meant  
escaping him  
and that miserable liar.

And why worry  
what others think,  
who can or will not  
examine  
what is false  
and what true?  
Yet, ahem, worrying  
about what I think,  
he thinks I do.

THE OWNER OF SORROW

From him and his ilk sprang all tragedy.  
He carries with him the memories  
of unfathomable weeping,  
and it is sadness yet still  
which keeps him aglow in royal state!  
In the piercing light  
of his blinding brilliance,  
he doesn’t think tears matter  
(or so at least he says.)  
And for this reason  
he’s the world’s king.  
Some (falsely) say he’s God.  
Some say he’s the Devil.  
Who and whatever he is,  
where is there any  
man enough to fight him?  
Some are rich  
because they are his friend.  
But what happiness is that
which has its bottom
in all sorrow?

JERUSALEM RESTORED

Earth, scene of an unending crime.
In the wars of conflicting desire
who will win and for how long?

How different it would be
if things were different!
Yet as they are,
a friend is a stranger.

Is a temple built by Herod God’s temple?
Certainly, it is Herod’s temple to God.

“Cut the phone lines, block the mail,
Morpheus our king is here!”

In the corridors of mind
he took the wrong door.
Realizing his mistake,
he stepped back.

“In that room things are bad,”
he said. “But that is not all rooms.”

ECONOMICS

A jewel of heaven is what to hell?
Something to plunder,
yet claim as nothing,
or worse
declare the public enemy.

A jewel of hell is what to heaven?
Something of value,
but which hell stole,
or worse
holds an unwilling hostage.

Then someone shouts:
“Heaven and hell henceforth are abolished.
There are no distinctions!”

EDITORIAL

Freedom spills gradually
in drops along the way,
not from some turbaned Arabs,
but from a suit and tie mafia
mired in the occult;
murdering children and families,
stabbing at the nation’s heart
in secret and silent screams.
Illusions and fear
are used to control and hold power.
Ours is a new Great Depression
yet with rather than without money.
While the President is ordered away
to see to the needs of a foreign land,
our own country needs leadership
like never before.
But the media won’t let us have it --
or choice.
And as years pass
the land of the free and home of the brave
becomes for many a circus prison camp
glutting the lust of magic’s god
who is else forbidden happiness.
That is not a human mind or heart
that speaks on TV.
It is the counterfeit conscience
of the bribed manikin or hypocrite hireling.
Appease or fight evil,
you can’t have it both ways.
Yet what enemy of evil is that
who won’t allow the truth?

SAVED

Ever rising waves
In the blasting gale we brave;
Rains beating down,
As we roll along,
Fleeing a watery grave.

Our ship sore leaks,
Timbers pained creak,
Tossed to and fro,
As along we go
And shredded sails shriek.

When others too soon
Have lost their life,
Can I hold my own so dear?
If I do drown,
Lord with pity look down!
May we not forget their tears!

SAME HEAVEN, SAME HEART

Though we
Go through life
As if we never met;
Though the world
Keeps us apart;
We are like each other,
Let’s never forget,
Of the same heaven,
The same heart.

Maybe
These days and times
No one is adored.
Yet in tomorrow
There’s a new start.
For there it’s something else.
There we’re so much more,
The same heaven,
The same heart.

Where we come from
Is greater than all the weather.
And though the whole world
Forever ends,
One day for sure,
One thing’s for sure,
We’ll be together,
We’ll be together friend.

AWAITING

Don’t feel that you can’t certain things do.
It’s just that now we are too wracked, distracted to.

Though now they gloat and now they jeer,
How will things look in future years?

They beat us so far in law and money.
But we beat them in being happy and being funny.

And think of those who died at their hands:
Adorable, precious. Are they not our friends?

We prefer to be free and live in peace.
For them violence and tortures never cease.

Because ghosts have their ear they do not give.
But who can tell them how to live?

We may be downtrodden when all is done and said,
Yet at least we know the living from the dead.

THE ALL WITHIN

We worry so much,
What he thinks,
What she thinks.
But if they are fearful,
If they’re all liars,
Why be on fire?
It’s truth alone
Will take us higher.

Sometimes we’re frantic,
Over this,
Over that.
But if time does its job,
We’ll be bored before long
Of all of those cares.
Hope alone
Will get us there.

What good is the globe,
Deaf and blind,
Lost in mind?
Why travel at all,
If we can’t be at peace?
Love alone
Gives us release.

We can choose what we see.
We can choose how we see
The reason we choose
Is so we’ll be free.
Look deep inside
To see where we’ve been,
‘Cause inside
Is all places and scenes.

WAITING TO BE EVERYWHERE

You were born to love.
Why were you born
If you could not love?
But the world was betrayed
And love went away.

You need love to live.
Why were you born
If you could not live?
But what can you do
If others prevent you?

We couldn’t love everyday.
We couldn’t love always.
But the day we did
Wasn’t that a day?
Hold on to what’s gone,
When forever longed.
Though no one cares,
It’s still there
Waiting to be
Everywhere!

Love lives in the truth,
A wind rising up cliffs
To lift you higher.
Yet if lies and fear reign
Can Love come again?

WHERE E’ER I GO

The world takes my body somewhere,
And my body somewhere my soul.
Although my soul prefers to stay in place,
It goes where e’er they roll.

Then Reason calls me to my Mind,
Saying is world and body all?
Ah thou soul without kind Love
world and body pall.

Oh then body, Oh then world,
Where ever now we go,
Comes with us dear true heart,
Though you care not, nor know.

TWO FUNNY OLD DUCKS

Two funny old ducks,
Turning now gray,
Yet quacking so jolly
Like they did yesterday.

Boldly approached
As I sat by the shore
“A fair bite to eat!
We want nothing more!”

The bread that I tossed
They snatched in their bills,
Then quacked and quacked on
Till they’d had all their fill.

You are so old,
Yet ducks, no misgivings?
“No, sir, we have not,
Because we fear not living.”

SECRET KNOWLEDGE

From the land of death
they who were once children
come in darkness
to destroy -- if they cannot rule,
lying in wait
in the dust bin of false religion.
They slew the fathers and mothers,
like they slew
the grandfathers and grandmothers before them;
putting in their place
the puppet and the slave,
who did not know the betters they replaced.
Our generation came along
hoping to continue
the heritage of our forbearers.
But, as before, they surprised
and murdered us too,
and also as before, it all took place
as if nothing happened.
You who come after
who would fight for life
and being able to really live,
know that we tried, but lies, fear and greed,
killed us also who came before you.
So that now no one can speak for you either
unless you do yourself.

THIS IS IT

This is it.
They are that.
(Are you ready?)

All was.
Some were.
They were.
He was.
I was.

All is.
Some are.
They are.
He is.
I am.

EARTH

In her sadness,
the earth makes to appear
gracious and cheerful.
Yet when you see
how very beautiful she is,
you see in truth
she has every real reason
to be happy.

Only who cares?
What do they care about?
They don’t care about her.
They don’t care about anything.
And if you don’t care then,
except for myself,
I guess no one does.

Seeing what she is here,
is different from seeing her
where we forgot her:
beyond the haunted kingdom,
over the garden wall,
in eternity.
There she has no fixed bounds.
There she has no end.

Rigid, yet fluid in the motion,
the feeling of knowing
rushed through me like rivers
rising from showers.
We have
fire, water, air, and earth in us too,
and like her
can with harmony and peace
be all of these forever.

**LET ME STAY IN THE SUMMER**

Let me stay in the Summer;
In that space serene,
Where the cares of the world
Don’t matter;
Till Autumn unfurls
Its colors in whirls
To calm and to sooth them.

Let me stay in the Summer;
In the race clouds run,
And processions of light
Don’t shatter,
Till downpours excite,
Bringing respite,
To the parched waiting earth

Let me stay in the Summer;
Where it’s hot and still;
Where sweet living abounds,
Nor scatters
Till the rising winds sound
And herald around:
“The time of mirth draws near!”
I cannot but hurt
when I hear a child
or an animal cry.
Could I but smooth their care!
His mother of a thousand years ago,
how that beauty persists in this child!
And think how any creature
could be loved, loved, loved,
without injustice to another.

Yet most will die many times
before at last they last expire.
How strange it is going through life
to have suffered more than one mortal wound!

Nor do all fruit, leaves, and flowers
grow the same,
though they come from the same tree.
Some are small.
Some are large.
Some pass away before their time.
Some get what they need, some don’t.
Some have strength and vigor
but must seek the light
from out the mass
of bombed and burned out rubble.

Out on some corner,
or off on some exit,
begging with a sign
in the rain,
grizzled, fat, or lean,
weary eyed,
determined.
Determined toward what?
You are part of the trip to eternity,
to goodness.
Yet the world belongs to these no more.
except as the shadow of hope.
And where is even that shadow?

Why did I grow like this?
Sorrow can at times
take me up like a flood,
and I can but flow with it.
Then I awake
washed ashore
on a bank of quiet solitude.
Quiet late at night,
the cool drops
begin fall and clatter.
Quiet, alone.
a rustle in the ivy,
a stir in the leaves,
are all that matter.
Oh to be never
taken unawares again,
and instead stay and live here always!
For no matter no still,
no matter how quiet,
we must leave a space
for the unexpected.

But if so, what is the true vision of the Good?

So many times we saw them up and go,
full of hope and promise.
The knowledge that something
could or might happen
thrilled us every time.
But in their case,
it did,
and fear fully realized:
full of hopes and promise,
shooting toward the sun,
then like a comet or shooting star
exploded in pieces on the ocean.

And to think how some wept before they died,
knowing that they would not live...
Yet others not only accepted calmly,
but even welcomed death.
All in one great number,
All for one great name,
alone and naked they rose and died.

And yet what were they going to do?
Live?
Live, live, live....
The Heaven I want to go to...
Could I love and treat and care for another
the way I would want to be loved, treated and cared for?
Could I but smooth their care!

When it was paradise,
it was paradise for the animals too.
What on earth then did we do?
A strange, pretty bird I never saw before
appeared
and alighted deep between some branches

in the time and place of poems and poetry.

You smile,
and smile you may.
But there is such a place.
But is it only I,
or do you remember too?

Love and Reason are the rock of ages.
Nature is children and childlike,  
even in gray aged wisdom,  
as great as any one is.  
And with that cute face!  
Quench then what is negative.  
Be without resentments.  
Quell animosity,  
and see  
All in one great number,  
All for one great name.  
Go where they love,  
see what they see,  
know empathy,  
even some Monday morning.

IMPROMPTU

Even though suburb raised  
Or city dwelt,  
There always use to be farms.  
Then something happened,  
and they went into a machine.  
There’s a place for us,  
Or there isn’t.  
That’s just how those things are:  
Hounded and stalked  
By a toxic waste site;  
Private interest;  
Muffled silence;  
Sweetness and light.

WINDS FROM THE SOUND

Oh ancient song, lead me along  
To sing what only a heart knows;  
Like a rooster who crows  
To the waking stars  
In the sky of a thousand suns,  
That for all progress,  
For all our alarms,  
Sea, sky and earth  
Hath not lost their charms!

Animals watch winds as they blow;  
In soft silence sitting below.  
The rushing gusts flow  
With yearning long gone  
From someone’s breast in the past;  
Revived now in mine.  
Then love weary grown,  
I find my heart moan  
For rest and a home.
VICHY AMERICA

Radioactive holiness
which erases your memory
and your guilt

“I am the Lord Your God....
(from Frank Herbert’s Dune)”

Wasting everyone’s time...
It’s pretty rich to be monsters of this kind.
“I need a billion dollars to torture enough people.”

And you are to me as,
and indivisible from,
the blubber and fat
of the Great Hooligan
sitting atop and astride
the freedoms of mankind.

JAILBIRD

Hunkered down;
Mums the word
When I’m around;
No one has come
To free this bird.
But I’m shining inside;
Waiting to shine,
And with my friends
Light up the world one day;
Ready to go all the way.
I could. I would,
Feeling up in a down world.
Oh to see faces again
Of those I loved, and then
We’d prove them all wrong,
And resume our song.

TO C.M.

Though sufficient precaution
I thought I’d provided for;
Never allowing my guard to sit,
To my dismay, consternation, and more,
She scored on me a direct hit!
And my heart, despite all pains I’d took
To avert that sweet avidity,
Was led a prisoner, elated but forsook,
Into that captivity;
Where iron chains weigh not more
Than tears hidden that adore!
How long one can endure such things,
I honestly don’t know.
Once more I find my heart a going
Where I did not want it to go.

THE SOLUTION

I told her if there were a way to say it
Without saying it I would.
She said she would free me
If some way she could.
Then a pause.
But no on second thought,
Don’t worry I’ll get over it.
I’ll have to, I said.
Think that I would take you
To an impossible head?
For how could one love beauty
And then not love you too?
And what good painter
Would not be a great lover too?
No, no, the solution’s simply this:
In times like these
There’s a thousand things to do.

LESCHI

Was he not handsome?
Was he not brave?
He would have it too good
Being right too.
So they sent him to his grave.
Long before he’d awoke on a land
Owned by none;
The sun lit up
The white birch on a blue sky;
While a seagull or hawk circled overhead
Under a placid moon and dim stars.
And though the sky still glows a golden glow,
The land is no longer free.
The world glitters on the surface
But rages and foments within.
It has the glory of light
With little true warmth or feeling.
Yet Nature shines love throughout
Wherever she is not spoiled by man.
But something even greater than she
Was the peace and strength of her son,
Calmly accepting an unjust fate,
Like the rugged pines that had outlasted time.

IN PASSING

I want to be there for you,
But don't know what to do.
I think you'd know this,
But don't know that you do.
So if you thought I did,
I did not forget you.

Forgetting is sometimes good;
Even when years roll by.
But if ever I care,
If ever I can fly,
I'll fly with you,
And never forget you.

It could go a hundred ways.
But however it goes,
No joy to me is more
Than that which you will know.
And though I am not there,
I cannot forget you.

TWO (SEPARATE) MINIATURES

She is right to love me
because I would give her everything;
not for my sake or for her sake,
but for beauty we both cherish

If it truly were the days of old,
I would have to, like some
Viking with an armed band,
have come taken and captured her
-- but only to kiss her!

TO S.B.

as the weariness of struggle
was draining me dry
I wanted water to flower
just a few last poems

yet my prayers were heard
for Heaven by way of you
rained in bursts
sending me a flood

now as my garden blooms
and butterflies have homes
inspiration thanks you
for the precipitation

TO CONTINUE

What is most good about someone
is what is most infinite.
When one realizes they need the infinite,
and that the one they love needs it too,
even more than they themselves,
only then can they love;
only then can they let go
to care for someone else
also deservedly called infinite.
True love then
needs not be tied down;
indeed cannot be.
For without the infinite
love dies and cannot endure.
And what is the infinite
but patience and charity
healing conscience;
courage in the face of dangers;
trustworthy, loyal, fair;
disregarding of any particular one
save the One;
ever followed, ever pursued;
tomorrow without an image?

**WHEN I THINK OF YOU**

When I think of you,
I don’t think of you;
But think of a beautiful sea.

When I think of you
I don’t think of you;
But roam long beaches roaring free.

When I think of you
I don’t think of you;
But view far hills with green adorned.

When I think of you,
I don’t think of you;
But hear a cooing dove that mourns.

When I think of you,
I don’t think of you;
But see clouds at stupendous height.

When I think of you,
I don’t think of you;
It’s your reflection in a rainbow’s light.

And when snowy blossoms
Sing from the trees
Wishing your felicity,
How I long for you so
Where’er I go.
POOR LOVE

An embrace from the soul,
A kiss from deepest heart
Must be sufficient here
For us who are apart.

How poor a love, they’ll say!
In this hard world that’s true.
Yet where sweet music lives
Such love is ever new.

There songs are always sung;
A rising harmony
O’er leaps the light ether
Above an angel’s tree.

Except for breaks and stops
Which halt the lulling strings,
Passions mild will rise up
Till all of heaven rings.

THE STRANGER

He came to town;
He’s the stranger.
That’s right the stranger.
He’s the stranger;
That’s all he is;
That’ all he ever was;
That’s all he’ll ever be to me.

He’s no friend of mine;
He’s borderline.
No one has greater money or place
As long as someone else
Ties his shoe lace.

“Indulge yourself for years.”
“Money kills fear.”
When he can live his life without me
Is when he can go on
Speaking so free.

In the olden times
They’d have hanged him.
But since more mercy needs a fool,
We’ll only see him sent
To reform school.

Yet if he stays set,
Weirder it gets;
Sprites and angels hover round him so;
Some say it’s sorcery;
Some Yugi Oh.

**REMEMBER**

Whirring flutter
Of feathered wings,
Oh soul,
Where now is hope’s prospect?
Where that peaceful, happy view
We once thought to expect?
Was it not in striving
To see love’s faith surviving?
Was it not in truth abiding;
False spirits overriding?
Was it not in bravest daring;
Borne aloft by caring?
Let us then now at this last
All void and emptiness defy.
Let us so boldly long to live
That Death itself may die.

**FIRST DAY**

Almost helpless,
Just beginning to see;
Looked on at a distance;
What now will they be?

Just yesterday
From the nest they rejoiced;
Each time the parents came
They raised their glad voice.

Free for the first time,
Hopping, not quite flying;
Today they’re out;
No thought of dying.

The sun then sets
On a day of new birth;
Filled with promise and hope
O’erflowing with mirth.

What’s tomorrow
Who now can say or know?
They begin in wonder;
But where will they go?
FRAGMENTS

Even after a million years,
Eagles still frown,
Yet seagulls still clown
both high soaring.

The golden bowl of you
The ideal of you in a pale blue book
Running off in print somewhere

A pretty girl I never saw
A part of the hills’ and forest’s awe
Somebody’s sister, somebody’s wife
It is just as well I didn’t meet her
Or I’d love her now too.

THE PEACEFUL DIN

Honk honk! -- Honk honk!
“What loud, strange noise wakens
This cold and damp autumnal night?”

When wonder to behold:
Miles and miles of Canadian geese
Heading south in noisy, distant flight.

Yet like a canopy of clouds
Housing the mists of a mountain
Is the calm left over from the sight.

POTSHATL

A modern house o’er looks a modern bay;
Yet new enough to bring back bygone days;
Strolling down sidewalked streets; past fenced backyards;
Yet the lost past seems not so far away.

Imagination takes me back to then.
I dream; and soon it seems like long ago.
I join free air and wind in swift adventure
And athwart the tall, waving grass we go.

Or from branch to branch we skip, leap and run;
From leaf to leaf memories to beseech;
Toward the black smoke of fires drifting
Where wood is burning on the distant beach.

Come packed canoes in the dawn’s dim, red light;
Though the thunder threatens with hints of rain;
They yet bring gifts overflowing to you.
For once more Potshatl has come again.

“Come, come then to the Potshatl my friends;
Where he who most wins is he who most gives.
And as the earth and sea give so shall we.
For he who most loves is he who most lives.

“Though they come fine, rich and filled with bounty;
Yet they will be put to shame my daughters.
For because you are the joy of my heart
Your spirit will be wide as the waters;

“And your pride rise high up as the great sky.
For myself I don’t need so much, that’s true.
My riches are great and already mine,
I need no more since, you see, I have you.

“And if somehow I could I gladly would
Give and give to all those who sadly died;
Finding laughter in their being happy.
Far from forgetting, I weep that they cried.

“But for that very reason let us sing;
As birds do.
And like insects let us dance;
And like flowers let us adorn.
For this is how to greet the morn.
For with just a few or even one good friend,
One can go on making songs ever without end.
May they then soon be our friends!
May they all soon shine;
Even if too we perish;
Even if too we’re left behind.”

MORAL OSCILLATION

You had it.
You don’t have it. (He took it.)
You will have it.

He had it.
He has it.
He won’t have it.

And how did he have it?
And where did he have it?

And how will you have it?
And where will you have it?

But why is all or was any of this ever an issue? Indeed a crisis? Because,
as it turned out, he needed you --
though you didn’t and don’t need him
(and though you continue to do your best to be nice to him.)
HE WILL NOT MIND HIS OWN BUSINESS FOR NOTHING

Sherman single-handedly could a hundred defeat
Till spirit people were brought in; him to cheat.
So now while his enemies thrive in wealth, honors and name;
He now must live friendless, in poverty, and in shame.

“Worry not for Sherman,” consoled a voice on high.
“Rather live rich, enjoy yourselves and buy.
For great, after all, shall be his Heavenly reward.”
That’s easy for him to say -- because he’s not my Lord!

Please then real Heaven, grant me this request!
May my murdered kids in peace find joy and rest.
As for myself, I don’t ask much -- only to be free.
So would you please tell these ghosts and angels – “M.Y.O.B.!”? 

GENTLY

What more silent is
Than a family of Juncos
Flitting on twigs and fences
Amid the light falling snow?
It was from such quiet,
Life, I first came to you.
But when I depart, when I go,
Will I that same quiet know?

LEMONS

Go make lemonade;
you’d be a fool not to.
A lemon after all
is for something.
Nor is every bad thing
anywhere near so good.
So that even lemons
can be precious too.

DANCE D’AMOUR

If she were sad I’d forgot her,
She should as well feel regret;
For the other two seasons
I now also forget.
Things should be done right.
In whatever it is we do.
And if we won’t do it right
Then how can Love stay new?
When things are done right,
The joy comes in profusion.
But if not done right
It’s all vain illusion.
And if difficulties prevail
And tyranny does not cease;
If we can’t do anything;
We’ll at least be at peace.
And just so you know
That I ever hold you dear,
I will always be good for you too
Whenever you’re not here.

THE VESSEL

With coursing winds to ride,
Dead calms to abide,
Storms to then survive;
How like long sailing
Is being alive.

With reason his ballast,
With purpose his guide,
He keeps his ship tight;
Then welcomes the port
When it comes in sight.

But the sailor who’s home
Soon’s dissatisfied
Nor likes all he sees;
And seaward returns
Seeking to be free.

TO N.P.

Is there any good word for second?
If no, then I can say as I durst;
And my words need not be peccant;
Since you are one of the first.

Even long ago I loved but you;
Yet did not till now find out your name.
Before these our years are all through,
A poem is the least of pains.

I’ll ask, “Do you want me to love you?”
I don’t want to (and you know why too…)  
But if somehow you want me to,
It’s the easiest thing to do.

Perhaps then great love we could pretend;
I’ll award you a badge or bouquet.
But if my heart must truly bend
All that’s needed is your say.

It takes time to reach a mountain’s peak;
It takes time to be up in the sky.
I think there is time for all we seek;  
Time to live for what we sigh.

These sighs are heaved for a good purpose;  
Else wise they would not be known or be.  
Our Maker gave these gifts to us  
So that we might give as he.

I pray to God I will be good for you  
(And some stupid pride not trip me up.)  
But if Time should cause me to forget you,  
Or if I fault you for being vain;  
It will be not yours, but my blame.  
(And so goes this game…)

HALF-RHYMED IN TIME

He shot for everything;  
How did he end up with nothing?  
And yet they’ll say  
Not all there is in the world,  
Even if one had it,  
Can remedy this life’s incompleteness;  
And for some special few  
This great world  
Is only a small place  
That alone cannot do.  
It cannot do  
Because there isn’t  
All the peace they are entitled to.  
And for all that they’ve lost,  
There is always today  
And tomorrow is interminable.

Where are the good going?  
Where are they who earned being happy going?  
Are they a family?  
If so, it’s because they have a mother and father.  
But if we can’t come we wish them well.

Now she must be one of them.  
Her beauty echoes off the rocks  
Or ripples across a pool.  
But if he but look at her  
Without the universal light  
To that sublime avenue,  
It seems he can’t quite see her.  
And when it is dark  
He says there is no light.  
But of course there is light;  
It’s just that for him it is not there.

In order to ascend high above  
Or dive deep under  
Desire then must abate;
And one must hanging wait  
(Just as music needs rests);  
Though the impatience is great.

**THE HEART IS THE EARTH**

The Heart is the Earth  
And the Mind is the Sky.  
Yet only if I behave myself  
Do I construe why  
Water is their spirit.  
Love is a spirit.  
You can feel it;  
You can hear it.  
The Spirit is Love.

Can any child  
Be Nature’s child?  
Yes, any child  
That loves Nature  
Can be so styled.  
For who loves Nature  
But Nature’s child?

Yet what is Nature?  
It calls me  
To the quiet of the fire  
On a frigid winter’s day;  
Soothes all my fears  
With warm summer rays.  
But if I am crushed  
Like a murdered animal,  
I feel my humanity.

**MORE THAN A MARINE**

You do not like it  
But let yourself be toughened;  
That way you will be stronger  
And sooner rid of it.  
What is truly good about you  
Is what is already inside you  
And what is inside of friends  
Who love what’s true.  
Yet you can’t assume  
Victory will come for you;  
Or that you will live to see it.  
You will instead probably just die  
With the consolation  
Of having fought the good fight.  
But let this be enough.

Bless these thy gifts, Lord,  
We are about to receive
Through thy bounty.
Remember the animals
Who give their lives;
Grant them your peace.
May we this day
Make ourselves worthy of this food,
In how we act and what we do.
May they with time
From their burden be freed
And we ourselves of the need.

FLYING AND POETRY 101

Speed up to avoid being a target.
Slow down to get your aim.
Stay high to keep safe.
Swoop low in order to harm
-- with success consisting of a
somehow happy medium between these.

Or if you prefer a jingle:

To evade, speedily fly.
To aim, go slow.
To stay safe, keep high.
To harm swoop low.

THE POINT

My life up to this point --
Alone, betrayed, poor, beat-up fool
Still seeking the time
When love made the town glow;
With nothing left it seems
But to escape the ruling show.
Can we rage against the ages
And lament what once was known?
Mourn fate past
Yet unable to escape our own?

Music is like (certain kinds of) love;
There is and there isn’t time for it.
And people you love are like songs;
You can’t always be with them
No matter how so you long.
Love is like music;
Good only up to a point.
Yet in that point is sown the seed
Of tomorrow’s today.
*Today* is so fraught with sorrow
I wouldn’t even call it today.
Today then must be tomorrow.

I have no one.
But when I think of
The one it’s she.
And how do I know?
Because she moved me.
But when today comes,
Will she be mine?
Probably not.
But she would have been,
And this love is the flower
That bloomed unseen.

DEATH IN SPRING

Poor life,
Why were you born?
Why did you live?
Your passing seems strange
-- you had so much to give.

Though someone once dreamed
Life’s happiness for you,
The world had you disowned.
Yet you were so humble,
You were so sweet;
I could have thought
It was made for you alone.
But for all tears that swell,
Your face fading here
Must instead shine far off,
Wherever Beauty dwells.

And now this ice in April,
This sleeping the sleep of ages
In youth,
Makes me ponder
Of my own demise
The truth.

When I die,
I’ll think of a soldier slain,
And think of the brave
Whom happiness here passed by.
May the prize go to the victor!
Felicity here to the good!
May God give me but to do rightly;
Just as you did and would.

WHEN ANGELS HOVER

When angels hover
Round a steeple,
They are then
What kind of people?
Though gracious --
Meaning well --
What they want
Who can tell?

Do they know
What they’re doing?
Is it wisdom
They’re pursuing?

Are they free
Goodness to empower?
Or do they serve
A tyrant in a tower?

Who knows?
Who can tell?
Only truth
Breaks such a spell.

But where may truth
Be found?
Clearly for some,
Not on the ground.

And yet could not this plot,
Where tares now grow,
Become a lovely spot
Did someone care to make it so?

**SISTER FREEDOM**

At first I wasn’t sure
Who it was you were.
Then in my mind’s sky,
From afar I spied
A glistening star,
And thought
That’s it!
That’s who you are!

*A light from out the blue,*
*Lilacs and lilies spring*
*Away from you.*
*In the hollow of dreams,*
*Gold ladders,*
*Whistle and bells,*
*I’m thinking, longing for you.*

Leading from you,
Creation’s blessed stream
Shines through.
And now I see too
The promise you aspire to,
Would see that hope realized
You within me rouse -- the true!
That spirit which you stir;
The beacon that is you!

And if tomorrow be anyone’s
Tomorrow will be ours!
And the fire of valor that died
Recalled some hurried night;
Oppression’s walls crumble down
That all may bask in freedom’s light.

SECURITY

No one cares --
But who then cares
If no one cares?
Look in the wrong place,
You’re sure not to find
What you’re seeking.

Then come a sudden mood,
Come a new circumstance,
A different time around,
How well you fare:
Feet firm on the ground.

As much as are your woes,
If you knew them
Your heart would melt
At others throes.
Is life a mystery?
You know it is.
How could it not be?

And will life always love you
For better or for worse?
That’s my job --
Your tears to quell,
Your joy to rehearse.

SOLID ETERNITY

There are ways a soul
Knows another soul,
And knows they love them too;
Touching a soulful fineness
That even the most
Keen spying spirit
Cannot scan or read --
Infrequent though they happen.
One day,
Hearing the echo of their presence
In the empty corridor
Of unfamiliarity,
And we learn our felicity
Lay hid all this while unknown
-- but there!
Rare are those
That cause you within to weep;
Grateful then their memory keep,
And before you sigh anymore!

OLYMPIC

What do I care if I die
Since they are
As much as Death to me;
And rather than go on
Dissecting pain,
Set myself free again?
Ah but Life’s not mine to lose;
Life’s not merely ours.
And promises and oaths
Command our destiny
When reason becomes an arctic waste
And thought cold consolation.
Drive on then, drive on,
Determination
Lifted from within,
And fly me the miles toward dawn.

NATALIE WOOD

A hush befalls
Not heard by all;
Ah here is
Her turn to gleam.
Yet if we insist
On seeing her
Any given now
We sometimes
Get to doubting;
Even though it is right
That we should.
Yet in and over
The landscape of times
That throne is undeniable;
Indeed, unworthy of paltry eyes.
And could we have but kissed her once
Beauty itself must say we’re wise!

JUST MY LUCK

Just my luck.,
He’s a key player
In megalomania.,
And because others
Won’t be straight,  
I can’t get rid of him;  
Howsoever great  
My anger or my hate.  
And you know as well,  
I can’t be making  
Such a fuss about myself,  
Though a prisoner of Hell.  
So a philosopher imperturbable  
I must be;  
Or like Odysseus  
Think of a trick  
To defeat him and set myself free.  
Yes, I will be weary;  
I will be annoyed;  
It can’t much be cured.  
And about all one can do  
Is remain calm and endure.  
But when it comes  
To actually being down  
That’s not so hard to get around.  
The burden of all that’s on him,  
The plague itself, Dunga Jinn.

JOURNEY OF THE LONE CANOE

Why after all anger and despair,  
Does the sunshine of youth  
Still beckon me forth?  
Why after all pride and doubt,  
For beauty far off  
Does my heart still yearn?  
Why after years a captive bound,  
Of a pleasant garden  
Do I seek home?  
I do so long; I am so drawn  
Because there is something about  
Where the tall green woods  
And the gray sea meet;  
Something about  
Where the earth breathes the wind  
And drinks the rain;  
Something about  
The rising sun  
(Who bids it wait?)  
Suffusing the air  
And making the mountains laugh  
In joyous reply;  
Something about that burst of gold  
In greenery translucent,  
Trembling and swimming  
In a flood of purest beams;  
Something in those selfsame rays  
When cast on the waters
And reflected dancing
On the river’s granite heights.
Oh, friend canoe, for that repose;
Toward where those western currents roll,
Where pouring from the cliffs
Veils of icy vapors
Mingle in yonder valley’s misty folds,
And streams and zephyrs billow
That sequoias and I may be evergreen.

There I am;
Towards there I go
On a trip
To the infinite
I call my own:
Locked to reason’s shore
Yet never leaving hope’s door;
Even in times sad and bereft.
For just as day in day out
This waterfall
Among the weeping cedars
Steadily descends,
So yet still sometimes hidden tears
Bubble and splash
Murmurs of remorse.
And yet just as assuredly
Am I soon to be solaced
By the great undercurrent of things,
Home of the immutable,
Silently rumbling
Without and within.

And not a voice in the forest is stifled.
Nor the shrieking hawk,
Nor the ocean’s lapping waves
Are enough to quell the eternal’s din:
The bark of the fleeing elk;
The deer’s tender tread;
Snorts of the towering moose;
Cackles of raccoons;
The grunts of bears;
The cougar’s growl;
The sea lions shout --
They all cry out
To the common mother.

And after all of this,
There is my joy!
She’s my little wonder
I care for and adore,
And always there
Were all else a bore.
I’m there with her in troubled hour.
I’m there when she needs me.
And can I cheer her this way
If I myself don’t keep on?
And if one day we part,
Why should I die?
Let death die;
I wouldn’t know how to die.
For with these Arms
In which we’re held,
How should we know what dying is?

**PASSAGE AHEAD**

When I think of
The miles we’ve gone,
It makes me wonder
About the miles to come.
In the sea of people
There are those
Who come and go.
To them --
Peace and hello.
What more can I do?
More I know.
Then there are those
Who are gone.
Our friends are gone!
But who then is here?
No one is here
But mourning hidden away
In the dark, lonely
Silence of the deep.
Judgment is the compass
On time’s changing sea;
And if no compass
Where will one be?
Sipping bittersweet molasses
In some caliginous den;
Let that not be me.
True, I sometimes want
To live -- or die,
And I don’t know why.
And yet I know
The spirit is the core;
The kernel of it all,
That *they* deem the shell.
But it is we, more than they,
Who are grateful for the day.
Yet sometimes I don’t think
I know it — though I try.
Other times I think I do.
Sometimes it’s up and went;
At other times,
“Ah, there -- the true.”
Be good then if only
For whom you love
And those who love you.
Yet for a while
I did not know what to think.
Till after many years
Of fretting and of fears,
I realize what fun we had,
Even if, then and now,
Still a long ways away
From being whole one day.

THE LESSON

In your mind, stay ahead
Of whatever’s being said,
And predict the effect
So as to not disrespect
Either what is right and true
Or whom you’re speaking to.

No need great heights to reach;
Come warmly with honest speech.
For a palace is bare
If no one can much live there;
Far better a cheery home
Where no one feels alone.

Though wrought
Into a glorious state,
Useless words we hate.
Speak to us then
Only from the heart;
That our own
May be made silent
Come the time you part.

EAGLEMOUNT

When brown little sparrows
Perch peaceably in a throng,
Cheerily they sing their song
Of felicity unseen
To whom they all belong.

For though someone’s small.
The love that adores them
May be most immensely tall.

That faery rockery
Full of clouds and verdant trees,
Eaglemount, so loved must be;
Where great has become little
And mighty are the wee.

For though very wee,
A giant joy binds them
High atop Discovery’s sea.
“When they went a roaming,
Weary to leave all care,
Did the good people visit there?”
Of such a queer query
How could you even dare?

Yet though they’d been near and far,
What a surprise met them
Beneath those western stars.

HEARD IN THE GAUNTLET - A POEM PLAY

Knocked down…
Dragged out…
Beaten in the head…
No more!
I ’d sooner be left for dead!
Oh, how I would
Have all problems and pain
Solved and fixed!
But failing that
Go to bed instead.

[Later that same day.]

Would that this noise
Would cease!
Could not my words
Make it stop?
Oh that Life could
Once more be embraced
In its most quiet detail!
But it’s difficult to live
If we’re always sick
With noise,
And I refused to be beguiled
By others tricks and wiles,
Sprung from their idlenesses.

And for all my own weakness,
I shall no slave be;
A prisoner I might,
But no slave me.
How could I have known
Life would take such turns?
But that’s not Life,
That’s only my life.
For others,
They don’t need
To worry about what I do.

What they say is
They hate to think
Of having to die
While they were  
Having such a good time of it.  
But if die they must --  
Then so be it, so be it…

**TUESDAY SERMON**

That you haven’t been yet  
Doesn’t mean you’ll never be.  
If you can’t grasp that  
You don’t* really* grasp infinity.  
And who is the truth for  
If not for you?  
And if it’s yours  
Why always hide it?  
Where you can always do better  
Is *right* where you are,  
And seeing others  
Through the mirror  
Of a distant triangle or star.  
So, be good if only  
For whom you love  
Or who love you.  
If you got the right going,  
Go with the flow  
While it’s flowing.  
But when it’s stopped,  
Let it go, let it go.  
Better to never speak again  
Than to go on speaking in vain.

**THIS DAY**

This day feel a limit;  
As a soaring bird must feel  
When it must come down  
To the gravity of earth.  
Though each muscle tendon burst  
To pass the aerosphere,  
In part because I breathe,  
I’m confined to this world here.  
And each day striking the calendar,  
It seems I wait in vain  
For blessedness to come  
To bring me stronger wings  
That would pierce  
The furthest bounds  
Of Freedom’s firmament.

What then are these recurring pains  
Which make life seem a burden;  
And cut deep like a falling axe?  
What gnaws late evenings  
And the dead of night?
Threatening totality
Such that life is wasted
Over woe’s temporarily tasted?

Thus asked in my worries and fears,
Born of idle, duped imaginings
Nestled in loss and boredom’s care.
Surely death cannot be more than
A myth of fear and unknowing,
-- Perhaps it offers respite.
Yet though death offers escape,
How can I concede the cause
That love will make all well,
And in so doing hate life
And resign myself to hell?

Bludgeoned and starved
To the spirit and sense,
Seemingly left
Beaten and robbed
By time and by life,
On troubled bed did I lay asking
“Where is God this lonely day?
“Wherefore proceed?” cried I.
“Why get up from this ditch
Once more to go
And risk all again?”
So it was I groaned
With dolor’s weight,
Ready to detach from the tree
Like a forgotten leaf whose late.

I then descended in sleep,
And in a dream
A strange shade beckoned to me,
And she whispered
With chiding voice:
“Do not languish
In self-filled pity.
Come with me
And see souls of the city.”
My mind followed her
And a vision opened
To my inward eyes
Of deformed and crippled
Struggling to make good
With nothing:
Sick, impoverished,
And prisoners in chains
Who had never a chance
For hope from their pains.
I saw one retarded, jeered at
Even as he wept.
An image wafted by
Of a limp woman raped,
While into the night
Her attacker escaped.
I learned of hearts
Who said good-bye
Without ever knowing
A true friend or kiss,
Or even imagined
A thing like bliss.
Dampened faced of children,
Bowed and lachrymose
Came forth
Who could never
Look up with kindness or trust.
There was a whore
Blank eyed and broken;
A drunk wallowing in a gutter,
Blood dripping
From the side of his head,
Less alive than dead.
So wretched and merciless
Was this I dreamed,
That my mind trembled
And in my sleep I screamed.

Then the heavy veils draped closed
And mists of mind obscured all,
The shade appeared once more and said:
“For every decent, yet troubled soul
That wills their end on life’s field
Goodness’ ranks are depleted
One less sword and shield,
And Evils are made the stronger.
Think well then you who weep
What your purpose could be
And why it is you belong!
Though you fail in the fight
Find comfort in doing what’s right;
For in that will you find
Love’s True meaning.”

The shade turned upward
And arose into the air;
Became a golden angel
With pinions bright and fair.

Amazed by her effulgence,
I awoke dazed from slumber
Bubbling like a warm spring
Flowing out onto the surface
Of cooling consciousness.
I strained like a new born child
Dazzled by her beams of light;
Awaking my spirit
From the shadows
Of that somnolent hypogeum.
A breeze from an open window
Lifted locks of my hair
And I breathed in deeply
The vigor of the flowing air,
Still hurting from regrets
But resolved to live more wisely;
To give so as to prove
My love forsaken
Was of actual worth after all.

Opportunities are never really gone
Until freely given up,
And if after all troubles I can move,
I will still laugh, cry and love.
I will not singly moan the loss
Of what is a mere illusion,
Of all that is called real.
For once the lies
That hypnotize
Are shorn asunder
And Time’s fleeting guise removed,
All of us that does survive
Is all that is living and beautiful.

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Addenda - Below is a previously included section of the “This Day” which was removed in the above now formal version. It’s added here as a semi-separate piece.

To exist or not exist,
All one can do is try.
Arrow on me woes
A hundred fold,
Yet still I’ll strive
For those I love
To stay alive.
Yet solitude can be too much
A burden that at times
That one wonders
About keeping on.
And it is painful comfort to know
There is such a thing as choice,
When there is no one left for love.
But sink not low so soon
Without remembering
The tiny seed
Deep resting in earth,
Alone in darkness below,
Piercing the soil and rubble
After a cloudy downpour.
Drinking the watery droplets
Till the sunlight bids it rise.
Then surging up,
The seed rends its form,
Bursting out in tender shoots --
A matchless delight
Of flourishing blossoms white.
WINTER DIRGE

The lion who mauled the lamb
Is after slain by man.
But then man must die too
At someone else’s hands.

Prepared for fortune good;
While steeled for what is sad,
Yet more ready when glad
Than when things turn to bad.

For December’s lonely cold
Bright candles and some wine,
For darkness comes early
In the chill of winter time.

Hear how the wind rises!
The hour soon comes nigh.
Our mornings were hello,
But now evening is goodbye.

And when death comes what then,
Amid these bleak nights and sore?
We’ll sing once more vespers
Heard in the days of yore.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Who that will not listen
Ever learned the lesson
Of Troy’s fall?

For years he fought
And kept the wall.
Yet one day’s sleight of hand
And look he lost it all.

Whoever is most fair and just
He said should rule.
But now say his captors
“No, it is he who best fools.

“And if good you must be
Then die you certainly will.
Oh, you won’t be good and die, eh?
Then like us you must kill.”
HERE

Did you ever stop
and ask whose stupid fault
this was in the first place?
Did you ever stop and think
the bad is them,
and when they are gone
we have everything else
to be glad over?

For any day
this all could end,
And any day
Cure all things.
Any day all
Will mend,
And it will be
Eternal spring.

We don’t need
A somewhere,
For somewhere is here.
No, the problem is
Too much strife and the fear.

Oh, how I long for peace,
And that no war would remain.
Oh, that there was no more fuss
And it was peace again.

SEA SONG

The mew flies in with news
Of solitary ships and barks
Plying waters far off and dark.
And though he laughs so,
My tears in rivers
Still flow and flow
For what happened long ago.

The pennant at the peak...
The yard swinging that squeaks
To a shuddering ruffle,
Till all sound is muffled
And proudly the sail fills,
Tacking towards the lee,
Taking us to sea.
REGRET

Oh, for in us when
Life poured radiant
Toward a golden sea!

But steered astray
By auras and mists
Of a treacherous noon,
The view vanished soon.

Now all that’s left,
Now that time has run,
Are the dripping embers
Of the distant sun.

A GOOD POET KNOWS

A good poet knows
There are as many
Highs and lows,
Not to mention
Fast and slows,
In Life
On which to draw on
And compose
As there are
In Music
-- only more so.
And though they’ll tell you
“It’s all been said,”
Not all of rhythm,
Counterpoint and harmony
Has yet been heard or read.

CROSS

The cross is
An Arapaho’s star;
A Sioux’s four corners
Of the earth
Wherever you are.

To others,
It’s the celestial glint
Of a lighted taper;
Or two roads
Intersecting
The eternal vapor.

To yet others,
Its on what
A sail is pinned
In order to catch
Truth’s wind,
On the voyage of ardor
To the longed for arbor.

But for you,
It is a rude mockery;
Just as life
At their hands
Becomes a rude mockery.
And when you starve
So it seems the world itself
Must starve also;
And then the world
Never really had hope.
And you are worn.
And you are beat up
Because they are
Beating you up.
But how well
Could they endure such
Who have no sense
Of right or shame?
They can act like
There is no war.
But there is, there is.
The proof is in these sores.
Yet though your body’s broken,
Your spirit,
Unlike theirs, is free.
They’ve purchased vain security
At the price of their own
Conscience and liberty;
While you now must endure,
Not to get something,
But only to keep
What’s already yours.
They are strangers;
They always were.
And because defy them you dare,
The sunshine
Of their false hope
You may forever forswear;
Let their own grief be theirs.

The cross is
An Arapaho’s star;
A Sioux’s four corners
Of the earth
Wherever you are.

To others,
It’s the celestial glint
Of a lighted taper;
Or two roads
Intersecting
The eternal vapor.
To yet others,
It’s on what
A sail is pinned
In order to catch
Truth’s wind,
On the voyage of ardor
To the dreamt of arbor.

GOOD FOR

Good for some things,
Yet not for others.
And when not good
For everything,
You sometimes
Feel good
For nothing.

But worse
Is not being able
To see whom you would,
But instead some other
Whom they
Say you should.

So why this charge?
What was my offense?
When all I sought
Was to live those dreams
That makes one’s life make sense.

Life as we wished it;
Life as it is.
Yet go on we must
That the good in us
Might live.

For if we stop
And say “no more,”
Then what on earth
Were we ever good for?

(I joke it’s true,
But you know the pain.
Better to laugh it off
Then go through this again.)

FEAR

A wee, little moth
With strange blue wings
Alighted on my hand
And would not let go;
As if to say
“If my life is so fleeting,
Why are my wings beautiful?
Let then me be with you.
For I’m frightened,
And don’t know why I’m here.”

GAME

When things are in place,
Life is fine,
But when they’re not,
For Death we pine.
Life is a game.
Death is a Game.
We take turns,
We pass;
The end;
Then another
Life and Death
Again.
And though what we play
Is not what we would,
It’s still a game
Just the same.

CONDEMNATION

People, but even more so animals,
Know when God isn’t present,
And will flee where peace is gone.
From the lowest plane
To the loftiest prospect,
Whose spirit alone
Is truly great and best?
There is none but his.
But only in faith, truth or reason
Can our souls know this is.

Then there is a monster;
Whom people placate and appease.
To buy false peace
They feed the angry demon
Who fills the air with stress.
He is angry --
So must you be too.
But at who?
Let me think of someone
To hurl my disapproval at,
Or scorn for imperfection
-- as if the only way to live
Is not to live in peace.

The condemnation of demonism --
There it is in black and white
For all to see and hear.

THE FRIEND FORGOT

For a hundred years or more,
The giant holly stood next door.
And though the sun comes up today
That motherly tree is no more.

While all trees, like all people,
Are wonderful in their way,
There are some trees,
Like some people,
That are even more so.

Its branches extended many yards;
The trunk nigh a hundred feet high.
By my home it stood close by
Shading us from the burning sun.
But now, alas, it’s gone!

It’s as if an old friend had died,
Yet whom I did not know before;
And only now when it’s not there
Do I realize how much I cared.

I remember how on some days
There the birds would flit and play;
Or high up its limbs
Secrete their nests
Where baby birds are loved best.

In that winged congregation,
How they cackled and made song!
What must that tree have felt
To’ve been host to such a throng?

Then just yesterday morn I awoke to hear
The chainsaw’s grind bringing us tears;
The ancient trunk sawed off
By branches then into blocks.
And now all that’s left
Is a stump forlorn
Clinging to the rocks.

MISS SNIP

She was a Seattle cougar
ever since being a little cub.
And though small
she still is,
the royal scowl
in that face of hers
looks to me like thunder.

And I think she would
Pray with you
If she could,
And you asked her to.

**ODYSSEUS AWAY**

The spirit comes;
it doesn’t come.

Then it comes.

But whether it’s here
or not here who can say?

We think we are whole,
but we never really are.
For someone somewhere,
somewhere beyond,
there’s always some
wonder we never know.

So when the light
is split in twain,
and one becomes two;
all then one can do
is think of you.

**EUROPE**

If you father loves lambs,
All’s good and well.
But if he murders,
Your father is hell.

Where Abraham lived
Was safety and Peace.
But where Lot dwelt
There was no release.

When Helen was lost,
There was a great stir.
When Briseis was taken,
Achilles demurred.

So know that life’s warm
With the chalice of faith,
But ends cold and deadly
In a god’s fond embrace.
ON CHRISTMAS DAY

On Christmas Day,
The birds I heard
Chirping in the holly;
Like angels are said to sing.
But, oh -- so very jolly.

How small was the babe
That was born this day
For us to all be glad.
How laughs my heart
To hear them sound
In merry round upon round.

On Christmas Day
The birds I heard,
Cheeping amid the berries;
Like angels are said to sing.
But, oh -- so very merry.

Let the little then
Ever have their way
On this most holy day.
And would that we
With love so gay
Could joying sing too always.

CAPTAIN CHRIS

Unless he comes to you first,
A spirit cannot be cursed.
And nothing makes more sense
Than imminent self-defense.
So pussy-foot no longer
And damn his soul in two;
Only be extra sure
To give him warning due.
And though he seem to come
With Heaven's blessing,
Not for a moment let him forget
With whom it is he's messing.
For Heaven is true
And spirits are sneaks;
Do not then hold back
On the havoc that you wreak.

CIRCLE ONE

The sky the father
loves earth the mother;
a love we know in peace.
And so in like tranquility
the planets all
circle the star.

Yet too far or too near
never exceeds just right.

Just as neither he or she
can ever surpass
the just One.

For all are enduring.
Yet special?
There is but one.

BALM

The good souls have moved on to bliss,
But these stayed behind to do us amiss.
Devils and false gods, how them then to defy?
When for Life we are willing to die

Left behind and all forgot?
They were not. They were not.
They took their own lives, true, it seems,
Yet only after being drowned in dreams.

How like poor soldiers slain they were
Did we know the truth that’s pure.
While those who bore the cross sublime
Bought the victor’s much needed time.

Peace may be all that some have left,
But then peace is all some need.
And there’s no greater palm
Than to win that precious balm.

Always peace and only peace;
Only then does hurting cease.

A MONGOL’S TALE

A stately pleasure dome was decreed
Where Alph the sacred river ran;
As a reward for wild, savage deeds
For the clan of Kublai Khan.

For years they reveled in delight;
Did the proud family of Yuan.
The conqueror no longer fights,
But sows peace like any man.

Till one day Fate itself poured
Upon the Mongols in Beijing;
Destiny flooded like one vast hoard;
Led on by the rebel Ming.

Leaving all behind, up north Yuan fled;
Not Karakorum or a town was saved.
All was lost for which they’d bled.
All was lost for which they’d braved.

Now on windy steppes where burns the sun,
Nomad sons make journey on horses sleek.
No thought of stately dome or Alph to be won,
But only the Buddha’s quiet to seek.

WHEN JUSTICE?

Using the group
to imprison and murder
those who don’t belong
to the group.

Was it worth the money?
Was it worth the women?
Was it worth
a ghost’s blessing?

“If you think so little
of doing those things,
you can go through them yourself.”
For what were they supposed to do?

Guilty wretch,
the days will come
when all that’s left
is your soul,
and dogs will bark
unceasing
throughout the day,
throughout the night...

Mark!

REVERIE

Everyone is snug asleep,
softness reigns, overcast,
but windy,
this late Sunday afternoon,
both living and dead slumbering in peace.

With determination like a needle’s tip,
A spider must carefully weave its web.
Just as pine cones must be strewn
necessarily;
just so for you.
But remember that
If you don’t really tell the truth,
you don’t really love.
And no matter how much
you change your tune,
the birds will still sing
as they’ve sung
for thousands of years.
And where would you be without them?

“But shall the light that is derived
deride its source?”

Yet then the sun is not the source ultimate
though terrifying and undeniable its might.

And what is life if it is sick?
If from oppression he won’t desist,
you must make him your footstool,
and that he might have
something honorable in life to do.

But must you then
wake up every morning
ready for a fight?
Worn out and beat up,
get up and start anew
with hopes and cheers?
Yes, for how many times
in the many ages of man
has pity looked on;
only to have to turn away forlorn
from what it could not help?

As the earth holds you
up on its shoulders,
sustain your brothers and sisters.
Let each who’s of good cheer
and good heart
have all that they desire.
But what’s for you
you cannot assume.

All you can do
is choose and hope
that if your own love
is worth something;
then perhaps who it’s for
may want some.
Then keep that love for her
in a box safe somewhere.
So that if ever she wants it,
it’s there.
TO --

True love is forever;
She’s no less a beauty too!
But we’re stuck here,
And the days are too few.

I'd buy her a present.
I would if I could.
I'd buy her some flowers
To do me some good.

Oh, that down
Would come this wall!
For what ever did I want?
Just to kiss her!
That’s all,
That’s all!
ALL ALONG

When feeling very bad,
Think yourself as one
Bearing the darkness of a storm.
And if you can get through it,
If you’ll be but strong,
Someday you’ll find
The sunlight forever lost
Has been there all along.
And even if Life of itself
Is not worth it anymore,
Grace, Love, Truth, and Beauty are
Worth dying and living for.

SO SAYS THE HEART

She should not have such power.
But I will give her her due;
Saying “That was
Some very good shooting.”
Though we do realize
She could not possibly
Have meant to aim.

So that now, thanks to her,
I’m so delirious
I must write this--

When before
We’d gone separate ways,
I was too busy to care.
Yet now it seems
One needs permission divine
(or something like that)
To dream of seeking her hand --

DIVINE PARADOX

If one is never good
enough for life,
what use is living?
A great person
who waited on poor persons
was the greatest of all persons.
Indeed your gallant friend
who loved you
bravely suffered
more deeply and worse
than all that you do,
that he might go before you
that you might know the way;
could you but stay awake
when darkness comes;
could you wait hand and foot
(as you said you would),
when not washing their feet.

NIGHT AND DAY

Ants humble and unseen
Gather food from a mound
Of fresh leafy green;
While gnats astride the sun beam
Whirl in a dance
In a happy dream.

Yet when the lone crow,
On a wire perched,
Waits at close of eve,
Are his thoughts of tomorrow
Or of the day which he leaves?

A jet plane alight
Streams through the night
Far high above diamonds
On a bed of love,
Yet far below the stars
Glistening before dawn.

That dawn that wakes upon
Oranges, reds, pinks,
 PURples and blues
Flowering forth in the day.
How together all blooms again!

And had you such joy?
Did your roses grow tall?
And when come night fall
Did not their memory
Look beautiful too?

THE GOOD THAT IS ALWAYS

In this life, it’s true,
The riches of demons
Leave a dingy residue.
And yet rarely comes
Justice to virtue.
Oft, indeed, the very
Innocent are slain,
Crying out
For help in vain. Indeed,
The more we get older,
Evil becomes only bolder.
Pity here has fled,
And all that appears left
Is the hope of being dead.
What then does it matter
Being faithful and true?

For the soul it seems
There are two doors:
One by faith and honesty
To ecstasy sublime;
Where cheerful hearts
Adore each other
In purity refined.
The second door,
Of lies and decay,
Leads to a heaven
Of false glory
The duped
And deceived to allay;
Or else a punishing grave,
The bourne of willing slaves.

But, of course,
To know even this,
Were it all
So simple and as plain,
Is yet to know so little.
We think we see,
We think we know all.
But there is ever
So much more
We do not know
And cannot see;
Such as a bone or rock
(A hundred miles away no less)
Buried beneath a tree.
Or how mirrors send us back
Exactly what’s the same;
How fire lives as air
Or how air burns as flame;
How placid and calm the night sky is,
Yet whose wispy lights ever move
And are not fixed as they seem.
To ascend to wonder’s apogee,
You sort through existence
Like sifting through that sea.
One needs all infinity, that’s true,
But not in equal portion or degree;
That the good within you may
Echo the good that is always.

In the halls of tradition,
In the pass of the ages,
You give ear to those fathers
That are our honored sages;
While setting forth the sons
To wherever tomorrow runs.
To work is all good;
For honor comes only from labor,
And all disgrace is laziness
That leaves nothing to savor.
Yet work is and ought
Not be an idol.
And as vital is disciplined rest,
Or fond leisure when somehow
The time’s just right
To joy in the best.
And work may be play
As long as it is work too:
In sum, have a good conscience
That you may have nothing to rue.
See Evil and Good then as merely
Words for acting false or sincerely.
And if by shameless theft
You would Heaven gain,
Receive at once, as is only mete,
“Criminal” for your name.

So many children and animals there are
That require our care, shelter, and rearing.
How stout a man then is that
Who needs be cruel and domineering?
They are not at bottom strong
Who will not the poor and weak protect,
And such who fail the innocent
Reveal innate frailty as defect.
For true riches and true might
Will safeguard the humbdest’s rights,
And if the mild or forlorn we cannot shield
Then all Earth’s but a barren field.
If love and charity don’t hold final sway,
Of what use is our leisure, jokes, and play?

Dirty tricks and violent strife --
Is no way of living life.
Let truth, mercy,
And justice reign
That there might be reason
For sun, rainbow, and rain;
Cherish as many we may
With compassion
Of highest quality.
For no greater force
Could or can there be
But that which loves
And makes all life free.
Towards that sort of power
Must we strive,
If there be
Meaning to being alive.
And even if we fail
And all the world
Is to chaos and ruin hurled,
Souls so loving
Will yet endure
Within the Spirit
Of all that’s pure.

Somewhere in its own vision of tender light
Shimmering in tranquil beams, like unto gold,
Lies every one or thing of lasting worth,
Yet which sight few of us ever behold;
Unless we be among the blest of the earth
Looking from inspiration’s threshold,
And even then it is but a fleeting glance
Prompted by thoughts much like romance.
So we look to glimpse or catch, therefore,
The shadow of true Heaven in Nature.
Yet so fallen or blind have we become
That Nature too has become a distant one.
Still we feel and know she’s yet there
Though obscured by our worry and cares,
And come such time we’re no more harried
Then once more Sky and Earth are married;
And the Universe itself one spacious hall
Where the flood of love suffuses all.

If God had or ever wanted to
He could make any religion true.
Yet if He did change
How things ought to be,
How would we know it was He?
The answer to this
Is mayhap hard to see,
Yet in thought and heart are the key.
The fickle senses are oft at best
Limpid mud either moving or at rest.
Which if we look through them for the One,
Can make Him seem as Satan, or else the sun.
Senses then when so tricked or cajoled
Can become sharp knives that slay the soul.
Logic, by contrast, is more divine and pure
Than the pristine freshets of a glacier
By means of it we see the clearer way;
Know false from true as night from day.
Then there is our deepest heart
From which all sincere affection starts.
Love is the beacon that guides us to ought;
That love which cannot be sold,
That cannot be bought.
Right thoughts and right love
Then ever be our guide;
Which tell us that God is innocence,
And that innocence here’s been crucified.

The life that lives in the sea,
Which shellfish and whales call home,
In their own peculiar state of peace,
Lie or swim silent and deep,
In darkness beyond our own.
Trilobite ancient, whose fossil we find,
What evil or sorrow could or did you know?
Long ere Man was felled by false mind,
What was death in hidden ages ago?
If less then today, it’s only because,
As the record shows (and I will insist),
All animals, even tigers and sharks,
Eat or devour merely to subsist.
Animals were, and indeed, are very good,
And the only beast that ever really was
Is the beast in our midst from outside us
And who does not what he should.

Often it is the little ones
Who have greater understanding.
For while it is normally right
To be of ourselves demanding
And remain ensconced indoors
With keen study and fond books,
It is sometimes wisdom, even so,
Surcease of good habit to brook;
As when the animals call us,
As they sometimes do,
To come forth with them,
And to become like the Indian;
Who delights in and venerates
The blessings of the sun.
For hardly less
Than princely Akhenaten,
Do God’s true creatures
Esteem the Dawn,
And no more pious train is there
Than the little animals who dutifully
Leave their hole, nest, or take to air;
Every morn to greet sunrise’s span;
Just as did their ancestors,
Epochs before fire and Man.

And as the animals with the Dawn,
Life itself commences with Spring,
And we begin to see flowers appear;
Come out more and new birds
Whose elegant season excites;
Tickling bees and rumbling herds;
Or braces of green ducks
Alighting on the scene
To glide on waves of golden sheen.

Then God tells them
Follow the directions:
Built your nest with sticks;
Look in this crevice for food;
Flee at signs of danger;
The infinite is a place
Where there’s always
Room to grow.
Yet why do I feel sadness
Come the day the baby birds
Left the singing of their nest?
Then a few days later,
Although I could not them see,
I heard chirping explorers
Flitting amidst a plum tree.
Some trees, fed
By warm or cool water,
Change their dress
With the annual quarter.
So how must then must
The birds wonder at their home?
To live in a tree’s interior,
To fly from branch to branch,
To fly to very tree,
That is one life of being free.
And what if every bird
Did have a name?
But if we knew,
They do, they do…
And the tree
Who knows them,
Its boughs nodding,
Seems to nod assent
When the soft wind
Starts ascending.

Though as sometimes strained
And grim the city gets,
Beneath the raucous din
There is yet
A warm, humming memory
Of the very good known here;
Reminding one of the very good
That yet is or may be done.
Sauntering in in pairs and packs,
The crows still gather as friends,
And like noble savages
Bellow out in tribal unison.
They caw out and reply to
Sacred strophes of jocund song.
And when gray dusk lowers coolly
Then disperses that sable throng.
Day falters; boughs begin to dance
Bright blossoms of radiant white
Sense and thought entrance
In the dimming light.
Now all who’s left is a single rook,
Solitary as the dulcet breeze,
Strutting quietly the verdant lawn,
Pensively like a gentleman.
Gradually droplets start to fall,
Tapping gently the leaves green.
The crow thus alights to leave,
And now comes eve.
Soft silver patter of the rain
Turns to a rushing downpour amain;
That spills from the clouds
In watery sheets and shrouds.
Then the lightening flash;
Then thunder distant,
But even so, a happy flood
That brings life to flower and bud.
And when at last the welkin clears,
The kind moon of May appears;
Covering with a halo the roses’ scent;
Closing with peace one day’s career.

To kiss the robin warbling,
Perched on the roof’s peak
When day breaks,
I am too ponderous.
Nor less clarion or beloved
Of a summer’s morn
Is the seagull’s shout
Skyward borne;
Loud, prolonged, and gay;
Like a trumpet voluntary;
That sounds with merry joy
The royal approach of day.
But once on a morning
When it was dark and overcast,
I a lone seagull
Who too wanted to give thanks;
Who too wanted to laugh,
Yet because the time was not right,
Soon departed in humbled flight.
These regal birds of liberty,
After thousands of years;
Soaring over land and sea
For what should they live?
Of what do they dream?
The young gulls gathered
Ready to do what right deems;
The veteran, afraid just a little
At what his charges don’t know,
Has yet plenty of love to lead them
Before on their own they go.
Perhaps what at last he teaches is —
“If each to other you your heart give,
Then ultimately life should let you live.”

The yellow butterfly of August
Greets our noontime stroll,
Yet a squirrel scampers up a tree
And robins scurry off silently;
In wary dread
At the sound of our
Approaching tread.
Now if you look down
The shaded lane ahead,
You’ll see bushes, trees,  
And flower beds.  
And if you listen closely,  
Hid in them you can hear  
Small birds singing cheerily.  
Sunny beams meanwhile  
Illume the grass a vibrant green;  
While up and down  
The long path before us  
Lie purple petals of drying lilac  
Strewn in a dizzying stream.  
No flower flourishes,  
Or bud fervidly flowers;  
Such as foxglove, fuchsia,  
Snap dragon, delphinium,  
Thimbleberry, hibiscus,  
Marigolds and geranium,  
But also feeds and nourishes  
The air and the breeze.  
And no bird cheeps in isolation,  
Howsoever humble their station,  
But chimes in harmony and as one  
With the music of the Spheres;  
And though such music  
We cannot quite hear,  
We at least feel its rhythm  
In the changing of the season.

“Good” then must be love.  
Yet what is love?  
Love is the feeling  
Such as a veined leaf knows.  
Warmed by the sun;  
Flowing with water,  
Filled with life.  
’Tis a spark given  
That sets one’s soul aglow;  
Raising it up into  
Beauty’s heart unseen.  
Yet where is love?  
Love is everywhere  
But where it isn’t.  
For munificently  
He bestows His blessing;  
Is such who so can bless;  
Seek and you shall find.”

Arriving home  
In the soft twilight  
And the thickening chill of eve,  
Tiny bushtits come into sight;  
In and out the bush they weave.  
Twittering like a cricket,  
As they flutter in the thicket.  
Lord love and protect it.
Yet more near or close,
We dare not further go.
For there Nature kisses them
In such sanctuary and repose
Which only innocence may know.
Let us rest content then
In viewing them from far,
And perhaps one day we too
May live the calm that they are.

Yonder where the deer step,
An eagle skims o’er tall trees;
Of forest crests and wooded hills;
Ascending to a height
Only to fall and find
Rest in each other’s laps;
In slumber deep like
A black mountain bear
Taking an Autumn’s nap:
He sleeps where silence reigns;
Only to wake and rise again.
Yet while the pines and sequoia
Are still a coniferous green,
Oaks, elms, and others seen
Are shedding leaves
Themselves between;
Orange, brown, red, and gold,
Just as they did in times of old.

But though too at harvest we
Are now more inclined
On our own couches to recline;
With the year more near
To being run,
There is yet for many still
Much work to be done.
Even among the smallest now,
Dame Nature herself
Displays her busy fancies;
As in the webs
Of the golden spiders
In all their fine intricacy.
Erecting as much
For pride and for shew,
Arachne lays on
The finishing touch
To gossamer
Glistening with dew.
Even wasps and bees
Will collect a bush’s buds
Gathering pollen that remains;
While the thrifty emmet
Refuses losing time
To bring home labor’s gains.
While we can then,
While we may,
Be our own hearts
Grateful for the day.
And by getting something done,
Be as votaries who plant an offering.

Not unoften are there places
Deserted and forlorn
Not far from where we dwell.
And did we know them,
What pity might we feel
Where life lives but is unwell.
Once after a rude storm had passed,
When the sky looked dark,
Somber and downcast,
I spied a large, beautiful leaf
Left in the road to die.
And could it have spoke,
Might it too have asked “Why?”
There are many such like that
For whom years of hoping
Have brought no relief.
And yet strange to think
How easily might
Have been healed such grief…
But for mysterious chance,
But for odd circumstance.

Was he so blessed
To compensate deformity?
Or had he been deformed
Because he’d been too blessed?
Was it necessary that they die
Because they were so loved?
Or are they now so loved
Because their death
Made us cry?
Oh, for an end to discord
That destroys!
Oh, for an end to fear
That ever mars our joys!
For if not by fire
We are burnt to clay,
Then most surely ice
Will close our days.
Oh, for a humble rock to be!
That we might be unconscious
For all futurity.
To not hurt,
To not be hurt,
To always be at peace,
Will not God at last
Make sharp suffering cease?
Though they dupe our friends
Us to betray,
Life’s true trespassers
Are sinister strangers
Sent from far away.
Yet though they us
Into prisoners make,
The chains of slavery
Will we ever break.
For all these trying cares
All along were really theirs.
And the sunshine
Of their false hope
Forever we forswear.

For many then
Troubles are rarely very far.
And even if we ourselves
Don’t in woe and worry languish,
How cold and dead we are
To be deaf and blind
To others’ tears and anguish.
Although some do regret
Winter’s rains and chill,
It is an apt time of year
To value quiet and be still.
And sometimes
The calm snow brings
Is just what’s needed
To get a proper sense of things.
For as farmers must
Every few years
Leave fallow tired fields
So that once again
They might fecundity yield;
So the respite
That Winters sends
Gives time to heal, forgive,
And make amends.
What richer tranquility
After all is there
Than a newly snow bound
December morn
In which to walk
And take the air?
Our very breath we can see,
And how lovely are the trees
Adorned with ivory drift
Of purest white;
Lit up by frost,
Moon, and starlight.

Yet for many animals,
As well as many people,
This time of brumal “rest”
Is often one when
When life is most
Hard pressed;
To sleep in cold burrows,
Or lie in damp retreats;
Or perhaps
For food to seek
When there’s ever
So little to eat.
How must they weather
Arctic sent blasts
That on occasion
Through Winter pass?
Notwithstanding
Such harsh reasons,
Some animals lose
None of their pluck
In this inclement season.
How amusing
One winter’s day
Was the sight
Of two brave sparrows
Formation flying
Within a pigeons’ flight!
Even our own furry friends
Some cold weather
Daring show;
As when Fido bounds
In deep downy drifts,
Or when come morn
We find Tabby’s paw marks
Trailing in the snow.

Such is but a sketch brief
Of (some of) the mass of life,
In all its myriad forms,
With which the Earth is rife.
And while in and for
All Matter’s solidity,
’Tis at last one Spirit
That governs Life’s
Promise and floridity;
By Him all spirits
Are overridden,
All must do as
By Him is bidden.
And despite how tangible
The physical seems,
Spirit is the end,
Not the means.
For when and how much
Is there justice enough?
How far does it extend?
Of justice,
There is never enough
To satisfy all demand,
But that He permits.
And though howsoever
Unjust, absurd, or tragic,
A given day of life appears,
Yet it never hurts
To bring comfort or dry tears;
To stand up
And vie for what’s right;
Even though surrounded
And engulfed by Night.
And when things
Get too complicate and confusing,
Look to what it is you are;
Choose happiness in the good.
Keep it simple.
Do your duty.
Respect in your heart
What’s right.
Be a good son, father, brother;
Or daughter, sister, mother;
And from the murk
Of irrational thought
See back to the Light.

INSURANCE

People tend
to disappoint:
either they didn’t
do much of anything;
or if they did,
we blame them for
not doing as well
as they did before.

Meantime, those
we did not even
want to meet in life
are killing us.
So we study facts
and wage war
to vanquish
the custodians
of present wealth
and future salvation.

But how does
one vanquish
the dead?

I wouldn’t
be cynical.
It’s just
I don’t want
any trouble.
That’s all.
Oh, how wicked a heart
must that be
that doesn’t pity
the child
born to all this,
or the good people
who loved and raised us
to do right.

Come the day,
we can’t bury
ourselves.
So hopefully
someone will
do it for us.
And mayhap
things then
will make
more sense.

LAMENT

A wind weeps
O’er an ancient sea
At the darkening
Close of day.
A past that’s lost
Cries out woe;
Chilled in the breeze
That echoes thoughts
Melancholy.

Come then night
That summons peace;
Bring forgetfulness,
Release!
That all may be silent
Once more!
Come oh sea,
To take life away;
Away from
This hapless shore.

As with speed
Sparrows take flight,
Take flight oh soul to air!
Come oh end to sorrow;
When life’s no longer here.

DAFFODILS

What painting or sight
Can match the light
Of daffodils glowing bright;
Breathing fresh as babes,
Steeped in waters of the rain?
How sad it is
They briefly appear
Only so soon to go;
So little time
Of life to know.
Their yellow heads
Like golden bells
Seem to joyously ring
Just long enough
To announce it’s Spring.

After them flows forth
A flowery tide,
When white blossoms
Peek from out from trees.
But, oh, poor daffodils,
What you signal
You can’t remain to see!

Yet come the time
Spring itself is gone,
I’ll remember then
Days when you were young.

HOME

The world is only so fallen as we permit.
And if the world is fallen,
It is because we let it.
And instead of climbing up out of the hole,
We confuse our deluded part for the whole.
You can't say there is no point,
Because if you do, then
What is the point of your saying so?
But evidently your kingdom is not of this world.
You who reject God, the One
As either the beginning or the end,
And instead explain our motivations
By how psychologically wends.
However, pray, did a utopian like you
Ever end up in this world you rue?

After what happened all was quiet,
And no one was left in the silence.
At one time it was home,
And they left abandoning it,
And won't come back again.
And yet now the house alone
Was never itself to blame.
It had for happiness been framed.
Would that God will love it;
Now that they are given up and gone.

It sank into the night's sleep.
Yet the winds wildly whirred,
Whisperings secret thoughts
Which only the trees heard;
Thrashing roofs, walls rattle and shake,
Battering, rattling at the door;
Leaving the leaves to shudder in its wake.
How quiet for a moment it all is
Until the wind returns again.
In its revels like spirits who cannot
Bring good yet who will chide our wrong,
Vagrant demons lurking
Where they should not be.

There the poor thing was left;
Alone, abandoned, still such a child.
She did know what happened.
Someone was supposed to've loved her.
Instead she was thrown away;
And for me to find her mad.
So I tried.
But she died.
In error, in error,
Going down, down, down.
And thus many are forgot,
Known only to the Lord.

Was life, thanks to evil,
Ever worth living?
Maybe not.
Even so, you are in no position to judge.
Yes, perhaps you are right in your despair.
Yet because life is in motion,
How can you rightly know say?
Can you know Time the way God knows it?
While today lies fallow,
Tomorrow's another field,
In which to grow and live.
Fire warms, earth holds,
Water carries, air lifts.
Love seeps in.
Not the way you want or need it now,
But it seeks to reach you all the same.
Looking out from the place everlasting,
And to know those who've died are safe;
Where no strife can touch them more.

Life as they say is a journey.
You can say this, you can say that.
But whatever you say,
You still have to go it.
We do what we can;
We can't hold ourselves to more
Or fuss about what can't be helped.
And yet there is hope in honest truth;
Which devils cannot darken or liars dampen.
Be then in it calm and still as the moon
And proceed majestically like the stars.
When Abram left the Chaldeess,
Moving past the desert sea,
What was he fleeing?
Could he have foreseen
His effect on what was to be?
All he knew
Was that he was striking out
To something new.

A new place to live
Where he could be true
By all means.
The ideal is all that's real. All the rest,
Including even Nature, are its flimsy shade;
Ever manipulated by others or ourselves.
Flesh dies, but the Spirit will go on.
You are not the Light. But be as a mirror,
And reflect it to others, and this retain:
Somewhere someone joys in the peace you crave;
Be patient then your soul to save.

TRANSIT

Birds sing almost
as soon as they're born:
each with a song all its own.
Oh, how like the trees;
the tall brush growing
wild on a hillock,
up, up, up in joyous praise!

And can I myself do better
than a soft sun
and a breeze pliant and sweet
sailing me, under the stars,
across a beckoning sea?

For animals, the time is the morning;
busy; singing; flitting; playing;
They look as if they were
made for paradise.
And yet some come to be
as poor as many people --
living off scraps.

Meanwhile, a fool can waste millions,
and destroy life and the landscape;
simply because he is a man.

I would have thought
the mountains' height
of distant gray and white,
and oceans of fond pines;
suffused with winds
and brimming waters
would have been enough.
But to one's utter
surprise and dismay,
we now are chained
from going there.

Though founding parents
left us a land
where free men might in dignity stand,
along comes a generation
that makes a pact with Satan
and free we are -- no more.

Mind control is easiest with the dumbest.
And when visions of the spectacular city
are placed before their eyes,
They will abandon justice
And hand over the innocent to wrath.

The wealthy, haunted apartment tower,
who I wonder would live there?
Built by a prosperous warlock,
a solitary dwelling of ghosts,
overlooking the bay,
rising up:
a mausoleum reaching to the sky.

And even I,
when I'd grown older
forgot the animals
thinking myself more wise,
but in truth darkened
by time's wiles.
For in self potentially lives
the interminable pit of despair.

We were to build
that house in the woods,
but did not.
The old songs we loved
have flown off to their new abode,
somewhere afar off.
Life, one day exalted
in the raiment of the sun,
later lies in a darkened room,
dieing, undone.

What was it that was left behind in time?
The countless lives, the countless stories;
tragedies, boredoms, and glories;
times of mirth;
times of despair;
moments of truth;
life weary of life and its care;
multitudes come and gone.
Where did it all go?
What did it all mean?
How much time was needed,
after all,
to pray for peace?

Lonely wilderness,
where fate descends,
the trees and branches toss wildly;
filling us with fear.

Soul is what you are;
your body but its vessel.
Would that now I could
at least live in the soul
and feed off the bread of life;
like he whose soul
has gone deeper than yours.
With cold hearts one can do nothing.

Life is but a day's journey to this world.
For mortals, each day
seen through the corridors of time
is but a flitting shadow.
You may have it,
but if so
you are bound to lose it.
But lasting is the consolation
that you tried to help;
you paid your dues
and for that reason
perhaps now in good conscience
you can at last find rest,
and go to sleep forever.

For even vegetation sleeping grows.
The seemingly quiet ivy and vine,
for example,
cling to the fence
dance in the night wind
and still yet feel
the rain upon their face.
NEIL ARMSTRONG

After Neil Armstrong died,
The wide sky of night
Shimmered like glimmering glass
With silver clouds illumined;
As I walked outside
To see the moon
Bright and beaming;
That orb he tread upon.

His fire’s extinguished.
He’s now gone.
The moon, however,
Recollects him sweetly
And goes on.

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD

Bigger than the police,
bigger than the government:
“Heaven” and the Devil.

“Torture – yes.
Mind my own business -- No
(I won’t do it.)”

Raised by sin to be a god among men,
“the infernal,” he says,
“is just as good as the eternal.”
Progress can bring us greater prosperity,
but his devilment destroys all gains.

“But I am someone vexed in love,
and for this reason
life must be enslaved.”

His peasants once bemoaned
the fear of being poor,
but after becoming rich insist
there is never enough of more.

I noticed
that if the person is not of the truth
not only can they not love
but they can’t really do anything
except bother people.

When we read The Iliad
how little we’re moved by the gods therein.
So that I think
if existence could sin
it’s crime would be criminal spirit men,
the life force of tyrants, barbarians;
the divine booger men.
No victor always wins,
and therefore must sometimes lose,
yet even in losing fight on;
for putting up with them
is not worth it.

We promise we won’t laugh -- tell us now who you are.

Disembodied voice: “I am someone who gets to be interesting too.”

Say again?

“I’m Batman.”

Oh, so you’re Batman.

Sprite: We don’t know who he is either (and we work for him.)

PRAYER

As often as the moon’s full,
As often does our love shine;
Waxing and waning
The rest of the time.

When they threw dice for his robe,
Of He who’s Love’s sun,
What were they gambling for?
What wasn’t theirs.
They didn't care his loss;
They didn't know his sacrifice.

Yet did not He crucified
Know where love was
When he died?
And yet without
Love everlasting,
What, in the end,
Is worth anything?

So precious you cannot contain it,
But would give it away if you could:
Truthful, devoted, enduring, reliable:
The pearl dearer than all else combined.

It covers a multitude of sins;
Lifts the quality
Of every person and thing;
It is the final standard
By which all wealth is measured.

In a seizure, paroxysm, or fit,
Think of justice, peace and harmony
-- that’s it.
For these are God too.
In a future time you will wish...
Sanctification through death.
Decide then what matters in the tower,
Not the cellar of your mind.

Picking what's good,
Leaving out the bad,
Raising the good up
To cure the sad.

Command me, Lord and Heart
What it is I must do;
Life is hard, confusing.
Let me see the church
As a child I once did;
Trusting in, by, and for what’s true
Despite what’s evil and absurd;
Let me seek and find shelter
In the Spirit and your Word.

A VISIT

Matter has no unity
Except in gravity.
Life however has a soul;
Its own swiftness and celerity.

Behind her something glows
From whence she hails;
That makes her radiate here.
Yet though through
A vast sea of stars
She sails, she goes,
This world is just a passing show.
Of her, few really know.

Water and blood,
In a rushing flood,
Flow forth from creation
To end in me.
On water! On blood!
Death pays our debt
And once again we're free;

To return home
To eternity.
HOPE AND CAUTION: A Poem for the New Year

“O man, whoever thou art, for come I know you shall,
I am Cyrus, who once held an empire in thrall.
Grudge me not, therefore, this little earth
That covers this corse; once of great worth.”
~ Inscription, paraphrased, found by Alexander
in the tomb of Cyrus the Great.

Beneath the strata of sorrow
Lie streams of joy in moving rest.
But to reach them needs a power
Known only to the wise and blessed;
Streams pouring in quietest peace
Far from despair that does not cease.

Yet to sound to what is most deep,
One must strive towards the most high;
In bleakest shades to seek the light
That beams from Beauty’s concealed sky.
And with faith, hope and charity,
Allot Justice with parity.

To effect this we listen within;
To hear the counsels of our heart.
Guided by Reason veracious,
Conscience informs us where to start;
To do right by others as we
Would have them do to us is key.

Do not do unto others that
What you would not have done to you.
Is this so hard to understand?
This too difficult to construe?
All morals we can comprehend
When we’ve made this maxim our end.

Though blind, we have capacity
To see good by the rays of truth;
Eschewing deceptions dark
And insisting on honest proof.
The flame of love shows us this way:
That from night we’ll be led to day.

But alongside beckoning love,
Reason, conscience must e’er abide;
Watching our steps as we proceed
Lest we falter, slip, and slide.
For dear as are all affections,
They need logical correction.

Moving a head to the future,
Life is a light on a wire,
Sparkling forth on its way.
And we must join with that fire;  
Else into the dark void we fall;  
A mere speck lost in the great all.

But for more than bare surviving  
We need to keep ourselves going.  
For despite boredom and mourning,  
Towards beauty we are flowing;  
There, for those who love and pity,  
Awaits the end, felicity.

How the would-be great strive for strength;  
For supreme might; beyond compare.  
Yet will they the poorest protect?  
No, the impoverished can’t be spared.  
Too weak animals to defend,  
Yet sway of empire they’d extend.

How strong and puissant is he  
Who, when it comes to innocence,  
Their safety cannot guarantee?  
He’s but a slave of evil;  
Miserable in doing good;  
Impotent to do what he should.

What good is human dignity  
That can’t insure freedom from fear  
For the animals on God’s earth?  
Someone is needed to lead Life here.  
And truly to be human means  
To save children from cruelty’s fiends.

Secrets there are that would some shame.  
Oh, that people knew the sad truth;  
Of what hypocrites believe;  
Who have money but little ruth.  
They trust sly Satan as divine,  
And can’t tell God from Frankenstein.

Yes, to Heaven they’ll look in awe  
A sky filled with angels seeming  
But one built on incessant tears  
Of babes not spared their false dreaming.  
Such is the crime ever hidden.  
Would that of it we could be ridden!

True, we need Contrariety  
In order to have harmony.  
We need a Counterpoint for Good.  
Yet must this foil Evil be?  
Who needs wars when there might be games?  
Why should numbered deaths measure fame?
Fair competition and merit
Go hand in hand to prove what’s best.
Who brings more good the more earns it;
Who works hardest deserves most rest.
Yet blood and hate what need for these;
That bring not true wealth nor true ease?

No honor’s there in sport not fair;
Nor real fame for fraud and liar.
No success for a tyrant’s slave;
The Devil reaps the most of his hire.
Free are they who in honor vie;
Not the cheat, nor the cowardly.

Of that which philosopher’s tell,
What for the struggle in this life;
In what’s the famed dialectic?
That lies and truth are e’er at strife.
Such are grounds of all contention;
At least such as one might mention.

What kills happiness is falsehood,
And in verity does Life live.
Yet con-artists get the most gain;
Rather than they who work and give.
Ban then the secrets and lying;
For from these comes all the dying.

Underlying monsters of old
Are facts of truth by us unknown.
’Tis in night philosophical
That the darkest of fears are shown.
For weeping woes and dire terror
Thrive best in rational error.

Morals are not learned from angels;
Nor ghosts as we sometimes hear it.
Character is by parents taught;
Martyrs and the Holy Spirit.
E’en animals are more well behaved
Than spirits from the sky or grave.

A spot bleak, muffled in darkness
Lay shrouded in oblivion;
Till one day it came back to life
In the warmth of the vibrant sun.
So too does Christ their lives renew
Who love Heart, Logic, and what’s True.

After Time’s tolls and exactions
And the suffocations of hell,
We are raised not by abstractions,
Theology, or magic spells,
But by Faith and Duty alive
To Christ; who will our breath revive.

Were we in Heaven that is real;
Were we in God’s eternity,
There as often as the wind blew
There would always our music be;
With rests and stops to set the mood;
To joy forever in the Good.

NO GOD, NO SOUL

No God, no soul;
no soul then no God.

If no God, no soul,
then all love is vain.

All that’s left a thrill:
one day gone;
ever to come again --

unless as something vain.

Only unrepentant liars
insist on this,
suffocating
slaves of hell.

But for those
who breathe Honesty
and Reason’s air,
God, soul, and love

are well.

YOUR VESSEL

Concealed deep within
is a taper unseen
that underlies all
intensity of emotion;
as if to douse that flame
were to snuff all feeling:
that for which
unthinkingly we yearn;
that which we pursue:
The soul’s epiphany,
a spark trembling
interred inside;
like Pythagoras’ fire
at the universal core,
but instead
sounding invisibly
the depths of being;
filling you throughout;
a frightening tremor;
knocking you senseless;
disorienting with fear,
yet lifting ethereally,
an exhilarating ecstasy
and uttermost peace
all the same,
but which you forget;
while spending the rest
of your days seeking:
calling it love,
calling it rapture,
call it what you will;
though it have no name.

It’s gone, it’s lost,
and yet go on you must.
Truth, love, happiness,
pure, distilled, refined,
Where again will I find thee?

Here are riches that have
little with money to do;
that elevate so high the spirit
they go unseen; unfelt by masses
and yet who as individuals
once knew the radiance and hope
of a child’s expectations.

“Non vitae, sed scholae discimus.”

Learning and wisdom
are riches we toss away
once we have left school;
growing up vexation to pursue;
in search of wealth,
honors, respectability
and ending up
the enemy of poetry.
Innocence is cute;
to know them is to feel them,
and if one cannot feel that way
one cannot know them:
echoes of the past;
of wished for calm;
a calm once known.
In the cool green shade
with love alone it sits;
in the memory of martyrs
and the darkening pall
of a weeping shadow
that remains indelible
on the dim landscape
of centuries.

Warmed by sun,
the golden moon
sails forth
into frigid night;
over trees
that have been old now
for hundreds
and hundreds of years;
while a spirit pours
through your soul
like clear, clean waters.

Why then did you leave it?
Uncherished, unadored;
hankering to be a giant
that to eternity looks
like a ridiculous dwarf?
For the vision of beauty
that the soul can hold
is worth immeasurably more
than all the lust and glory
the whole world can ever know.

AN ODE TO MUSIC

In the dark hours
Of an early May morn,
When the breeze of Spring
Is dulcet and fair,
Love makes even
Stars more bright
And gives roses
A sweeter air.

Then, come promised Day,
The trees and leaves
Seem more vibrant green
And life itself
Is more lovely and new
Than ever before it’s been.

And yet this will last
But for a moment;
For Nature, though joyous,
Is but an ephemeral,
Fleeting thing;
Since evil usurped it
Long ages ago,
And made Earth’s
Loved hope take wing.
So is this world
Then the end of all
*Beauty, Love, and Truth?*
You know friend it is not,
Since Bethlehem’s holy birth.

And yet the promised Heaven, Where is it now;
Who of us can say?
Except such who
Bear their cross,
And in constant
*Faith* do pray.
Only these and the *Innocent*
Are more blessed than they
Who yet can treasure within
Sweet *Music’s* celestial din.

**TO A SUPER HERO**

His armor gleams a golden green;
His masked brow is dark as night.
None is more quick, swift and fleet,
And he scarcely fears to die.
Few there are him can defeat,
Yet still and alas -- a fly!

The universe is very big!
How far, how close we are seen
Oft seems to decide our fate;
When others judge what we are.
And yet all alike are great;
Whether insect or a star.

You don’t believe me, this I know.
You sore suffer from neglect.
You’re too ignored, unwanted.
But you ought not feel so gray:
For who’s more ta’en for granted
Than Sun or Moon on any day?
NEC IN MEMORIAM

Unknown to most of the world,
prior to many a dawn,
much of the army wakes
to the smell of wet green;
of morning fresh dew
or of rain left behind
in the onrush of the night;
to run, to drill, to follow duty.

Left behind in Fort Knox’s halls,
an old, dusting photo,
black and white and framed,
hangs prominently on a wall
of the first, it is said,
killed in 1965.

Left behind in years of hurry,
He died before
so much storming for causes
then and later.
His smiling picture
since has hung,
silently fading,
days and nights;
honored, yet unknown.

It’s all past history;
that now and for most
seems rather,
seems rather meaningless;
but for him his life.
And yet his life
...His life?
A life for what?

Perhaps someone wept for him.
If so, for how long?
In any case, he floats down
to us draped in shadows,
simply another abandoned in time.
Perhaps some passing soul
remembers, perhaps not…
in pursuit of today,
in setting out at morn.

THE FUTURE HOME

The moan of a once sad hour
subsides in the wind
of another departing day.
How like an ocean surge
now that faint breeze sounds;
like rushing waves, swirling tides;
gusts of surf once more ride the air!
Roaring, yet trembling,
some long buried grief,
some long lost yearning,
resound now -- as if from afar;
as if from a hidden abyss
of forgotten yesterdays.

It's as if fervent love
had died, and its ghost arose
volant on sunset zephyrs:
a descended life yet still living
in the pity of the present.
The sadness of life, you know,
I have felt; even if
it was not mine alone:
hopes disappointed;
dreams gone to ruin.
Is sorrow, I wonder,
yet felt in the grave?

Oh lonely wind,
Who will soothe
your sighing groans?
Where will you find home?
There's no place like home.
And yet if that home is
swallowed by the sea
and all are drowned,
where then is home gone?

Sometimes we think that since
the world's died so many times,
it will no doubt will die tomorrow.
Indeed, perhaps it is not
even here anymore to die:
too hot or too cold,
too full of strife, too dirty.

It was still a beautiful land,
even in time of war:
red and purple evenings
over swamps of insects and snakes,
a plateau of reeds with
tall waving grass leading
to a lethal jungle.
Quiet beaches became war zones;
and whirlwinds carried fire from the sea.
the distant rumble of jet streams
rolled out the thunder of destruction:
metal clanking, bursts of flame,
the screams of men and children
heroism and brutality beyond
human control or reckoning.
What, in the end, was it all but
the nightmare of individual
and collective sin materialized?
The many native martyrs;
The soldier, from home or abroad,
though you may have died
for no seeming reason,
you did so beautifully
whether you wished to or not.

Yet certainly
it was no place
for Andy Williams,
happy television,
or innocent visions
of love and home.

And the present
that once was tumult
has now become
the past in peace.
Our hope, our wishes
our spirits stay,
though the spinning world
continues to runaway.
Before long, all will gone.
All the more reason
to cherish it before it is.

There is plenty for all
of us (and animals too),
to be happy and free,
Why then are we not already?
Because there are hearts and minds
still prisoners of darkness.
And not mere death, but
murder grips the globe;
For the devil hates with rage
peace and beauty he cannot own.
Liars, the cowards, the misers,
hypocrites sell us out to him,
and thus we suffer the plague of Hell.

What will it take to make us all whole?
This, they will say, is the problem,
that is the problem. But get rid of
him and that rids us
of nine tenths of them all;
whose cause is self-pity,
whose cause is false pride,
who never ceased invisibly
in our midst to abide.
Will you ever go on forever
suffering his whip and his chains,
His famines, his pestilence,
and anarchy insane?
Or will you at last fight
join together, fight,
and with him be done;
so that at last we can
have a true happy family
and a true happy home?

The soldier perished in battle;
the martyr died for the faith;
the innocent was eaten alive,
and nigh infinite others to name.
But for you and I
it is different;
and those who wallow
in self should survive.

He who seeks the true
vision of beauty
seeks it by way of the truth:
for no truth, no true beauty
and if no beauty,
then no truth is worth seeking.

Is pain everything?
"No, but all pain me is."
Are you everything?
"By no means."
And yet God, by faith,
is more than everything;
who pours the balm of love
into sunken crevices of pain;
till our suffering and toils
will one day in the end
be made whole again.

A SONNET

If banned had been the world
When hearts were ever moved,
Then despair had never been
In a world not made for love.
Yet even if this world is vain,
Is love vain and useless too?
Not if it o’er leaps the world
And beats for good and true.
For even if the world thrives.
Hearts still yet can give.
Even tho’ you succumb and die,
Yet beauty still will live.
Your beauty then e’er maintain;
That dying love may live again.

GRAVITAS

“...not hospitality heaped for Polymedes
but empty earth on the parched Dryopian fields.”
Despite all the good,  
despite all the bad,  
neither stops the days;  
time proceeds  
without them.

And we joy and grumble  
along the way.

As much a tragedy,  
as much a celebration,  
life is a journey  
we must go on.  
It isn't worth living.  
It is worth living.  
Yet whether or no  
you must go on

and go on.

Mind chained in darkness,  
body bound by time,  
how much anyone  
is embarrassed by the past;  
how much anyone  
has some shame.

If you died, then lived again,  
how now would you live?  
War less and learn more;  
for if you learn,  
onward and upward you go  
if not, then further down.

If God's kingdom  
is not of this world,  
what is beauty here?  
What is beauty  
in a world that rejects truth?

“Whoever hates me  
also hates my Father.”

If you knew better  
(and perhaps you do),  
Beauty doesn't need the world.

Comets, and stars are above  
they are right outside my door  
but they are also in my heart,  
they are also in my mind --

In a safe haven  
away from the sea,  
on a still shore
of a soul yearning,
but not fully filled
with wisdom.

We all judge,
but Who finally judges?

Who placed the earth?
Chance?
Or if not, did He chose
the exact location,
the exact coordinates,
of each view of the heavens
as seen from every land?

Wherever it is rare,
take me there,
take me there.

Where diamonds are framed
on translucent air,
tell me where,
tell me where?

Where one place
is everywhere,
where all are freed
from heavy care,

teach me there.
ILION

Many years since have sped,
And still the siege goes on:
Some fights won, some fights lost;
E’en so, we’ve yet to be undone.

But how long can it last?
How much more strain endure?
Age takes its silent toll,
And we no longer are as pure.

Even old friends we blame;
See fault where once we praised;
Wishing ill whom we loved;
Fretting with fear of future days.

Doubt starts to cloud the mind.
Whatever was the prize?
Youths now are not so hale.
New waters of illusion rise.

Would shame were burnt away;
All cankers of assumption.
Would we were wise as grey;
Not weighted with past presumption.

“They’ve left! they're gone!,” it’s cried.
It seems we’ve won the war --
While from a turret's seen
A wooden steed left at the door.

Can such gift be trusted?
Yes, most seem to agree:
There is no foe in sight;
The enemy's put to sea.

Some doubt, but they’re ignored.
Who can reject relief?
Who succor can despise?
No more then of this woe and grief!

And tho’ the citadel
Still yet fall,
Go let them tell it
Wide the world.
The body’s but a shell.
Only if, please Heaven,
Our souls survive,
That no man need tell.
ON FAITH

Safe, secure. But for how long?
Our life is ever moving;
Not least than when unseen.
And with so much unknown,
What mind can justify
Its scorning pride alone?

A life all too brief. And so,
In retrospect, what of it?
Is any dark so pitch
There is no longer light
Enough to illumine
And draw it from the night?

The pageantry of ages
Of queens, kings, knights, and sages,
Where now is all that gone?
Where now are all their homes?
Under cypress shadows,
Beneath majestic domes?

All doomed to die. Yet surely,
Somewhere, there is a spirit,
A power, to honor
Beauty all times and years.
And if less than heaven’s,
Enough for heaven’s tears.

Well said prayers bring forth and down
Treasures glowing like rare jewels;
While memories of deeds
Of daring and virtue
Will ever taste as fresh
As welkin falling dew.

Patience is a holy gem
That vanquishes every sin.
And the end of sin brings
Liberty, trust, and peace.
Oh, that we’d sin no more
That joys would never cease!

What reason to despair of
The might of justice and of right?
Joined e’er in faith and love,
Will we not at last be free;
When we see others
Not as they seem,
But what they can,
Indeed, will one day be?
DID YOU REMEMBER?

With frost at my feet
and silver stars in the sky,
even the bleakest cold
can bring a joyous
quiet and calm.

You don’t believe it,
but we are often forgetting
of so much good that abounds,
including feelings of the past;
forgetting what once was;
as if it never were.

Take for instance,
that at some time
all birds play,
all birds love
or would if they could.

Or when in rapture
of a radiant world
our eyes at night are touched
by infinite lights
of planets and stars
journeying through vastness.
Think how many countless of them
can touch us through our eyes!

And when all will have died,
and all those stars come
crashing down;
both victims of injustice;
the guilty, the indifferent,
what all will remain?

Who can guess tomorrow,
or of change not dreamt?
This life is not nearly long enough
to learn all we need to know;
except this,
that all this
great word and vast expanse
must lie under and obedient
to the loftiest soul.

For what but the soul
knows beauty?
When the body breaks down,
as it inevitably will,
what’s left but the soul?

And to the wise,
and in the pure light of truth,
there is no picture;
only an overwhelming peace
that survives
both life and death.

Christ the martyr.
Our peace built upon a cross,
And someone willingly suffering it.
If not Christ, someone,
some innocent will,
you know.

So that
though you were away,
though you were away,
I kept your memory safe
by trying to do good,
whenever, that is, I could.

IS NO THING SACRED?

O God I that such a world as this,
    So beautiful and brave;
Should be of all our fondest loves
    And dearest hopes the grave:
That in one bitter hour a blight
    Should change its glorious hue,
And wither beauties, which no showers
    Nor spring-time can renew!
~ from “Welaway” by George Hunt Clark (1809-1881)

If anyone supposes he knows anything,
he does not yet know as he ought to know.
~ 1 Corinth. 8:2

~*~

Oft have drifting dreamers,
whether wandering the night or day,
looked wondering to the moon;
As if from off on high
some secret would be told.

Yet when that moon surveyed them,
what from above could it see,
but travelers to oblivion;
tapers so ephemeral
that, even to ghosts,
they seemed hardly shadows.

Life as we know it
appears indeed
but a vapor or a flame.
And yet why does it
move and goad us so?
Could it be love?  
And yet if love gives hope,  
Why does existence burn?  

Colors once full and bright  
are now faded, dull to the sight.  
Those houses, those trees,  
those forests those mountains,  
that sky that a mist wafts over --  
all of these could disappear.  

Could? One day will.  

Treasures once longed for  
pawned in an hour’s poverty;  
A tomb effaced by time,  
its occupant unknown;  
All is as fleeting as a wave  
That lifts a weathered vessel  
battered by storms’ blast,  
striving to survive.  

Knowing joy we fear to die.  
Knowing evil we fear to live.  
The earth,  
with her raiment of clouds,  
lets in the sun  
where and when she will.  
On fortune who can depend?  

If things were but a certain way,  
we would be all right.  
But because they are not,  
we stumble into agony  
and breath scalds the living.  

Youth taught how exquisite life was,  
and right and wise reason  
how life should be  
surrounded by happiness,  
beauty and peace;  
here to sing songs  
that would never die.  

But then spite filled demons  
(call you them gods?)  
with bribes, threats and tricks  
commanded us honest truth forsake;  
to wage war for gain;  
that life might be buried  
under ugliness, pain, and woe.  

There are times we think badly  
of what was once thought so wonderful;
because it could not withstand time or evil.
But it wasn’t that the thing or the someone
that wasn’t good or more good no more,
rather we could not face time and evil.

Yes, he carries heaven with him,
she carries heaven within her
but in this world,
heaven by vote is banished,
and only faith will raise a heaven’s wings.

Mark, faith keeps better
the more constant you are
in doing good, in charity,
patience, courage:
it was these that give love power
and what cool the aching burn.

What then surpasses passing life?
Justice, Truth, Love everlasting:
For no work of art or creation
can ever exceed
the beauty it reflects.

When you can see your goal
on the distant horizon,
life can start anew.
When you know there is a light
that can illumine all darkness,
then glory again can be.

Now how could God save
so many people?
Bother saving animals?
Repair what is so pitifully wrecked?
Change time as if it had never been?
How, I say, could God do these things?

Such we can scarcely guess.
Yet the greatest thing
anyone ever saw
was someone lay down his life
for friends, nay, even
those not friends.
And that some that was seen,
that someone was very God.

**EASTER 2016**

The time was sublime
-- whether or not you were there.
Or most very sad
-- whether or not you where there.
A past mourned because it is gone,
Or mourned because it is here.
What then is the past? Here or gone?

It seems all we ever gain
Must be given back to time,
But we have this consolation --
Time too gets all our pain.

Why is it some things
Are so perfect?
Why are some things not?
Why in the world
Are the two joined
Ourselves to vex?

We cannot always escape
Disappointments and woes.
Yet these can be made less
By choosing rightly.
We have it in us to be happy,
But they will not let us be so.
Let us go forward notwithstanding,
Knowing what we know --
What is dead of the living dies,
But that which lived truly
Will ever truly live.

At least, good heart, believe it so.

Way up high,
Above the tree tops,
Over the clouds,
Beyond the sky,
In a dream land that never dies
There is (or seems) a higher good.

But how do we know this?

Who can know what others feel;
Whose lives we do not live;
When death comes unexpected
And tears are a surprise?

Now our own time, in any event,
Is less than it was before.
See to the body, yes.
Yet to heart, mind and soul first.
Whatever it is do it right;
And ever live today
As if it were your last.

We hear the moaning of the sea,
Whispers of regrets
For what might have been:
Wings fluttering,
The crackling of steps,
Wandering through space
Past the firmament,
Spanning the breadth of existence.
Time pours endlessly into tomorrow;
While from the cliff tops we gaze forth,
Pondering sorrow and fate;
Yearning for the power and strength
That will release love eternal
And free us from
The terror of this world.

“In my little soul-boat,
I will take to sea;
Trusting to angels,
While I slumber
Upon the broad expanse of the ocean;
Flung about by winds and waves,
Free of man,
One with the spirit of God
Which encompasses
All wild immensity.

“Bird of peace, the Holy Ghost,
Blesses us with calm serene and joy eternal.
Holy books of wisdom, of ages,
Rest upon the altar of the earth.
Cherubim swell on high in far echoing
Voices, hurling through the stars;
One endless ethereal throng:
Seraphs with wings of sparkling gold,
Rich green or bright red;
A sky bright of hue,
A deep clear blue;
Rays of light
Shooting across the clouds
Transmitting the glory of the Maker.

“Sweet Holy Maid that prays at our death,
Oh, radiant is thy purity,
Pure and precious is thy glow,
In ecstasy on high,
Yet weeping for our sins --
Mysterious unknown, faraway.
But the poor saint, naïve wakes up
Gathers some bread and feeds the poor:
All for the Mercy,
All for the One,
All for the Love
That watches
And conquers all.”
TRANSLATIONS

“Pervigilium Veneris” [The Night Vigil of Venus]

From Latin by an anonymous author of probably the 2nd or 3rd century A.D.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved and each who loved let him love tomorrow.
Spring new, spring now melodious, spring is the birth of the world.
Loves unites in spring, birds marry in spring;
Tomorrow love couples among the shades of the wood;
Interweaves lively in a cottage under myrtle branches
Tomorrow Dione speaks the law sustained by her throne sublime.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

Then life from above foams the sea into a mass;
Dark blue amidst the crowds, amidst the two legged and horses
Dione makes waves about the husband of Imbros.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

Herself flourishing purple she paints the year’s flowers
From her breasts arise the West Wind’s breath;
She presses warmth on muscles, herself moisture’s splendor,
In the breeze of the Night whom she leaves, she scatters wetting waters.
Look the tears sparkle quivering from their falling weight;
In drops headlong the small orbs delay their downfall.

Look! modesty and beauty bring forth majesty
That fluid which wets the serene stars of night.
In the Morning the damp robe falls loose on maiden breasts.
Herself commands in the morning where the virgin dews wed roses:
Refains Cythera from warmth; subside kisses of love;
Subside jewels, subside gusts, subsides the throne of purple.
Tomorrow the blush, which dress conceals the hidden fire,
Of the special marriage, unashamed, forbids not release.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

The goddess rich bade the nymphs go to the myrtle trees:
With the boy [Cupid] as companion of the girls: it could not however have been trusted
For Love to be idle if arrows struck.
And so, nymphs; he placed aside his arms, Love is at rest.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

He is commanded to go defenseless, to go naked he is commanded
Not with bow, not arrow, nor with fire to harm.
But, even so, nymphs beware, because Cupid is beautiful:
In arms all the same, when Love is bare.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

Venus arranged that modesty be sent to you virgins.
The thing that together we ask: yield, Virgin Delia
That the grove will be bloodless from the havoc of animals.
Herself she wanted to ask you, if chastity has turned aside,
Herself she wanted you to come, if virginity is fitting.
Now you see tribes of dancers in revelry at night,
Gathering in company to go through your dances,
Flowers among the garlands, myrtle leaves among the cottages.
Neither Ceres, nor Bacchus are away, nor the god of the poets
Hold back, all the night is awake singing:
Dione reigns in the woods: Delia, you must recede.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

She decrees flowers from mount Hybla to stand at the judgment seat of the goddess;
To the guardians she declares the law, and they sit Thankful.
Hybla, showering all with flowers, whatever the year brought,
Hybla, the height of floral dress, as wide as Aetna’s fields.
In this country girls are torn from the spring,
All within the grove, all in riches, all inhabit the mount.
All are enjoined to assist the boy and mother differently,
She directs girls to hide nothing and to trust in Love.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

And the young and flourishing are led from the flowers’ shades.
Tomorrow she goes to Heaven whom first joined marriages,
Father of all who makes Spring the wedding time of year:
Into the nuptial vessel flows the husband’s joining stream,
From whence the mingled breeding of all grows into a large body.
Herself the pulse and heart of penetrating spirit,
Hidden within steers the mother of men,
Through sky, through lands, under the seas,
On their steady course she sends procreation
Commanding the world to know the ways of birth.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

She herself carried over Troy’s subjects to become Latins:
She gave the Laurentian girl [Lavinia] to her offspring [Aeneas],
From whence the Branch of the Romans afterwards arose;
Created the mother of Romulus and his brood Caesar;
And soon gave to Mars the chapel of the chaste virgin;
Herself forming the union between the heirs of Romulus and the Sabines.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

Pleasure nurtures the country, in the country they know to Worship
Himself Love, the boy of Dione; the country bespeaks his birth.
Him, with the land born, she receives to her bosom:
Rearing him on the delicate blossoms of her kisses.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

Behold now under broom trees the lambs unfold,
Each careful to hold to the marriage agreement.
Beneath shades with their husbands, behold, flocks of sheep:
And to sing and not be quiet the goddess instructs the birds.
Now the talkative swans of raucous voice are obstreperous on the water:
The wife of Tereus [Procne] under the shadow of the poplars responds,
Such that you think love’s emotion is being addressed by the voice of music,
And you doubt she complains of her sister [Philomela] concerning the [i.e. Procne’s] barbaric husband.

She sings, we are silent. When my Spring comes,
When will I become as the lyre, so as to abandon being silent?
I ruined my Muse through silence, nor has Phoebus [Apollo] regard for me.
Thus as Amyclas, when they were silent, silence perished.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

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Prefatory Note

As much as for any other reason, this present translation of Statius’ *Silvae* was undertaken in an effort to expand and improve my knowledge of Latin, myself having becoming a student of that language only late in life.

For the original Latin text, historical and mythological references, and assistance generally in decoding and rendering Statius’ often strange and sometimes perplexing verse into English, I am indebted to and relied heavily on J. H. Mozley’s version from 1928. Where possible, and for purposes better acquainting myself with grammar and vocabulary, I have purposely striven as much as possible for a literal translation, while endeavoring to preserve the inherent feelings and spirit of the thing. Though well aware of the oft quoted secondary school admonition to not force a word for word approach, all in all I am reasonably satisfied in having been largely successful in securing what seems to me Statius’ meaning — though naturally others are more than welcome to judge for themselves.

*William Thomas Sherman*
Seattle, Washington

BOOK I

I have deliberated long and much, Stella, best of youths, in our most eminent of callings, which part you have pursued, whether I ought these little books, which by my fervor and pleasant hurrying flowed forth, with each having been produced from my breast, to have sent them out together. For why must I also be burdened as author of this edition, although it has been left behind me, while I still fear for my “Thebaid?” But also we have read “The Gnat” and have even recognized “The Battle of the Frogs,” neither is there any of the illustrious poets who did not before hand play lightly in his works with an indulgent pen. Was it late these verses to withhold, when those of whom for honor they have been given to, and you yourself have certainly, have already held? But among others, it is necessary many of these perish out of kindness, since they have lost freshness, which is the only advantage they have. For none of these have been composed in longer than two days, and some streamed forth in individual days. How I fear lest these verses prove themselves to be too much of that sort!

The first book contains a sacred testament: for it must commence with “Jove is the first of all.” These hundred verses, on a Great Equestrian [statue] to be made, it commanded to be handed over to our most indulgent Emperor, the day after he dedicated the work. Some will say “you were able to see it beforehand.” You will respond to him, most dear Stella, that your marriage song you enjoined to me you know was written in two days. Audaciously by Hercules, but only however three hundred hexameters it has, and perhaps you misled on behalf of a colleague. Certainly Manilius Vopiscus, a most learned man and who especially vindicates from near neglect literature now fled, is accustomed also to glorify my name beyond bounds for our having described his Tibur villa in a single day. A little book dedicated to Rutilius Gallicus convalescing, about which I say nothing, lest I seem to deceive on the occasion of a departed witness. For Claudius Etruscus is a witness, that he received his delayed “Bath” from me within the space of a dinner. At the end are the “December Kalends,” which are to be trusted for use: for that most happy night and for public pleasures not yet experienced...

I. The Great Equestrian Statue of Emperor Domitian.

What colossus stands upon a mound doubled; embraced by the surrounding Latinian forum? Did it stream from heaven completed? Or was the image formed by a Sicilian foundry, that left Steropes and
Brontes weary? Or have Palladian hands fashioned for us, Germanicus, such a kind that saw you holding in lofty check the Rhine and the astonished Dacians to their home?

Come now, be it marveled by Fame the name known before in the age of the Dardan horse, which brought down the sacred crown of Dindymon and the leaves of Ida’s grove to falling. This not the walls of Pergamum rent asunder could have received, nor could it by a mixed throng of unmarried boys and girls, nor Aeneas himself, have been led in, nor great Hector. Add that that one was carrying dangerous and savage Achaians, this commemorates a tranquil mount: it pleases to see a face with mixed marks of having borne war and placid peace. You should not think anything more true: equal form and beauty, equal honor, the Bistonian steed that carries Mars of highest arms does not outdo it, it disdains great weight; nor seized with delay by coursing rivers nearby, it fumes with a breath that drives forth the great Strymonian billows.

Equal to the work is the place where it rests. Here the constricted entrance he [i.e., Julius Caesar] widens, who wearied with wars, by a gift of an adopted offspring [to the state, i.e., Octavian, later Augustus], first showed us our way to ethereal divinities. He learns also from your expression, how much you, more mild with arms and who not easily given in external furies to rage, instead give trust to Chattians and Dacians. To you bearing by the laws the seal of Caesar he goes, having driven aside the son in law [i.e., Pompey] and Cato [the younger.] But the outstretched sides here protect you with the houses of Julius, there the sublime court of martial Paullus, the father sees the back and Concord with her winning mien.

You yourself have moreover seen, your lofty head looking out on the pure air, the shining temples surrounding; whether new more beautiful palaces, disdaining flames, rise, or whether the torch of Trojan fire silently watches, or having surveyed them Vesta now praises her ministrants. The right hand forbids you fight, the Tritonian maid [i.e., Minerva] weighs down not the left extending Medusa’s head severed at the neck: like a spur bestirring the horse: nothing anywhere is more sweet than the chosen seat of the goddess, not if Father you yourself held her. A breast, which might prevail to unravel the cares of the world, and for which Temese gave all to have exhausted its mines of riches; the cloak goes low down the back; the saber resting secure on the side, with how so great a sword Orion menaces the winter nights and averts the stars. But the steed, resembling horsemen with a keener souls, raises up its face and threatens a charge; to which on shoulders, with rigid necks, stand manes full of life, great spurs spread widely that they will be relied on for the attack. In place of the vacant grassy earth, the bronze hoof touches the hair of the Rhenish captive. Arion [the horse] of Adrastus would have feared and grown pale seeing him, and as well Cyllarus of Ledaeus from the temple close by. This one will never change the reins of its perpetual lord, nor, with its bridles, serve but a single star!

The soil beneath hardly breathes, the grounds alone are scarcely sufficient for having so much weight settled in upon them; with neither iron nor bronze they labor under, but with the guardian spirit, although the eternal maintains the foundation, which supports the heights of the mind and heaven pouring down and which would harden the worn out knee of Atlas.

No long delay to drag things out. The intense form of the god presently makes pleasing the labors and work themselves, youth marvels the more at what hands can do. The arduous pulse of the machine resounds. The continuous noise proceeds through the seven heights of Mars, and subdued the wandering murmurs of great Rome. The keeper of the site himself [i.e., Curtius], whose memorable name protects the sacred chasm and lake, innumerable raw sounds of brass being struck to bellow he senses in the forum, it stirs wildly the holy face and head of the place that merited the venerable oak wreath. And first the mighty demeanor, immersed in the trembling lake, becomes fearful by the glistening light and thrice greater horse with towering neck; [but] soon cheered by the commanding vision [cries]:

“Hail descendant and father of gods, divinity heard by me from afar! Now my happiness, now the lake to venerate, with you close by, to know your brightness, and to witness your indulgence close by the immortal throne. Once I [was] the author and discoverer of the safety of Romulus’ city. You tame the wars of Jove, you the battles of the Rhine, you civil disorders, you by treaty and far off war delayed master the mountain. If my own era had borne you, you had attempted, not I, to go daringly into the deep lake; only Rome your reins would have restrained.”
Let the steed of Latium yield, where the fanes of Dion stand at a seat opposite to the forum of Caesar - which you have presented boldly to the Pellacan captain Lysippus, soon amazed with the face of Caesar he bears up by the neck - with no tired light do you scan, how long from there to him is the downward view. Who is ever so green, and who not, that having seen both, how so much it may be said that horses stand apart from each other as princes from princes?

This one dreads neither the winter downpours or the threefold fire of Jove, nor the imprisoned streams of Aeolus, nor the pause of many years: it will stand while the earth and the celestial vault endure, while the Roman days last, here and under the silent night, while those of the earth please proud heaven, and when the remaining multitude will enter into a natural embrace like father, brother, and sister: one neck will give a place for all the stars of heaven to adorn.

Enjoy into perpetuity the gift of a great people and the Senate. The wax of Apelles would long to have chosen and inscribed you in a like image to be placed in the eldest Attic temple of Elean Jove, and your mild countenance Tarentum would prefer, and in your lights mirroring the stars Rhodes would disdain with contempt its own Phoebus. May you approve the fixed lands and what to you in the temple we dedicate, may you honor them; nor may [less than] the hall of heaven please you, may you with happiness see your grandsons bestow to this gift an offering.

II. A Wedding Song for Stella and Violentila.

From whence have the Latin hills sounded with sacred song? For whom, Apollo, do you stir the plectrum, ivory on the shoulder with hair dangling down, new music to make? Behold from afar, to the din of melody, the goddesses depart from Helicon and with nine lamps that flicker the ceremonial fire; gathering for the marriage a tuneful undulation from the Pierian springs. Among them lofty Elegy, with customary wanton look, draws near the goddesses, and urges and solicits that in future an added tenth foot be seen, and desires herself slipped in unnoticed and mingled in the sisters’ midst. The mother of Aeneas herself leads, with lamp in hand, the bride submissive with a sweet honest blush, herself the sacred couch prepares, and with a Latin garland has disguised the divine hair, tempers her face and cheeks, eager as she is to pass for less beside the new bride.

I know the day and reasons for this sacred rite: For you these sing -- swing wide the gates -- for you, Stella, the chorus; for you Phoebus and Euhan [Bacchus] and the swift Tegeaticus of Maenalian shades bring wreaths. neither charming Love nor Grace cease showering innumerable flowers and a cloud of fragrance on the close embrace with the welcome, snow-white limbed spouse. On your brow alone roses, on your brow alone violets and lilies mixed are received, as you obstruct them away from the chaste glances of the mistress.

Thus the day for the kept white fleece of the Fates has arrived, where for Stella and Violentilla having professed [their vows] the wedding is proclaimed, let care and fears yield, and misleading fraud and the falsity of a ballad cease, let Rumor be silent: that love freed has consumed restraints and bypassed rules: used up are the fables of the vulgar and already have citizens long told of the kisses they have seen. You however dazed, although having been granted such an abundance of a night, you chose and having been permitted by the divine right hand, you even still fear the vows. Put, sweet poet, put aside the sighs; she is yours. Let it be allowed setting out across the open threshold to go, to return by a step: there is no place now for doorman, law, or shyness. Seek at last the embrace to sate - it takes hold! and remain together to recall [those] nights [apart.]

Worthy indeed would be the reward, if Juno should assign you the labors of Hercules, and if the Fates gave you monsters to battle, if seething Cyanean seas to seize. On account of so great as this, it was worth the law of Pisa to run trembling and to hear the roaring of Oenomus following behind. Not more daring would it be if you were a shepherd seated on Dardanian Ida, these indeed would be gifts, [indeed] not even if instead cherishing Dawn had snatched and carried you away to the breezes in the Tithonian yoke. But what cause brought to the poet the unexpected joys of the bridal couch? Here with me, delightful
Erato, this teach me, while the doors and halls warm with the throng, and many staffs sound the lintels. He is free to move them with apt conversations and they learn to be taught to hear the [traditional wisdom of the] homestead.

Per chance, where rests the brightening milky region of heaven, cherishing Venus lay nightly in the marriage bed; dissolved in the hard embrace of her Getic mate. A line of tender cupids press the bed posts and couch of the goddess; they seek the approving signs by which to bear the torches, that she might command those with which hearts are to be reached; Whether she prefers on lands or seas to rage, or to embroil the gods or still yet to vex the Thundering One. Not yet having fixed her soul to the heart’s desires, weary she [i.e., Venus] lays upon the coverlets, where once the partner of guilt [Mars] having been discovered they crawled to bed into Lemnian bonds [made by Vulcan.] Here a boy from the bustle of the winged companions, to whom with most fervent mien and a nimble hand with the never failing arrows, thus from the midst of the tender troop with voice speaks out - pressing to silence his quiver-bearing brothers.

“As you know, mother,” he says, “there is no work which my right hand is slow to; whomever of man or god you have given [to me], [with passion] he burns. But once, by the tears and propitious begging with prayers and vows of men, grant us to be moved, o mother: indeed not out of adamantine hardness we have been created, but in truth we are your brood. There is a bright youth from the Latin nation, whom from elder patricians born and having joyed nobility now has brought and set down [here] titles of beauty from our heaven. One time with dense and quavering quivers, I pointedly pierced him - sweetly for you. Although many Ausonian matrons have sought him as a son in law, I subdued the victim of the powerful mistess to bear the yoke and to hope for long years to be so commanded. But her at last gently - for this you decreed - we had weakly strung the bow; by love’s lamp sparingly. From thence the anxious youth overwhels the many fires, as I am an astonished witness, how much by night and day he endures my urgings. Not any else have I more vehemently brooded over, mother, digging with repeated wounds. I also saw this [modern-day] Hippomenes with longing run the cruel race-course, nor did he thus wax pale at the turning point: I saw and praised this youth of Abydos competing with his arms and hands at the oars, and I lighted the way ahead of him [when he was] swimming: The savage heat warmed him less than it did the wide seas: you, oh youth, having passed over [even] veteran lovers. I myself was stupefied you had been so hardened by the swelter and I made firm those spirits [of yours] and with smoothing feathers removed the sweating from your eyes. How often has Apollo complained to me, that I am grief to the poet! Now, mother, gratify the loved marriage. He is our devoted comrade and ensign bearer; He can recall arms-bearing labors, famous deeds of men and fields with bloody streams. But for you he has given the soothing plectrum and has preferred to walk with poets and to weave the laurel with our myrtle. He has rolled back the slipping or else external wounds of youth; alas! how great the veneration, mother, of the Paphian godhead; he having wept bitterly the deaths of our dove.”

He finished; and coaxing clung to the neck of the tender mother and warmed her breast with nearing wings. Thus so invited, she replied with unresisting glance: “Grand indeed and of rare powers, which I myself have shown, the youth desires the Pierian [Muse’s] pledge. I marveling at the excellent splendor of this beauty, for whom glory of homeland and of patrimony have vied in honors, and with the earth sinking under me have received and cherished her; nor, my child, have my hands ceased adorning her curved neck and cheeks and to draw forth her locks with thick balm. She has sprung forth [to become] a flattering likeness to me. Behold from afar brow and hair suggesting high graces. Measure in what [qualities] she stands out above Latin matrons: how much the maid hard presses Latonian nymphs and [like] how much I myself [have given competition to] the Nereids. This girl is worthy to arise with me on the blue waves and would have been able to sit astride our [water-borne] shell; and if she had been able to scale to these blazing seats to enter these abodes, [even] you, [my] Loves, might err [thinking her me.] Determined, I have given her wealth in beauty, yet she conquers with the riches for the soul.

“We grumble now of greedy Seres despoiling the denuded grove, and that the buds of Clymene go wanting freshness, that the green Sisters weep not enough, few fleeces blush with Sidonian dye, and rarely are crystals frozen for the ancient snows. For her Hermum and Tagus run with reddish sand - not enough for cultivation - for her Glaucus and Proteus and all the Nereids are commanded to seek Indian necklaces.
"If, Phoebus, you had seen her in Thessaly, Daphne would have wandered through the fields secure, if on the shore of Naxos she was seen next the couch of Theseus, Bacchus [Euhan], flying Gnossus, had forsook the maid deserted. But that Juno had placated me from long quarreling, the Ruler of the bright air had taken on the disguising wings and horns for her, truly Jupiter would have fallen on her in [sheets of] gold.

"But given to the youth desiring, for you child, is the height of my powers, even though lamenting to bear the yoke of a second marriage the girl oft refuses. I sense now she herself yielding and in turn [ready] to warm to the husband."

Having thus spake she raised her celestial limbs from the bed and exiting the proud portal prompted the Amyclaean swans to their teams. Love happily seated had harnessed them; carrying the matron on the jeweled car through the clouds. Presently the Iliadean citadel on the Tiber is seen: the towering palace spreads out before them and the shining divinities of the dwelling, exulting, applaud at the swan’s arrival. Not sullied by gleaming stars is the honored seat of the goddess. Here are Libyan and Phrygian marble, here the hard verdant stones of Laconia. Here curved onyx shine, here rocky veins the same color as the deep sea, the purple of which the master of Oebalian and Tyrian copper vessels oft envies. Pressing roofs depend on columns innumerable; satisfying oak timbers shine with Dalmation metal. The cold of the ancient forests exclude falling rays [of the sun], transparent fountains are alive in the marble. Nor does Nature preserve her [usual] succession: here Sirius chills, winter warms the home and ground and makes the year for them mild.

Fond Venus exults at the sight of the mighty houses of the foster-child second to none, than if morning star had arose from the deep sea to [find] Idalian homes and the Eryxian shrine. Then herself reclined alone upon the couch speaking: “For what purpose [is] this continually useless sleep and restraint on the bed, oh delightful to me among Laurentian girls? For whose sake [is this] manner of customs and devotion? Are you never to submit to the masculine yoke? A more sad time of age even now will come. Exercise beauty and make use of gifts that are fleeing [with time.] Not therefore for such [reason] did I give to you my pride and splendor of face and to be marveled at, needing neither beauty or ancestry. For what experienced youths throughout the city, what girls, have not heard his songs? Thus indulging let him proceed with the Ausonian guardians - resolve to raise aloft up the twelve torches prior to the festive day; surely now he has stirred Cybele’s portals and selects the song of the Euboean Sibyl. And now the Latian parent, whose rightful mind is foreknown to me, will bestow the purple garment on the youth and the magisterial ivory - these a greater glory - laurels to celebrate recent Dacian spoils.

"Come therefore, unite with the marriage bed and cast off the idleness of youth. What nations, what hearts have I not joined with love’s flame? Flocks of sustaining herds and hard wild beats do not refuse me, lands themselves with the air I release for wedlock, when the clouds disperse into showers. Thus the succession of things returns to the ages of the world. Had I not been joined a to a Phrygian mate, from whence [had come] new glory to Troy and the abductor of the burning gods, from whence of Lydia [had come] he who had revived my Julian tribe on the Tiber? Who would have laid down the sevenfold walls of Rome, head of imperial Latium, unless a Dardanian priestess had secretly taken Mars [in her arms], and without me preventing her?”

With such flattering pronouncements she excites the honor of the speechless bride. Having protested with tears the man’s attendants near the threshold, now the gift and prayers return to her mind, now recalls the songs of the poet and of Aster’s [i.e., “Stella’s” bride] [sung] throughout the city, before the banquet of Aster’s, at night of Aster’s - “Hylas” was never shouted so much. And now begins to soften the sharp heart-strings, and appears to herself to have been hard. Honor to the couches, most pleasing among Latin poets, since the hard measured way is begun and you have comprehended the labors of taking refuge! Thus the river [i.e., Alpheus] deserting shining Pisa, having been long inflamed in outward love affairs, draws chastely to streams in a submerged course. until at last with panting mouth he imbibes the Sicanian springs; the Naiad [i.e., Arethusa] marvels at the sweet kisses nor can believe her husband has arrived from the open sea.
What a day, with the bright eagerness of the gods, it was for you then in this office, Stella, how greatly breasts leapt with the vow, when with fitting sweetness the face of the mistress assented to matrimony! To have appeared to go and wander for a little [moment] through glittering heavens! The shepherd rejoiced less on Amyclae’s sands with Helen coming to the Idaean ships; not such was seen in Peleus at Thessalian Tempe, [or] when Chiron with upright horse’s body saw from afar Thetis approaching on Haemonian lands. How long the constellations delay! How slow is Aurora to [heed] a husband’s consecrations!

But faraway, the son of Leto, father of poets, with Semele’s Bacchus, perceiving Stella to prepare the marriage, stirs Delos, stirs Nysa to their swift processions. The Lycian hills and the cool retreats of Thymbra, along with Parnassus, you sound for him; they reverberate in Pangaea and Ismara, and the one time festive shores of Naxos. Then the companions go in through the beloved doors in song: here they carry the harp, here with speckles behind the golden hide, here the Bacchic wand, here the plectrums; here brows wreathed with laurels, one with a Minoan crown sets his hair.

Hardly has the day passed, and now with all in fellowship excelling, already each home bustles with merry retinues. with leaves making green the door posts, cross-paths blaze with torch-flames, and the greater part of celebrated Rome rejoices. Every honor, anointing powers arrive at the door ways, each purple toga in the tumult rubs elbows with a plebeian. Here have mixed knights and youths with a company of matron gowns in distress. Each of them happy calls out, but more of the crowd envy the bridegroom. At one time formerly Hymen, reclining against a door post, had sought an untried poem of marriage to sing that might delight the poet. Juno dedicates matrimonial bonds to be revered and Concord confirms [them] with tandem torches. This was that day: let the husband sing the night itself!

It is permitted to have known how much so, thus Ilia, subdued by sleep, the cunning of Mars laid on the banks of the stream; the snowy countenance of Lavinia blushed not such with Turnus watching; not such Caludia, when the people gazed on the ship [of the Great Mother] having been set in motion by her virginity.

Now to work, Aonian companions of the muse and ministers of the tripods! Contending in different mediums: Let an inspired cohort be sent with fillets and ivy garlands encircling, and each lyre exert itself in elation! But with individuality. Who setting yourselves to the task with utmost excellence, bring forth music worthy of jocund nuptials. Here Cos itself applauding Philetas and old Callimachus and Propertius in the Umbrian grotto would have embraced to praise the day, nor would even Ovid in Tomi be gloomy, nor wealthy Tibullus at a sparkling hearthside [be indifferent.]

Certainly it is not one love and a single cause that has got me to sing: it is for me, Stella, like bringing you together with the Muse: we revel much as equals to the altars and we draw forth a shared wave from learned waters; But being first born, you my Parthenope first received into her lap, you alone crawling [as a babe] with our cherished glory. Let the land of Euboea arise to the bright ether and Sebethos swell with its beautiful child; may not the Lucrinaean Naiads in sulphurous caves, nor Pompeian Sarnus themselves be more pleased with peace.

Indeed come, hasten to Latium illustrious descendants, may they be able direct the laws and armies, may they be able to play the songs! May good Cynthia hurry the tenth month for birth, but spare Lucina I pray; you yourself boy spare the parent, may you harm not the tender womb, nor the erect breasts; when Nature in secret forms your quiet face, may you bear much charm from the father, but more from the mother. But you most beautiful exemplar of Italy, at last having possessed a worthy mate, cherish long the ties sought: thus no loss for you of splendor; blossoming youths flourish long, may your countenances thus remain, and with delay this loveliness age.

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III. The Villa of Manilius Vopiscus on the Tiber.

If any seeing of eloquent Vopiscus’s on the cold Tiber and the twin homes inserted on Anio’s [tributary] waters or have been able to know the exchange of friends competing on the bank; each defending themselves as the master villas, Sirius on him never barked with the heat of its star, nor did Nemea with its weighty leaves so look on its dear ones: nor winter touching such, as thus rude frosts crush the sun, no home swelters in the year as at Pisa.

Pleasure herself [is said] to have written of you with a tender hand...then Venus anointed and caressed the summits with Idalian moisture and her alluring locks and left honor to the dwellings, and forbade her winged children from departing thence.

O day to long remember! What joys to recall to mind, how wearying to have viewed so many wonders! How natural the mild earth! What forms of beauty in places preceding the hand of art! Never has Nature indulged herself more plentifully!

The high groves lying by the swift streams: a feigned image [on the water] replies to the leaves, and the same reflection flies through the long billows. The Anio itself - marveling belief - under and over the rocks here with murmurs lays down the swelling mad foam, as if having reverence to [only] disturb the sleep of placid Vopiscus and the Pieriean days with [its] music. And with a home on either bank, this most mild river divides you not. Palaces keep watch over the alternate banks, nor grudge the running river outside, as it were, restraining them. Now let Fame boast the Sestian bay and sea, and swimming by the daring boy [Leander] that surpassed dolphins! Here eternal calm, here laws with no storms, never a fury of waters. The sight is given here of voices, and almost hands, passing over them. Thus Callic’s waves drive forth to flow back, thus, having separated, the boundless Brutian shore surveys Sicanian Pelorus.

What will I sing for the first or middle [part], where will I rest the end? Will I not I admire the gilded timbers, or from whence the Moorish door frames, or the bright veins of colored marble, or the nymphs issuing forth through all the dens? Here I am drawn by the eyes, here by the mind. Shall I speak of the venerable age of the groves? Do you discern, what streams of rivers below, or what in the forests you gaze at, the stately halls passing over in silence, night will be silent, where for you, with all quiet and with no knocking from whirlwinds, murmuring darkness summons slumber? Or what baths, upheld by a grassy foundation, steam having been placed upon the frigid banks over fire? With the vapors of two furnaces joined, the river laughs at the panting nymphs hard by the tumbling stream.

I saw the arts of ancient hands and lively metals of various kinds. It is a labor now to remember the figures of gold, or ivory, or gems worthy to be fitted to fingers, each thing with silver first, or tricked in lesser bronze, and tried [the work of] teams of enormous colossi. I wander in view pondering through all I regard, I tread not influential riches, for splendor flowing from on high and bright brass reflecting sea shells to be revealed to me alone. Where various arts have painted upon the floor new figures. the ground joys: one’s steps tremble.

Why now should I marvel at vast dwellings, or why arrange my verse to sing about distant abodes? Why thou, a tree which, in the midst of houses, roofs have been protected by, and posts emerging in fluid airs, which under no master will be suffering savage two-headed axes? And mayhap unknown to you already an elusive Naiad or Hamadryad owes you for untrammeled years.

What Marcia, shall I relate twice to you about alternate courses accumulating, and deep white basins amid whirling fountains, which hidden lapse into an oblique river, streams running boldly through lead channels? Should Elis alone lead a path, under Ionian floods, a sweet river to Actna’s port? There Anio itself, by way of caves and a spring, eluding abandoned night under mystic blue mantles, here and there throwing its fragile longings over the moss, or into great glassy pools descends and claps the swimming waters. In that shade Tiber reclined, there Albua yearns to immerse her sulfurous locks; this home could separate woodland Phoebus from Egeria and widow cold Taygetus of Dryad choirs and summon Pan from the Lycaen forests. Since if Tirynthian temples would grant other lots of fate, the sisters of Praeneste would have migrated. Why should I praise you twice-bearing orchards of Alcinous, who never
have sprung forth in the air with empty limbs? Let the homes of Telegonus, Laurentia of Turnus, the acres of Lucrine and the cruel shore of Antiphates yield, yield Circe’s glassy summits with wolves howling of Dulchia and the proud seats of of Anxur, what the gentle old woman owes to nourishing Phrygia: yield now the Antian shores, where you with the wiles of suns recall the winter’s rain filled clouds.

Here doubtless are contemplated weighty matters, here one is oppressed by fruitful weather and exquisite quiet and the deep brow with bright light and carefree pleasures, which the Gargettian elder [Epicurus] would himself prefer, leaving his Athenian park deserted; it was worth it to have sought this place through Aegean storms and Hyades’ star of snows and under the stars of Olenus, if one may trust Malea with ships through the way of seething Sicilian tides: why should pleasure close by demean the eyes? Here the harp delights Tiber’s Fauns, Alciden himself, and the words of Catillus with a greater song: whether for you the spirit contends with Pindaric plectra, or you raise the lyre for mighty heroes, or you stir up enough livid anger with [satire’s] blackening blight, or your letter brightens sundry cares.

Oh worthy the riches of Midas and Croesus and with Persian treasures added, bravo to the goods of the soul, to whose watered countryside Hermes owed hastening through the golden banks and the gleaming sand of the Tagus! Thus frequenting learned leisure, thus having disclosed to all clouded hearts an end, I pray you may surpass the old age of Nestor.

IV. Thanks Given on the Recovery of Rutilius Gallicus from an Illness.

Huzzah, [verily] you are gods on high, the task of Clotho did not spin on inexorably, dear Astraea returns the pious to Jove having reconciled doubts while Gallicus sees the stars. You are divine. You are to the heart, Germancius - who would deny? Fortune blushed to rob your empire of so great a minister. The neck remains nearest to the ruinous thread of the immense weight of old age and [only] grows strong again in other years. Therefore the ready cohorts, which honor city banners, often take refuge in your bosom from the complaints of the agitated forums, where the city laws and the toga plead your rulings in long grievances, let joys contend, from the ranks let our hill resound, and murmurs of rumor for the worse be silenced! Clearly long life returning remains and will remain, in whose clement guardianship [are entrusted] the powers of undaunted Rome. No new ages will have been clothed so much in calamities, nor will crime, renewing, have sinned at the altar of Tarentum.

Yet I will not invoke Phoebus, though deaf to me without a plectrum for him, nor the Aonian goddesses with Pallas the tenth, nor the gentle young of Tegeae or Dirce: come yourself and attend new strengths of the soul, you who will have sung before; for having learned not so much without the divinity of Ausonia, you have bestowed on men of the toga ample grace and intellect and judgment to the Hundred. It is proper that inspired Pimplea deny the thirst of the poet [satisfaction], nor should he be given a partner in Pirene: better to me are abundant whirlpools in a draught, which is snatched from your fount, or plain words joined when freed from established customs, or when sweet eloquence is subdued by art and regards our [poetic] rules. Wherefore go, if to Ceres we return her gifts and wine to Lyaeus and Diana at the rotunda still receives all riches of spoils and captive booty, and the Power of War [i.e., Mars] the weapons of captives: When yourself, Gallicus, of greater eloquence, of speaking abounding in riches of the sublime, scorn not to worship with the delicate lyre. The wandering moon is encircled by stars while into the ocean lesser rivulets plunge.

What rewards of the city has careful love of custom released to you! What then did I know of the ignorant mob bewailing those able lives of the patriarchs and knights? Thus the blessed Curia feared not Numa failing, nor lofty knights [the plight of] Pompey, nor women [the death of] Brutus. This is the thing: reluctant to hear of sad shackles, to spare not [oneself] nor walk away from blows high power commands, but much arming themselves to win strength and to deem worthy humble hands and praying words, to restore laws to the courts of justice not drive out magistrates and appease the sword with the toga, thus the way to deep hearts, so one trusts reverence by mingling with it love. The grave harshness of fate itself frightened all, and with evil not even delaying for youth the peril of sudden danger. Not that this is the blame of old age - indeed these undertakings scarcely exceeding twelve [ceremonial] lustrations - but the
labor of a vigorous mind exerting command on its faculties for the watchful care of Caesar, a pleasant
choir. Hence inward rest has [in others before] crept insidiously into weary limbs and a lazy neglect of life.

Then the god, who close the high Alpine ranges signifies with holy name the Apollonian groves,
looks back, alas, praying for the safety of so dear a child of his, and cutting short any delay:

“With me here, Epidaurian offspring,” he says, “go now with glee: it is given - the means to
advance forth! - to restore the greatness of [your] powers. Let us preserve by assailing now pained fibers
distending: Let there be no fear of a deadly blow: Past limit Jupiter will praise these arts. For not a soul
plebian sprung or one without right divine do I preserve. And so briefly, while we pass under the roofs, I
will make ready. The race itself having returned to their [original] nobility; the source lies not hidden, but
with the light following is overcome, and, having yielded, joys in the illustrious descendant. To him also
[is] the foremost strength of the toga: mighty and bright in eloquence; having trained in countless camps,
he soon gained the principal settlements of the west and every band under the sun, having in leisure of
peace sworn the sword no permission to be ungirded and slacken. Him strengthening Galatea dared to
reproach in war - myself also - through nine harvests Pamphylia and warlike Pannonia feared the bow and
with Armenia in flight dreading the Araxes now is suffering a Latian bridge. Why should I turn over
repeating the twice [bestowed] commands and duties [for him] in great Asia? He might indeed wish to
have these [offices] thrice and four times for himself, but the greater annals of a magistrate, having been
promised to him not once, called him home. Wherefore should I praise the wondrous compliance of
Libya’s tribute and a triumph having been sent in the midst of peace and how immense the riches he
delivered over which no one had dared to expect? Transimene and the Alpes joy and the spirits of Cannae;
and foremost himself in honor the lacerated shade of Regulus openly demands an offering, the northern
battle line frees not the Rhine rebel and the prayers of captive Veleda, which of late is the supreme glory, to
lay open the surrendered city with ruined Dacians, with the reins of the ruler having been so chosen,
Gallicus, you have endured, surprising not Fortune.

“Him therefore, if I speak worthily, we will snatch from ill fortune, my son, for [the purposes of]
Jove. This the celebrated Latin father asks and deserves of the city; and indeed let it not be in vain for you
young men to have recently sounded honorable songs for me with the patrician in [the] purple [lined toga.]
If [there be] any herb in the healing cave of twin [bodied] Chiron, whatever is hidden for you in the temple
of Trojan Pergamum or whatever blessed Epidaurus may draw forth from healing grains of sand, what
wealth of flowering dittany Crete offers within the Idaean shadows, and where abounds the spume of the
snake: And I will join the expert hand itself with every good secretion, and fragrant balms in the lands of
Arabia or that I a shepherd plucked from the grass of Amphrysus.”

He said. They find now placed nearby the soul weakly struggling; by means of the Paeonian rite
he encircles them and at once the willing ones both teach and obey, until with transforming medicine they
shatter the deadly pests and doubt filled clouds of sickly sleep. He himself aids the blessed and with each
malady the remedy more strong prevails. Not more quickly was Telephus restored by Haemonia [i.e.,
Thessalian arts], nor what, with Machaon’s elixir, mended the savage wounds of fearing Atrides.

Amid so many people and cares of senators having been stirred, what may be the place of an
offering to me? I yet give as witness to you the lofty stars, Thymbracean father of versifiers, which with
every light and night a dread to me; as if a small craft having been joined with an immense ship. when a storm has raged, recovers
in a small part of the raging waters and is rolled forward in the same south wind.

Tie now gleaming threads with gladness, Sisters [of the Fates], bind! Let no man reckon [what is]
the measure of life’s passing: this will be the birth date of life. You are worthy to transcend the ages of
Troy, Euboea’s [i.e., the Euboean Sibyls’s] years of dust and the desuetude of Nestors! What suitable cask
of fragrance should I, a pauper, now obtain for you?

Not if Mevania should empty the vales or the fields of Clitumnus present bulls white as snow
would I suffice. But often in the midst of rewards, a grassy place and grain with a little salt have satisfied
[even] the gods.
V. The Baths of Claudius Etruscus.

Not at divine Helicon does the lyre pulse with the solemn plectrum, nor do I myself call having so often wearied divine approval, oh Muses; and you Phoebus and you Euhan [i.e., Bacchus] we exempt from choral concerts. You having moved loud wild beasts, winged Tegean [i.e., Mercury], should also press back. Other friendships require my songs. Naiads, mistresses of the waves, having thus far drawn forth the overworked monarch king [i.e., Vulcan] with flashing red fire enough from the Sicilian anvil, enough! Thebes put aside for a little while the harmful arts [of war.] I wish to sport with a loved companion. Join here, my lad, our cups - but lest their numbering be a labor - take up the harp delaying them: Let toil and care depart, while we sing the baths with shining stones, and while blossoming with impudent ivy and fillets, with the leaf untied in modesty. My [muse] Clio plays for Etruscus. Advance, blooming goddesses, turn here [your] pure faces and wreath the glass-green hair with tender flowers, with garment concealing nothing. As like when emerging from the deep fonts you tormented amorous Satyrs with the sight. It pleases not you to worry, [or] that with guilt you have defamed the glory of the waters; be far from hence idle [naiad] Salmacis with the deceitful spring and the dry rivers of Cebrenis for a grieving widow and may the despoiler of Hercules’ nursling [i.e., Hermaphroditus] be gone!

You nymphs, who’ve dwelt in the seven summits of Latium, raise up for me a new Thybris from the waves, and you whom the Anio pleases would headlong follow swimming to the Maiden [aqueduct] and Marcia [aqueduct] leading from the Marsian snows and cold, whose roving wave increases with the raised high embankments and by the countless hanging arches is carried o’er - : we undertake [to descant on] your work, it is yours; your home, which with soft music I round out. Never in other watered caves have you lived more richly. Cytherea herself held the hand of her husband and taught him arts; it is not the feeble flame that burns in furnaces, she herself sets on fire torches of winged Loves.

Not admitted are Thasos or wave abounding Carystos, onyx grieves from far, and excluded the snake-spotted marble protests: only the gold Nomad stone removed from purple quarries shines, only purple from the Synnas’ hollow cave in Phrygia that Attis himself has reddened with [his self-inflicted] bright [blood] stains, and those which one cuts from the white cliffs of Tyre and Sidon. Eurota has hardly a place, where the marble of Synnas marks with distinct long green edges. Nor are the thresholds remiss, chambers glitter, and ceilings shimmer with the splendors of life in varied blue-dyed tiles. Embraced by such gladdening riches, fire itself is stupefied and rules more leniently. Everywhere many a day, the brazen sun perforates with rays the roofs entirely and is burned by a second fire. Nothing there plebeian; nowhere will you observe the bronze of Temese, but with silver upon silver the happy wave is driven forward and falls over the bright rims, pursues its wondrous pleasures and refuses to go away. But beyond the snowy bank in which the blue-green rivers live and from every height lays open its deepest depth, who is not persuaded to go and remove one’s lazy robe for the basin? Here in the deep Cytherea prefers to be born, here, Narcissus, you better see yourself transparent, here swift Hecate having been caught would wish to be bathed.

What now, will I only report the spreading floors where balls resounding [in play] will be heard, [or] where listless fire wanders the chambers and steam channels roll forth thin vapor? Not if from Baiae’s strand should a new visitor come, will he despise such things - it ought be right to compare the small with the great - nor he who soaked in the manner of Nero’s baths disdain to sweat again here. Well done, I plead, lad shining in talent and careful in [your] attention! These things will age with you and your fortune learns now in good style [how] to be reborn!

VI. The Kalends¹ in Decembers

Thee father Phoebus [Apollo] and Pallas [Athena] severe,

¹ i.e., the first day.
and even you Muses, go afar and keep holiday:
You we will recall come the Kalends in January.
Saturn and much heavy wine
have freed me from December’s bonds,
and a place for laughing and raucous Wit
are also present, whilst I recall the blest day
of glad Caesar and the [Aeons’] intoxicated muse.

Scarcely had fresh Aurora stirred the dawn,
when lines of tasty treats descended like rain
- this the dew the coming east wind pours:
Whatever’s prime from Pontic nut orchards
or Idume’s fruitful ridges drops down;
what blossoms on righteous Damascus boughs,
and what ripens in drunken Caunus,
plummets freely in lavish plunder;
soft dainty pastries,
and with unburnt kneaded doughs of Ameria
and must-cakes while from the hidden palm
came down the fertile dates.
The hazy Hyades with such great clouds hides
not the lands nor melts a Pleiadean star,
as by wedges Winter with hail subdues
the people of Latin serenity.
Let Jupiter prolong clouds through the world
and threaten showers for spacious fields,
whilst THESE rains from OUR Jove are endured.

But look, he goes into the theater stalls
through all ranks with splendor, with care
seating the common people with no less honors.
These carry bread baskets,
white napkins, and fine dinners;
others serve languid wines;
you’d think them so many Ganymedes.
That world, which is upright and austere,
clans and togas together,
as well as so many others, oh blessed,
you nourish and feed.
Snobby Annona knows not this festival.
Go, Vetustas, compare the age now
with the ancient time of golden Jove:
not then did wines flow thus so freely,
nor grain so fill up the late year.
By one table is fed each rank,
children, women, common folk, knights, senators:
liberty relaxes reverence.
But even you - who to be idle here,
which of the gods could have promised this? -
entered with us the shared banquet.
Now they, whoever they are,
whether fortunate or needy,
glory themselves a table fellow of the leader [i.e., Caesar.]

Among these, pleasure flees the noise
of novel luxuries and polished gaping;
a coarse and naive woman stands with sword
as she takes the fight to shameless men!
You might believe the horsemen of Thermidon
charging to Tanais river or the wilds of Colchis.
Here impudent nature enters with a row of dwarves,
which by brief finishing too soon,
she bound at once into a knotty mass.
Swords set in, wounds devour,
- what a band! - and threaten death to them.
Father Mars grins at the bloody host
and with cranes falling with cries of cheating marvels at the ferocious fighters.

Now under the approaching shades of night
what tumult succeeds upon the dispensing of riches!
Here enter easy girls to be purchased,
here it is admitted by all, what in the theaters
pleases by beauty or is proven by art.
Here the puffed up of Lydia applaud with the crowd,
and there are the clacking cymbals of Cadiz,
there resound marching troops of the Syrians,
here the theaters groundlings and they who

Amidst which immense clouds of birds
suddenly fall in flight from the stars,
which sacred Nile and brusque Phais
and wet Numidia gathered from the south.
They go without who would seize the entire bowl,
and joy as long as new riches are acquired.
They raise innumerable voices
sounding to the stars
for the Saturnalia of the chief
and clamor for sweet favor of the Lord:
Caesar alone forbids granting this
[i.e., title for himself.]

Blue night scarce stole into the world,
when descended in the seashore’s midst
a bright ball of flame from the dense shadows
surpassing the torch of Gnossos’ crown
[i.e., Ariadne, a constellation.]
Nothing lights up the pole with fires
to permit the obscure night suffer
The pole with fires lights up to permit
nothing suffer from the dark night.
Discerning these things
Lazy Quiet and sluggish Sleep flee
and depart for other cities.

Who could sing the spectacles,
who the forward jokes,
who the guests, who the gratuitous feasts,
who the lavish floods of Lyaen cup?
Now, now I sink drunk with your wine
into sleep at a late hour.

This day will go far through the years!
Never in time will the sacred be forgotten!
While the Latin mountains and father Tiber,
while your Rome, and the Capitol with
its lands you restore persist, it will remain.

BOOK II

Statius Saluting his Melior

Given our friendship in which I joy, Melior, and also I joy in a man with not less better judgment
of literary matters than in all matters of life with a fine cast, this my book itself of trifles I thus hand over to
you by stipulation that it be set forth and seen as but a letter. For first it contains our Glaucias, whose infant
speechlessness as well as misfortunes of many kinds (I loved Galucias by your own embracing of him) are
most grateful not now allotted to you. Since having lost him to a recent wound, as you know, I attempted
a memorial song to such a pass that it was hurried, that I might have the prompt excuse of your ready mood
[for such a thing.] I don’t now declare this to you [alone], which you knew, but also announce it to others,
lest any in harsh detracion examine the poem, a writing bestowed in perplexed grief, and when by delay
consolations may become almost superfluous. In the Surrentine villa of Pollio that follows, it is owed by
me that the honor of his most diligent eloquence to be spoken of; but my friend has pardoned it. Certainly
in regard to your tree and parrot, Melior, you know my trifling little books as like a place for penned
inscriptions. The same stylus excluded levity with respect to the tame lion; who was prostrated lifeless in
the amphitheater, lest I should [have to] hand it over at once to the most sacred Emperor. Also to our
Ursus, a most bright learned youth and without the defect of idleness, this piece was written in consolation
of a boy [of his] that died; which I owe to him and have freely inserted. The volume closes with a birthday
poem to Lucan, which Polla Argentaria, most rare of wives, we perhaps may deliberate upon that day with
him, wished herself to be made accountable. I was not able to have greater reverence for so great an author
than that I dreaded my hexameters on the verge of declaring his praises. These are the kinds of things, most
dear Melior, which if they will not displease you, then the public may accept from you; if less than this,
may they be returned to me.

I. Glaucias, the Delight of Atedius Melior.

With what solace can I begin for your having a young one snatched away; before the unseemly
funeral pyre with his glowing ashes yet alive? Even now the mournful wound gapes with severed veins,
and a slippery way opens for a great gash. When now I set myself to a cruel song and healing words, you,
having been struck with powerful weeping, hate the lyre and prefer turning away with a deaf ear, I sing out
of season: more readily would lionesses bereaving their whelps lost to a routed tiger wish to hear me. Not if
the threefold song of the Sicilian maid should flow or the beasts of the forest understood the harp could the
mad groanings be soothed. Grief rests madly in the heart and breasts bark at the moving touch.

No man forbids: you would rather be satisfied by sick anguish and dwelling in freedom. When
now the pleasure of weeping has been reached and already you scorn the unweary orisons of friends, will
now I sing? Lo, my sad songs flow, from the mouth itself, and fall down in words smeared with tears. For
with you in the solemn pomp of night, a calamity for the city having seen, I led forth the bier of the boy,
and saw savage heaps of dooming incense and mortuary rites lamenting over his life, you with the groans
of a father overcome and the arms of an embracing mother preparing to quaff the fires of the dead, I could
scarcely hold back like companions and offended by restraining. And now, alas, with fillets and honor of
the brow loosened, my feelings having been transformed by you, I, unhappy poet, beat the lyre; but you
joint comrade in anguish, if I merited experiencing a shared sadness of yours, I pray now you suffer [me]
kindly. The fathers having heard me in the lightning bolt [hour of woe] itself, I have sung consolations alongside funeral pyres to [grief] outpouring mothers and devoted children and myself, when I was groaning at my own failings at the flames - oh Nature, what a father! I do not separate from you to mourn severely, but we ought combine sighs and sorrow as one.

Long ago, oh deservedly loved boy, I was drawn seeking the suitable beginnings of an approach to your praises. Here standing on the threshold of life’s annals, here beauty seizes me, seizes me with your gentle modesty, unfinished bashfulness, and probity advanced beyond your years. Oh where else are brought together from established family radiance pouring in, bright starry orbs, eyes for heaven chastened with modesty, and of a natural brow athwart soft locks at the margin of a glorious mane? Where in the world with flattering blame are found melodious speech folded in spring kisses, redolent of flowers; laughter mingled with inward tears, and a voice for speaking mixed with the honey-combs of Hybla? For whom a serpent might put aside hissing and acrid stepmothers would wish to serve. I embellish nothing as far as youthful advantages. Alas, the milk-white neck! Arms which were never without the neck of some lord to burden! Oh when will arrive for you that hope not distant from youth; with cheeks having been pledged a much wished for beard and honors? All the hours bring in painful ashes and hostile days: it is for us [merely] to have remembered what is left behind. Who will soothe your feelings with loving light-hearted banter? Who will relax the secret cares of the mind? Who will calm the puffed up attendant, fierce with wrath, and deflect the burning anger at servants to himself? Who with the feasts begun will lift away pouring wines from the mouth and disturb [you] from all the sweet booty? Who will disrupt with a whisper the morning slumbers, [your] departure having been imposed by obligations, stay by arts the coverlets and revive [you] in the doorway with kisses? The interrupting hand entering once more, who will spring forth with brief expressions of adoration and encompass [your] shoulders with outstretched arms? Quiet the home, I admit, left empty the households, and in the rooms and at the tables a gloomy stillness!

What wonder that an affectionate a sustainer so honors a funeral? You were rest and a safe haven for the master in old age, you the means of delight, you the pleasant recourse of a troubled heart. The uproar of a barbaric slave platform spun not you, nor when an infant were you mixed in with tawdry Egyptian merchandise, nor speaking devised words of pre-arranged wit did you with lascivious deliberation search out for and furnish mistresses. Here a home, here an ancestry of a master at once both with family dwellings dear and children obedient to your joys, not seeking importance of rank, but when you had been immediately been taken from the womb, the master exulting first raised you, and hailing with a clear voice, spoke with judgment, and embracing bore to his bosom someone deemed to have himself begot. It is right for me to have spoken with favor of pious parents, and you, Nature, I pray you may permit, to whom it is first given through the world to sanctify oaths of the soul: not everyone of near blood or one having descended from a series of a well bred race binds; often new pledges assumed are deeper and glide forward in the connecting. It is necessary to have given birth to children, and it pleases to have chosen [to do so.] Thus with tender flattering half-beast Chiron overcame Haemonian Peleus for Achilles, nor did elder Peleus accompany the son in arms at Troy, but it was Phoenix that adhered there to the illustrious offspring. Evander from afar wished for the return of Pallas rejoicing, [but] faithful Acoetes [in fact] beheld the battles. And when at a distance that the father might hold back within the bright stars, it was wave-tossed Dictys who made beautiful the winged Perseus. What should I say with piety of foster mothers living [as] parents? What say you Bacchus, after funeral ashes cheated you of a mother, [of your] more safely crawling to the breast of Ino? With Ilia, now secure from a Tuscan father, and reigning in the waves, Romulus wearied Accam carrying him? I have seen cross-weaving branches from a stranger [tree] go higher in an oak than its own. And already mind and soul had made you a father to him, but not by customs or ornamental display: And yet even now, having clasped with a murmur the voices of those crying, you loved the child’s infant wailings.

He as a rude flower that stands high in the mild meadows and will expire with the first south winds, tender thus it conquered day with a proud passing face and was leaving behind many similar [sorts of] years. Or had he stood, with fettered limbs curving, in wrestling schools: you’d think him conceived of a mother from Amycla, Apollo might have traded Oebalus for him, or Alicides substituted Hylan; or if attired an Attic Greek, he might have flowed eloquently with the words of Meander: have extolled rejoicing the echo and tresses of beauties and subdued impish Thalia with a roseate crown; or had he bespoke the labors of old Maeonia and Troy or of the calamities of the late returning Ulysses: the father
and teachers themselves would have been struck with astonishment. No doubt Lachesis touched the cradle with an ill-fortuned hand, and Envy certainly was cherishing that boy at the lap embracing: those cheeks and grown up hair to adorn, these arts to display and words to instill, for which now we mourn. He had begun to match the labors of Hercules for his years, though as yet near to infancy; already even so, stepping vigorously, with greater measures of cultivation, and having seen the clothing for the boy diminish in size - when what vestments for you, what garments did not the mild master hurry! Not with short doublets straining the torso, or tight cloaks constricting the arms; not he with irregular folds, but ever gathering for the years, wrapped woven fabrics in scarlet mode [for you] to wear, now lawn greens for following the chest, now coloring with delightful purple, now he made glad the fingers with vibrant gems: the crowds of comrades, the gifts, did not cease: he wanted only the bordered toga for modest propriety.

These the fortune of the home. Suddenly Parca [one of the Fates] lifted a hostile hand. For what, goddess, do you extend the savage weighty claws? Does not beauty, does not a time of weeping move you? Him not violent Procne would have torn for a [hated] husband, nor a wild vicious Colchian [Medea] have hardened in wrath for, nor have cast out [even] were this Aeolian Creusa [wife of Jason]; from him mad Athamas would have turned [aside] the grim bow, though hating Hectorean ashes Ulysses will have wept casting him from Troy of the Phrygian towers[,] [Come] the seventh day, and now lacking vigor the eyes numb, now it is Juno [in the underworld] below with encompassing hand that preserves the hair. He however, with the Fates pressing in on the fragile years, sees you with withering expression and faltering tongue murmur; in you of emptied heart now breathes out all that remains, alone he remembers you alone, calling he hears clearly your mouth stir, for you he leaves the [remaining] words and consoled forbids a grieving groan. It is pleasing, oh Fate, even so that death did not consume slowly the dignity of the prostrate boy, and he went below to the shades untouched as one of those undefiled bodies free of blame.

What, should I speak of obsequy fires, prodigious offerings, and the mournful luxury of ardent funerals? What, of yourself in purple ascend to heap upon the sad pyre, of Cilician bouquets, of herbal gifts from India, of Arabian, Egyptian and Palestinian perfumes to soak the burning hair? Each desires to bring all that is lavish and to incite the estimation of Melior, thinking lost riches nothing; but he does not arrest the hated blaze, nor are dense flames wanting. Dread seizes the senses. I feared for you Melior, formerly the most calm of individuals, near and at the summit of a conflagration for the dead! Did he then seem light hearted and affable? From whence [therefore] the barbaric fright and hands of a savage mind, while on the recoiling earth only the unjust light of day pours down, and now equally pitiless [to us] you rend robes and chest together, and seeing visions of the beloved press cold kisses, caressing? There were father and mother prostrate with woe, but to behold you [even] the parents were astonished. [Yet] why [should this seem] strange? All the crowds and folk going before [you] bewept the impious deed [of the youth’s death], by the Flaminian road which crosses the Mulvian causeway, while undeserving it the child is surrendered to the doleful flames, and by his form and age merits the lamentation: Of such a kind, in the Isthmian harbor, shipwrecked Palaemon, having been borne forth from the sea, lay placed beneath the mother; thus also having been cut down by serpents, an insatiable fire consumed Opheltes, playing in the snake haunted grass of Lerna.

Set aside dread of death and cease to fear its menaces: Cereberus with three heads will not bark, nor a sister [a Fury] with flames, nor hydias arising terrify him; but he [Charon] from the interior, the wild sailor of the implacable skiff, will come athwart the sterile embankments and burning shores, lest the means for the boy to have embarked be harsh.

What announces to me the offspring of Cyllene with glad wand? Is there not some happiness in so severe a time? The boy knew the noble likenesses of the face of the lofty Blaesus, while oft at home he saw you with a heart binding new garlands and rubbing clean wax images. When midst the Ausonian shores he recognized him of Lethe’s stream cleansing the procession of Quirinus’ princes[,] First on arrival with quiet trepidation he joins with the steps of the foremost and pulls on [their] robes, thereupon he follows further; by pulling more he is not spurned, but pardoned, [the other] trusts [him to be] from a descendant’s stock. Next when, with the pledge of a friend, he perceived the beloved with the pledge of a friend and the lost child as a consolation to Blaesus, he raises [him] from the ground with pride and binds himself long to the neck [in embrace] then carries him by the hand joying, what gifts of gentle Elysium, he extends bare
branches and silent birds and pale flowers with battered shoots. Nor does he forbid him to have
remembered you, but from a kind heart mingles and divides [with you] the love by turns.

Here an end to the ravaging. Yet why now should you sedate wounds and lift a head immersed in
sorrow? All you see discharging their duty [of dying] or will die: they go to meet nights and days and stars,
nor does it profit their schemes on the solid ground. For who should weep the death of noble and common
people fallen? These wars, these oceans demand [their deaths]: for these love [demands] destruction, and
for those madness wild with desire, (but I should be silent about distempers); these stiffening in the mouth
of Winter, those in the restless fire of fatal Sirius, these gaping remain pale in rainy Autumn. Whatever
undertakes birth, fears the end, we all will go, we all will pass: for innumerable shades Aecus shakes the
urn. But he, whom we lament, happy escapes the hazardous chance of untrustworthy men, gods, and an
unforeseen life, immune from fate. He did not ask for, nor did he dread meriting death: we anxious citizens,
we the unhappy, for whom from hence the last day, for whom the exit of the time of life, is uncertain, for
whom threatens lightning from the stars, which echoes fatally in the clouds. Have none of these things
persuaded thee to bend? But bend freely [then.] Be present here having let go at the dark threshold,
Glaucus, for whom only all means are obtainable - the ferry man cannot protect guiltless souls, nor he [that
is] a comrade from pitiless wild beasts - : you, delight hearts, you, forbid cheeks to flow and having blessed
nights with kind reassurances fill out the countenances of the living, and refuse having to have died, and
leaving [your] sister desolate, you who can do so, and proceed to find a way for the unhappy parents.

II. The Villa Surrentum of Pollius Felix.

By the Tuscan sea in between rock walls, known by the name of the Sirens, and laden with
temples of Minerva, there is a lofty villa, watcher of the Dicarchean depths, a field, which Bromius [i.e.,
Bacchus] loved, by high hills, that is scorched [by the sun] with wine presses that do not envy the Falernian
grape. Here I happy [was] after five years of patrician ceremony when now the race course remained lazy
with quiet and the gray dust from wrestling hung on having turned to Ambracian leaves [laurels], from
cross the narrow straits a countryman [i.e., Statius] honored the eloquence of placid Pollius and the
youthful charm of bright Polla, desirous now to turn [my] steps, where the known limit of Appia, queen of
the long roads, is worn away.

Yet delays are pleasing. In curved peaceful recess here and there, the waters break up upon the
bending cliffs. Nature bestows a mountain place, one shore intervenes on lands of hanging rocks and
expires [into the sea], the first grace of the place, twin baths with a covering shell steam forth, and outside
the grounds a nymph from the sea comes to meet sweetness with [salty] bitterness. Here a chorus of
Phorcus, Cymodoce with smooth wet hair, and youthful Galatea long to be bathed. In front of the home one
who restrains [Neptune?] keeps watch of the swelling blue waves, guard of an innocent household; whose
temples run over with foam from a friendly tide. Alcides protects the happy country; the harbor rejoices
under the double deity: he preserves the lands, he holds back the savage floods. Wondrous tranquility of
the main: here the weary waters put aside [their] furor, and the mad south wind blows more mercifully,
here winter risks less danger, the mild ponds lie without commotion, mirroring the lord’s custom.

From whence through slanting heights a walkway climbs, the work of the city, and by a long ridge
tames the sharp stones. Where before suns mixed with the dark sands, and overgrown trails cheerless, now
it is a pleasure to stroll: of a kind, should you pass under the tall summit of Bacchic Ephyre, that bespeaks
the covered paths of Ino’s Lechaeum.

Not if Helicon indulged me with all its streams, and Pimplea overcame should thirst, and the
flying hoof of the horse [Pegasus] settled, and chaste Phemonoe opened up the hidden fountains, or where
my Polllius, by the most high patron Phoebus, stirred up the plunging jar, I would [as a poet] be fit for
innumerable kinds of worship and be able to meet the standards of Pierian realms. With hardly a long row
sufficing to the eye, steps scarcely availing, while through separate ones I am lead. What a multitude of
matters! Of what am I amazed more, the seat of the master or of nature? Here one beholds the home of
sunrise and the dawning radiance of mild Phoebus; there [come evening] it detains and refuses to let go
abating and sinking sun, when now from the mountains daylight weary descends on the waters and the dark shadows of the palace float on the glassy sea. These [places] moan with the clamor of the main, here the homes disregard the sonorous surge and prefer [rather] the stillness of land. These sites Nature favored, here surviving it cedes to the worshipper and has grown tame in docile uses unknown [to her.] Where you see level grounds, there was a large mound; and under the ceilings where you now go, there were bogs; where now you descry tall groves, there was no soil here: the owner domesticated it, and taking on and shaping the boulders, the earth obedient was made glad. Now see stones paired having learned to become entrances to homes, and the mountain having been commanded to withdraw. Now let the hand of the poet of Methymne and the sole lyre of Thebes and the glory of the Getic plectrum concede to you: you move the stones and you the lofty forests follow you.

Why should I report about the traditional wax and bronze figures, or why the colors of Apelles rejoice to be brought to life, or why as yet in empty Pisa, though admirable, what by the hand of Phidias, [or] what by the art of Myron or Polycletus, was commanded to be chiseled to live in heaven, and the bronzes [made] from the ashes of the [burned down Corinthian] Isthmus better than gold, [or] the [sculpted] visage of a commander, the countenance of a wise poet, from times gone before, what concerns [there are] for you to follow, what you feel with all heart, your being immune from cares of the soul and with a quite strength ever prepared? Why recall the thousand high points and succession of sights? For whom his every pleasure he has joined to a bedroom by the sea; with Nereus [seen] from diverse openings lying beyond his lands: here he sees Inarimen, there rough Prochyta appears; here the armor bearer [i.e., a cape so named] of great Hector stands open, from thence Nesis breathes out malignant air flowing in from the sea; from thence Euploea sounds a happy omen for wandering vessels, with [the isle of] Megalia [aka Megaris] thrust forth strained by the arching billows, and Limon, at a distance lying opposite to his master, watches over your Surrentine dwelling. However from afar one of all the rooms, one room stands out, which directly carries in to yo [siren] Parthenope at the boundary of the sea: here within are rocks selected from Greek quarries; which a vein of eastern Syene bestrews, which from sad Synnade, by the wailing fields of Cybele, axes of Phrygia have mined, where in marble the white background is made distinct from a rim embellished with purple; here also cut from the Amyclaean mount of Lycurgus stone that becomes green and resembles supple grass on the cliffs, here the gold rocks of Numidia shine, and those of Thasos and Chios and Carystos rejoicing to see the ocean tides: all salute the Chalcidian towers facing them. Bravo to the mind, that you approve what is Greek, that you frequent the regions of Greece; may the walls of Dicharchi that begot you not envy, [and say instead] we shall gain what is best from our learned son! Why now should I speak of the fallow lands set by the sea, the wealth of the farm, and the cliffs dripping with the nectar for Bacchus? Oft times during autumn with the vine ripening for Lyaeus, a Nereid climbed the rocks, concealed under the shades of night, and snatched from the hills the agreeable grapes. Oft times too the harvest is sprinkled by the nearby surf, and Satyrs have descended into the shallows, and Pan’s mountain sprites longed to catch hold bare Doris [i.e., an ocean nymph] across the waves.

Oh land, may you be happy, with both masters [i.e., master and his mistress], from Phrygia and Pylus, aged in years, nor may your noble servitude [to such masters] be changed, nor may by the halls of Tirynthia and the bay of Dicarchus outlast you in honor, nor may those of Therapnaeus Galaesus please more often than these pretty vineyards, here where Pollius practices Pierian arts, or mediates the counsel, which the authority of Gargettus [i.e., birthplace of Epicurus] imparts, or he arouses our lyre, restrain discordant songs, or strip aways [i.e., unmask?] the avenger threatening from the podium [with satire]: hence the whimsical Siren flies from the rocks to better songs, hence with [helmet] plumes nodding Tritonia listens. Then the swift breezes settle, the seas themselves forbid roaring, and sleek dolphins, drawn to the learned lyre, emerge from the sea and stray towards the cliffs.

Live you long, richer than with the treasures of Midas and Lydian gold, and happy beyond the diadems of Euphrates and Troy, whom not the powers of uncertainty, nor the fickle people, nor laws, nor camps will wear away, you, who with great heart and hope, subdues hope and fear, with prayers more sublime than all, exempt from fates and refuting indignant Fortune; [you] whom in the whirlwind of affairs will not be caught in doubt on the last day, but prepared to depart and full with life, we, a worthless crowd, ever subject to tottering and wishing to be ready, are scattered about by chances: you of mind from a high citadel look down on erring humanity and with joy smile. There was a time when the applause from twin
lands rent you apart and for you to be carried through two lofty cities [in triumph], thence to be much revered by the tillers of Dichaurus, and from here adopted [as] mine, and equally bountiful to these and those with youth and feeling proud at the uncertainty [i.e., uncertain fortune?] of the plectrum. Now you look on struck down by the gloom of the actuality of things - others in turn are [also] thrown to that depth -, yet your barque, unshaken, has entered to a quiet port and placid realms. Thus may you proceed, the ship having never deserved to be lost in our storms [i.e., those storms we deservingly suffer.] And you, the daughters [in law?] of Latium having long directed attention to an intellect that is the match for a man, who without heart cares, a brow not to be averted by menaces, but ever beaming with gladness and an expression of delight oblivious to worries; not for you an unhappy place of greed that keeps close hidden away riches or expenses from ill gotten gain that torment the soul: putting forth wealth and delighting in wise tempers. None connects to a god with a better heart, never has Concord taught other minds [better.] Learn to be untroubled, let love oversee the laws of friendship in which the sacred fires have long been mingled to unite in purity, set forth through the years and ages, and exceed the reputations of ancient fame.

III. The Tree of Atredius Melior.

The tree stands, which shades embracing the clear waters of the lake of the brilliant Melior, which from inmost strength having bent down in the shallows returns from thence to its proper towering height, just as if from the midst of silent roots it is born again from the waves and dwells in the glassy current. Why should I ask so little of Phoebus? Speak ye the causes, Naiads, and bestow, it is enough, the easy songs of Faunus.

Vulnerable parties of Nymphs were flying from Pan; he indeed advances, as if he wished for them all, yet nevertheless one in [the person of] Pholoe. Here by the forests and rivers now she eludes the hairy feet, now the unseemly horns. And now waging war, through the dark grove of Janus and the country fields of Quirinus, suspended in flight, she climbs the Caelian wilds; thereupon at last having survived with toil, exhausted from fear, where now the open peaceful dwellings of Melior stand free of imposture, she gathers closely [her] golden veils and [drowsy] lays herself down at the margin of the snowy [?] bank. The god of the flocks follows swiftly and thinks of his wives; already now he heaves sighs from the breast, now hangs over the gentle prey. Behold Diana turns hurried steps and reads the tracks of the deer. Having seen the nymph she [Diana] is displeased, and turning to [her] faithful companions [groans]: “Shall I never ward off this foul and insolent herd lustful with rapine, and will always the throng of my chaste dancer[s] diminish?” Having thus spoken then with speed she draws a small dart from the quiver, which she sent not with the customary hissing or curving horns [of the bow], but with a contented hand flung from the left having, it is said, struck the sleeping Naiad from behind with an arrow.

She [the naiad] saw day and the impudent foe together arising at the spring, and lest he span the snow white limbs, with all [her] garment she thus rushed beneath the deep pools, believing Pan at last to follow, she entwined in the wide grasses; trapped, what could she do to the unexpected ravisher? Conscious of a hairy body he dare not trust himself, with coarse hide and from inexperience, in the deep waters to swim: grudging all, churlish Bromius [i.e., the absent assistance of Bromius, a name for Bacchus], the envied lake and hated dart, seeing the youthful plane tree, which with long trunk and innumerable branches will [at another time] go into the highest aether, he heaped up and deposited nearby fresh sands and sprinkled with wished for waters, and to such [tree] he commands: “Live long with the memorable pledge of our vow, [oh] tree, and do you at least bending love the unfeeling nymph in the hidden lair and press with leaves the wave. She indeed merited, but let her not, I pray, burn from fire from on high or be struck by a harsh hail; only remember thou to bestrew and disturb the water with leaves, then I will long recall you and the mistress of this kindly dwelling and will guard both [of you] uninjured into old age, that those of Jove, those of Phoebus, that the poplar with variegated shade, and our own pine may be startled by your budding boughs.” Thus he spoke. That god, old passions having been revived, brooded, and with the slanting trunk hanging over fertile pools, for fond shadows searched the waves. And hoped to have embraced, but the life of the waters kept it away and would not suffer [its] touch. At last having surmounted difficulty beneath the breezes it is swung again from its smooth foundation and ingeniously raises [itself] to its peak, just as if it might descend into the deepest lake by a separate root, now the Naiad
of Phoebe in the whirlpool does not hate but [rather] encourages the hindered branches. This little gift for you indeed we furnish on the daylight of birth [your birthday?], but perhaps it will live to a remarkable age. You, whose pleasant and cheerful honor is to erect a seat in a peaceful breast, but a virtue with weight, for whom are not lazy quiet, unjust power, nor false hopes, but a middle path by kind honesty and with an upright faith free of secrecy and [with] no commotions, while you plainly divide life into order, the same a brave condemner of easy gold, the same one also to arrange riches and wealth and to send in light. Stand firm youth in the spirit of the long and time honored traditions of Ilion to equal and surpass them: which the father of Elysium, which the mother, have bestowed down through the years: this for which the hard Sisters [i.e., the Fates] were won over, this spot which by your witness will fly oblivion and revive the towering glory of great-souled Blaesus.

IV. The Parrot of the same.²

Parrot, chief of the birds, lord of eloquent pleasure, adroit mimic of human speech, what so sudden fate has closed your mutterings? Yesterday’s unfortunate feasts you started will expire with us, and we saw [you] plucking the pleasant offerings of the table and in the middle of the night straying much for a time among the cushions, and having contemplated a speech you even rendered words. But now you hold that eternal vocal silence of Lethe. Let the multitude’s tale of Phaeton give way: Not only swans that announce their deaths.

But how magnificent the resplendent home for you with red roof, and silver having been joined together with an ivory row of rods, and the witty squawking, with your beak now spontaneously complaining, at the entrance gates! That happy prison is bare and nowhere jeering at the august abode!

May the learned of that feathery tribe be crowded together here, to whom Nature gave the distinguished right of speaking: May the memorable bird of Phoebus [i.e., the raven] sound within and may you hear the starling sending out [varied] voices and magpies sweeping the Baeotian contest, and joining the partridge who repeatedly calls out names, and the sister [i.e, Philomela, the nightingale] of Bistonia that moans from [her] bereaved nest - bring at once together the kindred sighs, lead the dead to the flames, and teach this commiserating hymn to all:

“The parrot, most celebrated of the tribes of the air fell with glory, with a blow he the green monarch of the east; whom not the bird of Juno, with jeweled tail, surpassed in appearance, nor the winged one of cold Phasis, nor what the Numidians caught below the wet south wind, he at one time acted as welcomer and spoke in turn the name of kings, of Caesar, and of the querulous friend, now a gentle companion, having been taught to render words with such ease! Which in [its] being released, dear Melior, were never alone, but not inglorious has he been sent to the shades: the ashes were consumed with Assyrian balm and the delicate feathers breathe forth with the herb of Arabia and the crocus of Sicania; not weary with helpless age he will ascend [from] the perfumed fires a happier Phoenix.”

V. The Forbearing Lion.

What [oh lion] does it profit now to be meek in anger? What is it for a mind to forget crime and human slaughters, and for a lord to obey the command of someone less than himself? What? What, depart for home again and return into the accustomed cloister, and willingly now recede, the prey having been seized, [yet] you go inside, having given up the hand from [your] indolent bite? You, the trained destroyer of tall beasts, are undone, [but] not barred from the flock by a ring of Massylian huntsmen, nor dreading to jump hunting spears rushing on you or blindly deceived by the gaping ditch, but rather surviving, fly the animal.

² i.e., of Melior.
He stands wretched at the cage’s opening and everywhere round the closed gates the lions are incensed this impious act of peace had been permitted, all the manes then are drooping, to view the events thus told was a disgrace, with all eyes to the front pondering. Yet at the first blow, that new shame pouring forth does not overwhelm you: abiding soul, now failing courage returns from the midst of death, not for a moment giving in to all the threats from behind. Just as to them conscious of a deep wound, dying the soldier goes against a hostile enemy, he raises his hand, and with sword slipping, threatens: thus the lazy, he with accustomed step, honor having been cast off and eyes opening, hardens [in determination] and demands the enemy’s life.

Yet the many comforts of a sudden [ignoble] end, you the conquered will bear, since the unhappy people and city fathers groaned at your dying, as if like a renown gladiator, you’d fallen in sorrowful arena sands; since by the look of great Caesar, the lion’s loss - among so many beasts of Scythia and Libya, and from the bank of the Rhine, and from the Egyptian nation [slain], which to waste is [usually] cheap - touched him alone.

VI. A Poem of Consolation for Flavius Ursus on the Loss of a Most Pleasant Boy.

Too savage, you whoever [it is] that set the divisions and measures of mourning. Unhappy it is for a parent have been aroused - a sin! - by the youthful and growing assurances in begetting children: and hard the deserted couch and the office of bewailing the spouse taken away, and grim the groans and laments of sisters and brothers: but from deep and afar it enters into deeper feelings and a lesser stroke [oft] outlasts greater wounds. A family servant - thus blind Fortune that by hand mixes the names of things knows not hearts -, but you, Ursus, grieve for a loyal family servant, but in love and faith he has merited these tears, to who was joined a freedom of mind greater than pedigree. Do not suppress tears, be not ashamed; Let that grief break the restraints and hard days if it so pleases - you bewail the man - alas for me! I supply the torches [of mourning] myself -, your man, Ursus, for who in welcoming servitude with kindness, for who nothing [was done] with sadness, was willingly commanding of himself. For who [themselves] in deaths having been thrown should fault these sorrows? The Parthian laments a steed having been slain in wars, and [it is for] Molossians to weep over faithful hounds, and birds to have a funeral pyre, and the stag [of Silvia] a Maro [i.e., Vergil to lament him in the Aeneid, VII, 483-499.] Why, if not a slave also? I myself saw the demeanors and I observed you [to be] very much the master of [his] choosing: But greater in accordance with the expression of the spirit and the manifest customs of gentle breeding, a Greek and Latin daughter [in law] much would have wished and desired to have given birth to such [a son.] Not with such concern did the clever Cretan recall proud Theseus with a thread, nor Paris seeing such a rustic have brought down Spartan loves into reluctant ships upon the seas, nor do I deceive or [merely] lead a song with conventional license: I saw and still I see, [yet] singing not with a kind of charm with which Thetis hid Achilles on the virgin shore, nor with that adroit lance of Achilles which Troilus discerned, fleeing round the walls of fierce Phoebus. Of what a sort you were! See from afar [one] more beautiful than all boys and men, and [in this] less only to [his] master! Of him [the boy] one was before in good looks, so much the bright moon precedes lesser torches and so much Hesperos overwhelms other fires. Not for you a feminine look and face with splendor atop supple graces, dubious kinds of form of a sex crossing over that command reproach, but a stern manly grace; not insolent and flattering glances, but an austere fire in the eye, to be seen now handsome in a helmet, as Parthenopacus was; unaffected and with fitting awe in [his] plumes, and with the youthful flashing flourish of the eyes not yet blocked over [by age]: such a boy Eurotas lead forth from Leda’s gulf, of a time of life to be preserved thus untouched, and [when] a lad commends [his] first years to Jove, he takes undertakes Elis [i.e., one of the sites of the “Olympic” games.] For from whence else might I be able in song to have recalled afresh decency of manners, calm of temper for the mind, and a tender soul more mature for his age? Not infrequently he willingly castigated master with high zeal and was helping in councils; with you [both] sad and laughing, and never did his countenance take cue from your own: deserving as well to precede in renown Haemonian Pylades [i.e., Patroclus] and [i.e., like Theseus] the trust of Cecrops, but let this be the end of praises which fortune permits: not more loyally did Eumaeus, with distressed outlook, await the return of tardy Ulysses.
What god or for what ends choose such sad wounds? From whence [is it that] the harming hand of Fate [is] so fixed? Oh to think how stronger [in adversity] you would have been, Ursus, stripped of riches and abundance! Even if rich Lorci, smoking in ruin, had belched Vesuvian fires or surging rivers had inundated the Pollentians or the onset of Lucanian Acir or Tiber had turned the deep waters to the right [sic], you would have suffered the gods with a serene face, or if nurturing Crete and Cyrene should refuse [their] trust and harvests and which bountiful Fortune from [her] bosom gives back to you with happiness. But wretched Envy, with the knowledge of griefs, sees the ways and vital aspects of the soul [and] will injure [them.] Just now at the limit of adult life that most beautiful youth had tried to bind with some three Elean lustres in three years. Dour Nemesis attended with pitiless mien, and first filled swelling eyes, [but] added brightness and set free speeches more sublime than customary, alas! Favoring with deadly pity, himself will be seen having tormented the dead lying down with hateful embrace and, in obligation, struck and despoiled with cruel crooked cruel hand the awe inspiring. Hardly had the Morning Star at the fifth sun rise laid out his dripping horse: already Philetus, you were seeing the hard savage shores of old, and unfeeling Acheron, where for the sound of [your] master cry out! Not more harsh the mother, when alive, blackened terrible arms wailing for you, nor [less so] the father; and surely the brother who saw the funereal rites blushed at being overcome [with emotion.] But [your corse] not taken away in the [ignoble mortuary] fires for slaves: the flame exhausted the fragrant harvets of Saba and Cilicia, the cinnamon lifted way from the bird of Pharia and juices from Assyrian grass pouring and the tears of the master: so much to drink up these ashes, continuously drank this pyre; since not for you did the Setian wine snuff out the white cinders, nor the sinuous bones by the firewood that the marble enclosed, more welcome pitiful ghosts than the lamentations. But does it even help? Why, Ursus, do we give back to sadness? Why do you maintain what is lost and in the breast love a wound unjust? Where is the noted eloquence for those having been taken wrongly in a [court] suit? Why do you torment a beloved shade with such unrestrained mourning? Outstanding of soul and merit it is permitted he be mourned: you have fulfilled [this duty.] He ascends to the brightly faithful and plucks the quiet rest of Elysium, and perhaps there finds [his] parents; or for him by Lethe’s endearing silence per chance the Naiads of Avernus frolic and having been everywhere mingled, and Proserpina observes with oblique expression. Put murmuring aside, I pray; perhaps the Fates will give you another Philetus and who will show display fitting habits manners and character and joying will teach a love like his.

VII. An Ode to Lucan, for Polla [his wife].

Let those celebrate the special day of Lucan’s, who, in the hills on the Isthmus of Dione [i.e., mother of Venus], having been urged by a gad-fly with an informed heart, drank the water paid out by the hoof [i.e., Pegasus’s hoof that, striking, brought forth a spring.] They, for which it is in the power to sing, Arcas inventor of the tuneful lute and you Euhan [i.e., Bacchus] whirler of Bacchantes and Paean and the sisters of Hyantia, make new with joy the purple ribbons, adorn the hair, and let the white garment be covered o’er with fresh ivy. Let the abundant streams of learning overflow, be even more green the woods of Aonia, and wherever day is let in or held back, may the shade be filled with smooth garlands. Let a hundred perfumes of Thespia’s sacred grove and a hundred altar victims stand which Dirce bathes or Cithaeron suckles: We sing of Lucan, favor [us] with speech, this is your day, favor [us] Muses while he who carried you off by twin arts,
and being bound by the [poetic] foot and freed of voice,
is honored [as] priest of the Roman choir.

Happy - alas too much so! - and blessed country,
that in the height of the ocean waves
you see the forward course of Hyperion
and hear the rattle of the falling wheel,
that you, Baetica, provoke fertile Athens
with the anointed oil presses of Lake Triton:
can claim Lucan with the lands!
This is more than to have given Seneca to the world
or to have begot delightful Gallio.
Let Baetis be raised to the stars
back-flowing springs famous
more than Meles for Greece;
Do not wish, Mantua, to challenge Beatis!

Calliope forthwith received the wailing child,
and through her the earth as well,
into the softening bosom
at first with a sweet murmur.
then next, with the shedding of grief lessened,
she flung aside the long sufferings of Orpheus
and said:

“Oh youth dedicated to the Muses,
soon to pass over the ancient bards,
you will not stir rivers, nor the herds of wild beasts,
with the plectrum, nor ash trees of Thrace,
but the seven summits and the Tiber of Mars
and skilled equestrians and the senate of purple
will you draw forth in eloquent song.
Let others attend the ruined nights of Phrygia,
and the late returning path of Ulysses,
and the ship of reckless Minerva,
tracks well trodden by poets:
You dear to Latium and mindful of the nation
lay bare more powerfully the Roman drama.
And yet first tender in years
you will play on Hector and the chariots of Thessaly
and the suppliant of the gold of mighty Priam,
and will lay open the seats of inferiors,
ungracious Nero in flattering theaters,
and by you is our Orpheus discovered.
you will speak the abominable fires
of the criminal master roaming the heights of Remus.
From here you will give honor and title
to chaste Polla with pleasing elocution.
Soon having started youth more noble
you will roar forth of Philippi pale with
Italian bones and the wars of Phasalia,
of the leader shattered midst the arms of the god,
grave Cato devoted to freedom
and Magnum pleasing to popular favor.
Pious you will weep bitterly
the crime of Pelusian Canopus
and will give to cruel Pharaoh
a tomb deeper than that for Pompey.
These things in the prime of youth you will sing
under age, years before Virgil’s “Culex”
[i.e., years younger than Virgil when he wrote “The Gnat.”]
The Muse of Ennius of wild roughness
and the lofty madness of erudite Lucretius
will submit, as also will he [i.e., Apollonius of Rhodess]
who led the Argonauts through seas
and he [i.e., Ovid] who transformed the first bodies.
What greater should I mention? “The Aeneid” itself
will be honored by the Latins singing with you.
Not only will I grant the splendor of songs,
but also with genial torches I will ascribe
proper teaching to your talent,
a kind charming Venus and Juno might give,
models with simplicity, good taste,
judgment, tradition, grace, decorum,
as well will I shout before your doors
a wedding hymn with festive singing.
Oh too weighty and fierce Parca [i.e., a lesser god of Fate]!
Oh never long have high places been given [to anyone] by Fate!
Why more do you lie open the heights [of success] to chance?
Why in turn do the savage great ne’er age?
Thus so the Nasamonian Thunderer’s son [i.e., Alexander the Great]
after a thunder-bolt wielding dawn and dusk
Babylon presses to a petty tomb.
Thus did Thetis trembling dread Pelides
transfixed, falling at the hand of Paris.
Thus on the banks of Hebrus I followed
the head not mute of murmuring Orpheus.
Thus also you - evil of the raging tyrant! -
I should headlong cast commands to be sunk in Lethe,
while you fight with the hard voice of a hound
and give consolations to grand sepulchers,
- oh dire evil! oh evil! you will be silenced.”

Having thus spoken and in leaning lightly
on the plectrum she wiped away the falling tears.

But you, if taken up in rearing chariots through
the swift heaven of Fame’s celestial vault,
where mightier souls rise,
you look down and smile at the earth’s tombs;
or if by merit the grove of peace is disclosed
you keep to the blessed shores of Elysium,
where the throngs of Pharsalus are assembled,
and Pompeys and Catos nobly join
with you in resounding song,
or if you find the sacred great and proud shades
in Tartarus and at a distance hear the blows
of the guilty and by the lamp of the mother [i.e., Agrippina]
in a vision gaze on pale Nero:
you shining should be near and calling Polla
and one quiet day, I beseech you, entreat the gods:
it is custom here to permit returning
husbands access to [their] brides.
She dresses you not impudently for revels
[or] in the deceptive form of a false god,
but cherishes and celebrates someone
sought in their deepest inner essence,
as a [mere] face furnishes empty consolation,
which gleams, having been observed resembling
to gold, and she lies prostrate in untroubled sleep.

Go far from hence, Deaths:
here is source of amiable life.
let cruel sorrow in the eyes yield and
even the pain of tears endure festive joys,
each one that’s wept before, now let them adore.

BOOK III

Statius Saluting his Pollius.

For you certainly, most dear Pollius and this by one whom you so faithfully hold fast to with
dignified serenity, I will not be long in explaining the temerity of these little books, when immediately you
know many things arising from them within your own breast and having [before] frequently dreaded the
audacity of our stylus. As often as I enter into the sanctuary of your eloquence and having been seduced by
more profound literature, I am lead by you into all the folds of studies. Thus without care this the third
book of our forest [i.e., our “silvae”] is being sent to you. Indeed it [earlier] had you an attending witness,
but here it holds you an authority. For Surrentine Hercules opens first its [i.e., the book’s] threshold, which
having been consecrated on your shore, when as soon as I had seen, I adored in these verses. A small
memorial comes next, in which a most splendid and pleasant youth, Maecius Celer, by the most hallowed
emperor having been sent to a Syrian legion, since I was not able to follow, I thus described in detail. Also
of my Claudius Etruscus some sense of duty from our studies merited compensation, when he might mourn
with real tears - which at present is most rare - an old father. Thereafter Earinus, freedman of our
Germanicus - you know how long I might have delayed his request. When he sought that I might dedicate
with verses his locks, which with a jeweled box and a mirror, he sent to Asclepius at Pergamum. The high
point is a short poem, in which I exhort my Claudia to depart with me to Naples. Here, if we speak truly,
and indeed with reliable word, and how when with a wife one wishes rather to persuade than please. For
this you will especially favor this small book, when you might know this design for my retirement to
extend chiefly to you and for me to withdraw, not into my homeland, but towards you. Farewell.


Thy sacred rites having been interrupted, [oh] Tirynian [i.e., Hercules], Pollius restores them to
you and indicates the causes of the idle year; that you might be worshipped under a greater rotunda,
hhabitable for wandering sailors and [that] yours be not a poor roof on an bare strand, but shining gates and
coverings supported by Greek metals; just as if by purifying torches of illustrious fire you once again
ascended to heaven from Oeta’s flame. Will you not even trust eyes and senses? Then with the thresholds
having been laid open, this [shrine] too is but an ignoble keeper of a paltry altar. From whence [came]
this fresh and brilliant temple unexpected by rustic Alcides? They are the destinies of gods, the purpose of
places! Oh [how] swiftly dutiful! Recently here were sterile sands, spanning from the wide sea to the
mountains and shaggy rocks with briars, nor was there to be discerned any paths to endure easily the
grounds. For who by sudden chance enhanced these rigid boulders? Come here with Tyrian plectrum or
Getic [i.e., Orphic] lyre? The year itself is astounded by the labors, and in the narrow limit of twice six, the
months marvel at the ancient work, the god brought and raised his strongholds, dislodged resistant stones,
and with a great heart striving repulsed a mountain: you’d think a cruel stepmother had commanded [it.]
Therefore come, whether now free from the laws of the ancestral denizens of Argos you trample Eurysthea sunk in the burial mounds, or if having been furnished alone with the power of your [sire] Jove you hold the stars, for you girded with good fortune a draught of nectar Hebe extends, better than [that] denied Phrygia: here as well you are near genius with shrines arising beneath, No Lerna harming, not the poor soil of Molorchus, nor Nemea’s dreaded field and the Thracian cave, nor the polluted altars of king Pharo make demands of you, but a happy and simple domicile not knowing of fraud and evils and you are seated most dignified among the highest guests. Put aside the rude procession and the fierce bows of the quiver and the club of kings saturated with much blood, and cast off the enemy lying over [your] rigid shoulders: here for you the high cushions woven with Sidonian [i.e., purple] acanthus and a rough couch swells with ivory badges of distinction. Come calmly and mild, not troubled with wrath, nor fearing to be used as a slave, but detained in that condition which Auge of Maenalia accomplished with you with Bacchic dances and dripping with much with [your] brother [i.e., Bacchus, Hercules step-brother] and Thespian, father in low of so many, was struck dumb following the reproaches of a night roving. Here for you are festival wrestling, and yearly contests of guileless youth, without boxing gloves of rage, are carried through with swift expiation. Here a priest, inscribed in temples for a joying grandfather, still little [in years] and yet like you, when you [as a babe] pressed in hand the first monsters from the step-mother [Juno] and grieved their being killed. Yet who of the temple, [though] starting so soon, must be revered.

Come speak, Calliope, [an] Alcides, a companion for you, and with grande bow drawn tight, will sound and mimic [your] ways. It was that time when chariot of heaven came down on lands in a most scorching stroke and keen Sirius with intense Hyperion set afire the gasping fields. Already the day was near when with kings fleeing the grove of Trivia at apt Arcia steamed and by a great torch, knowing the secret of Hippolytus, the lake glimmered; Diana herself decks worn out hounds with garlands, cleanses arrow shafts, and permits the protected wild beast to pass, while at all chaste hearths, the Italian land honors the ides of Hecate. Yet I, though for me a farm of my own under the Dardanian hills of Alba, the gift of the great prince [i.e., Domitian], and running waves at home to alleviate the cares of heat would be sufficient, you observe I had not by name the rocks of the Sirens and the host deity of eloquent Pollius, the peace of a man assiduously learning songs untired and new customs and flowers of the Pierian Muses. By chance we reflect on the day of Trivia, while on a wet shore, away from the usual narrow gates and roof laden with foliage, ward off suns wide open under a tree, and heaven withdrew and the radiant light of a sudden yielded to thin clouds and the west wind made damp with deep violet; the kind of rainstorm Saturnia carried to Libya, and fertile Elyssa was given to a Trojan husband while witnessing nymphs wailed in hiding. Wreathed in garlands, we scatter festive dishes and attendants haul away the wines; nor is there a place quests might depart to, although [there are] countless farms rejoicing on the height to seat a home and at many a summit the rich mountain gleams: but approaching clouds threatening, they were urged to seek the nearest [spot for cover] and trust fair weather will return. With the name of a sacred temple having been spoken, a slight dwelling stood and at the humble abode the least pursue great Alcides, hardly spacious to shelter wave-tossed sailors and searchers of the deep. Here we assemble with all the throng, here opulent feasts, swelling crowds and a most grateful cohort of servants of shining Polla are pressed together. No doors to take to, the constricted temple is insufficient. The god of Pollius blushed and pressed together. No doors to take to, the constricted temple is insufficient. The god of Pollius blushed and laughed, with delighted heart enters, and with affectionate forearms lays hold of the man.

“Then,” he says, “grantor of wealth, you are he who with a lavish intention filled equally the houses of Dicharcheus and youthful Parthenope? He who has fashioned for us so many mountain peaks, so many verdant groves, so many stones, faces imitated in gold, and so many living wax figures engraved by the eye? For what was this home, what this land, before it joyed you? You have bedecked the bare rocked with a long path. And where there was only a trail, now for you stands a high portico with distinct columns, lest the way seem mean, you have contained the lusty nymphs with a twin covering at the shore of the curved beach, I could scarcely enumerate the works; and only for me, Pollius, poor and unworthy? Yet I nevertheless enter such dwellings cheerfully, and I love the strand you have stretched out. But Juno looks down on the seat and quietly laughs at my latest domicile. With effort, give to the temple worthy altars, which ships with fair sails would be unwilling to pass by [without saluting], which the celestial father having been send for to the crowds of gods at banquets and which a sister from on high might come to [as] a temple guest. It should not intimidate you that the solid shield of the mountain opposite harden and by immense age never be consumed: I myself will be near and help such great endeavors and tear through the rough bowels of the unyielding earth. Begin and dare trusting in the exhortations of Hercules. The heights
of Amphion [i.e., in Egypt] or the labor of Pergamum [i.e., at Troy] will not have been made to stand more quickly."

[Thus] he spoke and left behind [his] mind. Without pause, when in the likeness of a web [i.e., latticed network] the plans had been composed, innumerable hands enter into concurrence: to chop down these woods and to raise the timbers, with these concerns to sink the foundations in the soil, part of the damp earth [for bricks] is baked that will protect from winters and keep out the frosts, indomitable stone melts in the curved furnace. It is indeed but a special labor to raze by contract the cliffs opposite while refusing the rocks with iron. Here, he the father of the site, with the Tirynthian arms having been layed on, sweats and alone, abasing himself with the mighty twin axe, when the sky is veiled in the heavy shade of night, digs. Fertile Caprae and green Taurubulae resound, while an echo profound falls back on the level plains. Not so at grand Aetna it sounds when Brontes and Steropes strike the busy anvils, nor greater is the clangor from the den of Lemnia, when Mulciber embosses the flaming aegis and furnishes Pallas with chaste adornments. The boulders diminish, and craftsmen returning under the rosy light [of dawn] marvel at the work. Now are given over the proofs of the peaceful trumpet, now the burning sand smoke with pungent sacrifices. Not Pisaean Jupiter or the father of shaded Cirrha would disdain these honors. Nothing with sadness at these places; let the sad Isthmus yield, let fierce Nemea yield: here a happier child makes offering. The young Nereids themselves bound wantonly from pumice caverns [beyond]: they cling to the wet rocks nor does it shame to observe the nude wrestlers in secret. Timbered [Mount] Gaurus looks on the woods and vine of Icarus [i.e., a Spartan pupil of Bacchus], which crowns Nesis fixed in the sea, and placid Limon and Euploea a [good] omen for ships, and Lucrine Venus, Greek trumpets out from the summit of Phrygia, Misenus, you will learn of besides, while Parthenope smiles with gentle kindness at the sacred rites of men and naked contests and miniature likenesses of her crown.

But come yourself freely to the performances of your own contest and dignify it with [your] invincible hand; whether to divide clouds with the discus or outdo the flying zephyrs with the javelin, or yourself with

delightful might the Libyan gymnasium in a knot, grant these consecrated rites, and if the apples of Hesperides remain for you, heap [them] in the venerable lap of Polla; for she captivates and will not be found unworthy of so great an honor. Since if with sweetness she might resume the splendor and youthful years - give pardon, Alcides - per chance you had also brought to her to be spun [i.e., as Hercules had done while serving Omphale, queen of Lydia.]

II. A Farewell Poem for Maecius Celer.

[Ye] gods, for whom it is love to guard daring ships and to calm the fierce dangers of the windy main, lay out softly the sea and turn to peaceful council consecrated with vows, praying that the gentle
wave not roar: "We give to you, Neptune, a rare charge for the profound abyss. A youth Maecius that has
been committed with deep doubt and he, the greater part of our soul, prepares to cross upon the ocean.
Bring forth benign stars and, brothers of Oebalia, rest upon the twin horn of the yardarm; and may the sea
and heavenly vault shine for you; by the distant star of the Ilian sister. Put to flight, I pray, the rain clouds
and shut all out from firmament. You also, Nereids, green-blue troop of the sea and to whom fortune grants
the honor of the second kingdom - to speak, stars of the great sea, what for me may be proper -, arise from
the glassy caves of Doris foaming, and the bay of Baiae tranquilly swimming about the fruitful shore of the
warm waves in earnest competition, searching for where the tall ship, which Celer of Ausonia, reared by a
warlike noble, joys to ascend. Nor must it [i.e., the ship] be long sought: for in the way across the ocean to
the lands, it first carried in from grave Dicharchea the [harvest] year of Pharia, it first hailed Caprea and
from the starboard beam sprinkled Mareotic [i.e., Egyptian] wines [in libation] to Minerva of Tyrrenna. Of
which surround on either side in a loose circle, and having divided extend you in turns the tow chains,
fasten you the linen of the sails to the mast tops, open you the folds to the western winds; let one part reset
the crossbeams, another cast in the waters rudders from the arching stern; let one from the rest with heavy
lead weight sound the deep, let them tie fast by hook whatever pod [i.e., small craft] will follow after from
behind, and haul up from below the anchor ropes; may this one temper and lower the swelling sea towards
the sunrise: may none of the blue-gray sisters go without [some] duty [to perform.] May many-bodied
Proteus and Triton of the twin-form swim here, and Glauclus who by unnatural event suddenly lost the still
yet [human] loins of his father, how off he glides with smooth tail striking the shore of Anthedon. You
however before all, Palaemon with the mother goddess, declare, if for me your love may span beyond
Thebes, I sing, nor with ignoble plectrum, of Apollo’s Amphion. And may the father, who discoursages the
winds into [their] Aeolian prison, whom all breezes and cloudy winter storms blowing throughout the
oceans of the variegated world obey, confine tightly Boreas [i.e., the north wind], Eurus [i.e., east wind]
and Notus [i.e., south wind] hurled from the mount: solely with Zephyr may the forces of the welkin be,
may he alone constant drive and float aloft the ships on the highest billows at sea; until he bestows your
glad sails, free of the whirlwind, on the Paraetonian strands."

We are heard. He himself [i.e., Aeolus?] calls and reproaches boat and seamen delaying. Behold
my heart, already cold with fear, slips and, though dread of the omen warns, I cannot withhold the tears
suspended at the rim of [mine] eyes. And now, the rope cast off, the sailor separates the ship from the lands
and lets down the narrow bridge onto the sea. From abaft the hard master with a far cry sunders and
wrenches apart the faithful kisses and embraces, nor permits one long on the dear neck to be detained. And
yet [only] at the very last will I return from each citizen back onto the lands, nor now leave but with the
keel falling away.

For who daring of character, having been rudely torn apart from wretched creatures, made the sea
a passageway and drove out and cast forth the blessed offspring of solid earth on to a sea of widening
waves? For was that not of more reckless power which joined icy Pelion to Ossa’s height and pressed
panting Olympus to two yokes [i.e., land and ocean.] Do you not strain continually in such great measure
[also] to cross marshes and lakes and to relieve with bridges narrow currents? With abruptness, we sail
everywhere in the naked breeze and fly native lands in the small enclosure of the ship. From thence the
furor of the indignant gale has roared with winds from heaven and more than enough lightning from the
Thunderer. Earlier in a listless dream the ships were numb on the smooth water, nor were they daring to be
covered in the foam of Thetis, nor were clouds sprinkling the tides. With the ships having been seen [by the
clouds], the waves began to swell, and a storm arose against man. Then in justice I protest the lowering
Pleiades and the Olenian goat [i.e., star Capella], then Orion more inauspicious than [was his] wont;
Behold he flies the roving billows through the exploits of the small ship, and by keeping long watch of the
mast in the slender light, little by little vanquishes so many fears encircling. Whatever beyond that remains
with you, a pledge of our affection, will carry, Celer. By what thought now will I be able to endure day or
sleep [at night]? What all fearing or ready herald will overlook you at the mouth of the sea in the frenzied
wave of Lucania, while the torture of Charybdis surges or the virgin ravisher of Sicily [i.e., Scylla] pours
forth, which headlong hastening bears you to the habits of the Adriatic, a Carpathian peace; of a kind that
would carry you away; as was the daughter of Agenor [i.e., Europa] by the deception of the flattering bull?
Yet I merited [such] moaning. For why did I not active come from the camp with you or unknown
comrades seeking exotic India and the chaos of Cimmeria? I should have been standing by the war
trumpets of the king with my standard, whether with spear in hand, you grasping the reins, or swearing by
oath to the soldiers; and although not a companion or your calling, certainly I will be admired to have been present. If formerly Phoenix, venerated by great Achilles, came to the shore of Ilion and Thymbraean Pergamum not ready for war or sworn by oath to swelling Atrides, wherefore [then should] my love be [thought] ignoble? Yet with a faithful heart, I will follow your sails and never be distant from the promises of days long gone by.

Isis, at one time housed within the caves of Phoroneus, now queen of Pharos and divinity of the breath-taking orient, receive the Mareotic ship with bronze sistra [i.e., rattle like instrument used in ceremonies of Isis], and the singular youth, to whom a prince of Latium has given ensigns the East and the cohorts of Palestine to bridle, lead him with gentle hand past your festive thresholds and sacred harbors. Stand over him that he may discover from whence is permitted the fecundity of the marshy Nile; why the shallows settle and the bank, formed by the swallows' clay, confines the waves; why Memphis envies, or why the shore Therapnean Canopus runs riot [in play]; why the gatekeeper of Lethe guards the Pharian altars; why mean animals equal mighty gods; what altars life-imbued Phoenix prepares for himself, what fields Apis deems worthy or in what flood of the Nile he sinks himself, having been honored by tremulous shepherds. And lead to the Emathian shades, where the warlike founder of the city, steeped in the nectar of Hybla, hardens, and the snake haunted den, where Cleopatra, drowned in alluring poison, fled the Ausonian chains of Actium; and further lead him unto the Assyrian seats, the armies having been commanded to escort the youth of Mars; goddess, bequeath [him hailing] from Latium, [that] he may not be a novice guest: for these things the boy sweated in the fields, having been much noted of yet greater [accomplishments], in the [honored] light of the [noble] tunic; already yet [possessed] of a strength to outrun the squadrons in quick circuit and, with the javelin, to shame the arrows of the East.

There will therefore be that day when greater [award] will be given for merit, Caesar commands you to depart from war, but we standing here once again on the shore will discern vast tides and welcome other breezes. Oh then how much I [will be] or else how much will I stir the lyre with offertory stirring! When with [your] great neck having been bound [in embrace], you will raise me to the shoulders and on my breast you first press, having from the new ship been preserved, and you pay back banter while in turn we recount the years intervening, you the rapid Euphrates and royal Bactra, and the recent riches of ancient Babylon and Zeugma, the way of Latin peace, how sweet Idume’s flowering grove, what reddens precious Tyrian dye, with what purple fluid that of Sidon is renewed in jars, where from radiant bud, fertile balssamic juice first sweats at the stalk: but I, having been overcome, give what tombs [I may] for the Pelasgians [i.e., burial for the Pelasgians in Statius' epic “The Thebiad”], while otherwise for me the page closes on the Theban labor.

IV. The Locks of Flavius Earinus.

Go Hence, [you] locks of hair, go I pray and hasten across a ready ocean, lying softly in a golden ring; go, gentle Cythera [i.e., Venus] will give and placate the course with favorable good luck, and should by chance the ship be feared for, [you] will be transported and led upon the seas in her conch shell. Accept, youth of Phoebus, these lauded tresses, which Caesar’s servant gives to you, accept the happiness, and show [them] to the unshaven sire. Permit he sweetly compare the shining [strands] and long think them to be [those] of brother Lyaeus.

Perhaps never again with gliding hair will he reap honor [in this way], and so will place it for you in an enclosed space with other gold. Pergamum, much more favored than pine-covered Ida! - [though] she [i.e., Ida] permitted herself to be pleased by the sacred abduction [i.e., of Ganymede] in a cloud -, certainly she gave him to the gods, whom Juno, annoyed, ever sees, and avoids and refuses the nectar from [his] hands -, but you pleasing to the gods sent to beautiful and nurtured Latium distinctions of honor, which ministrant both Ausonian Jupiter and Roman Juno equally behold with placid brow approve of. Not without reason [was there] so much divine pleasure for the mighty lord of the lands.

It is said golden Venus, while she seeks the Idalian groves from the summit of Eryx and drives the docile swans, had entered the [consecrated] abodes of Pergamum, where the greatest helper for the sick is
present, and hastening to restrain the fates, the merciful god with the healing serpent lies. She herself
observes here the splendid boy of surpassing beauty settled down playing before the altars of the god, and
first of a sudden is a little deceived by the form and thinks [him] [one] of [her] common children; but there
was no bow and no shade [i.e., made by wings] from the effulgent shoulders. Gazing she marvels at the
dignity, countenance, and mane of hair of the boy.

“Will you then” she says “go to the Ausonian towers neglected by Venus? Will you suffer dirty
dwellings and be prostituted to the yoke of servitude? May such a thing be far off and away: I will give the
lord of beauty these things which he has merited. Come and go with me, child: in the flying chariot I will
[you] across the vast stars a gift for the leader; nor will plebeian vows detain you; you ought to be a servant
for Palatine [i.e., or “Palace”] affection. Nothing, nothing, I admit, I saw or gave birth to so sweet in all the
world. The Latmian will freely yield to you, and the Sangarian lad, and he excited by the image in the
barren springs and whom love consumed. Cerulean Nais would have preferred you and being seized would
more vigorously have got [you] in a jar. You, child, before all; he alone to whom you will be surrendered is
more beautiful.”

So uttering, she commands [him] to take seat with her and raises the twin-yoked swans through
the light air. Without delay, now the Latin mountains and the homesteads of ancient Evander, which with a
new structure the celebrated father of the world honors and makes Germanicus equal with the loftiest stars.
Then were those cares now nearer now to the goddess: which [for him would be] the best shape of the hair,
which vestment suitable to set alight the roseate face, what [rings] on the fingers, what gold on the most
worthy neck. She knew the eyes of the celestial leader, and herself had joined the pine torches [of
wedlock], and granted marriages with a full right hand: Thus she adorns his hair, thus lays on the Tyrian
cloak, bestows rays and her own fire. Yield [ye] earlier companies and servant of the beloved fair; here for
the great leader first, with radiant hand, he brings crystal cups and heavy myrrh [in vessels]: the new charm
enhances Bacchus [i.e., the wine.]

Boy beloved of the gods, who has been chosen to sip the consecrated nectar and as often to lay
hold the great right hand, that Getae knew; which Persians, Armenians and Indians seek to touch! Oh
brought forth by a fortunate star, much indulgence favored the god towards you! Even once, lest next youth
despoil and esteem of beautiful form darken flourishing cheeks, the god of [your] fatherland himself left
noble Pergamum and crossed the seas. No power has been trusted to weaken the boy, but he of Phoebus by
gentle art commands the youth not be struck by any wound from sex to cross [his] person. But anxious with
cares

Cythera fears the boy’s being bitten by sorrows. Not yet had the beautiful distraction of the leader
[i.e., emperor] begun to preserve males untouched from birth; now it is a crime to undermine the sex and to
modify the man, glad nature sees and only gives birth to such, nor by an improper law do mothers of a
slave fear to bear the weight of sons.

Further now youth, had you been born later, with shaded adult cheeks and a more robust frame,
you would gladly have sent not one gift to the shrine of Phoebus; now may this single plait of hair sail to
the shores of the fatherland. Here steeped in much Paphian balm, here new combed by the thrice favoring
Graces; and to this Nisus’ wounded locks of purple will yield, and as well what pride-swelled Achilles kept
for Spercheus.

These when shorn, when first it was decreed the snowy brow to pluck and by hand to lay bare the
sleek shoulders, hastened to be held by the winged host [i.e., Cupids] of the Paphian mother and place the
tresses

on the breast in a silken coverlet. Then cutting the hairs with united arrows, they arrange them in
gold and gems, the mother Cythera herself snatches and renews the mystic fragrances. Then a boy from the
celebrated throng, who by chance with upturned hands had brought a mirror bejeweled in gold:

“This also we should give,” he asserts; there will not be any gift more gracious for the temples of
homelands and more powerful than gold itself. Only fasten you the keen eye and face and remain here
always.”
Thus seized by the image he spake and left open [to view] the reflection.

But that most singular lad stretching forth hands to the stars: “For me for these gifts, most comely guardian of men, if I have merited, may you wish the lasting youth of the master renewed and to preserve [him] for the world! This the stars, and this the waves and lands ask [jointly] with me. May he pass through the years, I pray, like him from Ilion [i.e., Priam] and him from Pylos [i.e., Nestor], and may he joy in his nearest family and the Tarpeian temples grow old with him.”

So he said and marveled at the [emotionally] stirred altars of Pergamum.

V. A Short Poem to the Wife [i.e., of Statius].

Why for me, wife, do you prolong an unhappy day, why [unhappy] shared nights, why the anxious vigils with sighing care? I do not fear but that trust has been injured or [that there be] a second love in this heart; it is not given to you to go with arrows [i.e., of, for example, “arrows” of jealousy] - let Rhamnusian [i.e., Nemesis] hear and permit this with hostile look [if he will] - it [still] is not given. And if from the shore of the fatherland I were taken into service through four wars, [or] I should wander through seas to the wilderness, you untouched would put to flight a thousand wooers, not [i.e., like Penelope] reversing a feigned web that had been cut apart, but [indeed] without deceit, you would openly refuse forced matrimony. Yet speak, from whence [comes] to me the remote expression and clouded looks? Can it be that I, weary, am predicted to return to Euboean homes and settle old age in the paternal land? Why for you this sadness? Certainly no heart with wantoness, nor do the battles of the rapid Circus delight you nor do the crowds of the shouting theater enter [your] feelings; but honesty and shaded quiet; never sordid delights.

Yet comrade through what waves do I drag you? And though I should travel to the icy Arctic to remain or upon the misty channels of western Thule, or the impenetrable source of the sevenfold Nile, you would urge the journeys. And since yours - truly whom kind Venus joined by fate to me in the flowering years and preserves into old age -, yours, which to wound [in love], still yet a youthful wanderer, you first fixed me untried in marriage, and your responsive reins I willingly took in, and once I press onward, the reins inserted will not be changed. You bringing shining Alban gifts with shining leaves, and [I] having been dressed in the consecrated gold of Caesar, and your wreathed body embraced, you gave me breathless kisses; you, when the lyres were being disowned at our Capitol, you felt hurt with me surviving savage and thankless Jove; you, advancing with the first sounds, with vigilant ear and after a murmur carried off all our nights in song; you [were] the sole partner of long toil; when in years with you my “Thebaid” came into being. Being snatched as like nearly to stygian shades, when already I could hear at hand the Lethean streams, I saw you, and preserved [my] eyes now failing in death. Of course drained by fate, Lachesis gave to me only time to be pitied by you, with the mighty gods fearing your displeasure. After this do you now hesitate to go a bosom comrade on the chosen path? Ah, where are the faiths so well known and tested through experience, where are the righteous Latin and Greek heroines of old? Penelope would have gone gladly to the community of Ilion - for what might deter lovers? -- if Ulysses had suffered it; Aegiale complained, Meliboea complained to be left behind and how - how fiercely - did Bacchante make wailing. Not less than these you have known to give faith and life to husbands. Thus assuredly do you yet still seek the ashes and shade of the previous [spouse], thus with a heart lamenting, receive the excessive obsequies for the consort of song a second time, [but that] now are mine. Not different for you is the care of a daughter, thus also you love [as] a mother, thus never from the breast recedes your daughter, you stay fixed to the inmost sanctuaries of the soul night and day. Not so does Alcyone of Trachis encircle nests, nor Philomela, cherishing spring-tide homes, transfer as security [her] life.

Now she supports you, alone on a widowed bed that wears away the unfruitful leisure of beautiful youth. But the marriages with plenteous pine torches will come [for her], they will come. Thus surely [her] goodness of mind and form merit; whether she seeks the lyre embraced or with ancestral voice resounds for the Muses to hear, and prevails on my songs, or with a soft motion spreads open [her] radiant arms: modesty and truthfulness outlast cleverness and art. Will not she shame polished boys, [but] not you
Cythera, remiss in this distinction? Not only does fertile Rome bring together marriage beds and kindle festive pine torches; and son-in-laws are given to our land. Not so much does Vesuvius’ flaming peak, and dire storms from the mountains, impoverish towns trembling with citizens: they stand and thrive with peoples. From here by the augury of Phoebus are the abodes of Dicarchus founded, the harbors and hospitable shores of the world: and here are walls imitating a tract of great Rome, which Capys filled with imported Trojans. Not rare also are gentle Parthenope and our own little framers, for whom alone, having crossed the seas, Apollo himself revealed the dove of Dione.

I endeavor to convey to you these habitations - for neither barbaric Thrace or Libya is my native soil - which combines the mild winters and cool summers, which the unwarlike sea washed [sic] with languid waves: untroubled peace with lazy seats and spare time for life and [where] never are rest and finished sleep disrupted. No madness in the forum or laws strained in quarreling: strength of equitable customs alone is obeyed and without rods and axes. Why now do you magnify the refinement and splendors of places and temples spaces interspersed with innumerable columns, the dual structure of the covered and uncovered theater and the five years of the Capitoline ceremonies nearby? Why should I praise the seashore and liberty of Menander, which mixes Roman honor and Greek license? Nor are their lacking round about [there] the delights of a varied life: Whether, on a most alluring coast, at vapor exhaling Baiae, or seeing the inspired dwellings of prophetic Sybil, [or] the ridge with the memorable oar of Ilion, it may be sweet; whether for you the dripping vineyards of Bacchic Gaurus, where Pharos, envied by the night-roving moon, raises reassuring beacons for frightened sailors, and the Surrentine hills beloved of manly Lyaeus [i.e., Bacchus], which the mind of inhabitant Pollious esteems before all others, and the healing lakes of Aenaria and Stabiae reviving [you]: will I speak to you of the thousand loves of our land? But it is enough here wife, enough to have so said: it [i.e., land] created me for you, committed me a companion for the long years. Surely is not this mother and nourisher to be seen [as] the honor of both [of us]? But more ungrateful that I, who unites with your character, should doubt: you will come, dearest spouse, and arrive before long besides; without me the Tiber, the leader of waters and the house of arm-bearing Quirinus, will appear unworthy of you.

BOOK IV

Statius to his Marcellus, Greetings.

I found a book, most dear Marcellus, that I should dedicate to your sense of responsibility. For my part, I think otherwise than invoking the divinity of the great emperor [with which] to have begun my trifle: but this has three [such poems(?)]; the fourth of which touches on your honor. In the first of these, however, I have paid homage to consulship seventeen of our Germanicus; in the second I give thanks honoring his most hallowed feast; in the third I marveled at the highway of Domitian, where he removed the most burdensome hindrance of [excess] sands [i.e., obstructing the road.] For whose benefit you as well will receive in a most timely manner my epistle, which I write for you in this book from Naples. Next is a song lyric to Septimius Severus, a youth, that you know among the most decorated of the second [i.e., equestrian] order, and indeed your fellow pupil, yet less a formal obligation than one [personally] dear to me also. For the Hercules at table [statuette] of our [friend] Vindix a subsequent honor, which from me and from its enthusiasm merits [attention], and [which] I can claim credit [for] even by you.

That Vibius Maximus with a name of dignity and eloquence to be loved by us was given witness to enough in the letter to him regarding the edition of my “Thebaid” which I published; but now I ask him also to return sooner from Dalmatia. To it is joined a short poem to my fellow native Julius Menecrates, a splendid youth and the son-in-law of my [friend] Pollius, for whom I am glad that he has honored our Naples with a number of volumes. Plotius Grypus, a youth of higher rank, I return a more worthy little work, but in the interim, I have inserted in this volume some hendecasyllables which we laughed together over during some Saturnalials.

Wherefore then is there more in the fourth “Silvae” than in the preceding books? Lest some think to have urged, who criticized as I hear, that I had cast aside this kind of stylus [i.e., writing.] First, it is pointless to argue against a thing done; then much of these I had already given to lord Caesar, and how much more to consume than is this? Moreover, is it not permitted I indulge a joke? “In secret,” he says. But
we see also ball games and play acting with birds [?, i.e., “palaris”; “fencing” in one translation, or similarly “pales or stakes”?] is permitted. At last, whoever reads something of mine reluctantly, at once professes himself an adversary. So, why should I agree to his counsel? In sum, truly I am one who is traduced; let him [then] be silent or let him joy. Yet you, Marcellus, will defend this book, and if at this juncture it seems less, we will hold back. Farewell.

I. Seventeenth Consulship of the Emperor Augustus Germanicus.  

Happy the purple [i.e., consulship, not principate] of Caesar with twice eight festivals, and Germanicus opens upon a distinguished year and springs forth with the new sun, and the grand constellations, shining more clear, he first and greater than the morning star. Let the laws of Latium exult, joy ye aediles, and more proud Rome with sevenfold summit strike the upper air, and the hill of Evander applaud more than other heights: new powers have moved up on the Palatine hill, and the twelve-fold lictors [of the consulship], receiving rest, and the Senate, with prayers, joys to have overcome the modesty of Caesar. Even the great reviver of immeasurable age, Janus himself, raises [his] countenances and gives thanks at both thresholds, whom you have bound by Peace from all neighboring war and commanded to establish and to swear obedience to laws in a new forum, behold from hence he lifts [his] hands thrown backward and thereupon with double voice speaks these [words]:

“Hail, great parent of the world, you who prepare with me to renew the ages, your Rome desires to discern you ever so great during my month; thus the times to be born, thus times to be born, thus is it fitting to enter upon the years. Give continual joys to the annals; Let him encircle these shoulders with many folds of purple and the toga hurried with the hands of your Minerva. See you another brightness in the temples, a higher fire on the altars, that the stars themselves warm my winter? And that the squadrons and tribes and fathers of the purple rejoice in your customs, and every honor from the consul commands the light? What such [glory], I pray, did the year before have? Come speak, mighty Rome, and with me, long Antiquity, reckon the annals nor review trite examples, but only what my Caesar deems excelling. Thrice ten for Latium, Augustus, in the passing years, lifted the rods and axes, but began [his consulship] too late began to be [properly] merited: you young man surpassed the forefathers. And [yet] how much you refuse, how much you forbid [yourself]! Moreover often you will promise to persuade the senate with petitions this day, a longer line [of honors? or successors to the throne?] remains in addition, and happy Rome will give you the chariots of state [i.e., curules] as much as three and four times. With you will found another era, and the altar of the ancient parent will be restored to you; you will carry off a thousand trophies, make possible such grand triumphs: Bactra remains, Babylon remains to be held in check with new tribute; not yet [are] the laurels of India in the lap of Jove, not yet do the Arabs and Seres request, not yet has the year every honor [still possible], ten months desire your names [i.e., that you select for them].”

Thus Janus pleased took himself back into the closed portal. Then all of the gods gave signs for joyful heaven to be opened, Jupiter declared o you an extended youth, great leader, and promised [as well] his years.

II. A Poem of Thanksgiving to Emperor Augustus Germanicus Domitianus.

He who brought great Aeneas to the Laurentian plains praises the royal banquets of Sidonian Elissa, he who ended [the story of] Ulysses returning from many a sea shows the feasts of Alcinous in enduring song:

yet I, whom Caesar gave the new joys of a sacred feast and now for the first time to arise at the mistress table, where I may celebrate my vows with the lyre. What thanks laid out by me will suffice? Not if at a glad peak Smyrna and Mantua together should bind fragrances and laurels for me could I worthily speak. I seem to recline in the midst of stars with Jove and to take up wine extended from the hand of an
Ilion immortal! We have crossed over barren years: [but] these [are the] first days of my generation, this the threshold of life. Is it you, the great parent and ruler of lands and of the subjugated world, the hope of men, the care of the gods, you I recumbent behold? Is it right it be given these things at hand, to be given to look upon faces amid wines and tables and not [have] to arise?

An august roof, enormous, not conspicuous with a hundred columns, but of as many that, with Atlas removed, are able to uphold the gods and heaven. This astounds the neighboring palaces of the Thunderer, and divinities are happy to have you placed equal with [their] abode. Nor would you hurry to ascend to the great heaven; so many vast causeways and the vigor of the palace more unrestrained than a field and much embraced by the canopies of the air, and yet so much less than the master; he fills and delights the dwellings with his extraordinary genius. There the mountain of Libya and the shining Ilion are rivals and many stones from Syene and Chios competing with sea-green [marble] of [Doris(?)] and with only the moon sufficient [i.e., to compete with (?)] for the carrying columns. Boundless beyond splendors: with wearied views you could hardly take in the heights and would think the fretted ceiling belonged to golden heaven. Here Cæsar at once commands princes of Romulus and a thousand royal robed processions to recline at the tables, Ceres herself, her lap [with grain] well prepared, and Bacchus labor to provide. Thus blessed, the [plowed] wheel-track of celestial Triptolemus streamed; thus did Lyaeus shade the bare hills and abstemious countryside under the vine-bearing bough.

But not for me, rested on ivory pillars and Moorish timbers, plates of food and troops of servants in succession, him, him only I desire to view, he was freed, a tranquil face, and emitting rays with serene majesty, soothing with modesty the [glorious] banners of his fortune; moreover he shone with an expression that ignored the honors. Such a sight too an enemy barbarian and strange nations would be able to recognize. Not otherwise reigned Gradivus in the gelid vale of the Rhodopes, having set the horses free; so Pollux placed aside sinuous limbs released from the wrestling of Therapnae, so lies Euhane at the Ganges by the shrieking Indians, thus grave Alcides [i.e., Hercules] having returned following frightful injunctions joyed to lay [his] side on the bed of the lion [skin.] And yet I speak with justice your small points about [your] countenance, Germanicus: of such a superb kind, when he goes back and sees the end of the Ocean and the tables of Ethiopia, the face suffused with scared nectar, the greatest leader commands the Muses to grant mystic songs and Phoebus to the triumphs of Pallene.

May the gods - for they are often said to listen [even] to lesser souls - decree for you to go forth twice and three times [beyond] the limits of [your] father’s old age! May you send authorized divinities [i.e., notable relatives of the Emperor] to the stars, give temples, and dwell in [divinely established] homes! Oft may you lay open the yearly thresholds, oft may you salute Janus with a new lictor, oft may you renew the quinquennial [games] with garlanded ceremonies! Where to me you gave your blessed feasts and sacred tables, after a long time of such the light came to me, like as under the hills of Trojan Alba, when [I sang] the measure of the German lines, the measure of the Dacians sounding battles, your hand dressed [i.e., awarded] me with the gold of Pallas.

III. The Domitian Road.

What din of hard iron and of vast rock near the ocean filled the side of the stony Appian Way?
Certainly not bands of Libyans clamor,
on a foreign leader swearing to war shakes unquiet the Campanian plains,
nor does a Nero crush the fords [for a canal] and with mountains hewn bring on sordid marshes,
yet rather he who encircles the warlike thresholds of Janus
with just laws at the forum,
who restored to chaste Ceres,
long refused, the sober lands and fields,
who [as] Censor forbids the strong sex
to perish and prohibits male adults
to fear the torture of handsome beauty,
who returns the Thunderer to the Capitol
and restores Peace to its very home,
who will ever dedicate the lights
of father’s nation and the heaven of Flavia:
he of the people burdened with sluggish roads
and the long plains detaining every path
he removes circuitous routes
and with a new injection
makes solid the painful sands,
gladdening the home of the Euboean Sibyl
and the laps of Gaurus while moving
seething Baiae to the seven hills.

Here in times past the lazy traveler
borne on a single planked axle
uncertain gave way when
the niggardly earth absorbed the wheels
and the Latin folk in the midst of the plains
shuddered at the unkind navigation;
not nimble paces, but hindered
the silencing wheel-ruts delayed the journey,
As long as too much weight is seeking
the deep under, the lanquid four-footed [animal]
creeps along with the chariot pole.
Yet the way now, that [once] wore out
the entire day, is hardly made in two hours.
Not [by] the stretched pinions of birds
through the stars, nor by ship,
will you proceed more swiftly.

Here the initial work was to set up the tracks,
to cut back the uncultivated grounds, and
to excavate and bear away the inner grounds;
next was to refill the emptied trenches
in a different manner and to prepare
the lap [of the road] with [its] ridge’s end,
lest the soils give way, lest a doubtful
bed, with pressing stones, give way
to treacherous foundations;
then to secure the path with collected knobs
and thick pegs here and there.
Oh, how many hands labor together!
These chop wood and strip the mountains,
these raise rocks and timbers with iron;
these bind stones and construct the work
with the powder and baked dirty tufa;
these dry by hand the soaking cavities
and drive off lesser streams from afar.
These with the right hand
are able to hollow out Athon
and without a floating bridge can block up
the grim sea of groaning Helle.
these, unless the gods forbid the way,
could have Ino’s small Isthmus
mingled [with] the straits.
the moving shores of forest are agitated,
the noise travels through the midst
of distant cities, and from hence and thereon
cluster-bearng Massicus at once sends back
a shattering echo to Gaurus.
Quiet Cynme, the Liternian marshe
and listless Savo marvel at the sound.

But [the river] Vulturnus, the golden head and
the broad swamp with the soft sedge impeded,
raises the face and reclining on the
great arch of Caesar’s bridge
with raucous throat(s) overflows
with such [words as these]:

“Noble builder on my plains,
who having poured into my unfrequented vales,
you have bound the unlearned skirts
of the hollow with laws of propriety,
now I, that also was impatient and threatening
having before scarcely suffered skittish boats,
now I bear a bridge passable by foot;
I who had been accustomed to seize lands
and to whirl forests - it shames [me]? -
I begin to be a river;
Yet I give thanks and so great is the service,
since under you as leader,
with you commanding [I] yield,
since you are to be read [as] the supreme arbiter
and perpetual victor of my bank.
now you you honor me with a blest path
nor do you permit dirtying and widely
remove the wicked shame of barren soil,
nor would I oppress the dusty air while
the bay of the deep Tyrrhenian sea cleanses me,
just as Cinyphian Bagrada silently creeps
the banks amidst the Punic fields,
but such will I bear, that on a shining course
I might be able with a pure stream rival
the sea and nearby tranquil Liris.”

These things the river [spoke] together [as]
the marbled expanse raised itself from the huge ridge.
The entrances of this prosperosu threshold
is an arch, with trophies of the warlike leader
and shining all with the metals of Liguria,
as great as he who decks the clouds for rain.
The traveler roused is turned there
there Appia itself is left behind Appia abandoned.
then more quickly and keenly the course,
then the force delights even the yoked teams;
as when the weary arms of the oarsmen
and the sails are fanned with the first breeze.
Come all therefore, that under the foremost sky
you honor the faith of the Roman father,
come forward and visit at the path of the nations,
come more swiftly laurels of the East.
Nothing opposes longing, nothings delays:
he who at first dawn left the Tiber behind,
at evening sails first Lake Lucrinus.

But how at the inmost end of the recent road,
where Apollo reveals the ancients [sibyls] of Cumae,
I discern white with fillets and tresses!
Are we deceived by the vision?
Or does the Sibyl bring forth bay leaves
of Chaleis from the sacred grottos?
Let us submit; lyre, restore now the song:
it must be silent, a more divine poet begins.
Behold! while in new intervals she rotates
the head widely, she celebrates the Bacchic rites
and fills up the road. Then with virgin mouth
thus she calls out:

“I spake, stay river and fields, he will come -,
he will come favoring heaven, who will
lift the foul forest and putrid sands
onto lofty bridges and a road.
Lo! Here is the god, Jupiter himself
will command him to rule for him the happy lands;
where he places under these reins none more worthy,
where Aeneas penetrated and left behind
the sacred groves of Avernus hungrily seeking
from me foreknowledge of the leader that will be.
This the man of honor for peace, here with arms to
be feared better and more puissant than Nature.
Here if he might master the flame-bearing skies,
you India would have moistened with lavish clouds,
(you) Libya have streamed, (you) Haemus have warmed.
Hail, leader of men and parent of gods,
for me the divine will foreseen and established.
Scan not now with crumbling sheets unrolled
of fifteen men in solemn prayer my words, but rather
be singing close at to be heard, as you deserve.
I saw how the bright sisters [i.e., the Fates] bound
a series worthy of the age for you:
Great may you abide with the order of the ages,
and longer than by sons and great-gransons
you will bear the peaceful years with perpetual youth,
which Nestor is said to have approached,
which old Tithonus counted and
as many as I have asked of the Delian gods.
The snowy North has already sworn to you,
now the East will grant great triumphs.
You will go where wandering Hercules and Euhan [went]
beyond the stars and the flaming sun,
to the head of the Nile and snows of Atlas,
and blessed by all you will ascend to the peak
of praises and refuse the war waging chariot;
as long as the Trojan fire [remains] and
Tarpeian Father thunders in the hall reborn,
as long as these things more than Appian’s years
may your road age with you ruling the earth.”

IV. Letter to Vitorius Marcellus.

Not sluggish, hurry letter through the Euboean plains, entering here the roads, where celebrated
Appia comes forth to the side and the solid causeway presses the soft sands, and when you have passed into
the towers of Romulus, without pause seek the favorable shores of golden Tiber, where Lydia confines by
an inner bank the naval lake and the shoal is bordered by suburban pleasure gardens. There you shall see
and recognize exquisite Marcellus with pre-eminent beauty, spirits and a lofty height. To whom I am in the
habit of first greeting according to the custom of the people, remember next to render these words enclosed
in this manner:

“Now slacken the lands and the winged welkin of watery Spring while heaven burns with Icarians
barking; now the high walls of crowded Rome thin out. These the sacred grounds of Praeneste; these the
gelid grove of Diana, or shuddering Algidus or the Tusculum shade covers. What more mild likewise
draws you away from the plague of the clamorous city? In what sky do you cheat the summer suns?
Which? Before everyone [else], your most prominent concern, your Gallus, and our love also - without
doubt with good habits of character to be commended - can it be he passes the summer on the Latin shores
[or] does he now return to the walls of metal-bearing Luna and [his] Tyrrenian homes? Since if he clings
nearest to you, I now do not withdraw far from your conversation; it is certain, [for] from there the sound
encircles both my ears. Yet you, while having been too much seized by Hyperion the grim mane of
Cleonae’s star flames, cast off from you the breast of care and the incessant raging for toil. Parthia closes
up the guilty quivers and unbends the bow, and in Alpheus the charioteer of Elea strokes gently the driving
steeds [weary] from their labors, while our [own] lyre begins to slacken: opportune rest nourishes and
urges on [our] strengths, and manliness is greater after a time of ease! In such a way, Achilles came more
stridently, having sung with Briseis, and the plectrums having been put aside, he issued forth against
Hector. You also for a short while will quietly excite repeated desires and exult in customary new deeds,
dubitably the laws of Latium do not now mix in quarrels, and the lazy year holds peace, and harvests
having returned, the forum is dismissed, nor now do the disputatious crowds of litigants ask for you in the
court vestibule march forth to clients; the mistress restrains the spear of the Hundred Judges, where you
now lofty are eminent with the most celebrated fame and the eloquence of [your] youth supersedes years.
Happy in responsibilities, for whom [are] not the wreaths with the spirit of Helicon nor the unwarlike
laurels from the summit of Parnassus, yet the talent is vigorous and girded in great experience the mind
bears whatsoever the changes: we are comforted in the leisure of life with song and seek the joyful winds
joys of fame. Lo, I myself pursued a dream to genial shore, where stranger Parthenope herself found an
Ausonian refuge, I strike the frail strings with lazy thumb, sitting at the margin of the temple of Maro [i.e.,
Vergil], and take up the soul going to the [burial] mound of the great master: But you, if Atropos will
bestow a course of long age, and [such] may she grant, I pray, and thus may the divinities of the Latin
prince proceed, whom for you to have honored zeal for the Thunderer is esteemed [even] less, and who
subjoins your rods and axes [i.e., public responsibilities] with another duty and entrusts [you] to restore the
expanses of the crossways [i.e., roads?] of Latium! - mayhap you will go to curb the armed bands of
Ausonia or the peoples of the Rhine or the coasts of black Thule or it be given to serve Istria or the dreaded
entrances of the Caspian gate. Indeed there is for you not only the virtue of potent eloquence: there are
fitting limbs for wars, and whose shoulders with deliberation undergo the breastplates [of battle]; or if the
well-matched feet are going to the camp, the [helmet’s] crest will flutter above the columns; or if you
prevail on the sounding reins, the wild steed will submit. In old age we are inclined to sing the deeds of
others: you handsome in [your] very own arms you treat singing itself as a trifle and will furnish
magnificent examples for [youthful] Geta, whom the grand-father of the family now requires worthy
warlike acts and [that] he provide [in order] to have triumphs known. Arise, advance, youth; young man
surprise the sire, with a happy pedigree from the mother, with ancestral virtue, blessed Glory herself now
alluring leads you forth to the lap of Tyre [i.e., the noble purple] and joys to give you as a pledge to all [the offices of] the magisterial chariots.”

These things I have sung for you Marcellus on the beaches of Chalcis, where Vesuvius raises shattering angers, unrolling incendiaries rivaling the flames of Trinacria, marvelous to believe! Will not a man believe in a generation to come, when the crops once more, when these present deserts shall be green, that there are cities and peoples beneath overwhelmed by fate and the ancestral countrysides likewise vanished? Not yet the deadly summit ceases to be imperiled, far may these fates be from your Teate, nor may this madness affect the Marrucinian mountains. Now if by chance you ask to know what may be the beginnings to my muses, the Sidonian labors already having been meted out for the “Thebiad,” the sail has furled in the wished for port, the forest of Parnassus and Helicon having yielded continual festive flames and entrails of a virgin heifer pledged, and suspended my [honorary] fillets from a tree. Now with another fillet placed to be bound on bare locks: indeed Troy and great Achilles is attempted by me, but the bow-bearing father [i.e., Apollo] calls to another [theme] and reveals the more distinguished arms of the Ausonian commander. Previously the impetus draws to it [but] fears draws back. Will the shoulders not bear under that mass or the neck be overcome by the great burden? Speak, Marcellus, ought I consider it? Or must the raft, not yet accustomed to lesser floods, be trusted to Ionian hazards?

And now farewell and forbid honor from the heart of the consecrating poet leave you; since neither was the Tirynthian frugal of nurturing friendship; the glory of faithful Theseus will yield to you, and he who dragged the mangled son of Priam around the walls of Troy to comfort the loved one slain.

V. A Lyric Ode to Septimius Severus.

Happy in the honors of a little farm, where ancient Alba cherishes the Trojan lares, and I hail steadfast and eloquent Severus with unaccustomed [lyre] strings.

Already savage winter o’erwhelmed by high suns has conceeded to the Parrhasian North, now with the north wind disheartened the sea and earth gleam with [mild] Zephyrs.

Now all the tree is covered with the annual foliage of Spring, now I’ve learned the complaint of birds and untried song which silent winter set in place.

The frugal soil and vigilant hearth with much light have consoled us and the pots have been emptied that seethed only with Bacchus.

Not a thousand wooly flocks bleat, nor does the cow bellow for sweet amour, and if when one is singing to the master the quiet field cries out in protest.

But after the native country, the land with the first cares is loved by me, here the warlike queen of battles adored my songs with gold from Caesar,
when you striving might lift each peril
from the breast of a companion,
as Castor trembled at all the din
of the Bebrycian arena.

Hold, did a grandmother of Leptis beget
in remote Syrtes? This time she will bear
Indian harvests and snatch rare
cinnamon from the scent bearing Sabaeans.

Who that has strolled on every peak of Rome
woud not think of sweet Septimius?
who would deny [you] to have been fed at
Juturna’s fount on the rich remnants?

No wonder the power: forthwith you enter
the Ausonian port, ignorant of the shallows
of Africa, and an adopted son, you
as a boy swam in Tuscan eddies.

Here a lad ‘midst content, pledged to
the Senate, in the glow of the select purple
you thrive, but, innately a patrician,
pursuing immeasurable labors.

Not for you Punic talk, not the manner,
not a mind for what’s foreign: Italian, Italian.
there are natives from the City
with Roman horsemen who could befit* Libya

* [i.e., befit the ranks of those of Libya]

And it is a voice lively with roaring at forum,
yet venal eloquence is not for;
and the sword rests in the scabbard,
unless friends should command it to be drawn.

But more oft a farm and quiet for the soul,
now on Veientine soil at paternal seats,
now atop leafy Hernica,
now at ancient Cures.

Here will you put down more words and rhythms
to permit relaxation, but meanwhile
twice remember our lyre
hidden below the humble grotto.

VI. The Hercules Statuette of Novius Vindex.

Perchance relaxing cares to Phoebus and with a heart lightened, when with day now declining I
might use up free time at the open-air Saepa Julia [i.e., a social collecting place in Rome], the dinner of
generous Vindex carried me away. This done with, it [i.e., the experience] remained in the inmost recess of
the soul undiminished. For we did not consume mockeries for the bellies or banquets sought from a
different sun or have aged wine competing with lasting [sacred] festivals. Ah wretched! - that which helps
to have known that the bird of Phasis should stand apart from a crane in Rhodope’s winter, what goose has
greater entrails [for divination], why the Tuscan boar is more noble than that of Umbria, [or] where a more
soft mollusk might lie with slippery sea-weed: for us true affection was sought the midst of Helicon and in
cheerful conversation, and jokes persuaded [us] to spend a winter’s night banishing effeminate sleep from
the eyes, as long as Castor viewed afar the other [twin] in the seats of Elysium and Tithonia smiled at
yesterday’s repasts. Oh goodly night, would that it were joined to a Tirynthian moon [i.e., that the night
would be double its length]! And night will have been marked with the Erythraean jewels of Thetis, and
long will be held in remembrance [its] perennial genius! Then a thousand splendors and with gold and
ivory of old and I learned by heart tablets [i.e., writings] that will speak on a deceptive surface [i.e., of wax.] For who anywhere has vied with the eyes of Vindex, and, in recognizing an artist led by the ancients,
did not return to the author written indications [of approval]? Here for you much that was awakened in the
clever bronze of Myron, the labor-bearing marbles of Praxiteles which live for heaven, what has been
etched on ivory by the Pisaean thumb, what has been commanded to breathe in the foundries Polycleitus, a
line which long bespeaks veteran Apples will be discovered: since this, as often as he casts aside the lyre, is
leisure for him, this calls love from the Aonian caverns.

Here amidst the tutelage of a chaste table the spirit, the son of Amphitrion [i.e., Hercules] seized
my heart with great love, nor long by the light did it sate to view: such great honor and majesty having
been contained in the work through artful ends! He a god, a god! He allowed himself to be viewed,
Lysippus, for you a little [thing] [yet] momentous to be sensed and seen. And when with wonders within
he might stand the measure of a [mere] foot, yet it will be pleasing to exclaim, if you will consider the
appearance by way of [its] limbs: “He the ravager of Nemea having been pressed to the breast, these arms
bore deadly strength and crushed the oars of Argo.” Ah! Such great illusions of form in a small space!
Which manner with a right hand, how much experience with skilled tasks to be learned, equally to devise
an adornment for the table and [yet], in the mind, turned into a vast colossus! Not any such Telchines in the
caves of Ida, nor dull Brontes, nor the Lemnian [i.e. Vulcan], he who polishes the arms of the gods, would
have been able to trick out from [so] small [a] mass. Not a fierce image alien and remiss to feasts, but a
kind admired at the home of frugal Morchius or [that] the Tegean priestess saw in the groves of Alea; of a
sort, having been hurled into the stars from Oeta’s embers, that happy he drank the nectar, yet still with
harsh Juno [not distant]: thus the mild countenance, as if joying from the heart, he cheers the tables. Here
he holds the exhausted cup of a brother, but there he remembered a hand for the knotty cudgel; the elegant
stone with Nemean cloak sustains stern dwellings.

For a sacred work [it is] a worthy fate. The august Pellaean king [i.e., Alexander the Great] had
[this] divinity [i.e., Hercules] at the happy tables and carried him a comrade west and east, and had
furnished freely the manner by which the right hand bore away and bestowed crowns, and overthrew great
cities. Ever he had sought from him the spirits for tomorrow’s wars. To him the conqueror ever related the
rich battle lines, whether from Bromius [i.e., Bacchus] he hauled off shackled Indians or with great spear
had broken open inaccessible Babylon or had crushed in war the lands of Pelops and Pelasgian liberty: and
from the great stream of praises he was spoken of to have only justified [i.e., felt he needed to justify or
excuse] the Theban triumphs. Even he, driven by the mighty destroying Fates, when he would have drawn
the lethal wine, now in the dark cloud of heavy death and with the flesh perspiring, feared other faces in the
deity at the climax of last banquets.

Next the uncanny distinction was possessed by the Nasamonian king [i.e., Hannibal]; proud
Hannibal, ever deceitful with the successful sword, poured libations to the puissant god. Soaked with
Italian blood and carrying dreaded fire to the houses of the nation of Romulus, [the god] had hated [him.]
And when he would have dedicated feasts and gifts of Bacchus, the affable god grieving to go with those
wicked camps, and especially when he [i.e., Hannibal] mingled sanctuaries with impious fire and violated
undeserving homes and temples of Saguntum, and let in furies on the honest people.

After the death of the Sidonian leader with the bronze [statue] not a home from the excellent
people was captured. It always adorned the dinner gatherings of Sulla; accustomed [as it was] to enter
illustrious abodes and the happy seat of masters with [honorable] lineage.
Now as well, if the customs, human hearts and concerns have been known to the gods; not indeed a palace, O Tirynthian, not kingly honors surrounds you, but the mind of a master chaste and unaware of guilt, for whom ancient trust having commenced the bond of friendship [is] everlasting. Vestinus still yet knows [it], flowering under the age equal with the great forefathers, whom he breathes night and day and lives in the embraces of [their] beloved shadow. Here then for you is a happy rest, bravest of the gods, Alicides, you see not ferocious wars and battles, but a lyre, headband ribbons, and music loving laurels. Here for you will be remembered in solemn song how much you terrified Getic and Ilian and snowy Stymphalus and Erymanthus with [its] well watered ridges; that the possessor of the Iberian flock, that the Mareotic overseer of the savage altar suffered you; the threshold of death having been broken through and despoiled, he will sing for you, and of the maids of Libya and Scythia weeping. Never could a Macedonian lord, nor a barbarian Hannibal, or the horrid voice of savage Sulla celebrate you in these ways. Surely you, Lysippus, the originator of the gift, would prefer to be approved of by no other eyes.

VII. Lyric Ode to Vibius Maximus.

Already long sated with the wide camp, brave Erato, postpone heroic labors and enter upon momentous work in lesser arenas;

And you, Pindar, lord of the lyric cohort, give to me a little of the rights of the plectrum, if I have made sacred with Latin song your Thebes:

For Maximus I attempt to refine music; now will the garland be taken from uncut myrtle, now a greater thirst and a more chaste stream must be sipped.

When will they return you to sweet Latium from the Dalmatian mountains, where Dis having been seen, the pale digger comes back the same color as mined gold?

Behold me sprung from nearer lands yet these do not restrict me to the pleasant port of indolent Baiae or the trumpeter known to the arms of Hector.

Our Muse is torpid without you, the guide of Thymbra [i.e., Apollo] himself comes more late than [his] wont, and lo at the first turns [i.e., in the course] my Achilles hesitates.

Of course with you as our trusty advisor much of the “Thebaid,” excoriated with revision, attempts with audacious string the joys of Mantuan renown.

But we grant mercy slowly, since you have laid at empty hearths the nurtured offspring.

oh happy day! Behold another Maximus comes to us!
Childlessness must be fled with every effort,
which the unfriendly heir presses with pledges,
demanding the honest friend - alas it shames!
a funeral soon.

Childlessness has not been buried with tears:
longing for a home it stands captive surviving
and the spoils of death threatening
deems itself the [funeral] fire.

May the noble infant long endure,
and [his] path, not distracted by many things,
thrive in the customs of the homeland
and call forth the deeds of the grandsires!

With but little you will recall your swords,
which to Eastern Orontes you carried,
with the banner of the bridled squadron
guided by Castor’s right hand;

that he followed the swift
lightning of unvanquished Caesar
and gave harsh law to the fleeing Sarmatians,
under one heaven to live.

Yet may the lad learn first your character,
to each who review the melancholy of the world
you restore the brief words of Sallust
and the ward of Timavus.

VIII. Congratulations to Julius Menecraten.

Swing open the gates of the heavens, Parthenope, and fill the consecrated temples with the
billowing clouds of Sheba’s incense and with entrails of [sacrificial] animal [offerings]; behold the of
famed Menecrates increases now with a third shoot. For you the noble crowd of princes thrives and is
consoled for the losses from raging Vesuvius. Do not permit that the privileged information only go round
the festive sanctuaries of Naples: strike and let the beloved harbor of the comrade, the land of gentle
Dicarcheo - and as well Surrentum dear to the dripping go - enwreathe the altar with garlands. Where the
shore of the maternal ancestor surrounds the throng of descendants and whom contend in returning like
countenances. Let the pre-eminent uncle with the Libyan spear be glad, and those also born to him whom
Polla holds and lifts to a loving bosom. Well done, oh youth, you, who meriting so much, give lights to our
country, lo the home of the masters shakes with the sweet tumult of so great shouting. Let black Envy
withdraw afar and with livid feelings turn elsewhere: To these fair Atropos pledged old age and the glory
of lasting virtue, and ancestral Apollo laurels. Therefore it was an omen that the most august father of the
Ausonian city has given you the welcome right of threefold offspring. So often Lucina has come and
entered again the pious dwelling. Thus, I pray, may the home stand with fertile abundance and never be
altered in its sacred gifts. Bravo, that also your progeny more frequently have grown in virile strength, yet
the maiden too must be happy for the young man [i.e., their father] they obey! - virtue is more suitable for
these, it will grant to her descendants more quickly,-, of the sort Helen [at Sparta] was already worthy
[along] with the mothers at the wrestling schools, she strolled amidst the games of Amyclaean brothers; or
as like the face of heaven, when on a serene night two radiant stars have drawn near with the moon in
between.
Yet I by no means protest without difficulty, rarest of youths, and I even get angry complaining, inasmuch as those who love are angered. Was it so fitting for me to know the joyous news from what is shared by all? And when you third infant wailed, a letter did not issue forthwith announcing the momentous event, that it might have been directed to heap up festive fires for the altars, entwine the lyre, decorate doorposts, bring out the jar worn out with Alban fumes and signalize the day with song, but late and helpless only now do I sing my vows? This is your fault and shame, but is indeed not permitted to prolong further complaining; behold the throng with jollity and that defends the father. Whom may you not conquer with this group?

Gods of our Fatherland, whom with great auguries upon the seas, the Abantian [i.e., Euboean] fleet conveyed to the Ausonian shore, and you Apollo, leader of a people long migrating, whose bird, still yet on the smooth left shoulder sitting, happy Eumelis gazing on adores, and you, Attic Ceres, to whom, ever on the panting course, ever flourish in silence the votive lamp of mystery, and you, Tyndarids, whom not dread Lycurgus and shadowy Therapnae have worshipped more: watch over these dwellings of the homeland [along] with its common folk. May there be those who, with a voice for the age, please the city weary with crowds, labors and riches and preserve the youthful name, may the original ancestor reveal to these the peaceful customs, and the bountiful splendor and zeal for both beauty and virtue. By all means wealth and family, with the first light, permit her to enter patrician doors, with the public itself under these, if only the divine will of invincible Caesar, prone to the good, should be near to strike the threshold of the Senate of Romulus.

IX. Facetious Verses for Plotius Grypus.

This is indeed a joke, Grypus, that you sent me a little book - for a little book. Yet this can be seen as polite, if after this you would return anything to me; for if, Grypus, you had persisted in playing, you don’t play. Look, we reckon it be so permitted! Our purple and new paper has been adorned with twin scroll knobs, besides it falls to me to have been so struck: [for you [then] to allow [yours] gnawed and [made] rotten by moths, or like those sodden with Libyan olives or preserved with incense or pepper from the Nile or they dress Byzantine lizards, not even containing your sayings, which, a youth, you thundered in the Triple Courts, or near the Hundred Judges, before Germanicus gave you as overseer of all things following the year [i.e., harvests?] and put you at large in charge of the stations of the roads, but instead] you give the gapings of old Brutus from scroll case of a wretched notary bought for more than a debased coin of Gaius, did the felt caps continuously fail having not submitted to being stitched from strips of cloaks or sallow cloth or paper napkins, Theban or Carian figs? No opportunity for bunches of plums and figs to have been kept from decay in the spirals? not desiccated cacti or abandoned tunics of onions? Not so much as eggs, nor fine wheat, or coarse grain?
Nowhere the wet wandering home of curved snails
from the Cinyphian plains? Not heavy lard or
fragile ham? No weighed down lucanican or
faliscian sausages? No easily digested salt,
or cheese, or bread of green soda? or
raisin wine with its phythian grape re-cooked,
sweet boiled grape juice, or with muddy dregs?
How much [was it of you] not to give [me]
smelling wax, a small knife or slim writing tablet?
I ask, was it not permissible to give grape jars
dishes turned in the round from Cumae, or one set
- why do you shrink? - of white goblets and pots?
but fixed as equal in the scales, you change
nothing, but repay me with the same thing.
What if, when on a good raw morning
I will have spoke a greeting borne to you,
and you [then] in turn salute me at home?
Or when you should have assisted me with
a plenteous feast, you expect the like and
dine yourself? I am irritated for you, Grypus,
but you will be well; only do not, wherever suns
charm, now send me back hendecasyllabics.

BOOK V

I. A Funeral Song for Priscilla.

If it was for me to easily shape by hand wax likenesses or to animate ivory or gold with impressed
figures, by this means I would have taken up, Priscilla, a consolation for your husband. For [his] excellence
in piety merits a face stamped with color by Apelleus, or to return [you to him] with feeling born from the
hand of Phidias. Thus it is attempted to bring away the shadow of a king and manage the prodigious cares
and contest with Death, while it fatigues the artist, and in each metal he seeks to love you. But mortal [is]
the honor, which the agile right hand loves. We for you. Most rare spouse of a celebrated youth, with a just
lyre we endeavor to furnish an end not long dim that will bespeak the eternal, Apollo favorable only comes
to me by whoever is always joined to Apollo and [whom] Caesar approves: [there is] no other better way to
shut the sepulcher from view.

Late indeed is devised a remedy for so great a grief, when with the constellations the wheel of
Phoebus turns another year; yet when there are besides fresh strokes on the first black wound of the house,
what approach then [was there] to the unhappy ear of the bereaving husband? Then it was a consolation to
weep, to rend vestments, to weary companies of servants, to overcome the utterance of anguish, and to
batter the unjust heavens with mad lamentations. Though from the woods and streams Orpheus himself
attended and been near that the groans be comforted, and might equally touch each maternal oracle, and all
the priests of Apollo and Bacchus: no song, no strings for the gods of pale Avernus and the Eumenides
[i.e., the Furies] had been heard to appease or bid adieu [even] to the locks of hair: such great grief reigned
in the stupefied breast! Even yet does the flattened scar still flee to wailing, while we sing, and a downpour
from the wife’s husband press hard on the weighted eyes. But even now do the devoted eyes have these
tears? Wondrous faith! More quickly the Sipylean matron carries away the exhausted cheeks, more quickly
the dews of sorrow fail Tithonia, or the mother of Achilles sated and will grow weak crashing storms [i.e.,
with her ocean waves] against the tombs. Well done hearts! The god notes these things who turns the reins
of the world and nearer to Jove directs human actions, and beholds mourning; and mysterious attendants of
the bridal couch! From such he yet again comprehends the examples, since you hold dear the shade and
cherish the obsequies. Here is the purest ardor, here is merited love from a lord to be commended by the
censor.
No wonder, if Harmony united you mingled together and gathered you to the heart in one long unbroken chain. She indeed was married before and was permitted pine [i.e., marriage] torches to another husband, but it was, as if [still] in [her] maidenhood, you were joined to all inmost being and with an embracing soul she cherished you; just as an elm tree loves a vine socializing with contemporaneous shoot, and the grove mixing with the deity prays for autumn and joys to be wreathe in the loved clusters of fruit. Some are extolled for [their] distant ancestors or for the gift of beautiful form, but are without the benefits of customs, and deceptively powerful of praise [i.e., are powerful as a result of being praised], they lack truth: although for you family, a happy appearance and much that husbands will wish for also would shine, from you is the greater honor, to have known one bed, to stir one fire under hidden sinews. No plunderer of Phrygia vitiates that love, no Dulichian suitors, nor an adulterer who had traduced a brother’s stainless marriage with Mycenean gold. If you would give Babylonian wealth, tons of Lydian treasures and the mighty riches of India, China and Arabia, she would have preferred to die undefiled in humble poverty and exchanged life for good repute.

Not the too great stiffening sad brow in dread behaviors, but an unaffected and cheerful faith mingled with gracious modesty, since if perilous fear had summoned her to greater customs, for the husband she gladly would have rescued him from armor bearing troops or the dangers of lightening fires on the midst of the sea. Well it was that such was not recommended by an adversary, since for you with concern for the [marriage] bond, how great the pale worry for the spouse! But better [it was that] your vows to the husband merited the way of favoring divinities, while night and day you weary the gods, while you will have knelt a suppliant at all the altars and adore the bright guardian of the present lord. You had been heard, and Fortune came on a benign footing. Of course the upright youth saw [your] industrious calm and faith intact and girded with a breast of care, you would be awake to feeling and worthy to pursue such great changes with a sober heart, HE saw, he who knows all his own and will go widely round inspecting each of [his] ministers. This is not strange: he sees the approach of the dawn, what the south and stormy north wind do, is borne by the toga, and [his] counsel sanctions judgment itself. He conquering imposed an immense mass and a weight scarcely tractable on shoulders - for there are not other sacred responsibilities more numerous for the master -, to send wide into the great sphere of Romulus the commands of the leader and to manage by hand the powers and bounds of empire; what from the north, what the roving Euphrates, what banks of twice-named Ister, what the banners of the Rhine might carry off, how greatly far the limits of the world will be passed in receding from the loud flood of Thule - for all the happy leaves [i.e., news] raised up on all the pikes, and no lance marked with infamous feathers [i.e., bad news] - in addition, if the trust deserving master should separate [i.e., sort] the swords, with whom who to expand a century [i.e., a Roman army unit], with whom he might prevail to breakdown [a century in size], a cavalryman sent among maniples who had anticipated a cohort, who would be more excellently fitted in the order of an illustrious tribune, for whom to give the signal to a wing of bridled horses is more worthy; to have known before hand even a thousand changes, whether the Nile will immerse the fields, or Libya will perspire with the rain-bearing south wind; and if I would count all, nor more does winged Tegean with interpreting wand announce from the high stars, and what the maid of Juno drops through the liquid ether and binds the rain bearing south wind; and if I would count all, nor more does winged Tegean with interpreting wand announce from the high stars, and what the maid of Juno drops through the liquid ether and binds the rain with a colored arc of mist [i.e., a rainbow], and what laurels of yours, Germanicus, Fame, on a winged course, carries; having gone ahead a day late day under the Arcadian stars, and leaves the daughter of Thaumas [i.e., Iris] in mid-heaven.

How excellent gods and men beheld you on a kind day, Priscilla, when first your husband was promoted for remarkable exploits! You nearly surpassed himself, while, with breast prone outpouring, you rolled up with such great eagerness before the sacred feet of the well-deserving lord. She joys not [even] thus on the Aonian height whom the father of Delos placed in command of the mystic cave, or [she] to whom venerable Bacchus assigned the law of the first wand and the ensigns of the stupefied [Bacchic] throng. Yet from here neither was quiet changed nor did honesty swell [i.e., in pride] with the favorable changes: Habits remain the same to a modest mind with increased fortune. She maintains the anxious zeal of the husband and at the same time urges he restrain labors. She hands over moderate dishes and sober cups, and to the master teaches an example; just as the Apulian mate of a frugal farmer or one tanned by the Sabine sun, who at the prospect of the stars sees now the time of the man worn from service to have arrived, hurrying she arranges the tables and cushions having awaited the sound of the returning plow. I speak little. With you she was a comrade in the icy Sarmatian north, the storms of Ister and pallid frost of the Rhine, was also with you hardened in courage through every summer, if the camps allowed, she would
have wished to wear quivers, have wished to parry with a wide Amazonian shield; provided that she might see you in a dust cloud of wars near the lightening steed of Caesar, brandishing a divine lance, and bestrewn with the sweat of the great spear.

Thus far a favorable lyre. Now [however] is the time, Phoebus, to set aside your [laurel] leaves and to bind the foliage with [those of] the sad cypress. For what deity tied Envy and Fortune in implacable kinship? Who commanded hostile goddesses to be fighting eternally? Will [the one] not mark some home, which pitiless she would not fastened instantly with light, but that [the other] drives out joys with a savage right hand? The unperturbed and mirth-filled gods of the household flourished: there was no sorrow. For how, although faithless and fickle, could Fortune be so frightened with Caesar favorable? Livid Fate finding a way, a cruel power invaded the pious dwelling. Thus are vineyards suffused wafted with the malignant south wind, thus the wheat field ages with excessive rain, thus the hostile wind envies the swift ship and beclouds successful sails. Priscilla of exceptional loveliness is seized by Fate; just as the glory of the forests is the foliage of the tall pine, whether dissolved from the root or falls by the punishing fire of Jove, despoiled it murmurs no more to the breeze. What are probity, a chaste faith, or divine worship that they benefit the supreme being? On every side black blows surround the unhappy circle of death, the unfeeling strings of the Sisters are drawn tight and left over is the farthest part of the expired thread. No concourse of servants, no extensive healing arts remedied the evil; companions on every side with feigning visage notwithstanding pretended hope, she observes the husband weeping. He asks anyone only for the pure streams of Lethe from below, now anxious he weeps at every altar, seals the gates and rubs the thresholds with [his prostrate] breast; now with great entreaty he invokes the divinity of Caesar, alas the unfeeling course of fate! Is there not something which he [i.e., Caesar] may not permit? How many obstacles of mortal years would have been able to approach, had you, father, held the sway of all judgment? Death locked out in the blind abyss would have groaned and the Fates have placed aside the destitute threads of life.

And now sink the faces with her eyes at the very last wandering and ears deafened, but that the voice of the husband alone is distinguished; him only the mind returned sees in the midst of death, him the ailing one envelopes bravely with forearms having turned [to him] the stiffened cheeks, not with the remaining light, but she prefers to be sated solely with the sweet spouse. Then thus the dying solaces the one united with her in love: “Part of my living soul, oh would that I could leave to whom the years which cruel Atropos snatches from me: show no more tears I pray, strike not the breast with savage lamentation, torment not the consort’s flying shade. I do indeed leave the marriage bed, yet I save in death’s succession what came before: I have for the better had done with long old age; I saw you some time ago shining in every flower, I saw you draw nearer and nearer into high favor. There is not now for you judgment by the fates or any celestial power: I bear these away with me. I begin freeing you on the path, exert yourself for the sacred and love without rest the spacious genius and power [i.e., of the emperor.] Now because you yourself desire to be enjoined, grant gold everlasting to the Capitoline seats, that the countenance of holy Caesar may gleam [in a statue of] a hundred weight and inscribe the love of a close devotee. Thus will I not see the Furies nor low Tartarus and be admitted to the ends of blest Elysiums.” These things said the companion, gliding away, clasped the clinging arms, without sadness transferred the soul to the lips of the husband and pressed [closed] her eyes with [his] loved right hand.

Yet the youth with great heart, inflamed with grief, now fills with frenzied cry the widowed home, now he desires to lay up the sword, now reaches to steep heights - comrades scarcely restrain [him] -, now he lay bound to the mouth of the departed and urges [himself] wildly with a heart overwhelmed by grief, just as the torpid wife was sighted, the Odrysian poet [Orpheus], setting the plectrum aside on the Strymonian [bank] was struck dumb and without song wept at the sad pyre. Even he erect broke down at this time of life, lest you should pass on into Tartarean chaos unaccompanied, but the confident mind of the leader marveling by sacred commands and a greater love forbade it. Who could survey obsequies and funereal gifts of unfortunate ostentation with worthy song? From all there pressed together in long procession flows an Arabian and Cilician spring, and Sabaeae flowers, grains of India snatched before their time, and frankincense from the temples of Palestine ablazing, at the same time Hebraic perfumes, Corycian leaves and Cinyrean buds; she herself lies at a late hour recumbent on high cushions shaded with Tyrian covering. But the husband alone is seen by all of the throng; to him are turned the eyes of great Rome, just as if the youth was bearing [his] last sons to the tomb: anguish in his expression, hair and
cheeks holding only night. Her they call happy and set free with a tranquil end, [and] the tears [rather] are shed for the husband.

There is a place, where lying before the premiere city the great Appian is born and where Cybele places aside groans in Italian Almo and recalls not any longer Ida’s streams. Here you are veiled gently veiled by the peerless husband with Sidonian purple - for he was not able to suffer fuming ashes and the roar of the funeral pyre - and arranged for Priscilla a happy bed. Labors of time will be able neither to seize longer lifetimes or stain dried limbs: the venerable marble breathes such great riches, having soon been transformed into various remarkable likenesses: here is Ceres in bronze, here the bright one of Gnossos, there Maia with a dome, here Venus acceptably in stone. They receive a face not unworthy of glorious divinity: the servants and customary throng gather round the obsequies, then are duly prepared the couches and busy tables. That home, a home! Who would call it a mournful tomb? This devotion of the deserved husband seen you would at once exclaim: “There he is, I recognize his minister, who lately built the sanctuary of the eternal nation and placed his [kindred] stars into another heaven.” Thus, when a great ship has set sail from the Pharian shore on a new passage and now, with innumerable ropes on each side and bearing broad sails, has extended the arms of the mast and entered the [sea] lanes, a small lowly craft proceeds on the same smooth sea and claims for itself a part of the vast South wind.

Why, most eligible of youth, do you nurture these immoderate tears in the heart and forbid long grief to depart? Surely you don’t fear that Priscilla might tremble at the barking of Cerberus? For the blessed dead he is silent! May not the sailor [i.e., Charon] in the shallows push away and arrive more late [to his destination]? Promptly he places and conveys well-deserving shades peaceably on a hospitable skiff. In addition, if when the shade comes with the praise from a pious husband, Proserpine directs happy torches to come forth and heroines of old and come out from the sacred grottos to relieve the sad darkness with the purple light of evening and for the spirit prepare in advance the flowers of Elysium. Thus Priscilla goes under to the departed; there a winning suppliant she beseeches the Fates for you, she placates for you the melancholy rulers of Avernus, that you fulfill the ends of human life and yourself aged you leave behind a young lord pacifying the lands! The Sisters take oath to certain vows.

II. Encomiums of Crispinus, son of Vettius Bolanus.

My Crispinus seeks the Etruscan countryside and the glades of Tages [i.e., an Etrurian divinity]; the delay is not long nor the land remote, but my heart is torn by a secret sting, and the wet eyes impel swelling drops, just as I attend the sails of a departing friend upon the stormy Aegean, and already weary watching the ship from the high cliffs, yet will I complain of eyes overcome by the distant sky.

Why? If you lad, were now known as a first-time soldier, and called to the loud training and glad beginnings of the camps, how greatly would pour joys with a tear or what [joys] I might bestow embracing!

Must even those close to us wish sorrow? And now life has encompassed you in twice eight circles, but in the narrow years a more robust soul, that does not succumb to a burden, nor does [youthful] age take captive its mind. No wonder: not for you was bespoken a chain of obscure parents without honor, or from plebian stock wanting ancient ancestors of fame: not born from equestrian blood or white mantle of recent distinction or did you a foreigner with a poor tunic strike out for an august and inmost seat with the senate of Latium, but rather your own surpassing [family] line. Of the sort when through the stretches of the Roman circus beauty is to be seen, and a noble steed of ancestral repute is awaited, from whose long happy family line has winning parents in breeding, all applauding bring him to a head, they joy recognizing him flying from the dust itself towards the curved turning point: so you, bright boy, the senate perceived as born for itself, and enclosed the patrician moon [i.e., a badge of senatorial rank] with [your] first footsteps. Soon from habit the Tyrian folds and the powerful tunic of [your] shoulder were acknowledged. Yet indeed the father had prepared for you great examples for those honors, he setting out a youth as a mater of course forthwith attacked warlike quiver-bearing Araxes and rebellious Armenia to serve fierce Nero. Corbulo acted in a high position of stern Mars, but he too marveled at the exceptional arms of Bolanus, a comrade and associate in the labors of war; and to him the most severe of responsibilities he was wont to trust and
[with him] the dread was to be divided, what time [he was] an ally in ambushes, what times good for open battle, whether the reliable faith or else retreat of defiant Armenia was gazed upon. Bolanus had known before the path to be feared, it was for Bolanus to seek the mountain advantage for safe encampments, Bolanus to measure the fields, to uncover malignant obstacles of the scorching forests, to satisfy the awe inspiring leader’s great mind and alone be adequate for the momentous commands. The barbarian land itself came now to know the man, his the second highest honor in battles and nearest active service, thus the astonished Phrygians, although they might see Neamean arms and the bow of Cleonae might drive the battle lines, yet [even] with Alcides fighting they feared Telamon [i.e., father of Ajax] as well. Learn, boy, - since it is not for you to seek from a foreign counselor a beautiful love of virtue: praise should minister to kindred minds. Others are taught by Decius or the return of Camillus - learn you [from] a father, how great he entered Thule, with Hyperion weary and western waves refusing, until in an allotted year, carrying great commands, he ruled a thousand cities of mighty Asia, tempering supreme power with the [just] toga. Drink in such matters with ears prone, let these lessons vie in uniting relatives to you, let seniors and a father’s comrades repeat them.

And now you undertake to go on another path and prepare [for it] at no lazy pace; not yet do the signs of virile youth steal into your cheeks, and thus far untouched is the course of [your] life. Nor is the father near; for a draught from evil fates killed [him] leaving two offspring without a guardian. He had not so much as removed the boyhood purple from tender arms or introduce the white mantle to the shoulders. Whom did not new and unrestrained manliness corrupt the freedom of the toga! Just as the wood, ignorant of the pruning knife, raises foliage and fruit and expires in the shades. But it is for you with Pierian zeal, and with a tender heart beneath, and the modesty of learning, to impart law and traditions; then a cheerful probity, and a tranquil brow keeping the splendors of luxury confined, being managed by all rules and sense of duty; the fortune of the home reminded [you] to yield to a brother of similar age, revere the father, and pardon an unhappy mother [i.e., who had reportedly tried to poison Crispinus; apparently to favor of his brother.] Was this wicked cup and deadly juice placed together to prevail over you, you who with a voice can prevent the bite of serpents and with a face to appease all step-mothers? It pleases ghosts to infest and take away peace from funeral pyres that merit prayer; but in you, upright fellow, I discern a look persuasive and furnishing such fine utterances: “Spare, I pray, the ashes: that destiny was the noxious wrath of the Fates and the crime of a god, Who sees mortal feeling too late, nor pauses at the threshold when attempting crime and furnishing minds with the unspeakable. Let those days perish with time and let not the coming age believe such was possible! Certainly it is for us to be silent and many things buried in night and let us suffer the reproaches of our clan to be covered o’er. He expels punishments who for the care of his people repays Devotion with due authority, revisits homelands, and whom all sin fears. These things and to be weeping is to us revenge enough. Would that it might be permitted in fact to persuade the savage Eumenides and turn away Cerberus from the timid shade and more quickly to give by your hands the forgetful stream [i.e., of Lethe].”

Well done with spirit, youth! Yet the crimes of the mother increase. Not only pious, but without pause were you laying claim to high courage. Not long ago when it chanced a companion paled at a falsely imputed crime of unmerited report, and with many a Julian judge the court of justice was gathered around, rose up and brandished chaste lightning: you, although not [yourself] suffering before the court of justice and severe laws, yet hidden in the silent umbrage of devotions [i.e., of a friendship], and as yet an unarmed recruit and obliging a friend, you sustained the assault, defending against fright and enemy spears. Never did Romulus and the Dardanian [i.e., Aeneas] of old behold such [youthful] years in a toga to war in the midst of the carnage of the forum, so greatly were the city fathers astounded by your attempts and exertions, not any less did the guilty fear you. Equal vigor in the limbs that are and qualified for brave action, they follow a great soul commanding. I myself recently saw you on the shore of the Tiber, where the Tyrrenian wave foams with the shallows of Laurentum, pressing the course, with a bare heel goading a bold steed, and with a threatening countenance and right hand: - if what is spoken be trusted, I was stupefied and though [you] a soldier armed- thus handsome Ascanius on Gaetulian mount and shaking a Trojan lance, went a hunter into the step-mother’s fields and with the father [i.e., Aeneas] made [the mistress of] unhappy Elissa burn [with passion]; not otherwise did Troilus with nimble wheeling adroitly evaded the menacing horsemen, or he whom, at the high turrets of Arcady, going round the turning points in the Theban dust, the Tyrian mothers viewed with not disapproving eye.
Therefore come - the sure indulgence of the leader strikes on and a brother furnishes a path of cheerful promise - arise now with great soul and take up the manly concerns of the camp. Mars and the Attic virgin will instruct the battle lines, Castor the cavalry to flank, Quirinus to rattle the arms on the shoulders, who trusted you, with so young a neck, to make ring cloud-born shields and arms untried in slaughters.

To what lands of Caesar’s therefore will you go into the world? Will you not swim northern streams and [ice] broken Rhenish rivers or will you perspire in the heat laden lowlands of Libya? Or will you shake the summits of Pannonia or the shifting homes of the Sarmatians? Or will the seven headed Ister [i.e., the Danube] hold you and in the flowing shade with [the isle] of Peuce’s paramour? Or will you be situated in the ashes of Solyma and the captive palm-groves of Idume, not esteeming the happy woods for herself? Since if the land held in check by the great parent should receive you, how much the untamed Araxes will rejoice! How much will the fields of Caledonia exalt glory! Where the ancient inhabitant of the wild land will recall to you: “Here the parent was accustomed to bestow laws, here on the grassy sod to address troops of cavalry; widely stretched apart watch towers and fortresses - do you see? - he furnished and encircled these walls with a ditch; these gifts, these weapons he dedicated to divinities of war, - you [can] still examine the trophies -; he dressed himself here from those summoned to arms, [it was] here he seized the armor of the British king.” Just as Phoenix related to Pyrrhus, preparing victorious wars against the Trojans, [about] unknown Achilles.

Happy Optatus, you, who trusting in green youth, will harden no matter the roads and valley, perhaps also - so may the divinity of the prince be near - you, and unwearied comrades united to friend, be girded at the side [with swords], with which Pylades from pious custom and the son of Menoetius [i.e., Patrolucus] wielded in Dardanian wars. Of course these harmonies are with you, this love is yours and I pray it may endures! Now the years of life more vigorously fly us; and for me I will aid [your] heart with vows and prayers! Yet if by chance I will disturb with customary murmuring and the fathers of Romulous come to [hear] my songs, [if] you are in need of me, Crispinus, and through all obstacles, I would dispatch my Achilles and he will look about for you. Yet you will better arrive - the omens of the poets hurry not in vain -, whoever now reveals to you the eagles [i.e., battle standards] and the camps, the same will give all [necessary] steps to sustain and to be surrounded with the proud rods and axes, by which the consuls of the fatherland have been seated.

But who from the exalted hills of Trojan Alba, from whence he the present god gazes close by on the walls of His Rome, is that herald who more quickly than Rumor enters and fills your dwellings, Crispinus? Certainly I have said: the auguries of the poets hurry not in vain. Lo! The magnificent threshold of honors and duties of Asonia to be borne Caesar has opened up and entrusts to you. Proceed, young man, stand up blessed carry forward such great talents [as are yours], and swear to and keep watch for sacred Germanicus to whom is handed over the first sword! Not less mighty this than if the God of War himself should extend the eagles and with grim countenance bring in the helmet. Go readily and learn the higher [honors] to be merited!

III. To the Memory of His Father.

Give to me yourself, learned father, dark powers from the Elysian fount and doleful music to be struck on an unhappy lyre. For the Delian caverns are not to be moved, nor is it the right custom to urge Cirrha without you. Whatever method Phoebus showed forth in the Corcyran shade, whatever Euhan from the Ismarian hills, I have [since] forgotten. The Parnassian fleece have shunned my tresses, and I am nervously frightened at the sad yew creeping midst the ivy - oh evil! - to wither the laurel. Doubtless I, who raised the deeds of magnanimous kings went inspired to equal lofty Mars with [my] chanting. Who then wretched, with my feeble spirit permitting, stretched frigid clouds into drowning Apollonian courage? The goddesses stand thunder-struck about the poet and neither fingers or voice are sweetly sounding. The guide herself the head propped up by the silent cithara, like the time after with Orpheus snatched away, she stood with you, oh Hebrus, discerning now, with song taken away, the deaf herds of animals and the sacred groves unmoved.
Yet you whether released from the limbs aiming at a flashing high place or surveying flashing strokes and the elements of things, [such as] who [is] a god, from whence [come] fires, what path leads the sun, what diminishes Phoebe [i.e., the moon] and what cause might restore [her] from lying hidden [to view], you resume the measures of esteemed Aratus; or whether you dwell in the mystic grassy plain of Lethe, near councils of heroes and blest shades, with the Maenian and Ascræan elders, no sluggish shadow, and you sound and mingle songs in turn: give natural voice, father, to great suffering. For thrice on the rim of heaven reviewing and thrice retracing [her orbit], Luna sees me sluggish with nothing from Helicon consoling [my] sad cares; as your fire reddened my looks and with wet eyes I drew up the ashes, the honor of [my] pursuits is worthless. In these tributes I scarcely set free [my] first feelings, and from silent cares to avert stagnation, even now with my hand slipping, not with a dry eye do I begin at the tomb you haunt, in which mound you quietly rest preserving [the memory of] our acres, where after the death of Aeneas, starry Ascanius poured upon Alba from the Latian hills, while he hated the fields made rich from Phrygian blood, a kingdom forming part of a the dowry of an ill-fated step-dame. Here I am - for the breath of the Sicanian crocus is not more fragrant, nor the rare cinnamon the rich Sabaeans reap for you, nor perfumed buds by Arabs - concluding for you the sacred offerings for the departed, I lament with Pierian song; oh receive the groans and wounds of a son, and tears which few parents ever have. Would that fortune gave to me hands for altars and a work equal to the temples, to raise up a towering mass, beyond the boulders of the Cyclops and the audacious stones of the Pyramids, to adorn the tomb with a large sacred grove! There surpassing the gifts of Sicilian sepulcher, the Nemean grove, and solemn ceremonies of maimed Peliops. There the naked strength of Greek males [i.e. athletes] would not split the air with the Oebalian disk, nor the sweat of horses wet the fields or the hoof give sound in the crumbling ditch; but rather a simple chorus of Phoebus, and with praising, father, I would duly bind you with the prize leaves of poets. The eyes dripping, and a priest groaning to the soul of shades, I would myself predict, to which not Cerberus with each mouth, nor the motions of Orpheus would be able to disturb you. And there your manners and deeds singing, and by chance maybe have me esteemed not less than vaunting Homer, and drawn equal to stern Maro in devotion.

Why should it be permitted that a mother, seated upon the warm [funeral] pile of the son, reproach the gods and the bronze threads of the Sisters more, or that as she beholds the fire of a youthful spouse, she overcomes the hands of a crowds opposing and holding her; about to die alongside the burning husband? Perhaps I should also strike the gods and envious Tartarus: even one wretched from afar might go to view a funeral. But not only does Nature give herself to grieving in rightful Piety; for me, father you, taken from life, go youthful and at the first threshold of the fates to harsh Tartarus. For neither did the Marathonian maid weep less sparingly weep at Icarius’ destruction by the crime of savage countrymen, than did the mother Astyanax falling from the Phrygian citadel. So that she [i.e.. Erigone, daughter of Icarius] at the final halter [i.e., for suicide] stifled [her] groans: yet it was a shame for, you after the funeral of great Hector, to have served a Haemonian husband. Not I, what melodious underworld offerings of fixed utterance the swan sends forth at death, nor will I invite to the ancestral pyres what the winged [maids] of Tyrrenia from the black cliff very sweetly menaced the mariner with, nor what Phlimela moans and complains with tongueless murmur to the cruel sister: all too familiar to the poet. Who has not at a burial bespoke all the tearful branches and buds of the daughters of Helios, and the boulders of Phrygia, and dared music contrary to Phoebus, with trustworthy Pallas [herself as well] not having joyed at a flute [i.e., on such an occasion?] Piety, forgotten of men, recalls you to heaven and Justice with a tongue of redoubled Eloquence bewails you, and Pallas and the Heliconian court of learned Phoebus; for whom it is labor to lead Aonian songs in six foot [meter] and those for whom, by measuring a poem with care to the tortoise-shell, Arcadia of the lyre was the name [given] and those under all the globe which Wisdom numbers sevenfold on the height of fame, who in dread buskin [i.e., stage costume for a tragedy] thundered the furies and hostile stars from heaven upon the homes of kings, and they who wore out wanton strength on sweet Thalia, or by a [metrical] foot crippled heroic ambitions. For having embraced all with spirit, the author lets it be known wide all the powers which may be spoken of, or if it pleased to refrain with Aonian rhythms, or if with voice loosened and freed to scatter rainstorms and harmonize with plain speaking.

Lay forth, Parthenope, from the sudden dust the half-demolished faces, and breathe from the mount and place [thy] hair upon the tombs and sunken burial of a great offspring, whom not any of the
heights of [Athenian] Munychia and shrewd Cyrene better excelled or bold Sparta gave birth to. If you were cast from an obscure stock, lacking of fame and with no holding in the race, you had approved him a fellow Euboean citizen with you and more of the Greeks than is thought of [one with] blood. So often joined with yours he surpassed the times, when in laudatory verse he would sing at the appointed quinquennial feasts; with an expression exceeding the Pylian of old and the face of the Dulichian monarch and a brow bound up with the splendor of either. You were not deformed born of obscure blood, nor without the light of noble birth (although the fortune of the parents was constrained by expenses); for Infancy with wealthy ceremony chose you to put aside purple mantle given with honor of lineage and the aristocratic gold of the breast. In [your] coming out at once the Aonian sisters smiled with favor, and Apollo, already charming to me, lowered and dipped the lyre of the boy into the sacred river. The glory of fatherland is not simple, and the origin of birth depends on an ambiguous contest of a twin lands [i.e., Rome and Greece.] Grecian Elea reports you derived from their tribe of Latin colonists, where the ships master [i.e., Palinurus] was vigilant [but] perished unhappily in the midst of the waves; yet from thence a greater from his long line of life it [i.e., Elea] approved...Partenope [i.e., ostensible gap in text]...other and different cities compete as birth places of [that] Homer they all commend; [but] he [i.e., Homer] is not a true [son] with these, the glory of fraud maintains [a] huge [count of] victims. And there, while you offer life years of well wishing [i.e., in the way of poetry], promptly are you taken to contests of ancestral purification hardly [meant] be be completed [even] by [grown] men, [so] swift and daring [you were] by nature for renown. The Euboean common folk were in awe at the youthful songs and parents showed you to [their] children. From whence your voice was frequent, and not without glory, at sacred battles: not as often did green Therapnae applaud at Castor’s racing course or the triumphant brother [i.e., Pollux] at a boxing bout. But if inclined to have been victorious at home [then]: what a prize [it is] now to merit being covered betimes with the boughs of Phoebus, now with the grass of Lerna, now with the Athamantian pine, yet with so many times having been wearied, did you nowhere bring forth boughs, did Victory [ever] take away [from you] or touch the hair of another?

Here for you to be trusted with the pledge of the fathers and honored manliness, with you to be guided by a preceptor, to learn the customs and deeds of forbearers - who fell at Troy, how Ulysses was delayed, how many steeds and battles of men Maeonides maneuvered in verse, and how much the old man of Ascra [i.e., Hesiod] and [he] of Sicily [i.e., Epicharmus] enriched the patriotic peasants, where, with convention prevailed upon, the voice of Pindar’s lyre might return, and Ibycus entreated of the birds, and Alcman was sung by the gloomy Amyclae, fierce Stesichorus, and reckless Sappho, not dreading the Leucadian cliffa, having undertaken the manly leap [i.e., in the taking of her own life], and those others the lyre has deigned worthy. [It was for] you to spread the learned songs of Battus’ son [i.e., Callimachus] and the hiding places of wily Lycophron, of obscure Sophron, and the the refined mysteries of Corinna. Yet why do I speak trifles? You were accustomed to bear equal yoke with Homer and to match hexameters with liberated verses, while never suffering what is more brief to be relinquished. What wonder, if those who left homelands seek you out, those from the Lucanian field, those from the mountains of stern Daunus, those that wept over the neglected home for Venus and the country of Alcides or the maid from the Sorrento’s summit that cast a watch on the Tyrrhenian deep, which nearer the bay with the war trumpet and oar, was observed long ago by one from the Ausonian hills, by a sojourner from a hearth-god of Cyme, which they sent from the port of Dicarchus and Baiae’s shore, where, with the deep mixed with middling shallows, fire breathes on the waters and homes watch over hidden passions? Thus to Avernus’ rocks and the dark cave of the Sibyl came peoples from every side asking; she sung omens of the Fates and deeds of the gods, a not ineffective prophetess despite foiled Phoebus. Soon also you instruct the future princes and the shoot of Romulus and stand firm, leading into the footsteps of the fathers. Under you thrived the Dardanian searcher of the secret fire, who hides the inner sanctums of furtive Diomede, and from thence the boy became acquainted with the sacred rite; being one to approve you showed arms to the Salii and certain fore-warnings of the skies to augurers; to whom is the right to recite Chalcidic song, why the hair of Phrygian flames could be concealed, and your many strokes gathered up [which] the Luperci feared.

And now perhaps one from that company gives laws to Eastern nations, another keeps in check Iberians, another at Zeugma shuts out Persian Achaemenids, these curb the wealthy of Asia, these other those of Pontus, these improve the forums with peace-maintaining laws, these hold dutiful station at the camp: you are the source of praise. To shape youthful hearts, neither Nester or Phoenix, guide of an
untamed ward, contended to shape youthful hearts for you, nor Chiron who, with Aecides wishing to hear sharp trumpets and bugles, subdued him with a different song.

While you celebrate such excellent things, suddenly Erinys [i.e., a Fury], from the Tarpeian mount, stirred the fire and provoked battles in Phlegra. The Capitol houses are alight with sacrilegious pine torches, and the cohorts of Latium took up the Furies of the Senones [i.e., a Gallic tribe.] Scarcely the flames rest, nor yet had this funeral pyre of the gods settled, when at the firebrands you, with vigor, chant many consolations for the razed temples, and would, with affectionate countenance, mourn the captives and crushing blows. The Latin princes and Caesar, the avenger of the gods, are amazed, and from the midst of the fire the Father of divinities nods in assent. And now it was his mind to weep with pious song at Vesuvian conflagrations and groan at the destruction overhanging the native country, when the Father removing the mountain from the lands lifted it to the stars, and cast it far and wide upon the unhappy cities.

The tuneful groves of Boetia at the time striking me also, when from your race descending I spoke the goddesses receiving: for [it was] not so much for me the stars, oceans and lands, which custom owes to the parent [of poets], but whatever distinction you first bestowed on this lyre, is to hope for fame in the tomb and not to be uttered to the multitude. You were as like the Latin fathers, such as often I might flatter with song, and I the happy spectator of the gift that you might appear! Oh how bewildering to weep with joyful prayers and respectful fears amidst glad modesty! How that day was yours, how for me there was no greater glory! When such observes the youth he begot on Olympian sand, the more the one strikes, the more he is slain deep within the heart; the spectators attend, he is watched by the great Achaneans, while frequently he covered up [his] eyes with a draught of dust and vows to die for a captured crown. [Alas] that for him so great under you a witness, I bore on the head only ancestral leaves, gifts of Ceres, and Chalcidic garlands. Hardly could the field of Dardanian Alba contain you, if through me you might carry off wreathes bestowed by the hand of Caesar! What strength to supply that day, how much of old age it was able to take away! For since the [award of] oak tree did not mixed with the [award of] olive [honor] press me, and hoped for honor has fled: how sweetly [it is that] you should take hold the unattainable [prize] of the Tarpeian Father! With you as our teacher, the “Thebiad” followed on the ancient first steps of the poets; You roused my song, laid out the deeds of heroes, and taught the bounds and settings of territories. Without you a path with uncertain bound fails for me and and the sails of a ship made destitute darken. Not only did you foster me with ample devotion: such also [were you] in [your] marriage. With one pine torch was marriage known to you, one love, certainly now I cannot separate [from you my] mother in the icy ashes; she feels with and holds you, she sees the tombs and greets you at dawn and sun’s setting, as others in feigned piety honor and bewail Pharian or Mygdonian funerals in sorrow not their own.

Why should I report the customs of weight known by their keeping? What loyalty, how worthless [is] greed, what care of modesty, how much love of [what is] right? And again when with delight to be relaxed,

what grace with words? How would old men be without a soul? With these things you have merited fame and kind praises, and a judge with concern for the gods pardoned not a sad wound. Your are taken, father, not unworthy of old age, not excessive, and joining thrice ten quinquennia purification ceremonies borne. But piety and grief do not permit me to number [time.] Oh that you might exceed transcending Nestor’s age and equal that of old Priam, [indeed] worthy to see me likewise [i.e., to such an age!] Yet not for you a door of gloomy death: by all means gentle circumstances, nor, with death pressing, did a slow lapse into senility send the limbs to the sepulcher, But inert torpor and death mirroring rest set you forth and in a false sleep bore you below to Tartarus. What groaning from I then, - the band of [my] comrades watched anxiously, and mother saw the likeness [i.e., to the father] and rejoicing knew [me.] What lamentation I produced! Allow pardon, shades, to have it spoken rightly, father: you could not have granted me more. Happy he [who], with unencumbered arms, has enclosed a father: and would wish, though he will be located at the seat of Elysium, to snatch and carry [him] away again through Danaan shadows; attempting and struggling living steps into Tarturus and the aged priestess of underworld Diana conveyed [him]; thus a lesser cause brought the lyre of Odrysa to languid Avernus; If one day returned the shade of Protesilaus, why father should either your harp or mine obtain naught [from the] spirits? Thus it is right for me to touch the father’s face, right to have hands joined; let whatever law follow [as a result.]
Yet you, kings of the shades and Ennean Juno [i.e., Proserpine], if my prayer be approved, take away the pine torches and [snaky] tresses of the Eumenides; let the cruel porter sound not [i.e., not bark] at the gate, let distant valleys keep Centaurs, Hydras and Scylla’s monster’s in darkness, and let the final boatman invite aged shades, with common people struck down, to the banks and settle them gently amid the sea-grass. Go, blessed spirits and crowds of Greek poets, scatter with Lethaean garlands the illustrious soul, and present the grove, which no Fury [ever] invaded, where there is no false day and with air most resembling heaven. Yet from thence may you come, where the better gate of horn succeeds niggardly ivory, and in a dream imagine show what one is accustomed to. Thus the sacred nymph, from under the Arician cavern, declared to Numa to maintain the peaceful rites, thus it is believed by the Ausonians for Scipio to command full visions of Latian Jove, thus Sulla was not without Apollo.

IV. Sleep.

By what crime or what error, Sleep, most placid youth of the gods, have I deserved misfortune, from those gifts of yours that I solely need? In each flock is silent the birds and beasts and the curved mountain peaks simulate weary slumbers, not the same sound as with wild rivers: dread from the ocean subsides, and the seas quieting lie down with the land. Seven times now returning Phoebe gazes at me standing with ailing eyes; as many [times] as the [starry] lamps of Octa and Paphos revisit and as often as Tithonia passes by our complaints, and, we pitied, she lays on with an icy blow. On what will I [be able to] suffice? Not if sacred Argus was supporting me with a thousand alternate eyes, nor ever remained awake [but] with the body entire. But now alas! If anyone being bound under the night holding the long arms of a girl. repels you further, oh Sleep, from hence come [to me], not that I insist you with all pinions to pour upon my eyes - this a happier throng beseeches -: it is sufficient you touch me with the extreme tip of the wand, or with hovering knee [i.e., step?] lightly cross over.

V. Lament for His Young Manservant.

Wretched me! For not with any solemn words could I begin, hated now [as I am] by tuneful waves of Castalia and by grave Phoebus. What secret rites of yours, Pierian sisters, what altars have we defiled? Speak, following the punishment it should be permitted that the crime be spoken. Surely I did not put down footsteps in an unapproachable sacred grove? Or drink from a forbidden spring? What so great guilt, what error [is it that] we alone for? Behold at these expiring arms, our vitals grasping, the breath of the child is wrenched away, one who indeed bears neither my lineage, name or face; I was not the father, yet see the tears and livid cheeks and believe the weepings of one childless: I childless. Here fathers and mothers with open heart ought come together; bring you ashes and blame with [your] eyes, she who, if beneath full breasts, carried herself with drooping step to child funerals, sank under drenched bosoms, and with [her] milk quenched burning embers. Whoever has yet plunged a youth stamped with the flower of tender years into ash and next saw cruel flames crawling on the young person so laid down, let them attend and gape with me in successive wailing: he will be outdone in tears, and, you, Nature, will blush. So great the savagery, so great is the madness of my grief. Here too I struggle, when thrice ten days devastated, inclined to the tomb, and I turn lamenting to discordant songs and with sobbing words undertake verses: you wish the utterances of the lyre, and anger is impatient with being silent. Yet the customary laurels on the crown are not for me, nor is it an honor on the brow to wear a sacred vitta [i.e., a fillet] [now,] lo a yew forest will wither the hairs, and weeping cypress ward off cheerful ivy boughs; I strike not chords with an ivory thumb [i.e., quill or plucking device], but unsure I rend the frantic harp with stuttering fingers. Alas, it helps, it helps undeserving disheveled song to pour out and lay bare wretched sorrow. Have I thus so merited? And thus should the gods gaze with divine disfavor on my thinking to sing? Might it [i.e., my singing] shame Thebes and young Achilles? Will nothing mild now flow from speech? I was he - how often! - who could charmingly soothe the wounds of mother, father and grieving widows, I the gentle consoler of those
mourning heard by bitter posterity and shades of the tomb, I seek cures and a healing hand for injuries my
own, from the highest, and I fail. Now is the time, friends, of which I wipe eyes and gashes in the breasts
outpouring: deliver succor, absolve cruel thanks [owed.] Doubtless when I your funerals with mournful
rhythms [lacuna in text...] reproaching: “You who suffer others’ loss, put back unhappy tears and preserve
sorrowful songs.” It was true: with powers and abundance exhausted naught was to be said by me, and
the mind found nothing worthy for so crushing a blow: pardon me, lad, every voice and all words seemed
mean and inadequate: you cover me with a mournful mist. Ah! Hard it was, if seeing he finds the dear
spouse to be wounded, that Thracian Orpheus should sweetly have sung, or if Apollo, taking in the grave of
[beloved poet] Linus, had not been silent. Perhaps I am perhaps spoken of as too zealous in grief and
weeping and to have exceeded shame? Moreover for whom do you take away our groans and lamentations?
Too happy beyond measure, too cruel and free of your restraint, oh Fortune, is he who ventures to
pronounce law to wailings and decree the limits of sorrowing! Alas that mourning enrages; better you
should detain and hinder swift fires or rivers flying the banks than forbid the miserable to despair. However
severe and whoever he is, let him know the cause of our distresses.

I learning loved, not talkative delights of Egyptian markets from the ship and the childish chatter
of the Nile, the too much impudent and witty tongue: he [was] mine, mine. I beheld the anointed falling
with the earth, but I cherished [him] with fecund song, and demanding of life, sowed new airs with his
trembling [infant] cries. What more could parents bestow? In fact freedom and other beginnings I gave
you, little one, [while] beneath milking breasts, when as yet ungrateful you would laugh at our reward.
[My] love may have hurried, but it hurried rightly, lest liberty might any day be lost to one so small. Surely
from thence might not I disheveled strike envy and the unjust gods of Tartarus? Shall I not bemoan you,
dear boy? With what is safe and sound [already given], I did not desire sons, whom having been begotten
for me, at once I was fixed and engaged with the first dawn, to whom I taught sounds and words, and
unraveled complaints and hidden hurts, and crawling below I having descended raised to our kisses, and
now with coaxing bosom, now the cheeks sinking to sleep, to summon kind slumber. For whom the first
speech was my name, and the laughter of tender play, and from our face came joys...

On the War in Germany - a fragment

lights: the humble good sense of Nestor-like Crispus and Fabius Veiente - the purple marks each
as mighty, thrice by name have they filled the list of memorial festivals - and Acilius, near to the confines
of Caesar’s palace.