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Horace

- 103 poems -

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Horace (8 December 65 BC – 27 November 8 BC)

Quintus Horatius Flaccus, known in the English-speaking world as Horace, was the leading Roman lyric poet during the time of Augustus. The rhetorician Quintilian regarded his Odes as almost the only Latin lyrics worth reading, justifying his estimate with the words: "He can be lofty sometimes, yet he is also full of charm and grace, versatile in his figures, and felicitously daring in his choice of words."

Horace also crafted elegant hexameter verses (Sermones and Epistles) and scurrilous iambic poetry (Epodes). The hexameters are playful and yet serious works, leading the ancient satirist Persius to comment: "as his friend laughs, Horace slyly puts his finger on his every fault; once let in, he plays about the heartstrings". Some of his iambic poetry, however, can seem wantonly repulsive to modern audiences.

His career coincided with Rome's momentous change from Republic to Empire. An officer in the republican army that was crushed at the Battle of Philippi in 42 BC, he was befriended by Octavian's right-hand man in civil affairs, Maecenas, and became something of a spokesman for the new regime. For some commentators, his association with the regime was a delicate balance in which he maintained a strong measure of independence (he was "a master of the graceful sidestep") but for others he was, in [John Dryden's](http://www.poemhunter.com/john-henry-dryden/) phrase, "a well-mannered court slave".

His poetry became "the common currency of civilization", and he still retains a devoted following, despite some stigmatization after World War I (perhaps due to popular mistrust of old-fashioned patriotism and imperial glory, with which he was identified, fairly or unfairly)] Horatian studies have become so diverse and intensive in recent years that it is probably no longer possible for any one scholar to command the whole range of arguments and issues.

Life

Most of what we know about Horace comes from self-disclosures in his poetry, supplemented by a short biography probably written by Suetonius (Vita Horati). He has been considered the world's first autobiographer. Recent scholarship tends to frown on biographical interpretations of an author's works (critical analysis reveals only the author's mask or persona) but Horace not only invites our interest, he also mentions events that are verifiable, and thus it is valid to make some inferences about the individual behind the poems.

As Boy

He was born on 8 December 65 BC in Italy's Hellenized south-east. His home town, Venusia, lay on a trade route in the border region between Apulia and Lucania (Basilicata). Various dialects were spoken in the area and maybe this enriched his feeling for language. He could have been familiar with Greek words even as a young boy and later he poked fun at the jargon of mixed Greek and Oscan spoken in neighbouring Canusium (Satires 1.10.30). Literary Latin must have sounded to him like a semi-foreign language, heard only at school. One of the works he probably studied in school was the *Odyssey* of Livius Andronicus, crammed into Italian boys with threats and floggings by teachers like the 'Orbilius' mentioned in one of his poems (Epistles 2.1.69 ff.). School was made even more irksome by a number of his fellow pupils, the over-grown sons of beefy centurions (Satires 1.6.71 ff.). The army veterans could have been settled there at the expense of local families uprooted by Rome as punishment for their part in the Social War (91–88 BC). Such state-sponsored migration must have added still more linguistic variety to the area.

According to a local tradition reported by Horace (Satires 2.1.34), a colony of Romans or Latins had been installed in Venusia after the Samnites had been driven out early in the third century. In that case, Horace could have felt himself to be Roman though there are also indications that he regarded himself as a Samnite or Sabellus (Epistles 1.16.49). Italians in modern and ancient times have always been devoted to their home towns, even after success in the wider world, and Horace was no different. Images of his childhood setting and references to it are found throughout his poems.

Horace's father was probably a Venusian taken captive by Romans in the Social War, or possibly he was descended from a Sabine captured in the Samnite Wars. Either way, he was a slave for at least part of his life. He was evidently a man of strong abilities however and managed to gain his freedom and improve his social position. Thus Horace claimed to be the free-born son of a prosperous 'coactor'. The term 'coactor' could denote various roles, such as tax collector, but its use by Horace (Satires 1.6.86) was explained by scholia as a reference to 'coactor argentareus' i.e. an auctioneer with some of the functions of a banker, paying the seller out of his own funds and later recovering the sum with interest from the buyer.

The father spent a small fortune on his son's education, eventually accompanying him to Rome to oversee his schooling and moral development. The poet later paid tribute to him in a poem (Satires 1.6) that one modern scholar considers the best memorial by any son to his father. The poem includes this passage:

If my character is flawed by a few minor faults, but is otherwise decent and moral, if you can point out only a few scattered blemishes on an otherwise immaculate surface, if no one can accuse me of greed, or of prurience, or of profligacy, if I live a virtuous life, free of defilement (pardon, for a moment, my self-praise), and if I am to my friends a good friend, my father deserves all the credit... As it is now, he deserves from me unstinting gratitude and praise. I could never be ashamed of such a father, nor do I feel any need, as many people do, to apologize for being a freedman's son. Satires 1.6.65–92

He never mentioned his mother in his verses and he might not have known much about her. Perhaps she also had been a slave.

Young Man

Horace left Rome, possibly after his father's death, and continued his formal education in Athens, the Oxbridge or Harvard of the ancient world, where he arrived at nineteen years of age, enrolling in The Academy. Founded by Plato, The Academy was now dominated by Epicureans and Stoics, whose theories and practises made a deep impression on the young man from Venusia. Meanwhile he mixed and lounged about with the elite of Roman youth, such as Marcus, the idle son of Cicero, and the Pompeius to whom he later addressed a poem (Odes 2.7). It was in Athens too that he probably acquired deep familiarity with the ancient tradition of Greek lyric poetry, at

that time largely the preserve of grammarians and academic specialists (access to such material was easier in Athens than in Rome, where the public libraries had yet to be built by Asinius Pollio and Augustus).

Rome's troubles were soon to catch up with him in Athens. It was here that Marcus Junius Brutus turned, after the assassination of Julius Caesar, seeking support for a republican cause that was bereft of ideas, the much-vaunted ideal of liberty actually being irrelevant to a conflict that was essentially a struggle between elites. The Athenians however had a tradition of honouring tyrannicides, as types of their own heroes Harmodius and Aristogeiton, beside whose statues Brutus and his colleague Cassius were, by a popular decree, scheduled to be immortalized in bronze. Brutus was fêted around town in grand receptions and he made a point of attending academic lectures, all the while recruiting supporters among the impressionable young men studying there — Horace among them. An educated young Roman could begin military service high in the ranks and Horace was made *tribunus militum* (one of six senior officers of a typical legion), a post usually reserved for men of senatorial or equestrian rank and which seems to have inspired jealousy among his well-born confederates (*Satires* 1.6.48). He undoubtedly learned the basics of military life while on the march, particularly in the wilds of northern Greece, whose rugged scenery became a backdrop to some of his later poems. It was there in 42 BC that Octavian (later Augustus) and his associate Mark Antony crushed the republican forces at the Battle of Philippi. Horace later recorded it as a day of embarrassment for himself, when he fled without his shield (*Odes* 2.7.10), but allowance should be made for his self-deprecating humour and his self-identification with a tradition of poets who had long ago abandoned their shields in battle, notably his heroes Alcaeus and Archilochus (the latter did so in a part of Thrace near to Philippi, and was deeply involved in the Greek colonization of Thasos, where by coincidence the republican army finally surrendered).

Octavian offered an early amnesty to his opponents and the deflated ex-military tribune quickly accepted it. On returning to Italy, however, he was confronted with yet another loss: his father's estate in Venusia was one of many throughout Italy to be confiscated for the settlement of veterans (Virgil lost his estate in the north about the same time). Horace later claimed that he was reduced to poverty and this led him to try his hand at poetry (*Epistles* 2.2.51–2) yet there was no money to be had directly from versifying. At best, it offered future prospects through contacts with other poets and their patrons among the rich. Meanwhile he somehow obtained the sinecure of *scriba quaestorius*, a civil service position at the *aerarium* or Treasury, profitable enough to be purchased even by members of the *ordo equester* and not very demanding in its work-load, since tasks could be delegated to *scribae* or permanent clerks. It was about this time that he began writing his *Satires* and *Epodes*.

As Poet

The *Epodes* belong to the iambic genre of 'blame poetry', as practised by Archilochus, and it seems that Horace wrote them like his literary hero in order to shame his fellow citizens into a proper sense of their social responsibilities. Social bonds in Rome had been decaying since the destruction of Carthage a little more than a hundred years earlier, under the alluring prospect of vast wealth attainable by plunder and corruption, and the troubles weren't over yet, with Octavian, Mark Antony and confederates like Sextus Pompey all jockeying for a bigger share of the spoils. One modern scholar has counted a dozen civil wars in the hundred years leading up to 31 BC, including the Spartacus rebellion, eight years before Horace's birth. As the heirs to Hellenistic culture, Horace and his fellow Romans were not equipped intellectually for collective answers to their most pressing problems:

"At bottom, all the problems that the times were stirring up were of a social nature, which the Hellenistic thinkers were ill qualified to grapple with. Some of them censured oppression of the poor by the rich, but they gave no practical lead, though they may have hoped to see well-meaning rulers doing so. Philosophy was drifting into absorption in self, a quest for private

contentedness, to be achieved by self-control and restraint, without much regard for the fate of a disintegrating community." — V.G. Kiernan

Satire was a genre unique to Latin literature and Horace introduced to it a style and outlook suited to the social and ethical issues confronting Rome. Ironically, his approach radically changed its role from public, social engagement to private meditation. Meanwhile, the poet was beginning to interest Octavian's supporters, a gradual process described by him in *Satires* 1.6. The way was opened for him by his friend, the poet Virgil, who had gained admission into the privileged circle around Maecenas, Octavian's lieutenant, following the success of his *Eclogues*. An introduction soon followed and, after a discreet interval, Horace too was accepted. He depicted the process as an honourable one, based on merit and mutual respect, eventually leading to true friendship, and there is reason to believe that his relationship was genuinely friendly, not just with Maecenas but afterwards with Augustus as well. On the other hand, the poet has been unsympathetically described by one scholar as "a sharp and rising young man, with an eye to the main chance." There were advantages on both sides: Horace gained encouragement and material support, the politicians gained a hold on a potential dissident. His republican sympathies, and his role at Philippi, may have caused him some pangs of remorse over his new status. However most Romans considered the civil wars to be the result of *contentio dignitatis*, or rivalry between the foremost families of the city, and he too seems to have accepted the principate as Rome's last hope for much needed peace.

In 37 BC, Horace accompanied Maecenas on a journey to Brundisium, described in one of his poems (*Satires* 1.5) as a series of amusing incidents and charming encounters with other friends along the way, such as Virgil. In fact the journey was political in its motivation, with Maecenas en route to negotiate the Treaty of Tarentum with Antony, a fact Horace artfully keeps from the reader (political issues are largely avoided in the first book of *satires*). Horace was probably also with Maecenas on one of Octavian's naval expeditions against the piratical Sextus Pompeius, which ended in a disastrous storm off Palinurus in 36 BC, briefly alluded to by Horace in terms of near-drowning (*Odes* 3.4.28). There are also some indications in his verses that he was with Maecenas at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, where Octavian put an end to Antony's hopes (*Epodes* 1 and 9). By then Horace had already received from Maecenas the famous gift of his Sabine farm, probably not long after the publication of the first book of *Satires*. The gift, which included income from five tenants, may have ended his career at the Treasury, or at least allowed him to give it less time and energy. It signalled his identification with the Octavian regime yet, in the second book of *Satires* that soon followed, he continued the apolitical stance of the first book. By this time, he had attained the status of *eques Romanus* (*Satires* 2.7.53), perhaps as a result of his work at the Treasury.

And Knight

Odes 1–3 were the next focus for his artistic creativity. He adapted their forms and themes from Greek lyric poetry of the seventh and sixth centuries. The fragmented nature of the Greek world had enabled his literary heroes to express themselves freely and maybe his semi-retirement from the Treasury in Rome to his own estate in the Sabine hills empowered him to some extent also. Thus even when his lyrics touched on public affairs they reinforced the importance of private life.

Nevertheless his work in the period 30–27 BC began to show his closeness to the regime and his sensitivity to its developing ideology. In *Odes* 1.2, for example, he eulogized Octavian in hyperboles that echo Hellenistic court poetry. The name Augustus, which Octavian assumed in January 27 BC, is first attested in *Odes* 3.3 and 3.5. In the period 27–24 BC, political allusions in the *Odes* concentrated on foreign wars in Britain (1.35), Arabia (1.29) Spain (3.8) and Parthia (2.2). He greeted Augustus on his return from abroad in 24 BC as a beloved ruler whose recent illness had endangered his own happiness (3.14).

The public reception of Odes 1–3 disappointed him however. He attributed the lack of success to jealousy among imperial courtiers and to his isolation from literary cliques (Epistles 1.19.35–44). Perhaps it was disappointment that led him to put aside the genre in favour of verse letters. He addressed his first book of Epistles to a variety of friends and acquaintances in an urbane style reflecting his new social status as a knight. In the opening poem, he professed a deeper interest in moral philosophy than poetry (Epistles 1.1.10) but, though the collection demonstrates a leaning towards stoic theory, it reveals no sustained thinking about ethics. Maecenas was still the dominant confidante but Horace had now begun to assert his own independence, suavely declining constant invitations to attend him (Epistles 1.7). In the final poem of the first book of Epistles, he revealed himself to be forty-four years old in the consulship of Lollius and Lepidus i.e. 21 BC, and "of small stature, fond of the sun, prematurely grey, quick-tempered but easily placated" (Epistles 1.20.24–5).

According to Suetonius, the second book of Epistles was prompted by Augustus, who desired a verse epistle to be addressed to himself. Augustus was in fact a prolific letter-writer and he once asked Horace to be his personal secretary. Horace refused the secretarial role but complied with the emperor's request for a verse letter. The letter to Augustus however may have been slow in coming, being published possibly as late as 11 BC. It celebrated, among other things, the 15 BC military victories of his stepsons, Drusus and Tiberius, yet it and the following letter (Epistles 2.2) were largely devoted to literary theory and criticism. The literary theme was explored still further in *Ars Poetica*, published separately but written in the form of an epistle and sometimes referred to as Epistles 2.3 (possibly the last poem he ever wrote). He was also commissioned to write odes commemorating the victories of Drusus and Tiberius (Odes 4.4 and 4.14) and one to be sung in a temple of Apollo for the Secular Games, a long abandoned festival that Augustus revived in accordance with his policy of recreating ancient customs (*Carmen Saeculare*).

Suetonius is also the source for gossip about Horace's sexual activities towards the end of his life, involving mirrors. The poet died at 56 years of age, not long after his friend Maecenas, near whose tomb he was laid to rest. Both men bequeathed their property to Augustus, an honour that the emperor expected of his friends.

Historical context

Latin poetry was a product of the Hellenistic period and thus it was self-consciously a literary artifact. Horace's works were written in Greek metres, ranging from the hexameters of the Satires and Epistles and iambs of the Epodes, which were relatively easy to adapt into Latin, to the more complex measures used in the Odes, such as alcaics and sapphics, which were sometimes a difficult fit for Latin structure and syntax. He incorporated literary theory and criticism in his poems throughout his career and he considered himself a partisan in the development of a new and sophisticated style, influenced by the Callimachian aesthetics of brevity, elegance and polish.

"As soon as Horace, stirred by his own genius and encouraged by the example of Virgil, Varius, and perhaps some other poets of the same generation, had determined to make his fame as a poet, being by temperament a fighter, he wanted to fight against all kinds of prejudice, amateurish slovenliness, philistinism, reactionary tendencies, in short to fight for the new and noble type of poetry which he and his friends were endeavouring to bring about." — Eduard Fraenkel

In modern literary theory, a distinction has often been made between immediate personal experience (*Urerlebnis*) and a mediated form of experience derived from cultural norms such as literature, philosophy and the visual arts (*Bildungserlebnis*). The distinction has little relevance for Horace however since his poetry is a complete blend of personal and literary experiences, such as Satires 1.5, which recounts in realistic details an actual trip Horace made with Virgil and some other literary friends and which is closely modelled on a Satire by Lucilius, his predecessor. Unlike much

Hellenistic-inspired literature, his poetry was not composed primarily for a small coterie of admirers and fellow poets, nor does it rely on abstruse allusions for many of its effects. It was elitist in its literary standards yet it was written for a wide readership, as a publicly accessible form of art. A similar kind of ambivalence characterizes his literary persona, since his presentation of himself as part of a small community of philosophically aware people, seeking true peace of mind and shunning vices like greed, was well suited to Augustus's ambitious plans to reform public morality, corrupted by greed. His plea for moderation was part of a grand message to the nation.

His general practise was to follow the examples of poets established as classics in different genres, such as Archilochus in Epodes, Lucilius in Satires and Alcaeus in the Odes, later broadening his scope for the sake of variation and because his models were ultimately unsuited to the realities confronting him in his own life. Archilochus was an aristocratic Greek whose iambic poetry had a social function that was immediately intelligible to an audience in the seventh century but which became a mere contrivance or literary motif when transposed to Rome, and Lucilius was a senator's son who could castigate his peers with impunity, whereas Horace was a mere freedman's son who had to tread carefully. His craftsmanship, as a wordsmith, is evident even in his earliest attempts in any particular genre, but his handling of each genre tended to improve over time as he adapted it to his own needs. Thus for example it is generally agreed that his second book of Satires, where human folly identifies itself through dialogue between characters, is superior to the first, where human folly is pointed out in the poet's monologues (though the first book also includes some of his most popular poems).

Lucilius, his model in satire, was an aggressively Roman poet and a significant voice in Roman self-awareness, endearing himself to his countrymen by his blunt frankness and explicit politics, indicative of *libertas*. His style included 'metrical vandalism' and looseness of structure. Horace instead adopted an oblique and ironic style of satire, ridiculing stock characters and anonymous targets. His *libertas* was the private freedom of a philosophical outlook, not a political or social privilege. His use of meter in the Satires is relatively easy-going (relative to his later use of tight lyric meters in the Odes) but formal and highly controlled relative to the rough and ready Lucilius, whom he mocked for his sloppy standards (Satires 1.10.56–61)

Horace proudly claimed to introduce into Latin the spirit and iambic meter of Archilochus but (unlike Archilochus) without persecuting anyone (Epistles 1.19.23–5). It was no idle boast. His Epodes were modelled on the verses of the Greek poet in their meter and in some formal aspects of the iambic genre, as 'blame poetry', yet he avoided targeting real scapegoats. Whereas Archilochus presented himself as a serious and vigorous opponent of wrong-doers, Horace aimed for comic effects and adopted the persona of a weak and ineffectual critic of his times (as symbolized for example in his surrender to the witch Canidia in the final epode). He also claimed to be the first to introduce into Latin the lyrical methods of Alcaeus (Epistles 1.19.32–3) and he actually was the first Latin poet to make consistent use of Alcaic meters and themes: love, politics and the symposium. He imitated many other Greek lyric poets as well, and many scholars believe he employed a 'motto' technique, beginning each ode with some reference to a Greek original and then diverging from it.

Reception

The reception of Horace's work has varied from one epoch to another. In a verse epistle to Augustus (Epistle 2.1), in 12 BC, he argued for classic status to be awarded to contemporary poets, including Virgil and apparently himself. In the final poem of his third book of Odes he claimed to have created for himself a monument more durable than bronze ("Exegi monumentum aere perennius", Carmina 3.30.1). For one modern scholar, his personal qualities are more notable than the monumental quality of his achievement:

"...when we hear his name we don't really think of a monument. We think

rather of a voice which varies in tone and resonance but is always recognizable, and which by its unsentimental humanity evokes a very special blend of liking and respect. — Niall Rudd

Yet for men like [Wilfred Owen](http://www.poemhunter.com/wilfred-owen/), scarred by experiences of World War I, his poetry stood for discredited values:

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The Old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

The same motto, *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*, was echoed sympathetically in the lyrics of early Christian poets, such as Prudentius, being adapted to an ethos of martyrdom.

Appreciation of Horace's work varied markedly in his own lifetime. Odes 1–3 were not well received when first 'published' in Rome, yet Augustus later commissioned a ceremonial ode for the Centennial Games in 17 BC and encouraged the publication of Odes 4, after which Horace's reputation as Rome's premier lyricist was assured. His Odes were to become the best received of all his poems in ancient times, acquiring a classic status that discouraged imitation: no other poet produced a comparable body of lyrics in the four centuries that followed (though that may have had more to do with social causes, particularly the parasitism that Italy was sinking into). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, ode-writing became highly fashionable in England and a large number of aspiring poets imitated him both in English and in Latin.

These preliminary comments touch on a small sample of developments in the reception of Horace's work. More developments are covered epoch by epoch in the following sections.

Antiquity

Horace's influence can be traced in the works of his younger contemporaries, Ovid and Propertius. The former rivalled him in creating a completely natural style of expression in hexameter verse, and the latter cheekily mimicked him in his third book of elegies. His Epistles provided them with a model for their own verse letters and also for Ovid's exile poetry. His influence also seems to have had an ironically negative power. As mentioned above, the brilliance of his Odes may have discouraged imitation. Moreover publication of Odes 1–3 may have created a vogue for Pindar's lyrics, due to the fact that Horace had largely neglected that form (see Pindar's Influence and legacy). His criticism of the unpolished style of his predecessor in satire, Lucilius, may have revived popular interest in him. For Persius, and later for Juvenal, both Horace and Lucilius offered valid models — thus Persius described his own satires as lacking Lucilian acerbity and Horace's gentler touch. Juvenal's caustic satire was influenced mainly by Lucilius but Horace by then was a school classic and echoes of his work could be identified by Juvenal in a round-about way as "themes worthy of the Venusine lamp". The iambic genre seems almost to have disappeared after publication of Horace's Epodes. Ovid's *Ibis* was a rare attempt at the form, inspired mainly by Callimachus, and there are some iambic elements in Martial but they owe more to Catullus than Horace.

Statius paid homage to Horace by composing one poem in Sapphic and one in Alcaic meter (the verse forms most often associated with Odes), which he included in his collection of occasional poems, *Silvae*. Ancient scholars wrote commentaries on the lyric meters of the Odes. Caesius Bassus was one such metrical theorist, as well as being a poet himself. By a process called *derivatio*, he varied established meters through the addition or omission of syllables, a technique that Seneca the Younger borrowed when adapting Horatian meters to the stage.

Horace's poems continued to be school texts into late antiquity. Works

attributed to Helenius Acro and Pomponius Porphyrio are just the remnants of a much larger body of Horatian scholarship. Porphyrio arranged the poems in non-chronological order, beginning with the Odes, reflecting their general popularity and/or appeal to scholars (the Odes generally kept this privileged position in the medieval manuscript tradition and thus in modern editions also). Horace was often evoked by poets of the fourth century, such as Ausonius and Claudian. Approaching the fifth century, Prudentius, presented himself in the role of a Christian Horace, adapting Horatian meters and giving Horatian motifs a Christian tone. St Jerome however modelled an uncompromising response to pagan literature, observing: "What harmony can there be between Christ and the Devil? What has Horace to do with the Psalter?" By the early 6th century, Horace and Prudentius were both part of a classical heritage that was struggling to survive the disorder of the times. Boethius, the last major author of classical Latin literature, could still take inspiration from Horace, sometimes mediated by Senecan tragedy. It can be argued that Horace's influence extended beyond poetry to dignify core themes and values, such as self-sufficiency, inner contentment and courage.

Middle Ages and Renaissance

The copying of classical texts virtually ceased in the period between the mid sixth century and the Middle Ages. Horace's work survived probably just in two or three books imported into northern Europe from Italy, these being the ancestors of six extant manuscripts dated to the ninth century. Two of the six manuscripts are French in origin, one was produced in Alsace, and the other three show Irish influence, probably written in continental monasteries (Lombardy for example). By the last half of the ninth century, direct knowledge of Horace's poetry was not unusual. His influence on the Carolingian Renaissance can be found in the poems of Heiric of Auxerre and in some manuscripts marked with neumes, possibly intended as an aid to the memorization and discussion of his lyric meters. Ode 4.11 is even neumed with the melody of a hymn to John the Baptist, *Ut queant laxis*, both composed in Sapphic stanzas. The hymn became the basis of the solfège system — an association with western music quite appropriate for a lyric poet, though the language of the hymn is Prudentian rather than Horatian.

The German scholar, Ludwig Traube, once dubbed the tenth and eleventh centuries The age of Horace (*aetas Horatiana*), and placed it between the *aetas Vergiliana* of the eighth and ninth centuries, and the *aetas Ovidiana* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a distinction supposed to reflect the dominant classical Latin influences of those times. It was over-schematized: Horace was a substantial influence in the ninth century as well, and it seems Traube had focused on Horace's Satires. Medieval scholars also over-schematized: they associated Horace's different genres with the different ages of man. A twelfth century scholar encapsulated the theory: "...Horace wrote four different kinds of poems on account of the four ages, the Odes for boys, the *Ars Poetica* for young men, the Satires for mature men, the Epistles for old and complete men." It was even thought that Horace had composed his works in the order in which they had been placed by ancient scholars. Despite its naivety, the schematism involved an appreciation of Horace's works as a collection, the *Ars Poetica*, Satires and Epistles appearing to find as much favour as the Odes. Dante referred to him as *Orazio satiro*, an epithet perhaps reflecting the special status that the Satires and Epistles had attained by the later Middle Ages, and he awarded him a privileged position in the first circle of Hell, with Homer, Ovid and Lucan.

One measure of Horace's popularity is the large number of quotes from all his works found in almost every genre of medieval literature, and the number of imitators composing in ancient quantitative Latin meter. The most prolific imitator of his Odes was the Bavarian monk, Metellus of Tegernsee, who composed a large collection of poems dedicated to the patron saint of Tegernsee Abbey, St Quirinus, around the year 1170. He imitated all Horace's lyrical meters then followed these up with imitations of other meters used by Prudentius and Boethius, indicating that variety, as first modelled by Horace, was considered a fundamental aspect of the genre. The content of his poems however was restricted to simple piety. Among the

most successful imitators of Horace's hexameters was another Germanic author, calling himself Sextus Amarcius, around 1100, who composed four books, the first two exemplifying vices, the second pair mainly virtues, modelled on Horace's Satires and Epistles and exhibiting some of the stylistic differences between the two genres.

Petrarch is a key figure in the transition from imitations of Horace in quantitative Latin meter to imitations in accentual meters. His verse letters in Latin were modelled on the Epistles and he wrote a letter to Horace in the form of an ode. However he also borrowed from Horace when composing his Italian sonnets. One modern scholar has speculated that authors who imitated Horace in meters based on accentual rhythms (including stressed Latin and vernacular languages) may have considered their work a natural sequel to Horace's metrical variety. In France, Horace and Pindar were the inspiration for a group of vernacular authors called the Pléiade, including for example Pierre de Ronsard and Joachim du Bellay. Montaigne made constant and inventive use of Horatian quotes. The vernacular languages were dominant in Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth century, where Horace's influence is notable in the works of such authors as Garcilaso de la Vega, Juan Boscán Sá de Miranda, Antonio Ferreira and Fray Luis de León, the latter for example writing odes on the Horatian theme *beatus ille* (happy the man). The sixteenth century in western Europe was also an age of translations (except in Germany, where Horace wasn't translated until well into the next century). The first English translator was Thomas Drant, who placed translations of Jeremiah and Horace side by side in *Medicinable Morall*, 1566, the same year that the Scot George Buchanan paraphrased the Psalms in a Horatian context. Ben Jonson put Horace on the stage in 1601 in *Poetaster*, along with other classical Latin authors, giving them all their own verses to speak in translation. Horace's part evinces the independent spirit, moral earnestness and critical insight that many readers look for in his poems.

Age of Enlightenment

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or the Age of Enlightenment, neo-classical culture was pervasive and English literature in the middle of that period has been dubbed Augustan. It is not always easy to separate out Horace's influence during those centuries (the mixing of influences is shown for example in one poet's pseudonym, Horace Juvenal). However a measure of his influence can be found in the diversity of the people interested in his works, both among readers and authors.

New editions of his works were published almost yearly. There were three new editions in 1612 (two in Leiden, one in Frankfurt) and again in 1699 (Utrecht, Barcelona, Cambridge). Cheap editions were plentiful and fine editions were also produced, including one whose entire text was engraved by John Pine in copperplate. The poet James Thomson owned five editions of Horace's work and the physician James Douglas had five hundred books with Horace-related titles. Horace was often commended in periodicals such as *The Spectator*, as a hallmark of good judgement, moderation and manliness, a focus for moralising. His verses offered a fund of mottoes, such as *simplex munditiis*, *splendide mendax*, *sapere aude*, *nunc est bibendum*, *carpe diem* (the latter perhaps being the only one still in common use today), quoted even in works as prosaic as Edmund Quincy's *A treatise of hemp-husbandry* (1765). The fictional hero Tom Jones recited his verses with feeling. His works were also used to justify commonplace themes, such as patriotic obedience, as in James Parry's English lines from an Oxford University collection in 1736.

What friendly Muse will teach my Lays
To emulate the Roman fire?
Justly to sound a Caesar's praise
Demands a bold Horatian lyre.

Horatian-style lyrics were increasingly typical of Oxford and Cambridge verse collections for this period, most of them in Latin but some like the previous ode in English. John Milton's *Lycidas* first appeared in such a collection. It has

few Horatian echoes yet Milton's associations with Horace were lifelong. He composed a controversial version of Odes 1.5, and *Paradise Lost* includes references to Horace's 'Roman' Odes 3.1–6 (Book 7 for example begins with echoes of Odes 3.4). Yet Horace's lyrics could offer inspiration to libertines as well as moralists, and neo-Latin sometimes served as a kind of discrete veil for the risqué. Thus for example Benjamin Loveling authored a catalogue of Drury Lane and Covent Garden prostitutes, in Sapphic stanzas, and an encomium for a dying lady "of salacious memory". Some Latin imitations of Horace were politically subversive, such as a marriage ode by Anthony Alsop that included a rallying cry for the Jacobite cause. On the other hand, Andrew Marvel took inspiration from Horace's Odes 1.37 to compose his English masterpiece Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland, in which subtly nuanced reflections on the execution of Charles I echo Horace's ambiguous response to the death of Cleopatra (Marvel's ode was suppressed in spite of its subtlety and only began to be widely published in 1776). Samuel Johnson took particular pleasure in reading *The Odes*. Alexander Pope wrote direct imitations of Horace (published with the original Latin alongside) and also echoed him in *Essays* and *The Rape of the Lock*. He even emerged as "a quite Horatian Homer" in his translation of the *Iliad*. Horace appealed also to female poets, such as Anna Seward (*Original sonnets on various subjects, and odes paraphrased from Horace, 1799*) and Elizabeth Tollet, who composed a Latin ode in Sapphic meter to celebrate her brother's return from overseas, with tea and coffee substituted for the wine of Horace's sympotic settings:

Quos procax nobis numeros, jocosque
 Musa dictaret? mihi dum tibi que
 Temperent baccis Arabes, vel herbis
 Pocula Seres
 What verses and jokes might the bold
 Muse dictate? while for you and me
 Arabs flavour our cups with beans
 Or Chinese with leaves.

Horace's *Ars Poetica* is second only to Aristotle's *Poetics* in its influence on literary theory and criticism. Milton recommended both works in his treatise of *Education*. Horace's *Satires* and *Epistles* however also had a huge impact, influencing theorists and critics such as John Dryden. There was considerable debate over the value of different lyrical forms for contemporary poets, as represented on one hand by the kind of four-line stanzas made familiar by Horace's Sapphic and Alcaic Odes and, on the other, the loosely structured Pindarics associated with the odes of Pindar. Translations occasionally involved scholars in the dilemmas of censorship. Thus Christopher Smart entirely omitted Odes 4.10 and re-numbered the remaining odes. He also removed the ending of Odes 4.1. Thomas Creech printed Epodes 8 and 12 in the original Latin but left out their English translations. Philip Francis left out both the English and Latin for those same two epodes, a gap in the numbering the only indication that something was amiss. French editions of Horace were influential in England and these too were regularly bowdlerized.

Most European nations had their own 'Horaces': thus for example Friedrich von Hagedorn was called The German Horace and Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski The Polish Horace (the latter was much imitated by English poets such as Henry Vaughan and Abraham Cowley). Pope Urban VIII wrote voluminously in Horatian meters, including an ode on gout.

19th century and on

The solfège system (Do, Re, Mi), which is the theme of a song by the Von Trapp children, is just a small sample of Horace's all-pervasive influence on western culture, even among people who might never have heard the name Quintus Horatius Flaccus.

Horace maintained a central role in the education of English-speaking elites right up until the 1960s. A pedantic emphasis on the formal aspects of language-learning at the expense of literary appreciation may have made him unpopular in some quarters yet it also confirmed his influence — a

tension in his reception that underlies Byron's famous lines from *Childe Harold* (Canto iv, 77)

Then farewell, Horace, whom I hated so
Not for thy faults, but mine; it is a curse
To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,
To comprehend, but never love thy verse.

William Wordsworth's mature poetry, including the preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, reveals Horace's influence in its rejection of false ornament and he once expressed "a wish / to meet the shade of Horace...". John Keats echoed the opening of Horace's *Epodes* 14 in the opening lines of *Ode to a Nightingale*.

The Roman poet was presented in the nineteenth century as an honorary English gentleman. William Thackeray produced a version of *Odes* 1.38 in which Horace's questionable 'boy' became 'Lucy', and Gerard Manley Hopkins translated the boy innocently as 'child'. Horace was translated by Sir Theodore Martin (biographer of Prince Albert) but minus some ungentlemanly verses, such as the erotic *Odes* 1.25 and *Epodes* 8 and 12. Lord Lytton produced a popular translation and William Gladstone also wrote translations during his last days as Prime Minister.

[Edward FitzGerald's](http://www.poemhunter.com/edward-fitzgerald/) *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, though formally derived from the Persian *ruba'i*, nevertheless shows a strong Horatian influence, since, as one modern scholar has observed, "...the quatrains inevitably recall the stanzas of the 'Odes', as does the narrating first person of the world-weary, ageing Epicurean Omar himself, mixing sympotic exhortation and 'carpe diem' with splendid moralising and 'memento mori' nihilism." Matthew Arnold advised a friend in verse not to worry about politics, an echo of *Odes* 2.11, yet later became a critic of Horace's inadequacies relative to Greek poets, as role models of Victorian virtues, observing: "If human life were complete without faith, without enthusiasm, without energy, Horace... would be the perfect interpreter of human life." Christina Rossetti composed a sonnet depicting a woman willing her own death steadily, drawing on Horace's depiction of 'Glycera' in *Odes* 1.19.5-6 and Cleopatra in *Odes* 1.37. A. E. Housman considered *Odes* 4.7, in Archilochian couplets, the most beautiful poem of antiquity and yet he generally shared Horace's penchant for quatrains, being readily adapted to his own elegiac and melancholy strain. The most famous poem of Ernest Dowson took its title and its heroine's name from a line of *Odes* 4.1, *Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae*, as well as its motif of nostalgia for a former flame. Kipling wrote a famous parody of the *Odes*, satirising their stylistic idiosyncracies and especially the extraordinary syntax, but he also used Horace's Roman patriotism as a focus for British imperialism, as in the story *Regulus* in the school collection *Stalky & Co.*, which he based on *Odes* 3.5. Wilfred Owen's patriotism while ignoring the rules of Latin scansion. However there were few other echoes of Horace in the war period, possibly because war is not actually a major theme of Horace's work.

Both W.H.Auden and Louis MacNeice began their careers as teachers of classics and both responded as poets to Horace's influence. Auden for example evoked the fragile world of the 1930s in terms echoing *Odes* 2.11.1-4, where Horace advises a friend not to let worries about frontier wars interfere with current pleasures.

And, gentle, do not care to know
Where Poland draws her Eastern bow,
 What violence is done;
Nor ask what doubtful act allows
Our freedom in this English house,
 Our picnics in the sun.

The American poet, [Robert Frost](http://www.poemhunter.com/robert-frost/), echoed Horace's *Satires* in the conversational and sententious idiom of some

of his longer poems, such as *The Lesson for Today* (1941), and also in his gentle advocacy of life on the farm, as in *Hyla Brook* (1916), evoking Horace's *fons Bandusiae* in Ode 3.13. Now at the start of the third millennium, poets are still absorbing and re-configuring the Horatian influence, sometimes in translation (such as a 2002 English/American edition of the Odes by thirty-six poets) and sometimes as inspiration for their own work (such as a 2003 collection of odes by a New Zealand poet).

Horace's Epodes have largely been ignored in the modern era, excepting those with political associations of historical significance. The obscene qualities of some of the poems have repulsed even scholars yet more recently a better understanding of the nature of Iambic poetry has led to a re-evaluation of the whole collection. A re-appraisal of the Epodes also appears in creative adaptations by recent poets (such as a 2004 collection of poems that relocates the ancient context to a 1950s industrial town)

Works:

Satires 1 (c. 35–34 BC)
Satires 2 (c. 30 BC)
Epodes (30 BC)
Odes 1–3 (c. 23 BC)
Epistles 1 (c. 21 BC)
Carmen Saeculare (17 BC)
Epistles 2 (c. 11 BC)
Odes 4 (c. 11 BC)
Ars Poetica (c. 10–8 BC)

BkI:I The Dedication: To Maecenas

Maecenas, descendant of royal ancestors,
O my protector, and my sweet glory,
some are delighted by showers of dust,
Olympic dust, over their chariots, they
are raised to the gods, as Earth's masters, by posts
clipping the red-hot wheels, by noble palms:
this man, if the fickle crowd of Citizens
compete to lift him to triple honours:
that one, if he's stored away in his granary
whatever he gleaned from the Libyan threshing.
The peasant who loves to break clods in his native
fields, won't be tempted, by living like Attalus,
to sail the seas, in fear, in a Cyprian boat.
The merchant afraid of the African winds as
they fight the Icarian waves, loves the peace
and the soil near his town, but quickly rebuilds
his shattered ships, unsuited to poverty.
There's one who won't scorn cups of old Massic,
nor to lose the best part of a whole day lying
under the greenwood tree, or softly
close to the head of sacred waters.
Many love camp, and the sound of trumpets
mixed with the horns, and the warfare hated
by mothers. The hunter, sweet wife forgotten,
stays out under frozen skies, if his faithful
hounds catch sight of a deer, or a Marsian
wild boar rampages, through his close meshes.
But the ivy, the glory of learned brows,
joins me to the gods on high: cool groves,
and the gathering of light nymphs and satyrs,
draw me from the throng, if Euterpe the Muse
won't deny me her flute, and Polyhymnia
won't refuse to exert herself on her Lesbian lyre.
And if you enter me among all the lyric poets,
my head too will be raised to touch the stars.

Horace

BkI:II To Augustus

The Father's sent enough dread hail
and snow to earth already, striking
sacred hills with fiery hand,
to scare the city,

and scare the people, lest again
we know Pyrrha's age of pain
when Proteus his sea-herds drove
across high mountains,

and fishes lodged in all the elms,
that used to be the haunt of doves,
and the trembling roe-deer swam
the whelming waters.

We saw the yellow Tiber's waves
hurled backwards from the Tuscan shore,
toppling Numa's Regia and
the shrine of Vesta,

far too fierce now, the fond river,
in his revenge of wronged Ilia,
drowning the whole left bank, deep,
without permission.

Our children, fewer for their father's
vices, will hear metal sharpened
that's better destined for the Persians,
and of battles too.

Which gods shall the people call on
when the Empire falls in ruins?
With what prayer shall the virgins
tire heedless Vesta?

Whom will Jupiter assign to
expiate our sins? We pray you,
come, cloud veiling your bright shoulders,
far-sighted Apollo:

or laughing Venus Erycina,
if you will, whom Cupid circles,
or you, if you see your children
neglected, Leader,

you sated from the long campaign,
who love the war-shouts and the helmets,
and the Moor's cruel face among his
blood-stained enemies.

Or you, winged son of kindly Maia,

changing shape on earth to human
form, and ready to be named as
Caesar's avenger:

Don't rush back to the sky, stay long
among the people of Quirinus,
no swifter breeze take you away,
unhappy with our

sins: here to delight in triumphs,
in being called our prince and father,
making sure the Medes are punished,
lead us, O Caesar.

Horace

BkI:III Virgil: Off to Greece

May the goddess, queen of Cyprus,
and Helen's brothers, the brightest of stars,
and father of the winds, Aeolus,
confining all except Iapyga, guide you,

ship, that owes us Virgil, given
to your care, guide you to Attica's shores,
bring him safely there I beg you,
and there watch over half of my spirit.

Triple bronze and oak encircled
the breast of the man who first committed
his fragile bark to the cruel sea,
without fearing the fierce south-westerlies

fighting with the winds from the north,
the sad Hyades, or the raging south,
master of the Adriatic,
whether he stirs or he calms the ocean.

What form of death could he have feared,
who gazed, dry-eyed, on swimming monsters,
saw the waves of the sea boiling,
and Acroceraunia's infamous cliffs?

Useless for a wise god to part
the lands, with a far-severing Ocean,
if impious ships, in spite of him,
travel the depths he wished inviolable.

Daring enough for anything,
the human race deals in forbidden sin.
That daring son of Iapetus
brought fire, by impious cunning, to men.

When fire was stolen from heaven
its home, wasting disease and a strange crowd
of fevers covered the whole earth,
and death's powers, that had been slow before

and far away, quickened their step.
Daedalus tried the empty air on wings
that were never granted to men:
Hercules' labours shattered Acheron.

Nothing's too high for mortal men:
like fools, we aim at the heavens themselves,
sinful, we won't let Jupiter
set aside his lightning bolts of anger.

Horace

BkI:IV Spring

Fierce winter slackens its grip: it's spring and the west wind's sweet change:
the ropes are hauling dry hulls towards the shore,
The flock no longer enjoys the fold, or the ploughman the fire,
no more are the meadows white with hoary frost.

Now Cytherean Venus leads out her dancers, under the pendant moon,
and the lovely Graces have joined with the Nymphs,
treading the earth on tripping feet, while Vulcan, all on fire, visits
the tremendous Cyclopean forges.

Now its right to garland our gleaming heads, with green myrtle or flowers,
whatever the unfrozen earth now bears:
now it's right to sacrifice to Faunus, in groves that are filled with shadow,
whether he asks a lamb, or prefers a kid.

Pale death knocks with impartial foot, at the door of the poor man's cottage,
and at the prince's gate. O Sestus, my friend,
the span of brief life prevents us from ever depending on distant hope.
Soon the night will crush you, the fabled spirits,

and Pluto's bodiless halls: where once you've passed inside you'll no longer
be allotted the lordship of wine by dice,
or marvel at Lycidas, so tender, for whom, already, the boys
are burning, and soon the girls will grow hotter.

Horace

BkI:IX Winter

See how Soracte stands glistening with snowfall,
and the labouring woods bend under the weight:
see how the mountain streams are frozen,
cased in the ice by the shuddering cold?

Drive away bitterness, and pile on the logs,
bury the hearthstones, and, with generous heart,
out of the four-year old Sabine jars,
O Thaliarchus, bring on the true wine.

Leave the rest to the gods: when they've stilled the winds
that struggle, far away, over raging seas,
you'll see that neither the cypress trees
nor the old ash will be able to stir.

Don't ask what tomorrow brings, call them your gain
whatever days Fortune gives, don't spurn sweet love,
my child, and don't you be neglectful
of the choir of love, or the dancing feet,

while life is still green, and your white-haired old age
is far away with all its moroseness. Now,
find the Campus again, and the squares,
soft whispers at night, at the hour agreed,

and the pleasing laugh that betrays her, the girl
who's hiding away in the darkest corner,
and the pledge that's retrieved from her arm,
or from a lightly resisting finger.

Horace

BkI:V Treacherous Girl

What slender boy, Pyrrha, drowned in liquid perfume,
urges you on, there, among showers of roses,
deep down in some pleasant cave?
For whom did you tie up your hair,

with simple elegance? How often he'll cry at
the changes of faith and of gods, ah, he'll wonder,
surprised by roughening water,
surprised by the darkening storms,

who enjoys you now and believes you're golden,
who thinks you'll always be single and lovely,
ignoring the treacherous
breeze. Wretched are those you dazzle

while still untried. As for me the votive tablet
that hangs on the temple wall reveals, suspended,
my dripping clothes, for the god,
who holds power over the sea.

Horace

BkI:VI A Tribute to Agrippa

BkI:VI A Tribute to Agrippa

You should be penned as brave, and a conqueror
by Varius, winged with his Homeric poetry,
whatever fierce soldiers, with vessels or horses,
have carried out, at your command.

Agrippa, I don't try to speak of such things,
not Achilles' anger, ever unyielding,
nor crafty Ulysses' long sea-wanderings,
nor the cruel house of Pelops,

I'm too slight for grandeur, since shame and the Muse,
who's the power of the peaceful lyre, forbids me
to lessen the praise of great Caesar and you,
by my defective artistry.

Who could write worthily of Mars in his armour
Meriones the Cretan, dark with Troy's dust,
or Tydides, who with the help of Athene,
was the equal of all the gods?

I sing of banquets, of girls fierce in battle
with closely-trimmed nails, attacking young men:
idly, as I'm accustomed to do, whether
fancy free or burning with love.

Horace

BkI:VII Tibur

Let others sing in praise of Rhodes, or Mytilene,
or Ephesus, or Corinth on the Isthmus,
or Thebes that's known for Bacchus, or Apollo's isle
of Delphi, or Thessalian Tempe.

There's some whose only purpose is to celebrate
virgin Athene's city forever,
and set indiscriminately gathered olive on their heads.
Many a poet in honour of Juno

will speak fittingly of horses, Argos, rich Mycenae.
As for me not even stubborn Sparta
or the fields of lush Larisa are quite as striking,
as Albunea's echoing cavern,

her headlong Anio, and the groves of Tiburnus,
and Tibur's orchards, white with flowing streams.
Bright Notus from the south often blows away the clouds
from dark skies, without bringing endless rain,

so Plancus, my friend, remember to end a sad life
and your troubles, wisely, with sweet wine,
whether it's the camp, and gleaming standards, that hold you
or the deep shadows of your own Tibur.

They say that Teucer, fleeing from Salamis and his
father, still wreathed the garlands, leaves of poplar,
round his forehead, flushed with wine, and in speech to his friends
said these words to them as they sorrowed:

'Wherever fortune carries us, kinder than my father,
there, O friends and comrades, we'll adventure!
Never despair, if Teucer leads, of Teucer's omens!
Unerring Apollo surely promised,

in the uncertain future, a second Salamis
on a fresh soil. O you brave heroes, you
who suffered worse with me often, drown your cares with wine:
tomorrow we'll sail the wide seas again.'

Horace

BkI:VIII: To Lydia: Stop Ruining Sybaris!

Lydia, by all the gods,
say why you're set on ruining poor Sybaris, with passion:
why he suddenly can't stand
the sunny Campus, he, once tolerant of the dust and sun:

why he's no longer riding
with his soldier friends, nor holds back the Gallic mouth, any longer,
with his sharp restraining bit.
Why does he fear to touch the yellow Tiber? Why does he keep

away from the wrestler's oil
like the viper's blood: he won't appear with arms bruised by weapons,
he who was often noted
for hurling the discus, throwing the javelin out of bounds?

Why does he hide, as they say
Achilles, sea-born Thetis' son, hid, before sad Troy was ruined,
lest his male clothing
had him dragged away to the slaughter, among the Lycian troops?

Horace

BkI:X To Mercury

Mercury, eloquent grandson of Atlas,
I'll sing of you, who wise with your training, shaped
the uncivilised ways of our new-born race,
with language, and grace

in the ways of wrestling, you the messenger
of Jove and the gods, and the curved lyre's father,
skilful in hiding whatever pleases you,
with playful deceit.

While he tried to scare you, with his threatening voice,
unless you returned the cattle you'd stolen,
and so craftily, Apollo was laughing
missing his quiver.

And indeed, with your guidance, Priam carrying
rich gifts left Troy, escaped the proud Atridae,
Thessalian fires, and the menacing camp
threatening Ilium.

You bring virtuous souls to the happy shores,
controlling the bodiless crowds with your wand
of gold, pleasing to the gods of the heavens
and the gods below.

Horace

BkI:XI Carpe Diem

Leuconoë, don't ask, we never know, what fate the gods grant us,
whether your fate or mine, don't waste your time on Babylonian,
futile, calculations. How much better to suffer what happens,
whether Jupiter gives us more winters or this is the last one,
one debilitating the Tyrrhenian Sea on opposing cliffs.
Be wise, and mix the wine, since time is short: limit that far-reaching hope.
The envious moment is flying now, now, while we're speaking:
Seize the day, place in the hours that come as little faith as you can.

Horace

BkI:XII Praising Augustus

What god, man, or hero do you choose to praise
on the high pitched flute or the lyre, Clio?
Whose name will it be that joyfully resounds
in playful echoes,

either on shadowed slopes of Mount Helicon,
or on Pindus's crest, or on cool Haemus,
where the trees followed thoughtlessly after
Orpheus's call,

that held back the swift-running streams and the rush
of the breeze, by his mother the Muse's art,
and seductively drew the listening oaks
with enchaining song?

Which shall I sing first of the praises reserved
for the Father, who commands mortals and gods,
who controls the seas, and the land, and the world's
various seasons?

From whom nothing's born that's greater than he is,
and there's nothing that's like him or near him,
though Athene has honour approaching his,
she's bravest in war:

I won't be silent about you, O Bacchus,
or you Diana, virgin inimical
to wild creatures, or you Apollo, so feared
for your sure arrows.

I'll sing Hercules, too, and Leda's twin boys,
one famed for winning with horses, the other
in boxing. When their clear stars are shining bright
for those on the sea,

the storm-tossed water streams down from the headland,
the high winds die down, and the clouds disappear,
and, because they wish it, the menacing waves
repose in the deep.

I don't know whether to speak next, after those,
of Romulus, or of Numa's peaceful reign,
of Tarquin's proud axes, or of that younger
Cato's noble death.

Gratefully, I speak in distinguished verses
of Regulus: and the Scauri: and Paulus
careless of his life, when Hannibal conquered:
of Fabricius.

Of him, and of Curius with uncut hair,

and Camillus too, whom their harsh poverty
and their ancestral gods, and their ancient farms,
inured to struggle.

Marcellus' glory grows like a tree, quietly
with time: the Julian constellation shines,
among the other stars, as the Moon among
the lesser fires.

Father, and guardian of the human race,
son of Saturn, the care of mighty Caesar
was given you by fate: may you reign forever
with Caesar below.

Whether its the conquered Persians, menacing
Latium, that he leads, in well-earned triumph,
or the Seres and the Indians who lie
beneath Eastern skies,

under you, he'll rule the wide earth with justice:
you'll shake Olympus with your heavy chariot,
you'll send your hostile lightning down to shatter
once-pure sacred groves.

Horace

BkI:XIII His Jealousy

When you, Lydia, start to praise
Telephus' rosy neck, Telephus' waxen arms,
alas, my burning passion starts
to mount deep inside me, with troubling anger.

Neither my feelings, nor my hue
stay as they were before, and on my cheek a tear
slides down, secretly, proving how
I'm consumed inwardly with lingering fires.

I burn, whether it's madhouse
quarrels that have, drunkenly, marked your gleaming
shoulders, or whether the crazed boy
has placed a love-bite, in memory, on your lips.

If you'd just listen to me now,
you'd not bother to hope for constancy from him
who wounds that sweet mouth, savagely,
that Venus has imbued with her own pure nectar.

Three times happy are they, and more,
held by unbroken pledge, one which no destruction
of love, by evil quarrels,
will ever dissolve, before life's final day.

Horace

BkI:XIV The Ship of State

O ship the fresh tide carries back to sea again.
Where are you going! Quickly, run for harbour.
Can't you see how your sides
have been stripped bare of oars,

how your shattered masts and yards are groaning loudly
in the swift south-westerly, and bare of rigging,
your hull can scarce tolerate
the overpowering waters?

You haven't a single sail that's still intact now,
no gods, that people call to when they're in trouble.
Though you're built of Pontic pine,
a child of those famous forests,

though you can boast of your race, and an idle name:
the fearful sailor puts no faith in gaudy keels.
You must beware of being
merely a plaything of the winds.

You, who not long ago were troubling weariness
to me, and now are my passion and anxious care,
avoid the glistening seas
between the shining Cyclades.

Horace

BkI:XIX Glyceria's Beauty

Cruel Venus, Cupid's mother,
Bacchus, too, commands me, Theban Semele's son,
and you, lustful Licentiousness,
to recall to mind that love I thought long-finished.

I burn for Glyceria's beauty,
who gleams much more brightly than Parian marble:
I burn for her lovely boldness
and her face too dangerous to ever behold.

Venus bears down on me, wholly,
deserting her Cyprus, not letting me sing of
the Scythians, or Parthians
eager at wheeling their horses, nor anything else.

Here set up the green turf altar,
boys, and the sacred boughs of vervain, and incense,
place here a bowl of last year's wine:
if a victim's sacrificed, she'll come more gently.

Horace

BkI:XV Nereus' Prophecy of Troy

While Paris, the traitorous shepherd, her guest,
bore Helen over the waves, in a ship from Troy,
Nereus, the sea-god, checked the swift breeze
with an unwelcome calm, to tell

their harsh fate: 'You're taking a bird of ill-omen,
back home, whom the Greeks, new armed, will look for again,
having sworn to destroy the marriage your planning
and the empire of old Priam.

Ah, what sweated labour for men and for horses
draws near! What disaster you bring for the Trojan
people! Athene's already prepared her helm,
breastplate, chariot, and fury.

Uselessly daring, through Venus' protection,
you'll comb your hair and pluck at the peace-loving lyre,
make the music for songs that please girls: uselessly
you'll hide, in the depths of your room,

from the heavy spears, from the arrows of Cretan
reeds, and the noise of the battle, and swift-footed
Ajax quick to follow: yet, ah too late, you'll bathe
your adulterous hair in the dust!

Have you thought of Ulysses, the bane of your race,
have you even considered Pylia Nestor?
Teucer of Salamis presses you fearlessly,
Sthenelus, skilful in warfare,

and if it's a question of handling the horses
he's no mean charioteer. And Meriones
you'll know him too. See fierce Tydides, his father's
braver, he's raging to find you.

As the deer sees the wolf there, over the valley,
and forgets its pastures, a coward, you'll flee him,
breathing hard, as you run, with your head thrown high,
not as you promised your mistress.

The anger of Achilles' armies may delay
the day of destruction for Troy and its women:
but after so many winters the fires of Greece
will burn the Dardanian houses.'

Horace

BkI:XVI He Repents

O lovelier child of a lovely mother,
end as you will, then, my guilty iambs
whether in flames or whether instead
deep down in the Adriatic's waters.

Neither Cybele, nor Apollo, who troubles
the priestess's mind in the Pythian shrine,
nor Bacchus, nor the Corybants who
clash their shrill, ringing cymbals together,

pain us like anger, that's undefeated by
swords out of Noricum, or sea, the wrecker,
or cruel fire, or mighty Jupiter
when he sweeps down in terrible fury.

They say when Prometheus was forced to add
something from every creature to our first clay
he chose to set in each of our hearts
the violence of the irascible lion.

Anger brought Thyestes down, to utter ruin,
and it's the prime reason powerful cities
vanished in their utter destruction,
and armies, in scorn, sent the hostile plough

over the levelled spoil of their shattered walls.
Calm your mind: the passions of the heart have made
their attempt on me, in my sweet youth,
and drove me, maddened, as well, to swift verse:

I wish to change the bitter lines to sweet, now,
since I've charmed away all of my hostile words,
if you might become my friend, again,
and if you, again, might give me your heart.

Horace

BkI:XVII The Delights of the Country

Swift Faunus, the god, will quite often exchange
Arcady for my sweet Mount Lucretilis,
and while he stays he protects my goats
from the midday heat and the driving rain.

The wandering wives of the rank he-goats search,
with impunity, through the safe woodland groves,
for the hidden arbutus, and thyme,
and their kids don't fear green poisonous snakes,

or the wolf of Mars, my lovely Tyndaris,
once my Mount Ustica's long sloping valleys,
and its smooth worn rocks, have re-echoed
to the music of sweet divine piping.

The gods protect me: my love and devotion,
and my Muse, are dear to the gods. Here the rich
wealth of the countryside's beauties will
flow for you, now, from the horn of plenty.

Here you'll escape from the heat of the dog-star,
in secluded valleys, sing of bright Circe,
labouring over the Teian lyre,
and of Penelope: both loved one man.

Here you'll bring cups of innocent Lesbian
wine, under the shade, nor will Semele's son,
that Bacchus, battle it out with Mars,
nor shall you fear the intemperate hands

of insolent Cyrus, jealously watching,
to possess you, girl, unequal to evil,
to tear off the garland that clings to
your hair, or tear off your innocent clothes.

Horace

BkI:XVIII Wine

Cultivate no plant, my Varus, before the rows of sacred vines,
set in Tibur's gentle soil, and by the walls Catilus founded:
because the god decreed all things are hard for those who never drink,
and he gave us no better way to lessen our anxieties.
Deep in wine, who rattles on, about harsh campaigns or poverty?
Who doesn't rather speak of you, Bacchus, and you, lovely Venus?
And lest the gifts of Liber pass the bounds of moderation set,
we've the battle over wine, between the Lapiths and the Centaurs,
as a warning to us all, and the frenzied Thracians, whom Bacchus
hates, when they split right from wrong, by too fine a line of passion.
Lovely Bacchus, I'll not be the one to stir you, against your will,
nor bring to open light of day what's hidden under all those leaves.
Hold back the savagery of drums, and the Berecyntian horns,
and those deeds that, afterwards, are followed by a blind self-love,
by pride that lifts its empty head too high, above itself, once more,
and wasted faith in mysteries much more transparent than the glass.

Horace

BkI:XX To Maecenas

Come and drink with me, rough Sabine in cheap cups,
yet wine that I sealed myself, and laid up
in a Grecian jar, when you dear Maecenas,
flower of knighthood,

received the theatre's applause, so your native
river-banks, and, also, the Vatican Hill,
together returned that praise again, to you,
in playful echoes.

Then, drink Caecubum, and the juice of the grape
crushed in Campania's presses, my cups are
unmixed with what grows on Falernian vines,
or Formian hills.

Horace

BkI:XXI Hymn to Diana

O tender virgins sing, in praise of Diana,
and, you boys, sing in praise, of long-haired Apollo,
and of Latona, deeply
loved by all-conquering Jove.

You girls, she who enjoys the streams and the green leaves
of the groves that clothe the cool slopes of Algidus,
or dark Erymanthian
trees, or the woods of green Cragus.

You boys, sounding as many praises, of Tempe
and Apollo's native isle Delos, his shoulder
distinguished by his quiver,
and his brother Mercury's lyre.

He'll drive away sad war, and miserable famine,
the plague too, from our people and Caesar our prince,
and, moved by all your prayers,
send them to Persians and Britons.

Horace

BkI:XXII Singing of Lalage (Integer Vitae)

The man who is pure of life, and free of sin,
has no need, dear Fuscus, for Moorish javelins,
nor a bow and a quiver, fully loaded
with poisoned arrows,

whether his path's through the sweltering Syrtes,
or through the inhospitable Caucasus,
or makes its way through those fabulous regions
Hydaspes waters.

While I was wandering, beyond the boundaries
of my farm, in the Sabine woods, and singing
free from care, lightly-defended, of my Lalage,
a wolf fled from me:

a monster not even warlike Apulia
nourishes deep in its far-flung oak forests,
or that Juba's parched Numidian land breeds,
nursery of lions.

Set me down on the lifeless plains, where no trees
spring to life in the burning midsummer wind,
that wide stretch of the world that's burdened by mists
and a gloomy sky:

set me down in a land denied habitation,
where the sun's chariot rumbles too near the earth:
I'll still be in love with my sweetly laughing,
sweet talking Lalage.

Horace

BkI:XXIII Chloë, Don't Run.

You run away from me as a fawn does, Chloë,
searching the trackless hills for its frightened mother,
not without aimless terror
of the pathless winds, and the woods.

For if the coming of spring begins to rustle
among the trembling leaves, or if a green lizard
pushes the brambles aside,
then it trembles in heart and limb.

And yet I'm not chasing after you to crush you
like a fierce tiger, or a Gaetolian lion:
stop following your mother,
now, you're prepared for a mate.

Horace

BkI:XXIV A Lament For Quintilius

What limit, or restraint, should we show at the loss
of so dear a life? Melpomene, teach me, Muse,
a song of mourning, you, whom the Father granted
a clear voice, the sound of the lyre.

Does endless sleep lie heavy on Quintilius,
now? When will Honour, and unswerving Loyalty,
that is sister to Justice, and our naked Truth,
ever discover his equal?

Many are the good men who weep for his dying,
none of them, Virgil, weep more profusely than you.
Piously, you ask the gods for him, alas, in vain:
not so was he given to us.

Even if you played on the Thracian lyre, listened
to by the trees, more sweetly than Orpheus could,
would life then return, to that empty phantom,
once Mercury, with fearsome wand,

who won't simply re-open the gates of Fate
at our bidding, has gathered him to the dark throng?
It is hard: but patience makes more tolerable
whatever wrong's to be righted.

Horace

BkI:XXIX Off To The Wars

 Iccius, are you gazing with envy, now,
at Arabian riches, and preparing
for bitter war on unbeaten kings
of Saba, weaving bonds for those dreadful

 Medes? What barbaric virgin
will be your slave, when you've murdered her lover?
What boy, from the palace, with scented
hair, will handle your wine-cups, one taught

 by his father's bow how to manage eastern
arrows? Who'll deny, now, that rivers can flow
backwards, to the summits of mountains,
and Tiber reverse the course of his streams,

 when you, who gave promise of much better things,
are intent on changing Panaetius's
noble books, the school of Socrates,
for a suit of Iberian armour?

Horace

BkI:XXV A Prophecy of Age

Now the young men come less often, violently
beating your shutters, with blow after blow, or
stealing away your sleep, while the door sits tight,
hugging the threshold,

yet was once known to move its hinges, more than
readily. You'll hear, less and less often now:
'Are you sleeping, Lydia, while your lover
dies in the long night?'

Old, in your turn, you'll bemoan coarse adulterers,
as you tremble in some deserted alley,
while the Thracian wind rages, furiously,
through the moonless nights,

while flagrant desire, libidinous passion,
those powers that will spur on a mare in heat,
will storm all around your corrupted heart, ah,
and you'll complain,

that the youths, filled with laughter, take more delight
in the green ivy, the dark of the myrtle,
leaving the withering leaves to this East wind,
winter's accomplice.

Horace

BkI:XXVI A Garland For Lamia

Friend of the Muses, I'll throw sadness and fear
to the winds, to blow over the Cretan Sea,
untroubled by whoever he is, that king
of the icy Arctic shores we're afraid of,

or whatever might terrify the Armenians.
O Sweet Muse, that joys in fresh fountains,
weave them together all the bright flowers,
weave me a garland for my Lamia.

Without you there's no worth in my tributes:
it's fitting that you, that all of your sisters,
should immortalise him with new strains
of the lyre, with the Lesbian plectrum.

Horace

BkI:XXVII Entanglement

To fight with wine-cups intended for pleasure
only suits Thracians: forget those barbarous
games, and keep modest Bacchus away
from all those bloodthirsty quarrels of yours.

The Persian scimitar's quite out of keeping
with the wine and the lamplight: my friends restrain
all that impious clamour, and rest
on the couches, lean back on your elbows.

So you want me to drink up my share, as well,
of the heavy Falernian? Then let's hear
Opuntian Megylla's brother tell
by what wound, and what arrow, blessed, he dies.

Does your will waver? I'll drink on no other
terms. Whatever the passion rules over you,
it's not with a shameful fire it burns,
and you always sin with the noblest

of lovers. Whoever it is, ah, come now,
let it be heard by faithful ears – oh, you wretch!
What a Charybdis you're swimming in,
my boy, you deserve a far better flame!

What magician, with Thessalian potions,
what enchantress, or what god could release you?
Caught by the triple-formed Chimaera,
even Pegasus could barely free you.

Horace

BkI:XXVIII Three Handfuls of Earth

You, my Archytas, philosopher, and measurer of land,
of the sea, of wide sands, are entombed
in a small mound of meagre earth near the Matinian shore,
and it's of no use to you in the least,

that you, born to die, have explored the celestial houses
crossed, in spirit, the rounds of the sky.
Tantalus, Pelop's father, died too, a guest of the gods,
and Tithonus took off to the heavens,

Minos gained entry to great Jupiter's secrets, Tartarus
holds Euphorbus, twice sent to Orcus,
though he bore witness, carrying his shield there, to Trojan times,
and left nothing more behind, for black Death,

but his skin and his bones, and that certainly made him, Archytas,
to your mind, no trivial example
of Nature and truth. But there's still one night that awaits us all,
and each, in turn, makes the journey of death.

The Furies deliver some as a spectacle for cruel Mars,
the greedy sea's the sailor's ruin:
the funerals of the old, and the young, close ranks together,
and no one's spared by cruel Proserpine.

Me too, the south wind, Notus, swift friend of setting Orion,
drowned deep in Illyrian waters.
O, sailor, don't hesitate, from spite, to grant a little treacherous
sand, to my unburied bones and skull.

So that, however the east wind might threaten the Italian
waves, thrashing the Venusian woods,
you'll be safe, yourself, and rich rewards will flow from the source,
from even-handed Jupiter, and from

Neptune, who is the protector of holy Tarentum. Are you
indifferent to committing a wrong
that will harm your innocent children hereafter? Perhaps
a need for justice, and arrogant

disdain, await you, too: don't let me be abandoned here
my prayers unanswered: no offering
will absolve you. Though you hurry away, it's a brief delay:
three scattered handfuls of earth will free you.

Horace

BkI:XXX Ode To Venus

O Venus, the queen of Cnidos and Paphos,
spurn your beloved Cyprus, and summoned
by copious incense, come to the lovely shrine
of my Glycera.

And let that passionate boy of yours, Cupid,
and the Graces with loosened zones, and the Nymphs,
and Youth, less lovely without you, hasten here,
and Mercury too.

Horace

BkI:XXXI A Prayer to Apollo

What is the poet's request to Apollo?
What does he pray for as he pours out the wine
from the bowl? Not for the rich harvests
of fertile Sardinia, nor the herds,

(they're delightful), of sunlit Calabria,
not for India's gold or its ivory,
nor fields our silent Liris's stream
carries away in the calm of its flow.

Let those that Fortune allows prune the vines,
with a Calenian knife, so rich merchants
can drink their wine from a golden cup,
wine they've purchased with Syrian goods,

who, dear to the gods, three or four times yearly,
revisit the briny Atlantic, unscathed.
I browse on olives, and chicory
and simple mallow. Apollo, the son

of Latona, let me enjoy what I have,
and, healthy in body and mind, as I ask,
live an old age not without honour,
and one not lacking the art of the lyre.

Horace

BkI:XXXII To the Lyre

I'm called on. O Lyre, if I've ever played
idle things with you in the shade, that will live,
for a year or more, come and utter a song
now, of Italy:

you were first tuned by Alcaeus of Lesbos,
a man daring in war, yet still, amongst arms,
or after he'd moored his storm-driven boat
on a watery shore,

he sang of the Muses, Bacchus, and Venus
that boy of hers, Cupid, that hangs around her,
and that beautiful Lycus, with his dark eyes
and lovely dark hair.

O tortoiseshell, Phoebus's glory, welcome
at the feasts of Jupiter, the almighty,
O sweet comfort and balm of our troubles, heal,
if I call you true!

Horace

BkI:XXXIII Tibullus, Don't Grieve

Tibullus, don't grieve too much, when you remember
your cruel Glycera, and don't keep on singing
those wretched elegies, or ask why, trust broken,
you're outshone by a younger man.

Lovely Lycoris, the narrow-browed one, is on fire
with love for Cyrus, Cyrus leans towards bitter
Pholoë, but does in the wood are more likely
to mate with Apulian wolves,

than Pholoë to sin with some low-down lover.
So Venus has it, who delights in the cruel
game of mating unsuitable bodies and minds,
under her heavy yoke of bronze.

I, myself, when a nobler passion was called for,
was held in the charming bonds of Myrtale,
that freed slave, more bitter than Hadria's waves
that break in Calabria's bay.

Horace

BkI:XXXIV Fortune's Changes

Once I wandered, an expert in crazy wisdom,
a scant and infrequent adorer of gods,
now I'm forced to set sail and return,
to go back to the paths I abandoned.

For Jupiter, Father of all of the gods,
who generally splits the clouds with his lightning,
flashing away, drove thundering horses,
and his swift chariot, through the clear sky,

till the dull earth, and the wandering rivers,
and Styx, and dread Taenarus' hateful headland,
and Atlas's mountain-summits shook.
The god has the power to replace the highest

with the lowest, bring down the famous, and raise
the obscure to the heights. And greedy Fortune
with her shrill whirring, carries away
the crown and delights in setting it, there.

Horace

BkI:XXXV To Fortune

O goddess, who rules our lovely Antium,
always ready to lift up our mortal selves,
from humble position, or alter
proud triumphs to funeral processions,

the poor farmer, in the fields, courts your favour
with anxious prayers: you, mistress of ocean,
the sailor who cuts the Carpathian
Sea, in a Bithynian sailing boat:

you, the fierce Dacian, wandering Scythian,
cities, and peoples, and warlike Latium,
mothers of barbarous kings, tyrants,
clothed in their royal purple, all fear you,

in case you demolish the standing pillar
with a careless foot, or the tumultuous crowd
incite the peaceful: 'To arms, to arms',
and shatter the supreme authority.

Grim Necessity always treads before you,
and she's carrying the spikes and the wedges
in her bronze hand, and the harsh irons
and the molten lead aren't absent either.

Hope cultivates you, and rarest Loyalty,
her hands bound in sacred white, will not refuse
her friendship when you, their enemy,
desert the great houses plunged in mourning.

But the disloyal mob, and the perjured whores
vanish, and friends scatter when they've drunk our wine
to the lees, unequal to bearing
the heavy yoke of all our misfortunes.

Guard our Caesar who's soon setting off again
against the earth's far-off Britons, and guard
the fresh young levies, who'll scare the East
in those regions along the Red Sea's shores.

Alas, the shame of our scars and wickedness,
and our dead brothers. What has our harsh age spared?
What sinfulness have we left untried?
What have the young men held their hands back from,

in fear of the gods? Where are the altars they've left
alone? O may you remake our blunt weapons
on fresh anvils so we can turn them
against the Scythians and the Arabs.

Horace

BkI:XXXVI Numida's Back Again

With music, and incense, and blood
of a bullock, delight in placating the gods
that guarded our Numida well,
who's returned safe and sound, from the farthest West, now,

showering a host of kisses
on every dear friend, but on none of us more than
lovely Lamia, remembering
their boyhood spent under the self-same master,

their togas exchanged together.
Don't allow this sweet day to lack a white marker,
no end to the wine jars at hand,
no rest for our feet in the Salian fashion,

Don't let wine-heavy Damalis
conquer our Bassus in downing the Thracian draughts.
Don't let our feast lack for roses,
or the long-lasting parsley, or the brief lilies:

we'll all cast our decadent eyes
on Damalis, but Damalis won't be parted
from that new lover of hers she's
clasping, more tightly than the wandering ivy.

Horace

BkI:XXXVII Cleopatra

Now's the time for drinking deep, and now's the time
to beat the earth with unfettered feet, the time
to set out the gods' sacred couches,
my friends, and prepare a Salian feast.

It would have been wrong, before today, to broach
the Caecuban wines from out the ancient bins,
while a maddened queen was still plotting
the Capitol's and the empire's ruin,

with her crowd of deeply-corrupted creatures
sick with turpitude, she, violent with hope
of all kinds, and intoxicated
by Fortune's favour. But it calmed her frenzy

that scarcely a single ship escaped the flames,
and Caesar reduced the distracted thoughts, bred
by Mareotic wine, to true fear,
pursuing her close as she fled from Rome,

out to capture that deadly monster, bind her,
as the sparrow-hawk follows the gentle dove
or the swift hunter chases the hare,
over the snowy plains of Thessaly.

But she, intending to perish more nobly,
showed no sign of womanish fear at the sword,
nor did she even attempt to win
with her speedy ships to some hidden shore.

And she dared to gaze at her fallen kingdom
with a calm face, and touch the poisonous asp's
with courage, so that she might drink down
their dark venom, to the depths of her heart,

growing fiercer still, and resolving to die:
scorning to be taken by hostile galleys,
and, no ordinary woman, yet queen
no longer, be led along in proud triumph.

Horace

BkI:XXXVIII The Simple Myrtle

My child, how I hate Persian ostentation,
garlands twined around lime-tree bark displease me:
forget your chasing, to find all the places
where late roses fade.

You're eager, take care, that nothing enhances
the simple myrtle: it's not only you that
it graces, the servant, but me as I drink,
beneath the dark vine.

Horace

BkII:I To Pollio, Writing His History of the Civil Wars

You're handling the Civil Wars, since Metellus
was Consul, the causes, errors, and stages,
Fortune's game, and the heavy friendships
of princes, and the un-expiated

stain of blood over various weapons,
a task that's filled with dangerous pitfalls,
so that you're walking over embers
hidden under the treacherous ashes.

Don't let the Muse of dark actions be long away
from the theatre: soon, when you've finished writing
public events, reveal your great gifts
again in Athenian tragedy,

you famous defendant of troubled clients,
Pollio, support of the Senate's councils,
whom the laurel gave lasting glory
in the form of your Dalmatian triumph.

Already you're striking our ears with the sounds,
the menace of blaring horns, and the trumpets,
already the glitter of weapons
terrifies horses, and riders' faces.

Now I seem to hear magnificent leaders,
heads darkened, but not with inglorious dust,
and all the lands of earth are subdued,
but not implacable Cato's spirit.

Juno, and those gods friendly to Africa,
who, powerless to avenge the land, withdrew,
make funeral offerings to Jugurtha,
of the grandchildren of his conquerors.

What fields are not enriched with the blood of Rome,
to bear witness with their graves to this impious
struggle of ours, and the sound, even heard
by the Persians, of Italy's ruin?

What river or pool is ignorant of these
wretched wars? What sea has Roman slaughter failed
to discolour, and show me the shores
that are, as yet, still unstained by our blood.

But Muse, lest you dare to leave happy themes,
and take up Simonides' dirges again,
search out a lighter plectrum's measures,
with me, in some deep cavern of Venus.

Horace

BkII:II Money

Crispus, silver concealed in the greedy earth
has no colour, and you are an enemy
to all such metal unless, indeed, it gleams
from sensible use.

Proculeius will be famous in distant
ages for his generous feelings towards
his brothers: enduring fame will carry him
on its tireless wings.

You may rule a wider kingdom by taming
a greedy spirit, than by joining Spain
to far-off Libya, while Carthaginians
on both sides, serve one.

A fatal dropsy grows worse with indulgence,
the patient can't rid himself of thirst unless
his veins are free of illness, and his pale flesh
of watery languor.

Though Phraates is back on the Armenian
throne, Virtue, differing from the rabble, excludes
him from the blessed, and instructs the people
not to misuse words,

instead conferring power, and security
of rule, and lasting laurels, on him alone
who can pass by enormous piles of treasure
without looking back.

Horace

BkII:III One Ending

When things are troublesome, always remember,
keep an even mind, and in prosperity
be careful of too much happiness:
since my Dellius, you're destined to die,

whether you live a life that's always sad,
or reclining, privately, on distant lawns,
in one long holiday, take delight
in drinking your vintage Falernian.

Why do tall pines, and white poplars, love to merge
their branches in the hospitable shadows?
Why do the rushing waters labour
to hurry along down the winding rivers?

Tell them to bring us the wine, and the perfume,
and all-too-brief petals of lovely roses,
while the world, and the years, and the dark
threads of the three fatal sisters allow.

You'll leave behind all those meadows you purchased,
your house, your estate, yellow Tiber washes,
you'll leave them behind, your heir will own
those towering riches you've piled so high.

Whether you're rich, of old Inachus's line,
or live beneath the sky, a pauper, blessed with
humble birth, it makes no difference:
you'll be pitiless Orcus's victim.

We're all being driven to a single end,
all our lots are tossed in the urn, and, sooner
or later, they'll emerge, and seat us
in Charon's boat for eternal exile.

Horace

BkII:IV Loving A Servant Girl

Phocian Xanthis, don't be ashamed of love
for your serving-girl. Once before, Briseis
the Trojan slave with her snow-white skin stirred
angry Achilles:

and captive Tecmessa's loveliness troubled
her master Ajax, the son of Telamon:
and Agamemnon, in his mid-triumph, burned
for a stolen girl,

while the barbarian armies, defeated
in Greek victory, and the loss of Hector,
handed Troy to the weary Thesalians,
an easier prey.

You don't know your blond Phyllis hasn't parents
who are wealthy, and might grace their son-in-law.
Surely she's royally born, and grieves at her
cruel household gods.

Believe that the girl you love's not one who comes
from the wicked masses, that one so faithful
so averse to gain, couldn't be the child of
a shameful mother.

I'm unbiased in praising her arms and face,
and shapely ankles: reject all suspicion
of one whose swiftly vanishing life has known
its fortieth year.

Horace

BkII:IX Stop Weeping

The rain doesn't fall from the clouds forever
on the sodden fields, and capricious storm-winds
don't always trouble the Caspian
waters, nor does the solid ice linger,

Valgius, dear friend of mine, through all twelve months,
and the oak woods of Garganus aren't always
trembling, because of the northern gales,
or the ash trees stripped of their foliage:

But you're always pursuing in tearful ways
the loss of your Mystes, and your endearments
don't ebb with the evening star's rising
or when it sinks before the swift sunrise.

Yet Nestor, who lived for three generations,
didn't mourn his beloved Antilochus,
every moment, nor were the youthful
Troilus's Trojan parents and sisters,

always weeping. Stop your unmanly grieving
now, and let's sing about Augustus Caesar's
new trophies instead, the ice-bound Mount
Niphates, and the Persian waters,

with its flow reduced, now the Medes are added
to the subject nations, and then the Thracians,
riding over their meagre landscape,
within the bounds that we've now set for them.

Horace

BkII:V Be Patient

She's not ready to bear a yoke on her bowed
neck yet, she's not yet equal to the duty
of coupling, or bearing the heavy
weight of a charging bull in the mating act.

The thoughts of your heifer are on green pastures,
on easing her burning heat in the river,
and sporting with the eager calves
in the depths of moist willow plantations.

Forget this passion of yours for the unripe
grape: autumn, the season of many-colours,
will soon be dyeing bluish clusters
a darker purple, on the vine, for you.

Soon she'll pursue you, since fierce time rushes on
and will add to her the years it takes from you,
soon Lalage herself will be eager
to search you out as a husband, Lalage,

beloved as shy Pholoë was not, nor your
Chloris, with shoulders gleaming white, like a clear
moon shining over a midnight sea,
nor Cnidian Gyges, that lovely boy,

whom you could inser in a choir of girls,
and the wisest of strangers would fail to tell
the difference, with him hidden behind
his flowing hair, and ambiguous looks.

Horace

BkII:VI Tibur and Tarentum

Septimus, you, who are prepared to visit
Cadiz with me, and its tribes (they're not used
to bearing our yoke) and barbarous Syrtes,
by the Moors' fierce Sea,

I'd rather Tibur, founded by men of Greece,
were my home when I'm old, let it be my goal,
when I'm tired of the seas, and the roads, and all
this endless fighting.

But if the cruel Fates deny me that place,
I'll head for the river Galaesus, sweet
with its precious sheep, on Spartan fields, once ruled
by King Phalanthus.

That corner of earth is the brightest to me,
where the honey gives nothing away to that
of Hymettus, and its olives compete with
green Venafrum:

where Jupiter grants a lengthy spring, and mild
winters, and Aulon's hill-slopes, dear to fertile
Bacchus, are filled with least envy for those rich
grapes of Falernum.

That place, and its lovely heights, call out to me,
to you: and there'll you'll scatter your debt of sad
tears, over the still-glowing ashes of this,
the poet, your friend.

Horace

BkII:VII A Friend Home From the Wars

O Pompey, often led, with me, by Brutus,
the head of our army, into great danger,
who's sent you back, as a citizen,
to your country's gods and Italy's sky,

Pompey, the very dearest of my comrades,
with whom I've often drawn out the lingering
day in wine, my hair wreathed, and glistening
with perfumed balsam, of Syrian nard?

I was there at Philippi, with you, in that
headlong flight, sadly leaving my shield behind,
when shattered Virtue, and what threatened
from an ignoble purpose, fell to earth.

While in my fear Mercury dragged me, swiftly,
through the hostile ranks in a thickening cloud:
the wave was drawing you back to war,
carried once more by the troubled waters.

So grant Jupiter the feast he's owed, and stretch
your limbs, wearied by long campaigning, under
my laurel boughs, and don't spare the jars
that were destined to be opened by you.

Fill the smooth cups with Massic oblivion,
pour out the perfume from generous dishes,
Who'll hurry to weave the wreathes for us
of dew-wet parsley or pliant myrtle?

Who'll throw high Venus at dice and so become
the master of drink? I'll rage as insanely
as any Thracian: It's sweet to me
to revel when a friend is home again.

Horace

BkII:VIII Faithless Barine

If any punishment ever visited
you, Barine, for all your perjuries, if you
were ever harmed at all by a darkened tooth,
a spoilt fingernail,

I'd trust you. But no sooner have you bound your
faithless soul by promises, than you appear
much lovelier, and shine out, as everyone's
dearest young thing.

It helps you to swear by your mother's buried
ashes, by all night's silent constellations,
by the heavens, and the gods, who are free from
the icy chill of death.

Venus herself smiles at it all, yes she does:
the artless Nymphs, smile too, and cruel Cupid,
who's always sharpening his burning arrows
on a blood-stained stone.

Add that all our youths are being groomed for you,
groomed as fresh slaves, while none of your old lovers
leave the house of their impious mistress, as
they often threatened.

All the mothers fear you, because of their sons,
and the thrifty old fathers, and wretched brides,
who once were virgins, in case your radiance
makes husbands linger.

Horace

BkII:X The Golden Mean

You'll live more virtuously, my Murena,
by not setting out to sea, while you're in dread
of the storm, or hugging fatal shores
too closely, either.

Whoever takes delight in the golden mean,
safely avoids the squalor of a shabby house,
and, soberly, avoids the regal palace
that incites envy.

The tall pine's more often shaken by the wind,
and it's a high tower that falls with a louder
crash, while the mountainous summits are places
where lightning strikes.

The heart that is well prepared for any fate
hopes in adversity, fears prosperity.
Though Jupiter brings us all the unlovely
winters: he also

takes them away again. If there's trouble now
it won't always be so: sometimes Apollo
rouses the sleeping Muse with his lyre, when he's
not flexing his bow.

Appear brave and resolute in difficult
times: and yet be wise and take in all your sails
when they're swollen by too powerful
a following wind.

Horace

BkII:XI Don't Ask

Don't ask what the warlike Spaniards are plotting,
or those Scythians, Quinctius Hirpinus,
the intervening Adriatic
keeps off, don't be anxious about the needs

of life: it asks little: sweet youth and beauty
are vanishing behind us, and dry old age
is driving away all our playful
affections, and all our untroubled sleep.

And the glory of spring flowers won't last forever,
and the blushing moon won't always shine, with that
selfsame face: why weary your little
mind with eternal deliberations?

Why not drink while we can, lying, thoughtlessly,
under this towering pine, or this plane-tree,
our greying hair scented with roses,
and perfumed with nard from Assyria?

Bacchus dispels all those cares that feed on us.
Where's the boy now, who'll swiftly dilute for us
these cups of fiery Falernian,
with clear water drawn from the passing stream?

Who'll lure Lyde, that fickle jade, from the house?
Go, tell her to hurry, with her ivory lyre,
her hair done in an elegant knot,
tied up, as if she were a Spartan girl.

Horace

BkII:XII Terentia's Singing

You'd not wish the theme of Numantia's fierce wars
matched to the lyre's soft tones, nor cruel Hannibal,
nor the Sicilian Sea turned to dark crimson
by the Carthaginians' blood,

nor the savage Lapiths, and drunken Hylaeus
filled with excess wine, nor Hercules with his hand
taming the sons of earth, at the danger of which
ancient Saturn's glittering house

was shaken: you'd be better yourself, Maecenas,
at writing prose histories of Caesar's battles,
and telling us about all those menacing kings,
now led by the neck through the streets.

The Muse wishes me to speak of the sweet singing
of your lady Terentia, and speak of her bright
flashing eyes, and speak of that heart of hers, that is
so faithful in mutual love:

she to whom it's not unbecoming to adopt
the lead among the dancers, or compete in wit,
or, that holy day that honours Diana, give
her arm in play to shining girls.

Would you exchange now, one hair of Terentia's
for what rich Achaemenes owned, Mygdonian
wealth of fertile Phrygia, or
the Arabians' well-stocked homes,

while she bends her neck for those passionate kisses,
or in gentle cruelty refuses to yield them,
more than he who asks likes having them taken: then
at times surprises by taking?

Horace

BkII:XIII Nearly, Tree

Tree, whoever planted you first it was done
on an evil day, and, with sacrilegious
hands, he raised you for utter ruin
of posterity, and this region's shame.

He'll have broken his father's neck, I guess:
he'll have sprinkled the blood of a guest around,
in an inner room, in deepest night:
he'll have dabbled with Colchian poisons,

and whatever, wherever, evil's conceived,
that man who one planted you there in my field,
you, sad trunk, who were destined to fall
on the head of your innocent master.

Men are never quite careful enough about
what they should avoid: the Carthaginian
sailor's afraid of the Bosphorus,
but not the hidden dangers, beyond, elsewhere:

Soldiers fear the Persians' arrows and rapid
flight, the Persians fear Italian power, and chains:
but they don't expect the forces of death,
that have snatched away the races of men.

How close I was, now, to seeing the kingdom
of dark Proserpine, and Aeacus judging,
and the seats set aside for the good,
and Sappho still complaining about

the local girls, on her Aeolian lyre,
and you, Alcaeus, with a golden plectrum,
sounding more fully the sailor's woe,
the woe of harsh exile, the woe of war.

The spirits wonder at both of them, singing,
they're worth a reverent silence, but the crowd,
packed shoulder to shoulder, drinks deeper
of tales of warfare and banished tyrants.

No wonder that, lulled by the songs, the monster
with a hundred heads lowers his jet-black ears,
and the snakes that wriggle in the hair
of the Furies take time out for a rest.

Even Prometheus, even Tantalus,
are seduced in their torments by the sweet sound:
Orion doesn't even bother
to chase the lions, or wary lynxes.

Horace

BkII:XIV Eheu Fugaces

Oh how the years fly, Postumus, Postumus,
they're slipping away, virtue brings no respite
from the wrinkles that furrow our brow,
impending old age, Death the invincible:

not even, my friend, if with three hundred bulls
every day, you appease pitiless Pluto,
jailor of three-bodied Geryon,
who imprisons Tityos by the sad

stream, that every one of us must sail over,
whoever we are that enjoy earth's riches,
whether we're wealthy, or whether we are
the most destitute of humble farmers.

In vain we'll escape from bloodiest warfare,
from the breakers' roar in the Adriatic,
in vain, on the autumn seas, we'll fear
the southerly that shatters our bodies:

We're destined to gaze at Cocytus, winding,
dark languid river: the infamous daughters
of Danaus: and at Sisyphus,
son of Aeolus, condemned to long toil.

We're destined to leave earth, home, our loving wife,
nor will a single tree, that you planted here,
follow you, it's briefly-known master,
except for the much-detested cypress.

A worthier heir will drink your Caecuban,
that cellar a hundred keys are protecting,
and stain the street with a vintage wine,
finer than those at the Pontiff's table.

Horace

BkII:XIX To Bacchus

I saw Bacchus on distant cliffs - believe me,
O posterity - he was teaching songs there,
and the Nymphs were learning them, and all
the goat-footed Satyrs with pointed ears.

Evoe! My mind fills with fresh fear, my heart
filled with Bacchus, is troubled, and violently
rejoices. Evoe! Spare me, Liber,
dreaded for your mighty thyrsus, spare me.

It's right to sing of the wilful Bacchantes,
the fountain of wine, and the rivers of milk,
to sing of the honey that's welling,
and sliding down from the hollow tree-trunks:

It's right to sing of your bride turned goddess, your
Ariadne, crowned among stars: the palace
of Pentheus, shattered in ruins,
and the ending of Thracian Lycurgus.

You direct the streams, and the barbarous sea,
and on distant summits, you drunkenly tie
the hair of the Bistonian women,
with harmless knots made of venomous snakes.

When the impious army of Giants tried
to climb through the sky to Jupiter's kingdom,
you hurled back Rhoetus, with the claws
and teeth of the terrifying lion.

Though you're said to be more suited to dancing,
laughter, and games, and not equipped to suffer
the fighting, nevertheless you shared
the thick of battle as well as the peace.

Cerberus saw you, unharmed, and adorned
with your golden horn, and, stroking you gently,
with his tail, as you departed, licked
your ankles and feet with his triple tongue.

Horace

BkII:XV Excess

Not long now and our princely buildings will leave
few acres under the plough, ornamental
waters appearing everywhere, spread
wider than the Lucrine Lake is, plane trees,

without vines, will drive out the elms: and violet
beds, and myrtles, and all the wealth of perfumes
will scatter their scent through olive groves
that gave their crops for a former owner.

Then thick laurel branches will shut out the sun's
raging. It wasn't the case under Romulus,
or long-haired Cato, it wasn't the rule,
that our ancient predecessors ordained.

Private property was modest in their day,
the common lands vast: no private citizen
had a portico, measuring tens
of feet, laid out facing the shady north,

nor did the laws allow ordinary turf
to be scorned for altars, ordering cities
and the gods' temples, to be adorned,
at public expense, with rarest marbles.

Horace

BkII:XVI Contentment

It's peace the sailor asks of the gods, when he's
caught out on the open Aegean, when dark clouds
have hidden the moon, and the constellations
shine uncertainly:

It's peace for Thrace, so furious in battle,
peace for the Parthians, adorned with quivers,
and, Grosphus, it can't be purchased with jewels,
or purple or gold.

No treasure, no consular attendants,
can remove the miserable mind's disorders,
and all of the cares that go flying around
our panelled ceilings.

He lives well on little, whose meagre table
gleams with his father's salt-cellar, whose soft sleep
isn't driven away by anxiety,
or by sordid greed

Why do we struggle so hard in our brief lives
for possessions? Why do we exchange our land
for a burning foreign soil? What exile flees
from himself as well?

Corrupting care climbs aboard the bronze-clad ship,
and never falls behind the troops of horses,
swifter than deer, swifter than easterly winds
that drive on the clouds.

Let the spirit be happy today, and hate
the worry of what's beyond, let bitterness
be tempered by a gentle smile. Nothing is
altogether blessed.

Bright Achilles was snatched away by swift death,
Tithonus was wasted by lingering old age:
perhaps the passing hour will offer to me
what it denies you.

A hundred herds of Sicilian cattle
low around you, mares fit for the chariot
bring you their neighing, you're dressed in wool:
African purple

has stained it twice: truthful Fates, 'the Sparing Ones',
the Parcae, gave me a little estate, and
the purified breath of Greek song, and my scorn
for the spiteful crowd.

Horace

BkII:XVII We'll Go Together

Why do you stifle me with your complaining?
It's neither the gods' idea nor mine to die
before you, Maecenas, you're the great
glory, and pillar of my existence.

Ah, if some premature blow snatches away
half of my spirit, why should the rest remain,
no longer as loved, nor surviving
entire? That day shall lead us to ruin

together. I'm not making some treacherous
promise: whenever you lead the way, let's go,
let's go, prepared as friends to set out,
you and I, to try the final journey.

No Chimaera's fiery breath will ever tear
me from you, or if he should rise against me
hundred handed Gyas: that's the will
of all-powerful Justice and the Fates.

Whether Libra or fearful Scorpio shone
more powerfully on me at my natal hour,
or Capricorn, which is the ruler
of the waters that flow round Italy,

our stars were mutually aspected in their
marvellous way. Jupiter's protection shone,
brighter for you than baleful Saturn,
and rescued you, and held back the rapid

wings of Fate, that day when the people crowding
the theatre, three times broke into wild applause:
I'd have received the trunk of a tree
on my head, if Faunus, the guardian

of Mercurial poets, hadn't warded off
the blow with his hand. So remember to make
due offering: you build a votive shrine:
I'll come and sacrifice a humble lamb.

Horace

BkII:XVIII Vain Riches

There's no ivory, there's no
gilded panelling, gleaming here in my house,
no beams of Hymettian
marble rest on pillars quarried in deepest

Africa, I've not, as heir
to Attalus, become unwitting owner
of some palace, no noble
ladies trail robes of Spartan purple for me.

But I've honour, and a vein
of kindly wit, and though I'm poor the rich man
seeks me out: I don't demand
anything more of the gods, or my powerful

friend, I'm contented enough
blessed with my one and only Sabine Farm.
Day treads on the heels of day,
and new moons still continue to wane away.

Yet you contract on the edge
of the grave itself for cut marble, forget
the tomb and raise a palace,
pushing hard to extend the shore of Baiae's

roaring seas, not rich enough
in mainland coast. What's the point of tearing down
every neighbouring boundary
edging your fields, leaping over, in your greed,

the limits of your tenants? Both the husband
and wife, and their miserable
children, are driven out, and they're left clutching
their household gods to their breast.

Yet there's no royal courtyard
that more surely waits for a wealthy owner,
than greedy Orcus' fateful
limits. Why stretch for more? Earth's equally open

to the poorest of men and
the sons of kings: and Orcus's ferryman
couldn't be seduced by gold
to row back and return crafty Prometheus.

Proud Tantalus, and Pelops
his son, he holds fast, and whether he's summoned,
or whether he's not, he lends
an ear, and frees the poor man, his labours done.

Horace

BkII:XX Poetic Immortality

A poet of dual form, I won't be carried
through the flowing air on weak or mundane wings,
nor will I linger down here on earth,
for any length of time: beyond envy,

I'll leave the cities behind. It's not I, born
of poor parents, it's not I, who hear your voice,
beloved Maecenas, I who'll die,
or be encircled by Stygian waters.

Even now the rough skin is settling around
my ankles, and now above them I've become
a snow-white swan, and soft feathers are
emerging over my arms and shoulders.

Soon, a melodious bird, and more famous
than Icarus, Daedalus' son, I'll visit
Bosphorus' loud shores, Gaetolian
Syrtes, and the Hyperborean plains.

Colchis will know me, so will the Scythians,
who pretend to show no fear of Italian
troops, and the Geloni: Spain will learn
from me, the expert, and those who drink Rhone.

No dirges at my insubstantial funeral,
no elegies, and no unseemly grieving:
suppress all the clamour, not for me
the superfluous honour of a tomb.

Horace

BkIII:I Odi Profanum

I hate the vulgar crowd, and keep them away:
grant me your silence. A priest of the Muses,
I sing a song never heard before,
I sing a song for young women and boys.

The power of dread kings over their peoples,
is the power Jove has over those kings themselves,
famed for his defeat of the Giants,
controlling all with a nod of his head.

It's true that one man will lay out his vineyards
over wider acres than will his neighbour,
that one candidate who descends to
the Campus, will maintain that he's nobler,

another's more famous, or has a larger
crowd of followers: but Necessity sorts
the fates of high and low with equal
justice: the roomy urn holds every name.

Sicilian feasts won't supply sweet flavours
to the man above whose impious head hangs
a naked sword, nor will the singing
of birds or the playing of zithers bring back

soft sleep. But gentle slumber doesn't despise
the humble house of a rural labourer,
or a riverbank deep in the shade,
or the vale of Tempe, stirred by the breeze.

He who only longs for what is sufficient,
is never disturbed by tumultuous seas,
nor the savage power of Arcturus
setting, nor the strength of the Kids rising,

nor his vineyards being lashed by the hailstones,
nor his treacherous farmland, rain being blamed
for the state of the trees, the dog-star
parching the fields, or the cruel winter.

The fish can feel that the channel's narrowing,
when piles are driven deep: the builder, his team
of workers, the lord who scorns the land
pour the rubble down into the waters.

But Fear and Menace climb up to the same place
where the lord climbs up, and dark Care will not leave
the bronze-clad trireme, and even sits
behind the horseman when he's out riding.

So if neither Phrygian stone, nor purple,

brighter than the constellations, can solace
the grieving man, nor Falernian
wine, nor the perfumes purchased from Persia,

why should I build a regal hall in modern
style, with lofty columns to stir up envy?
Why should I change my Sabine valley,
for the heavier burden of excess wealth?

Horace

BkIII:II Dulce Et Decorum Est

Let the boy toughened by military service
learn how to make bitterest hardship his friend,
and as a horseman, with fearful lance,
go to vex the insolent Parthians,

spending his life in the open, in the heart
of dangerous action. And seeing him, from
the enemy's walls, let the warring
tyrant's wife, and her grown-up daughter, sigh:

'Ah, don't let the inexperienced lover
provoke the lion that's dangerous to touch,
whom a desire for blood sends raging
so swiftly through the core of destruction.'

It's sweet and fitting to die for one's country.
Yet death chases after the soldier who runs,
and it won't spare the cowardly back
or the limbs, of peace-loving young men.

Virtue, that's ignorant of sordid defeat,
shines out with its honour unstained, and never
takes up the axes or puts them down
at the request of a changeable mob.

Virtue, that opens the heavens for those who
did not deserve to die, takes a road denied
to others, and scorns the vulgar crowd
and the bloodied earth, on ascending wings.

And there's a true reward for loyal silence:
I forbid the man who divulged those secret
rites of Ceres, to exist beneath
the same roof as I, or untie with me

the fragile boat: often careless Jupiter
included the innocent with the guilty,
but lame-footed Punishment rarely
forgets the wicked man, despite his start.

Horace

BkIII:III Stand Firm

The passion of the public, demanding what
is wrong, never shakes the man of just and firm
intention, from his settled purpose,
nor the tyrant's threatening face, nor the winds

the stormy masters of the troubled Adriatic,
nor Jupiter's mighty hand with its lightning:
if the heavens fractured in their fall,
still their ruin would strike him, unafraid.

By these means Pollux, and wandering Hercules,
in their effort, reached the fiery citadels,
where Augustus shall recline one day,
drinking nectar to stain his rosy lips.

Bacchus, for such virtues your tigers drew you,
pulling at the yoke holding their untamed necks:
for these virtues, Romulus, escaped
with horses that were Mars', from Acheron,

while Juno, in the council of the gods, spoke
welcome words: 'Ilium, Ilium is in
the dust, through both Paris's fatal,
sinful judgement, and that foreign woman:

Ilium was mine, and virgin Minerva's,
and its citizens, and its treacherous king,
from the time when Laomedon robbed
the gods, withholding the payment agreed.

The infamous guest no longer shines for his
Spartan adulteress, nor does Priam's house,
betrayed, hold back the fierce Achaeans,
with Hector's help: now the ten-year battle,

which our quarrels long extended, is ended.
From this moment on I'll abandon my fierce
anger, and I'll restore my hated
grandson, he who was born of a priestess

of Troy, to Mars: I'll allow him to enter
the regions of light, and to drink sweet nectar,
and to be enrolled, and take his place,
here, among the quiet ranks of the gods.

Let the exiles rule happily in any
place they choose, so long as there's a width of sea,
roaring, between Ilium and Rome,
so long as the cattle trample over

the tombs of Paris and of Priam, and wild

beasts hide their offspring there with impunity:
and let their Capitol stand gleaming,
let warlike Rome make laws for conquered Medes.

Let her extend her dreaded name to farthest
shores, there where the straits separate Africa
and Europe, there where the swollen Nile
irrigates the lands beside the river,

firm in ignoring gold still undiscovered,
that's better where it is while earth conceals it,
than mining it for our human use,
with hands that grasp everything that's sacred.

Whatever marks the boundaries of the world,
let Rome's might reach it, eager to see regions
where solar fires perform their revels,
or places where the mists and rain pour down.

But I prophesy such fate for her warlike citizens,
with this proviso: that they show no excess
of piety, or faith in their powers,
wishing to rebuild Troy's ancestral roofs.

Troy's fortunes would revive with evil
omens, and they'd repeat their sad disaster,
while I, who am Jove's wife and sister,
would lead the victorious armies.

If her bronze walls were to rise again three times
with Apollo's help, three times they'd be destroyed,
shattered by my Argives, and, three times,
the captive wife would mourn sons and husband.'

What are you saying, Muse? This theme doesn't suit
the happy lyre. Stop wilfully repeating
divine conversations, and weakening
great matters with these trivial metres.

Horace

BkIII:IV Temper Power With Wisdom

O royal Calliope, come from heaven,
and play a lengthy melody on the flute,
or, if you prefer, use your clear voice,
or pluck at the strings of Apollo's lute.

Do you hear her, or does some lovely fancy
toy with me? I hear, and seem to wander, now,
through the sacred groves, where delightful
waters steal, where delightful breezes stray.

In my childhood, once, on pathless Vultur's slopes,
beyond the bounds of nurturing Apulia,
exhausted with my play and weariness,
the fabled doves covered me with new leaves,

which was a wonder to everyone who holds
Acherontia's high nest, and Bantia's
woodland pastures, and the rich meadows
of low-lying Forentum, since I slept

safe from the bears and from the dark vipers,
the sacred laurel and the gathered myrtle
spread above me, a courageous child,
though it was thanks to the power of the gods.

Yours Muses, yours, I climb the high Sabine Hills,
or I'm carried off to my cool Praeneste,
to the slopes of Tibur, if I please,
or the cloudless loveliness of Baiae.

A friend of your sacred fountains and your
choirs, the rout of the army at Philippi
failed to kill me, and that accursed
tree, and Palinurus' Sicilian Sea.

Whenever you are with me, as a sailor
I'll attempt the raging Bosphorus, or be
a traveller in the burning sands
of the Syrian shore: as a stranger

I'll see the fierce inhospitable Britons,
the Spaniards that love drinking horses' blood,
I'll see the quiver-bearing Thracians,
and, unharmed, visit the Scythian stream.

It's you then who refresh our noble Caesar,
in your Pierian caves, when he's settled
his weary troops in all the cities,
and he's ready to complete his labours.

You give calm advice, and you delight in that

giving, kindly ones. We know how the evil
Titans, how their savage supporters
were struck down by the lightning from above,

by him who rules the silent earth, the stormy
sea, the cities, and the kingdoms of darkness,
alone, in imperial justice,
commanding the gods and the mortal crowd.

Great terror was visited on Jupiter
by all those bold warriors bristling with hands,
and by the brothers who tried to set
Pelion on shadowy Olympus.

But what power could Giant Typhoeus have,
or mighty Mimas, or that Porphyriion
with his menacing stance, Rhoetus,
or Enceladus, audacious hurler

of uprooted trees, against the bronze breastplate,
Minerva's aegis? On one side stood eager
Vulcan, on the other maternal
Juno, and Apollo of Patera

and Delos, who is never without the bow
on his shoulder, who bathes his flowing hair
in Castalia's pure dew, who holds
the forests, and thickets of Lycia.

Power without wisdom falls by its own weight:
The gods themselves advance temperate power:
and likewise hate force that, with its whole
consciousness, is intent on wickedness.

Let hundred-handed Gyas be the witness
to my statement: Orion too, well-known as
chaste Dian's attacker, and tamed
by the arrows of the virgin goddess.

Earth, heaped above her monstrous children, laments
and grieves for her offspring, hurled down to murky
Orcus by the lightning bolt: The swift
fires have not yet eaten Aetna, set there,

nor the vultures ceased tearing at the liver
of intemperate Tityus, those guardians placed
over his sin: and three hundred chains
hold the amorous Pirithous fast.

Horace

BkIII:IX A Dialogue

'While I was the man, dear to you,
while no young man, you loved more dearly, was clasping
his arms around your snow-white neck,
I lived in greater blessedness than Persia's king.'

'While you were on fire for no one
else, and Lydia was not placed after Chloë,
I, Lydia, of great renown,
lived more gloriously than Roman Ilia.'

'Thracian Chloe commands me now,
she's skilled in sweet verses, she's the queen of the lyre,
for her I'm not afraid to die,
if the Fates spare her, and her spirit survives me.'

'I'm burnt with a mutual flame
by Calais, Thurian Ornytus's son,
for whom I would die twice over
if the Fates spare him, and his spirit survives me.'

'What if that former love returned,
and forced two who are estranged under her bronze yoke:
if golden Chloë was banished,
and the door opened to rejected Lydia?'

'Though he's lovelier than the stars,
and you're lighter than cork, and more irascible
than the cruel Adriatic,
I'd love to live with you, with you I'd gladly die!'

Horace

BkIII:V No Surrender

We believe thunderous Jupiter rules the sky:
Augustus is considered a god on earth,
for adding the Britons, and likewise
the weight of the Persians to our empire.

Didn't Crassus' soldiers live in vile marriage
with barbarian wives, and (because of our
Senate and its perverse ways!) grow old,
in the service of their hostile fathers.

Marsians, Apulians ruled by a Mede,
forgetting their shields, Roman names, and togas,
and eternal Vesta, though Jove's shrines
and the city of Rome remained unharmed?

Regulus's far-seeing mind warned of this,
when he objected to shameful surrender,
and considered from its example
harm would come to the following age,

unless captured men were killed without pity.
'I've seen standards and weapons,' he said,
'taken bloodlessly from our soldiers,
hung there in the Carthaginian shrines,

I've seen the arms of our freemen twisted
behind their backs, enemy gates wide open,
and the fields that our warfare ravaged
being freely cultivated again.

Do you think that our soldiers ransomed for gold,
will fight more fiercely next time! You'll add
harm to shame: the wool that's dyed purple
never regains the colour that vanished,

and true courage, when once departed, never
cares to return to an inferior heart.
When a doe that's set free, from the thick
hunting nets, turns to fight, then he'll be brave

who trusts himself to treacherous enemies
and he'll crush Carthage, in a second battle,
who's felt the chains on his fettered wrists,
without a struggle, afraid of dying.

He's one who, not knowing how life should be lived,
confuses war with peace. O, shame! O mighty
Carthage, made mightier now because
of Italy's disgraceful decadence.'

It's said he set aside his wife's chaste kisses,

and his little ones, as of less importance,
and, grimly, he set his manly face
to the soil, until he might be able

to strengthen the Senate's wavering purpose,
by making of himself an example no
other man had made, and hurrying,
among grieving friends, to noble exile.

Yet he knew what the barbarous torturer
was preparing for him. Still he pushed aside
the kinsmen who were blocking his way,
and the people who delayed his going,

as if, with some case decided, and leaving
all that tedious business of his clients,
he headed for Venafrum's meadows,
or Lacedaemonian Tarentum.

Horace

BkIII:VI Moral Decadence

Romans, though you're guiltless, you'll still expiate
your fathers' sins, till you've restored the temples,
and the tumbling shrines of all the gods,
and their images, soiled with black smoke.

You rule because you are lower than the gods
you worship: all things begin with them: credit
them with the outcome. Neglected gods
have made many woes for sad Italy.

Already Parthians, and Monaeses
and Pacorus, have crushed our inauspicious
assaults, and laugh now to have added
our spoils to their meagre treasures.

Dacians and Ethiopians almost toppled
the City, mired in civil war, the last feared
for their fleet of ships, and the others
who are best known for their flying arrows.

Our age, fertile in its wickedness, has first
defiled the marriage bed, our offspring, and homes:
disaster's stream has flowed from this source
through the people and the fatherland.

The young girl early takes delight in learning
Greek dances, in being dressed with all the arts,
and soon meditates sinful affairs,
with every fibre of her new being:

later at her husband's dinners she searches
for younger lovers, doesn't mind to whom she
grants all her swift illicit pleasures
when the lights are far removed, but she rises,

openly, when ordered to do so, and not
without her husband's knowledge, whether it's for
some peddler, or Spanish ship's captain,
an extravagant buyer of her shame.

The young men who stained the Punic Sea with blood
they were not born of such parentage, those who
struck at Pyrrhus, and struck at great
Antiochus, and fearful Hannibal:

they were a virile crowd of rustic soldiers,
taught to turn the furrow with a Sabine hoe,
to bring in the firewood they had cut
at the instruction of their strict mothers.

when the sun had lengthened the mountain shadows,

and lifted the yokes from the weary bullocks,
bringing a welcome time of rest,
with the departure of his chariot.

What do the harmful days not render less?
Worse than our grandparents' generation, our
parents' then produced us, even worse,
and soon to bear still more sinful children.

Horace

BkIII:VII Be True

Why weep, Asterie, for Gyges, whom west winds
will bring back to you at the first breath of springtime,
your lover constant in faith,
blessed with goods, from Bithynia?

Driven by easterlies as far as Epirus,
now, after Capella's wild rising, he passes
chill nights of insomnia,
and not without many a tear.

Yet messages from his solicitous hostess,
telling how wretched Chloë sighs for your lover,
and burns with desire, tempts him
subtly and in a thousand ways.

She tells how a treacherous woman, making
false accusations, drove credulous Proteus
to bring a too-hasty death
to a too-chaste Bellerophon:

she tells of Peleus, nearly doomed to Hades,
fleeing Magnesian Hippolyte in abstinence:
and deceitfully teaches
tales that encourage wrongdoing.

All in vain: still untouched, he hears her voice, as deaf
as the Icarian cliffs. But take care yourself
lest Enipeus, next door,
pleases you more than is proper:

even though no one else is considered as fine
at controlling his horse, on the Campus's turf,
and no one else swims as fast
as him, down the Tiber's channel.

Close your doors when it's dark, and don't you go gazing
into the street, at the sound of his plaintive flute,
and when he keeps calling you
cruel, you still play hard to get.

Horace

BkIII:VIII Celebration

You, an expert in prose in either language,
wonder what I, a bachelor, am doing
on the Kalends of March, what do the flowers mean,
the box of incense,

and the embers laid out on the fresh cut turf.
I vowed sweet meats to Bacchus, vowed a pure white
goat, at that time when I was so nearly killed
by a falling tree.

When this festive day returns again I'll draw
a tight-fitting cork, sealed with pitch, from a jar
laid down to gather the dust in that year when
Tullus was Consul.

So drink a whole gallon of wine, Maecenas,
celebrating your friend's escape, and we'll quench
the flickering lamps at dawn: keep far away
the noise and anger.

Leave the cares of state behind in the City:
Cotiso's Dacian army's been destroyed,
the dangerous Medes are fighting each other,
in grievous battle,

our old Cantabrian enemies are slaves,
subdued, in chains, at last, on the Spanish coast,
and now the Scythians, their bows unstrung, plan
to give up their plains.

A private citizen for now, don't worry
yourself, overmuch, what troubles the people,
and gladly accept the gifts of the moment,
and forget dark things.

Horace

BkIII:X Cruel One

If you drank the water of furthest Don, Lyce,
married to some fierce husband, you'd still expose me
to the wailing winds of your native North country,
stretched out here by your cruel door.

Hear how the frame creaks, how the trees that are planted
inside your beautiful garden moan in the wind,
and how Jupiter's pure power and divinity
ices over the fallen snow.

Set aside your disdain, it's hateful to Venus,
lest the rope fly off, while the wheel is still turning:
you're no Penelope, resistant to suitors,
nor born of Etruscan parents.

O, spare your suppliants, though nothing moves you,
not gifts, not my prayers, not your lover's pallor,
that's tinged with violet, nor your husband smitten
with a Pierian mistress,

you, no more pliant than an unbending oak-tree,
no gentler in spirit than a Moorish serpent.
My body won't always put up with your threshold,
or the rain that falls from the sky.

Horace

BkIII:XI Remember the Danaids

Mercury (since, taught by you, his master,
Amphion could move the stones, with his singing),
and you, tortoise shell, clever at making your
seven strings echo,

you, who were neither eloquent nor lovely,
but welcomed, now, by rich tables and temples,
play melodies to which Lyde might apply
a reluctant ear,

who gambols friskily, like a three year old
filly, over the widening plain, fears being
touched, a stranger to marriage, who's not yet ripe
for a forceful mate.

You've the power to lead tigers and forests as
attendants, and hold back the swift-running streams:
Cerberus, the frightful doorkeeper of Hell,
yielded to your charms,

though a hundred snakes guarded his fearful head,
and a hideous breath flowed out of his mouth
and poisoned venom was frothing around
his triple-tongued jaws.

Even Ixion and Tityos smiled, with
unwilling faces, and, for a little while,
the urns were dry, as your sweet song delighted
Danaus' daughters.

Lyde should listen to those girls' wickedness
and their punishment, it's well known: their wine jars
empty, water vanishing through the bottom:
that fate long-delayed

that still waits for wrongdoers down in Orcus.
Impious (what worse could they have committed?)
impious, they had the power to destroy their
lovers with cruel steel.

Hypermnestra alone of the many was
worthy of marriage, splendidly deceiving
her lying father, a girl rendered noble
for ages to come,

'Up, up,' she cried to her young husband, 'lest sleep,
that lasts forever, comes, to you, from a source
you wouldn't expect: escape from my father,
my wicked sisters,

ah, they're like lionesses who each has seized

a young bullock, and tears at it: I, gentler
than them, will never strike you, or hold you
under lock and key.

Let my father weigh me down with cruel chains,
because in mercy I spared my wretched man:
let him banish me in a ship to the far
Numidian lands.

Go, wherever your feet and the winds take you,
while Venus, and Night, both favour you: luck be
with you: and carve an epitaph on my tomb,
in fond memory.

Horace

BkIII:XII Neobule, to Herself

Girls are wretched who can't allow free play to love, or drown their cares
with sweet wine, those who, terrified, go around in fear of a tongue
lashing from one of their uncles.

Neobule, Cytherea's winged boy snatches your wool stuff away
and your work, your devotion to busy Minerva, whenever
shining Liparean Hebrus,

that lover of yours, has bathed his oiled shoulders in Tiber's waters,
even better a horseman than Bellerephon, never beaten
through slowness of fists or of feet,

clever too at spearing the deer, as they pour, in a startled herd,
across the wide open spaces, and quick to come at the wild boar
as it lurks in the dense thicket.

Horace

BkIII:XIII O Fons Bandusiae

O Bandusian fountain, brighter than crystal,
worthy of sweet wine, not lacking in flowers,
tomorrow we'll honour you
with a kid, whose brow is budding

with those horns that are destined for love and battle.
All in vain: since this child of the playful herd will
darken your ice-cool waters,
with the stain of its crimson blood.

The implacable hour of the blazing dog-star
knows no way to touch you, you offer your lovely
coolness to bullocks, weary
of ploughing, and to wandering flocks.

And you too will be one of the famous fountains,
now I write of the holm oak that's rooted above
the cave in the rock where your
clear babbling waters run down.

Horace

BkIII:XIV Augustus Returns

O citizens, conquering Caesar is home
from the Spanish shores, who, like Hercules, now
was said to be seeking that laurel, that's bought
at the price of death.

May his wife rejoice in a matchless husband,
having sacrificed to true gods, appear now
with our famous leader's sister, and, all dressed
in holy ribbons,

the mothers of virgins and youths, now safe and
sound. And you, O you boys and you young girls who
are still without husbands, spare us any of
your ill-omened words

This day will be a true holiday for me,
and banish dark care: I'll not fear civil war,
nor sudden death by violence, while Caesar has
command of the earth.

Go, now, you boys, seek out perfumes and garlands
and a jar that's old as the Marsian War,
if any of them have managed to escape
Spartacus's eyes.

And tell that graceful Neaera to hurry
and fasten all her perfumed hair in a knot:
if her hateful doorkeeper causes
delay, come away.

My greying hair softens a spirit eager
for arguments and passionate fights:
I'd not have endured it in my hot youth, while
Plancus was Consul.

Horace

BkIII:XIX Let's Drink

You can tell me the years between
Inachus and Codrus, who wasn't afraid to
die for his country, Aeacus'
line, and the fights by the walls at sacred Troy:

but you can't say what price we'll pay
for a jar of Chian wine, who'll heat the water,
or under whose roof, at what time,
I can escape at last from Paelignian cold.

Don't wait: drink to the new moon, boy,
to the midnight hour, to the augur, Murena:
the wine is mixed in three measures,
or nine, depending which of the two is fitting.

The poet, inspired, who's in love
with the odd-numbered Muses, will ask for three times
three: fearing our quarrels, the Grace,
who's hand in hand with her naked sisters, forbids

more than triple. I like to rave:
why have the blasts of the Berecyntian flute
fallen silent? Why is the pipe
hanging there speechless, next door to the speechless lyre?

I dislike those hands that refrain:
scatter rose petals: and let envious Lycus
hear our demented noise-making,
and the girl who's next door, who won't suit old Lycus.

Ripe Rhode is searching for you,
Telephus, you with the glistening hair, oh you,
who are like the pure evening star:
while a slow love, for Glycera, has me on fire.

Horace

BkIII:XV Too Old

O, dear wife of poor Ibycus,
put an end to your wickedness, at last, and all
of your infamous goings-on:
now you are nearer the season for dying,

stop playing about with the girls,
and scattering a mist over shining stars.
What fits Pholoe is not quite
fitting for you, Chloris: while your daughter's more

suited to storming the houses of lovers,
like a Bacchante stirred by the beating drum.
Her love for Nothus forces her
to gambol like a lascivious she-goat:

the wool that's shorn near to noble
Luceria's fitting for you, sad old thing,
not the dark red flower of the rose,
nor the lyre, nor the wine-jars drained to their dregs

Horace

BkIII:XVI Just Enough

The towers made of bronze, and the doors made of oak,
and the watch-dogs sombre vigil, would, surely, have
been enough, to protect imprisoned Danaë,
from adulterers in the night,

if Jupiter, and then Venus, hadn't been laughing
at Acrisius, the girl's anxious guardian:
since they knew that the path would be safe and open,
with the god as a shower of gold.

Gold loves to travel in the midst of fine servants,
and break through the rocks, since it's far more powerful
than lightning bolts: didn't the Greek prophet's house fall
because of his riches, and sink

to ruin: and with gifts, the Macedonian
burst the gates of the cities, brought rival kingdoms
to destruction: and gifts of gold, too, are able
to snare fierce naval commanders.

Anxiety, and the hunger for more, pursues
growing wealth. It's right, then, that I shrank from raising
my head to be seen far and wide, dear Maecenas,
glory of the Equestrians.

The more that a man denies himself, then the more
will flow from the gods: so naked, I seek the camp
of those who ask for nothing, I'm a deserter,
eager to abandon the rich,

a more glorious lord of the wealth that I spurn,
than if it were said I conceal, deep in my barns,
whatever the busy Apulians harvest:
destitute among great riches.

A stream of pure water, a few woodland acres,
and a confident faith in the crops from my fields,
are more blessed than the fate that deceives the shining
master of fertile Africa.

Though it's true the Calabrian bees don't bring me
their honey, and no Laestrygonian wine-jar
mellows for me, with no glossy fleece thickening
for me in the pastures of Gaul:

yet there's still no presence of grinding poverty,
nor if I wished for more would you deny it me.
I can eke out my income more effectively
by constraining what I desire,

than if I were to join the Mygdonian plains

to the Lydian kingdom. To those who want much,
much is lacking: he's happy to whom the god grants
just enough, from a careful hand.

Horace

BkIII:XVII The Approaching Storm

Aelius, noble descendant of ancient
Lamus (and they say the Lamiae of old
were named from him, the ancestral line,
through all of our recorded history):

you come from him, the original founder,
who, it's said, first held the walls of Formiae
and Latium's River Liris where
it floods the shores of the nymph, Marica,

he the lord, far and wide. Tomorrow a storm
sent from the East, will fill all the woodland grove
with leaves, and the sands with useless weed,
unless the raven, old prophet of rain,

is wrong. Pile up the dry firewood while you can:
tomorrow, with your servants, released from their
labours, cheer your spirit with neat wine,
and a little pig, only two months old.

Horace

BkIII:XVIII To Faunus

Faunus, the lover of Nymphs who are fleeing,
may you pass gently over my boundaries,
my sunny fields, and, as you go by, be kind
to all my new-born,

if at the end of the year a tender kid
is sacrificed to you: if the full bowls of wine,
aren't lacking, friend of Venus: the old altar
smoking with incense.

All the flock gambols over the grassy plain,
when the fifth of December returns for you:
the festive village empties into the fields,
and the idle herd:

the wolf wanders among the audacious lambs:
for you the woods, wildly, scatter their leaves:
the ditcher delights in striking the soil he
hates, in triple time.

Horace

BkIII:XX The Conflict

Pyrrhus, you can't see how dangerous it is
to touch the Gaetolian lioness' cub?
Soon you'll be running from all that hard fighting,
a spiritless thief,

while she goes searching for lovely Nearchus,
through obstructive crowds of young men: ah, surely
the fight will be great, whether the prize is yours,
or, more likely, hers.

Meanwhile, as you produce your swift arrows, as
she is sharpening her fearsome teeth, the battle's
fine judge is said to have trampled the palm leaf,
beneath his bare foot,

and he's cooling his shoulders, draped in perfumed
hair, in the gentle breeze, just like Nireus,
or like Ganymede, who was snatched away from
Ida rich in streams.

Horace

BkIII:XXI Praise Of Wine

Faithful wine-jar, born, with me, in Manlius'
Consulship, whether you bring moans or laughter,
whether you bring mad love, and quarrels,
or whether you bring us gentle slumber,

whatever the end of the vintage Massic
you guard, that's worthy of some auspicious day,
be emptied, Corvinus orders us
to bring out a much less powerful wine.

You apply gentle torture to wits that are
mostly dull: you reveal the cares of the wise,
and you uncover their secret thoughts,
by means of Bacchus' happy pleasantries:

you bring fresh hope to those minds that are distressed,
and grant the poor man strength and courage, through you
he no longer trembles at the crowns
of angry kings, nor at soldiers' weapons.

You, Bacchus, and delightful Venus, if she
would come, the Graces, reluctant to dissolve
their knot, and the bright lamps, will be here,
till Phoebus puts the stars to flight again.

Horace

BkIII:XXII To Diana

Virgin protectress of the mountain and the grove,
who, called on three times, hears young girls, labouring
through childbirth, and rescues them from dying, O
triple formed goddess,

may it be yours, this pine-tree above my farm,
so that I may, happily, through passing years,
offer it the blood of a boar, that's trying
its first sidelong thrusts.

Horace

BkIII:XXIII Pure Hands

Phidyle, my country girl, if you raise your
upturned palms to heaven, at the new-born moon,
if you placate the Lares with corn
from this year's harvest, with a greedy pig:

your fruiting vines won't suffer the destructive
southerlies, nor your crops the killing mildew,
nor will the young of the flock be born
in that sickly season, heavy with fruit.

Since the destined victim, grazing, on snowy
Algidus, amongst the oak and ilex trees,
or fattening in the Alban meadows,
will stain the axes of the priest with blood:

there's no need for you to try and influence
the gods, with repeated sacrifice of sheep
while you crown their tiny images
with rosemary, and the brittle myrtle.

If pure hands have touched the altar, even though
they've not gratified with lavish sacrifice,
they'll mollify hostile Penates,
with the sacred corn, and the dancing grain.

Horace

BkIII:XXIV Destructive Wealth

Though you're richer than the untouched
riches of Araby, than wealthy India,
and you fill the land, and inshore
waters, with your deposits of builders' rubble:

if dread Necessity fixes
her adamantine nails in your highest rooftops,
you'll not free your spirit from fear,
nor free your very being from the noose of death.

Better to live like Scythians
in the Steppes, whose wagons haul their movable homes,
that's custom, or the fierce Getae,
whose unallocated acres produce their fruits,

their harvests of rye, in common,
where cultivation's not decided for more than
a year, and when one turn is done,
it's carried on by other hands, as a duty.

There, as their own, the unselfish
women raise those children who have lost their mothers:
and the richly dowered wife never
rules her husband, or believes in shining lovers.

Their greatest dowry's their parents'
virtue, and their own chastity, which is careful
of another's husband, in pure
loyalty, sin is wrong and death's its penalty.

O whoever would end impious
killing, and civil disorder, and would desire
to have 'City Father' inscribed
on their statues, let them be braver, and rein in

unbridled licence, and win fame
among posterity: since we, alas, for shame,
filled with envy, hate chaste virtue,
and only seek it when it's hidden from our eyes.

What use are sad lamentations,
if crime is never suppressed by its punishment?
What use are all these empty laws
without the behaviour that should accompany them?

if neither those parts of the Earth
enclosed by heat, nor those far confines of the North,
snow frozen solid on the ground,
deter the trader, if cunning sailors conquer

the stormy seas, if poverty,

is considered a great disgrace, and directs us
to do and to bear everything,
and abandon the arduous paths of virtue?

Let's send our jewels, our precious
stones, our destructive gold, to the Capitol, while
the crowd applauds, and raises its strident clamour,
or ship them to the nearest sea,

as causes of our deepest ills,
if we truly repent of all our wickedness.
Let the source of our perverted
greed be lost, and then let our inadequate minds

be trained in more serious things.
The inexperienced noble youth is unskilled
at staying in the saddle, he
fears to hunt, and he's much better at playing games,

whether you order him to fool
with a Greek hoop, or you prefer forbidden dice,
while his father's perjured trust cheats
his partner and his friends, hurrying to amass

money for his unworthy heir.
While it's true that in this way his ill-gotten gains
increase, yet there's always something
lacking in a fortune forever incomplete.

Horace

BkIII:XXIX Fortune

Maecenas, son of Etruscan kings, a jar
of mellow wine, that nobody's touched, awaits
you, at my house, and with rose-petals,
and balsam, for your hair, squeezed from the press.

Escape from what delays you: don't always be
thinking of moist Tibur, and of Aefula's
sloping fields, and of the towering heights
of Telegonus, who killed his father.

Forget the fastidiousness of riches,
and those efforts to climb to the lofty clouds,
stop being so amazed by the smoke,
and the wealth, and the noise, of thriving Rome.

A change usually pleases the rich: a meal
that's simple beneath a poor man's humble roof,
without the tapestries and purple,
smooths the furrows on a wrinkled forehead.

Already Cepheus, Andromeda's bright
father, shows his hidden fires, and now Procyon
rages, and Leo's furious stars,
as the sun returns with his parching days:

Now the shepherd, with his listless flock, searches
for the shade, and the stream and the thickets
of shaggy Silvanus, the silent banks
lack even the breath of a wandering breeze.

You're worrying about state politics,
and, anxious about the City, you're fretting
what the Seres, and Bactra, Cyrus
once ruled, and troublesome Don, are plotting.

The wise god buries the future's outcome deep
in shadowy night, and smiles at those mortals
who are agitated far beyond
what's sensible. Remember, with calmness,

reconcile yourself to what is: the rest is
carried along like a river, gliding now,
peacefully, in mid-stream, and down
to the Tuscan Sea, now rolling around

polished stones, uprooted trees, the flocks, and homes
together, with the echoes from the mountains,
and the neighbouring woods, while the wild
deluge stirs the peaceful tributaries.

He's happy, he's his own master, who can say

each day: 'I've lived: tomorrow, the Father may
fill the heavens with darkening cloud,
or fill the sky with radiant sunshine:

yet he can't render whatever is past as
null and void, he can never seek to alter,
or return and undo, whatever
the fleeting moment tosses behind it.

Fortune takes delight in her cruel business,
determined to play her extravagant games,
and she alters her fickle esteem,
now kind to me, and, now, to some other.

I praise her while she's here: but if she flutters
her swift wings, I resign the gifts she gave, wrap
myself in virtue, and woo honest
Poverty, even though she's no dowry.

When the masts are groaning in African gales,
it's not for me to ask in wretched prayer,
that my Cyprian and Tyrian
wares should be saved entire not add new wealth

to the greedy sea: and then the light breezes,
Pollux, and Castor his brother, carry me
safely through the stormy Aegean,
all with the aid of my double-oared skiff.

Horace

BkIII:XXV Bacchanalian Song

Where are you taking me, Bacchus,
now I'm full of you? To what caves or groves, driven,
swiftly, by new inspiration?
In what caverns will I be heard planning to set

illustrious Caesar's lasting
glory among the stars, in the councils of Jove?
I'll sing a recent achievement,
not yet sung by other lips. So does the sleepless

Bacchante, stand in amazement
on a mountain-ridge, gazing at Hebrus, at Thrace,
shining with snow, at Rhodope,
trodden by barbarous feet, even as I like

to wander gazing, at river
banks, and echoing groves. O master of Naiads,
of Bacchae owning the power
to uproot the tallest ash-trees, with their bare hands,

I'll sing nothing trivial, no
humble measure, nothing that dies. O, Lenaeus,
the danger of following a god
is sweet, wreathing my brow with green leaves of the vine.

Horace

BkIII:XXVI Enough

I was suited to sweethearts till now, and performed
my service, not without glory: but now this wall
that protects the left flank of Venus,
the girl from the sea, shall have my weapons,

and hold up the lyre that has finished with warfare.
Here, O here, place the shining torches, and set up
the crowbars, and set up the axes,
so that they menace opposite doorways.

O goddess, you who possess rich Cyprus, O queen,
who holds Memphis, that's free of Sithonian snows,
touch, just for once, arrogant Chloë,
touch her, just once, with your whip, lifted high.

Horace

BkIII:XXVII Europa

Let the wicked be led by omens of screeching
from owls, by pregnant dogs, or a grey-she wolf,
hurrying down from Lanuvian meadows,
or a fox with young:

May a snake disturb the journey they've started,
terrifying the ponies like an arrow
flashing across the road: but I far-seeing
augur, with prayer

for him whom I'm fearful for, out of the east
I'll call up the ominous raven, before
the bird that divines the imminent showers
seeks standing water.

Galatea, wherever you choose to live
may you be happy, and live in thought of me:
no woodpecker on your left, or errant crow
to bar your going.

But see, with what storms flickering Orion
is setting. I know how the Adriatic's
black gulf can be, and how the bright westerly
wind commits its sins.

Let the wives and children of our enemy
feel the blind force of the rising southerly,
and the thunder of the dark waters, the shores
trembling at the blow.

So, Europa entrusted her snow-white form
to the bull's deceit, and the brave girl grew pale,
at the sea alive with monsters, the dangers
of the deep ocean.

Leaving the meadow, where, lost among flowers,
she was weaving a garland owed to the Nymphs,
now, in the luminous night, she saw nothing
but water and stars.

As soon as she reached the shores of Crete, mighty
with its hundred cities, she cried: 'O father,
I've lost the name of daughter, my piety
conquered by fury.

Where have I come from, where am I going? One
death is too few for a virgin's sin. Am I
awake, weeping a vile act, or free from guilt,
mocked by a phantom,

that fleeing, false, from the ivory gate brings

only a dream? Is it not better to pick
fresh flowers than to go travelling over
the breadths of the sea?

If anyone now could deliver that foul
beast to my anger, I'd attempt to wound it
with steel, and shatter the horns of that monster,
the one I once loved.

I'm shameless, I've abandoned my country's gods,
I'm shameless, I keep Orcus waiting. O if
one of the gods can hear, I wish I might walk
naked with lions!

Before vile leanness hollows my lovely cheeks,
and the juices ebb in this tender victim,
while I am still beautiful, I'll seek to be
food for the tigers.

My absent father urges me on: 'Why wait
to die, worthless Europa? Happily you
can hang by the neck from this ash-tree: use
the sash that's with you.

Or if cliffs and the sharpened rocks attract you,
as a means of death, put your trust in the speed
of the wind, unless you'd rather be carding
some mistress's wool,

you, of royal blood, be handed over, as
concubine to a barbarous queen.' She moaned:
Venus was laughing, treacherously, with her
son, his bow unstrung.

When she'd toyed enough with her, she said: 'Refrain
from anger and burning passion, when the bull,
you hate, yields you his horns again, so that you
can start to wound them.

Don't you know you're invincible Jupiter's
wife. Stop your sobbing, and learn to carry your
good fortune well: a continent of the Earth
will be named for you.

Horace

BkIII:XXVIII For Neptune

What better thing is there to do,
on Neptune's festive day? Lyde, brisk now, bring up
Caecuban wine, from my reserve,
and apply some pressure to wisdom's defences.

You can see the day is dying,
and yet, as if the flying hours were standing still,
you're slow to fetch from the cellar
that wine-jar put down in Bibulus' Consulship.

We'll sing, one after the other,
I, of Neptune, I, the Nereids' sea-green hair:
you reply on the curving lyre
with Latona, and Cynthia's speeding arrows:

we'll end the song with she who holds
Cnidos, the shining Cyclades, she who visits
Paphos: Venus, drawn by her swans:
and we'll celebrate night too, with a fitting song.

Horace

BkIII:XXX Aere Perennius

I've raised a monument, more durable than bronze,
one higher than the Pyramids' royal towers,
that no devouring rain, or fierce northerly gale,
has power to destroy: nor the immeasurable
succession of years, and the swift passage of time.
I'll not utterly die, but a rich part of me,
will escape Persephone: and fresh with the praise
of posterity, I'll rise, beyond. While the High
Priest, and the silent Virgin, climb the Capitol,
I'll be famous, I, born of humble origin,
(from where wild Aufidus roars, and where Daunus once,
lacking in streams, ruled over a rural people)
as the first to re-create Aeolian song
in Italian verse. Melpomene, take pride,
in what has been earned by your merit, and, Muse,
willingly, crown my hair, with the Delphic laurel.

Horace

BkIV:I Venus, be Merciful

Venus now you've returned again
to battles long neglected. Please, oh please, spare me.
I'm not prey to the power of kind
Cinara, as once I was. After fifty years,

cruel mother of sweet Cupids,
leave one now who's hardened to your soft commands:
take yourself there, where seductive
prayers, from the young men, invite you to return.

It would be better still for you,
lifted by wings of gleaming swans, to adventure
to Paulus Maximus's house,
if you want a worthy heart to set on fire.

Since he's noble and he's handsome,
and he's not un-eloquent, for anxious clients:
he's a lad of a hundred skills,
and he'll carry your army's standard far and wide:

and he'll laugh when he's successful
despite his rival's expensive gifts, and he'll raise,
just for you, by the Alban Lake,
a statue in marble, under a wooden roof.

You'll smell rich incense, and you'll take
delight in the notes of the lyre, when they're mingled
with the Berecyntian flute's,
and the sound of the reed pipes won't be absent, there:

while sweet, virgin girls celebrate
your power, there, twice every day, see the young boys
beat the ground with their snow-white feet,
in a triple measure, like Salian dancers.

Women and boys can't please me now,
nor those innocent hopes of mutual feeling,
nor wine-drinking competitions,
nor foreheads circled by freshly-gathered flowers.

But why, ah Ligurinus, why
should tears gather here on my cheeks, from time to time?
Why does my tongue, once eloquent,
fall indecorously silent while I'm speaking?

In dreams, at night, hard-hearted one,
I hold you prisoner, or follow you in flight,
over the grassy Fields of Mars,
or wing with you above the inconstant waters.

Horace

BkIV:II Augustus's Return

Iulus, whoever tries to rival Pindar,
flies on waxen wings, with Daedalean art,
and is doomed, like Icarus, to give a name
to glassy waters.

Like a river, rushing down from the mountains,
that the rain has filled above its usual banks,
so Pindar's deep voice seethes, immeasurably,
and goes on flowing,

Pindar, deserving Apollo's laurel crown,
whether he coins new phrases in audacious
dithyrambs, and is carried along in verse
that's free of rules,

or whether he sings gods, and kings, the children
of gods, at whose hands the Centaurs, rightly, died,
and by whom the fearful Chimaera's fires
were all extinguished,

or speaks of those godlike ones an Elean
palm, for boxing or riding, leads home again,
granting a tribute much more powerful than
a hundred statues,

or weeps for the young man snatched from his tearful
bride, praises his powers, to the stars, his spirit,
his golden virtue, begrudging all of them
to gloomy Orcus.

Son of Antony, a powerful breeze raises
the Dircean swan, whenever it's carried
to cloudy heights. While I create my verses,
in the manner

of a humble Matinian bee, that goes
gathering pollen from all the pleasant thyme,
and labours among the many groves, on the banks
of flowing Tiber.

You, a poet of much greater power, will sing
Caesar, honoured with well-earned wreaths, as he climbs
the sacred slopes, drawing along in his wake
the savage Germans:

he, whom no greater and no better ruler
has Fate, and the true gods, given to the world,
nor ever will, though the centuries roll back
to that first age of gold.

You'll sing of those happy days, and the City's

public games, when our brave Augustus returns,
in answer to our prayers: you'll sing the Forum
free of all quarrels.

Then, if what I utter's worth hearing, the best
strains of my voice, thrilled by Caesar's return,
will rise, and I will sing: 'O lovely sun, O
worthy to be praised!'

While you lead us along: 'Hail, God of Triumph!'
not once but many times: 'Hail, God of Triumph!'
all the city will shout, and offer incense
to the kindly gods.

Ten bulls will acquit you, and as many cows:
me, a tender calf that has left its mother,
one that's been fattened on wide pastures, one that
can fulfil my vow,

echoing, with its brow, those returning fires
of the crescent moon, at the third night's rising,
appearing snow-white where it carries a mark,
and the rest tawny.

Horace

BkIV:III To The Muse

Melpomene, Muse, one whom you
have looked on with favourable eyes at his birth
Ismian toil will never grant
fame as a boxer: while no straining horses

will draw him along, triumphant
in a Greek chariot, nor will his acts of war
show him to the high Capitol,
wreathed with the Delian laurel crown, who's crushed

the bloated menaces of kings:
but the waters that run beneath fertile Tibur,
and the thick leafage of the groves,
will make him of note in Aeolian song.

It's thought that I'm worthy by Rome's
children, the first of cities, to rank there among
the choir of delightful poets,
and already envy's teeth savage me less.

O Pierian girl, you who
command the golden tortoise shell's sweet melodies,
O you, who could, if you wished,
lend a swan's singing, too, to the silent fishes,

all of this is a gift of yours:
that I'm pointed out by the passer-by as one
who's a poet of the Roman lyre:
that I'm inspired, and please as I please: is yours.

Horace

BkIV:IV Drusus and the Claudians

Like the winged agent of the bright lightning-bolt,
to whom Jove granted power over wandering
birds, once the divine king had found him
faithful in snatching blond Ganymede:

youth and his native vigour first launching him
fresh to his labours, out from the nest: spring winds,
despite his fears, when the storms were past,
teaching him, then, unaccustomed effort:

now with a fierce, hostile assault sweeping down
on the sheepfold, and love of spoils, and the fight,
hurling him at writhing snakes: or like
a lion-cub newly weaned from rich milk

and its tawny mother, seeing a roe deer
intent on its browsing, that's fated to die
in his inexperienced jaws, such
was Drusus, as the Vindelici found

waging war beneath the Rhaetian Alps:
(where the custom's derived from that, as long as
is known, has forced them to arm themselves,
clutch, in their right hands, Amazonian

battle-axes, I've not tried to ascertain,
it's not right to know everything) but those hordes,
triumphant everywhere, for so long,
were conquered by the young man's strategies:

they came to realise what mind, and character
nurtured, with care, in a fortunate household,
by Augustus' fatherly feelings
towards his stepsons, the Neros, could do.

By the brave and good, are the brave created:
their sire's virtues exist in horses and men,
while the ferocious golden eagles
don't produce shy doves, but education

improves inborn qualities, and its proper
cultivation strengthens the mind: whenever
moral behaviour falls short, its faults
dishonour whatever was good at birth.

The Metaurus river's a witness, O Rome
to what you owe to the Neros, so too is
defeated Hasdrubal, and that day
as sweet, when the shadows fled Latium,

the first day to smile in its kindly glory,

since dread Hannibal rode through Italy's
cities, a fire among the pine-trees,
or an East wind on Sicilian seas.

And after that, through favourable efforts,
the Roman youth grew in stature, and the shrines
destroyed by Carthaginians'
impious uproar, had their gods restored.

At last that treacherous Hannibal proclaimed:
'Of our own will, like deer who become the prey
of ravening wolves, we're chasing those
whom it's a triumph to flee and evade.

Their race, still strong despite the burning of Troy,
brought their children, sacred icons, and aged
fathers, tossed about on Tuscan seas,
to the towns of Italy, as some oak,

rich in its dark leaves, high on Mount Algidus,
trimmed back by the double-bladed axe, draws strength
and life, despite loss and destruction,
from the very steel itself. The Hydra,

as its body was lopped, grew no mightier,
in grief at being conquered by Hercules,
nor was any greater monster reared
by Colchis or Echionian Thebes.

Drowned in the deep, it emerges lovelier:
contend, it defeats the freshest opponent,
with great glory, and wages wars
that the housewives will tell of in story.

I'll send no more proud messages to Carthage:
every hope of mine is ended, and ended
the fortunes of all my family,
since my brother Hasdrubal's destruction.

There's nothing that Claudian power can't achieve,
protected by Jove, protected by the god's
authority, power for which shrewd minds
clear the way through the harsh dangers of war.'

Horace

BkIV:IX Lollius

Don't think that the words I speak to accompany
the lyre (I, born near thunderous Aufidus,
plying those skills not generally known
before) are destined to utterly die:

Though Maeonian Homer holds the first place,
Pindar's Muse is not hidden, Simonides'
of Ceos, nor threatening Alcaeus',
nor that of the stately Stesichorus:

time hasn't erased what Anacreon once
played: and the love of the Lesbian girl still
breathes, all the passion that Sappho
committed to that Aeolian lyre.

Laconian Helen wasn't the only one
inflamed by marvelling at an adulterer's
elegant hair, or gold-spangled clothes,
his regal manners, and his companions,

Teucer wasn't the first to fire an arrow
from a Cydonian bow, more than once great
Troy was troubled: Idomeneus
the mighty, and Sthenelus weren't alone

in fighting wars sung by the Muses: Hector
the fierce and brave Deiphobus weren't the first
to suffer the weight of heavy blows
for the sake of their chaste wives, and children.

Many brave men lived before Agamemnon:
but all are imprisoned in unending night,
all of them are unwept and unknown,
because of the lack of a sacred bard.

Courage that's concealed in the tomb, is little
different to cowardice. Lollius I won't
be silent about you in my verse,
(you're celebrated) nor allow envious

oblivion to prey with impunity
on your many exploits. You've a mind that's versed
in affairs, that's just, in dubious
times, or in the most favourable ones,

punishing avaricious deceit, restrained
with money that draws everything to itself,
not a Consul of a single year,
but a judge often, one honest and true,

preferring honour to expediency,

with a noble look rejecting the criminal's
bribe, a conqueror carrying arms
through the hostile ranks of the enemy.

It's not right to call a man blessed because he
owns much: he more truly deserves a name for
being happy, who knows how to make
a wiser use of the gifts from the gods,

and how to endure the harshest poverty,
who's a greater fear of dishonour than death:
he's not afraid to die for the friends
that he loves, or to die for his country.

Horace

BkIV:V To Augustus

Son of the blessed gods, and greatest defender
of Romulus' people, you've been away too long:
make that swift return you promised, to the sacred
councils of the City Fathers,

Blessed leader, bring light to your country again:
when your face shines on the people, like the shining
springtime, then the day itself is more welcoming,
and the sun beams down more brightly.

As a mother, with vows and omens and prayers,
calls to the son whom a southerly wind's envious
gales have kept far from his home, for more than a year,
lingering there, beyond the waves

of the Carpathian Sea: she who never turns
her face away from the curving line of the shore:
so, smitten with the deep longing of loyalty,
the country yearns for its Caesar.

Then the ox will wander the pastures in safety,
Ceres, and kindly Increase, will nourish the crops,
our sailors will sail across the waters in peace,
trust will shrink from the mark of shame,

the chaste house will be unstained by debauchery,
law and morality conquer the taint of sin,
mothers win praise for new-born so like their fathers,
and punishment attend on guilt.

Who'll fear the Parthians, or the cold Scythians,
and who'll fear the offspring savage Germany breeds,
if Caesar's unharmed? Who'll worry about battles
in the wilds of Iberia?

Every man passes the day among his own hills,
as he fastens his vines to the waiting branches:
from there he gladly returns to his wine, calls on
you, as god, at the second course:

He worships you with many a prayer, with wine
poured out, joins your name to those of his household gods,
as the Greeks were accustomed to remembering
Castor and mighty Hercules.

'O blessed leader, bring Italy endless peace!'
That's what we say, mouths parched, at the start of the day,
that's what we say, lips wetted with wine, when the sun
sinks to rest under the Ocean.

Horace

BkIV:VI To Apollo

God, whom Niobe's children encountered, O
you, avenger of boastful words on Tityos
the robber, and Phthian Achilles, all
but proud Troy's victor,

and a greater fighter than others, but not than
you, though he was the son of sea-born Thetis,
and made the Dardanian towers tremble,
with his fearful spear.

Like a pine-tree slashed by the bite of the axe,
or a cypress struck by an Easterly wind,
he fell, outstretched, to the earth, bowed down his neck
in the Trojan dust.

He'd not have cheated the Teucrians, with their
vain celebrations, nor Priam's joyfully
dancing court, by hiding deep in the Horse, false
tribute to Minerva:

but he'd have burnt, ah, wickedly, wickedly,
their un-weaned offspring, with Achaean fires,
in open cruelty to his prisoners,
babes hid in the womb,

if Jupiter hadn't agreed to your pleas,
and those of lovely Venus, that Aeneas
should come to rule the walls of a city built
with better omens.

Phoebus, musician and teacher of tuneful
Thalia, who bathe your hair in Xanthus' stream,
defend the Daunian Muse's honour, O
beardless Agyieus.

Phoebus gave me inspiration, Phoebus gave
me skill in singing, and the name of poet.
You noble young girls, and you boys who are born
of famous fathers,

both, protected by the Delian goddess,
who brings down, with the bow, swift deer and lynxes,
follow the Sapphic measure, note the rhythm
of my finger's beat,

and ritually sing the son of Latona,
ritually sing the fire of the waxing Moon,
the quickener of crops, and swift advancer
of the headlong months.

Married, you'll say: 'I sang the song the gods love,

when time brought back the days of the festival,
and I was one who was trained in the measures
of Horace the bard.

Horace

BkIV:VII Diffugere Nives

The snow has vanished, already the grass returns to the fields,
and the leaves to the branches:
earth alters its state, and the steadily lessening rivers
slide quietly past their banks:

The Grace, and the Nymphs, with both of her sisters, is daring enough,
leading her dancers, naked.
The year, and the hour that snatches the kindly day away, warn you:
don't hope for undying things.

Winter gives way to the westerly winds, spring's trampled to ruin
by summer, and in its turn
fruitful autumn pours out its harvest, barely a moment before
lifeless winter is back again.

Yet swift moons are always repairing celestial losses:
while, when we have descended
to virtuous Aeneas, to rich Tullus and Ancus, our kings,
we're only dust and shadow.

Who knows whether the gods above will add tomorrow's hours
to the total of today?
All those you devote to a friendly spirit will escape from
the grasping hands of your heirs.

When once you're dead, my Torquatus, and Minos pronounces
his splendid judgement on you,
no family, no eloquence, no righteousness even,
can restore you again:

Persephone never frees Hippolytus, chaste as he is,
from the shadow of darkness,
nor has Theseus, for his dear Pirithous, the power to
shatter those Lethean chains.

Horace

BkIV:VIII Poetry

I'd give bowls, generously, and pleasing bronzes,
to all of my comrades, my dear Censorinus,
I'd give tripods, the prizes that mighty Greeks gave,
and you wouldn't be seeing the least of my gifts,
if I were, appropriately, rich in the works
Scopas produced, or Parrhasius created,
the latter in marble, the former in painting,
now expert in showing heroes, and now, a god.
But I've no such powers, and your spirit and state
don't ask for any such kinds of amusement.
You delight in poetry, poetry we can
deliver, and establish the worth of the gift.
It's not marble, carved out with public inscriptions,
and by which, after death, life and spirit return
to great generals, it's not Hannibal's rapid
retreat, once repulsed, with his threats turned against him,
nor is it the burning of impious Carthage,
that more gloriously declares all the praises
of him who winning a name from his African
conquest, came home, than the Calabrian Muses:
and you wouldn't receive the reward for your deeds
if the books were silent. What would the child of Mars
and of Ilia be today, if mute envy
stood in the way of Romulus's just merits?
The virtue, and favour, and speech of powerful
poets snatches Aeacus from Stygian streams,
immortalising him, in the Isles of the Blessed.
It's the Muse who prevents the hero worth praising
from dying. The Muse gladdens heaven. So, tireless
Heracles shares the table of Jove he hoped for,
so the bright stars of the Twins, Tyndareus' sons,
snatch storm-tossed ships out of the depths of the waters,
and Bacchus, his brow wreathed, in the green sprays of vine,
brings all of our prayers to a fortunate outcome.

Horace

BkIV:X Age

O you who are cruel still, and a master of Venus's gifts,
when a white, unexpected plumage surmounts all your arrogance,
and the tresses that wave on your shoulders have all been shorn away,
and the colour that now outshines the flower of the crimson rose
is transformed, my Ligurinus, and has changed into roughened skin:
whenever you look at your altered face in the mirror, you'll say:
'Why didn't I have, when I was a youth, the mind I have today,
or why can't those untouched cheeks return to visit this soul of mine?'

Horace

BkIV:XI Maecenas' Birthday

I've a jar of Alban wine over nine years
old: and there's parsley for weaving your garlands,
in the garden, Phyllis, and see, there's a huge
amount of ivy,

with which you shine whenever it ties your hair:
the house gleams with silver: the altar is wreathed
with pure vervain, and waits to be stained with blood,
a sacrificed lamb:

All hands are scurrying: here and there, a crowd
of boys and girls are running, and see the flames
are flickering, sending the sooty smoke rolling
high up in the air.

And so that you know to what happiness you're
invited, it's the Ides that are the reason,
they're the days that divide the month of April,
of sea-born Venus,

it's truly a solemn day for me, and more
sacred to me almost than my own birthday,
because from that morning Maecenas reckons
the flow of his years.

A rich, an impudent, young girl has captured
Telephus, one you desire, and who's above
your station, and holds him prisoner, fettered
with beautiful chains.

Scorched Phaethon's a warning to hope's ambition,
and winged Pegasus offered a harsh example
in refusing his back to Bellerephon,
his earthly rider:

always pursue what's appropriate for you,
consider it wrong to hope for what isn't
allowed, for someone who isn't your equal.
Come now, my last love,

(since I'll burn for no other woman after
you) learn verses you'll repeat in your lovely
voice: the darkest of cares will be lessened
by means of your song.

Horace

BkIV:XII Spring

Now Spring's companions, the Thracian northerlies,
that quieten the ocean, are swelling the canvas:
now fields are unfrozen, and rivers stop roaring
with their volumes of winter snow.

The sad swallow, tearfully mourning Itys, builds
her nest, she's the House of Cecrops' eternal shame,
avenging the barbarous lust of Tereus
with too savage a cruelty.

The shepherds, with indolent sheep, in the soft grass,
sing their songs to the sound of the pipes, and delight
great god, Pan, who is pleased with the flocks, and is pleased
by the dark hills of Arcady.

And, Virgil, the season has brought its thirst to us:
but if you're eager to sip at a grape that was pressed
at Cales, you follower of noble youth, then
earn your wine with a gift of nard.

One small onyx box of nard elicits a jar
that's lying there now in Sulpicius' cellar,
sufficient for granting fresh hope, and effective
at washing away bitter care.

If you're in a rush for pleasures like this, come quick
with your purchase: since I refuse to consider
dipping a gift-less you, in my wine, as if I'm
rich, my house filled with everything.

But abolish delay, and desire for profit,
and, remembering death's sombre flames, while you can,
mix a little brief foolishness with your wisdom:
it's sweet sometimes to play the fool.

Horace

BkIV:XIII You too, Lyce

BkIV:XIII You too, Lyce

Lyce, the gods have heard my prayers, the gods have heard me, Lyce: you're growing old, but still desire the power of beauty, and still you play, and drink quite shamelessly,

and, drunk, you urge dull Cupid on with tremulous singing. He's keeping watch on the beautiful cheeks of Chia the young and fresh, who's expert at playing the harp.

For he flies disdainfully past the withered oak, and he runs away from you, since you're disfigured by those now yellowing teeth, those wrinkles, and that greying hair.

Now gowns of Coan purple, and those expensive jewels, won't bring back time, that the passage of days has shut away, and buried, a matter of public record.

Where's Venus fled, alas, and beauty? And where now are your graceful gestures? What is left of that girl, that girl who once breathed of love, who stole me away from myself,

happy when Cinara had vanished, and famous for your looks and your charming ways? The Fates granted Cinara the briefest years, preserving Lyce, endlessly,

to suffer as long a life as an ancient crow, so that the burning youths with many a ripple of laughter, are here to gaze at a fire that's fallen to ashes.

Horace

BkIV:XIV Drusus and Tiberius

What care the Citizens and the Senators
shall take in immortalising your virtues,
granting you full honours, Augustus,
with titles and memorial plaques, O,

greatest of princes, wherever the sun shines
over the countries where people can live, you,
whose power in war the Vindelici
free of our Roman laws, till now, have learnt.

For, with your army, brave Drusus, demolished
the Genauni, that implacable race, in more
direct retaliation, the swift
Breuni, and their defences, established

on the formidable Alpine heights: and soon
Tiberius, the elder Nero, entered
that fierce fight, with his favourable
omens, defeating the wild Rhaetians:

it was wonderful to see with what destruction,
in contesting the war, he exhausted those minds
intent on the deaths of our freemen,
as the south wind, almost, when it troubles

the ungovernable waves, while the Pleiades'
constellation pierces the clouds, he was eager
to attack the hostile ranks, and drive
his neighing horse through the midst of their fire.

As, bull-like, the Aufidus rolls on, flowing
by the domains of Apulian Daunus,
when it rages and threatens fearful
destruction to their cultivated fields,

so Tiberius overwhelmed the armoured
ranks of barbarians, his fierce impetus
covering the earth, mowing down front
and rear, and conquering them without loss,

yours the troops, the strategy and the friendly
gods. For on that date when Alexandria
opened all its harbour, and empty
palaces to you, in supplication,

good Fortune, fifteen years later, delivered
a favourable outcome to the campaign,
and awarded fame, and the glory
hoped-for, to your imperial action.

The Spaniards, never conquered before, the Medes,

the Indians, marvel at you, the roving
Scythians, O eager protector
of Italy and Imperial Rome.

The Nile, that conceals its origin, hears you,
the Danube hears, and the swift-flowing Tigris,
the Ocean, filled with monsters, roaring
around the distant island of Britain,

and the regions of Gaul, unafraid of death,
and the stubborn Iberian land, hear you:
Sygambri, delighting in slaughter,
stand, with grounded weapons, worshipping you.

Horace

BkIV:XV To Augustus

Phoebus condemned my verse, when I tried to sing
of war and conquered cities, lest I unfurled
my tiny sail on Tyrrhenian
seas. Caesar, this age has restored rich crops

to the fields, and brought back the standards, at last,
to Jupiter, those that we've now recovered
from insolent Parthian pillars,
and closed the gates of Romulus' temple,

freed at last from all war, and tightened the rein
on lawlessness, straying beyond just limits,
and has driven out crime, and summoned
the ancient arts again, by which the name

of Rome and Italian power grew great,
and the fame and majesty of our empire,
were spread from the sun's lair in the west,
to the regions where it rises at dawn.

With Caesar protecting the state, no civil
disturbance will banish the peace, no violence,
no anger that forges swords, and makes
mutual enemies of wretched towns.

The tribes who drink from the depths of the Danube,
will not break the Julian law, the Getae,
nor Seres, nor faithless Persians,
nor those who are born by the Don's wide stream.

On working days, and the same on holy days,
among laughter-loving Bacchus' gifts to us,
with our wives and our children we'll pray,
at first, to the gods, in the rites laid down,

then, in the manner of our fathers, bravely,
in verse, that's accompanied by Lydian flutes,
we'll sing past leaders, we'll sing of Troy,
Anchises, and the people of Venus.

Horace