

CATULLUS & MARTIAL

translations & imitations

Roger Dickinson-Brown

to Peter Dale, one of the master translators of our times

Afin d'approcher les vers latins, des mesures à nombre impair sont parfois employées ici, ainsi que des rimes imparfaites, et un décompte de syllabes oral plutôt que classique.

In order to approximate unrhymed hexameters, septameters and other Latin meters, often mixed, off-rhyme is sometimes used here, and at other times a sort of hexametric blank verse, or a mix of meters, or something like the sprung pentameters Ben Jonson uses in his plays.

Other versions are cast in hendecasyllabics, varying line lengths, off-rhyme and – especially for the French – oral rather than traditional courtly or classical meters and rhymes.

N. B. Some of the epigrams of Catullus and Martial are notoriously scurrilous, obscene or scatological. (The reader is reminded that this is not the translator's fault.)

These poems, presented discreetly here in very small type, should not be culled: there is in the work of each poet a characteristic and necessary mixture of the high and the low. (Martial argues that the poet, and not the poems, should be chaste and pure.)

La fine grossièreté de certains épigrammes de Catulle et de Martial est notoire ; (le traducteur rappelle au lecteur que l'auteur seul en est responsable).

Ces bas-poèmes (présentés discrètement ici en format miniature) ont leur place, car il y a dans l'œuvre de chaque poète un mélange, caractéristique et nécessaire, de l'élevé et du vulgaire.

This verse is best read slowly.

GAIUS VALERIUS CATULLUS

III

*Lugete, o Veneres Cupidinesque,
Et quantum est hominum uenustiorum!
Passer mortuus est meae puellae,
Passer, deliciae meae puellae,
Quem plus illa oculis suis amabat:
Nam mellitus erat suamque norat
Ipsam tam bene quam puella matrem,
Nec sese a gremio illius mouebat,
Sed circumsiliens modo huc modo illuc
Ad solam dominam usque pipiabat.
Qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum
Illuc, unde negant redire quemquam.
At uobis male sit, malae tenebrae
Orci, quae omnia bella deuoratis:
Tam bellum mihi passerem abstulistis.
O factum male! O miselle passer!
Tua nunc opera meae puellae
Flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli.*

Weep, ye gods of love, who live to wed
grace and joy: my mistress' pet is dead –
the sparrow, the delight of my delight,
that she loved more than her own eyes love light.
That small bird loved its mistress as a child
loves its mother: lodged in her breast, wild,
here, there, singing for her, beguiled.
Now it's flitting on that somber track
from which, they say, not one of us comes back.

My curse upon these shades that harm
bliss and beauty! It had charm,
that little bird, and its demise
swells with tears my mistress' eyes.

V

*Vivamus mea Lesbia, atque amemus,
rumoresque senum severiorum
omnes unius aestimemus assis!
soles occidere et redire possunt:
nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,
nox est perpetua una dormienda.
da mi basia mille, deinde centum,
dein mille altera, dein secunda centum, omoteleuto
deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum.
dein, cum milia multa fecerimus,
conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus,
aut ne quis malus invidere possit,
cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.*

Let us, Lesbia, love and live
and spurn the counsel gray men give:
the sun can die and then come back,
but we, after a blaze of light,
sleep forever in one constant night.
Give me a thousand kisses, plus
another thousand! Then lose track
lest we make the others envious.

VI

*Flavi, delicias tuas Catullo,
ni sint illepidae atque inelegantes,
velles dicere nec tacere posses.
verum nescio quid febriculosi
scorti diligis: hoc pudet fateri.
nam te non viduas iacere noctes
nequiquam tacitum cubile clamat
sertis ac Syrio fragrans olivo,
pulvinusque peraeque et hic et ille
atritus, tremulique quassa lecti
argutatio inambulatioque.
nam in ista praevalet nihil tacere.
cur? non tam latera ecfututa pandas,
ni tu quid facias ineptiarum.
quare, quidquid habes boni malique,
dic nobis. volo te ac tuos amores
ad caelum lepidio vocare versu.*

If she were graceful, Flavius, and elegant,
you'd not be silent – you'd be eloquent.
I don't know what diseased slut you're adoring
nowadays, but you spend your nights whoring:
you're ashamed of her, no doubt, but your bed reeks
of cheap, exotic perfume, and it creaks.
Why hide what's obvious? You wouldn't seem so weak
and wasted without Cupid's curse.
But be you happy, hesitant or worse,
tell me, so I can sing your love in verse.

VIII

*Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire,
et quod vides perisse perditum ducas.
Fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles,
cum ventitabas quo puella ducebat
amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla;
ibi illa multa cum iocosa fiebant
quae tu volebas nec puella nolebat,
fulsere vere candidi tibi soles.
Nunc iam illa non volt: tu quoque, impotens, noli,
nec quae fugit sectare, nec miser vive,
sed obstinata mente perfer, obdura.
Vale, puella! Iam Catullus obdurat,
nec te requiret, nec rogabit invitam.
At tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nulla.
Scelestas, vae te! Quae tibi manet vita?
Quis nunc te adibit? Cui videberis bella?
Quem nunc amabis? Cuius esse diceris?
Quem basiabis? Cui labella mordebis?
At tu, Catulle, destinatus obdura.*

Catullus, wretch, stop being such an ass
and realize that what is past is past.
You and she once lived out radiant days:
no girl had ever had such love and praise;
back then she wanted the same things as you –
but she's new-fangled now; you should be, too.
Don't be miserable, don't quail, don't cry:
strengthen your spirit, hold firm: girl, goodbye!
Catullus will be strong, and will not deign
to follow her who always turns away.
*Woe unto you, vile thing! What joys remain?
Who'll call you beautiful? And who will miss
you? Whom will you love now? Who will yearn
for you? Whose will you say you are? Whom will you kiss?*
But you, Catullus, hold fast, and stand firm!

X

*Varus me meus ad suos amores
visum duxerat e foro otiosum:
scortillum (ut mihi tum repente visum est)
non sane illepidum neque invenustum;
huc ut venimus, incidere nobis
sermone varii, in quibus, quid esset
iam Bithynia, quo modo se haberet,
et quonam mihi profuisset aere.
Respondi id quod erat: nihil neque ipsis
nec praetoribus esse nec cohorti,
cur quisquam caput unctius referret:
praesertim quibus esset irrumator
praetor, nec faceret pili cohortem.
"At certe tamen," inquiunt "quod illic
natum dicitur esse, comparasti
ad lecticam homines." Ego (ut puellae
unum me facerem beatiorem)
"Non" inquam "mihi tam fuit maligne,
ut, provincia quod mala incidisset,
non possem octo homines parare rectos."
(At mi nullus erat nec hic neque illic
fractum qui veteris pedem grabati
in collo sibi collocare posset.)
Hic illa, ut decuit cinaediorum,
"Quaeso," inquit "mihi, mi Catulle, paulum
istos commoda: nam volo ad Serapim
deferri." "Mane," inquit puellae,
"istud quod modo dixeram me habere ...
fugit me ratio: meus sodalis-
Cinna est Gaius - is sibi paravit.
Verum, utrum illius an mei, quid ad me?
Utor tam bene quam mihi pararim.
Sed tu insulsa male et molesta vivis,
per quam non licet esse negligentem!"*

My pal Varus found me free in the forum
and took me with him to see his *belle de nuit*.
A delicious piece, or so she seemed to me,
not without beauty, not without grace and charm.
We chatted about a lot of different things,
and whether, during my stay near the Black Sea,
I'd made money in the region, and I say
no one, not even a governor, a king
could manage more than a miserable living
there. "But surely," they say, "from that distant shore,
known for horses, you bought some for your carriage?"
And so, to impress this little work of art,
I say, "Well, naturally, I brought back some –
seven, in fact, of the very best of them"
(although the truth is that, neither there nor here,
have I ever owned one single, mangy mare).
So now the girl says, exactly like the whore
she is, "Oh, do let me borrow them next week;
I'm going out of town, Catullus, my dear,"
and then I'm forced to say, "Well, the horses aren't
exactly mine – they're really Gaius Cinna's,
but we're such intimate friends it's just as if...
anyway, what does it matter whose they are?
Just let things be, you disagreeable slut.
Because of you I got things all mixed up."

XI

*Furi et Aureli comites Catulli,
sive in extremos penetrabit Indos,
litus ut longe resonante Eoa
tunditur unda,
sive in Hyrcanos Arabesve molles,
seu Sagas sagittiferosve Parthos,
sive quae septemgeminus colorat
aequora Nilus,
sive trans altas gradietur Alpes,
Caesaris visens monimenta magni,
Gallicum Rhenum horribile aequor ulti-
mosque Britannos,
omnia haec, quaecumque feret voluntas
caelitum, temptare simul parati,
pauca nuntiate meae puellae
non bona dicta.
cum suis vivat valeatque moechis,
quos simul complexa tenet trecentos,
nullum amans vere, sed identidem omnium
ilia rumpens;
nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem,
qui illius culpa cecidit velut prati
ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam
tactus aratro est.*

Furus and Aurelius, my loyal
friends, I leave for a far Indian border,
the multiple Nile, Gaul, memorial
of great Caesar,

or the cold, sunless British skies – I run
where the gods drive me, but ever onwards.
Meanwhile please send to my beloved one
these ugly words:

may she grow old with her fornicators
loveless between her legs as they grind shame-
lessly above her. I won't come to her,
as once I came:

love has been murdered by inconstancy.
She is a meadow flower I once looked
on in delight, now anonymously
crushed underfoot.

XIII

*Cenabis bene, mi Fabulle, apud me
paucis, si tibi di favent, diebus,
si tecum attuleris bonam atque magnam
cenam, non sine candida puella
et vino et sale et omnibus cachinnis.
haec si, inquam, attuleris, venuste noster,
cenabis bene; nam tui Catulli
plenus sacculus est aranearum.
sed contra accipies meros amores
seu quid suavius elegantiusve est:
nam unguentum dabo, quod meae puellae
donarunt Veneres Cupidinesque,
quod tu cum olfacies, deos rogabis,
totum ut te faciant, Fabulle, nasum.*

What a rare dinner, Fabullus, you're going
to have, gods willing, at my house. Just bring
a charming girl, good food, the salt, fine wine
and your good nature. Me, I don't have a dime,
but I'll receive you here with such cordiality
I'll give you the perfume my girl gave me –
a gift from Venus, goddess of lush beauty:
it will make you think that all existence
has metamorphosed to one luscious fragrance.

IV

*Ni te plus oculis meis amarem,
iucundissime Calve, munere isto
odissem te odio Vatiniano:
nam quid feci ego quidve sum locutus,
cur me tot male perderes poetis?
isti di mala multa dent clienti,
qui tantum tibi misit impiorum.
quod si, ut suspicor, hoc novum ac repertum
munus dat tibi Sulla litterator,
non est mi male, sed bene ac beate,
quod non dispereunt tui labores.
di magni, horribilem et sacrum libellum!
quem tu scilicet ad tuum Catullum
misti, continuo ut die periret,
Saturnalibus, optimo dierum!
non non hoc tibi, false, sic abibit.
nam si luxerit ad librariorum
curram scrinia, Caesios, Aquinos,
Suffenum, omnia colligam venena.
ac te his suppliciis remunerabor.
vos hinc interea valete abite
illuc, unde malum pedem attulistis,
saecli incommoda, pessimi poetae.*

Calvus, you joker, if I weren't nuts
about our friendship, I would hate your guts:
have I deserved this? What's your explanation
for sending me these rhymesters' *Poems to Forget*?
The publisher of such abominations
will burn in hell. But I'll retaliate:
at dawn tomorrow I'll go out and get
the books of every inflated, second-rate
poet, just for you, and you'll beat a retreat
on your limping poets' misshapen feet!

XV

*Commendo tibi me ac meos amores,
Aureli. veniam peto pudentem,
ut, si quicquam animo tuo cupisti,
quod castum expeteres et integellum,
conserues puerum mihi pudice,
non dico a populo-- nihil veremur
istos, qui in platea modo huc modo illuc
in re praetereunt sua occupati--
verum a te metuo tuoque pene
infesto pueris bonis malisque.
quem tu qua lubet, ut lubet moveto
quantum vis, ubi erit foris paratum:
hunc unum excipio, ut puto, pudenter.
quod si te mala mens furorque vecors
in tantam impulerit, sceleste, culpam,
ut nostrum insidiis caput laccessas.
a tum te miserum malique fati!
quem attractis pedibus patente porta
percurrent raphanique mugilesque.*

Now I must beg, Aurelius, and trust you:
if you wish anything kept chaste and true,
protect this boy – not from anyone else,
not from the man in the street, but from yourself.
You see, I know exactly what you do,
at every chance, with your criminal penis.
Spare this one innocent your filthy business.
I beseech you humbly: don't deprive
him of his youth, do not betray me. If you do,
may you, like Marsyas, be flayed alive.

XVII

*O Colonia, quae cupis ponte ludere longo,
et salire paratum habes, sed vereris inepta
crura ponticuli axulis stantis in redivivis,
ne supinus eat cavaque in palude recumbat:
sic tibi bonus ex tua pons libidine fiat,
in quo vel Salisubsili sacra suscipiantur,
munus hoc mihi maximi da, Colonia, risus.
quendam municipem meum de tuo volo ponte
ire praecipitem in lutum per caputque pedesque,
verum totius ut lacus putidaeque paludis
lividissima maximeque est profunda vorago.
insulsissimus est homo, nec sapit pueri instar
bimuli tremula patris dormientis in ulna.
cui cum sit viridissimo nupta flore puella
et puella tenellulo delicatior haedo,
adservanda nigerrimis diligentius uvis,
ludere hanc sinit ut lubet, nec pili facit uni,
nec se subleuat ex sua parte, sed velut alnus
in fossa Liguri iacet suppernata securi,
tantundem omnia sentiens quam si nulla sit usquam;
talis iste meus stupor nil videt, nihil audit,
ipse qui sit, utrum sit an non sit, id quoque nescit.
nunc eum volo de tuo ponte mittere pronum,
si pote stolidum repente excitare veternum,
et supinum animum in gravi derelinquere caeno,
ferream ut soleam tenaci in voragine mula.*

I know a man so naïve he abuses
Probability: he lets his bride,
Gentle, lovely, nubile and wide-eyed,
Go wherever and do what she chooses.

XXII

*Suffenus iste, Vare, quem probe nosti,
homo est venustus et dicax et urbanus,
idemque longe plurimos facit versus.
puto esse ego illi milia aut decem aut plura
perscripta, nec sic ut fit in palimpsesto
relata: cartae regiae, novi libri,
novi umbilici, lora rubra membranae,
derecta plumbo et pumice omnia aequata.
haec cum legas tu, bellus ille et urbanus
Suffenus unus caprimulgus aut fossor
rursus videtur: tantum abhorret ac mutat.
hoc quid putemus esse? qui modo scurra
aut si quid hac re scitius videbatur,
idem infaceto est infacetior rure,
simul poemata attigit, neque idem umquam
aeque est beatus ac poema cum scribit:
tam gaudet in se tamque se ipse miratur.
nimirum idem omnes fallimur, neque est quisquam
quem non in aliqua re videre Suffenum
possis. suus cuique attributus est error;
sed non videmus manticae quod in tergo est.*

That man Suffenus, whom you appreciate –
well-spoken, elegant, sophisticated –
writes reams of poetry, which he circulates
in finest calf-skin covers. Now, why does fate
make this distinguished man suddenly reverse
his good taste? He changes it to something worse
than a drunk ditch-digger's, once he touches verse,
rejoicing in himself, loving his own name.
What's this degradation that he celebrates?
And yet all of us, I think, are just the same:
extravagant, ostentatious, unrestrained,
and proudest at those times when we should feel shame.

XXV

*Cinaede Thalle, mollior cuniculi capillo
vel anseris medullula vel imula oricilla
vel pene languido senis situque araneoso,
idemque, Thalle, turbida rapacior procella,
cum luna mulierarios ostendit oscitantes,
remitte pallium mihi meum, quod involasti,
sudariumque Saetabum catagraphosque Thynos,
inepte, quae palam soles habere tamquam avita.
quae nunc tuis ab unguibus reglutina et remitte,
ne laneum latusculum manusque mollicellas
inusta turpiter tibi flagella conscribillent,
et insolenter aestues, velut minuta magno
deprensa navis in mari, vesaniente vento*

Thallus, you're softer than a rabbit, than eider-down, than an earlobe, than an old man's wiener, than a web abandoned by its spider, and yet you're more grasping and greedier than a bird of prey. You stole my cloak and handkerchief, which you're fool enough to show your neighbors, pretending the initials are some ancestor's. Get them out of your filthy claws and back to me or my whip will mark and maim your pudgy hands and pitiful, soft thighs so miserably you'll writhe with new-found vigor in your frenzy.

XXVI

*Furi, villula vestra non ad Austri
flatus opposita est neque ad Favoni
nec saevi Boreae aut Apheliotae,
verum ad milia quindecim et ducentos.
o ventum horribilem atque pestilentem!*

Given the vast sums you blew on it,
and thanks to your expensive architect,
your charming country house is now protected,
Furus, from the harsh and howling air's effect.
The icy winter wind won't blow on it,
but what of all the money you still owe on it?

XXVII

*Minister vetuli puer Falerni
inger mi calices amariores,
ut lex Postumiae iubet magistrae
ebriosa acina ebriosioris.
at vos quo lubet hinc abite, lymphae
vini pernicies, et ad severos
migrate. hic merus est Thyonianus.*

Let the boy fill my glass with old wine and new cheer!
The sacred laws of Bacchus make this crystal clear:
there shall be no adulterating water here!

XLII

*Adeste, hendecasyllabi, quot estis
omnes undique, quotquot estis omnes.
iocum me putat esse moecha turpis,
et negat mihi nostra reddituram
pugillaria, si pati potestis.
persequamur eam et reflagitemus.
quae sit, quaeritis? illa, quam videtis
turpe incedere, mimice ac moleste
ridentem catuli ore Gallicani.
circumsistite eam, et reflagitate,
"moecha putida, redde codicillos,
redde putida moecha, codicillos!"
non assis facis? o lutum, lupanar,
aut si perditius potes quid esse.
sed non est tamen hoc satis putandum.
quod si non aliud potest ruborem
ferreo canis exprimamus ore.
conclamate iterum altiore voce.
"moecha putida, redde codicillos,
redde, putida moecha, codicillos!"
sed nil proficimus, nihil movetur.
mutanda est ratio modusque vobis,
siquid proficere amplius potestis:
"pudica et proba, redde codicillos."*

Come, my pentameters, help me coerce
this bitch who won't give back my verse –
the one who smells like dogshit. Here's my curse:
*Die or return my poems, you perverse
trollop!* She doesn't care? *Vile slut!* Say worse,
if that won't do the trick – here's something more:
Give me my manuscript, you reeking whore!
But nothing works. Perhaps a change of tack?
Gentle lady, do please give it back.

L

*Hesterno, Licini, die otiosi
multum lusimus in meis tabellis,
ut convenerat esse delicatos:
scribens versiculos uterque nostrum
ludebat numero modo hoc modo illoc,
reddens mutua per iocum atque vinum.
atque illinc abii tuo lepore
incensus, Licini, facetiisque,
ut nec me miserum cibus iuaret
nec somnus tegeret quiete ocellos,
sed toto indomitus furore lecto
versarer, cupiens videre lucem,
ut tecum loquerer, simulque ut essem.
at defessa labore membra postquam
semimortua lectulo iacebant,
hoc, iucunde, tibi poema feci,
ex quo perspiceres meum dolorem.
nunc audax cave sis, precesque nostras,
oramus, cave despuas, ocelle,
ne poenas Nemesis reposcat a te.
est vehemens dea: laedere hanc caveto.*

We drank, Licinnus, and we laughed together,
and wrote some lines – one meter, then another,
and then we wrote verse answers to each other.
I was so charmed by you that, when we parted,
everything around me seemed half-hearted.
I couldn't even sleep, waiting for daylight
and another chance to quote and write
with you again. At last, I scribbled this
so you might know, Licinnus, how you're missed.
Please, though, be gentle with these lines I send.
Don't judge them brutally, lest you offend
the goddess Nemesis – she who descends
with fury upon those who spurn their friends.

LVIII

*Caeli, Lesbia nostra, Lesbia illa.
illa Lesbia, quam Catullus unam
plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes,
nunc in quadriviis et angiportis
glubit magnanimi Remi nepotes.*

Caelius, our Lesbia, that very one
whom I loved more than anything, than anyone,
is now found in Rome's backstreets, where she loiters,
sucking off the sons of senators.

LIX

*Bononiensis Rufa Rifulum fellat,
uxor Meneni, saepe quam in sepulcretis
vidistis ipso rapere de rogo cenam,
cum devolutum ex igne prosequens panem
ab semiraso tunderetur ustore.*

Misery

That slut Rufa's giving head
to some poor client in the graveyard.
Sometimes she manages to steal the bread
left to placate the ancestral dead
before she's clubbed off by the filthy guard.

LXX

*Nulli se dicit mulier mea nubere malle
quam mihi, non si se Iuppiter ipse petat.
dicit: sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti,
in vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua.*

My woman says that she'd prefer no other
even if it were Jove himself who sought her.
So says she, but a girl's words to her lover
are written on the wind, or flowing water.

LXXII

*Dicebas quondam solum te nosse Catullum,
Lesbia, nec prae me velle tenere Iovem.
dilexi tum te non tantum ut vulgus amicam,
sed pater ut gnatos diligit et generos.
nunc te cognovi: quare etsi impensius uror,
multo mi tamen es vilior et levior.
qui potis est, inquis? quod amantem iniuria talis
cogit amare magis, sed bene velle minus.*

Once, Lesbia, in your exuberance,
you preferred mine to Jupiter's caresses.
I revered you then, not just with the commonplace
love that every man feels for his mistress,
but also with that pure benevolence
families feel in their togetherness.
Now there is a difference.
What, you ask, explains this change in me?
Shattered by obscene inconstancy,
I know now who you are, to my distress.
I love you even more. But I respect you less.

LXXV

*Huc est mens deducta tua mea, Lesbia, culpa
atque ita se officio perdidit ipsa suo,
ut iam nec bene velle queat tibi, si optima fias,
nec desistere amare, omnia si facias.*

To Lesbia

You've shrunk my soul: its very
faith's transformed in misery:
whatever you might now do,
I can never respect you,
nor can I stop loving you,
Lesbia, whatever you do.

LXXXV

*Odi et amo. quare id faciam, fortasse requiris.
nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior.*

Je l'aime et je la hais.
Comment est-ce possible ?
Hélas ! Je ne le sais.
La douleur est terrible.

I love and hate her. How, perhaps you wonder,
Is that possible? I have no answer,
Yet I feel it happening, and suffer

LXXXVIII

*Quid facit is, Gelli, qui cum matre atque sorore
prurit, et abiectis pervigilat tunicis?
quid facit is, patrum qui non sinit esse maritum?
ecquid scis quantum suscipiat sceleris?
suscipit, o Gelli, quantum non ultima Tethys
nec genitor Nympharum abluit Oceanus:
nam nihil est quicquam sceleris, quo prodeat ultra,
non si demisso se ipse voret capite.*

Do you realize, Gellius, what it is that you excrete
and stew in when, nude and sweating, at last you fall asleep,
exhausted, in your mother's or your sister's sheets?
Not even the great gods could ever sweep
away such filth, nor could you more brutally shock
if you bent down and sucked on your own cock.

XCI

*Non ideo, Gelli, sperabam te mihi fidum
in misero hoc nostro, hoc perduto amore fore,
quod te cognossem bene constantemve putarem
aut posse a turpi mentem inhibere probro;
sed neque quod matrem nec germanam esse videbam
hanc tibi, cuius me magnus edebat amor.
et quamvis tecum multo coniungerer usu,
non satis id causae credideram esse tibi.
tu satis id ducti: tantum tibi gaudium in omni
culpa est, in quacumque est aliquid sceleris.*

I thought you, Gellius, were someone I could trust –
not that you were a chaste or honest lover,
but because Lesbia's not your sister or your mother,
and so she wouldn't be the object of your lust.
I did not know you whet your appetite
with every spice of treacherous delight.

XCII

*Lesbia mi dicit semper male nec tacet umquam
de me: Lesbia me dispeream nisi amat.
quo signo? quia sunt totidem mea: deprecor illam
assidue, verum dispeream nisi amo.*

Lesbia bitches about me
but she couldn't live without me.
I know. It's just the same with me:
I bitch all day long about her
but I couldn't live without her.

XCVII

*Non (ita me di ament) quicquam referre putavi,
utrumne os an culum olfacerem Aemilio.
nilo mundius hoc, nihiloque immundius illud,
verum etiam culus mundior et melior:
nam sine dentibus est. hic dentis sesquipedalis,
gingivas vero ploxeni habet veteris,
praeterea rictum qualem diffissus in aestu
meientis mulae cunnus habere solet.
hic futuit multas et se facit esse venustum,
et non pistrino traditur atque asino?
quem siqua attingit, non illam posse putemus
aegroti culum lingere carnificis?*

Damn me if I can tell which one stinks worse:
Emilius's mouth, or else his arse.
His asshole's cleaner, though; his breath's like putrid meat,
or like an old mule's cunt, pissing in heat.
How can it be he beds so many women
and hasn't yet even been sent to prison?
Any wench who'd do it with this ogre
would lick the anus of a leprous beggar.

XCVIII

*In te, si in quemquam, dici pote, putide Victi,
id quod verbosis dicitur et fatuis.
ista cum lingua, si usus veniat tibi, possis
culos et crepidas lingere carpatinas.
si nos omnino vis omnes perdere, Victi,
hiscas: omnino quod cupis efficies.*

They say, of flatterers, windbags and politicking
fakes like you, "His tongue's no good for anything
but dirty foot- and boot- and shoe- and asshole-licking."
If that comment ever has been true,
Victus, you foul disease, it is of you.
If, however, you prefer our death,
just turn upon us your infected breath.

CI

*Multas per gentes et multa per aequora vectus
advenio has miseras, frater, ad inferias,
ut te postremo donarem munere mortis
et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem.
quandoquidem fortuna mihi tete abstulit ipsum.
heu miser indigne frater adempte mihi,
nunc tamen interea haec, prisco quae more parentum
tradita sunt tristi munere ad inferias,
accipe fraterno multum manantia fletu,
atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale.*

From distant lands, across wide seas, I've come to meet
you, here at your tomb, and render what is due
to ceremony, and to think what it is to die.
I speak in vain to ashes, mute beneath my feet,
that were my brother once, that once were you.
Weeping, I strew offerings to satisfy
the sacraments, to bring my greetings, and to say goodbye.

CVIII

*Si, Comini, populi arbitrio tua cana senectus
spurcata impuris moribus intereat,
non equidem dubito quin primum inimica bonorum
lingua exsecta avido sit data vulturio,
effossos oculos voret atro gutture corvus,
intestina canes, cetera membra lupi.*

If, Cominius, by popular demand,
Death put an end to you, a gray old man
made vile by filthy habits, I don't doubt
that your indecent tongue would be cut out
and fed to vultures, and your eyes pecked out
by black crows, and your guts thrown to the dogs.
Whatever's left could serve as slop to hogs.

MARCUS VALERIUS MARTIALIS

[Ad Catonem]

*Nosces iocosae dulce cum sacrum Florae
Festosque lusus et licentiam volgi,
Cur in theatrum, Cato severe, venisti?
An ideo tantum veneras, ut exires?*

To Stern Cato

You understand this festival's wild games –
the wanton masses have so little shame –
so what, in coming here, will you achieve?
Or are you coming, Cato, just to leave?

I. x

*Petit Gemellus nuptias Maronillae
Et cupit et instat et precatur et donat.
Adeone pulchra est? immo foedius nil est.
Quid ergo in illa petitur et placet? Tussit.*

Tuberculosis

Gemellus hopes to tie the knot
with Maronilla, so he sighs and swoons a lot.
“She’s very beautiful?” “Certainly not.
Her ugliness puts everybody off.”
“Then what’s the interest?” “Her money, and her cough.”

I. xxxvii

*Ventris onus misero, nec te pudet, excipis auro,
Basse, bibis vitro: carius ergo cacas.*

On a Gold Chamber Pot

A gold pot for your ass –
you’re not ashamed of it.
You drink your wine in glass:
you spend more on your shit.

I. xxxviii

*Quem recitas meus est, o Fidentine, libellus:
Sed male cum recitas, incipit esse tuus.*

The verse you’re reading, Fidentine, is mine,
but, read so badly, it’s becoming thine.

I. lxiv

*Bella es, novimus, et puella, verum est,
Et dives, quis enim potest negare ?
Sed cum te nimium, Fabulla, laudas,
Nec dives neque bella nec puella es.*

Tu es certes jolie, et jeune, c'est vrai,
Et riche – personne ne le nierait ;
Mais quand, ma Fabulla, tu te glorifies,
Tu n'es ni riche ni jeune ni jolie.

You're young, I know, and you are beautiful
and very rich – that, no one would deny.
But when, Fabulla, it's yourself you glorify,
you're neither young, nor rich, nor beautiful.

I. xlvii

*Nuper erat medicus, nunc est vespillo Diaulus:
quod vespillo facit, fecerat et medicus.*

He was a doctor, now he's a mortician,
still doing what he did as a physician.

I. lxxi

*Laevia sex cyathis, septem Iustina bibatur,
Quinque Lycas, Lyde quattuor, Ida tribus.
Omnis ab infuso numeretur amica Falerno,
Et quia nulla venit, tu mihi, Somne, veni.*

Four drinks for Jane, and for Pam three,
nine for Françoise and Anne-Marie:
each letter is a glass of eau-de-vie –
and since not one of them comes back to me,
I'll drink til Sleep drowns memory.

I. lxxxiii

*Os et labra tibi lingit, Manneia, catellus:
Non miror, merdas si libet esse cani.*

Your puppy licks your face –
I'm not surprised one bit;
such things are commonplace:
dogs love shit.

I. cx

*Scribere me quereris, Velox, epigrammata longa.
Ipse nihil scribis: tu breviora facis.*

You write nothing, but you say
my long epigrams distort
the nature of the form; I say
yours are too short.

II. xiii

*Et iudex petit et petit patronus.
Solvās censeo, Sexte, creditorī.*

Given the fees your clever lawyer gets,
it might be cheaper just to pay your debts.

II. xxi

*Basia das aliis, aliis das, Postume, dextram.
Dicis "Utrum mavis? elige." Malo manum.*

You ask, *Shall we embrace, or just shake hands?*
Postumus, how considerate! Let's just shake hands.

II. xxxviii

*Quid mihi reddat ager quaeris, Line, Nomentanus?
Hoc mihi reddit ager: te, Line, non video.*

You ask what fruit my country farm will bear?
Linus, this fruit: I never see you there.

II. lviii

*Pexatus pulchre rides mea, Zoile, trita.
Sunt haec trita quidem, Zoile, sed mea sunt.*

Bought with money he still owes,
his new suit is fine;
let him laugh at my old clothes:
at least my clothes are mine.

II. lxxi

*Candidius nihil est te, Caeciliane. Notavi:
Si quando ex nostris disticha pauca lego,
Protinus aut Marsi recitas aut scripta Catulli.
Hoc mihi das, tamquam deteriora legas,
Ut conlata magis placeant mea? Credimus istud:
Malo tamen recites, Caeciliane, tua.*

I read you one of my own epigrams
and you quote Horace and then say I am
superior by contrast, better than
Catullus, even Virgil. Damn!
Now show me at my finest, my good man:
read me one of your own epigrams.

III. ii

*Cuius vis fieri, libelle, munus?
Festina tibi vindicem parare,
Ne nigram cito raptus in culinam
Cordylas madida tegas papyro
Vel turis piperisve sis cucullus.
Faustini fugis in sinum? sapisti.
Cedro nunc licet ambules perunctus
Et frontis gemino decens honore
Pictis luxurieris umbilicis,
Et te purpura delicata velet,
Et cocco rubeat superbus index.
Illo vindice nec Probum timeto.*

Go quickly, little book:
seek readers for the ages,
before some unread cook,
sweating in his kitchen,
rips out all your pages
to wrap his chips and fish in.

III. xxxv

*Artis Phidiacae toreuma clarum
Pisces aspicias: adde aquam, natabunt.*

La main de Phidias a laissé
Des poissons sur ce bol gravés :
Emplis-le d'eau, ils vont nager.

The hand of Phidias engraved the rim
of this silver vase with fish that brim
with real life. Add water. They will swim.

III. xl

*Inserta phialae Mentoris manu ducta
Lacerta vivit et timetur argentum.*

On this cup a carved lizard appears,
slithering across a shimmering veneer.
The hand recoils in silver fear.

III. xliii

*Mentiris iuvenem tinctis, Laetine, capillis,
Tam subito corvus, qui modo cycnus eras.
Non omnes fallis; scit te Proserpina canum:
Personam capiti detrahet illa tuo.*

Though your white hair is now dyed black,
Death is no less on your track.

III. xlv

*Fugerit an Phoebus mensas cenamque Thyestae
Ignoro: fugimus nos, Ligurine, tuam.
Illa quidem lauta est dapibusque instructa superbis,
Sed nihil omnino te recitante placet.
Nolo mihi ponas rhombos mullumve bilibrem,
Nec volo boletos, ostrea nolo: tace.*

I don't know if the old Sun fled in horror
at the Thyestes family's cannibal gore,
but when it comes to banquets, we flee yours.
Your feasts are more than anyone could hope for –
wine and oysters, salmon, truffles, scallops –
but I forget them all when you serve up
your poetry. Please, Lucus, just shut up.

III. li

*Cum faciem laudo, cum miror crura manusque,
Dicere, Galla, soles "Nuda placebo magis,"
Et semper vitas communia balnea nobis.
Numquid, Galla, times, ne tibi non placeam?*

I praise your hands, your face, your grace, your pulchritude.
You say "You'd like me even better, nude,"
but you leave me to bathe in solitude:
perhaps you wouldn't like *me* better, nude?

III. lii

*Et voltu poteram tuo carere
Et collo manibusque cruribusque
Et mammis natibusque clunibusque,
Et, ne singula persequi laborem,
Tota te poteram, Chloe, carere.*

I could have managed without your embrace,
darling Chloë, and without your face,
and without your breasts and hair and hands,
your neck, your legs, your eyes, your shoulders and –
it's too long to pass each part in review –
I could have managed without *all* of you.

III. lv

*Quod quacumque venis, Cosmum migrare putamus
Et fluere excusso cinnama fusa vitro,
Nolo peregrinis placeas tibi, Gellia, nugis.
Scis, puto, posse meum sic bene olere canem.*

On dirait des fûts d'Yves Saint Laurent
Déversés sur tes cheveux en torrents !
Quel parfum ! Et quelle profusion !
Mais à ce prix, mon chien sentirait bon.

You'd think all Araby's perfume
had been decanted in one room.
The finest scents have been splashed over you –
but at that cost, my dog would smell good, too.

III. lxiii

*Cotile, bellus homo es: dicunt hoc, Cotile, multi.
Audio: sed quid sit, dic mihi, bellus homo.
'Bellus homo est, flexos qui digerit ordine crines,
Balsama qui semper, cinnama semper olet;
Cantica qui Nili, qui Gaditana susurrat,
Qui movet in varios bracchia volsa modos;
Inter femineas tota qui luce cathedras
Desidet atque aliqua semper in aure sonat,
Qui legit hinc illinc missas scribitque tabellas;
Pallia vicini qui refugit cubiti;
Qui scit, quam quis amet, qui per convivia currit,
Hirpini veteres qui bene novit avos.'*
*Quid narras? hoc est, hoc est homo, Cotile, bellus?
Res pertriosa est, Cotile, bellus homo.*

They say, Cotillus, you're a gentleman –
explain to me what that means, if you can.

"A gentleman will dye and curl his hair
and follow women everywhere;
he shaves his arms and legs and face
and always moves with studied grace,
sings the new songs, smells of fine perfume,
whispers sweet nothings, knows who sleeps with whom,
never dirties his fine clothes,
names everybody's ancestors, and goes
to every dinner that is highly rated."

Now I see why, Cotillus, you're appreciated:
gentlemen are very complicated!

III. lxiv

*Sirenas hilarem navigantium poenam
Blandasque mortes gaudiumque crudele,
Quas nemo quondam deserebat auditas,
Fallax Ulixes dicitur reliquisse.
Non miror: illud, Cassiane, mirarer,
Si fabulantem Canium reliquisset.*

Though shrewd Ulysses once survived the song
of the Sirens in their lethal sea,
not even he could have survived for long
the verse to which you're now subjecting me.

III. lxix

*Omnia quod scribis castis epigrammata verbis
Inque tuis nulla est mentula carminibus,
Admiror, laudo; nihil est te sanctius uno:
At mea luxuria pagina nulla vacat.
Haec igitur nequam iuvenes facilesque puellae,
Haec senior, sed quem torquet amica, legat.
At tua, Cosconi, venerandaque sanctaque verba
A pueris debent virginibusque legi.*

Cosconius, you are demure!
Your noble-minded verse is pure,
without a single dirty word.
In my own poetry there's not a page
without a cunt, a cock or turd.
My foul-mouthed work is verbiage
for ladies of small virtue, and young wild
or dirty old men. You, thank God, meanwhile,
edify the virgin and the child.

III. lxxix

Rem peragit nullam Sertorius, inchoat omnes.

Hunc ego, cum futuit, non puto perficere.

Tu ne termines jamais

Ce que tu as commencé.

Saurais-tu parachever

Ne serait-ce qu'un seul pet ?

You never finish anything you start.

Can you, I wonder, finalize a fart?

III. lxxxv

Quis tibi persuasit naris abscidere moecho?

Non hac peccatum est parte, marite, tibi.

Stulte, quid egisti? nihil hic tibi perdidit uxor,

Cum sit salva tui mentula Deiphobi.

Pourquoi arracher le nez

De l'amant de ta nana ?

Ce n'est certes pas par là

Que le mal est arrivé.

Why cut off your wife's stud's nose?

That's not the part that caused your woes:

take their *weapons* from your foes.

IV. xxxii

*Et latet et lucet Phaethontide condita gutta,
Ut videatur apis nectare clusa suo.
Dignum tantorum pretium tulit illa laborum:
Credibile est ipsam sic voluisse mori.*

On a Bee in Amber

Secret and shining in this drop of grandeur,
it seems to be preserved in its own nectar
as a reward for its painstaking labor:
perhaps it wanted to die here in amber.

IV. xxxviii

*Galla, nega: satiatur amor, nisi gaudia torquent:
Sed noli nimium, Galla, negare diu.*

Dis non, Galla : l'amour aime les contretemps ;
Dis non, Galla, mais ne le dis pas trop longtemps.

Galla, say no: Love loves a moody song.
But do not, Galla, say no for too long.

IV. xlii

*Hic est pampineis viridis modo Vesbius umbris,
Presserat hic madidos nobilis uva lacus:
Haec iuga, quam Nysae colles, plus Bacchus amavit,
Hoc nuper Satyri monte dedere choros.
Haec Veneris sedes, Lacedaemone gratior illi,
Hic locus Herculeo numine clarus erat.
Cuncta iacent flammis et tristi mersa favilla:
Nec superi vellent hoc licuisse sibi.*

Here, once, were vines in Vesuvian-shaded plains:
into oak vats Pompeiian wine was spilled:
Bacchus loved these peaks more than the Nysan hills;
here satyrs danced, here Venus loved to reign,
here the heights rang with Hercules's fame.
It is all smoldering now in ash and flame,
and the inhuman gods themselves are saddened
by what should not have been allowed to happen.

IV. lxxxix

*Ohe, iam satis est, ohe, libelle,
Iam pervenimus usque ad umbilicos.
Tu procedere adhuc et ire quaeris,
Nec summa potes in schida teneri,
Sic tamquam tibi res peracta non sit,
Quae prima quoque pagina peracta est.
Iam lector queriturque deficitque,
Iam librarius hoc et ipse dicit
"Ohe, iam satis est, ohe, libelle."*

The Last Poem (in Book IV)

Whoa, little book! Enough already! Whoa!
Here at the last page, on and on you'd go:
you act as if this thing is not yet done
that would have ended better on page one.
The reader yawns, the editor cries No!
Whoa, little book! Enough already! Whoa!

V. xxix

Si quando leporem mittis mihi, Gellia, dicis:

“Formosus septem, Marcus, diebus eris.”

Si non derides, si verum, lux mea, narras:

Edisti nunquam, Gellia, tu leporem.

Tu m’envoies un lièvre en me disant

« Pour sept jours tu seras séduisant. »

Chéri, si tu ne plaisantes pas,

Si tu me dis bien la vérité,

Alors, le lièvre doit être un plat

Dont tu ne t’es jamais régalée.

You send a dish of rabbit; thus, you say

I’ll be good-looking for eight days.

If this is true, then you’re not in the habit,

O my darling love, of eating rabbit.

V. lii

*Quae mihi praestiteris memini semperque tenebo.
Cur igitur taceo, Postume? Tu loqueris.
Incipio quotiens alicui tua dona referre,
Protinus exclamat 'Dixerat ipse mihi.'
Non belle quaedam faciunt duo: sufficit unus
Huic operi: si vis, ut loquar, ipse tace.
Crede mihi, quamvis ingentia, Postume, dona
Auctoris pereunt garrulitate sui.*

I don't forget what you have done for me;
if I am silent, it's because you're not.
I talk about your generosity
and hear "He's told us," and "He mentions that a lot."
This isn't something to be done by two:
don't speak about it if you want me to.

V. lvi

*Munera quod senibus viduisque ingentia mittis,
Vis te munificum, Gargiliane, vocem?
Sordidius nihil est, nihil est te spurcius uno,
Qui potes insidias dona vocare tuas:
Sic avidis fallax indulget piscibus hamus,
Callida sic stultas decipit esca feras.
Quid sit largiri, quid sit donare, docebo,
Si nescis: dona, Gargiliane, mihi.*

You make gifts to childless, rich and lonely
old people, and call it liberality.
No one else is even half as wily
as you, who call your vile traps charity –
they're cunning hooks for fish, avidity,
bait for animal stupidity.
You want to learn true generosity?
Give to a man who lives in poverty
and can't make you his beneficiary;
give, for example, to someone like me.

V. lviii

*Cras te victurum, cras dicis, Postume, semper.
Dic mihi, cras istud, Postume, quando venit?
Quam longe cras istud, ubi est? aut unde petendum?
Numquid apud Parthos Armeniosque latet?
Iam cras istud habet Priami vel Nestoris annos.
Cras istud quanti, dic mihi, possit emi?
Cras vives? hodie iam vivere, Postume, serum est:
Ille sapit, quisquis, Postume, vixit heri.*

Tomorrow you are going to live, you say,
but when's tomorrow, Postumus? When's that day?
How long is it, where is it? Where do you
go to find it? Somewhere in Timbuktu?
Tomorrow's grown as old as an old shoe.
Tell me: for a tomorrow, what do you pay?
Live tomorrow? It's too late even today:
the wise ones, Postumus, lived yesterday.

V. lxiiv

*Sextantes, Calliste, duos infunde Falerni,
Tu super aestivoas, Alcime, solve nives,
Pinguescat nimio madidus mihi crinis amomo
Lassenturque rosis tempora sutilibus.
Tam vicina iubent nos vivere Mausolea,
Cum doceant, ipsos posse perire deos.*

Caius, un verre de Xérès fino ;
Alcimus, verse du champagne à flots ;
Choisis des fleurs, qui faniront demain :
L'ombre de la tombe n'est pas très loin.

Caius, a glass of amber sherry *fino*;
Alcimus, let the twinkling champagne flow;
arrange the flowers, though they'll decay tomorrow:
the silent shade of the dark tomb is nearby,
reminding even the gods: we will all die.

V. lxxxi

*Semper pauper eris, si pauper es, Aemiliane.
Dantur opes nullis nunc nisi divitibus.*

Si tu n'en as pas,
Tu n'en auras pas,
Car l'argent ne va
Qu'à celui qui l'a.

You'll always be poor, you poor son-of-a-bitch:
money now goes only to the rich.

V. lxxxiii

*Insequeris, fugio; fugis, insequor; haec mihi mens est:
Velle tuum nolo, Dindyme, nolle volo.*

Tu suis,
Je fuis ;
Tu fuis,
Je suis.

You flee, I follow; you follow, I flee;
I want you when you don't want me.

VI. xii

*Iurat capillos esse, quos emit, suos
Fabulla: numquid illa, Paule, peierat?*

Elle jure que ses cheveux sont les siens.
C'est vrai : ce qu'elle achète lui appartient.

On Fabulla's New Wig

Her hair is really hers, she cries!
Indeed: she owns the things she buys.

VI. xv

*Dum Phaethontea formica vagatur in umbra,
Implicuit tenuem sucina gutta feram.
Sic modo quae fuerat vita contempta manente,
Funeribus facta est nunc pretiosa suis.*

A stray ant, in the shadows of a pine,
inside a drop of amber was enshrined:
what had lived out, unseen, its little time
in death became enduring and sublime.

VI. xix

*Non de vi neque caede nec veneno,
Sed lis est mihi de tribus capellis:
Vicini queror has abesse furto.
Hoc iudex sibi postulat probari:
Tu Cannas Mithridaticumque bellum
Et periuria Punici furoris
Et Sullas Mariosque Muciosque
Magna voce sonas manumque tota.
Iam dic, Postume, de tribus capellis.*

Ici, ni meurtre, ni gros gain ;
L'affaire est simple : mon voisin
S'est emparé de mes trois chèvres.
Mon avocat a, toutefois,
Toute l'histoire de la loi
Et force détails sur ses lèvres.
Un beau discours ! Mais n'oublie pas,
Mon très cher maître, mes trois chèvres.

There is no poison here, no rape or force –
a simple case: my neighbor stole my goats.
But my expensive lawyer will discourse
on the whole history of law. He quotes
book, precedent and chapter 'til he's hoarse.
Fine, noble words! But what about my goats?

VI. xxxix

*Pater ex Marulla, Cinna, factus es septem
Non liberorum: namque nec tuus quisquam
Nec est amici filiusve vicini,
Sed in grabatis tegetibusque concepti
Materna produnt capitibus suis furta.
Hic, qui retorto crine Maurus incedit,
Subolem fatetur esse se coci Santrae.
At ille sima nare, turgidis labris
Ipsa est imago Pannychi palaestritae.
Pistoris esse tertium quis ignorat,
Quicumque lippum novit et videt Damam?
Quartus cinaeda fronte, candido voltu
Ex concubino natus est tibi Lygdo:
Percide, si vis, filium: nefas non est.
Hunc vero acuto capite et auribus longis,
Quae sic moventur, ut solent asellorum,
Quis morionis filium negat Cyrtae?
Duae sorores, illa nigra et haec rufa,
Croti choraulae vilicique sunt Carpi.
Iam Niobidarum grex tibi foret plenus,
Si spado Coresus Dindymusque non esset.*

My lord, you and your lovely lady wife
count seven offspring in your married life,
but none is noble: not a one is yours,
or even a friend's, a colleague's or a neighbor's.
They've all been generated on the floor,
in the cellar or behind a door,
and each small face betrays its father's looks:
the murky little Moor evokes the cook;
that one's fat nose and lips are like the baker's;
this one's sick eyes come from the pastry-maker;
the fourth boy, with the white face of a poofter,
looks very much the child of your own lover:
now you and your own son can bang each other!
The one with the ass's ears must be your jester's
child; the brunette and the redhead sisters,
compliments of your head clerk and your plumber.
This is really an impressive number!
Niobe's nine would have been duplicated
if Marc and Cresus hadn't been castrated.

VI. xl

*Foemina praeferrī potuit tibi nulla, Lycori :
Praeferrī Glycerae foemina nulla potest.
Haec erit hoc, quod tu : tu non potes esse, quod haec est.
Tempora quid faciunt ? hanc volo, te volui.*

Aucune femme ne pouvait
Être comparée à toi, Louise,
Et aucune n'est comparée
Maintenant à la belle Lise.
Elle sera comme tu es ;
Tu ne peux être ce qu'elle est.
Naguère, je t'ai désirée :
Je la veux. Le temps contrefait.

To you, no other could have been compared,
and to her, none can be compared.
She will be what you are, when time changes
her. You can't be what she is.
I wanted you. I want her. Time estranges.

VI. li

*Quod convivaris sine me tam saepe, Luperce,
Inveni, noceam qua ratione tibi.
Irascor: licet usque voces mittasque rogesque -
'Quid facies?' inquis. Quid faciam? veniam.*

Lycus, you give feasts I'm not invited to,
so this is how I'll take revenge on you:
Just you try to invite me! Bid me welcome,
beg me to accept!

What will I do?

I'll tell you what, you sonofabitch: I'll come.

VI. xci

*Sancta ducis summi prohibet censura vetatque
Moechari. Gaude, Zoile, non futuis.*

Cinq Coups

1.

Pas grave que l'adultère soit défendu,
Zoïlus, puisque tu n'as jamais rien foutu.

2.

César proscrit tout acte charnel outre
Le mariage. Tu n'as donc rien à foutre.

3.

un poème français en tetramètre iambique

Tu peux te réjouir, Alex !
César a proscrit l'adultère,
Mais les dames sont le sexe
Qui n'a jamais su te plaire.

4.

Sur l'interdiction de l'adultère

César interdit, mais ton style se maintient,
Puisque, mon Zoïlus, tu ne fous jamais rien.

5.

Mighty Caesar has now banned
all our adulterous joys.
Zoïlus, you're a lucky man:
he didn't mention boys.

VII. iii

*Cur non mitto meos tibi, Pontiliane, libellos?
Ne mihi tu mittas, Pontiliane, tuos.*

Je ne t'envoie pas mes livres,
Car les tiens pourraient s'ensuivre.

Why don't I send my books to thee?
Lest thou send thy books to me.

VII. xvi

*Aera domi non sunt, superest hoc, Regule, solum,
Ut tua vendamus munera: numquid emis?*

Je suis fauché et entouré de crédateurs.
Je vais vendre tes cadeaux. Serais-tu preneur ?

I'm broke. There's one hope left: I'm trying
to sell your gifts. You interested in buying?

VII. xciv

*Unguentum fuerat, quod onyx modo parva gerebat:
Olfecit postquam Papyrus, ecce, garum est.*

Ce beau vase contenait
D'exquises fleurs d'églantier ;
Quand Papyrus l'a touché,
Il s'est mis à empester.

This jar held roses, cloves and pinks;
Papyrus touched it. Now it stinks.

VIII. x

*Emit lacernas milibus decem Bassus
Tyrius coloris optimi. Lucri fecit.
"Adeo bene emit?" inquis. Immo non solvet.*

Le costume de Bassus ? Une vraie affaire !
Ce qu'on ne paie pas ne coûte pas très cher.

Bassus got a bargain suit today:
things aren't expensive when you never pay.

VIII. xxix

*Disticha qui scribit, puto, vult brevitate placere.
Quid prodest brevitatis, dic mihi, si liber est?*

On a Collection of Epigrams

What's the point of being terse
in a full-length book of verse?

VIII. lxxiv

*Oplomachus nunc es, fueras ophthalmicus ante.
Fecisti medicus quod facis oplomachus.*

You were a butcher; now you have arranged
to be a doctor. Nothing much has changed.

VIII. lxxvi

*"Dic verum mihi, Marce, dic amabo;
Nil est, quod magis audiam libenter."
Sic et cum recitas tuos libellos,
Et causam quotiens agis clientis,
Oras, Gallice, me rogasque semper.
Durum est me tibi, quod petis, negare.
Vero verius ergo quid sit, audi:
Verum, Gallice, non libenter audis.*

"Do please tell me the truth, my good friend Martial;
the truth is something to which I am partial."
Gaius, your request's invariable,
and what you ask's not easy to deny:
"Tell me the truth, my friend; I do not fear it."
Here, therefore, is the truth that you swear by:
The truth is, Gaius, you don't want to hear it.

VIII. lxxix

*Omnes aut vetulas habes amicas
Aut turpes vetulisque foediores.
Has ducis comites trahisque tecum
Per convivia, porticus, theatra.
Sic formosa, Fabulla, sic puella es.*

Your friends are uglier than toads, or old.
You drag them all with you throughout the city:
parties, shopping, dinners, and Behold!
You, by comparison, are young and pretty.

IX. x

*Nubere vis Prisco : non miror, Paula : sapisti.
Ducere te non vult Priscus : & ille sapit.*

Ah, Paula! Tu aimes François ;
Pas étonnant : tu as bon goût.
Mais François ne veut pas de toi,
Car lui aussi, il a bon goût.

Paula, Priscus is the man you want to marry:
such good taste is typical of you.
Alas, your Priscus isn't really very
interested: he, you see, has good taste, too.

IX. ix

*Cenes, Canthare, cum foris libenter,
Clamas et maledicis et minaris.
Deponas animos truces, monemus:
Liber non potes et gulosus esse.*

Rich men would happily have you to dine
if you didn't *always* speak your mind.
One of the two you'll have to do without:
choose between speaking out and dining out.

IX. xiv

*Hunc, quem mensa tibi, quem cena paravit amicum,
Esse putas fidae pectus amicitiae?
Aprum amat et mullos et sumen et ostrea, non te.
Tam bene si cenem, noster amicus erit.*

Your guest, your cherished soul mate, tried and true,
loves your grand table more than he loves you.
If I had your wines, he'd be my friend too.

IX. xxi

*Artemidorus habet puerum, sed vendidit agrum;
Agrum pro puero Calliodorus habet.
Dic, uter ex istis melius rem gesserit, Aucte:
Artemidorus amat, Calliodorus arat.*

One kept his slave girl and sold all the rest;
the other sold his whore to buy some land.
Neither man is hard to understand:
each man plows the thing that he loves best.

IX. xxxvii

*Cum sis ipsa domi mediaque ornere Subura,
Fiant absentes et tibi, Galla, comae,
Nec dentes aliter quam Serica nocte reponas,
Et iaceas centum condita pyxidibus,
Nec tecum facies tua dormiat, innuis illo,
Quod tibi prolatum est mane, supercilio,
Et te nulla movet cani reverentia cunni,
Quem potes inter avos iam numerare tuos.
Promittis sescenta tamen; sed mentula surda est,
Et sit lusca licet, te tamen illa videt.*

Each night your teeth and hair are placed
beside your bed: you sleep without your face.
False-eyelashed in the morning, face rebuilt,
you bare your pussy for a morning screw.
My dick's got just one eye, unlike your rheumy two,
but it still sees enough of you to wilt.

IX. xlix

*Haec est illa meis multum cantata libellis,
Quam meus edidicit lector amatque togam.
Partheniana fuit quondam, memorabile vatis
Munus: in hac ibam conspiciendus eques,
Dum nova, dum nitida fulgebat splendida lana,
Dumque erat auctoris nomine digna sui:
Nunc anus et tremulo vix accipienda tribuli,
Quam possis niveam dicere iure tuo.
Quid non longa dies, quid non consumitis anni?
Haec toga iam non est Partheniana, mea est.*

The other day I came across a worn
shirt I had forgotten, out of fashion
nowadays. Back then I was a handsome
enough young man. I had a future. Some
girls were fond of me – I think I remember
wearing it the first time that I met her:
she said she liked it. Alas, the shirt is frayed
and has a stain, and she, of course, is dead.
It might have been anyone's once, but now
it's mine. Why have I kept it? I don't know.

IX. lxxiv

*Effigiem tantum pueri pictura Camoni
Servat, et infantis parva figura manet.
Florentes nulla signavit imagine voltus,
Dum timet ora pius muta videre pater.*

Dead Child

The father keeps a portrait of his son
as a child, but there is none of him grown.
Both of them are gone.

X. ix

*Undenis pedibusque syllabisque
Et multo sale nec tamen protervo
Notus gentibus ille Martialis
Et notus populis - quid invidetis? -
Non sum Andraemone notior caballo.*

Every word articulated,
finely salted, not unfair,
and some readers are aware
that these lines are something rare –
yet they're not more celebrated
than the local dancing bear.

X. xv

*Cedere de nostris nulli te dicis amicis.
Sed, sit ut hoc verum, quid, rogo, Crispe, facis?
Mutua cum peterem sestertia quinque, negasti,
Non caperet nummos cum gravis arca tuos.
Quando fabae nobis modium farrisve dedisti,
Cum tua Niliacus rura colonus aret?
Quando brevis gelidae missa est toga tempore brumae?
Argenti venit quando selibra mihi?
Nil aliud video, quo te credamus amicum,
Quam quod me coram pedere, Crispe, soles.*

To My Boss

You say I'm a first-class collaborator,
remarkably effective with your clients.
You say my work will be rewarded later.
I make another meal of beans and patience,
shivering as the winter night wind blows
through my house, and through my ragged clothes.
Meanwhile I have this token of your confidence:
you honor me by farting in my presence.

X. xxi

*Scribere te quae vix intellegat ipse Modestus
Et vix Claranus, quid rogo, Sexte, iuvat?
Non lectore tuis opus est, sed Apolline libris:
Iudice te maior Cinna Marone fuit.
Sic tua laudentur sane: mea carmina, Sexte,
Grammaticis placeant, ut sine grammaticis.*

On an Academic Poet

Comparing Homer and his commentator,
you would judge the latter to be greater.
You don't need readers, you need exegesis:
these are poems for a Master's thesis.

X. xxxvi

*Inproba Massiliae quidquid fumaria cogunt,
Accipit aetatem quisquis ab igne cadus,
A te, Munna, venit: miseris tu mittis amicis
Per freta, per longas toxica saeva vias;
Nec facili pretio, sed quo contenta Falerni
Testa sit aut cellis Setia cara suis.
Non venias quare tam longo tempore Romam,
Haec puto causa tibi est, ne tua vina bibas.*

You concoct your rotgut with much nastier
ingredients than any man would care to own,
then, faked and labeled to appear superior,
your poison's shipped to all of us in Rome.
We haven't seen you here in a long time.
Are you afraid you might be served your wine?

X. xl

*Semper cum mihi diceretur esse
Secreto mea Polla cum cinaedo,
Inrupi, Lupe. Non erat cinaedus.*

People told me every day
that my wife often sneaked away
with some gay guy, and so today
I burst in on them. He's not gay.

X. liii

*Ille ego sum Scorpus, clamosi gloria Circi,
Plausus, Roma, tui deliciaeque breves,
Invida quem Lachesis raptum trieteride nona,
Dum numerat palmas, credidit esse senem.*

I am that Scorpus whom all Rome cheered on,
champion charioteer of days now gone.
I was not thirty when I crossed the threshold:
Death thought a man with so much laurel must be old.

X. lxi

*Hic festinata requiescit Erotion umbra,
Crimine quam fati sexta peremit hiems.
Quisquis eris nostri post me regnator agelli,
Manibus exiguis annus iusta dato:
Sic lare perpetuo, sic turba sospite solus
Flebilis in terra sit lapis iste tua.*

Here lie Erotion's remains;
the child she was will never be again.
She was gone before her seventh year.
Stranger, who after me may wander here,
you who are exposed to wind and rain,
try to imagine what cannot be known
from reading a few words on sculpted stone.

X. lxx

*Cum te municipem Corinthiorum
Iactes, Charmenion, negante nullo,
Cur frater tibi dicor, ex Hiberis
Et Celtis genitus Tagique civis?
An voltu similes videmur esse?
Tu flexa nitidus coma vagaris,
Hispanis ego contumax capillis;
Levis dropace tu cotidiano,
Hirsutis ego cruribus genisque;
Os blaesum tibi debilisque lingua est,
Nobis filia fortius loquetur:
Tam dispar aquilae columba non est,
Nec dorcas rigido fugax leoni.
Quare desine me vocare fratrem,
Ne te, Charmenion, vocem sororem.*

I am Spanish, you are Greek;
for what reason do you seek
excuses to call me your *Brother*?
Are our faces similar?
My hair's coarse, but yours is curled;
my hairy arms and legs are dark,
while your plucked skin is pale and frail;
I speak out loudly, strong and clear;
you lisp words no one can hear.
Roaring lion, trembling deer!
Stop calling me your brother, Mister,
or I'll start to call you *Sister*.

X. lxx

*Quod mihi vix unus toto liber exeat anno,
Desidia tibi sum, docte Potite, reus.
Iustius at quanto mirere, quod exeat unus,
Labantur toti cum mihi saepe dies.
Non resalutantis video nocturnus amicos,
Gratulor et multis, nemo, Potite, mihi.
Nunc ad luciferam signat mea gemma Dianam,
Nunc me prima sibi, nunc sibi quinta rapit.
Nunc consul praetorve tenet reducesque choreae,
Auditur toto saepe poeta die.
Sed nec causidico possis inpune negare,
Nec si te rhetor grammaticusve rogent.
Balnea post decumam lasso centumque petuntur
Quadrantes. Fiet quando, Potite, liber?*

You complain that my small books appear rarely – hardly one per year. Paullus, it makes more sense to wonder how I manage even one. I visit people early in the day and they're not in. They come to me at noon, and stay. (Although I polish them with flattery, it isn't often they have much for me.) After the consul's tedious convocation, a reader stops me, praises, skillfully, my book and (mostly) his own poetry, a critic makes some arrogant suggestions and a professor asks a dozen questions. I pause to sign my books, and then the long day ends. I'm off the hook. I slip, exhausted, down into my bath. When, Paullus, can I write a book?

X. lxxiv

*Iam parce lasso, Roma, gratulatori,
Lasso clienti. Quamdiu salutator
Anteambulones et togatulos inter
Centum merebor plumbeos die toto,
Cum Scorpus una quindecim graves hora
Ferventis auri victor auferat saccos?
Non ego meorum praemium libellorum
- Quid enim merentur? - Apulos velim campos:
Non Hybla, non me spicifer capit Nilus,
Nec quae paludes delicata Pomptinas
Ex arce clivi spectat uva Setini.
Quid concupiscam quaeris ergo? dormire.*

The truth is, Rome, my own hypocrisy
exhausts me: days of weary flattery
just to take some pennies home with me,
while the privileged ones pile up their money.
I'm not asking, Rome, for luxury,
No palace, farms, horses or flocks of sheep.
What, then, do I ask for? Just some sleep.

XI. xix

*Quaeris, cur nolim te ducere, Galla? Diserta es.
Saepe soloecismum mentula nostra facit.*

Why, Galla, won't I marry you?
You're one of the proper few,
perfect at everything you do,
while my poor joystick often makes
rather embarrassing mistakes.

XI. xxi

*Lydia tam laxa est, equitis quam culus aheni,
Quam celer arguto qui sonat aere trochus,
Quam rota transmisso totiens inpacta petauro,
Quam vetus a crassa calceus udus aqua,
Quam quae rara vagos expectant retia turdos,
Quam Pompeiano vela negata noto,
Quam quae de pthisico lapsa est armilla cinaedo,
Culcita Leuconico quam viduata suo,
Quam veteres bracae Brittonis pauperis, et quam
Turpe Ravennatis guttur onocrotali.
Hanc in piscina dicor futuisse marina.
Nescio; piscinam me futuisse puto.*

Lydia's as vast as a bronze horse's ass.
They say I fucked her in the public baths,
but I don't know: I think I fucked the baths.

XI. xliv

*Orbus es et locuples et Bruto consule natus:
Esse tibi veras credis amicitias?
Sunt verae, sed quas iuvenis, quas pauper habebas.
Qui novus est, mortem diligit ille tuam.*

You're childless, rich, nearing the end
and you believe this girl's your friend?
She's a funereal paramour:
your friends were made when you were poor.

XI. lxxvii

*Nil mihi das vivus; dicis post fata daturum.
Si non es stultus, scis, Maro, quid cupiam.*

To Him Who Would Make Me His Heir

Nothing now, you say:
all, after your last day.
What will I pray for? Maro,
you're not a fool: you know.

XI. lxxviii

*Parva rogas magnos; sed non dant haec quoque magni.
Ut pudeat levius te, Matho, magna roga.*

Stop asking for so little! Ask for more!
You'll feel less shame when they show you the door.

XI. cvii

*Explicitum nobis usque ad sua cornua librum
Et quasi perlectum, Septiciane, refers.
Omnia legisti. Credo, scio, gaudeo, verum est.
Perlegi libros sic ego quinque tuos.*

You've returned my book with markers stuffed into
all the pages you have carefully gone through.
I understand. I read *your* books that way, too.

XII. x

*Habet Africanus miliens, tamen captat.
Fortuna multis dat nimis, satis nulli.*

Rich Africanus finds life tough:
Fortune sometimes gives too much,
but she never gives enough.

XII. xx

*Quare non habeat, Fabulle, quaeris
Uxorem Themison? habet sororem.*

You want to know, Fabullus, why good Mr.
Themison has no wife? He has a sister.

XII. xxxv

*Tamquam simpliciter mecum, Callistrate, vivas,
Dicere percisum te mihi saepe soles.
Non es tam simplex, quam vis, Callistrate, credi.
Nam quisquis narrat talia, plura tacet.*

Although he says he's candid, since he chatters
on on graphic sexual matters,
he who opens wide one door
often closes many more.

XII. xli

*Non est, Tucca, satis, quod es gulosus:
Et dici cupis et cupis videri.*

The Hot-Dog Eating Contest

*Gut's not content with glut, he needs to show it –
eats like a dog, and wants the world to know it.*

XII. xlvi

*Difficilis facilis, iucundus acerbus es idem:
Nec tecum possum vivere, nec sine te.*

Cruel and kind, false and also true:
it's all the same. What is it about you?
I can't live with and I can't live without you.

XII. lxxviii

*Matutine cliens, urbis mihi causa relictæ,
Atria, si sapias, ambitiosa colas.
Non sum ego causidicus, nec amaris litibus aptus,
Sed piger et senior Pieridumque comes;
Otia me somnusque iuvant, quæ magna negavit
Roma mihi: redeo, si vigilatur et hic.*

From His Place of Retirement

I renounced the city, Atrius,
because of exhausting hullabaloo like this.
Ambition? I decided to forego it:
I'm no big boss, just an old, lazy poet.
If there's no peace even here at home,
I might as well go back to rabid Rome.

XII. lxxv

*Festinat Polytimus ad puellas;
Invitus puerum fatetur Hypnus;
Pastas glande natis habet Secundus;
Mollis Dindymus est, sed esse non vult;
Amphion potuit puella nasci.
Horum delicias superbiamque
Et fastus querulos, Avite, malo,
Quam dotis mihi quinquies ducena.*

Polytimus runs after little girls;
Hypnus admits that he was born a male;
Julius fancies nuts, just like a squirrel;
Dindymus hates being so soft and pale;
Amphion'd give the world to be a girl
and I, I'd rather watch them whine and bitch
than be the very richest of the rich.

XII. xcii

*Saepe rogare soles, qualis sim, Prisce, futurus,
Si fiam locuples simque repente potens.
Quemquam posse putas mores narrare futuros?
Dic mihi, si fias tu leo, qualis eris?*

You often ask me, Priscus, what I'd do
if I were powerful and well-to-do.
The future's what no man can ever see.
If you were a big bear, what sort of bear would you be?

LIBER XIII
to accompany small gifts

XIII. iii

*Omnis in hoc gracili Xeniorum turba libello
Constabit nummis quattuor empta tibi.
Quattuor est nimium? poterit constare duobus,
Et faciet lucrum bybliopola Tryphon.
Haec licet hospitibus pro munere disticha mittas,
Si tibi tam rarus, quam mihi, nummus erit.
Addita per titulos sua nomina rebus habebis:
Praetereas, si quid non facit ad stomachum.*

Four shillings is the price you're asked to pay
for this small book. If that drives you away,
if it's too much, well, you might try to get it
for two – the editor still makes a tidy profit.
And if, like me, you're broke, and can't afford a gift,
just give your host my book.

Each topic
conveniently appears above the couplet.
If you happen to dislike a text,
simply move on to the next.

XIII. xiv

Lactucae

*Cludere quae cenas lactuca solebat avorum,
Dic mihi, cur nostras inchoat illa dapes?*

Lettuce

It used to be served last; it starts meals now.
Why have we made this change? I do not know.

XIII. xviii

Porri sectivi

*Fila Tarentini graviter redolentia porri
Edisti quotiens, oscula clusa dato.*

Shredded Leeks

After these tasty leeks, you won't smell like a rose:
eat them, but give your kisses with mouth closed.

XIII. xxxiv

Bulbi

*Cum sit anus coniunx et sint tibi mortua membra,
Nil aliud bulbis quam satur esse potes.*

Onions

Your wife is old and your parts freeze?
No better remedy than lots of these.

XIII. xlviii

Boleti

*Argentum atque aurum facilest laenamque togamque
Mittere: boletos mittere difficilest.*

Mushrooms

Silver, silk and gold are found with ease,
but not delectable mushrooms like these.

XIII. lviii

Iecur anserinum

*Aspice, quam tumeat magno iecur ansere maius!
Miratus dices: "Hoc, rogo, crevit ubi?"*

Foie Gras d'Oie

The creamy liver that was found inside
is bigger than the goose it occupied.

XIII. lx

Cuniculi

*Gaudet in effossis habitare cuniculus antris.
Monstravit tacitas hostibus ille vias.*

Rabbits

The rabbit rejoices deep in its galleries:
it taught us how to reach our enemies.

XIII. lxxxvii

Murices

*Sanguine de nostro tinctas, ingrate, lacernas
Induis, et non est hoc satis, esca sumus.*

La Plainte de l'huître

Êtres ingrats ! D'abord, vous dérobez
Nos perles ; ensuite, vous nous gobez.

Oysters

Ungrateful men! Not only do
you steal our pearls – you eat us, too.

XIII. cii

Garum sociorum

*Expirantis adhuc scombri de sanguine primo
Accipe fastosum, munera cara, garum.*

Worcester Sauce

Accept this sauce, made from living fish:
not every day brings condiments like this.

XIII. cvi

Passum

*Gnosia Minoae genuit vindemia Cretae
Hoc tibi, quod mulsum pauperis esse solet.*

Fortified Wine

This cheap Cretan wine, for those who have no money,
turns to nectar when it's mixed with honey.

XIII. cxi

Falernum

*De Sinuessanis venerunt Massica prelis:
Condita quo quaeris consule? Nullus erat.*

Falernum

What vintage for this fine Falernian wine?
From before we started keeping time.

LIBER XIV
lottery prizes

Quo vis cumque loco potes hunc finire libellum:
Versibus explicitumst omne duobus opus.
Lemmata si quaeris cur sint adscripta, docebo:
Ut, si malueris, lemmata sola legas.

Pick up, put down this booklet where you please:
the distichs are all finished entities.
The subject of each couplet is declared
in the title. If you like, stop there.

XIV. ix

Vitelliani

*Quod minimos cernis, mitti nos credis amicae.
Falleris: et nummos ista tabella rogat.*

Envelopes

Because we're small, you think that love and frills
are all we'll bring. We'll also bring you bills.

XIV. x

Chartae maiores

*Non est munera quod putes pusilla,
Cum donat vacuas poeta chartas.*

Paper

A poet sends you this instead of sonnets:
paper, for once, with nothing written on it.

XIV. xxiv

*Acus aurea
Splendida ne madidi violent bombycina crines,
Figat acus tortas sustineatque comas.*

A gold hairpin, so the silk dress of a fair girl
will not be stained by falling, perfumed curls.

XIV. xxxi

Culter venatorius

*Si deiecta gemas longo venabula rostro,
Hic brevis ingentem comminus ibit aprum.*

Hunting Knife

If the huge boar, in the midst of your strife,
flings away your spear, close in with this knife.

XIV. xxxiii

Pugio

*Pugio, quem curva signat brevis orbita vena,
Stridentem gelidis hunc Salo tinxit aquis.*

Dagger

This tempered, decorated blade sang out to feel
icy water washing its hot steel.

XIV. xxxix

Lucerna cubicularis

*Dulcis conscia lectuli lucerna,
Quidquid vis facias licet, tacebo.*

Une Lampe de chevet

Sur ta table de nuit, j'éclaire très bien,
Mais ne t'inquiète pas : je ne dirai rien.

Bedside Lamp

I light your bedside, and see very well,
but do not worry: I will never tell.

XIV. il

Halteres

*Quid pereunt stulto fortes haltere lacerti?
Exercet melius vinea fossa viros.*

Dumbbells

Why strain your arms by taking these in hand?
Better to work the grapevines on your land.

XIV. lvi

Dentifricium

Quid mecum est tibi? me puella sumat:

Emptos non soleo polire dentes.

Toothpaste

What are you doing? This defies belief!

I wasn't born to polish your false teeth!

XIV. xcvi

Lances chrysendetae

Grandia ne viola parvo chrysendeta mullo:

Ut minimum, libras debet habere duas.

Des Plateaux en vermeil

Deux si beaux plateaux doivent être parés :

Caviar et foie gras pourraient les honorer.

Silver-Gilt Platters

Such fine platters ought to be respected:

caviar and foie gras are expected.

XIV. cviii

Calices Saguntini

*Quae non sollicitus teneat servetque minister,
Sume Saguntino pocula facta luto.*

Des Bols en terre cuite

Ton servent est maladroit ? Ne sois pas fâché.
Il peut casser des bols qui étaient bon marché.

Terra Cotta Cups

Your servant's clumsy? Don't be apprehensive:
he can break these cups. They weren't expensive.

XIV. cxvii

Lagona nivaria

*Non potare nivem, sed aquam potare recentem
De nive commenta est ingeniosa sitis.*

Snowater

Although you can't drink snow, if first
you melt it, it will slake your thirst.

XIV. cxlv

Paenula gausapina

*Is mihi candor inest, villorum gratia tanta,
Ut me vel media sumere messe velis.*

A Fur Coat

So lustrous and luxurious am I
you'll want to wear me even in July.

XIV. clxxi

Βρούτου παιδίον fictile

*Gloria tam parvi non est obscura sigilli:
Istius pueri Brutus amator erat.*

A Statuette of a Young Slave

This statue's not an idle toy:
it's said that Brutus loved this boy.

XIV. clxxiv

Hermaphroditus marmoreus

*Masculus intravit fontis, emersit utrumque:
Pars est una patris, cetera matris habet.*

Hermaphrodite en marbre

Il est entré dans l'eau : cela en est sorti ;
Y est allé un fils, en sortant fille aussi.
Cet enfant ressemble tout à fait à sa mère,
Sauf pour une chose qui ressemble à son père.

A Hermaphrodite in Marble

He walked into, it emerged from water,
went in a son and came out also daughter.
This child looks exactly like its mother,
except for one thing that is like its father.

XIV. clxxv

Danae picta

*Cur a te pretium Danae, regnator Olympi,
Accepit, gratis si tibi Leda dedit?*

Une Fresque de Danaë

Léda et Io prêtèrent gratis leurs culs ;
Pourquoi Danaë fut-elle comblée d'écus ?

A Painting of Danaë

Leda got nothing, Jove, when she got laid,
so how come Danaë got paid?

XIV. clxxviii

Hercules fictilis

*Sum fragilis: sed tu, moneo, ne sperne sigillum:
Non pudet Alciden nomen habere meum.*

Terra Cotta Hercules

Though I seem fragile, I will not displease:
I bear the name of Hercules.

XIV. clxxx

Europe picta

*Mutari melius tauro, pater optime divum,
Tunc poteras, Io cum tibi vacca fuit.*

A Painting of Europa

Why, O mighty Jove, when beautiful
Io was a cow, weren't you *then* a bull?

XIV. ccxxiii

Adipata

*Surgite: iam vendit pueris ientacula pistor
Cristataeque sonant undique lucis aves.*

Le Déjeuner

Réveille-toi ! Debout ! Le jour va se lever !
Les pains chauds et les chants d'oiseaux vont arriver !

Breakfast

Get up! Get up! Fresh pastry's on the way!
Bright birds are singing in the light of day.