

# CATULLUS: THE POEMS



**Translated by A.S. Kline**

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## 1. The Dedication: to Cornelius

To whom do I send this fresh little book  
of wit, just polished off with dry pumice?  
To you, [Cornelius](#): since you were accustomed  
to consider my trifles worth something  
even then, when you alone of Italians  
dared to explain all the ages, in three learned  
works, by Jupiter, and with the greatest labour.  
Then take this little book for your own: whatever  
it is, and is worth: virgin [Muse](#), patroness,  
let it last, for more lives than one.

## 2. Tears for Lesbia's Sparrow

Sparrow, my sweet girl's delight,  
whom she plays with, holds to her breast,  
whom, greedy, she gives her little finger to,  
often provoking you to a sharp bite,  
whenever my shining desire wishes  
to play with something she loves,  
I suppose, while strong passion abates,  
it might be a small relief from her pain:  
might I toy with you as she does  
and ease the cares of a sad mind!

### 2b. Atalanta

It's as pleasing to me as, they say,  
that golden apple was to [the swift girl](#),  
that loosed her belt, too long tied.

### 3. The Death of Lesbia's Sparrow

Mourn, O you Loves and Cupids  
and such of you as love beauty:  
my girl's sparrow is dead,  
sparrow, the girl's delight,  
whom she loved more than her eyes.  
For he was sweet as honey, and knew her  
as well as the girl her own mother,  
he never moved from her lap,  
but, hopping about here and there,  
chirped to his mistress alone.  
Now he goes down the shadowy road  
from which they say no one returns.  
Now let evil be yours, evil shadows of [Orcus](#),  
that devour everything of beauty:  
you've stolen lovely sparrow from me.  
O evil deed! O poor little sparrow!  
Now, by your efforts, my girl's eyes  
are swollen and red with weeping.

#### 4. His Boat

This boat you see, friends, will tell you  
that she was the fastest of craft,  
not to be challenged for speed  
by any vessel afloat, whether  
driven by sail or the labour of oars.  
The threatening Adriatic coast won't deny it,  
nor the isles of the [Cyclades](#),  
nor noble Rhodes, nor fearful [Bosphorus](#),  
nor the grim bay of the [Black Sea](#)  
where, before becoming a boat, she was  
leafy wood: for on the heights of [Cytorus](#)  
she often hissed to the whispering leaves.  
The boat says these things were well known to you,  
and are, [Amastris](#) and box-wood clad Cytorus:  
she says from the very beginning she stood  
on your slope, that she dipped her oars  
in your water, and carried her owner from there  
over so many headstrong breakers,  
whether the wind cried from starboard  
or larboard, or whether [Jupiter](#) struck at the sheets  
on one side and the other, together:  
and no prayers to the gods of the shore were offered  
for her, when she came from a foreign sea

here, as far as this limpid lake.  
But that's past: now hidden away here  
she ages quietly and offers herself to you,  
[Castor](#) and his brother, heavenly Twins.

## 5. Let's Live and Love: to Lesbia

Let us live, my [Lesbia](#), let us love,  
and all the words of the old, and so moral,  
may they be worth less than nothing to us!  
Suns may set, and suns may rise again:  
but when our brief light has set,  
night is one long everlasting sleep.  
Give me a thousand kisses, a hundred more,  
another thousand, and another hundred,  
and, when we've counted up the many thousands,  
confuse them so as not to know them all,  
so that no enemy may cast an evil eye,  
by knowing that there were so many kisses.

## 6. Flavius's Girl: to Flavius

[Flavius](#), unless your delights  
were tasteless and inelegant,  
you'd want to tell, and couldn't be silent.  
Surely you're in love with some feverish  
little whore: you're ashamed to confess it.  
Now, pointlessly silent, you don't seem to be  
idle of nights, it's proclaimed by your bed  
garlanded, fragrant with Syrian perfume,  
squashed cushions and pillows, here and there,  
and the trembling frame shaken,  
quivering and wandering about.  
But being silent does nothing for you.  
Why? Spread thighs blab it's not so,  
if not quite what foolishness you commit.  
How and whatever you've got, good or bad,  
tell us. I want to name you and your loves  
to the heavens in charming verse.

## 7. How Many Kisses: to Lesbia

Lesbia, you ask how many kisses of yours  
would be enough and more to satisfy me.  
As many as the grains of Libyan sand  
that lie between hot [Jupiter](#)'s oracle,  
at [Ammon](#), in resin-producing [Cyrene](#),  
and old [Battiades](#) sacred tomb:  
or as many as the stars, when night is still,  
gazing down on secret human desires:  
as many of your kisses kissed  
are enough, and more, for mad Catullus,  
as can't be counted by spies  
nor an evil tongue bewitch us.

## 8. Advice: to himself

Sad Catullus, stop playing the fool,  
and let what you know leads you to ruin, end.  
Once, bright days shone for you,  
when you came often drawn to the girl  
loved as no other will be loved by you.  
Then there were many pleasures with her,  
that you wished, and the girl not unwilling,  
truly the bright days shone for you.  
And now she no longer wants you: and you  
weak man, be unwilling to chase what flees,  
or live in misery: be strong-minded, stand firm.  
Goodbye girl, now Catullus is firm,  
he doesn't search for you, won't ask unwillingly.  
But you'll grieve, when nobody asks.  
Woe to you, wicked girl, what life's left for you?  
Who'll submit to you now? Who'll see your beauty?  
Who now will you love? Whose will they say you'll  
be?  
Who will you kiss? Whose lips will you bite?  
But you, Catullus, be resolved to be firm.

## 9. Back from Spain: to Veranius

[Veranius](#), first to me of all  
my three hundred thousand friends,  
have you come home to your own house  
your harmonious brothers, and old mother?  
You're back. O happy news for me!  
I'll see you safe and sound and listen  
to your tales of Spanish places that you've done,  
and tribes, as is your custom, and  
hang about your neck, and kiss  
your lovely mouth and eyes.  
O who of all men is happier  
than I the gladdest and happiest?

## 10. Home Truths for Varus's girl: to Varus

[Varus](#) drags me into his affairs  
out of the Forum, where I'm seen idling:  
to a little whore I immediately saw,  
not very inelegant, not unattractive,  
who, when we came there, met us  
with varied chatter, including, how might  
[Bithynia](#) stand now, what's it like, and where  
might the benefit have been to me in cash.  
I told her what's true, nothing at all,  
while neither the praetors nor their aides,  
return any the richer, especially since  
our Praetor, [Memmius](#), the bugger,  
cared not a jot for his followers.  
'But surely,' they said, you could have bought  
slaves they say are made for the litter there.'  
I, so the girl might take me to be wealthy,  
said 'no, for me things weren't so bad,  
that coming across one bad province,  
I couldn't buy eight good men.'  
But I'd no one, neither here nor there,  
who might even raise to his shoulder  
the shattered foot of an old couch.  
At this she, like the shameless thing she was, said

‘I beg you, my dear Catullus, for the loan of them,  
just for a while: I’d like to be carried  
to [Serap](#)’s temple.’ ‘Wait’ I said to the girl,  
‘what I just said was mine, isn’t actually in  
my possession: my friend [Cinna](#), that’s Gaius,  
purchased the thing for himself.  
Whether they’re his or mine, what difference to me?  
I use them just as well as if I’d bought them myself.  
But you are quite tasteless, and annoying,  
you with whom no inexactness is allowed.’

## 11. Words against Lesbia: to Furius and Aurelius

[Furius](#) and [Aurelius](#), you friends of Catullus,  
whether he penetrates farthest India,  
where the Eastern waves strike the shore  
with deep resonance,  
or among the [Hyrceanians](#) and supple Arabs,  
or [Sacians](#) and [Parthian](#) bowmen,  
or where the seven-mouthed Nile  
colours the waters,  
or whether he’ll climb the high Alps,  
viewing great [Caesar](#)’s monuments,

the waters of Gallic Rhine,  
and the furthest fierce Britons,  
whatever the will of the heavens  
brings, ready now for anything,  
tell my girl this in a few  
ill-omened words.

Let her live and be happy with her adulterers,  
hold all three-hundred in her embrace,  
truly love-less, wearing them all down  
again and again: let her not look for  
my love as before,  
she whose crime destroyed it, like the last  
flower of the field, touched once  
by the passing plough.

## 12. Stop Stealing the Napkins! : to Asinius Marrucinus

[Asinius](#) Marrucinus, you don't employ your left hand too well: in wine and jest you take neglected table-linen.

Do you think that's witty? Get lost, you fool: it's such a sordid and such an unattractive thing.

Don't you believe me? Believe [Pollionus](#) your brother, who wishes your thefts could be fixed by money: he's a boy truly stuffed with wit and humour.

So expect three hundred hendecasyllables or return my napkin, whose value doesn't disturb me, truly, it's a remembrance of my friends.

[Fabullus](#) and [Veranius](#) sent me the gift, napkins from Spain: they must be cherished as my Veranius and Fabullus must be.

### 13. Invitation: to Fabullus

You'll dine well, in a few days, with me,  
if the gods are kind to you, my dear [Fabullus](#),  
and if you bring lots of good food with you,  
and don't come without a pretty girl  
and wine and wit and all your laughter.  
I say you'll dine well, and charmingly,  
if you bring all that: since your Catullus's  
purse alas is full of cobwebs.  
But accept endearments in return for the wine  
or whatever's sweeter and finer:  
since I'll give you a perfume my girl  
was given by the Loves and Cupids,  
and when you've smelt it, you'll ask the gods  
to make you, Fabullus, all nose.

## 14. What a Book! : to Calvus the Poet

If I didn't love you more than my eyes,  
most delightful [Calvus](#), I'd dislike you  
for this gift, with a true [Vatinian](#) dislike:  
Now what did I do and what did I say,  
to be so badly cursed with poets?  
Let the gods send ill-luck to that client  
who sent you so many wretches.  
But if, as I guess, [Sulla](#) the grammarian  
gave you this new and inventive gift,  
that's no harm to me, it's good and fine  
that your efforts aren't all wasted.  
Great gods, an amazing, immortal book!  
That you sent, of course, to your Catullus,  
so he might immediately die,  
on the optimum day, in the [Saturnalia](#)!  
No you won't get away with this crime.  
Now when it's light enough I'll run  
to the copyists bookstalls, I'll acquire  
[Caesius](#), [Aquinus](#), [Suffenus](#),  
all of the poisonous ones.  
And I'll repay you for this suffering.  
Meanwhile farewell take yourself off, there,  
whence your unlucky feet brought you,

cursed ones of the age, worst of poets.

## 15. A Warning: to Aurelius

I commend myself and my love to you,  
[Aurelius](#). I ask for modest indulgence,  
so, if you've ever had a desire in your mind  
you've pursued chastely and purely,  
keep this boy of mine modestly safe,  
I don't speak to the masses – nothing to fear  
from those who pass to and fro in the streets  
occupied with their business –  
truly the fear's of you and your cock  
dangerous to both good and bad boys.  
Shake it about as you please, and with as much  
force as you please, wherever you choose, outside:  
I except him from that, with modesty, I think.  
But if tempests of mind, and mad passion  
impel you to too much sin, you wretch,  
so you fill my boy's head with deceptions,  
then let misery, and evil fate, be yours!  
Of him whom, with feet dragged apart, an open  
door,  
radishes and mullets pass through.

## 16. A Rebuke: to Aurelius and Furius

I'll fuck you and bugger you,  
[Aurelius](#) the pathic, and sodomite [Furius](#),  
who thought you knew me from my verses,  
since they're erotic, not modest enough.  
It suits the poet himself to be dutifully chaste,  
his verses not necessarily so at all:  
which, in short then, have wit and good taste  
even if they're erotic, not modest enough,  
and as for that can incite to lust,  
I don't speak to boys, but to hairy ones  
who can't move their stiff loins.  
You, who read all these thousand kisses,  
you think I'm less of a man?  
I'll fuck you, and I'll bugger you.

## 17. The Town of Cologna Veneta

O [Cologna](#), who want a long bridge to sport on,  
and are ready to dance, though you fear  
the useless bridge-props with their  
much-patched standing timber,  
lest they tumble and lie in deep mud:  
let a good bridge be made for you as you desire  
where even leap-frogging priests are safe: but  
Cologna, give me that greatest gift, a good laugh.  
I want a fellow-citizen of mine to go head over heels  
straight into the deep mire from your bridge,  
since truly the whole pool and the putrid marsh  
is the blackest and deepest of chasms.  
The man's totally dull, knows no more than  
a two-year-old child, asleep in its father's trembling  
arms.  
Who, though he's married a girl in her first  
flowering,  
a girl more delicate than a pretty little kid,  
needing to be tended more carefully than choicest  
grapes,  
let's her play as she wishes, doesn't care a fig,  
hasn't risen to the occasion, but like an alder  
in a Ligurian ditch, crippled by the axe,

feels as much of it all as if there were no woman there:

Such is his stupor he doesn't see, or hear me, he, who doesn't know who he is, or whether he is or not.

Now I want to toss him headlong from your bridge, if it's possible suddenly to raise that stupefied dullness,

and abandon that indolent mind in the heavy bog, as mules cast shoes into tenacious depths.

*Note: Nos: 18-20 are considered spurious and are omitted here.*

## 21. Greedy: To Aurelius.

[Aurelius](#), father of hungers,  
you desire to fuck,  
not just these, but whoever my friends  
were, or are, or will be in future years.  
not secretly: now at the same time as you joke  
with one, you try clinging to him on every side.  
In vain: now my insidious cock  
will bugger you first.  
And, if you're filled, I'll say nothing:  
Now I'm grieving for him: you teach  
my boy, mine, to hunger and thirst.  
So lay off: while you've any shame,  
or you will end up being buggered.

## 22. People Who Live in Glass Houses: to Varus

[Varus](#), that [Suffenus](#), thoroughly known to us,  
is a man who's charming, witty, urbane,  
and the same man for ages has penned many verses.  
I think he's written a thousand, ten thousand, or  
more,  
not those that are done on cheap manuscript  
paper: but princely papyri, new books,  
new roller ends, new red ties for the parchment,  
lead-ruled and smoothed all-over with pumice.  
When you read them, that lovely urbane Suffenus  
turns into a goat-herd or a ditch-digger:  
he's so altered and strange.  
What should we think of it? He who might just now  
have been playing the fool, being witty with the  
thing,  
the same man's crude, crude as a bumpkin,  
he mentions his poems as well, nor is there ever  
likewise anything as happy as the poems he writes:  
he delights in himself so, is so amazed by himself.  
Of course we're all deceived in the same way, and  
there's no one who can't somehow or other be seen  
as a Suffenus. Whoever it is, is subject to error:  
we don't see the pack on our own back.

## 23. Poverty: to Furius

[Furius](#), you who've neither slaves nor cash  
nor beetles nor spiders nor fire,  
truly have a father and step-mother,  
whose teeth can chew like flints:  
that's fine for you, and your father  
and your father's wooden wife.  
No wonder: since you're all well,  
good digestion, nothing to fear,  
no flames, no weighty disasters,  
no wicked deeds, no threat of poison,  
no chance of further dangers.  
And you've a body drier than bone  
or whatever is most desiccated  
by heat and cold and hunger.  
Why wouldn't you be well and happy?  
You've no sweat, no phlegm,  
or mucus, or evil cold in the head.  
To this cleanliness add more cleanliness,  
your arse is purer than a little salt-cellar,  
and doesn't crap ten times in a year:  
and your shit's harder than beans or pebbles.  
So if you rub it and crush it between your fingers,  
you can't stain a single finger:

it all suits you so happily Furius,  
don't despise it, or consider it nothing,  
and cease to beg for that hundred sestertia  
you always ask for: sufficiency is riches.

## 24. Furius's Poverty: to Iuventius

[Iuventius](#), who are our pride,  
not just now, for all times that have been,  
or will be hereafter in later years,  
rather surrender [Midas](#)'s riches  
to him, who has no slaves or cash,  
than allow yourself to be loved by him.  
'Why, isn't he a decent man?' you ask. He is:  
but this decent man has no slaves or cash.  
Ignore it: disparage it as you may:  
he still has no slaves and no money.

## 25. My Things Back Please: to Thallus

[Thallus](#) the sodomite, softer than rabbit's fur  
or goose grease, or the little tip of the ear,  
or an old man's slack penis mouldy with spider-  
webs,  
and that same Thallus more rapacious than a wild  
storm,  
when the sea-goddess reveals the yawning  
breakwaters,  
return my cloak, you pounced on,  
and Spanish napkin, and [Bithynian](#) painted ware,  
absurd man, that you 'own' openly like heirlooms.  
Now, unglue them from your talons, and return  
them,  
lest those soft little flanks and tender fingers  
are shamefully written over with the mark of the  
lash,  
and you toss immoderately, like a paltry boat  
caught in a heavy sea, in a raging wind.

## 26. The Mortgage: to Furius

[Furius](#), your little villa's not exposed  
to the southerlies, or the westerlies,  
the savage north-wind, or the easterly breeze,  
but truly to fifteen thousand two hundred cash.  
O terrifying and destructive wind!

## 27. Falernian Wine

Serving-boy fill for me stronger cups  
of old [Falernian](#), since [Postumia](#),  
the mistress's, laws demand it,  
she who's juicier than the juicy grape.  
But you water, fatal to wine, away with you:  
far off, wherever, be off to the strict.  
This wine is [Bacchus](#)'s own.

## 28. Patronage: to Veranus and Fabullus

Followers of [Piso](#), needy retinue,  
with suitable and ready packs,  
[Veranius](#), the best, and you, my [Fabullus](#),  
what possessions do you carry? Haven't you borne  
hunger and cold enough with that good-for-nothing?  
Do any small gains show in the expense accounts,  
considering that I, following my praetor,  
repay what was spent, with small gain?  
O [Memmius](#), truly, and daily, slowly  
buggered me backwards with that whole tree of his.  
But, as far as I can see, your case is the same:  
now you're stuffed by no less a circumcised cock.  
Seek out the noble ones, my friends!  
But, to you, may the gods and goddesses bring  
much evil luck, disgraces to Romulus and Remus.

## 29. Catamite

Who could see it, who could endure it,  
unless he were shameless, greedy, a gambler?

[Mamurra](#) owns riches that Transalpine Gaul  
and furthest Britain once owned.

Roman sodomite, do you see this and bear it?  
And now shall the man, arrogant, overbearing,  
flit through all of the beds

like a whitish dove or an [Adonis](#)?

Roman sodomite, do you see this and bear it?

You're shameless, greedy, a gambler.

Surely it wasn't for this, you, [the unique leader](#),  
were in the furthest western isle,

so that this loose-living tool of yours  
might squander two or three hundred times its  
worth?

What is it but perverted generosity?

Hasn't he squandered enough, or been elevated  
enough?

First his inheritance was well and truly spent,  
then the booty from [Pontus](#), then

Spain's, to make three, as the gold-bearing Tagus  
knows:

now be afraid for Gaul's and Britain's.

Why cherish this evil? What's he good for  
but to devour his rich patrimony?  
Was it for this, the city's wealthiest,  
you, father-in law, son-in-law, wasted a world?

### 30. Faithlessness: to Alfenus

[Alfenus](#), negligent, false to the concord of pals,  
have you no sympathy now with your gentle friend?  
The impious deeds of deceitful men don't please the  
gods.

You neglect me and abandon me to miserable  
illness.

Ah, say, what should men do, in whom should they  
trust?

Surely you, unjustly, commanded my trust, seduced  
me to love, as if it were all quite safe for me.

Now you withdraw, and all your vain actions and  
words

you let slip on the winds, with the airy clouds.

If you forget, the gods will remember, Faith  
remembers,

so that whatever you do, you'll soon repent of your  
deeds.

### 31. Sirmio

[Sirmio](#), jewel of islands, jewel of peninsulas,  
jewel of whatever is set in the bright waters  
or the great sea, or either ocean,  
with what joy, what pleasure I gaze at you,  
scarcely believing myself free of [Thynia](#)  
and the [Bithynian](#) fields, seeing you in safety.  
O what freedom from care is more joyful  
than when the mind lays down its burden,  
    and weary, back home from foreign toil,  
we rest in the bed we longed for?  
This one moment's worth all the labour.  
Hail, O lovely Sirmio, and rejoice as I rejoice,  
and you, O lake of Lydian waters, laugh  
with whatever of laughter lives here.

### 32. Siesta: to Ipsíthilla

Please, my sweet [Ipsíthilla](#),  
my delight, my charmer:  
tell me to come to you at siesta.  
And if you tell me, help it along,  
let no-one cover the sign at your threshold,  
nor you choose to step out of doors,  
but stay at home, and get ready  
for nine fucks, in succession, with me.  
Truly, if you should want it, let me know now:  
because lying here, fed, and indolently full,  
I'm making a hole in my tunic and cloak.

### 33. A Suggestion: to Vibennius

O first of the bath-house thieves  
[Vibennius](#) the father, with sodomite son  
(since the father's right hand is dirtier,  
and the son's arse more all-consuming),  
why not go into exile, to some vile place?  
Seeing the father's pillage is known  
to us all, and the son's hairy arse,  
you can't sell for a farthing.

### 34. Song: to Diana

Under [Diana](#)'s protection,  
we pure girls, and boys:  
we pure boys, and girls,  
we sing of Diana.  
O, daughter of [Latona](#),  
greatest child of great [Jove](#),  
whose mother gave birth  
near the [Delian](#) olive,  
mistress of mountains  
and the green groves,  
the secret glades,  
and the sounding streams:  
you, called [Juno Lucina](#)  
in childbirth's pains,  
you, called all-powerful [Trivia](#),  
and Luna, of counterfeit daylight.  
Your monthly passage  
measures the course of the year,  
you fill the rustic farmer's  
roof with good crops.  
Take whatever sacred name  
pleases you, be a sweet help  
to the people of Rome,

as you have been of old.

### 35. Cybele: to Caecilius

Paper, I'd like you to say to [Caecilius](#),  
that tender poet, that friend of mine,  
leave Lake Como, come now to Verona,  
abandon the town there and the shore.  
Because there are certain thoughts that I want  
him to hear of, from his friend and yours.  
So, if he's wise, he'll eat up the road,  
though some lovely girl calls to him  
asks his return, clasping both hands  
round his neck, and begging delay.  
Who, if the truth's been told me now  
love's him with violent desire.  
For, since the moment she read his unfinished  
Lady of [Dindymus](#), the poor little thing  
has been eaten by fire to the core of her bones.  
I forgive you, girl, more learned  
than the [Sapphic](#) Muse: it's truly lovely,  
Caecilius's unfinished Great Mother [Cybele](#).

### 36. Burnt-Offering: to Volusius's Droppings

Annals, of [Volusius](#), papyrus droppings,  
discharge my girl's votive offering.  
Since, by sacred [Venus](#) and [Cupid](#), she promised,  
that if I were given back to her,  
and I left off launching wild iambs,  
she'd offer the gods the choicest words,  
of the worst of limping poets,  
consumed with malignant wood.  
And the girl thought this was the worst,  
with charming laughter, to move the gods.  
Now O goddess created from the blue sea,  
whose is holy [Idalia](#), Uria, [Ancona](#),  
reed-bound [Cnidos](#), and [Amathusia](#),  
[Golgos](#), and Adriatic [Dyrrachium](#),  
make the vow acceptable, fulfilled,  
if its not lacking in wit and charm.  
But meanwhile, you, enter the fire,  
you, full of boorishness and crudities,  
Volusian annals, papyrus droppings.

### 37. Free for All: to the Regulars and Egnatius

Lecherous tavern, and you its regulars,  
nine pillars along from the [Twins](#)' pillars,  
do you think you're the only ones with cocks,  
the only ones who're allowed to trouble  
young girls, and consider the rest of us goats?  
Or, because a hundred or two of you sit in a row,  
you,  
dullards, that I daren't bugger two hundred together?  
Think on: I'll draw all over the front  
of the tavern with your leavings.  
Because my girl, who's left my arms,  
whom I loved as no other girl's ever been loved,  
for whom so many great battles were fought,  
is there. You, all the rich and the fortunate, love her,  
and, what's so shameful, it's true, all the lesser ones,  
all the adulterous frequenters of by-ways:  
you, above all, one of the hairy ones,  
rabbit-faced offspring of Spain,  
[Egnatius](#). Whom a shadowy beard improves,  
and teeth scrubbed with Iberian piss.

### 38. A Word Please: to Cornificius

He's ill, [Cornificius](#), your Catullus,  
he's ill, by [Hercules](#), and it's bad,  
and worse and worse by the hour.  
Where are you, for whom it's the least and easiest  
thing,  
to bring consolation with chatter?  
I'm cross with you. So much for my friendship?  
Even a little might comfort me,  
sadder than [Simonides](#)'s tears.

### 39. Your Teeth! : to Egnatius

[Egnatius](#), because he has snow-white teeth,  
smiles all the time. If you're a defendant  
in court, when the counsel draws tears,  
he smiles: if you're in grief at the pyre  
of pious sons, the lone lorn mother weeping,  
he smiles. Whatever it is, wherever it is,  
whatever he's doing, he smiles: he's got a disease,  
neither polite, I would say, nor charming.  
So a reminder to you, from me, good Egnatius.  
If you were a [Sabine](#) or [Tiburtine](#)  
or a fat Umbrian, or plump Etruscan,  
or dark toothy [Lanuvian](#), or from north of the Po,  
and I'll mention my own Veronese too,  
or whoever else clean their teeth religiously,  
I'd still not want you to smile all the time:  
there's nothing more foolish than foolishly smiling.  
Now you're Spanish: in the country of Spain  
what each man pisses, he's used to brushing  
his teeth and red gums with, every morning,  
so the fact that your teeth are so polished  
just shows you're the more full of piss.

#### **40. You want Fame? : to Ravidus**

What illness of mind, poor little [Ravidus](#),  
drives you headlong onto my iambics?  
What god, badly-disposed towards you,  
intends to start a mad quarrel?  
Or is it to achieve vulgar fame?  
Why the assault? You want to be known  
everywhere?  
You will be, seeing you've wanted to love  
my love, and with a long punishment.

## 41. An Unreasonable Demand: to Ameana

[Ameana](#), a girl fucked by all,  
requires ten thousand from me,  
that girl with the ugly great nose,  
bankrupt [Formianus](#)'s 'friend'.  
Gather round, you who care for the girl,  
assemble together, doctors and friends:  
the girl's not well, don't ask what it is:  
she's suffering from fantasy money.

## 42. The Writing Tablets: to the Hendecasyllables

Come, hendecasyllables, all that there are  
and from every side, as many as are.  
A base adulteress thinks I'm a joke,  
and refuses to give me my tablets  
once more, if you'd believe it.  
We'll follow her: ask for them back.  
Which one, you may ask? The one you can see  
strutting disgracefully, laughing ridiculously,  
maddening, with the jaws of a Gaulish bitch.  
Surround her: ask for them back:  
'Stinking adulteress, give back my letters,  
give back, stinking adulteress, my letters!'  
You won't? O to the mire, the brothel,  
or if anything can be more ruinous, then that!  
But still don't think that's enough.  
Call her again in a louder voice:  
'Stinking adulteress, give back my letters,  
give back, stinking adulteress, my letters!'  
But it's no use: nothing disturbs her.  
We'd better change methods and tactics,  
if we want them to be of more use to us:  
let's see if we can't get a blush  
from that bitch's brazen face.:

‘Honest and chaste one, give back my letters.’

### 43. No Comparison: to [Ameana](#)

Greetings, girl with a nose not the shortest,  
feet not so lovely, eyes not of the darkest,  
fingers not slender, mouth never healed,  
and a not excessively charming tongue,  
bankrupt [Formianus](#)'s 'little friend'.

And the Province pronounces you beautiful?

To be compared to my [Lesbia](#)?

O witless and ignorant age!

#### 44. His Estate

O my estate, whether you're [Sabine](#) or [Tiburtine](#)  
(for they call you Tiburtine, who don't wish to  
wound

Catullus: but those who wish to do so say  
that whatever the bet is you're Sabine),  
but whether you're Sabine or Tiburtine,  
I willingly inhabit your suburban villa,  
and shake off a bad bronchial cough,  
given me by a stomach chill, my own fault,  
while stuffing extravagant dinners.

For I wanted to be a guest of [Sestius](#),  
so I read the oration in [Antius](#)'s case,  
full of legal poison and pestilence,  
it weakened me even to the extent  
of watery colds and frequent coughing,  
till I fled to your bosom, and restored  
my health, with rest and nettle-soup.

Refreshed by which, I give you great thanks,  
who take no revenge on me for my error.

Now I don't care, if I take up that heinous  
script again, if it's not me but Sestius himself,  
wheezing and coughing, who takes a chill,  
who invited me only after I'd read that vile work.

## 45. A Pastoral: to Septimius

Septimius holding his beloved Acme  
in his lap, said: ‘Acme, mine, if I  
don’t love you desperately, and love forever,  
continually through all the years,  
as much as he who loves the most,  
in empty Libya and scorched India,  
I’ll fight against some green-eyed lion.’  
As he spoke, Love, to left and right,  
sneezed his approbation.

But Acme lifted her head slightly  
and her charming red lips spoke  
to her sweet boy’s intoxicated eyes:  
‘So, Septimius, *mea vita*,  
let us always serve this one lord,  
that more deeply and more fiercely  
the fire will burn my tender marrow.’  
As she spoke, Love, to left and right  
sneezed his approbation.

Now profiting from these good omens  
their mutual spirits love and are loved.  
Septimius sets his little Acme,  
above the Syrians or Britons:  
faithful Acme makes Septimius

her one darling and desire.  
Who might see more blessed creatures  
who a love more fortunate?

## 46. Spring Parting

Now Spring returns mild and temperate,  
now the wild equinoctial skies  
are calmed by [Zephyr](#)'s happier breezes.  
The fields of [Phrygia](#) will be forsaken,  
Catullus, rich farms of hot [Nicaea](#):  
we'll flee to Asia's bright cities.  
Now restless minds long for travel,  
now the glad feet stir with pleasure.  
O sweet crowd of friends farewell,  
who came together from far places,  
whom divergent roads must carry.

## 47. Preferment: to Porcius and Socration

[Porcius](#) and [Socration](#), two left hands  
of [Piso](#), the world's itches and famines,  
that circumcised [Priapus](#) prefers you  
to my [Veraniolus](#) and my [Fabullus](#)?  
You, indulged with great sumptuous banquets  
every day: my friends  
looking for work at the crossroads?

## **48. Passion: to Iuventius**

[Iuventius](#), if I were always allowed  
to kiss your honey-sweet eyes,  
I might kiss you three hundred  
thousand times, and never be sated,  
not even if my kisses were more  
than the crop's ripe ears of wheat.

## **49. A Compliment: to Marcus Tullius Cicero**

Most fluent of Romulus's descendants,  
that are, that have been, that will be  
through all the years, [Marcus Tullius](#),  
Catullus sends you the warmest thanks,  
the least of all the poets, as much  
the least of all the poets, as you  
are the greatest of all lawyers.

## 50. Yesterday: to Licinius Calvus

Yesterday, [Calvus](#), idle day  
we played with my writing tablets,  
harmonising in being delightful:  
scribbling verses, each of us  
playing with metres, this and that,  
reciting together, through laughter and wine.  
And I left there fired with your charm,  
Calvus, and with your wit,  
so that, restless, I couldn't enjoy food,  
or close my eyes quietly in sleep,  
but tossed the whole bed about wildly  
in passion, longing to see the light,  
so I might speak to you, and be with you.  
But afterwards I lay there wearied  
with effort, half-dead in the bed,  
I made this poem for you, pleasantly,  
from which you might gather my pain.  
Now beware of being rash, don't reject  
my prayers I beg, my darling,  
lest [Nemesis](#) demand your punishment. She's  
a powerful goddess. Beware of annoying her.

## 51 An Imitation of Sappho: to Lesbia

He seems equal to the gods, to me, that man,  
if it's possible more than just divine,  
who sitting over against you, endlessly  
sees you and hears you  
laughing so sweetly, that with fierce pain I'm robbed  
of all of my senses: because that moment  
I see you, [Lesbia](#), nothing's left of me.....  
but my tongue is numbed, and through my poor  
limbs  
fires are raging, the echo of your voice  
rings in both ears, my eyes are covered  
with the dark of night.

'Your idleness is loathsome Catullus:  
you delight in idleness, and too much posturing:  
idleness ruined the kings and the cities  
of former times.'

## **52. Injustice: on Nonnius**

Why, Catullus? Why wait to die?

[Nonnius](#) the tumour sits in a Magistrate's chair,

[Vatinius](#) perjures himself for a Consulate:

Why, Catullus? Why wait to die?

### **53. Laughter in Court: to Gaius Licinius Calvus**

I laughed when someone, from the crowd,  
while my [Calvus](#) explained the [Vatinian](#) case  
quite wonderfully, said admiringly, raising his  
hands:

‘Great gods, what an eloquent little man!’

#### 54. Oh Caesar! : of Otho's head

Otho's head is quite tiny,  
and it's owner's legs loutishly unclean,  
soft and delicate is Libo's farting:  
if not with all that, then let me displease you  
with Sufficio, old age renewed...  
again let my worthless iambs  
rile you, our one and only general.

## 55. Where are You? : to Camerius

I beg you, if it's not too much trouble,  
point out where your shade might be.  
You, little [Camerius](#), I've looked for you,  
you, in the Circus, you, in the bookshops,  
you, in the sacred shrine of great [Jove](#).  
I've detained all the girls together  
in [Pompey](#)'s Arcade, my friend,  
whose faces were blank, however.  
'Worst of girls, reveal my Camerius',  
so I demanded of them.  
One replied, revealing her nudity...  
'Look he's hiding in these rosy breasts.'  
But, oh it's a labour of [Hercules](#) to bear with you:  
as much as your pride denies it, my friend.  
Since I'm not that [bronze guardian](#) of Crete,  
not [Ladas](#) or wing-footed [Perseus](#),  
since I'm not carried by [Pegasus](#) in flight,  
nor by [Rhesus](#)'s swift snowy-white team,  
add to that feathered-feet and swiftness  
and the collective speed of the winds,  
Camerius you might have said who you were with:  
but I'd be weary right down to my marrow  
and devoured by excessive fatigue

if I went on searching for you, my friend.  
Tell us where you'll be in future, utter  
boldly, commit yourself, trust to the light.  
Do the milk-white girls hold you now?  
If your tongue's stuck in your mouth,  
you'll banish all the rewards of love.  
[Venus](#) delights in copious language.  
Or, if you want, fasten your lips,  
while letting me share in your loves.

## 56. Threesome: to Cato

O [Cato](#), an amusing ridiculous thing,  
worth your ears and your laughter!  
Cato laugh as you love Catullus:  
the thing is amusing, and quite ridiculous.  
I caught my girl's little pupil thrusting away:  
if only to please [Dione](#), I sacrificed him  
to my rigid succeeding shaft.

## 57. You Two! : to Caius Julius Caesar

Beautifully matched the perverse buggers,  
[Mamurra](#) the catamite and [Caesar](#).

No wonder: both equally spotted,  
one from Formia, the other the City,  
marks that remain, not to be lessened.  
diseased the same, both of these twins,  
both somewhat skilled in the selfsame couch,  
this one no greedier an adulterer than that,  
rivals in shared little girls.

Beautifully matched the perverse buggers.

## 58. Lament for Lesbia: to Marcus Caelius Rufus

[Caelius](#), our [Lesbia](#), *that* Lesbia,  
that Lesbia, Catullus alone loved  
more than himself, and all of his own,  
now at crossroads, and down alleyways,  
jerks off the brave sons of Rome.

## 59. The Leavings: on Rufa

[Rufa](#) from Bologna gives head to [Rufulus](#),  
she's [Menenius](#)'s wife, whom you've often seen,  
snatching food, from the pyre itself, in the cemetery,  
chasing the bread when it rolls from the flames,  
being thumped by the half-shaven cremator.

## 60. Lioness

You now, did a lioness, from African mountains,  
or the depths of howling Scylla's thighs,  
create you as hard and as foul as that,  
so you might show scorn for the voice of entreaty,  
in its latest misfortune, out of that oh too cruel  
heart?

## 61. Epithalamion: for Vinia and Manlius

You, who live on [Helicon](#)'s  
hills, the son of [Urania](#),  
who carry the tender virgin  
to her man, O Hymanae [Hymen](#),  
O Hymen Hymenae:  
crown your brow with sweet flowers  
of marjoram fragrance,  
put on the glad veil, here,  
come, wearing the saffron shoes  
on your snow-white feet:  
summoned to the happy day  
singing the nuptial songs  
with ringing voice,  
strike your feet on the ground, shake  
the pine torch in your hand.  
Now [Vinia](#) comes to her [Manlius](#),  
as [Venus](#), adorning Mount [Ida](#),  
came to [Paris](#), her [Phrygian](#) judge,  
a rare girl wedded to rare fortune,  
like the myrtle of Asia born  
on the flowering branches,  
that the divine [Hamadryads](#)  
playfully tend themselves

with shining dew.

So come, suffer yourself to approach,  
leave the [Aonian](#) cave among  
the cliffs of [Thespia](#),  
leave the nymph [Aganippe](#)  
and her cooling stream.

And call the bride to her  
new husband's loving home,  
her heart bound fast with love,  
as the clinging ivy enfolds the tree,  
winding here and there.

And you chaste virgins too,  
whose own day will come,  
singing harmoniously  
cry, O Hymanae Hymen,  
O Hymen Hymenae.

That, hearing himself called  
to perform his service, he may  
suffer himself to approach,  
the commander of wedding joys,  
the true uniter-in-love.

What greater god do you love  
sought out by lovers?

What divine one do men  
worship more, O Hymanae Hymen,  
O Hymen Hymenae?

You her trembling father  
invokes: for you  
the virgin belt's untied:  
for you the bridegroom waits,  
fearful with new desire.  
You give the young girl fresh  
from her mother's breast,  
to the young novice's  
hands, O Hymanaeae Hymen,  
O Hymen Hymenaeae.  
Venus can take no advantage  
of what good custom allows,  
without you, but she can  
if you're willing. What god dare  
compare with you in this?  
No house bears offspring  
without you, no parent can be  
brightened by children: but they can  
if you're willing. What god dare  
compare with you in this?  
No ruler can set the boundaries  
to his country: but he can  
if you're willing. What god dare  
compare with you in this?  
Open the lock of the door.  
The virgin comes. Do you see how

the torches scatter brilliant sparks?

.....

.....

Noble shame holds back.  
However obedient she is,  
she weeps that she has to go.  
Don't weep. There's no danger  
to you [Aurunculeia](#),  
nor will bright day see  
a lovelier girl than you  
rise from the Ocean waves.  
Such a hyacinth flower  
as blooms in a rich man's  
colourful little garden.  
But you linger: the day vanishes.  
Let the new bride appear.  
Let the new bride appear, so  
she can now be viewed, and listen  
to my words. See? The torches  
scatter golden sparks:  
let the new bride appear.  
Your husband's not fickle,  
given to sinful adulteries,  
chasing shameful vices,  
does not wish to flee from

sleep in your tender breasts,  
and as the vines slowly wind  
about the trees they claim,  
he'll be wound in your  
embrace. But the day vanishes:  
let the new bride appear.  
O bridal-bed, that for all

.....  
.....

at the foot of the shining couch,  
comes to your master,  
what joy, what wandering  
night, what noon  
delights! But the day goes by:  
let the new bride appear.  
O, you boys, lift the torches:  
I see the flame approach.  
Come: let the song sound in harmony  
'io Hymen Hymenae io,  
io Hymen Hymenae.'  
Don't hold back the bold  
[Fescennine](#) laughter,  
don't let this obedient concubine  
abandoning his master's love  
deny the boys their nuts.

Give nuts to the boys, you idle  
concubine! You've toyed  
with the nuts long enough:  
now be pleased to serve [Hymen](#).  
Concubine, give them nuts.  
Girls seemed vile to you,  
concubine, yesterday, till today:  
now the hair-curler smooths  
your beard. Wretch of a wretch,  
concubine, give them nuts.  
You'll speak ill of abstaining  
from your slaves, perfumed  
husband, but abstain.  
Io Hymen Hymenaeae io,  
io Hymen Hymenaeae.  
We know what's allowed to you  
when you're known to be single,  
but married it's not allowed.  
Io Hymen Hymenaeae io,  
io Hymen Hymenaeae.  
Bride, beware you don't deny  
what your man comes seeking,  
lest he goes seeking elsewhere.  
Io Hymen Hymenaeae io,  
io Hymen Hymenaeae.  
Powerful in your house,

and happy in your powers,  
that act without you there,  
Io Hymen Hymenaeae io,  
io Hymen Hymenaeae,  
until with trembling motion  
white-haired old age  
nods at all and everything.  
Io Hymen Hymenaeae io,  
io Hymen Hymenaeae.  
In your saffron shoes cross  
the threshold with good omens,  
and enter the shining door.  
Io Hymen Hymenaeae io,  
io Hymen Hymenaeae.  
Look inside where your man  
lies on a [Tyrian](#) bed  
waiting for you alone.  
Io Hymen Hymenaeae io,  
io Hymen Hymenaeae.  
He no less than you  
burns with fire in his heart,  
but inwardly much greater.  
Io Hymen Hymenaeae io,  
io Hymen Hymenaeae.  
Page, let go the young  
girl's shapely arm: now

she reaches her husband's bed.  
Io Hymen Hymenaeae io,  
io Hymen Hymenaeae.  
You good wives who know  
the powers of old to bring  
young girls to marriage.  
Io Hymen Hymenaeae io,  
io Hymen Hymenaeae.  
Now bridegroom, you may come:  
your wife waits in your bed,  
her lovely face gleaming,  
like a white poppy,  
on a saffron field.  
But, husband, let the gods  
joy, you are no less  
handsome, nor does Venus  
neglect you. But the daylight flies:  
come now, don't delay.  
He's not lingered:  
now he comes. Kind Venus  
shall aid you, since you desire  
openly what you desire, you  
won't forget kind love.  
He who would count your joys,  
many thousands, must first  
tally the grains of Africa's sands,

and the glittering stars.  
Play as you wish, and quickly  
give her children. It's not right  
for an ancient name to be  
childless, but it should create  
from the same root.

I want a young [Torquatus](#)  
to stretch out his tender hand  
from his mother's lap  
sweetly smiling to his father  
from half-open lips.

Let him be like his father  
Manlius, let that be known  
by all the unknowing,  
and let his face reveal,  
his mother's faithfulness.

So our praise approves  
one born of a noble mother,  
just as unparalleled fame echoes  
from [Penelope](#), the mother  
of excellent [Telemachus](#).

Close the doorways, virgins:  
we're satisfied with our play. But you  
brave partners live truly, and  
do your duty constantly,  
with vigour and with joy.

## 62. Wedding Song

Evening is here, young men, arise: evening, awaited  
so long by the heavens, barely still shows the light.  
Now is the time to rise, to leave the rich banquet,  
now the virgin comes, now the wedding-song is  
sung.

[Hymen](#) O Hymenaeae, Hymen be near, O Hymenaeae!  
Do you see the unmarried girls, you young men?  
Rise to meet them: the evening star shows  
Thessalian fire.

Such is the contest: see how they spring up so  
nimble?

Don't fear to rise, they sing to win a partner.

Hymen O Hymenaeae, Hymen be near, O Hymenaeae!  
The palm's not easily won by us men as equals:  
consider, the girls need to prepare amongst  
themselves.

not a vain preparation: they truly know what's what:  
no wonder, since they concentrate their whole mind.  
Our minds are elsewhere: our ears turn elsewhere:  
so we'll be defeated by willpower: victory needs  
attention.

Therefore turn your minds to it at the least:  
now they begin to sing, now you must reply.

Hymen O Hymenaeae, Hymen be near, O Hymenaeae!

Hesperus what fire, they say, is crueller than yours?  
Who can tear a daughter away from her mother's  
arms,  
from a mother's detaining arms tear a daughter  
away,  
and give a virgin girl to an ardent young man.  
What do the enemy do that's crueller, in capturing a  
city?  
Hymen O Hymenaeae, Hymen be near, O Hymenaeae!  
Hesperus, who shines with happier fire in the sky?  
You who strengthen the bond of marriage with your  
flame,  
with what men swear, swearing it to the parents,  
not to be joined together before your own brightness  
rises.  
What wished-for hour by the gods is more happily  
granted?  
Hymen O Hymenaeae, Hymen be near, O Hymenaeae!  
Hesperus has stolen one like us away.

.....  
.....

And now at your rising the watchman always wakes,  
thieves hide by night, who often likewise return,

Hesperus, you catch them, as your name alters, at dawn,

but the girls love to slander you with false complaints.

Why do they complain, if they secretly wish it then?

Hymen O Hymenaeae, Hymen be near, O Hymenaeae!

As the hidden flower born in the hedged garden unknown to the beasts, untouched by the plough, that the breezes sweeten, the sun strengthens, the rain feeds:

that many young men would choose, and many young girls:

when that same flower fades, plucked by a tender hand,

no young boy would choose it, and no young girl:

so the virgin, while she's untouched, while she's their love:

if she loses her flower of chastity, her body dishonoured,

she's no longer the boy's delight, the girls' beloved.

Hymen O Hymenaeae, Hymen be near, O Hymenaeae!

As the vine we see, grown in the open field, never lifting its head, never bearing sweet grapes, its delicate stem bending downwards with the weight,

so that in a moment its tallest shoot will touch its  
roots:  
no countryman, no farm-hand will cherish it:  
but if the same plant is fastened tight, wedded to an  
elm,  
many countrymen and farm-hands will cherish it.  
So a virgin who stays untouched, and uncultivated,  
ages:  
while taken in equal marriage, while the time is ripe,  
she's loved more by the man, less hateful to her  
parents.  
Hymen O Hymenaeae, Hymen be near, O Hymenaeae!  
And don't you struggle with such a husband, girl.  
it's not right to struggle, you, whose father gives you  
away,  
your father and your mother, who prepare you.  
Your virginity's not wholly yours: part is your  
parents:  
a third your father's, a third your mother's,  
only a third is yours: don't fight those two,  
who grant their rights to the son-in-law with the  
dowry.  
Hymen O Hymenaeae, Hymen be near, O Hymenaeae!

### 63. Of [Berecynthia](#) and Attis

As soon as [Attis](#), borne over the deep seas in a swift boat,  
had reached the [Phrygian](#) woods, with rapid eager steps,  
had returned to a dark corner of the goddess's grove,  
goaded by mad fury, and there, his wits wandering  
had sliced off his testicles with a sharp stone,  
and had seen his remaining members devoid of power,  
and that country's soil spotted with fresh blood,  
he took up the drum lightly in his pale hands,  
your drum, [Cybele](#), yours, Great Mother, in your rite,  
and striking the sounding bull's-hide with delicate fingers,  
chanted to his followers, as it quivered from his assault:  
'[Gallae](#), come, rise, to the high woods of Cybele,  
now,  
come, now, wandering cattle of [Dindymus](#)'s Lady,  
like exiles wandering here on an alien shore,  
followers of my way, lead by me, my friends,  
you suffered the swift seas and the wild waves

and sheared your sex from your bodies with great  
hatred:  
gladden the Lady's spirit with swift movements.  
Banish dull delay from your minds: come, now,  
follow,  
to Phrygian Cybele's house, the Phrygian goddess's  
grove,  
where the voice of the cymbal clashes, the drum  
echoes,  
where the Phrygian flute-player plays on a curving  
reed,  
where the ivy-crowned Maenads violently toss their  
heads,  
where they act out the sacred rites with high-pitched  
howls,  
where the goddess's wandering retinue's wont to  
hover,  
where we should hurry with our swift triple-step.'  
As Attis, the counterfeit woman, sings this to his  
friends,  
the [Bacchic](#) choir suddenly cries with quivering  
tongues,  
the drum echoes it gently, the hollow cymbals ring.  
The swift choir comes to green [Ida](#) on hurrying feet.  
Attis, leading, panting wildly, goading his scattered  
wits,

enters the dark grove accompanied by the drum,  
like a wild heifer escaping the weight of the yoke:  
The agile [Gallae](#) follow their swift-footed leader.  
Then, since wearied, foodless, they reach Cybele's  
grove,  
they're seized by sleep from their excessive labours.  
Dull tiredness overwhelms eyes giving way to  
languor:  
mad frenzy vanishes in the calm of gentle breath.  
But when the Sun from his golden face scanned the  
bright  
heavens with radiant eye, the harsh earth, and wild  
sea,  
and dispelled the shadows of night with his lively  
steeds,  
then the Grace, [Pasithea](#), takes swift Sleep, flying  
from the waking Attis, to her beating heart.  
So, rapidly, from sweet dream and free of madness,  
Attis recollected his actions in his thoughts,  
and saw with a clear heart what and where he had  
been,  
turning again with passionate mind to the sea.  
There gazing at the wide waters with tearful eyes  
he raised his voice and sadly bemoaned his  
homeland:  
'Land that fathered me, land that mothered me,

I, who left you so sadly, have reached the groves of  
Ida,

like a slave fleeing his master, so am I among  
snows, and the frozen lairs of wild creatures,  
and should I in madness enter one of their dens  
where would I think to find you buried in those  
places?

The keen eye itself desires to turn itself towards you,  
while my thought is free a while of the wild  
creatures.

Have I been brought from my distant home for this  
grove?

Shall I lose country, possessions, friends, kin?

Shall I lose forum, wrestling ring, stadium and  
gymnasium?

Sorrow on sorrow, again and again complaint in the  
heart.

What form have I not been, what have I not  
performed?

I a woman, I a young man, a youth, a boy,

I the flower of the athletes, the glory of the wrestling  
ring:

my doorway frequented, my threshold warm,  
my house was garlanded with wreaths of flowers,  
at the dawn separation from my bed.

Now am I brought here priest and slave of divine  
Cybele?

I, to be [Maenad](#): a part of myself: a sterile man?

I to worship on green Ida in a place cloaked in  
frozen snow?

I to live my life beneath the high summits of  
Phrygia,

where deer haunt the woods, where the wild boar  
roams?

Now I grieve for what I did, now I repent.'

As the swift sounds leave his rosy lips

the fresh words reach the twin ears of the goddess,

as Cybele is loosing the lions from their yoke

and goading the left-hand beast: she spoke to it,

saying: 'Go now, be fierce, so you make him mad,  
so he

is forced to return to the grove by the pain of his  
madness,

he who desires to escape my rule so freely.

Let your tail wound your back, let the lashes show,

make the whole place echo to your bellowing roar,

shake your red mane fiercely over your taut neck.'

So Cybele spoke in threat and loosed the leash.

The wild beast urging itself to speed, roused in  
spirit,

tore away, roared, broke madly through the thickets.

and when it reached the wet margin of the white sands,  
and saw delicate Attis near to the ocean waves,  
it charged. He fled demented to the wild wood:  
there to be ever enslaved, for the rest of his life.  
Goddess, Great Goddess, Cybele, Lady of  
Dindymus,  
Mistress, let all your anger be far from my house:  
make others aroused, make other men raving mad.

#### **64. Of the Argonauts and an Epithalamium for Peleus and Thetis**

Once they say pine-trees born on the heights of [Pelion](#)  
floated through [Neptune](#)'s clear waves,  
to the River [Phasis](#) and [Aeetes](#)'s borders,  
with chosen men, oaks of the [Argive](#) people,  
hoping to steal the Golden Fleece of [Colchis](#)  
daring to course the salt deeps in their swift ship,  
sweeping the blue waters with fir-wood oars.  
[The goddess](#) herself who guards the heights of the  
city,  
who joined the curving fabric to pinewood keel,  
made their ship speed onwards with light winds.  
That vessel was first to explore the unknown sea:

so, as she ploughed the windblown waters with her  
prow,  
and whitened the churning waves with foam from  
the oars,  
the [Nereids](#) lifted themselves from the dazzling  
white  
depths of the sea, amazed at this wonder of ocean.  
In those, and other days, mortal eyes saw the sea-  
nymphs  
raise themselves, bodies all naked, as far as their  
nipples, from the white depths.  
Then [Peleus](#), they say, was inflamed with love of  
[Thetis](#),  
then Thetis did not despise marriage with a mortal,  
then Jupiter himself agreed to Thetis's marriage.  
O heroes, born in a chosen age, hail, godlike race!  
O offspring of a blessed mother, hail once more.  
Often I'll address you, in my song.  
And I address you, so blessed in your fortunate  
marriage,  
chief of Pelian Thessaly, to whom Jupiter himself  
creator of gods, yielded his beloved:  
did not Thetis possess you, loveliest of Nereids?  
Did not [Tethys](#) allow you to lead off her grand-  
daughter,

and [Oceanus](#), who embraces the whole world with sea?

When at the time appointed the longed-for flames arise,

all of Thessaly crowds together to the palace,  
the halls are filled with a joyful assembly:  
they bring gifts with them, declaring their joy in their looks.

[Cieros](#) is deserted: they leave [Pthiotic Tempe](#),  
[Crannon](#)'s houses, and [Larissa](#)'s walls,  
they gather in [Pharsalia](#), crowd under Pharsalia's roofs.

No one farms the fields, the necks of bullocks soften,  
nor does the curved hoe clear beneath the vines,  
nor does the ox drag earth outward with the blade,  
nor does the sickle thin the shade of leafy trees,  
coarse rust attacks the neglected plough.

But the palace gleams bright with gold and silver  
through all the rich receding halls.

The ivory chairs shine, cups glisten on tables,  
the whole palace gladdened with splendour of royal wealth.

In the midst of the palace a sacred couch, truly joyful

for the marriage of the goddess, gleaming with  
Indian ivory,  
stained with the red dyes won from purple murex.  
The cloth depicts in ancient forms, with marvellous  
art,  
in all their variety, the excellence of gods and men.  
Here are seen the wave-echoing shores of [Naxos](#),  
[Theseus](#), aboard his ship, vanishing swiftly, watched  
by [Ariadne](#), ungovernable passion in her heart,  
not yet believing that she sees what she does see,  
still only just awoken from deceptive sleep,  
finding herself abandoned wretchedly to empty  
sands.  
But uncaring the hero fleeing strikes the deep with  
his oars,  
casting his vain promises to the stormy winds.  
The [Minoan](#) girl goes on gazing at the distance,  
with mournful eyes, like the statue of a [Bacchante](#),  
gazes, alas, and swells with great waves of sorrow,  
no longer does the fine turban remain on her golden  
hair,  
no longer is she hidden by her lightly-concealing  
dress,  
no longer does the shapely band hold her milk-white  
breasts  
all of it scattered, slipping entirely from her body,

plays about her feet in the salt flood.

But, not caring now for turban or flowing dress, the lost girl gazed towards you, Theseus, with all her heart, spirit, mind.

Wretched thing, for whom bright [Venus](#) reserved the thorny

cares of constant mourning in your heart,

from that time when it suited warlike Theseus,

leaving the curving shores of [Piraeus](#),

to reach the [Cretan](#) regions of the unbending king.

For then forced by cruel plague, they say,

as punishment, to absolve the murder of [Androgeos](#)

ten chosen young men of Athens and ten unmarried girls

used to be given together as sacrifice to the

[Minotaur](#).

With which evil the narrow walls were troubled until Theseus chose to offer himself for his dear Athens rather than such [Athenian](#) dead be carried un-dead to Crete.

And so in a swift ship and with gentle breezes

he came to great [Minos](#) and his proud halls.

As soon as the royal girl cast her eye on him with desire,

she whom the chaste bed nourished, breathing sweet perfumes in her mother's gentle embrace,

even as [Eurotas](#)'s streams surround a myrtle  
that sheds its varied colours on the spring breeze,  
she did not turn her blazing eyes away from him,  
till she conceived a flame through her whole body  
that burned utterly to the depths of her bones.  
Ah sadly [the Boy](#) incites inexorable passion  
in chaste hearts, he who mixes joy and pains for  
mortals,  
and [she](#) who rules [Golgos](#) and leafy [Idalia](#),  
even she, who shakes the mind of a smitten girl,  
often sighing for a blonde-haired stranger!  
How many fears the girl suffers in her weak heart!  
How often she grows pallid: more so than pale gold.  
As Theseus went off eager to fight the savage  
monster  
either death approached or fame's reward!  
Promising small gifts, not unwelcome or in vain,  
she made her prayers to the gods with closed lips.  
Now as a storm uproots a quivering branch of oak,  
or a cone-bearing pine with resinous bark, on the  
heights  
of Mount [Taurus](#), twisting its unconquered strength  
in the wind (it falls headlong, far off, plucked out  
by the roots, shattering anything and everything in  
its way)  
so Theseus upended the conquered body of the beast

its useless horns overthrown, emptied of breath.  
Then he turned back, unharmed, to great glory,  
guided by the wandering track of fine thread,  
so that his exit from the fickle labyrinth of the palace  
would not be prevented by some unnoticed error.  
But what should I relate, digressing further  
from my poem's theme: the girl, abandoning  
her father's sight, her sisters' embraces, and lastly  
her mother's, she wretched at her lost daughter's joy  
in preferring the sweet love of Theseus to all this:  
or her being carried by ship to Naxos's foaming  
shore,  
or her consort with uncaring heart vanishing,  
she conquered, her eyes softening in sleep?  
Often loud shrieks cried the frenzy in her ardent  
heart  
poured out from the depths of her breast,  
and then she would climb the steep cliffs in her  
grief,  
where the vast sea-surge stretches out to the view,  
then run against the waves into the salt tremor  
holding her soft clothes above her naked calves,  
and call out mournfully this last complaint,  
a frozen sob issuing from her wet face:

‘False Theseus, is this why you take me from my father’s land, faithless man, to abandon me on a desert shore?  
Is this how you vanish, heedless of the god’s power, ah, uncaring, bearing home your accursed perjuries? Nothing could alter the measure of your cruel mind? No mercy was near to you, inexorable man, that you might take pity on my heart? Yet once you made promises to me in that flattering voice, you told me to hope, not for this misery but for joyful marriage, the longed-for wedding songs, all in vain, dispersed on the airy breezes. Now, no woman should believe a man’s pledges, or believe there’s any truth in a man’s words: when their minds are intent on their desire, they have no fear of oaths, don’t spare their promises: but as soon as the lust of their eager mind is slaked they fear no words, they care nothing for perjury. Surely I rescued you from the midst of the tempest of fate, and more, I gave up my half-brother, whom I abandoned to you with treachery at the end. For that I’m left to be torn apart by beasts, and a prey

to sea-birds, unburied, when dead, in the scattered earth.

What lioness whelped you under a desert rock,  
what sea conceived and spat you from foaming waves,  
what [Syrtis](#), what fierce [Scylla](#), what vast [Charybdis](#),  
you who return me this, for the gift of your sweet life?

If marriage with me was not in your heart,  
because you feared your old father's cruel precepts,  
you could still have led me back to your house,  
where I would have served you, a slave happy in her task,

washing your beautiful feet in clear water,  
covering your bed with the purple fabric.

But why complain to the uncaring wind in vain?

It is beyond evil, and without senses, unable  
to hear what is said, without voice to reply.

It is already turning now towards mid-ocean,  
and nothing human appears in this waste of weed.

So cruel chance taunts me in my last moments,  
even depriving my ears of my own lament.

All-powerful [Jupiter](#), if only the Athenian ships  
had not touched the shores of [Cnossos](#), from the  
start,

carrying their fatal cargo for the ungovernable bull,

a faithless captain mooring his ropes to Crete,  
an evil guest, hiding a cruel purpose under a  
handsome  
appearance, finding rest in our halls!  
Now where can I return? What desperate hope  
depend on? Shall I seek out the slopes of [Ida](#)?  
But the cruel sea with its divisive depths  
of water separates me from them.  
Or shall I hope for my father's help? Did I not leave  
him,  
to follow a man stained with my brother's blood?  
Or should I trust in a husband's love to console me?  
Who hardly bends slow oars in running from me?  
More, I'm alive on a lonely island without shelter,  
and no escape seen from the encircling ocean waves.  
No way to fly, no hope: all is mute,  
all is deserted, all speaks of ruin.  
Yet still my eyes do not droop in death,  
not till my senses have left my weary body,  
till true justice is handed down by the gods,  
and the divine help I pray for in my last hour.  
So you [Eumenides](#) who punish by avenging  
the crimes of men, your foreheads crowned  
with snaky hair, bearing anger in your breath,  
here, here, come to me, listen to my complaints,  
that I, wretched alas, force, weakened, burning,

out of the marrow of my bones, blind with mad rage.  
Since these truths are born in the depths of my  
breast,  
you won't allow my lament to pass you by,  
but as Theseus left me alone, through his intent,  
goddesses, by that will, pursue him and his with  
murder.'

When these words had poured from her sad breast,  
the troubled girl praying for cruel actions,  
the chief of the gods nodded with unconquerable  
will:

at which the earth and the cruel sea trembled  
and the glittering stars shook in the heavens.

Now Theseus's mind was filled with a dark mist  
and all the instructions he had held fixed in memory  
before this, were erased from his thoughts,  
failing to raise the sweet signal to his mourning  
father,

when the harbour of Athens safely came in sight.

For they say that when [Aegeus](#) parted from his son,  
as the goddess's ship left the city, he yielded him  
to the wind's embrace with these words:

'Son, more dear to me than my long life,  
son, whom I abandoned through chance uncertainty,  
lately returned to me in the last days of my old age,  
since my fate and your fierce virtue tear you away

from me, against my will, whose failing eyes  
are not yet sated with my dear son's face,  
I don't send you off happily with joyful heart,  
or allow you to carry flags of good fortune,  
but start with the many sorrows in my mind,  
marring my white hairs with earth and sprinkled  
ashes,  
then hang unfinished canvas from the wandering  
mast,  
so the darkened sail of gloomy Spanish flax  
might speak the grief and passion in my mind.  
But if the one who dwells in sacred [Iton](#), who  
promised  
to defend the people and city of [Erectheus](#), allows  
you  
to wet your hand with the blood of the bull,  
then make sure this command is done, buried in your  
remembering heart, not to be erased by time:  
that as soon as you set eyes on our hills,  
strip the dark fabric fully from the yards,  
and hoist white sails with your twisted ropes,  
so that seeing them from the first, I'll know joy  
in my glad heart, when a happy time reveals your  
return.'

These words to Theseus, once held constantly in  
mind,

vanished like clouds of snow struck by a blast of  
wind  
on the summits of high mountains.  
But when his father, searching the view from the  
citadel's height, endless tears flooding his anxious  
eyes,  
first saw the sails of dark fabric,  
he threw himself head first from the height of the  
cliff,  
believing Theseus lost to inexorable fate.  
So fierce Theseus entered the palace in mourning  
for his father's death, and knew the same grief of  
mind  
that he had caused neglected Ariadne,  
she who was gazing then where his ship had  
vanished  
pondering the many cares in her wounded heart.  
But bright [Bacchus](#) hurries from elsewhere  
with his chorus of [Satyrs](#) and [Silenes](#) from [Nysa](#),  
seeking you, Ariadne, burning with love for you.

.....  
.....

In rapture his [Bacchantes](#) raved madly, crazed in  
mind,

with cries of ‘*euhoë*’ and tossing heads,  
some brandished the thyrsus with hidden tip,  
some flourished the torn limbs of bullocks,  
some wreathed themselves with twining snakes,  
some celebrated the secret rites of the hollow box,  
rights they wished the profane to hear in vain:  
others beat the drums with the flat of their hands,  
or raised a clear ringing from rounded cymbals:  
they blew endless strident calls on the horns  
and the barbarous flute shrilled with fearful tunes.  
Such the splendid workings of figured tapestry  
covering the sacred couch its cloth embraced.  
The people of Thessaly after gazing eagerly  
were satisfied, they began to leave the goddess’s  
sanctuary.

As [Zephyr](#) stirs the willing waves, ruffling  
the placid sea with morning breeze,  
while [Aurora](#) rises to the wandering Sun’s threshold,  
so that at first they move slowly struck by a gentle  
blast,  
and their splashing resounds with slight lamentation,  
while afterwards they increase, swelling more and  
more,  
and reflect the red of the sunrise far-off as they rise:  
so, here and there, with wandering feet the crowd  
disperse

to their homes, leaving the courtyard of the royal palace.

After their departure [Chiron](#), the Centaur's leader, arrived from steep [Pelion](#) carrying woodland gifts: since what the fields bear, whatever the country of Thessaly

yields on high peaks, whatever the flowers by the river's waves the fecund breath of the warm west wind produces,

he brought woven together in confused garlands, so that the palace smiled, charmed by happy fragrances.

At once [Peneus](#) came to green [Tempe](#), Tempe, whose hanging woods encircle it above, leaving [Pasiphae](#) to be honoured by the sea's dance: not empty-handed, since he carried a tall beech by the roots, and long-leafed laurel from a straight trunk,

and was not without nodding plane, and pliant poplar,

scorched [Phaethon](#)'s sister, and airy cypress.

He placed them woven, here and there, round the house

till the courtyard was green, veiled with fresh foliage.

[Prometheus](#) followed after him, skilled in mind,

showing faint traces of his ancient punishment,  
when once he suffered, hung in tight chains  
from the high ledge of rock.

Then the father of the gods with his sacred consort,  
and his sons, came down from the heavens,  
leaving behind only you, [Phoebus](#), and the one born  
together with you, she who lives on the slopes of  
[Ida](#):

Peleus is still disdained by both you and [your sister](#),  
and you will not celebrate Thetis's wedding torches.  
Then the gods seated their limbs at the white  
benches,

at tables richly heaped with various foods,  
while, moving their bodies in trembling dance,  
the [Fates](#) began to utter their prophetic song.

Quivering seized their bodies, their white ankles  
wholly covered by the red hem of their dresses,  
and a red headband circling their white hair,  
and their hands were busy, as ever, at their eternal  
work.

The left hand held the distaff, wound with soft wool,  
then the right, drawing out the thread lightly, shaped  
it

with upturned fingers, then, twisting it under the  
thumb,

turned the level spindle in smooth rotation,

and often a plucking tooth made the strands equal,  
and fragments of wool, that once projected  
from the light threads, clung to their dry lips:  
and, before their feet, bright wool from a soft fleece  
was guarded by a basket woven of willow.

Then in a clear voice, pushing away the fleece,  
they poured out these prophecies in divine song,  
song not to be proven wrong, by any amount of  
years.

‘Defence of [Thessaly](#), dearest of [Jupiter](#)’s scions,  
adding marvellous glory to your great powers,  
accept what the glad sisters bring to the light,  
true oracles: but you who accompany fate,  
fly, guiding threads: fly, spindle.

Now [Hesperus](#) comes to you bearing the longed-for  
bride, the wife approaches beneath a fortunate star,  
who pours out her heart to you with tender love,  
and prepares to lie with you in languid sleep,  
spreading her delicate arms beneath your strong  
neck.

Fly, guiding threads: fly, spindle.

No house has ever sheltered such love,  
no love has ever joined lovers in such a union,  
even as harmony comes to Thetis, and Peleus.

Fly, guiding threads: fly, spindle.

A child [Achilles](#) is born to you, free of fear,

noted for never turning his back on an enemy, strong of heart, who, often the victor in the fickle foot-race, outstrips the swift deer with fiery hooves.

Fly, guiding threads: fly, spindle.

No hero dare confront him in battle, when the [Phrygian](#) rivers flow with the blood of [Teucer](#)'s people, and the third heir of deceitful Pelops lays waste

the walls of [Troy](#), besieged in the weary war.

Fly, guiding threads: fly, spindle.

Often women at the funerals of their sons lament his illustrious powers and bright deeds, as neglected hair streams down from their white heads,

and weak hands mark their withered breasts.

Fly, guiding threads: fly, spindle.

Now, as a reaper prematurely mowing the dense stalks,

scythes the golden fields under his eager feet, he destroys the Trojan bodies with his fierce blade.

Fly, guiding threads: fly, spindle.

[Scamander](#)'s waves that pour down in cascade to the swift Hellespont will bear witness to his great courage,

its passage narrowed by the heaped bodies of the dead,

the deep waters mixed with warm blood.

Fly, guiding threads: fly, spindle.

At last it will be witness also to a death-prize payed,  
when a heaped tomb by the high rampart receives  
the smooth white body of a sacrificed virgin girl.

Fly, guiding threads: fly, spindle.

Then as luck grants the riches of the [Trojan](#) city  
to the weary [Greeks](#), loosening [Neptune](#)'s bond,  
the high mound will be soaked with [Polyxena](#)'s  
blood:

who bowing like a sacrifice to the two-edged blade  
will fall to her knees, a maimed corpse.

Fly, guiding threads: fly, spindle.

So perform the wishes of your hearts, join in love.

Let the husband accept his goddess in joyful  
contract,

now the bride be given to her loving partner.

Fly, guiding threads: fly, spindle.

The nurse returning at daybreak will not  
encircle her neck with yesterday's ribbon,  
nor the anxious mother by the sad bed of a troubled  
daughter, forgo the hope of dear grandchildren.

Fly, guiding threads: fly, spindle.'

Such the song once sung of happy prophecy  
to Peleus, from the [Parcae](#)'s divine hearts.

Once the gods in person visited the pure houses of heroes, and showed themselves to the mortal crowd, the gods were not yet used to men's scorn for piety. Often the father of the gods revisiting his bright temple, when the annual rites came round on the holy days, saw a hundred bulls lying on the ground. Wandering [Bacchus](#) often lead the shouting [Bacchantes](#), with their flowing hair, on the high peak of [Parnassus](#), when all rushing in emulation from the happy town of [Delphos](#) received the god with smoking altars. Often in the fatal struggles of war, [Mars](#), or swift [Minerva](#) the lady of Lake Tritonis, or virgin [Artemis](#) appeared to exhort the crowds of armed men. But afterwards earth was tainted by impious wickedness and all fled from justice with eager minds, the brother's hand was stained with a brother's blood, the child ceased to mourn for its dead parents, the father chose the a younger son's death to acquire a single woman in her prime, the impious mother spread herself beneath the unknowing son, not afraid of desecrating the household shrine.

All piety was confused with impiety in evil frenzy  
turning the righteous will of the gods from us.  
So such as they do not visit our marriages,  
nor allow themselves to approach us, in the light of  
day.

## 65. The Promise: to Hortalus

Though I'm continually worn out by grief's pain,  
removed, [Hortalus](#), from the learned girls,  
unable to bear the sweet fruit of the [Muses](#),  
the mind troubled by so many dark feelings  
(for lately the flowing water in [Lethe](#)'s depths  
washes at my brother's pallid feet,  
whom, torn from my eyes, the earth crushes  
beneath the shore of Trojan [Rhoeteum](#).  
Am I never to see you hereafter, brother  
more lovely than life? But I will always love you,  
it's true, always sing your death in mournful song,  
as [Daulian Procne](#) sings in the dense shadow  
of branches, lamenting dead [Itylus](#)'s fate)  
even in such great sadness, Hortalus, I still send you  
these verses in imitation of [Callimachus](#),  
lest you might think your words for no good reason  
had been lost from my mind on the passing wind,  
as the apple sent as a secret gift from a lover  
rolls from the chaste girl's breast,  
placed under the soft clothing, sadly forgotten,  
until, as she springs up at her mother's approach,  
it's shaken out, and rolls down in headlong descent,  
leaving a knowing blush on her sad face.

## 66. The Lock of Hair: Berenice

He who gazed at all the lights in the vast heavens,  
who learnt the rise and setting of the stars,  
how the fiery beauty of the swift sun's darkened,  
how constellations vanish at fixed times,  
how sweet love entices [Diana](#), secretly passing  
near the [Latmian](#) cliffs, in her airy course:  
that same [Conon](#), the astronomer, saw me shining  
brightly  
at heaven's threshold, a lock of hair from [Berenice](#)'s  
head,  
she who stretching out her delicate arms  
made promises to a multitude of gods,  
at that time when the great king newly married  
was gone to lay waste the borders of Assyria,  
bearing sweet traces of nocturnal strife,  
those that are brought about by virgin spoils.  
Is [Venus](#) really hated by new brides? Is parents' joy  
deceived by their false tears, shed copiously within  
the threshold of the bed? If it were truth they sighed  
they'd not have supported my divinity so.  
My queen taught me that, with her many woeful  
cries,  
when her new husband went off to grim battle.

And is it not the bereavement of an empty bed you  
mourn,  
but the tearful separation from a dear brother?  
How sad cares eat at the heart's core from within!  
As though, troubled, your mind is wholly lost,  
robbed of all feeling in your breast!  
But I recognise true greatness in a girl.  
Surely that brave act is not forgotten by which a  
husband's kingdom was gained, that no one stronger  
dared?  
But what sad words were said in sending off this  
husband!  
Jupiter, how often your eyes were brushed by your  
hand!  
What god has changed you so? Or is it a lovers wish  
not to be absent from the beloved body for long?'  
And, there too, you promised me, to all the gods,  
not without blood of bulls, for your dear husband,  
if it brought his return. It did not take him long  
to add captive Asia to the bounds of Egypt.  
I discharge former promises, for those deeds,  
by this new tribute that joins me to the heavens.  
Unwillingly, O Queen, I was parted from your hair,  
unwillingly: I swear it by you and that head of  
yours,

that is worthy, even though one were to swear in  
vain:  
but who could claim to be equal to steel itself?  
Even the mountain's overthrown by it, the greatest  
bright child of [Macedonia](#)'s shores, over-passed  
when the Persians created a new sea, when  
barbarians  
drove their fleet through the midst of [Athos](#).  
What can hair do when such things fall to the blade?  
By Jupiter, that the tribe of [Chalybes](#) might all  
perish,  
and those who first pursued the search for veins of  
metal  
below the earth, and how to cut tough things with  
iron!  
A little while ago the sisters were mourning my fate  
as a shorn lock, when, out of Locri, [Arsínoe](#) sent  
the winged horses of Ethiopian [Memnon](#) himself,  
beating, with quivering wings, [Zephyrus](#)'s,  
the West Wind's, air, the brother born with him,  
and carrying me through the shadowed sky, he flew,  
and placed me in chaste Venus's lap.  
[Arsínoe](#) herself sent her servant there,  
Greek inhabitant of the [Canoptic](#) shore.  
My arrival changed the heavens, so the golden  
crown

from [Ariadne](#)'s brow might not be fixed alone  
in the bright sky: but, so that I too might shine,  
a faithful spoil of that golden hair, the goddess  
passing, wet from the flood, to the gods' temple,  
placed me as a new constellation among the old.  
For, touching the [Virgin](#)'s stars and the savage [Lion](#),  
joined to [Callisto](#) daughter of [Lycaon](#),  
I fall towards the west, leading slow [Bootës](#),  
who merges tardily with the deep [Ocean](#).  
But though the footsteps of the gods touch me by  
night,  
light still returns me to [the ancient sea](#).  
(Let this be known, by your leave, Fate, Virgin  
[Ramnusia](#),  
since I hide nothing of the truth through fear,  
nor though the stars disperse me with angry words,  
do I choose to hide the buried truth of the heart.)  
I don't delight in these things, as much as I suffer  
from being parted, parted from my lady's hair,  
with which, when the girl used to try out  
all perfumes, I myself absorbed many thousands.  
Now you, whom the longed-for marriage torches  
join,  
don't surrender your bodies to mutual embrace,  
baring your breasts with clothes removed,  
before the onyx delights me with its pleasing gift,

your onyx, you who by right adorn the chaste bed.  
But she who gives herself to impure adulteries,  
let her absorb from sin the vain gift of light dust:  
since I seek no prize from the undeserving.  
But let great harmony, O brides, always inhabit  
your house, continual love always.  
You, [my Queen](#), when you see your divine  
constellation,  
    as you placate Venus with festive lights,  
don't leave me free of your perfumes,  
but endow me with more great gifts.  
I wish that the stars would fall! I'd become royal  
hair,  
and then let [Orion](#) shine next to [Aquarius](#)!

## 67. Of Someone's Adulterous Door

O hail, sweet door, pleasing to a husband, pleasing to a father, and may [Jupiter](#) add his virtuous power to you, who served [Balbus](#) faithfully, they say, for a good while, when the old man owned the house himself, and served the son, on the contrary, quite badly, it's said, when you became a wedding gift with the old man dead.

Come on, tell us, why exhibit this change deserting old loyalties of ownership?

'It's not my fault (I please this [Caecilius](#), I'm handed over to now), though it's said to be mine, it's no sin of mine that anyone can say anything: truly a door of your people answers you, me, to whom whenever some ill deed's discovered all cry out: "It's your fault, door."'

It's not enough to say that, with a word, but you must do what anyone might see and know.

'How can I? No one asks or takes the trouble to know?'

I will, tell me, don't hesitate.

‘Well first, the virgin, they say, who was handed  
over to us, was false. The husband wasn’t the first to  
touch her,  
he whose sword hangs limper than a tender beet,  
never lifting the middle of his tunic:  
but they say the father violated his son’s bed,  
and disgraced the unfortunate house,  
either because his impious mind burned with blind  
lust,  
or because the son was useless, with barren seed,  
so it was necessary to search for one more vigorous,  
who could undo her virgin tie.’  
You tell of an illustrious father with amazing piety.  
who comes in his own son’s lap.  
‘And Brescia under the cliffs of [Cycnea](#),  
that golden [Mella](#) with sweet water runs by,  
Brescia dear mother of my Verona, says  
he isn’t the only one known to have had her,  
but speaks of [Postumius](#) and [Cornelius](#) with passion,  
with whom she committed wicked adultery.  
Here someone will have said? “How do you know,  
door, never allowed to leave your master’s  
threshold,  
or overhear people, but fixed to this post,  
so accustomed to opening and closing the house?”  
I’ve often heard her alone in a furtive voice

speak to her maids about her sins,  
    the names I've said being spoken, she expecting  
    that I'd have neither speech nor hearing.  
    Besides, she added, someone else, whose name  
    I don't want to say, lest he raise his red eyebrow.  
    He's a tall man, who fought a great lawsuit once,  
    about a false pregnancy in a lying womb.'

## 68. Friendship: to Manlius

That you send this letter to me, written with tears,  
to me, crushed by fate and bitter ill-fortune,  
that I might raise up, and return from the threshold  
of death  
one shipwrecked, cast from the foaming waves of  
the sea,  
one whom sacred [Venus](#) deprives of gentle sleep,  
forsaken, enduring an empty bed, not delighting  
in the sweet songs of the [Muse](#) of the ancient poets,  
lying awake all night with an anxious mind:  
that's pleasing to me, since you call me your friend,  
and search here for the gifts of the Muses and  
Venus.  
But in case my troubles aren't known to you,  
[Manlius](#),  
or you think I dislike the duties of a friend,  
let me tell of waves of misfortune that I myself  
plunge in,  
lest you seek rich gifts any more from a wretched  
man.  
At that time when the first white toga was handed  
me,

when my youth passed in flower through happy  
spring,

I played more than enough: the goddess was not  
unknown to me, the work that mixed bitter with  
sweet.

But all my studies were lost in the grief at my  
brother's death. O wretched, to take my brother from  
me:

you brother, you, in dying, wrecked my good  
fortune,

with you our whole house is buried together,  
with you all our joys perish in one,  
that your love nourished in sweet life.

So that ruined in thought I forsake those studies  
and all the delights of the mind.

Therefore, when you say that it's shameful for

[Catullus](#)

to be in Verona, that here someone well-known  
only warms cold limbs in an empty bed,

it's not shameful, Manlius, my sadness is great.

So pardon me if I don't bestow those gifts on you  
that grief takes from me, while I cannot.

Since there's no great store of books here with me,  
it needs me to be living in Rome: there's my house,  
there's my place, there my time is spent:

only one of my many book-boxes follows me here.

since it's so, don't think I do anything with ill intent,  
or that I'm lacking at all in noble feeling:  
it's on you and no other I seek to lavish riches:  
besides I'd offer whatever riches I had.

## 68b. Commemoration: to Allius

I can't conceal, goddesses, the things of mine  
[Allius](#) helped with, or how many services he's  
performed,  
lest fleeting time in forgetful ages  
hides this kindness of his in blind night:  
but I tell it to you: speak to many future thousands  
and let this paper speak in its old age,

.....

.....

and let the dead become more and more famous,  
don't let the spider spinning its fine web on high  
perform its task on Allius's neglected name.  
For you know how fickle [Venus](#) would have  
troubled me,  
and in what way she might have scorched me,  
when I might have burned like the [Sicilian](#) rocks,  
or the waters of Malis at [Oetaean Thermopylae](#),  
my grieving eyes not have ceased to melt with  
endless tears, my cheeks to have been drenched with  
a saddened rain.

Then like a mountain stream shining on airy heights,  
springing from mossy rock, that, having fallen  
headlong from sloping valleys, passes  
through the midst of densely populated regions,  
sweet comfort to travellers' weary labour,  
when fierce heat splits the dried-up fields:  
like to a favourable wind that comes breathing  
lightly  
to the sailor tossed in the black tempest,  
now praying to [Pollux](#), now imploring [Castor](#),  
such was Allius's help to me.  
He opened the closed field with a wide path,  
and granted my self and my girl a house,  
where we carried on our mutual affair,  
to which my bright goddess repaired  
with gentle steps, set her graceful sandals  
on the worn threshold, rested her shining feet,  
as once with blazing passion [Laodamia](#) came  
to the house, begun in vain, of [Protesilaus](#)  
her husband, the sacrifice not yet appeasing  
the gods' love of sacred blood.  
Let nothing please me much, Fate, [Ramnusian](#)  
Virgin,  
that you by chance may receive unwillingly.  
Laodamia learnt from the loss of her husband  
how the hungry altar desires holy blood:

she was forced to loose her new spouse's neck,  
before one winter, and another returning,  
had sated eager love with their long nights,  
so she might learn to live without a lost husband,  
whom the [Fates](#) knew would not live long  
if he went as a soldier to the walls of [Troy](#).  
For now [Helen](#)'s abduction had forced  
the [Greek](#) nobles to rouse their men for Troy,  
Troy (the evil!) a common grave for Asia and  
Europe,  
Troy the bitter ruin of men and of all virtue,  
have you not even brought my brother's death.  
Oh alas for the brother taken from me,  
oh alas the shining light of a brother lost,  
with you our whole house is buried together,  
with you all our joys perish in one,  
that your love nourished in sweet life.  
You who, far away, are not interred among famous  
tombs,  
nor near the ashes of the known,  
but vile Troy, unhappy Troy, holds your grave,  
in the furthest soil of an alien land.  
To which they say the men of Greece hurried  
from every side, deserting their household shrines,  
lest [Paris](#), delighted, carried off at leisure,  
to a peaceful bed, the adulteress he'd abducted.

Through your misfortune, then, loveliest Laodamia  
your husband was taken from you, dearer to you  
than life and spirit: love's passion, swallowing you  
in a whirlpool, carried you into the steep abyss,  
as they say the soil of Greek [Pheneus](#) near [Cyllene](#)  
dried up, when the thick swamp was drained,  
that [Hercules](#), the divinely-fathered, once dared to  
lance,  
in the hacked out marrow of the mountains,  
when his sure arrows struck the [Stymphalian](#) birds,  
at a worse master's command, so that the threshold  
of the heavens might be frequented by more gods,  
and [Hebe](#) might not long remain a virgin.  
But your deep love, that taught an untamed girl  
to bear the yoke, was deeper still than that abyss.  
Since the grandchild nursed by an only daughter,  
is not as dear to her father, child of his old age,  
that, when the child's name is barely entered  
in the grandfather's will, disposing of his riches,  
removing the scornful family's impious joy,  
scatters the vultures from his white head:  
no spouse was ever as pleasing to a white dove,  
that they say often sinfully gives far more kisses  
nipping with its beak, than any woman  
who beyond measure longs for as much.  
But you alone outdo their great passion,

you who are won for ever by a golden-haired man.  
You to whom the light of my life conceded little  
or nothing in worth, when she gave herself  
into my lap, who often shone, with [Cupid](#)  
running about her, bright in his saffron tunic.  
Even if she's still not content with Catullus alone,  
I'll suffer the infrequent affairs of a shy mistress,  
lest I'm too annoying in the manner of fools.  
Often even [Juno](#), greatest of goddesses,  
swallows her burning anger with her spouse's sins,  
knowing the many affairs of all-willing [Jupiter](#).  
And men are not to be compared with the gods,

.....  
.....

bear the thankless burden of a worried father.  
Yet, led by no father's hand, she comes to me,  
to the house, fragrant with Assyrian perfumes,  
brings me the marvellous gift in the secret night,  
she herself, stolen away from her husband's breast.  
And that is enough, if that alone's granted to me,  
that she marks out that day with a brighter light.  
This then Allius, for you, what I can, a gift  
made of song, in return for your friendship,  
lest this day and that, and others on others

touch your name with corrosions of rust.  
And let the gods add more to this, those gifts  
[Themis](#) once used to bring to the pious of old.  
May you be happy, both you and your life,  
both your house in which we joyed, and the lady,  
and he who first gave you to me,  
from which source all our good was born, and she,  
before everything, dearer to me than him, light of  
my life, through whose being alive, living is sweet  
to me.

## 69. Odorous: To Rufus

I'm not surprised as to why no girl desires  
to place her gentle thighs beneath you, [Rufus](#),  
not if you were to weaken her with gifts  
of rarest dresses, the delights of clearest gems.  
A certain evil story wounds you: that they tell  
about you: that you've a wild goat under the armpits.  
Everyone hates that, no wonder: since it's a truly  
evil-smelling beast, not one that girls bed with.  
So either kill the cruel plague to their noses,  
or cease to wonder why they run away.

## 70. Woman's Faithfulness

My girl says she'd rather marry no one but me,  
not if [Jupiter](#) himself were to ask her.  
She says: but what a girl says to her eager lover,  
should be written on the wind and in running water.

## 71. Revenge

If a goat's smell under the arms rightly prevents  
anyone,  
or if a slow gout deservedly cripples them,  
your rival, who keeps your lover busy,  
is discovered by you to be wonderfully sick with  
both.

Now whenever he fucks her, you're revenged on the  
pair:  
she's troubled by the smell, he's ruined by the gout.

## 72. Familiarity: to Lesbia

Once you said you preferred Catullus alone,  
[Lesbia](#): would not have [Jupiter](#) before me.  
I prized you then not like an ordinary lover,  
but as a father prizes his children, his family.  
Now I know you: so, though I burn more fiercely,  
yet you're worth much less to me, and slighter.  
How is that, you ask? The pain of such love  
makes a lover love more, but like less.

### **73. Failed Friend**

Stop wanting to be kind to all and sundry,  
or believing someone can become good.  
All are ungrateful: being generous achieves nothing,  
rather it wearies even, and greatly harms:  
so with me, whom no one oppresses as heavily,  
bitterly,  
as he who once held me to be his one and only  
friend.

## 74. Security: to Gellius

[Gellius](#) had heard his uncle used to rebuke, anyone who performed or spoke about love's delights.

To avoid this misfortune himself, he seduced his uncle's wife, and made his uncle a silent [Harpocrates](#).

What he wanted, he did: for, now though he buggered his uncle himself, his uncle would not say a word.

## **75. Chained: to Lesbia**

My mind's reduced to this, by your faults, [Lesbia](#),  
and has ruined itself so in your service,  
that now it couldn't wish you well,  
were you to become what's best,  
or stop loving you if you do what's worst.

## 76. Past Kindness: to the Gods

If recalling past good deeds is pleasant to a man,  
when he thinks himself to have been virtuous,  
not violating sacred ties, nor using the names of  
gods  
in any contract in order to deceive men,  
then there are many pleasures left to you, Catullus,  
in the rest of life, due to this thankless passion.  
Since whatever good a man can do or say  
to anyone, has been said and done by you.  
All, that entrusted to a thankless heart is lost.  
Why torment yourself then any longer?  
Why not harden your mind, and shrink from it,  
and cease to be unhappy, since the gods are hostile?  
It's difficult to suddenly let go of a former love,  
it's difficult, but it would gratify you to do it:  
That's your one salvation. That's for you to prove,  
for you to try, whether you can or not.  
O gods, if mercy is yours, or if you ever brought  
help  
to a man at the very moment of his death,  
gaze at my pain and, if I've lived purely,  
lift this plague, this destruction from me,  
so that the torpor that creeps into my body's depths

drives out every joy from my heart.  
I no longer ask that [she](#) loves me to my face,  
or, the impossible, that she be chaste:  
I choose health, and to rid myself of this foul illness.  
O gods, grant me this for all my kindness.

## 77. Traitor: to Rufus

[Rufus](#), trusted by me as a friend, uselessly and  
pointlessly,  
(Uselessly? Rather, at a great and evil price),  
have you crept into my life like this, and ruptured  
my entrails, ah alas, have you robbed me of all my  
good?  
You've robbed me, oh cruel poison of my life,  
oh ruin of my friendship.

## **78. The Pandar: to Gallus**

Gallus has brothers, of whom one has the loveliest  
wife

the other the loveliest son.

Gallus is a cute man: since he joins them as lovers,  
so that beautiful boy beds with beautiful girl.

Gallus is a stupid man, not seeing himself as a  
husband,

who instructs a nephew in an uncle's wife's  
adultery.

## **78b. Immortality**

But now I grieve that your foul saliva  
has polluted the pure lips of a pure girl.  
Still you'll not do it with impunity: now all the years  
will know you, and ancient tradition tell what you  
are.

## 79. Not So Fair: to Lesbius

[Lesbius](#) is pretty. Why not? Since [Lesbia](#) likes him more than you and all your people, Catullus. But still let this pretty boy sell Catullus and all his people if he should find three to acknowledge his birth.

## 80. Give-Away: to Gellius

What can I say, [Gellius](#), as to why those red lips  
become whiter than winter snow,  
when you leave your house in the morning or when  
the eighth hour wakes you placid and weak in the  
long day?

It's something, for sure: perhaps rumour's whisper is  
true

that you swallow the tall jet from a man's groin?  
this is for sure: [Victor](#)'s strained thighs proclaim it,  
and your lips marked with dried semen.

## 81. Strange Taste: to Iuventius

Can there be no one in all these people, [Iuventius](#),  
no nice man you might begin to like,  
besides that guest of yours, yellower than a gilded  
statue,  
from the environs of deadly [Pesaro](#),  
who pleases you now, whom you dare to prefer  
to me, and do who knows what with?

## 82. Eye-debt: to Quintius

[Quintius](#), if you want Catullus to owe you his eyes or something that might be more dear than his eyes, don't steal from him what's much dearer to him than his eyes, or something dearer than eyes.

### **83. The Husband: to Lesbia**

[Lesbia](#) says bad things about me to her husband's face:

it's the greatest delight to that fool.

Mule, don't you see? If she forgot and was silent about me,

that would be right: now since she moans and abuses,

she not only remembers, but something more serious,

she's angry. That is, she's inflamed, so she speaks.

## 84. Aspirations: to Arrius

[Arrius](#) said *chonvenient* when he meant to say convenient, and ambush was *hambush*, and trusted he'd spoken amazingly well, when he'd said *hambush* as much as he could. So, I guess, his mother and uncle spoke, freely, so his maternal grandfather, grandmother. When he was posted to Syria our ears had a rest, they heard the same things said softly and easily, nor feared to hear such words in future, when suddenly terrible news is brought, the Ionian Sea, since Arrius got there, is not Ionian now, but *Hionian*.

## **85. Love-Hate**

I hate and love. And why I do, perhaps you ask.  
I don't know: but I feel, and I'm tormented.

## 86. True Beauty: to Lesbia

[Quintia](#)'s lovely to many. To me she's white, long,  
and straight: I acknowledge that's so.

But I don't agree that's beauty: there's no charm,  
there's not a speck of good taste in all of that long  
body.

[Lesbia](#)'s lovely, possessed of all that's most  
beautiful,  
besides she alone's stolen all charm from all other  
women.

## **87. Incomparable: to Lesbia**

No woman can say she's been loved so much,  
as my [Lesbia](#) in truth's been loved by me.  
No faith in any tie was ever so great,  
as has been found, on my part, in love of you.

## 88. Incest in the Family: to Gellius

What's he doing, [Gellius](#), the man who wantons with mother and sister, up all night, with no clothes on?

What's he doing, who won't let his uncle play husband?

Do you know how much sin any man might incur? O Gellius, he incurs so much not furthest [Tethys](#) can wash it away, nor [Ocean](#) begetter of Nymphs: since there's no sin at all that exists beyond that one, not if he bent his head, and swallowed himself.

## 89. Thinness: to Gellius

[Gellius](#) is thin: why wouldn't he be? Whose mother enjoys life, so kind and so healthy, and a sister so charming,

and so kind an uncle, and everywhere filled so with girls who're related, why should he leave off being lean?

Though he touched nothing, but what it's illegal to touch, you'd find any number of reasons why he'd be lean.

## 90. Too Much! : to Gellius

Let a [Magus](#) be born from the sinful union  
of [Gellius](#) and his mother, and learn Persian  
soothsaying:  
since a Magus ought to be born from a mother and  
son,  
if the impious religion of the Persians is true,  
so with acceptable chants he'll pleasingly worship  
the gods  
melting the entrails in the greasy flame.

## 91. My Mistake: to Gellius

It's not because I knew you well or thought you  
faithful,  
[Gellius](#), or thought you could keep your mind from  
vile sin,  
that I expected you to be true to me  
in this hopeless ruinous love of mine:  
but because I was aware that she, for whom a vast  
desire  
consumes me, was no mother or sister of yours.  
And though *I* was closely linked to you by  
friendship,  
I didn't think that was enough excuse for you.  
You considered it enough: there's so much pleasure  
in every game to you, in which there's any sin.

## **92. Sign of Love: to Lesbia**

[Lesbia](#) always speaks ill of me, never shuts up about me: damn me if she doesn't love me.

What's the sign? Because it's the same with me: I'm continually complaining, but damn me if I don't love her.

### **93. Indifference: to Gaius Julius Caesar**

I've no great inclination to want to please you,  
[Caesar](#),  
or to know which of the two you are, black or white.

## **94. Naturally: to Mentula**

Mentula the Cock fornicates. Does a Cock fuck? For sure.

That's what they say: the pot picks its own herbs.

## 95. Smyrna: to Gaius Helvius Cinna

My [Cinna](#)'s *Smyrna* is published at last, nine  
summers and winters after it was begun,  
while from [Hatria](#) there's half a million verses a year

.....

.....

*Smyrna*, reaching the deep streams of Cyprian  
[Satrachus](#),  
white-haired centuries will long read *Smyrna*.  
But [Volusian](#) annals will be stillborn in Padua,  
and often provide a limp wrapper for mackerel.  
Let my friend's little monument be dear to me,  
and the masses delight in swollen [Antimachus](#).

## 96. Beyond The Grave: to Gaius Licinius Calvus

If anything from our grief, can reach beyond  
the mute grave, [Calvus](#), and be pleasing and  
welcome,  
grief with which, in longing, we revive our lost  
loves,  
and weep for vanished friendships once known,  
surely [Quintilia](#)'s not so much sad for her early  
death,  
as joyful for your love.

## 97. Disgusting: to Aemilius

I did not (may the gods love me) think it mattered, whether I might be smelling [Aemilius](#)'s mouth or arse.

The one's no cleaner, the other's no dirtier, in fact his arse is both cleaner and nicer: since it's no teeth. Indeed, the other has foot long teeth, gums like an old box-cart, and jaws that usually gape like the open cunt of a pissing mule on heat.

He fucks lots of women, and makes himself out to be charming, and isn't set to the mill with the ass? Shouldn't we think, of any girl touching him, she's capable of licking a foul hangman's arse?

## 98. Well Armed: to Victius

About you, if anyone, Stinking [Victius](#), can be said  
what they say of the verbose and fatuous.

With that tongue, if the need arose,  
you could lick arses, and leather-soled sandals.

If you want to destroy us completely, Victius,  
gape at us: what you desire you'll wholly achieve.

## 99. Stolen Kisses: to Iuventius

I stole a sweet kiss while you played, sweet  
[Iuventius](#),  
one sweeter than sweetest ambrosia.  
Not taken indeed with impunity: for more than an  
hour  
I remember, I hung at the top of the gallows,  
while I was justifying myself to you, yet with my  
tears  
I couldn't lessen your anger a tiny morsel.  
No sooner was it done, than, your lips rinsed  
with plenty of water, you banished it with your  
fingers,  
so nothing contracted from my lips might remain,  
as though it were the foul spit of a tainted whore.  
More, you handed me unhappily to vicious love  
who's not failed to torment me in every way,  
so that sweet kiss, altered for me from ambrosia,  
was more bitter than bitter hellebore then.  
Since you lay down such punishments for unhappy  
love,  
now, after this, I'll never steal kisses again.

## 100. A Choice: to Marcus Caelius

[Caelius](#) with [Aufilenus](#), and [Quintius](#) with Aufilena, both madly in love with the brother, the sister, the flower of Veronese youth. That as they say's truly sweet, that fellowship of brothers.

Who shall I favour more? You, Caelius, since your friendship, alone, saw me through my passion, when the furious flames scorched me to the core.

Be happy, Caelius, be successful in love.

## **101. Ave Atque Vale: An Offering to the Dead**

Carried over many seas, and through many nations,  
brother, I come to these sad funeral rites,  
to grant you the last gifts to the dead,  
and speak in vain to your mute ashes.  
Seeing that fate has stolen from me your very self.  
Ah alas, my brother, taken shamefully from me,  
yet, by the ancient custom of our parents,  
receive these sad gifts, offerings to the dead,  
soaked deeply with a brother's tears,  
and for eternity, brother: 'Hail and Farewell!'

## **102. Secrecy: to Cornelius**

If anything was ever entrusted by a friend to a silent  
sure one, whose loyalty of spirit is deeply known,  
you'll find I'm equally bound by that sacred rite,  
[Cornelius](#), and turned into a pure [Harpocrates](#).

### **103. Choose: to Silo**

[Silo](#), please return the ten sestertii,  
and then be as wild and unruly as you like:  
or, if you like the money, please leave off  
being a pander, and wild and unruly too.

## 104. Monstrous

Do you think I could speak ill of my own life,  
she who's dearer to me than my two eyes?  
I couldn't, nor, if I could, would I love so  
desperately:  
but you, with [Tappo](#), you do everything monstrous.

## **105. No Poet: to Mentula**

Mentula the Cock tries to climb the Parnassian  
Mount:  
the Muses with pitchforks toss him out, head first.

## **106. It's Obvious**

When you see one who's an auctioneer with a pretty boy,  
what to think, but that he wants to advertise himself?

## 107. Back Again: to Lesbia

If anything happens to one who desires it, and wishes and never expects it, it's a special delight to the mind.

Likewise, this is delight, dearer than gold, to me, that you come back to me, [Lesbia](#), in my longing, come back, desired and un-hoped for, give yourself back to me. O day marked out with greater brightness!

Who exists more happily than me, or can say that he wishes for any life greater than this?

## 108. Dear Cominius

If your white-haired old age, soiled by your impure  
ways,  
is ended by will of the people, [Cominius](#),  
I've no doubt, for my part, your tongue, first, the  
enemy  
of good, will be cut out, and given to eager vultures,  
your eyes gouged out, swallowed by black-throated  
ravens,  
your intestines by dogs, the rest of your body by  
wolves.

**109. A Prayer: to [Lesbia](#)**

You declare that this love of ours will be happy,  
*mea vita*, and eternal between us.

Great gods, let it be that she promises truthfully,  
and says it sincerely, and from her heart,  
so we may extend, through the whole of our life,  
this endless bond of sacred friendship.

## 110. No Cheating: to Aufilena

[Aufilena](#), just mistresses are always praised:  
they accept their reward, for what they agree to.  
You, who promised, dishonestly hostile, to me,  
who don't give but just take, you do wrong.  
To carry it through would be fine, Aufilena,  
not to promise is chaste: but to snatch at what's  
given  
in fraudulent service, is worse than the greediest  
whore  
who offers herself with her whole body.

## 111. Preferable: to Aufilena

To live content with one man, [Aufilena](#),  
is the glory of highest glories for a bride:  
but its better to sleep with whoever she likes,  
than be mother of her cousins by her uncle.

## 112. To Naso

You're a lot of man, [Naso](#), but lots of men  
wouldn't stoop to you: Naso, a lot of man and a  
pathic.

### **113. Fruitful: to Gaius Helvius Cinna**

In [Pompey](#)'s first Consulate two men frequented [Maecilia](#),

[Cinna](#): now he is Consul again

those two remain, but each one's increased by a thousand.

The fruitful seed of adultery.

## 114. Mirage: to Mentula

They say, no lie, that [Mentula](#) the Cock is rich  
with the pastures of [Firmum](#), full of good things,  
fowling of every kind, fish, meadows, fields and  
game.

In vain: his income's surpassed by his costs.

So, I concede he's rich, while everything's lacking.  
lets praise the pastures, so long as he's in want.

## 115. Menace: to Mentula

[Mentula](#)'s as good as thirty acres of meadows,  
forty of fields: the rest of it's marsh.

Why shouldn't he exceed [Croesus](#) in riches,  
one who possesses so many assets, in land,  
meadows, fields, vast woods and pastures and pools  
as far as the [Hyperboreans](#), and [Ocean](#)'s seas?  
All this is great, but he's the greatest of all,  
not a man, but, in truth, a great projecting Cock.

## 116. The Last Word: to Gellius

I've often been searching around, my busy mind  
hunting,  
as to how I could send you [Callimachus](#)'s poems,  
so they'd soften you towards me, so you'd not try  
to land your hostile shafts on my head,  
now I see I've troubled myself in vain,  
[Gellius](#), my good intentions were worthless.  
I'll evade the shafts of yours you fire at me,  
but you'll be punished, fixed for ever by mine.

*Note: Fragments I-III are not translated and regarded as spurious.*

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### **Achaia**

[Poem 64](#). Another name for Hellas, a synonym for Greece. hence the Achaians.

### **Achilles**

[Poem 64](#). The Greek hero of the Trojan War. The son of [Peleus](#), king of Thessaly, and the sea-goddess [Thetis](#), (See Homer's Iliad).

### **Adonis**

[Poem 29](#). The son of Myrrha, by her father Cinyras, born after her transformation into a myrrh-tree. (As such he was a vegetation god born from the heart of the wood.) See Ovid's Metamorphoses Book X:503-559. [Venus](#) fell in love with his beauty. She warned him to avoid savage creatures but he ignored her warning and was killed by a wild boar that gashed his thigh. His blood became the windflower, the *anemone*.

## **Aeetes**

[Poem 64](#). King of [Colchis](#), son of Sol and the Oceanid Perse, brother of Circe, and father of Medea.

The Argonauts reached his court, and requested the return of the Golden Fleece. This fleece was that of the divine ram on which Phrixus had fled from Orchemonos, to avoid being sacrificed. Iolcus could never prosper until it was brought back to Thessaly. King Aeetes was reluctant and set Jason demanding tasks as a pre-condition for its return.

## **Aegeus**

[Poem 64](#). The father of [Theseus](#). King of Athens. The Aegean Sea was named after him.

## **Aemilius**

[Poem 97](#). Unknown.

## **Aganippe**

[Poem 61](#). One of the two springs, Hippocrene being the other, on Mount [Helicon](#), sacred to the Muses.

## **Alfenus**

See [Varus](#).

## **Allius**

[Poem 68b](#). An unknown friend.

## **Amastris**

[Poem 4](#). A port near [Cytorus](#) in Paphlagonia.

## **Amathusia**

[Poem 36](#). A province of, and alternative name for Cyprus.

## **Ameana**

[Poem 41](#). A girlfriend of [Mamurra](#)'s (Formianus).

## **Ammon**

[Poem 7](#). Siwa the oasis in Libya where the Egyptian god Ammon was worshipped as [Jupiter](#)-Ammon.

## **Ancon**

[Poem 36](#). Ancona, a town on the Adriatic coast, originally a Greek colony, associated with [Venus](#).

## **Androgeos**

[Poem 64](#). The son of [Minos](#) and [Pasiphae](#), murdered by [Aegeus](#) in Greece due to his success at the Panathenaic Games.

## **Antimachus**

[Poem 95](#). The sixth century BC Greek poet author of an epic poem on the Trojan War. In his own day rated second only to Homer.

## **Antius**

[Poem 44](#). An unknown litigant.

## **Aonia**

[Poem 61](#). A name for Boeotia. Mount [Helicon](#) is there.

## **Apollo**

[Poem 64](#). Son of [Jupiter](#) and [Latona](#) (Leto), brother of Diana ([Artemis](#)), born on Delos. Also appears as the sun-god Phoebus. God of the arts, dance, song, poetry etc. The lyre an attribute. (See the Apollo Belvedere, sculpted by Leochares? Vatican: the Piombino Apollo, Paris Louvre: the Tiber Apollo, Rome, National Museum of the Terme: the fountain sculpture by Tuby at Versailles – The Chariot of

Apollo: and the sculpture by Girardon and Regnaudin at Versailles – Apollo Tended by the Nymphs – derived from the Apollo Belvedere, and once part of the now demolished Grotto of Thetis.)

### **Aquarius**

[Poem 66](#). The zodiacal constellation. On the opposite side of the sky from [Orion](#). It represents Ganymede carried off by [Jupiter](#) to become the wine pourer to the gods.

### **Aquinus**

[Poem 14](#). A traditional poet. Possibly mentioned by [Cicero](#) in his *Tusculan Disputations*.

### **Argives**

[Poem 64](#). The crew of the Argo, and the inhabitants of the city of Argos, in the Peloponnese. [Poem 68](#). Hence the Greeks who sailed for Troy.

### **Ariadne**

[Poem 64](#). A daughter of [Minos](#). Half-sister of the Minotaur, and sister of Phaedra, who helped [Theseus](#) on Crete. She fled to [Dia](#) with Theseus and was abandoned there, but was rescued by Bacchus, and her crown is

set among the stars as the *Corona Borealis*. (See Titian's painting – Bacchus and Ariadne – National Gallery, London: and Annibale Carracci's fresco – The triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne – Farnese Palace, Rome)). The Northern Crown, the Corona Borealis, is a constellation between Hercules and Serpens Caput, consisting of an arc of seven stars, its central jewel being the blue-white star Gemma. [Poem 66](#). Her constellation. The *Corona Borealis*.

### **Arrius**

[Poem 84](#). Traditionally Quintus Arrius, praetor, and self-made man, who supported Marcus Crassus and may have accompanied him to Parthia.

### **Arsínoe**

[Poem 66](#). Also called Zephyritis. See [Berenice](#) for the full background.

### **Artemis**

[Poem 64](#). Daughter of [Jupiter](#) and [Latona](#) (hence her epithet Latonia) and twin sister of [Apollo](#). She was born on the island of Ortygia which is [Delos](#) (hence her epithet Ortygia). Goddess of the moon and the hunt. She carries a bow, quiver and arrows. She and her followers are virgins. She is worshipped as the

triple goddess, as Hecate in the underworld, Luna the moon, in the heavens, and Diana the huntress on earth. (Skelton's 'Diana in the leaves green, Luna who so bright doth sheen, Persephone in hell') Callisto is one of her followers. (See Luca Penni's – Diana Huntress – Louvre, Paris, and Jean Goujon's sculpture (attributed) – Diana of Anet – Louvre, Paris.)

### **Asinius**

[Poem12](#). Asinius Marrucinus the brother of Gaius Asinius [Pollio](#).

### **Atalanta**

[Poem2b](#). See Ovid's Metamorphoses Book X. Atalanta, the daughter of King Schoeneus of Boeotia, was famous for her swift running. Warned against marriage, by the oracle, her suitors were forced to race against her on penalty of death for losing. She fell in love with Hippomenes. He raced with her, and by use of the golden apples, won the race and her. She, and Hippomenes, desecrated [Cybele](#)'s sacred cave and were turned into lions. (See Guido Reni's painting – Atalanta and Hippomenes – Naples, Galleria Nazionale di Capodimonte)

## **Athene**

The Roman Minerva. The goddess Palla Athene, patron goddess of Athens. She is a representation of the Phoenician triple Goddess Astarte of Asia Minor. She was born beside lake Tritonis in Lybia and nurtured by the nymphs. She killed her playmate Pallas ('youth') when young and her name is a memorial to him. She carries the aegis, a magical goatskin bag containing a snake and covered by a Gorgon mask. She is the goddess of the Mind and of women's arts. The daughter of [Jupiter](#).

[Poem 64](#). Athene fitted an oracular beam into the prow of the Argo, the Argonauts's ship, cut from her father Zeus's (Jupiter's) oracular oak grove at Dodona.

## **Athos**

[Poem 66](#). The Mountain at the end of the Acte peninsula in Macedonia, facing the Aegean Sea.

## **Attis**

[Poem 63](#). A [Phrygian](#) shepherd, loved by [Cybele](#). An incarnation of the vegetation god, the consort of the Great Goddess.

## **Aufilenus/Aufilena**

[Poem 100](#). An unknown brother and sister.

[Poem 110](#). [Poem 111](#). Perhaps the same sister.

## **Aurelius**

[Poem 11](#). An unknown friend of Catullus.

[Poem 15](#). Given a warning.

[Poem 16](#). [Poem 21](#). Rebuked.

## **Aurora**

[Poem 64](#). Goddess of the Dawn.

## **Aurunculeia**

[Poem 61](#). [Lavinia](#), wife of Manlius [Torquatus](#).

## **Bacchus**

[Poem 27](#). (Thyoneus) The god Dionysus, the ‘twice-born’, the god of the vine. The son of [Jupiter](#) and Semele. His worship was celebrated with orgiastic rites borrowed from [Phrygia](#). His female followers are the [Maenades](#) or Bacchantes. He carries the *thyrsus*, a wand tipped with a pine-cone, the Maenads and [Satyrs](#) following him carrying ivy-twined fir branches as *thyrsi*. (See Caravaggio’s painting –Bacchus – Uffizi, Florence)

[Poem 63](#). His ecstatic cult was similar to [Cybele](#)’s.

[Poem 64](#). Called Iachus. He is followed by [Satyrs](#) and [Silenes](#).

### **Balbus**

[Poem 67](#). An unknown Veronese.

### **Battiades**

[Poem 7](#). A patronymic for the poet [Callimachus](#), a descendant of King Battus of [Cyrene](#), a Spartan who built the Libyan city in 630 BC.

### **Berecynthia**

[Poem 63](#). A mountain in [Phrygia](#) associated with the worship of [Cybele](#).

### **Berenice**

[Poem 66](#). The wife of Ptolemy III (246-22BC) of Egypt (The Ptolemaic dynasty was of Macedonian origin). Her mother Apáme was wife of Magas, King of Cyrene. On her husband's death she cancelled her daughter's engagement to Ptolemy III and arranged for her to marry her cousin Demetrius, who however devoted himself to Apáme rather than Berenice. Under Berenice's direction he was killed in Apáme's bedroom. Berenice then married Ptolemy III. Her mother-in-law [Arsínoe](#) wife of

Ptolemy II (283-246BC) was deified and worshipped as a manifestation of [Venus](#)-Aphrodite. When Berenice's husband left for war in Assyria, she placed a lock of her hair in her mother-in-law's shrine at Zephyrium, against his safe return. The lock vanished and [Conon](#) the Royal Astronomer claimed to have discovered it as the new constellation *Coma Berenices* (Berenice's Hair). [Callimachus](#) wrote a poem to celebrate the event, which Catullus translates. Coma Berenices touches Virgo, Leo, and Ursa Major and is near Bootes. Arsinoe is called Zephyritis from her shrine, which Catullus associates with Zephyr the west wind.

### **Bithynia**

The Roman province on the shores of the Black Sea.

[Poem 10](#). Catullus had visited.

[Poem 25](#). Possessions he acquired there.

[Poem 31](#). He returns home to Sirmio from there.

### **Boötes**

[Poem 66](#). The constellation of the Waggoner, or Herdsman, or Bear Herd. The nearby constellation of Ursa Major is the Waggon, or Plough, or Great Bear. He holds the leash of the constellation of the hunting dogs, Canes Venatici. He is sometimes

identified with Arcas son of [Jupiter](#) and [Callisto](#). Arcas may alternatively be the Little Bear. The constellation is near *Coma Berenices*.

### **Caecilius**

An unidentified poet, and friend of Catullus.

[Poem 35](#). His poem.

[Poem 67](#). Possibly the same man.

### **Caelius**

[Poem 58](#). [Poem 100](#). Marcus Caelius [Rufus](#).

### **Caesar**

Gaius Julius Caesar the dictator. Catullus ridicules his homosexuality and his patronage of [Mamurra](#).

[Poem 11](#). His campaigns in Gaul and Britain.

[Poem 29](#). [Poem 57](#). His patronage of Mamurra is ridiculed.

[Poem 54](#). His relationships ridiculed.

[Poem 93](#). Catullus's assumed indifference to him.

### **Caesius**

[Poem 14](#). An unidentified traditional poet.

## **Callimachus**

[Poem 65](#). [Poem 116](#). The Greek poet (died 250BC), a native of [Cyrene](#) in North Africa, who lived at Alexandria and worked in the Library. [Poem 66](#) on [Berenice](#) is a translation from his work.

## **Callisto**

[Poem 66](#). A nymph of Nonacris in Arcadia, a favourite of Phoebe-[Diana](#). The daughter of Lycaon. Jupiter raped her.

Pregnant by Jupiter she was expelled from the band of Diana's virgin followers by Diana, as Cynthia in her Moon goddess mode. She gave birth to a son Arcas. She was turned into a bear by [Juno](#), and then a constellation in the sky, Ursa Major, the Great Bear, by [Jupiter](#). **Lycaon**, her father, the son of Pelasgus was a king of primitive Arcadia who presided over barbarous cannibalistic practises. He was transformed into a wolf by Zeus, angered by human sacrifice. His sons offered Zeus, disguised as a traveller, a banquet containing human remains. They were also changed into wolves and Zeus then precipitated a great flood to cleanse the world. The constellation of Ursa Major represents Callisto turned into a bear by Jupiter, or the plough or waggon or cart of [Bootës](#). The two stars of the

‘bowl’ furthest from the ‘handle’, Merak and Dubhe, point to Polaris the pole star. The ‘handle’ points to the star Arcturus in the constellation Bootës, who is the Waggoner or Herdsman or Bear Herd (Arcturus means the Bearkeeper) or Ploughman. The constellation borders on *Coma Berenices*.

### **Calvus**

Gaius Licinius Calvus, orator, poet, friend of [Catullus](#) and colleague of [Cicero](#). Ovid mentions him alongside Catullus and Tibullus.

[Poem 14](#). [Poem 50](#). Addressed to him.

[Poem 53](#). His size mocked.

[Poem 96](#). The death of his beloved, [Quintilia](#).

### **Camerius**

[Poem 55](#). An unknown acquaintance of Catullus.

### **Canoptic**

[Poem 66](#). From the town in Egypt, twelve miles from Alexandria, a capital city of the Ptolemaic Dynasty.

### **Castor**

The son of Tyndareus of Sparta and Leda, and twin brother of [Pollux](#). Noted for his horses and

horsemanship. In the *Homeric Hymn to the Dioscuri* (the Gemini, the Twins) the Twins descend through the air to help distressed sailors, and on Etruscan mirrors are shown as winged.

[Poem 4](#). The boat dedicates herself to these Gods of sailors.

[Poem 37](#). The Twins are mentioned. Their temple on the Clivus Victoriae.

[Poem 68](#). Prayed to by sailors.

## **Cato**

[Poem 56](#). Publius Valerius Cato, a freedman of Verona, born c100BC, poet and man of letters, perhaps the original source of the new movement in poetry.

## **Catullus**

Caius Valerius Catullus (c84-c54BC), of Verona. One of the key figures of the 'modern' school of poetry in Rome, who applied Alexandrian criticism and technique to Latin poetry. He visited Asia Minor and lost a brother in the Troad. He was a member of [Clodia](#)'s circle and one of her lovers.

[Poem 68](#). Mourning for his brother, in Verona.

## **Cecrops**

The mythical founder of Athens. He was a son of mother Earth like Erechthonius (who some think was his father). He was part man and part serpent. His three daughters were Aglauros, Herse and Pandrosus who were goddesses of the Acropolis in Athens.

[Poem 64](#). Athenian.

## **Chalybes**

[Poem 66](#). Inhabitants of a region of Asia Minor, near [Pontus](#), famous for its iron mines.

## **Charybdis**

[Poem 64](#). The whirlpool between Italy and Sicily in the Messenian straits. Charybdis was the voracious daughter of Mother Earth and [Neptune](#), hurled into the sea, and thrice, daily, drawing in and spewing out a huge volume of water.

## **Chiron**

[Poem 64](#). One of the Centaurs, half-man and half-horse. He was the son of Philyra and Saturn. Phoebus [Apollo](#) took his newborn son Aesculapius to his cave for protection. He is represented in the

sky by the constellation Centaurus, which contains the nearest star to the sun, Alpha Centauri. Begot by Saturn disguised as a horse. His home is on Mount [Pelion](#). He was [Peleus](#)'s grandfather and the future tutor of [Achilles](#).

### **Cicero**

[Poem 49](#). Marcus Tullius Cicero, statesman, orator, author. Consul in the year of the Cataline conspiracy. Incurring the enmity of [Caesar](#)'s faction he was driven into exile by Publius Clodius Pulcher. His speech *Pro Caelio*, defending Marcus Caelius Rufus is the only full-length portrait of [Clodia](#)/Lesbia. He was an intimate of many of Catullus's friends.

### **Cieros**

[Poem 64](#). A town in Thessaly.

### **Cinna**

Gaius Helvius Cinna, a Cisalpine and friend of Catullus, one of the new poets. Probably accompanied Catullus under [Memmius](#)'s patronage to [Bithynia](#). He was murdered in the confusion after Julius [Caesar](#)'s assassination mistaken for Cinna the conspirator. See Shakespeare's Julius Caesar.

[Poem10](#) He is mentioned.

[Poem 95](#). His poem *Smyrna*, possibly a miniature epic.

[Poem 113](#). Addressed.

### **Clodia**

See [Lesbia](#). Clodia Metelli the wife of Quintus Metellus Celer, her cousin. She had a reputation for affairs, and was rumoured to have poisoned her husband. See also [Cicero](#).

### **Cnidos**

[Poem 36](#). A city in Caria in Asia Minor with three temples dedicated to [Venus](#).

### **Cnossos**

[Poem 64](#). A city in [Minoan](#) Crete.

### **Colchis**

[Poem 64](#). A region at the eastern end of the Black Sea, reached by the Argonauts in their quest for the Golden Fleece.

### **Cologna Veneta**

[Poem 17](#). A small town near to Verona. There used to be a bridge there called *Il Ponte di Catullo*.

## **Cominius**

[Poem 108](#). Unknown.

## **Conon**

[Poem 66](#). The Royal Astronomer at the court of [Berenice](#).

## **Cornelius**

[Poem 1](#). Cornelius Nepos the historian. See entry for [Nepos](#).

[Poem 67](#). [Poem 102](#). Possibly the same person.  
[Achaia](#)

## **Cornificius**

[Poem 38](#). Quintus Cornificus the quaestor who espoused the Senatorial cause and was killed in battle in 41BC. He was a new poet friend of [Cicero](#) and Catullus.

## **Crannon**

[Poem 64](#). A town in central Thessaly.

## **Croesus**

[Poem 115](#). The King of Lydia, legendary for his wealth.

## **Cupid**

The god of love, son of [Venus](#) by [Mars](#). (Aphrodite). He is portrayed as a blind winged child armed with a bow and arrows, and he carries a flaming torch.

[Poem 36](#). Invoked.

[Poem 64](#). The stirrer up of passion.

[Poem 68](#). Dressed in a saffron robe.

## **Cybele, Cybebe**

[Poem 35](#). The [Phrygian](#) great goddess, personifying the earth in its savage state, worshipped in caves and on mountaintops. Merged with Rhea, the mother of the gods. Her consort was [Attis](#), slain by a wild boar like [Adonis](#). His festival was celebrated by the followers of Cybele, the [Galli](#), or Corybantes, who were noted for convulsive dances to the music of flutes, drums and cymbals, and self-mutilation in an orgiastic fury.

[Poem 63](#). Attis becomes her follower.

## **Cyclades**

[Poem 4](#). Greek islands in the Aegean Sea.

## **Cycnea**

[Poem 67](#). An old fortress overlooking Brescia.

## **Cyllene**

[Poem 68](#). A mountain in Arcadia and the town at its foot.

## **Cyrene**

[Poem 7](#). The town and province of North Africa.

## **Cytorus**

[Poem 4](#). A port in Paphlagonia on the borders of Bithynia beneath the mountain of the same name, famous for boxwood.

## **Dardania**

[Poem 64](#). Another name for the Troad, from Dardanus an ancestor of the Trojan people. Hence Dardanians.

## **Delos**

[Poem 34](#). The Greek island in the Aegean, one of the [Cyclades](#), birthplace of, and sacred to, [Apollo](#) (Phoebus) and [Diana](#) (Phoebe, Artemis), hence the adjective Delian. Its ancient name was Ortygia. A wandering island, that gave sanctuary to Latona (Leto). Having been hounded by jealous Juno (Hera), she gave birth there to the twins Apollo and

Diana, between an olive tree and a date-palm on the north side of Mount Cynthus. Delos then became fixed in the sea. In a variant she gave birth to Artemis-Diana on the islet of Ortygia nearby. (Pausanias VIII xlvii, mentions the sacred palm-tree, noted there in Homer's *Odyssey* 6, 162, and the ancient olive.)

### **Delphos, Delphi**

[Poem 64](#). The site of the oracle of [Apollo](#) in Phocis. The navel stone in the precinct at Delphi was taken as the central point of the known world.

### **Diana**

[Poem 34](#). Daughter of [Jupiter](#) and [Latona](#) (hence her epithet Latonia) and twin sister of [Apollo](#). She was born on the island of Ortygia which is [Delos](#) (hence her epithet Ortygia). Goddess of the moon and the hunt. She carries a bow, quiver and arrows. She and her followers are virgins. She is worshipped as the triple goddess, as [Hecate](#) in the underworld, Luna the moon, in the heavens, and Diana the huntress on earth. (Skelton's 'Diana in the leaves green, Luna who so bright doth sheen, Persephone in hell') Callisto is one of her followers. (See Luca Penni's – Diana Huntress – Louvre, Paris, and Jean

Goujon's sculpture (attributed) – Diana of Anet –  
Louvre, Paris.)

[Poem 66](#). Called Trivia, the goddess of the three  
ways. 'Diana of the crossroads.' As the moon, she  
loved Endymion, a Carian shepherd, with whom she  
fell in love seeing him naked on the top of Mount  
[Latmos](#).

### **Dindymia, Dindymus**

[Poem 35](#). [Poem 63](#). A mountain in Mysia (Phrygia)  
in Asia Minor, sacred to Ceres and [Cybele](#).

### **Egnatius**

[Poem 37](#) An unidentified rival.

[Poem 39](#) He is mocked.

### **Emathia**

[Poem 64](#). An ancient name for Thessaly. The  
birthplace of [Achilles](#).

### **Epidamnus, Dyrrachium**

[Poem 36](#). Modern Durres, on the Adriatic, where  
[Venus](#) was worshipped.

## **Erectheus**

[Poem 64](#). King of Athens, son of Pandion, father of Orithyia and Procris. A benevolent ruler. The people of Erectheus are the Athenians.

## **Eumenides**

[Poem 64](#). The ‘*Kindly Ones*’, The Furies, or Erinyes. The Three Sisters were Alecto, Tisiphone and Megaera, the daughters of Night and Uranus. They were the personified pangs of cruel conscience that pursued the guilty. (See Aeschylus – *The Eumenides*). Their abode was in Hades by the Styx.

## **Eurotas**

[Poem 64](#). A river in Laconia not far from [Sparta](#).

## **Fabullus**

An unidentified friend of Catullus, who may have served in Spain and Macedonia.

[Poem 12](#). [Poem 47](#). He is mentioned.

[Poem 13](#). He is invited to dinner.

[Poem 28](#). He is addressed.

## **Falernian**

[Poem 27](#). Wine from Falernia, a district in Northern Campania famous for its high quality wine-making.

## **Fescennine**

[Poem 61](#). A kind of tribal song perhaps from Fescennium in Etruria.

## **Firmum**

[Poem 114](#). A town in Picena. [Mamurra](#) had an estate there.

## **Flavius**

[Poem 6](#). An unidentified friend of Catullus.

## **Formianus**

[Poem 41](#). [Mamurra](#).

## **Furius**

Probably Marcus Furius [Bibaculus](#), a Cremonese and one of the new poets.

[Poem 11](#). Addressed to him. [Poem 16](#). Rebuked.

[Poem 23](#). His poverty! [Poem 26](#). His mortgage.

## **Gallae**

[Poem 63](#). The priests of [Cybele](#), so called from the River Gallus in [Phrygia](#), whose waters maddened those who drank them. They castrated themselves ritually.

## **Gellius**

[Poem 74](#). [Poem 80](#). [Poem 88](#). [Poem 90](#).  
[Poem 91](#). [Poem 116](#).

Lucius Gellius [Poplicola](#). Consul in 36BC. He fought for Antony at Actium.

## **Golgos**

[Poem 36](#). [Poem 64](#). Golgi, a town in Cyprus associated with the worship of [Venus](#).

## **Gortyn**

[Poem 64](#). A town in Crete, hence Cretan.

## **Hamadryads**

[Poem 61](#). The tree-nymphs.

## **Harpocrates**

[Poem 74](#). [Poem 102](#). Horus, the Egyptian god, represented as a child on Isis's lap with his finger on his lips. The god of silence.

## **Hatria**

[Poem 95](#). A town in the Padua delta.

## **Hebe**

[Poem 68](#). The daughter of [Juno](#), born without a father.

She became the wife of [Hercules](#) after his deification, and has the power to renew life.

## **Hecate**

[Poem 34](#). Also called Trivia. The daughter of the Titans Perses and Asterie, [Latona](#)'s sister. A Thracian goddess of witches, her name is a feminine form of [Apollo](#)'s title '*the far-darter*'. She was a lunar goddess, with shining Titans for parents. In Hades she was Prytania of the dead, or the Invincible Queen. She gave riches, wisdom, and victory, and presided over flocks and navigation. She had three bodies and three heads, those of a lioness, a bitch, and a mare. Her ancient power was to give to or withhold from mortals any gift. She

was sometimes merged with the lunar aspect of [Diana](#)-Artemis, and presided over purifications and expiations. She was the goddess of enchantments and magic charms, and sent demons to earth to torture mortals. At night she appeared with her retinue of infernal dogs, haunting crossroads (as Trivia), tombs and the scenes of crimes. At crossroads her columns or statues had three faces – the Triple Hecates – and offerings were made at the full moon to propitiate her.

## **Helen**

[Poem 68](#). The daughter of Leda and [Jupiter](#) (Tyndareus was her putative father), sister of Clytemnaestra, and the [Dioscuri](#). The wife of Menelaüs. She was taken, by [Paris](#), to [Troy](#), instigating the Trojan War.

## **Helicon**

[Poem 61](#). The mountain in Boeotia near the Gulf of Corinth where the Muses lived. The sacred springs of Helicon were [Aganippe](#) and Hippocrene, both giving poetic inspiration. The Muses' other favourite haunt was Mount [Parnassus](#) in Phocis with its Castalian Spring. They also guarded the oracle at

Delphi. The fountain of Hippocrene sprang from under the hoof of [Pegasus](#), the winged horse.

## **Hercules**

The Hero, son of [Jupiter](#). He was set in the sky as the constellation Hercules between Lyra and Corona Borealis. The son of Jupiter and Alcmena, the wife of Amphitryon. Called Alcides from Amphitryon's father Alceus. Called also **Amphitryoniades**. Called also Tyrinthius from Tiryns his home city in the Argolis. Jupiter predicted at his birth that a scion of [Perseus](#) would be born, greater than all other descendants. [Juno](#) delayed Hercules birth and hastened that of [Eurystheus](#), grandson of Perseus, making Hercules subservient to him. Hercules was set twelve labours by Eurystheus at Juno's instigation.

[Poem 38](#). [Poem 55](#). A reference to his labours.

[Poem 68](#). The sixth labour, the [Stymphalian](#) birds.

## **Hortalus**

[Poem 65](#). Lucius Quintus Hortalus, praetor and consul, died 50BC, a distinguished lawyer and friend of [Cicero](#). One of the 'new poets'.

## **Hymen**

[Poem 61](#). Hymenaeus, god of marriage, who lives on [Helicon](#) with the Muses.

[Poem 62](#). Again invoked as god of marriage.

## **Hyperboreans**

[Poem 115](#). A race of people living beyond the North wind, often taken to mean the Thracians.

## **Hyrkania**

[Poem 11](#). A wild country bordering the Caspian Sea.

## **Ida**

The mountain in [Phrygia](#), in the Troad. Also the mountain in Crete.

[Poem 61](#). Scene of the Judgement of [Paris](#), in Phrygia, where he chose the most beautiful of the naked goddesses, awarding [Venus](#) the prize of the golden apple.

[Poem 63](#). Site of the worship of [Cybele](#) in [Phrygia](#).

[Poem 64](#). Mount Ida in Crete.

## **Idalia**

[Poem 36](#). [Poem 64](#). A district in Cyprus with a grove sacred to [Venus](#).

## **Ipsíthilla**

[Poem 32](#). An unidentified girl.

## **Iton**

[Poem 64](#). [Athene](#) was said by some source to be the daughter of Itonus, King of Iton in Phthiotis, near the Pagasaeon Gulf.

## **Itylus**

[Poem 65](#). The murdered son of [Procne](#) q.v.

## **Iuventius**

[Poem 24](#). [Poem 48](#). [Poem 81](#). [Poem 99](#).

An unidentified friend of Catullus.

## **Juno**

The daughter of Rhea and Saturn, wife of her brother [Jupiter](#), and the queen of the gods. A representation of the pre-Hellenic Great Goddess. (See the Metope of Temple E at Selinus – The Marriage of Hera and Zeus – Palermo, National Museum.)

[Poem 68](#). Aware of Jupiter's many affairs with mortals.

## **Juno Lucina**

[Poem 34](#). An aspect of [Diana](#), as goddess of childbirth.

## **Jupiter**

The sky-god, son of Saturn and Rhea, born on Mount Lycaeum in Arcadia and nurtured on Mount Ida in Crete. The oak is his sacred tree. His emblems of power are the sceptre and lightning-bolt. His wife and sister is [Juno](#) (Iuno). (See the sculpted bust (copy) by Brassides, the Jupiter of Otricoli, Vatican)

[Poem 4](#). He can determine the winds.

[Poem 7](#). His oracle of Jupiter-Ammon in Africa.

[Poem 34](#). Father of [Latona](#).

[Poem 55](#). His sacred shrine.

[Poem 64](#). He is all-powerful. [Peleus](#) is his descendant through Aeacus.

[Poem 67](#). His power.

[Poem 68](#). [Poem 70](#). [Poem 72](#). Notorious for his many affairs with mortal women.

## **Ladas**

[Poem 55](#). Alexander the Great's courier who ran so swiftly he left no footprints.

## **Lanuvium**

[Poem 39](#). A small town in [Latium](#) on the Appian Way south east of Rome.

## **Laodamia, Laodameia**

[Poem 68](#). The daughter of Acastus and wife of [Protesilaus](#). Distressed by the loss of her husband she had a life-sized statue made of him, which he slept with. In one version of the myth her father ordered it burnt and she threw herself into the flames, in a second variant she begged for Protesilaus to revisit her if only for a few hours. The statue was animated by his ghost, and he told her to follow him, which she did by stabbing herself.

## **Larissa**

[Poem 64](#). A town in Thessaly on the River [Peneus](#).

## **Latmos**

[Poem 66](#). The mountain in Caria where Endymion encountered the Moon.

## **Latona**

[Poem 34](#) Daughter of the Titan Coeus, and mother of [Apollo](#) and Artemis ([Diana](#)) by [Jupiter](#). Pursued

by a jealous Juno, she was given sanctuary by [Delos](#), a floating island. There between an olive tree and a date-palm she gave birth to Apollo and Diana-Artemis, by Mount Cynthus. Delos became fixed. A variant has Artemis born on the nearby islet of Ortygia.

## **Leo**

[Poem 66](#). The constellation and zodiacal sign of the Lion. It contains the star Regulus ‘the heart of the lion’, one of the four guardians of the heavens in Babylonian astronomy, which lies nearly on the ecliptic. (The others are Aldebaran in Taurus, Antares in Scorpius, and Fomalhaut ‘the Fish’s Eye’ in Piscis Austrinus. All four are at roughly ninety degrees to one another). The constellation represents the lion killed by [Hercules](#) as the first of his twelve labours. It borders on *Coma Berenices*.

## **Lesbia**

[Poem 5](#). [Clodia](#) Metelli. (Referred to in poems [2](#), [3](#), [5](#), [7](#), [8](#), [11](#), [36](#), [43](#), [51](#), [58](#), [70](#), [72](#), [75](#), [76](#), [79](#), [83](#), [86](#), [87](#), [92](#), [107](#), [109](#))

See the entry for [Clodia](#).

## **Lesbius**

[Poem 79](#). Unknown presumably a relative of [Lesbia](#).

## **Lethe**

[Poem 65](#). A river of the Underworld, whose waters bring forgetfulness. Its stream flows from the depths of the House of Sleep, and induces drowsiness with its murmuring. (Hence the stream of forgetfulness)

## **Libo**

[Poem 54](#). An unidentified associate of [Caesar](#).

## **Maecilia**

[Poem 113](#). A known adulteress.

## **Maenad**

[Poem 63](#). The Bacchantes, the female followers of [Bacchus](#), given to ecstatic maddened howling, and wild chases through the woods. Also the female followers of [Cybele](#).

[Poem 64](#). The crazed followers of Bacchus. usually with dishevelled hair and clothing.

## **Magus**

[Poem 90](#). The Magi were the priests of the Persians.

## **Mamurra**

[Caesar](#)'s chief engineer in Gaul, and one of his intimates. He came from Formia in Latium hence referred to as [Formianus](#).

[Poem 29](#). His profligate spending.

[Poem 41](#). His girlfriend.

[Poem 57](#). His relationship with Caesar.

## **Manlius**

Lucius Manlius [Torquatus](#) q.v.

## **Mars**

[Poem 64](#). The god of war. Trapped with [Venus](#) under a net forged by her husband Vulcan.

## **Mella**

[Poem 67](#). A river near Brescia.

## **Memmius**

Gaius Memmius Gemellus, praetor in 58BC, and governor of Bithynia in 57BC. Catullus's patron. Catullus accompanied him to [Bithynia](#). He was himself a poet of the new school.

[Poem 10](#) Mentioned implicitly.

[Poem 28](#). Mentioned.

## **Memnon**

[Poem 66](#). The King of Ethiopia, one of the sons of [Aurora](#) the Dawn, brother of [Zephyrus](#).

## **Menenius**

[Poem 59](#). An unidentified person.

## **Mentula**

[Poem 94](#). [Poem 105](#). [Poem 114](#). [Poem 115](#).  
Unknown. Possibly [Mamurra](#).

## **Midas**

[Poem 24](#). The king of Phrygia, son of Gordius and Cybele, called Berecyntius heros from Mount Berecyntus in Phrygia, sacred to Cybele. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book XI:85-145. In reward for returning Silenus to him, Bacchus granted Midas a gift. He chose the golden touch, whereby all he handled turned to gold, and when it plagued him Bacchus took it away again. He was instructed to bathe in the waters of the Pactolus to cleanse himself.

## **Minos, Minoans, Minoan, Minotaur**

[Poem 64](#). The legendary King of Crete, ruler of a hundred cities. Son of [Jupiter](#) and Europa. The Minoan Empire at one time ruled the Aegean. Hence the terms Minoan and Minoans for the culture and people of ancient Crete.

The Minotaur was the half-bull half-man born of the union of [Pasiphae](#), Minos's wife, with a bull.

[Theseus](#) destroyed it at the heart of the Labyrinth (built by Daedalus), with help from [Ariadne](#).

## **Muses**

[Poem 65](#). [Poem 105](#). The nine Muses are the virgin daughters of [Jupiter](#) and Mnemosyne (Memory).

They are the patronesses of the arts. Clio (History), Melpomene (Tragedy), Thalia (Comedy), Euterpe (Lyric Poetry), Terpsichore (Dance), Calliope (Epic Poetry), Erato (Love Poetry), Urania (Astronomy), and Polyhymnia (Sacred Song). Their epithets are Aonides, and Thespiades. Mount [Helicon](#) is one of their haunts and is hence called Virgineus.

[Poem 1](#). [Poem 68](#). The Muse, as the force of poetic inspiration.

## **Naso**

[Poem 112](#). Unknown.

## **Naxos**

The largest island of the [Cyclades](#), and the home of [Bacchus](#).

The scene of [Ariadne](#)'s abandonment by [Theseus](#), and her rescue by Bacchus.

[Poem 64](#). Also called Dia, its ancient name.

## **Nemesis**

[Poem 50](#). Rhamnusia. The Goddess of retribution. She punishes mortal pride and arrogance (*hubris*) on behalf of the gods.

## **Nepos**

[Cornelius](#) Nepos, the historian, a friend of [Cicero](#). Possibly from Verona.

[Poem 1](#). Addressed to him.

## **Neptune**

God of the sea, brother of [Jupiter](#). The trident is his emblem. He and [Apollo](#) built the walls of [Troy](#) for Laomedon. He flooded the land when Laomedon refused to pay, and demanded the sacrifice of

Hesione to a sea-monster. He was thought to be protecting Troy.

[Poem 64](#). The Sea-god. Builder of the Walls of Troy.

### **Nereids**

The fifty mermaids, attendant on [Thetis](#). They were the daughters of Doris and Nereus.

[Poem 64](#). Seen by the Argonauts.

### **Nicaea**

[Poem 46](#). A town in [Bythinia](#).

### **Nonnius**

[Poem 52](#). Perhaps Marcus Nonnius Sufenas, of [Pompey](#)'s faction awarded the *curile aedileship* (higher Magistrate's office) for 54BC.

### **Nysa**

[Poem 64](#). Heliconian Mount Nysa. The Nyseids were the nymphs Macris, Erato, Bromie, Bacche and Nysa who hid [Bacchus](#) in their cave and nurtured him. They became the Hyades star-cluster. Also used of Mount Nysa in India whence Bacchus is supposed to originate.

## **Ocean, Oceanus**

[Poem 64](#). [Poem 88](#). [Poem 115](#). The Sea and river god: husband of his sister [Tethys](#). In poem 88 about incest, Catullus therefore makes an ironic reference to Ocean and Tethys.

Catullus makes [Thetis](#) a granddaughter of Oceanus. [Poem 66](#). The destination of the setting constellations.

## **Orcus**

[Poem 3](#). A name for Pluto, god of the Underworld, and for the Underworld itself.

## **Orion**

[Poem 66](#). The mighty hunter, one of the Giants, now a constellation with his two hunting dogs and his sword and glittering belt. The brightest constellation in the sky, it is an area of star formation in a nearby arm of the Galaxy centred on M42 the Orion Nebula, which marks Orion's sword. He is depicted as brandishing a club and shield at Taurus the Bull. He was stung to death by a scorpion, and now rises when Scorpio sets and vice versa. His two dogs are Canis Major, which contains Sirius the brightest star in the sky after the sun, and Canis Minor, which contains the star Procyon,

forming an equilateral triangle with Sirius and Betelgeuse the red giant in Orion. Orion is on the opposite side of the zodiac from [Aquarius](#).

### **Otho**

[Poem 54](#). An unidentified associate of [Caesar](#).

### **Parcae**

[Poem 64](#). [Poem 68](#). The three Fates, born of [Erebus](#) and Night. Clothed in white, they spin, measure out, and sever the thread of each human life. Clotho spins the thread. Lachesis measures it. Atropos wields the shears.

### **Paris**

Prince of [Troy](#), son of Priam and Hecuba, brother of Hector. His theft of Menelaüs's wife Helen provoked the Trojan War.

[Poem 61](#). He was asked to judge the most beautiful among the three naked goddesses, [Venus](#)-Aphrodite, Athene-Minerva and Hera-[Juno](#), choosing Venus.

[Poem 68](#). He abducted [Helen](#). perhaps willingly.

### **Parnassus**

[Poem 64](#). [Poem 105](#). A mountain in Phocis sacred to [Apollo](#) and the Muses. [Delphi](#) is at its foot where the

oracle of Apollo and his temple were situated.

[Themis](#) held the oracle in ancient times.

### **Parthia**

[Poem 11](#). The Parthian Empire to the south-west of the Caspian Sea was Rome's enemy in the East. Its mounted archers were particularly effective.

### **Pasiphae**

The wife of [Minos](#), mother by him of [Ariadne](#) and Phaedra. Mother of the [Minotaur](#), having been impregnated by a bull.

[Poem 64](#). Daphne took this name in Crete according to one variant of her myth.

### **Pasithea**

[Poem 63](#). One of the three Graces (The Charites: Pasithea, Cale and Euphrosyne) betrothed to Somnus the god of sleep.

### **Pegasus**

[Poem 55](#). The winged horse, sprung from the head of Medusa when [Perseus](#) decapitated her. At the same time his brother Chrysaor the warrior was created. He is represented in the sky by the constellation Pegasus. The sacred fountain of

Hippocrene on Mount [Helicon](#), haunt of the Muses, springs from under his hoof. He was created by Neptune's union with Medusa.

### **Peleus**

[Poem 64](#). The son of Aeacus, king of Aegina, brother of Telamon and Phocus. King of Thessaly and husband of [Thetis](#) and father by her of [Achilles](#). (See Joachim Wttewael's – The Wedding of Peleus and Thetis - Alte Pinakothek, Munich: see W.B Yeats poem 'News for the Delphic Oracle, verse III) He was a hero, one of the Argonauts, and present at the Calydonian Boar Hunt. He was a descendant of [Jupiter](#) through Aeacus.

### **Pelion**

A mountain in Thessaly in Northern Greece.

[Poem 64](#). The timbers for the Argo were cut from there.

The home of [Chiron](#) the Centaur.

### **Pelops**

[Poem 64](#). The son of Tantalus, and brother of Niobe. He was cut in pieces and served to the gods at a banquet by his father to test their divinity. Ceres-Demeter, mourning for Persephone, did not perceive

the wickedness and ate a piece of the shoulder. The gods gave him life again and an ivory shoulder. He gave his name to the Peloponnese. Hence a name for the Greeks as a whole, the 'children of Pelops'. The grandfather of Agamemnon and Menelaus, the sons of Atreus.

### **Penelope**

[Poem 61](#). The wife of Ulysses, and daughter of Icarius and the Naiad Periboa. (See J R Spencer Stanhope's painting Penelope - The De Morgan Foundation)

She is pestered by many suitors (a hundred and eight, in Homer ), while she waits faithfully for Ulysses to return from [Troy](#). A synonym for faithfulness.

### **Peneus**

[Poem 64](#). The River in Thessaly. Its River-god, the father of Daphne. Daphne was turned into a laurel bough, having been pursued by [Apollo](#), but, in a variant of the myth, Earth left the laurel-tree behind but spirited Daphne away to Crete, where she became known as [Pasiphae](#). (Apollodorus i.7.9, Plutarch: *Agis* 9)

## **Perseus**

[Poem 55](#). The son of [Jupiter](#) and Danaë, grandson of Acrisius, King of Argos. He was conceived as a result of Jupiter's rape of Danaë, in the form of a shower of gold. He is represented by the constellation Perseus near Cassiopeia. He is depicted holding the head of the Medusa, whose evil eye is the winking star Algol. It contains the radiant of the Perseid meteor shower. His epithets are Abantiades, Acrisioniades, Agenorides, Danaëius, Inachides, Lyncides.

(See Burne-Jones's oil paintings and gouaches in the Perseus series particularly The Arming of Perseus, The Escape of Perseus, The Rock of Doom, Perseus slaying the Sea-Serpent, and The Baleful Head.)(See Benvenuto Cellini's bronze Perseus - the Loggia, Florence)

## **Pesaro**

[Poem 81](#). The town on the Adriatic, in the Roman region of Umbria, known for its unhealthy, low-lying aspect.

## **Phaeton, Phaethon**

[Poem 64](#). Son of Clymene, the daughter of [Oceanus](#) and [Tethys](#) whose husband was the Ethiopian king

Merops. His true father is Sol, the sun-god ([Phoebus](#)). He asked his mother for proof of his divine origin and went to the courts of the Sun to see his father who granted him a favour. He asked to drive the Sun chariot. He lost control of the chariot, and was destroyed by [Jupiter](#) in order to save the earth from being consumed by fire. The Heliads, were the daughters of Clymene and the Sun, sisters of Phaethon, who were turned into poplar trees as they mourned for him, their tears becoming drops of amber.

### **Pharsalia**

[Poem 64](#). A plain in Thessaly named after the town of Pharsalus.

### **Phasis**

[Poem 64](#). A river in [Colchis](#), in Asia, east of the Black Sea, reached by the Argonauts.

### **Phrygia**

The country in Asia Minor, noted for its worship of [Cybele](#).

[Poem 46](#) A winter retreat.

[Poem 61](#). Mount [Ida](#) situated there, in the Troad.

[Poem 63](#). Locale of the worship of Cybele.

[Poem 64](#). The region where [Troy](#) was situated.

### **Phthiotic Tempe**

[Poem 64](#). The beautiful valley in Thessaly, between Mount [Olympus](#) and Mount Ossa through which the River [Peneus](#) flows.

### **Piraeus**

[Poem 64](#). The harbour of Athens, about three miles from the city.

### **Piso**

Traditionally Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, [Caesar](#)'s father-in-law.

[Poem 28](#). [Poem47](#). He is mentioned.

### **Pollio**

[Poem12](#). Gaius Asinius Pollio ('Pollionus') a supporter of [Caesar](#) and subsequently the Triumvirate. A distinguished poet, patron and orator. Brother of [Asinius](#).

### **Pollux**

Polydeuces, the son of Tyndareus of Sparta and Leda, and twin brother of [Castor](#). Famous for his

boxing prowess. See the entry for Castor for more detail.

[Poem 4](#). The boat is dedicated to the Twins.

[Poem 68](#). Prayed to by sailors.

## **Polyxena**

[Poem 64](#). The daughter of [Priam](#) and Hecuba sacrificed to appease the ghost of [Achilles](#).

## **Pompey**

[Poem 55](#). [Poem 113](#). Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus (106-48BC) put down a slave rebellion, cleared the Mediterranean of pirates, and conquered Mithridates. He married Julia, the daughter of Julius [Caesar](#), but quarrelled with the father and was defeated at Pharsalus in 48BC. He fled to Egypt and was murdered there. He opened a new colonnaded piazza in the *Campus Martius* in 55BC.

## **Pontic Sea**

[Poem 4](#). The Black Sea. Propontus is the Bosphorus.

[Poem 29](#). Julius [Caesar](#) returned with booty from there.

## **Poplicola**

See [Gellius](#).

## **Porcius**

[Poem47](#). An unidentified follower of [Piso](#).

## **Postumia**

[Poem 27](#). An unknown female friend of Catullus.

## **Postumius**

[Poem 67](#). Unknown.

## **Priam**

[Poem 64](#). King of [Troy](#). Son of Laomedon, who in turn was the son of Ilus the founder of the city.

## **Priapus**

[Poem47](#) The god of gardens and lust, usually shown displaying a huge phallus.

## **Procne**

[Poem 65](#). The daughter of Pandion, king of Athens, married to Tereus, king of Thrace. (See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book VI:438-674.) She persuaded Tereus to bring her sister Philomela to stay with her. Tereus raped and mutilated her sister, and told Procne that Philomela was dead. Philomela communicated with

her by means of a woven message, and she rescued her during the Bacchic rites. She murdered her son Itys and served the flesh to Tereus. Pursued by Tereus she turned into a nightingale. The bird's call, mourning Itys, is said to be 'Itu! Itu!' which is something like the occasional 'chooc, chooc' among its wide range of notes.

### **Prometheus**

[Poem 64](#). The son of Iapetus by the nymph Cleomene, and father of Deucalion. Sometimes included among the seven Titans, he was the wisest of his race and gave human beings the useful arts and sciences. [Jupiter](#) first withheld fire and Prometheus stole it from the chariot of the Sun. Jupiter had Prometheus chained to the frozen rock in the Caucasus where a vulture tore at his liver night and day for eternity. (See Aeschylus's 'Prometheus Bound', and Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound')

### **Protesilaus**

[Poem 68](#). The son of Iphiclus and husband of [Laodamia](#). He fulfilled [Thetis](#)'s prophecy that the first Greek to land at [Troy](#) would die. He was buried in the Thracian Chersonese.

## **Quintia**

[Poem 86](#). Unknown.

## **Quintilia**

[Poem 96](#). The poet [Calvus](#)'s beloved.

## **Quintius**

[Poem 82](#). [Poem 100](#). Unknown.

## **Ravidus**

[Poem 40](#). An unidentified rival.

## **Rhamnusia, Ramnusia**

[Poem 66](#). [Poem 68](#). A name for Nemesis, or Fate, from her temple at Rhamnus in Attica.

## **Rhesus**

[Poem 55](#). The King of Thrace whose horses were renowned for their speed.

## **Rhoeteum**

[Poem 65](#). A promontory on the Dardanelles near [Troy](#). [Catullus](#)'s brother was lost at sea near there, sometime before 57/6 BC.

## **Rufa**

[Poem 59](#). An unidentified person.

## **Rufulus**

[Poem 59](#). An unidentified person.

## **Rufus**

Marcus Caelius Rufus, a disciple of [Cicero](#) who defended him against Clodius [Pulcher](#)'s charges of being involved in the Cataline conspiracy. He was a lover of Clodia.

[Poem 58](#). [Poem 69](#). Addressed to him.

[Poem 77](#). Regarded as treacherous.

## **Sabine**

[Poem 39](#). The Sabini, a people who lived between the Nar and the Anio and were subdued by and merged with the Romans. The region near [Tibur](#) preserved their name but was not as fashionable as Tibur.

[Poem 44](#). The less fashionable area for a country villa.

## **Sacia**

[Poem 11](#). A Scythian country bordering the Caspian Sea.

## **Sappho**

[Poem 35](#). The seventh century Greek lyric poetess of Lesbos. The archetype of the learned girl. Sapphic therefore denotes a literary woman, and/or a Lesbian follower of Sappho's, from Sappho's own love for and relationships with other women. Poem 51 is a direct translation of one of her poems, and a first use of the Sapphic metre in Latin.

## **Satrachus**

[Poem 95](#). A city and river in Cyprus.

## **Saturnalia**

[Poem 14](#). The midwinter feast of Saturn (December) when the shops closed, presents were exchanged, and there was an air of licence and good-humour.

## **Satyrs**

[Poem 64](#). Demi-gods with the legs, hooves and horns of goats, attendant on [Bacchus](#).

## **Scamander**

[Poem 64](#). The River Xanthus, and its god. With the Simois one of the two principal rivers of [Troy](#).

## **Scylla**

[Poem 64](#). The daughter of Phorcys and the nymph Crataeis, remarkable for her beauty. Circe or Amphitrite, jealous of [Neptune](#)'s love for her changed her into a dog-like sea monster, 'the Render', with six heads and twelve feet. Each head had three rows of close-set teeth. Her cry was a muted yelping. She seized sailors and cracked their bones before slowly swallowing them.

## **Serap**

[Poem10](#). The Egyptian god, with a suburban Roman temple. Identified by Apollodorus with Apis, the bull-headed god. Women displayed themselves in front of the god as a cure for sterility, and had intercourse with the priests for similar purposes. The cult was ratified by Antoninus Pius in 146AD but subsequently suppressed.

## **Sestius**

[Poem 44](#). Publius Sestius, quaestor in 63BC, a close friend and colleague of [Cicero](#).

## **Silenes**

[Poem 64](#). Silenus was a demi-god, a follower of [Bacchus](#). The Silenes are [Satyrs](#) and Fauns, attendant on him.

## **Silo**

[Poem 103](#). Unknown.

## **Simonides**

[Poem 38](#). The Greek lyric poet (556-467BC).

## **Sirmio**

[Poem 31](#). The promontory on Lake Garda where Catullus or his father owned a villa.

## **Socraton**

[Poem 47](#). An unidentified follower of [Piso](#).

## **Stymphalia**

[Poem 68](#). Stymphalus was a town, lake and mountain in Arcadia. [Hercules](#) slew the man-eating Stymphalides, the monstrous birds, in his sixth labour.

## **Suffenus**

[Poem 14](#). An unidentified traditional poet.

[Poem 22](#). His verse mocked.

## **Sufficio**

[Poem 54](#). An unidentified associate of [Caesar](#).

## **Sulla**

[Poem 14](#). An unidentified grammarian.

## **Syrtes, Syrtis**

[Poem 64](#). Quicksands and shoal water off the coast of North Africa.

## **Talasius**

[Poem 61](#). The Latin name for [Hymen](#).

## **Talos**

[Poem 55](#). The bronze giant who guarded Europa on Crete, after she was carried off by [Jupiter](#) in the form a bull.

## **Tappo**

[Poem 104](#). Unknown.

## **Taurus**

[Poem 64](#). A mountain in Asia Minor.

## **Telemachus**

[Poem 61](#). The son of Ulysses and [Penelope](#). See Homer's *Odyssey*.

## **Tethys**

The Sea-goddess and wife of her brother [Oceanus](#).

[Poem 64](#). [Thetis](#) is her grand-daughter.

[Poem 66](#). [Poem 88](#). An ancient term for the sea.

## **Teucer**

[Poem 64](#). A mythical ancestor of the [Trojans](#), originating in Crete or Athens.

## **Thallus**

[Poem 25](#). An unknown acquaintance of Catullus.

## **Themis**

[Poem 68](#). A Titaness, co-ruler of the planet Jupiter, daughter of heaven and earth. She is the Triple-Goddess with prophetic powers. The mother of the Seasons and the [Parcae](#), the Fates. The Goddess of Justice.

## **Thermopylae**

[Poem 68.](#) Thermopylae (*The Hot Gates*), famous for its hot springs, ‘*The Cauldrons.*’ In Malis in Thessaly, near Trachis and the mountain chain of Oeta. See Herodotus VII 176, and 201.

## **Theseus**

[Poem 64.](#) King of Athens, son of [Aegeus](#), hence Aegides. His mother was Aethra, daughter of Pittheus king of Troezen. Aegeus had lain with her in the temple. His father had hidden a sword, and a pair of sandals, under a stone (The Rock of Theseus) as a trial, which he lifted, and he made his way to Athens, cleansing the Isthmus of robbers along the way.

Medea attempted to poison Theseus but Aegeus recognised his sword, and his son, and prevented her. He killed the Minotaur in the Cretan labyrinth, and abandoned [Ariadne](#) on Dia ([Naxos](#)). (See Canova’s sculpture – Theseus and the Dead Minotaur – Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

## **Thespia**

[Poem 61.](#) A town in Boeotia near Mount [Helicon](#).

## **Thetis**

[Poem 64](#). A sea-goddess, wife of [Peleus](#), and mother of [Achilles](#). The daughter of Nereus and Doris, and therefore a [Nereid](#).

## **Thia**

[Poem 66](#). A name for Macedonia, the source of the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt.

## **Thynia**

[Poem 31](#). A town in [Bithynia](#).

## **Tibur**

[Poem 39](#). Modern Tivoli, on the Anio near Rome provided a fashionable country address.

[Poem 44](#). The more fashionable address for a villa.

## **Torquatus**

Lucius Manlius Torquatus, the orator and friend of [Cicero](#). He was a supporter of [Pompey](#), was quaestor in 49BC, and died in the Civil War in North Africa in 47BC. [Lavinia](#) was his wife.

[Poem 61](#). His marriage.

[Poem 68](#). Addressed to him as Catullus's friend.

## **Trinacria**

[Poem 68](#). Sicily. Catullus refers to Mount Etna.

## **Troy, Ilium**

[Poem 64](#). [Poem 68](#). The city of the Troad, in Phrygia, which was besieged by the Greeks in the Trojan War.

## **Tyrian**

[Poem 61](#). The city in Phoenicia, now the Lebanon, famous for its purple dyes, made from murex.

## **Urania**

[Poem 61](#). One of the nine Muses, the Muse of Astronomy.

## **Varus**

Publius Alfenus Varus, a Cremonese, mentioned by Horace in his first satire. He gave up his cobbler's business for a career in law. He was the first Cisalpine to become consul.

[Poem 10](#). [Poem 22](#). [Poem 30](#). Addressed to him.

## **Vatinius**

Publius Vatinius, quaestor in 63BC, tribune in 59, praetor in 55 and consul in 47. A supporter of

[Caesar](#) and friend of [Cicero](#). He was a frequent litigant often with Licinius [Calvus](#) as prosecutor. On an occasion when the case was going against him [Clodius](#) and his henchmen broke up the proceedings. [Poem 14](#). A by-word for his dislikes. [Poem 52](#). Accused of perjury. [Poem 53](#). Involved in a court case.

## **Venus**

The Goddess of Love. The daughter of [Jupiter](#) and Dione. She is Aphrodite, born from the waves, an incarnation of Astarte, Goddess of the Phoenicians. The mother of [Cupid](#) by [Mars](#). Doves were sacred to her.

(See Botticelli's painting – Venus and Mars – National Gallery, London)

[Poem 36](#). Her sacred places in Cyprus and elsewhere.

[Poem 55](#). [Poem 68](#). The Love Goddess.

[Poem 56](#). Referred to as Dione.

[Poem 61](#). [Poem 66](#). She presides over love and marriage.

[Poem 64](#). Called Erycina from her shrine on Mount Eryx in Sicily. Worshipped in [Golgos](#) and [Idalia](#).

## **Veranius**

[Poem 9](#). An unknown friend of [Catullus](#).

## **Veraniolus.**

[Poem12](#). [Poem47](#) He is mentioned.

[Poem 28](#). He is addressed.

## **Vesper, Hesperus**

[Poem 62](#). [Poem 64](#). The planet Venus as evening star, also termed Lucifer as the morning star, and believed to rise behind Mount Oeta in Thessaly.

## **Vibennius**

[Poem 33](#). An unknown acquaintance.

## **Victius**

[Poem 98](#). Unknown.

## **Victor**

[Poem 80](#). Unknown.

## **Vinia**

[Poem 61](#). Lavinia the wife of Lucius Manlius [Torquatus](#).

## **Virgo**

[Poem 66](#). Erigone was set in the sky as the constellation Virgo, after her suicide, by hanging, in despair at finding her father Icarius's body. Icarius is identified with the constellation [Boötes](#). The zodiacal constellation borders on *Coma Berenices*.

## **Volusius**

[Poem 36](#). An unknown poet, contemporary with Catullus.

[Poem 95](#). Resident near Padua at this time.

## **Zephyrus**

[Poem 46](#). The West Wind, brother of [Memnon](#), one of the sons of [Aurora](#), the dawn.

[Poem 64](#). A morning wind.

[Poem 66](#). Brother of Memnon.

## **Zerithon, Pheneus**

[Poem 68](#). A town in Arcadia with a lake of the same name.

