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EZRA POUND

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LANGUE D'OC

Alba

WHEN the nightingale to his mate
Sings day-long and night late
My love and I keep state
In bower,
In flower,
'Till the watchman on the tower
Cry:
"Up! Thou rascal, Rise,
I see the white
Light
And the night
Flies."

I

*Compleynt of a gentleman who has been waiting outside
for some time*

"O PLASMATOUR and true celestial light,
Lord powerful, engirdled all with might,
Give my good-fellow aid in fools' despite
Who stirs not forth this night,
And day comes on.

"Sst! my good fellow, art awake or sleeping?
Sleep thou no more. I see the star upleaping
That hath the dawn in keeping,
And day comes on!

"Hi! Harry, hear me, for I sing aright
Sleep not thou now, I hear the bird in flight
That plaineth of the going of the night,
And day comes on!

“Come now! Old swenkin! Rise up from thy bed,
I see the signs upon the welkin spread,
If thou come not, the cost be on thy head.
And day comes on!

“And here I am since going down of sun,
And pray to God that is St. Mary’s son,
To bring thee safe back, my companion.
And day comes on.

“And thou out here beneath the porch of stone
Badest me to see that a good watch was done,
And now thou’lt none of me, and wilt have none
Of song of mine.”

(Bass voice from within.)

“Wait, my good fellow. For such joy I take
With her venust and noblest to my make
To hold embracèd, and will not her forsake
For yammer of the cuckold,
Though day break.”
(Girart Bornello.)

II

Avril

WHEN the springtime is sweet
And the birds repeat
Their new song in the leaves,
'Tis meet
A man go where he will.

But from where my heart is set
No message I get;
My heart all wakes and grieves;
Defeat
Or luck, I must have my fill.

Our love comes out
Like the branch that turns about
On the top of the hawthorne,

Where my love is, there is a glitter of sun ;
God give me life, and let my course run
 'Till I have her I love
 To lie with and prove.

I do not live, nor cure me,
Nor feel my ache—great as it is,
For love will give me no respite,
Nor do I know when I turn left or right
 nor when I go out.
 For in her is all my delight
 And all that can save me.

I shake and burn and quiver
From love, awake and in swevyn,
Such fear I have she deliver me not from pain,
 Who know not how to ask her ;
 Who can not.

Two years, three years I seek
And though I fear to speak out,
 Still she must know it.
If she won't have me now, Death is my portion
 Would I had died that day
 I came into her sway.

God ! How softly this kills !
When her love look steals on me.
Killed me she has, I know not how it was,
 For I would not look on a woman.

Joy I have none, if she make me not mad
 Or set me quiet, or bid me chatter.
Good is it to me if she flout
 Or turn me inside out, and about.
My ill doth she turn sweet.
How swift it is. Pleasure is 'neath her feet.

For I am traist and loose,
I am true, or a liar,
All vile, or all gentle,
Or shaking between, as she desire,

I, Cerclamon, sorry and glad,
The man whom love had
and has ever;
Alas! whoe'er it please or pain,
She can me retain.

I am gone from one joy,
From one I loved never so much,
She by one touch
Reft me away;
So doth bewilder me
I can not say my say
nor my desire,
And when she looks on me
It seems to me
I lose all wit and sense.

The noblest girls men love
'Gainst her I prize not as a glove
Worn and old.
Though the whole world run rack
And go dark with cloud,
Light is
Where she stands,
And a clamour loud
in my ears.

IV

Vergier

IN orchard under the hawthorne
She has her lover till morn,
Till the traist man cry out to warn
Them. God how swift the night,
And day comes on.

O Plasmatur, that thou end not the night,
Nor take my belovèd from my sight,
Nor I, nor tower-man, look on daylight,
'Fore God, How swift the night,
And day comes on.

“Lovely thou art, to hold me close and kisst,
Now cry the birds out, in the meadow mist,
Despite the cuckold, do thou as thou list,
So swiftly goes the night
And day comes on.

“My pretty boy, make we our play again
Here in the orchard where the birds complain,
'Till the traist watcher his song unrein,
Ah God! How swift the night
And day comes on.”

“Out of the wind that blows from her,
That dancing and gentle is and pleasanter,
Have I drunk a draught, sweeter than scent of myrrh.
Ah God! How swift the night.
And day comes on.”

Venust the lady, and none lovelier,
For her great beauty, many men look on her,
Out of my love will her heart not stir.
By God, how swift the night.
And day comes on.

V

Canzon

I ONLY, and who elrische pain support
Know out love's heart o'erborne by overlove,
For my desire that is so firm and straight
And unchanged since I found her in my sight
And unturned since she came within my glance,
That far from her my speech springs up aflame;
Near her comes not. So press the words to arrest it.

I am blind to others, and their retort
I hear not. In her alone, I see, move,
Wonder. . . . And jest not. And the words dilate
Not truth; but mouth speaks not the heart outright:

I could not walk roads, flats, dales, hills, by chance,
To find charm's sum within one single frame
As God hath set in her t'assay and test it.

And I have passed in many a goodly court
To find in hers more charm than rumour thereof . . .
In solely hers. Measure and sense to mate,
Youth and beauty learned in all delight,
Gentrice did nurse her up, and so advance
Her fair beyond all reach of evil name,
To clear her worth, no shadow hath opprest it.

Her contact flats not out, falls not off short. . . .
Let her, I pray, guess out the sense hereof
For never will it stand in open prate
Until my inner heart stand in daylight,
So that heart pools him when her eyes entrance,
As never doth the Rhone, fullèd and untame,
Pool, where the freshets tumult hurl to crest it.

Flimsy another's joy, false and distort,
No paregale that she springs not above . . .
Her love-touch by none other mensurate.
To have it not? Alas! Though the pains bite
Deep, torture is but galzeardy and dance,
For in my thought my lust hath touched his aim.
God! Shall I get no more! No fact to best it!

No delight I, from now, in dance or sport,
Nor will these toys a tinkle of pleasure prove,
Compared to her, whom no loud profligate
Shall leak abroad how much she makes my right.
Is this too much? If she count not mischance
What I have said, then no. But if she blame,
Then tear ye out the tongue that hath expresst it.

The song begs you: Count not this speech ill chance,
But if you count the song worth your acclaim,
Arnaut cares lyt who praise or who contest it.

(Arnaut Daniel, a.d. about 1190.)

MOEURS CONTEMPORAINES

I

Mr. Styrax

I

MR. HECATOMB STYRAX, the owner of a
large estate
and of large muscles,
A "blue" and a climber of mountains, has married
at the age of 28,

He being at that age a virgin,
The term "virgo" being made male in mediaeval latinity ;
His ineptitudes
Have driven his wife from one religious excess to another.
She has abandoned the vicar
For he was lacking in vehemence ;
She is now the high-priestess
Of a modern and ethical cult,
And even now Mr. Styrax
Does not believe in aesthetics.

2

His brother has taken to gipsies,
But the son-in-law of Mr. H. Styrax
Objects to perfumed cigarettes.
In the parlance of Niccolo Macchiavelli,
"Thus things proceed in their circle" ;
And thus the empire is maintained.

“*Nodier raconte . . .*” I

A T a friend of my wife's there is a photograph,
 A faded, pale, brownish photograph,
 Of the times when the sleeves were large,
 Silk, stiff and large above the *lacertus*,
 That is, the upper arm,
 And décolleté. . . .

It is a lady,

She sits at a harp,
 Playing,

And by her left foot, in a basket,
 Is an infant, aged about 14 months,
 The infant beams at the parent,
 The parent re-beams at its offspring.
 The basket is lined with satin,
 There is a satin-like bow on the harp.

2

And in the home of the novelist
 There is a satin-like bow on an harp.

You enter and pass hall after hall
 And conservatory follows conservatory,
 Lilies lift their white symbolical cups,
 Their symbolical pollen is excerpted,
 Near them I noticed an harp
 And the blue satin ribbon,
 And the copy of “Hatha Yoga”
 And the neat piles of unopened, unopening books,

And she spoke to me of the monarch,
 And of the purity of her soul.

VI

Stele

AFTER years of continence
 he hurled himself into a sea of six women.
 Now, quenched as the brand of Meleagar,
 he lies by the poluphloisboious sea-coast.

Παρά Θίνα Πολυφλοίσβοιο Θαλάσσης.

SISTE VIATOR.

VII

I Vecchii

THEY will come no more,
 The old men with beautiful manners.

Il était comme un tout petit garçon
 With his blouse full of apples
 And sticking out all the way round;
 Blagueur! "Con gli occhi onesti e tardi,"

And he said:

"Oh! Abelard," as if the topic
 Were much too abstruse for his comprehension,
 And he talked about "the Great Mary,"
 And said: "Mr. Pound is shocked at my levity,"
 When it turned out he meant Mrs. Ward.

And the other was rather like my bust by Gaudier,
 Or like a real Texas colonel,
 He said: "Why flay dead horses?"
 "There was once a man called Voltaire."

And he said they used to cheer Verdi,
 In Rome, after the opera,
 And the guards couldn't stop them

THREE CANTOS

I

HANG it all, there can be but the one "Sordello,"
But say I want to, say I take your whole bag of
tricks,
Let in your quirks and tweeks, and say the thing's an art-
form,

Your "Sordello," and that the "modern world"
Needs such a rag-bag to stuff all its thought in;
Say that I dump my catch, shiny and silvery
As fresh sardines flapping and slipping on the marginal
cobble?

I stand before the booth (the speech), but the truth
Is inside this discourse: this booth is full of the marrow of
wisdom.

Give up the intaglio method?

Tower by tower,
Red-brown the rounded bases, and the plan
Follows the builder's whim; Beaucaire's slim gray
Leaps from the stubby base of Altaforte—
Mohammed's windows, for the Alcazar
Has such a garden, split by a tame small stream—
The moat is ten yards wide, the inner court-yard
Half a-swim with mire.
Trunk-hose?

There are not. The rough men swarm out
In robes that are half Roman, half like the Knave of Hearts,
And I discern your story:

Peire Cardinal
Was half fore-runner of Dante. Arnaut's the trick
Of the unfinished address,
And half your dates are out; you mix your eras;
For that great font, Sordello sat beside—

'Tis an immortal passage, but the font
Is some two centuries outside the picture—
And no matter.

Ghosts move about me patched with histories.
You had your business: to set out so much thought.
So much emotion, and call the lot "Sordello."
Worth the evasion, the setting figures up
And breathing life upon them.

Has it a place in music? And your: "Appear Verona!"?
I walk the airy street,

See the small cobbles flare with poppy spoil.

'Tis your "Great Day," the Corpus Domini,
And all my chosen and peninsular village
Has spread this scarlet blaze upon its lane,
Oh, before I was up,—with poppy flowers.

Mid-June, and up and out to the half ruined chapel,
Not the old place at the height of the rocks
But that splay barn-like church, the Renaissance
Had never quite got into trim again.

As well begin here, here began Catullus:

"Home to sweet rest, and to the waves deep laughter,"
The laugh they wake amid the border rushes.

This is our home, the trees are full of laughter,
And the storms laugh loud, breaking the riven waves
On square-shaled rocks, and here the sunlight
Glints on the shaken waters, and the rain

Comes forth with delicate tread, walking from Isola Garda,

Lo Soleils plovil,

It is the sun rains, and a spatter of fire

Darts from the "Lydian" ripples, *lacus undae*,

And the place is full of spirits, not *lemures*,

Not dark and shadow-wet ghosts, but ancient living,

Wood-white, smooth as the inner-bark, and firm of aspect

And all a gleam with colour?

Not a-gleam,

But coloured like the lake and olive leaves,

GLAUKOPOS, clothed like the poppies, wearing golden
greaves,

Light on the air. Are they Etruscan gods?

The air is solid sunlight, *apricus*.

Sun-fed we dwell there (we in England now)
For Sirmio serves my whim, better than Asolo,
Yours and unseen. Your palace step?
My stone seat was the Dogana's vulgarest curb,
And there were not "those girls," there was one flare,
One face, 'twas all I ever saw, but it was real . . .
And I can no more say what shape it was . . .
But she was young, too young.

True, it was Venice,
And at Florian's under the North arcade
I have seen other faces, and had my rolls for breakfast,
Drifted at night and seen the lit, gilt cross-beams
Glare from the Morosini.

And for what it's worth
I have my background; and you had your background,
Watched "the soul," Sordello's soul, flare up
And lap up life, and leap "to th' Empyrean";
Worked out the form, meditative, semi-dramatic,
Semi-epic story; and what's left?
Pre-Daun-Chaucer, Pre-Boccaccio? Not Arnaut,
Not Uc St. Circ.

Gods float in the azure air,
Bright gods and Tuscan, back before dew was shed;
It is a world like Puvis'?

Never so pale my friend,
'Tis the first light—not half-light—Panisks
And oak-girls and the Maelids have all the wood;
Our olive Sirmio
Lies in its burnished mirror, and the Mounts Balde and
Riva
Are alive with song, and all the leaves are full of voices.
"*Non è fuggi.*"

"It is not gone." Metastasio
Is right, we have that world about us.
And the clouds bowe above the lake, and there are folk
upon them
Going their windy ways, moving by Riva,
By the western shore, far as Lonato,
And the water is full of silvery almond-white swimmers,
The silvery water glazes the upturned nipple.

*“When Atlas sat down with his astrolabe,
He brother to Prometheus, physicist.”*

We let Ficino

Start us our progress, say it was Moses' birth year?
Exult with Shang in squatness? The sea-monster
Bulges the squarish bronzes.
Daub out, with blue of scarabs, Egypt,
Green veins in the turquoise?

Or gray gradual steps

Lead up beneath flat sprays of heavy cedars :
Temple of teak-wood, and the gilt brown arches
Triple in tier, banners woven by wall,
Fine screens depicted : sea-waves curled high,
Small boats with gods upon them,
Bright flame above the river : Kuanon,
Footing a boat that's but one lotus petal,
With some proud four-square genius
Leading along, one hand upraised for gladness,
Saying, "'Tis she, his friend, the mighty Goddess.
Sing hymns, ye reeds, and all ye roots, and herons, and
swans, be glad.
Ye gardens of the nymphs, put forth your flowers."
What have I of this life?

Or even of Guido?

A pleasant lie that I knew *Or San Michael*e,
Believe the tomb he leapt was Julia Laeta's,
Do not even know which sword he'd with him in the
street-charge.

I have but smelt this life, a whiff of it,
The box of scented wood
Recalls cathedrals. Shall I claim ;
Confuse my own phantastikon
Or say the filmy shell that circumscribes me
Contains the actual sun ;

confuse the thing I see

With actual gods behind me?

Are they gods behind me?

Worlds we have, how many worlds we have.

Brings her ashore on that great cockle-shell,
 His Venus (Simonetta?), and Spring
 And Aufidus fill all the air
 With their clear-outlined blossoms?
 World enough. Behold I say, she comes
 "Apparelled like the Spring, Graces her subjects"
 ("Pericles"),
 Such worlds enough we have, have brave decors
 And from these like we guess a soul for man
 And build him full of aery populations,
 (Panting and Faustus),
 Mantegna a sterner line, and the new world about us:
 Barred lights, great flares, and write to paint, not music,
 O Casella.

II

O "VIRGILIO mio,"
 Send out your thought upon the Mantuan palace,
 Drear waste, great halls; pigment flakes from the
 stone;
 Forlorn quarter:
 Silk tatters still in the frame, Gonzaga's splendour,
 Where do we come upon the ancient people,
 Or much or little,
 Where do we come upon the ancient people?
 "All that I know is that a certain star"—
 All that I know of one, Joios, Tolosan,
 Is that in middle May, going along
 A scarce discerned path, turning aside
 In "level poplar lands," he found a flower, and wept;
 "Y a la primera flor," he wrote,
 "Qu'ieu trobei, tornei em plor."
 One stave of it, I've lost the copy I had of it in Paris,
 Out of a blue and gilded manuscript:
 Couci's rabbits, a slim fellow throwing dice,
 Purported portraits serving in capitals.

Joios we have, by such a margent stream,
He strayed in the field, wept for a flare of colour
When Coeur de Lion was before Chalus ;
Arnaut's a score of songs, a wry sestina ;
The rose-leaf casts her dew on the ringing glass,
Dolmetsch will build our age in witching music,
Viols da Gamba, tabors, tympanons.

Yin-yo laps in the reeds, my guest departs,
The maple leaves blot up their shadows,
The sky is full of Autumn,
We drink our parting in saki.
Out of the night comes troubling lute music,
And we cry out, asking the singer's name,
And get this answer :

“ Many a one

Brought me rich presents, my hair was full of jade,
And my slashed skirts were drenched in the secret dyes,
Well dipped in crimson, and sprinkled with rare wines ;
I was well taught my arts at Ga-ma-rio
And then one year I faded out and married.”
The lute-bowl hid her face. We heard her weeping.

Society, her sparrows, Venus' sparrows.
Catullus hung on the phrase (played with it as Mallarmé
Played for a fan : “ Rêveuse pour que je plonge.”) ;
Wrote out his crib from Sappho :
God's peer, yea and the very gods are under him
Facing thee, near thee ; and my tongue is heavy.
And along my veins the fire ; and the night is
Thrust down upon me.
That was one way of love, *flamma demanat*,
And in a year : “ I love her as a father,”
And scare a year, “ Your words are written in water,”
And in ten moons : “ O Caelius, Lesbia illa,
Caelius, Lesbia, our Lesbia, that Lesbia
Whom Catullus once loved more
Than his own soul and all his friends,
Is now the drab of every lousy Roman ” ;
So much for him who puts his trust in woman.

Dordoigne! When I was there
There came a centaur, spying the land
And there were nymphs behind him!
Or procession on procession by Salisbury,
Ancient in various days, long years between them;
Ply over ply of life still wraps the earth here.
Catch at Dordoigne!

Vicount St. Antoni—

“D’amor tug miei cossir”—hight Raimon Jordans
Of land near Caortz. The Lady of Pena
“Gentle and highly prized.”

And he was good at arms and *bos trobair*,
“Thou art the pool of worth, flood-land of pleasure,
And all my heart is bound about with love,
As rose in trellis that is bound over and over”;
Thus they were taken in love beyond all measure.

But the Vicount Pena

Went making war into an hostile country,
And was sore wounded. The news held him dead,
“And at this news she had great grief and teen,”
And gave the church such wax for his recovery
That he recovered,

“And at this news she had great grief and teen”
And fell a-moping, drove off St. Antoni,
“Thus was there more than one in deep distress,”

So ends that novel. Here the blue Dordoigne
Placid between white cliffs, pale

As the background of a Leonardo. Elis of Montfort
Then sent him her invitations (wife of de Gordon).

It juts into the sky, Gordon that is,
Like a thin spire. Blue night pulled down about it
Like tent-flaps or sails close hauled. When I was there,

La Noche de San Juan, a score of players

Were straddling about the streets in masquerade,
Pike-staves and paper helmets, and the booths
Were scattered align, the rag ends of the fair
False arms, true arms:

A flood of people storming about Spain:

My Cid rode up to Burgos,

Up to the studded gate between two towers,

Beat with his lance butt. A girl child of nine years
Comes to the shrine-like platform in the wall,
Lisps out the words a-whisper, the King's writ :
Let no man speak to Diaz (Ruy Diaz, Myo Cid)
Or give him help or food, on pain of death :
His heart upon a pike, his eyes torn out, his goods
sequestered.

Cid from Bivar, for empty perches of dispersed hawks,
From empty presses,
Came riding with his company up the great hill
(*Afe Minaya!*) to Burgos in the Spring,
And thence to fighting, to down-throw of Moors
And to Valencia rode he. By the beard! *Muy velida!*
Of onrush of lances, of splintered staves
Riven and broken casques, dismantled castles ;
Of painted shields split up, blazons hacked off,
Piled men and bloody rivers. Or
"Of sombre light upon reflected armour"
When De las Nieblas sails—
"Y dar nueva lumbre las armas y hierros"—
And portents in the wind, a pressing air ;
Full many a fathomed sea-change in the eyes
That sought with him the salt sea victories,
Rumble of balladist.

Another gate :

And Kumasaka's ghost comes back to explain
How well the young man fenced who ended him.
Another gate :

The kernelled walls of Toro, *las almenas*,
Afield, a king come in an unjust cause,
Atween the chinks aloft flashes the armoured figure,
"Muy linda!", "Helen!", "a star,"

Lights the king's features . . .
"No use my liege. She is your highness' sister,"
Breaks in Ancures.

"Mal fuego s'enciende!"
Such are the gestes of war.

A tire-woman,
Court sinecure, the court of Portugal,
And the young prince loved her, Pedro,

Called later, Cruel. Jealousy, two stabbed her,
Courtiers, with king's connivance.
And he, the prince, kept quiet a space of years.
And came to reign, after uncommon quiet,
And had his will upon the dagger-players:
A wedding ceremonial: he and the dug-up corpse in
cerements.

Who winked at murder kisses the dead hand,
Does loyal homage

“Que despois de ser morta foy Rainha.”

Dig up Camoens:

“That once as Proserpine

Gatheredst thy soul's light fruit, and every blindness;
Thy Enna the flary mead-land of Mondego.

Long art thou sung by maidens in Mondego.”

What have we now of her, his “*linda Ignéz*”?

Houtmans in jail for debt in Lisbon, how long after,

Contrives a company, the Dutch eat Portugal,

Follow her ships tracks. Roemer Vischer's daughters

Talking some Greek, dally with glass engraving:

Vondel, the Eglantine, Dutch Renaissance.

The old tale out of fashion, daggers gone,

And Gaby wears Braganza on her throat,

Another pearl, tied to a public gullet.

I knew a man, flat corn-lands run mile on mile,

Born on a farm, he hankered after painting,

His father kept him at work, no luck,

Married and got four sons,

Three died, the fourth he sent to Paris. And this son:

Ten years of Julians' and the ateliers,

Ten years of life, his pictures in the salons,

Name coming in the press;

and when I knew him:

Back once again in middle Indiana,

Acting as usher in the theatre,

Painting the local drug-shop and soda bars,

The local doctor's fancy for a mantle-piece:

Sheep! jabbing the wool upon their flea-bit backs.

“Them sheep! Them goddamd sheep!!” Adoring Puvis,

Giving his family back what they had spent on him,
Talking Italian cities,
Local excellence at Perugia ; dreaming his renaissance,
Take my Sordello !

III

A NOTHER one, half-cracked : John Heydon,
Worker of miracles, dealer in levitation,
" Servant of God and secretary of nature,"
The half transparent forms, in trance at Bulverton :
" Decker all in green," with sleeves of yellow silk
Slit to the elbow, slashed with various purples,
(Thus in his vision.) Her eyes were green as glass,
Dangling a chain of emeralds, promised him—
Her foot was leaf-like, and she promised him
The way of holiest wisdom.

" Omniformis
Omnis intellectus est " : thus he begins
By spouting half of Psellus ; no, not " Daemonibus,"
But Porphyry's " Chances," the 13th chapter,
That every intellect is omniform.
" A daemon is a substance in the locus of souls."
Munching Ficino's mumbling Platonists.

Valla, more earth and sounder rhetoric,
Prefacing praise to his Pope, Nicholas :
A man of parts skilled in the subtlest sciences ;
A patron of the arts, of poetry ; and of a fine discernment.
A catalogue, his jewels of conversation.
" Know then the Roman speech : a sacrament "
Spread for the nations, eucharist of wisdom,
Bread of the liberal arts.

Ha ! Sir Blancatz,
Sordello would have your heart up, give it to all the princes ;
Valla, the heart of Rome,
sustaining speech,
Set out before the people. " Nec bonus
Christianus " (in the *Elegantiae*) " ac bonus Tullianus."

Shook the church. Marius, Du Bellay, wept for the
buildings;

Baldassar Castiglione saw Raphael

“Lead back the soul into its dead, waste dwelling,”

Laniato corpore. Lorenzo Valla

“Broken in middle life? Bent to submission?

Took a fat living from the Papacy”

(That’s in Villari, but Burckhardt’s statement’s different).

“More than the Roman city the Roman speech”

Holds fast its part among the ever living.

“Not by the eagles only was Rome measured.”

“Wherever the Roman speech was, there was Rome.”

Wherever the speech crept, there was mastery,

Spoke with the law’s voice, while your greek logicians. . . .

More greeks than one! Doughty’s “Divine Homeros”

Came before sophistry. Justinopolitan, uncatalogued,

One Andreas Divus gave him in latin,

In Officina Wecheli, M.D. three “X’s.” eight,

Caught up his cadence, word and syllable:

“Down to the ships we went, set mast and sail,

Black keel and beasts for bloody sacrifice,

Weeping we went.”

I’ve strained my ear for *-ensa*, *-ombra*, and *-ensa*,

And cracked my wit on delicate canzoni,

Here’s but rough meaning:

“And then went down to the ship, set keel to breakers,

Forth on the godly sea,

We set up mast and sail on the swart ship,

Sheep bore we aboard her, and our bodies also,

Heavy with weeping; and winds from sternward

Bore us out onward with bellying canvas,

Circe’s this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.

Then sat we amidships—wind jamming the tiller—

Thus with stretched sail

we went over sea till day’s end.

Sun to his slumber, shadows o’er all the ocean,

Came we then to the bounds of deepest water,

To the Kimmerian lands and peopled cities

Covered with close-webbed mist, unpierced ever

With glitter of sun-rays,

Nor with stars stretched, nor looking back from heaven,
Swartest night stretched over wretched men there,
The ocean flowing backward, came we then to the place
Aforesaid by Circe.

Here did they rites, Perimedes and Eurylochus,
And drawing sword from my hip
I dug the ell-square pitkin,
Poured we libations unto each the dead,
First mead and then sweet wine, water mixed with white flour,
Then prayed I many a prayer to the sickly death's-heads,
As set in Ithaca, sterile bulls of the best
For sacrifice, heaping the pyre with goods.
Sheep, to Tiresias only ; black and bell sheep.
Dark blood flowed in the fosse,
Souls out of Erebus, cadaverous dead,
Of brides, of youths, and of much-bearing old ;
Virgins tender, souls stained with recent tears,
Many men mauled with bronze lance-heads,
Battle spoil, bearing yet dreary arms,
These many crowded about me,
With shouting, pallor upon me, cried to my men for more
beasts.

Slaughtered the herds, sheep slain of bronze,
Poured ointment, cried to the gods,
To Pluto the strong, and praised Proserpine,
Unsheathed the narrow sword,
I sat to keep off the impetuous, impotent dead
Till I should hear Tiresias.

But first Elpenor came, our friend Elpenor,
Unburied, cast on the wide earth,
Limbs that we left in the house of Circe,
Unwept, unwrapped in sepulchre, since toils urged other.
Pitiful spirit, and I cried in hurried speech :
" Elpenor, how art thou come to this dark coast ?
Com'st thou a-foot, outstripping seamen ? "

And he in heavy speech :
" Ill fate and abundant wine ! I slept in Circe's ingle,
Going down the long ladder unguarded, I fell against the
buttress,
Shattered the nerve-nape, the soul sought Avernus.

But thou, O King, I bid remember me, unwept, unburied,
Heap up mine arms, be tomb by sea-board, and inscribed :
' *A man of no fortune and with a name to come.*'
And set my oar up, that I swung mid fellows."

Came then another ghost, whom I beat off, Anticlea,
And then Tiresias, Theban,
Holding his golden wand, knew me and spoke first :
" Man of ill hour, why come a second time,
Leaving the sunlight, facing the sunless dead, and this
joyless region ?
Stand from the fosse, move back, leave me my bloody bever,
And I will speak you true speeches."

And I stepped back,
Sheathing the yellow sword. Dark blood he drank then,
And spoke : " Lustrous Odysseus
Shalt return through spiteful Neptune, over dark seas,
Lose all companions." Foretold me the ways and the signs.
Came then Anticlea, to whom I answered :
" Fate drives me on through these deeps. I sought Tiresias.
Told her the news of Troy. And thrice her shadow
Faded in my embrace."

Lie quiet Divus. Then had he news of many faded women,
Tyro, Alcmena. Chloris,
Heard out their tales by that dark fosse, and sailed
By sirens and thence outward and away,
And unto Circe. Buried Elpenor's corpse.
Lie quiet Divus, plucked from a Paris stall
With a certain Cretan's " *Hymni Deorum* " ;
The thin clear Tuscan stuff

Gives way before the florid mellow phrase,
Take we the goddess, Venerandam
Auream coronam habentem, pulchram. . . .
Cypri munimenta sortita est, maritime,
Light on the foam, breathed on by Zephyrs
And air-tending Hours, mirthful, orichalci, with golden
Girdles and breast bands, thou with dark eyelids,
Bearing the golden bough of Argicida.

END OF THIRD CANTO

“ These are your images, and from you the sorcerizing
of shut-in young ladies,
“ The wounding of austere men by chicane.”
Thus Mistress Calliope,
Dabbling her hands in the fount, thus she
Stiffened our face with the backwash of Philetas the Coan.

III

MIDNIGHT, and a letter comes to me from our
mistress :
Telling me to come to Tibur, *At once!!* :
Bright tips reach up from twin towers,
Anienan spring water falls into flat-spread pools.

What *is* to be done about it?
Shall I entrust myself to entangled shadows,
Where bold hands may do violence to my person?

Yet if I postpone my obedience
because of this respectable terror
I shall be prey to lamentations worse than a nocturnal assailant.
And I shall be in the wrong,
and it will last a twelve month,
For her hands have no kindness me-ward,

Nor is there anyone to whom lovers are not sacred at
midnight
And in the Via Sciro.

If any man would be a lover
he may walk on the Scythian coast,
No barbarism would go to the extent of doing him harm,
The moon will carry his candle,
the stars will point out the stumbles,
Cupid will carry lighted torches before him
and keep mad dogs off his ankles.

Thus all roads are perfectly safe
and at any hour ;
Who so indecorous as to shed the pure gore of a suitor ? !
Cypris is his cicerone.

What if undertakers follow my track,
such a death is worth dying.
She would bring frankincense and wreathes to my tomb,
She would sit like an ornament on my pyre.

Gods' aid, let not my bones lie in a public location
with crowds too assiduous in their crossing of it ;
For thus are tombs of lovers most desecrated.

May a woody and sequestered place cover me with its foliage
Or may I inter beneath the hummock
of some as yet uncatalogued sand ;
At any rate I shall not have my epitaph in a high road.

IV

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION WITH LYGDAMUS

TELL me the truths which you hear of our constant
young lady,
Lygdamus,
And may the bought yoke of a mistress lie with
equitable weight on your shoulders ;
For I am swelled up with inane pleasurableities
and deceived by your reference
To things which you think I would like to believe.

No messenger should come wholly empty,
and a slave should fear plausibilities ;
Much conversation is as good as having a home.
Out with it, tell it to me, all of it, from the beginning,
I guzzle with outstretched ears.

Thus? She wept into uncombed hair,
And you saw it,
Vast waters flowed from her eyes?
You, you Lygdamus
Saw her stretched on her bed,—
it was no glimpse in a mirror;
No gawds on her snowy hands, no orfevverie,
Sad garment draped on her slender arms.
Her escritaires lay shut by the bed-feet.
Sadness hung over the house, and the desolated female
attendants
Were desolated because she had told them her dreams.

She was veiled in the midst of that place,
Damp woolly handkerchiefs were stuffed into her undryable
eyes,
And a querulous noise responded to our solicitous
reprobations.

For which things you will get a reward from me,
Lygdamus?
To say many things is equal to having a home.

And the other woman “has not enticed me
by her pretty manners,
“She has caught me with herbaceous poison,
she twiddles the spiked wheel of a rhombus,
“She stews puffed frogs, snake’s bones, the moulded feathers
of screech owls,

“She binds me with ravelles of shrouds.
“Black spiders spin in her bed!
“Let her lovers snore at her in the morning!
“May the gout cramp up her feet!
“Does he like me to sleep here alone, Lygdamus,?
“Will he say nasty things at my funeral?”

And you expect me to believe this
after twelve months of discomfort?

If she with ivory fingers drive a tune through the lyre,
 We look at the process
How easy the moving fingers; if hair is mussed on her
forehead,
If she goes in a gleam of Cos, in a slither of dyed stuff,
There is a volume in the matter; if her eyelids sink into
sleep,
There are new jobs for the author,
And if she plays with me with her shirt off,
 We shall construct many Iliads.
And whatever she does or says
 We shall spin long yarns out of nothing,

Thus much the fates have allotted me, and if, Maecenas,
I were able to lead heroes into armour, I would not,
Neither would I warble of Titans, nor of Ossa
 spiked onto Olympus,
Nor of causeways over Pelion,
Nor of Thebes in it's ancient respectability,
 nor of Homer's reputation in Pergamus,
Nor of Xerxes two barreled kingdom, nor of Remus and
his royal family,
Nor of dignified Carthaginian characters,
Nor of Welsh mines and the profit Marus had out of them.
I should remember Caesar's affairs . . .
 for a background,
Although Callimachus did without them,
 and without Theseus,
Without an inferno, without Achilles attended of gods,
Without Ixion and without the sons of Menoetius and the
Argo and without Jove's grave and the Titans.

And my ventricles do not palpitate to Caesarial *ore-rotundos*,
Nor to the tune of the Phrygian fathers.

Sailor, of winds; a plowman, concerning his oxen;
Soldier, the enumeration of wounds; the sheep-feeder, of
ewes;
We, in our narrow bed, turning aside from battles:
Each man where he can, wearing out the day in his manner.

“He who is now vacant dust
“Was once the slave of one passion :”

Give that much inscription

“Death why tardily come?”

You, sometimes, will lament a lost friend

For it is a custom :

This care for past men,

Since Adonis was gored is Idalia, and the Cytharean
Ran crying with out-spread hair,

In vain, you call back the shade,

In vain, Cynthia. Vain call to unanswering shadow,
Small talk comes from small bones.

VII

ME happy, night, night full of brightness ;
Oh couch made happy by my long delectations ;
How many words talked out with abundant candles ;
Struggles when the lights were taken away ;
Now with bared breasts she wrestled against me,
Tunic spread in delay ;
And she then opening my eyelids fallen in sleep,
Her lips upon them ; and it was her mouth saying : Sluggard !

In how many varied embraces, our changing arms,
Her kisses, how many, lingering on my lips.

“Turn not Venus into a blinded motion,

Eyes are the guides of love,

Paris took Helen naked coming from the bed of Menelaus,
Endymion’s naked body, bright bait for Diana,

—such at least is the story.

While our fates twine together, sate we our eyes with love ;
For long night comes upon you

and a day when no day returns.

Let the gods lay chains upon us

so that no day shall unbind them.

Have you contempered Juno's Pelasgian temples,
Have you denied Pallas good eyes?
Or is it my tongue that wrongs you
with perpetual ascription of graces?
There comes, it seems, and at any rate
through perils, (so many) and of a vexed life,
The gentler hour of an ultimate day.

Lo moored the first years with averted head,
And now drinks Nile water like a god,
Ino in her young days fled pell mell out of Thebes,
Andromeda was offered to a sea-serpent
and respectably married to Perseus,
Callisto, disguised as a bear,
wandered through the Arcadian prairies
While a black veil was over her stars,
What if your fates are accelerated;
your quiet hour put forward,
You may find interment pleasing,

You will say that you succumbed to a danger identical,
charmingly identical, with Semele's,
And believe it, and she also will believe it,
being expert from experience,
And amid all the gloried and storied beauties of Maconia
There shall be none in a better seat, not one
denying your prestige,

Now you may bear fate's stroke unperturbed,
Or Jove, harsh as he is, may turn aside your
ultimate day,
Old lecher, let not Juno get wind of the matter,
Or perhaps Juno herself will go under,
If the young lady is taken?

There will be, in any case, a stir on Olympus.

“ You are a very early inspector of mistresses.

“ Do you think I have adopted your habits? ”

There were upon the bed no signs of a voluptuous
encounter,

No signs of a second incumbent.

She continued :

“ No incubus has crushed his body against me,

“ Though spirits are celebrated for adultery.

“ And I am going to the temple of Vesta . . . ”
and so on.

Since that day I have had no pleasant nights.

XI

I

THE harsh acts of your levity!

Many and many.

I am hung here, a scare-crow for lovers.

2

Escape! There is, O Idiot, no escape,

Flee if you like into Ranaus,

desire will follow you thither,

Though you heave into the air upon the gilded Pegasean
back,

Though you had the feathery sandals of Perseus
To lift you up through split air,

The high tracks of Hermes would not afford you
shelter.

Amor stands upon you, Love drives upon lovers,

a heavy mass on free necks.

It is our eyes you flee, not the city,

You do nothing, you plot inane schemes against me,

Languidly you stretch out the snare

with which I am already familiar,

And yet again, and newly rumour strikes on my ears
Rumours of you throughout the city,
and no good rumour among them.

“You should not believe hostile tongues,”
“Beauty is slander’s cock-shy,”
“All lovely women have known this,”
“Your glory is not outblotted by venom,”
“Phoebus our witness, your hands are unspotted,”

A foreign lover brought down Helen’s kingdom.
and she was lead back, living, home ;
The Cytharean brought low by Mars’ lechery
reigns in respectable heavens, . . .

Oh, oh, and enough of this,
by dew-spread caverns,
The Muses clinging to the mossy ridges ;
to the ledge of the rocks ;
Zeus’ clever rapes, in the old days,
combusted Semele’s, of Io strayed.
Of how the bird flew from Trojan rafters,
Ida has lain with a shepherd, she has slept between
sheep.

Even there, no escape
Not the Hyrcanian seabord, not in seeking the shore of
Eos.

All things are forgiven for one night of your games. . . .
Though you walk in the Via Sacra, with a peacock’s tail for
a fan.

XII

WHO, who will be the next man to entrust his girl
to a friend?
Love interferes with fidelities ;
The gods have brought shame on their relatives ;
Each man wants the pomegranite for himself ;

Make way, ye Roman authors,
clear the street O ye Greeks,
For a much larger Iliad is in the course of construction
(and to Imperial order)
Clear the streets O ye Greeks!

And you also follow him "neath Phrygian pine shade :
Thyrsis and Daphnis upon whittled reeds,
And how ten sins can corrupt young maidens ;
Kids for a bribe and pressed udders,
Happy selling poor loves for cheap apples.

Tityrus might have sung the same vixen ;
Corydon tempted Alexis,
Head farmers do likewise, and lying weary amid their oats
They get praise from tolerant Hamadryads."

Go on, to Ascreaus' prescription, the ancient,
respected, Wordsworthian :
" A flat field for rushes, grapes grow on the slope."

And behold me, small fortune left in my house.
Me, who had no general for a grandfather !
I shall triumph among young ladies of indeterminate character,
My talent acclaimed in their banquets,
I shall be honoured with yesterday's wreathes.

And the god strikes to the marrow.

Like a trained and performing tortoise,
I would make verse in your fashion, if she should command
it,
With her husband asking a remission of sentence,
And even this infamy would not attract numerous
readers
Were there an erudite or violent passion,
For the nobleness of the populace brooks nothing below its
own altitude.
One must have resonance, resonance and sonority . . .
like a goose.

Varro sang Jason's expedition,
 Varro, of his great passion Leucadia,
There is song in the parchment; Catullus the highly
 indecorous,
Of Lesbia, known above Helen;
And in the dyed pages of Calvus,
 Calvus mourning Quintilia,
And but now Gallus had sung of Lycoris.
 Fair, fairest Lycoris—
The waters of Styx poured over the wound:
And now Propertius of Cynthia, taking his stand among
these.

