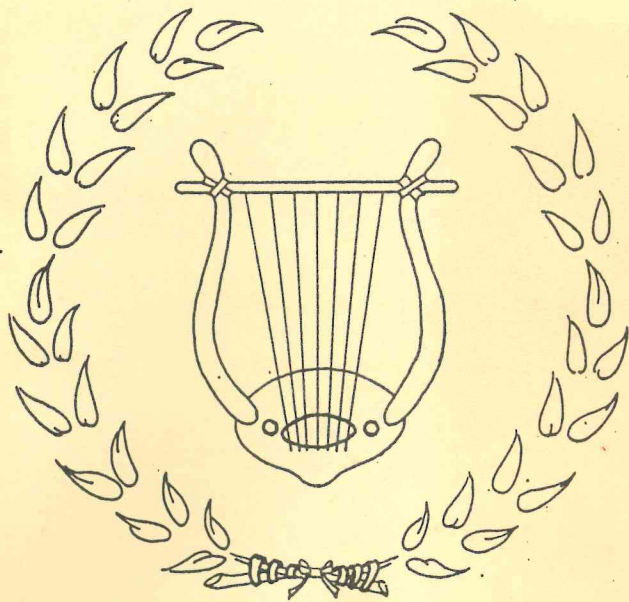


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Paraphrases
from the
Latin Poets



Garrett W. Thiessen
Bernice L. Fox

FOREWORD

The Department of Classics at Monmouth College is pleased to reissue this little book in honor of the 1987 Illinois Latin Tournament held at the college.

Garrett Thiessen was Professor of Chemistry at Monmouth College from 1930 until 1967 and had a life-long love of Latin language and literature.

Bernice L. Fox was Professor of Latin at Monmouth College from 1947 until 1981 and was active for many years in the Illinois Classical Conference.

Quare habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli
Quaecumque, quod, o patrona virgo,
Plus uno maneat perenne saeclo.

Catullus, 1.8-10

Thomas J. Sienkewicz
Capron Professor of Classics

PREFACE

In 1958 Dr. Thiessen and I had a little booklet of poems printed under the title **POEMS FROM THE LATIN**. Its popularity led us the next year to publish a new collection under the title **MORE POEMS FROM THE LATIN**. Now we have revised and combined those two publications and have added twenty-four previously unpublished poems to form the present book.

This little book is not made up of representative selections from Latin poetry. It is not even representative of the poets included. It gives as incomplete a picture of Latin poetry as a bouquet of flowers gives of a flower garden. A person may choose roses and snapdragons, and leave beautiful lilies and gladioli untouched. Similarly, our "bouquet" has much chosen from Horace and Catullus, while Ovid and Vergil are practically ignored, and such people as Tibullus and Lucan are not included at all. And just as a person may choose several red and white roses but not pick a single pink or yellow one, so from a writer like Horace we have chosen several poems on such subjects as death, the great equalizer, while we have entirely passed over the golden mean. Our only basis of selection was what struck our fancy.

Another characteristic of much of this book which will disturb the man who knows and loves these poems in the original is that only Dr. Thiessen's verses can in any way be classified as paraphrases. Mine are, rather, adaptations. Addison said of Pope's translation of Homer: "An admirable poem, Mr. Pope, but it is not Homer." And my version of "The Bore" is an amusing poem, but it is certainly not Horace. I have tried to express the thoughts these poets would have written if they had been born in Twentieth Century America. I have tried to remove the barrier of time and let them speak directly to a modern audience in terms which would have meaning for that audience. I

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feel that the Latin poets had much to say which has more than historical value. I think their ideas can amuse or touch deeply the minds of a generation which has, in general, lost contact with them. Thus I have chosen poems which delighted me and have tried to share some of this pleasure with my friends. This is the sole purpose of this little book.

PREFACE

To

Poems From The Latin

This little brochure makes no pretense of being scholarly. It doesn't even claim to have any organization. It consists of selections from some of the Latin poets, chosen by whim, and paraphrased into English verse.

The purpose of most of my paraphrases has been to give a completely contemporary version of what the poet was saying. This is the reason for introducing automobiles and golf and sputnik, and changing even some of the proper names to those more familiar in modern usage. The poets themselves would probably find my versions confusing, but I think that they say in modern English what the Latin poets were saying in their Latin. These modern versions were made in order to introduce the ideas of the Roman poets to people who know little or no Latin, and to show these people that what the Roman poets said is neither dull nor out-of-date.

Dr. Thiessen's versions were not made for the same purpose. His paraphrases have been used mostly in reference to the times that produced the original poems. Therefore his versions are invariably nearer the original than mine are. However, neither of us wrote for the Latin scholar. We wrote primarily for the fun of it, and we hope that you will share in some of our pleasure.

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PREFACE

To

More Poems From The Latin

The kindly acceptance of a person's writing simply encourages him to do more of it. Consequently, since people were so generous in their comments on *POEMS FROM THE LATIN*, we have prepared *MORE POEMS FROM THE LATIN*, again basing our choice on pure caprice and paraphrasing freely. Some friends foolishly urged us to include some Catullus in this "volume." And so we did.

We realize that in making these paraphrases we lack two rather important qualities which these Roman poets had—the youthful intensity of Catullus, and the *curiosa felicitas* of Horace. Perhaps we might summarize our efforts by paraphrasing an epigram from Martial:

The verses in this little book, we know,
Are sometimes apt and sometimes weak in style;
The greatest bulk of them are just so-so,
But one good phrase will make the whole worthwhile.

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HORACE, ODES II, 3

Remember, Delius, whate'er you do,
Let not ambition swallow you,
For whether mayor or town bum
The final destiny will come
To you in death.

Our life is short, the wise man knows,
And youth more fragile than the rose.
So take that hunting trip, and play
Some golf on every sunny day,
While you have breath.

For you will leave your big estate
When your time comes, and soon or late,
Your stocks and bonds and bank account
Will be paid off—the full amount—
To all your heirs.

For death's not bribed in any way.
To king and beggar comes the day
When everything life holds is past,
And we shall all find Fate at last
Unyielding to our prayers.

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HORACE, ODES I, 9

The weary trees are bending low
Beneath the burden of deep snow;
Ice glistens where the river ran;
The cold wind chills both beast and man.

Build high the fire to warm our skin,
Drink deep aged wine for warmth within.
Leave all else to the gods, who bring
Each winter to a close with spring.

Don't ask what our tomorrows hold;
One day we'll wake to find we're old.
So dance and sing now, love and live,
With the zest that only youth can give.

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HORACE, EPODE II

"How blessed is he who spends his life
Far from the city's rush and strife;
Whose father left him fields of grain
To harvest, plant, and reap again.
A drop in stocks can't mar his day;
War threats are echoes, far away;
Politics and graft and such
Are words—his life they never touch.
He walks the earth with head held high,
And fawns on no man who goes by.
His interests are his vines and trees,
His flocks and herds and hives of bees.
His recreation is to pass
An afternoon on tender grass
Beneath a shade tree, where is heard
The symphony of brook and bird.
In winter with his dog (and luck!)
He hunts for rabbit and wild duck.
When, weary, homeward he returns,
There, where a cheerful log fire burns,
Await his slippers, pipe and chair—
His comfort is his wife's first care.
No crepe suzettes at supper, nor
Anchovies and rich caviar;
But home-grown vegetables and fruit,
Fresh milk and meat their palates suit.
In sweet content he looks around
At flocks and herds and fertile ground
And his wholesome family at his side.
What greater wealth could life provide?"
Thus spoke the money-lender, while
He closed his monthly books. His smile
Revealed that business had been good.
Next month he'd double it if he could.

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HORACE, ODES II, 16

For peace of mind the sailors pray,
When glowering skies and clouds of gray
Hide moon and guiding star.
The soldier, as he leads the fight
In battle, dreams through the long night
Of quiet fields afar.

Elusive, precious peace of mind,
Your presence, as the rich will find,
Their gold and gems won't buy.
Prestige and wealth can't close the door
To restless worries; evermore
They crowd around nearby.

He owns what none has ever bought,
Whose sleep is not disturbed by thought
Of what a thief may steal;
Whose wealth just satisfies his need,
Who feels no pang of jealous greed
To spoil his evening meal.

Why do we strive so hard to gain
So many things with so much pain?
Our life will soon be gone.
Though we may seek a distant sun,
However fast or far we run,
We take ourselves along.

Our worries follow where we go,
Much faster than the winds that blow;
They're with us all the while.
Rejoice in what is good today;
Tomorrow's cares be what they may,
Take trouble with a smile.

Nothing is wholly free of flaw;
Nature follows this constant law—
Each blessing brings its curse.
Achilles died before his prime;
Tithonus far outlived his time—
Which fate can be called worse?

And you and I, how very far
Apart in ways of life we are,
Yet each of us how blessed!
You have your cattle, horses, sheep;
Your well-filled barns and silos keep
Your herds the very best.

Though I have no such vast estate,
The gods grant gifts to compensate,
With which I would not part:
Talent to use as best I may,
And power to take what men may say
Without a bitter heart.

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HORACE, EPODE 15

One warm spring night not long ago,
Beneath a moonlit sky,
You clung to me as vine to tree,
And breathed a lovely lie.

You vowed our love would never fade
Till wolf and lamb were friend;
While winter had storms, and youth had charms,
Our devotion would not end.

But shallow were your promises,
Your "love" was for a day;
And now I find your fickle mind
Is turned another way . . .

And you, who glory in the thought
That you've won her from me,
Though rich and wise, and in her eyes
Quite handsome you may be;

Yet soon my fate will be your own—
She'll tear your heart in half.
When she goes from you to someone new,
'Twill be my turn to laugh!

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HORACE'S ANNIVERSARY HYMN

Apollo and Diana, say,
Ye guardians of the forest way,
Who fill the heavens with glory bright,
How shall we pray, this holy night,

Whereof the ancient gypsy lore
Hath said: sweet maidens evermore
Should join with noble lads in song,
To praise the gods who made Rome strong?

Thou blazing solar disc, whose ray
Is the harbinger of the day,
Reborn the same, yet ever new,
May Rome transcendent all else in view!

Goddess of birth! (whate'er thy name)
Provide us manhood, strong of frame
And spirit; may our future state
Be, as the fathers planned it, great;

Sure that each century will view
These rites, and hear this song anew
Upon the triple holiday
When Romans throng their shrines to pray.

Yet fates who spin the human web,
Preserve, though lives of men must ebb,
The great things done in days of yore;
And, to the mighty past, add more!

Divinities of Earth and Grain!
Grant fruitful winds and send the rain!
On fields and meadows lay the crown
Of wheat and meat! Pray do not frown!

Apollo, put thy bow aside!
Diana of the Moon! Abide!
Hark to the song, O Queen and King,
Which male and female chorus bring!

If of a truth Rome is thine own;
If by thy mighty power alone
The Trojan remnant crossed the sea
Unto a city yet to be;

If ye have brought our founder here
From flaming Troy, and have made clear
The path that he and his must go
To raise a power Troy could not know;

Then, God and Goddess! grant our youth
Sincere obedience to all truth;
Give gentle peace to folk grown old;
And stay Rome well with men and gold!

Our renowned Emperor divine
Lays on thine altars snow white kine!
Please grant to him sufficient grace
To quell and rule each hostile race.

Barbarians from far and near
Already bow the knee, and fear
Our legions and our ordered might.
Now peace and honor, truth and light

And manhood's worth, our land adorn;
And plenty spills her copious horn!
—If but Apollo, Poet and Seer,
Healer Divine, our prayer now hear,

And if Diana on her throne
Will heed these praying children, own
The worship which we bring, and be
Propitious through this century!

Ye populace! We bid you know
Jove heeds our worship, and will show
His favor! Turn ye each back home,
And fill our century with—Rome!

GWT

HORACE, ODES IV, 7

Now the winter snows have melted
And the grass and trees grow green;
Once again the joyous springtime
Delicately tints the scene.

But the ever-changing seasons
Warn that nothing's here to stay:
Every year cuts down our lifetime,
Every hour shortens today.

Warm spring breezes are refreshing
After winter's bitter cold,
But the summer is upon us
When the spring's a few weeks old.

Summer's burning grip is loosened
Under fruitful autumn's sway;
Then before we know what's happened,
Winter's blast blows fall away.

When the moon in its last quarter
Grows so small it's hard to see,
We don't grieve for there will follow
A new moon eventually.

But once our small light is darkened,
It is dimmed forevermore;
We become just one of millions
Who have lived and died before.

Who is there so bold and foolish
As to confidently say
That the gods will give tomorrow
To add to his brief today?

So enjoy what life has given,
Never hesitate to spend
What you have. (Your heirs will do so,
When your life comes to an end.)

For when once you cross life's threshold,
And you travel down death's lane,
Neither eloquence nor virtue
Ever brings you back again.

HORACE, ODES II, 18

My house has neither marble halls
Nor golden chandeliers;
It has no gorgeous fireplace, nor
Rich draperies hung in tiers.
But I have one possession which
Mere wealth can never buy,
For I have other men's respect
And love, and that is why
I'm happy with my little place,
I ask for nothing more.
I watch the rich get richer, while
They trample on the poor.
I watch them cheat in business deals;
Their greed seems without end.
They build estates and bank accounts—
For someone else to spend.
For prince and pauper, when Death comes,
Will go the selfsame way;
And Death will not be bribed at all,
By any kind of pay.
He took the powerful Stalin, and
He took the poor Jones boy.
The mighty he knocks from their thrones,
And brings the suffering — joy.

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THE BORE

(As described by Horace, Satires I, 9)

As I was strolling down the street,
Enjoying life, I chanced to meet
A man whom I could call by name.
That's all the acquaintance we might claim.
Like a long-lost pal he grabbed my hand,
Inquiring, "How you doing?" and
To be polite I said, "Not too
Bad, and I hope the same is true
With you." I walked on; so did he.
I asked, "Did you wish to see me?"
"Only to talk, since you and I
Are both great talkers." His look was sly.
"That's good," I stupidly replied,
And then I desperately tried
To get away. I would walk fast,
Then stop at store windows we passed.
He did the same, and all the time
He kept on talking, without rhyme
Or reason — about the weather,
The new fall styles, the cost of leather
Goods. I cursed my plight,
And wished I weren't so darned polite.
"Where are you going?" he inquired.
"To see a friend," I answered, tired
Of being kind. "He's very ill
With a bad virus that's sure to kill."
Finally, my desire to be
Rid of him he had to see.
Then he remarked, "You'd like me to
Be gone and cut out pestering you.
But I am going along to see
Your friend with you — you can't shake me!"
"Don't you have mother, children, wife?"
I asked. "You should not risk your life."
"Nope," he replied, "I've buried all
My family." Lucky I would call
Them. Now there's only me
For him to talk to death. 'Twas he
The fortune teller must have meant
When she said physical ailment

Would not bring me to my last breath—
Some chatterbox would be my death.
And now he got around to talk
Of why he really joined my walk.
"I hear that you and Mayor Brown
Are very close. He runs the town,
And you run him. I'm sure that he
Would find it helpful to meet me.
I know some places he could get
Some good kick-backs if he would let
Me work for him." I angry cried
"I don't advise him, and besides,
He'd enter no dishonest deal."
"That," he said blandly, "makes me feel
That more than ever I should know
So good a man. I'd love him. So
Introduce me, and I'll say
A good word for you every day."
"You don't need introductions," I
Replied; "your gall will get you by."
Just then I saw my closest friend
And thought my troubles now would end.
I called him, and with nods and signs
So he could not miss my designs,
I said, "I had almost forgot
We wished to talk about a lot
Of private matters right away."
He laughed and said, "Some other day
Will do, I see you're busy now."
I'll get even with him some day, somehow!
I'd given up hope, when all at once
A policeman tapped my leech — the dunce
In his pursuit of me had parked
His car by a hydrant. He embarked
To move it, begging me to wait,
But I sneaked out, and escaped my fate.

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HORACE, ODES I, 28 (1)

Here lies a man whose keen eyes looked out into
space.

Who measured the moon and the sun,
Six feet of earth is now the space that he needs—
What would serve anyone.

All famous heroes have met a similar fate:
Great Caesar no longer survives;
Neither does Shakespeare, Einstein, Louis Pas-
teur—
Though theirs seemed timeless lives.

Houdini hoped he could find some secret way back;
His magic was of no avail.
No mortal man has yet found any escape
From death's shadow-filled trail.

Whether by shipwreck or war or cancer or heart,
It doesn't much matter. At last
Death reaches out and makes the old and the young
Merely part of the past.

BLF

HORACE, ODES II, 11

Who cares what Khrushchey* might have said?
Or where old Sputnik sticks its head?
Life's too short for all that worry;
Our youth is wasted in this flurry.
The rose won't bloom the whole year long,
The harvest moon will soon be gone,
So why should you become involved
With problems that will not be solved?
It's better you, while yet you may,
Get full enjoyment from this day,
Take a blanket and some beer
And think of nothing but good cheer.
Take a pretty girl along.
And your whole day will be a song.

*This name may be changed as the world's po-
litical situation changes.

BLF

HORACE, ODES I, 22

If all your life is wholesome,
And if your heart is pure,
You need no lethal weapons
To make yourself secure.

One day while I was strolling
About my Sabine farm,
Upon my lips a love-song,
I noticed with alarm

A mighty wolf leap at me,
With dripping, hungry jaw;
No fiercer, deadlier creature
Earth's wastelands ever saw.

To fight or run was useless,
So, loud I sang my lay;
And—would you e'er believe it?—
He turned and ran away!

So, if I go a-trekking
To lands of ice and storm
Or if I make safari
Where Afric suns are warm,

I'll take no poisoned arrows,
No Moorish sling or bow;
I'll simply know some love-songs,
And I'll sing the ones I know;

I'll blithely tread the bad lands
As I trod my Sabine field,
For the whole world loves a lover,
And his heart's his golden shield.

GWT

HORACE, ODES IV, 1

Ah, goddess of love, so fair and bright.
 You cannot frighten me.
 From your subtle tricks and conquering might
 I am at long last free.

I am not such as once I was
 When warm blood filled my veins;
 Age lacks the fire a young man has.
 You'll not catch me again!

The world is full of younger folk.
 Who want to play your game.
 On them work out your little joke;
 Let them burn by your flame.

For neither pretty form nor face
 Can longer catch my eye.
 I'm free! Yet Ann, with her sweet grace,
 Charms me—I wonder why!

BLF

CARPE DIEM—HORACE, ODES I, 11

Don't seek to learn what final fate
 The gods have planned for you or me;
 It is their will we should not know
 How long or short our lives may be.

'Tis better just to take each day.
 And never let our hearts inquire
 Whether next winter's snows will find
 Us sitting here before the fire.

Don't worry what the future holds;
 Be wise, and do your daily task.
 Our life at best is very brief;
 The fool alone for "time" will ask.

The seconds slip by while we talk;
 The minutes wasted by us must
 Rob us of hours. Let's grasp today,
 And in tomorrow put no trust.

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Fear not to wed your little slave
 Xanthian Phoeus. Did not brave
 Achilles fall to Briseis' smile
 And ivory skin, she slave the while?

Ajax, son of Telamon,
 By captive Tecmessa undone;
 And Agamemnon, indiscreet,
 Lured by a slave girl to defeat

Bear witness that, in days of yore,
 Free men to slaves in love gave o'er.
 Likely enough this captive lass
 Has parents who did wealth amass!

Some unfair god with angry fist
 Forced her name on a slave-mart's list;
 And you may find, with proper awe,
 A King is your new father-in-law!

A girl so faithful and so kind,
 Averse to money in her mind—
 Her parents must be royal, no less.
 This union now I rise to bless.

I praise her arms, her legs, her features!
 She is the loveliest of creatures!
 But please don't think I'm getting sporty—
 I — trembling on the edge of forty!

GWT

HORACE, ODES IV, 10

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,"
 For once your youth has fled,
 You cannot bring it back again
 With rouge and lipstick's red.
 You may wear young girls' clothes and try
 To be as you once were;
 But youth will pity you and say,
 "Poor old thing, look at her."

BLF

HORACE, ODES I, 24

We need not feel ashamed of tears we shed
 In sadness when a cherished friend is dead.
 Therefore, I'll sing my little sad refrain
 For one I loved and will not see again.
 Eternal sleep has closed Quintilius' eyes;
 He will not wake to see the new dawn rise.
 All people mourn the loss of such a friend,
 And grieve to think so pure a life must end.
 Some one to fill his place we'll seek in vain;
 We'll not find such a gentleman again.
 And no power under heaven can bring back breath
 To one whose lips are tightly sealed by death.
 We must accept Fate's often harsh decree:
 What can't be changed must be borne patiently.

BLF

HORACE, ODES I, 31

Apollo throned! Thy poet prays,
 To thee he pours this wine;
 And unto thee lifts up this plea,
 In thy resplendent shrine.

The rarest wines our land can grow
 I ask not, for my mouth;
 I ask no grain of sunny Spain,
 Nor beef from our rich South.

No Indian ivory nor gold,
 Nor treasured argosy;
 The simplest fare, and things to wear
 Are quite enough for me.

Apollo god! I simply ask
 To use what now I own;
 And that, when old, my health may hold
 In muscle, brain, and bone.

And only two more boons I crave:
 Be my life short or long,
 Don't let it lack its gusty smack,
 Don't let it lack a song.

GWT

CATULLUS 43

Is this the girl they told me was so fair?
 It cannot be. This creature has no grace.
 I do not find one lovely feature there,
 Neither in bearing, form, nor yet in face.
 Her mouth is weak; her eyes—I can't recall
 Their color—and her nose adds nothing much.
 Her hands are short and stubby, not at all
 The feminine hands your hands reach out to touch.
 How can her fellow townsmen even dare
 To call her beautiful in any way?
 How could they go so far as to compare
 Her with my Lesbia? All that I can say
 Is: Beauty before such judges would be waste.
 Oh, what a gross example of poor taste!

BLF

CATULLUS 3

Let every lovely thing bow down its head
 In grief: the world lacks charm it had before.
 The sparrow of my dear one now is dead;
 The darling of my darling is no more.

It loved her as a child would love its mother.
 It sat upon her finger trustingly,
 And sang for her alone and for no other,
 As she smiled down at it adoringly.

But now the voice is stilled. Never again
 Will it sing out its notes of joy and mirth.
 Oh, cruel selfish Death, with cold disdain
 You crush all precious, lovely things to earth.

Poor pretty sparrow, she whom you held dear
 Has mourned your vanished charm with many a
 tear.

BLF

CATULLUS 45

Septimius, with his arm around
His sweetheart Acme, said,
"I'll love you with my heart and soul
Till my last breath is fled.

"For you fierce lions I would fight;
I'd give my life for you.
There's nothing you could ever ask,
I would not gladly do."

And Cupid weighed the value of
The statement he had heard;
Then nodded his approval, for
Truth was in every word.

But Acme kissed her lover's lips
And whispered tenderly,
"My darling, though your love is great,
Still greater love fills me."

And Cupid weighed the value of
The statement he had heard;
Then nodded his approval, for
Truth was in every word.

To be both loved and loving,
With such intensity!
Were ever two more happy?
Could love more blessed be?

BLF

CATULLUS 85

I hate you and I love you.
How can this be true?
I do not know,
But it is so,
And tears my heart in two.

BLF

CATULLUS 76

If any recompense is in life's plan
For those who have kept faith with God and man,
Then years of joy, Catullus, you will see
To compensate for your deep misery.
For everything that man could say or do
You've done and said. Yet she has been untrue.
Then why torment yourself with carking grief
Of unrequited love? Your one relief
Will be to tear her from your heart—today!
Although 'twill hurt, there is no other way.
Oh gods, if mercy is a part of you,
If you shed pity on a life that's true,
Then take this fevered love out of my soul,
Cleanse me of it, and once more make me whole.
I do not pray for love returned, nor such
A boon as faithfulness. That is too much
For which to ask. Just make me well again.
Please don't forsake me in my mortal pain.

BLF

CATULLUS 75

Never again will my mind be
Completely logical and free
To follow reason's lead.
It could not accept you if you would reform;
And it can't reject you though you may perform
Every evil deed.

BLF

CATULLUS 70

My sweetheart says that no one else
Can give her such a thrill
As I do. No one ever did,
And no one ever will.

But the words of a woman in your arms,
As all fond lovers know,
Are written on the water, or
Are for the winds to blow.

BLF

CATULLUS 7

How many kisses are enough
For lovers such as we?
I'll tell you if you first will bring
These answers back to me.

How many grains of golden sand
Surround the pyramids?
How many leaves in forests green
Dance as the west wind bids?

How many stars in the silent night
Look down from high above
To watch men make their secret way
To a rendezvous of love?

Add all these figures in one sum
And you will almost know
How many kisses are enough
For one who loves you so.

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CATULLUS 5

Kiss me, my sweet, and don't count worth a cent
The frowns and scowls of those old fogies who
Have quite forgot, or maybe never knew
The thrill that comes from love's enjoyment.
The sun that sets today will rise tomorrow,
But once the night has dimmed our little day,
Its light has gone forever; thus I say
Let's fill each precious minute. Ban all sorrow
Until another time, while you and I
Kiss first a thousand thousand times, and then
Make it a hundred hundred more, again
A thousand, till the number grows so high
That we can't count them. Then no gossip can
Total a sum not known by any man.

BLF

CATULLUS 41

Amaena, who apparently
Was trying to be coy,
Came up to me with simpering smile
And called me her sweet boy.

She is the snub-nosed mistress
Of our town's weakest bum.
You won't find less attractiveness
For quite some time to come.

Some one should call a doctor, quick!
There are no "if's" or "but's";
When this girl plays the coquette's part,
She must be just plain nuts!

BLF

CATULLUS 72

You told me that you cared for me alone.
My Lesbia of the magical caress;
And I loved you with man's love for his mate,
As well as with a father's tenderness.
But now I find you meant not what you said,
For many others have been in my place.
Therefore, my passion grows more fierce and wild,
Though you seem cheap and vile when we embrace.

How can this be, you ask; and I reply:
Mistreatment fans the flame of man's desire;
But honor and respect to ashes burn
When love is changed into lust's raging fire.

BLF

CATULLUS 96

There is so little, Calvus, can be said
Before the silent portal of the tomb,
Where lies your dear Quintilia newly wed
And swiftly lost to you in early bloom.

You vainly yearn to lift to her your love,
And—could it be?—she watches from the sky,
And seeks to tell you all is well above,
And to live in your heart is not to die.

GWT

MARTIAL'S EPIGRAMS

Martial II, 58

Your clothes are of the latest cut and style;
You see my last year's wardrobe and you smile,
Well, smile ahead. I don't have your array,
But then I don't have all your bills to pay.

BLF

Martial IV, 41

Why do you wear on your neck a scarf
When for speaking you appear?
That protective covering would have more use
If it covered your listener's ear.

BLF

Martial, VIII, 5

You kept giving girl friends mink coats—
I think this was your twelfth!
So now you don't have any coat
To cover up yourself.

BLF

Martial, I, 109

Tico—more beguiling than the sparrow of Catullus;
Tico—with a kiss to warm the heart of any girl;
Tico—more appealing than a curly-headed
youngster;

Tico—much more precious than a diamond or a
pearl.

There is nothing more enchanting than my little
pet dog, Tico.

When I talk to him, he almost seems to say
That he knows and shares my sadness when my
world seems dark and lonely

And his heart is filled with joy when I am gay.
He has added so much pleasure to the routine of
my living

That I cannot bear the haunting thought that death
Will erase his personality with quick annihilation.
His existence to be lost with his last breath.
So I had a picture painted—such a likeness of
my pet!

Put the painting by the dog and you will feel
That the picture is so lifelike that it has to be alive,
And the dog himself too charming to be real.

BLF

Page Twenty-Four

Martial, X, 47

If I could have whatever things would make
Life most worth living, here is what I'd take:
A little wealth willed to me by a friend,
Since money earned is ever hard to spend;
A fertile piece of land to always give
Enough return of food that I could live
With ample in reserve from year to year—
Then times of drought would bring them no fear;
A simple way of life, no business cares,
And socially no formal dress affairs;
A healthy body with the strength to do
The chores a gentleman's accustomed to;
A few congenial friends with whom to share
My evening meals of plain, old-fashioned fare;
Enough red wine to make our evenings gay,
But not enough to drive good taste away;
With normal zest for feminine company,
I'd neither prudish nor immoral be;
A quiet sleep would make the night hours fly,
And tranquilizer pills I'd never buy;
With no complexes to disturb my thought,
I'd be content with what my life had brought;
My limitations I'd accept with grace,
And death I'd neither seek nor dread to face.

BLF

Martial, VII, 3

I do not send my poems for you to see,
Because I fear that you'll send yours to me.

BLF

Martial, VIII, 35

If like to like is drawn, then I must say
You two should lead a perfect married life.
For you're the worst of possible husbands
And married to the worst possible wife.

BLF

Martial, V, 29

You feed me hard bread crusts with the excuse
That they will make me fair in days to come.
I look at you and think that all your life
You must have eaten only soft bread crumb.

BLF

Page Twenty-Five

Martial, V, 81

You'll always be poor if you start that way, my friend.
The only way to make money is to have some money to spend.

BLF

Martial, I, 10

Our Johnny woos Amelia
With sighs and prayers and flowers.
Because she is so beautiful?—She's not.
What is it that she has, then,
To attract this man of ours?
Why, a coffer and a cough is what she's got!

BLF

Martial, V, 58

You always say tomorrow you will live,
But when, Postumus, will tomorrow be?
Where is this bright tomorrow to be found?
Does it lie hidden somewhere o'er the sea?
It's old — you've talked about it for some years.
To buy it, how much would I have to pay?
You'll live tomorrow? Even today is spent;
Wise is the man who lived life yesterday.

BLF

Martial, XI, 67

You give me nothing while you live,
But say that every glass and dish
Will be mine when you're dead. You fool,
If you don't know, then, what I wish.

BLF

Martial, XII, 10

J.B. has made his millions, but he keeps on grabbing stuff.
Many men have had too much, and yet no one has enough.

BLF

Martial III, 61

You say that what you ask is very small.
That's good. Then my quick "no" won't hurt at all.

BLF

Martial V, 9

I had a cold, 'twas nothing much;
I went to Dr. Brown for such
Relief as he might have to give.
He talked as if I might not live,
And handed me five kinds of pill.
Now I am really very ill.

Martial XII, 51

The easy becomes hard, and sweet is bitter:
I cannot live without her, nor yet with her.

BLF

Martial I, 93

Close beside Sergeant Fabricius lies Aquinus joined
in death;
Earlier dying, good Aquinus cheered his friend
with faltering breath;
Joyed that he could gain a bivouac whence the
trumpet would not call,
Joyed that still his friend survived him, and could
bear the comrade's pall.
Now a double altar rises to attest the soldiers' creed.
Bearing but a terse inscription, so that he who
runs may read:
"Both were faithful unto Caesar; both were praised
for living well;
Each was true toward the other." Nothing else
there is to tell.
Yet how few can ever earn it — tribute to a faith
fulfilled,
Calmly steadfast through two lifetimes, and by
death itself unkilld.

GWT

Martial X, 25

Last morn on the arena sand
A mimic Scaevola did stand
And held his hand out in a flame
Till it burned off. Do you exclaim:
"A hero! patient, brave, and strong!"?
If so, you have the picture wrong.
His other choice: burn at the stake;
And still more courage that would take.

GWT

Martial I, 27

My long-eared friend, I made a crack
About a night or so, on back—
With ten half-pints put down the hatch—
"Dine with me soon"! And straightway—snatch—
You "took me up," and made a note,
Which now confronts a bleary-eyed poet.
I don't like barfly pals that way;
Such can be dangerous, they say.

GWT

Martial I, 47

Old Doctor Diaulus has left pill and potion,
To attend the last rites of a friend, with devotion,
For a change of profession, he still might do worse;
As pallbearer or medic, he's close to the hearse!

GWT

Martial IX, 10

You wish to marry Harry — no fool, you!
But he won't do it, will he? He's smart, too!

BLF

Martial II, 38

You say that you would like to know
What makes my farm delight me so.
You've asked me, so I'll tell you true—
When I am there, I'm not near you!

BLF

Martial, XI, 92

Whoever calls you vicious,
That man lies.
You're not a vicious man.
You're just plain vice.

BLF

Martial, I, 70

My little book, speed on your way
To greet my Proculus. Don't say:
"I might get lost in streets so fine!"
Just listen: First, to Castor's shrine,
And on to Vesta; and then march
Right up the hill to Titus' arch.
Mind, you loiter not to play
Beneath Colossal Nero's ray.
About face! Up the palace hill
And keep right on your way, until
Domitian's statues, many-fold
Look on you, each in sheets of gold.
Past Bacchus of the dripping juice.
And Mother-Goddess; then you choose
The most resplendent home in sight
And ring its bell. The door swings light.
So, in you go; and say: "My boss
Has sent me to you; he's at loss
To find time both to write and call!"
And Proculus won't mind at all.

GWT

A POET RETIRES

Martial XII, 18

ROMAE
AVC 850 ca

Dear Juvenal:

I'm going home.
Farewell to fortune, fame and Rome!
I leave to you each noisy street
And weary hill we climbed, to greet
Our patrons, whose polite disdain
Of poor poets shows. I'm off for Spain.
In rustic Bilbilis, whose pride
Is but in ores she can provide
To feed an empire's power and greed,
I'll find the peace and rest I need;
The village where I first saw day.
I'm going back! At last! To stay!
Life's simple there, I'll sleep till noon
Or later, if that comes to soon.
I'll wear whatever lies at hand,
No stuffy toga. I will stand
My back up to the fireplace heat,
And when I'm hungry, I will eat
Good country stew; fresh, steaming hot.
And please believe me, I will not
Wish back my thirty years here spent
In alley and in tenement,
In study and in ill-paid toll,
In sweat and strain and midnight oil.
Our farm's so easy a boy's skill
Can keep the place in shape, and will.
There is no temple's panoply,
The which is quite all right by me.
On holy days, I think I'll go
Out in the woods, and worship so.
I'm going home!—to gypsy ways
Wherein I'll spend, and end, my days.
The wagon waits. I'm packed. I'll start
To find my youth, long lost.

Yours,
Mart----

GWT

DE RERUM NATURA OF LUCRETIUS

Dedication: lines 1-40 Inc.

Who art the joy of men and of immortals,
Who hast conceived and nurtured every Roman,
Who givest teeming life to land and ocean;
O Venus! since through thee alone all living
Have risen up to see the glorious sunlight—
Therefore, behold, before thee and thy presence
Flee winds and clouds; while come delightful
flowers.

And waters laugh, and skies of heaven are radiant.
For with the springlike kind of day returning
The air is filled with romance; winged creatures
Heart-smitten by thy power, hail first thine advent.
Then beasts in fields and forests and swift rivers,
So dost thou cause them, captive by thy beauty
To follow in thy train, where'er thou listest.
So dost thou cause, in hill and sea and river,
In tree and meadow, every happy creature
To seek its generations, breast love-wounded.
Since therefore thou alone dost rule creation
So that without thee none can see the sunlight
Nor happy be, nor lovable to any,
I seek thy counsel while these lines are shaping
Which I compose, to show of Things the Nature
To Memmius' sons; whom thou throughout all ages
Dost wish to shine, adorned with all things lovely
Wherefore, O Goddess! make my words immortal!
Halt, meanwhile, all the cruel works of warfare.
Yea, let these sleep, on every land and ocean!
For thou alone may even thus delight us,
Since Armed Mars doth rule these works of war-
fare.

He who hath oft reclined upon thy bosom,
Unhelmed, and conquered by Love's ancient
arrow,

His eager eyes drunk with thy face's beauty.
His suppliant spirit hanging on thy speaking.
Goddess renown'd! from him beg peace for Ro-
mans.

Holding him captive near thy sacred body;
For else we cannot work with mind untroubled,
And Memmius' sons would lack the common safety.

GWT

LUCRETIUS ON DEATH

Now, even now, your happy home forever
Has closed its doors behind you. Wife and children,
Your fondest joy, can ne'er again caress you,
Nor touch your heart once more with silent sweetness.

Success cannot delight you. To your dear ones
You can no longer be a shield and fortress.
"Pity this hapless soul," they say, "from whom is
taken,

In one fell day, all gifts that life has given."
Why should they never add: "Beyond such losses
Will no desire, even for a day, survive them!"?
If this were duly in their minds considered
And framed in words, they would cast from their
bosoms

Anxiety and fear, as alien tenants.

"Ah, yes," they say, "that's well enough; the dead
man

Is from all further woes of life delivered.

But think of us, who in farewell are gathered
About the corpse on the dread couch burning,
The torch brought nigh! How can we cease our
weeping?

When comes the day that brings surcease of sorrow?"

From such I ask: "Why then should you be weeping?"

What woe is there in endless sleep and quiet?
Why shed unending tears for rest attained?"

GWT

AUSONIUS, ON GROWING OLD TOGETHER

My darling, let us live as we have lived,
With the same love as on our wedding night.
Let that day never come when you and I.
Look on each other in a different light.
And when old age shall claim us as his own,
Though some may feel regret to lose life's prime,
We'll look back on the joys each year has brought,
With thankful hearts for such a gift of time.

BLF

SENECA, ON THE GOOD LIFE

Riches can never make a king,
Nor can mere robes of purple bring
Royalty to plebeian breast.
Nor splendors brought from East and West.
He is a king who conquers fear,
Who feels no need to feed his ear
On plaudits of the fickle crowd,
But holds himself, enthroned and proud,
Above the flow of life's events;
Who, like a fighter, armed, intense,
Will face death when it comes his way,
With no complaining word to say.

GWT

THE CREATION

(as described by Ovid)

My spirit's moved to speak of bodies changed
Into new forms. Ye gods, since 'twas ye did it,
Inspire now my beginning; lead my stanzas
From earliest dawn of all things, to the present.

Before the sea and earth and guarding Heaven
There was a uniformity in Nature;
You'd call it Chaos; rude and unworked masses,
Dead weight, naught else, and heaped up all
together,

Discordant seeds of things unwilling mated.
No sun there was to shine upon the world yet;
No Goddess of the Moon with changing crescent;
Earth hung not in the air, with its weight balanced;
Nor did the Sea embrace the coastal margins.
Although there was then Earth and Air and Water,
Yet so it was that the earth was still unsolid,
The waves unyielding, and the air was lightless.
There were no separate shapes; each fought the
other:

In every part, heat was at war with coldness,
Moistness with drought, hardness and softness
clashing.

Lightness dragged down by heaviness commingled.
Some god helped Nature to resolve the conflict;
He clave the earth away from sky and water;
The firmament and air apart he sundered,
And bound each in its place with bands eternal.
The fiery ball evolved, and set his station
Aloft and in the highest dome of heaven.
The air was next in place, since next in poundage
Then heaviest earth, and all else heavy with it.
Last came the water, 'round the solid planet.
Whoever was that god, he next proceeded
To separate the heaped-up lands and mold them
Into a diverse cosmos; seas he scattered
By swelling winds, so that the lands had shorelines;
And he provided springs, lakes, mighty marshes;
Rivers he gave, to flow down their fixed channels,
Of which part reached the sea, part fed the soil.

He bade the prairies spread, the vales to deepen,
And leafy forests rise, and stony mountains.
Five zones of heat and cold he marked in heaven,
And likewise on the earth. Two were for living;
Excessive heat or cold spoiled all the others.
Air hung above the earth, lighter than water,
Lighter than earth, but heavier than fire
The god bade mists to be, and white cloud masses,
And thunder (dread of mortals), and the lightning,
And winds to carry cold that follows thunder.
The winds he scattered, saved the world from
rending—

Eurus to sunrise land, the Eastern splendor;
Zephyr goes to the setting sun, and nightwards;
Boreas to the North, the Bear, and Russia;
Southward goes Auster, ever wet and drenching.
And over all was Ether, evanescent.
When all the heavy stuff was cleared beneath them,
Stars boiled out everywhere in all the heaven.
So that no land would lack its guarding spirit,
Stars and the gods divine dwelt in the heavens.
The gleaming waves became the home of fishes;
Wild beasts dwelt on the land, the birds the air-
ways.

Yet hitherto in all the world was lacking
A sacred creature with the power to reason,
Who could rule all the others; so was Man born
With divine seed, somehow derived from Heaven;
In image of the gods, who rule all creatures.
Unlike the others, Man from his creator
Was given an uplift face, to view the heavens.
And thus it was that the new earth, which lately
Was rude and formless, now had put upon it
The formed shape of the well-known human
species.

GWT

In praise of heroes strong and rare,
 Crops will raise themselves; and fair
 Upon the thorn will grow the fig;
 While honey-dews from oaks drip big!
 Yet will remain of ancient woe
 A little; ships to sea still go,
 Tall battlements still guard the town,
 And plow-points in the soil press down.
 Other Argonauts will sail.
 A new Achilles will prevail.
 But when you reach manhood's estate
 Commerce will cease: each land will sate
 Each hunger of its own, complete;
 And in the pastures there will bleat
 Sheep clad in purple, yellow, red:
 No need to dye the cloth, the thread!
 "Hasten the day!" the Fates exclaim.
 "Hail to you, Child, Jove's own by name
 See how the dome of heaven bows down?
 Earth, sky, and sea lift your renown.
 Behold the sign! Bid all rejoice!"
 And may my life, my skill, my voice
 Suffice to sing your glorious days
 In one supernal hymn of praise!
 Rise up, o new-born child; beguile
 Your mother with a winning smile;
 It is her due; near gates of death
 She lingered long, to bring you breath.
 Rise up, and give your parents joy.
 Grow to a god, o new-born Boy!

GWT

STATUS

On Insomnia

O gentle youth, of all the gods most kindly,
 Please tell me how to expiate the sin
 Which I have wrought against you somehow
 blindly,
 So you will come, Sleep, to my couch again.
 Behold, the cattle and the trees are resting,
 And birds, and beasts of prairie and the wood;
 The ocean's waves have muted their protesting,
 And are an earth-bed-pillowed, slumbering brood.
 Yet now in turn the seventh red-rimmed rising
 Of sun has met my red-rimmed open eyes,
 And each night falls, with my heart realizing
 That wholesome sleep would be one grand surprise.
 I vainly mourn and none heeds my complaining,
 I can't endure; I have no thousand eyes,
 But only two, and both of them are straining
 When sleep departs, and sleepless I arise.
 Consider, too, some hearts are young and wooing,
 And that to such you are no welcome guest;
 So won't you come, and for poor me be doing
 A little bit?—I dare not ask your best.
 You needn't wrap your velvet wings around me;
 That is a guerdon happier folk attain;
 But please, just touch me gently when you've found
 me,
 Or brush me lightly with your wand again.

GWT

JUVENAL: END OF SATIRE X

Is there then nothing for which men should pray?
Nothing to ask the gods for? Nothing to seek?
Man would do well to let the gods decide
What's best for him, for he is dearer far
To them than to himself, and they will give
Such blessings as man never has imagined.
In our shortsightedness we're apt to pray
For wives and children as life's greatest boon;
But we, blind fools, may find our answered prayer
A sorrowladen curse, bereft of good.
But, yes, there are some prayers that we should
 make;
Lift reverent hands and ask for things like these:
A healthy mind in healthy body placed;
A spirit which can face death unafraid
And see the end of life for what it is—
A natural, blessed part of our existence;
A spirit too which has no fear of life,
And bears with grace all burdens put upon it.
Ask heaven to keep your heart clear of all anger,
And bitterness from luxuries unpossessed;
Ask then to have an understanding heart,
Which seeks the pain productive labor brings
Rather than the futile life of the idle rich.
Now, having prayed, remember this, my friend:
These things you seek are mostly up to you.
A life of courage and uprightness forms
The only path on earth that brings content.
Chance is no equal to plain common sense;
And Lady Luck cannot compete with foresight.

BLF