

**OVID**

THE AMORES;  
OR, AMOURS

Ovid

**The Amores; or, Amours**

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## **Ovid**

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**Ovid**  
**The Amores, or Amours / Literally Translated**  
**into English Prose, with Copious Notes**

**BOOK THE FIRST**

**AN EPIGRAM ON THE AMOURS**

We who of late were five books [001](#) of Naso, are now but three: this work our author has preferred to the former one. Though it should [002](#) now be no pleasure to thee to read us; still, the labour will be less, the two being removed.

## ELEGY I

He says that he is compelled by Cupid to write of love instead of battles and that the Divinity insists on making each second Hexameter line into a Pentameter.

I was preparing to write of arms and impetuous warfare in serious numbers, [003](#) the subject-matter being suited to the measure. [004](#) The second verse was of equal measure with the first; but Cupid is said to have smiled, and to have abstracted one foot. [005](#) "Who, cruel boy, has given thee this right over my lines? We poets are the choir of *the Muses*, the Pierian maids, not thine. What if Venus were to seize the arms of the yellow-haired Minerva, *and* if the yellow-haired Minerva were to wave the lighted torches *of Love*? Who would approve of Ceres holding her reign in the woods on the mountain ridges, *or* of the fields being tilled under the control of the quivered Virgin? Who would arm Phoebus, graceful with his locks, with the sharp spear, while Mars is striking the Aonian lyre? Thy sway, O youth, is great, and far too potent; why, in thy ambition, dost thou attempt a new task? Is that which is everywhere, thine? Is Heliconian Tempe thine? Is even his own lyre hardly safe now for Phoebus? When the new page has made a good beginning in the first line, at that moment does he diminish my energies. [008](#) I have no subject fitted for *these* lighter numbers, whether youth, or girl with her flowing locks arranged."

*Thus* was I complaining; when, at once, his quiver loosened, [009](#) he selected the arrows made for my destruction; and he stoutly bent upon his knee the curving bow, and said, "Poet, receive a subject on which to sing." Ah wretched me! unerring arrows did that youth possess. I burn; and in my heart, *hitherto* disengaged, does Love hold sway. *Henceforth*, in six feet [010](#) let my work commence; in five let it close. Farewell, ye ruthless wars, together with your numbers. My Muse, [011](#) to eleven feet destined to be attuned, bind with the myrtle of the sea shore thy temples encircled with their yellow *locks*.

## ELEGY II

He says, that being taken captive by Love, he allows Cupid to lead him away in triumph.

Why shall I say it is, that my bed appears thus hard to me, and that my clothes rest not upon the couch? The night, too, long as it is, have I passed without sleep; and why do the weary bones of my restless body ache? But were I assailed by any flame, I think I should be sensible of it. Or does *Love* come unawares and cunningly attack in silent ambush? 'Tis so; his little arrows have pierced my heart; and cruel Love is tormenting the breast he has seized.

Am I to yield? Or by struggling *against it*, am I to increase this sudden flame? I must yield; the burden becomes light which is borne contentedly. I have seen the flames increase when agitated by waving the torch; and when no one shook it, I have seen them die away. The galled bulls suffer more blows while at first they refuse the yoke, than those whom experience of the plough avails. The horse which is unbroken bruises his mouth with the hard curb; the one that is acquainted with arms is less sensible of the bit. Love goads more sharply and much more cruelly those who struggle, than those who agree to endure his servitude. Lo! I confess it; I am thy new-made prey, O Cupid; I am extending my conquered hands for thy commands. No war *between us* is needed; I entreat for peace and for pardon; and no credit shall I be to thee, unarmed, conquered by thy arms. Bind thy locks with myrtle; yoke thy mother's doves; thy stepfather [014](#) himself will give a chariot which becomes thee. And in the chariot *so* given thee, thou shalt stand, and with thy skill shalt guide the birds *so* yoked [015](#), while the people shout "*Io triumphe*" [016](#) aloud. The captured youths and the captive fair shall be led *in triumph*; this procession shall be a splendid triumph for thee. I myself, a recent capture, shall bear my wound *so* lately made; and with the feelings of a captive shall I endure thy recent chains. Soundness of Understanding shall be led along with hands bound behind his back, Shame as well, and whatever *beside* is an enemy to the camp of Love. All things shall stand in awe of thee: towards thee the throng, stretching forth its hands, shall sing "*Io triumphe*" with loud voice. Caresses shall be thy attendants, Error too, and Madness, a troop that ever follows on thy side. With these for thy soldiers, thou dost overcome both men and Gods; take away from thee these advantages, *and* thou wilt be helpless. From highest Olympus thy joyous mother will applaud thee in thy triumph, and will sprinkle her roses falling on thy face. While gems bedeck thy wings, *and* gems thy hair; in thy golden chariot shalt thou go, resplendent thyself with gold. [017](#)

Then too, (if well I know thee) wilt thou influence not a few; then too, as thou passest by, wilt thou inflict many a wound. Thy arrows (even shouldst thou thyself desire it) cannot be at rest. A glowing flame *ever* injures by the propinquity of its heat. Just such was Bacchus when the Gangetic land [018](#) was subdued; thou art the burden of the birds; he was *that* of the tigers. Therefore, since I may be some portion of thy hallowed triumph, forbear, Conqueror, to expend thy strength on me. Look at the prospering arms of thy kinsman Cæsar; [019](#) with the same hand with which he conquers does he shield the conquered. [020](#)

## ELEGY III

He entreats his mistress to return his affection, and shows that he is deserving of her favour.

I ask for what is just; let the fair who has so lately captivated me, either love me, or let her give me a cause why I should always love her. Alas! too much have I desired; only let her allow herself to be loved; *and then* Cytherea will have listened to my prayers so numerous. Accept one who will be your servant through lengthened years; accept one who knows how to love with constant attachment. If the great names of ancient ancestors do not recommend me, or if the Equestrian founder of my family [021](#) *fails to do so*; and *if* no field of mine is renewed by ploughs innumerable, and each of my parents [022](#) with frugal spirit limits my expenditure; still Phoebus and his nine companions and the discoverer of the vine may do so; and Love *besides*, who presents me as a gift to you; a fidelity, too that will yield to none, manners above reproach, ingenuousness without guile, and modesty *ever* able to blush.

A thousand damsels have no charms for me; I am no rover in affection; [023](#) you will for ever be my choice, if you do but believe me. May it prove my lot to live with you for years as many as the threads of the Sister *Destinies* shall grant me, and to die with you sorrowing *for me*. Grant me yourself as a delightful theme for my verse; worthy of their matter my lines will flow. Io, frightened by her horns, and she whom the adulterer deceived in *the shape of* the bird [024](#) of the stream have a name in song; she, too, who, borne over the seas upon the fictitious bull, held fast the bending horns with her virgin hand. We, too, together shall be celebrated throughout all the world; and my name shall ever be united with thy own.

## ELEGY IV

He instructs his mistress what conduct to-observe in the presence of her husband at a feast to which he has been invited.

Y our husband is about to come to the same banquet [026](#) as ourselves: I pray that it may be the last meal [027](#) for this husband of yours. And am I then only as a guest to look upon the fair so much beloved? And shall there be another, to take pleasure in being touched *by you*? And will you, conveniently placed below, be keeping warm the bosom of another? [028](#) And shall he, when he pleases, be placing his hand upon your neck? Cease to be surprised that the beauteous damsel of Atrax [029](#) excited the two-formed men to combat when the wine was placed *on table*. No wood is my home, and my limbs adhere not to *those of* a horse; yet I seem to be hardly able to withhold my hands from you. Learn, however, what must be done by you; and do not give my injunctions to be borne away by the Eastern gales, nor on the warm winds of the South.

Come before your husband; and yet, I do not see what can be done, if you do come first; but still, do come first. [031](#) When he presses the couch, with modest air you will be going as his companion, to recline by him; *then* secretly touch my foot. [032](#) Keep your eye on me, and my nods and the expression of my features; apprehend my secret signs, [033](#) and yourself return them. Without utterance will I give expression to words by my eyebrows; [034](#) you shall read words traced by my fingers, words *traced* in the wine. [035](#) When the delights of our dalliance recur to your thoughts, press your blooming cheeks [036](#) with your beauteous finger. If there shall be anything, of which you may be making complaint about me silently in your mind, let your delicate hand reach from the extremity of your ear. When, my life, I shall either do or say aught which shall give you delight, let your ring be continually twisted on your fingers. [037](#) Take hold of the table with your hand, in the way in which those who are in prayer [038](#) take hold *of the altar*, when you shall be wishing many an evil for your husband, who so well deserves it. *The cup* which he has mixed for you, if you are discreet, [039](#) bid him drink himself; *then*, in a low voice, do you ask the servant [041](#) for what *wine* you wish. I will at once take the cup which you have put down; [042](#) and where you have sipped, on that side will I drink. If, perchance, he shall give you any morsels, of which he has tasted beforehand, reject them *thus* touched by his mouth. [043](#) And do not allow him to press your neck, by putting his arms around it; nor recline your gentle head on his unsightly breast. [044](#) Let not your bosom, or your breasts so close at hand, [045](#) admit his fingers; *and* especially allow him to give you no kisses. If you do give him *any* kisses, I shall be discovered to be your lover, and I shall say, "Those are my own," and shall be laying hands upon him.

Still, this I shall *be able to* see; but what the clothing carefully conceals, the same will be a cause for me of apprehension full of doubts. Touch not his thigh with yours, and cross not legs with him, and do not unite your delicate foot with his uncouth leg. To my misery, I am apprehensive of many a thing, because many a thing have I done in my wantonness; and I myself am tormented, through fear of my own precedent.

Oft *by joining hands* beneath the cloth, [048](#) have my mistress and I forestalled our hurried delights. This, I *am sure*, you will not do *for him*; but that you may not *even* be supposed to do so, take away the conscious covering [049](#) from your bosom. Bid your husband drink incessantly, but let there be no kisses with your entreaties; and while he is drinking, if you can, add wine by stealth. [050](#) If he shall be soundly laid asleep with dozing and wine, circumstances and opportunity will give us *fitting* counsel. When you shall rise to go home, we all will rise as well; *and* remember that you walk in the middle rank of the throng. In that rank you will either find me, or be found *by me*; *and* whatever part of me you can there touch, *mind and* touch.

Ah wretched me! I have given advice to be good for *but* a few hours; *then*, at the bidding of night, I am separated from my mistress. At night her husband will lock her in; I, sad with my gushing

tears, will follow her as far as I may, even to her obdurate door. *And* now will he be snatching a kiss; *and* now not kisses only will he snatch; you will be compelled to grant him that, which by stealth you grant to me. But grant him this (you can do so) with a bad grace, and like one acting by compulsion; let no caresses be heard; and let Venus prove inauspicious. If my wishes avail, I trust, too, that he will find no satisfaction therein; but if otherwise, still at least let it have no delights for you. But, however, whatever luck may attend upon the night, assure me in positive language to-morrow, that you did not dally with him.

## ELEGY V

The beauties of Corinna.

Twas summer time, [051](#) and the day had passed the hour of noon; *when* I threw my limbs to be refreshed on the middle of the couch. A part of the window [053](#) was thrown open, the other part shut; the light was such as the woods are wont to have; just as the twilight glimmers, when Phoebus is retreating; or *as* when the night has gone, and still the day is not risen. Such light should be given to the bashful fair, in which coy modesty may hope to have concealment.

Behold! Corinna [054](#) came, clothed in a tunic [055](#) hanging loose, her flowing hair [056](#) covering her white neck.

Beauteous Semiramis [057](#) is said to have entered her chamber, and Lais, [058](#) beloved by many a hero. I drew aside the tunic; in its thinness [059](#) it was but a small impediment; still, to be covered with the tunic did she strive; and, as she struggled as though she was not desirous to conquer, without difficulty was she overcome, through betrayal of herself. When, her clothing laid aside, she stood before my eyes, throughout her whole body nowhere was there a blemish. What shoulders, what arms I *both* saw and touched! The contour of her breast, how formed was it to be pressed! How smooth her stomach beneath her faultless bosom! How full and how beautiful her sides! How plump with youthfulness the thigh! *But* why enlarge on every point? Nothing did I behold not worthy of praise; and I pressed her person even to my own.

The rest, who knows not? Wearied, we both reclined. May such a midday often prove my lot.

## ELEGY VI

He entreats the porter to open to him the door of his mistress's house.

Porter, fastened (*and* how unworthily!) with the cruel fetter, [060](#) throw open the stubborn door with its turning hinge. What I ask, is but a trifle; let the door, half-opened, admit me sideways with its narrow passage. Protracted Love has made my body thin for such an emergency, and by diminishing my bulk, has rendered my limbs *quite* supple. 'Tis he who shows me how to go softly amid the watches of the keepers; [062](#) 'tis he directs my feet that meet no harm. But, at one time, I used to be afraid of the night and imaginary ghosts; *and* I used to be surprised if any one was about to go in the dark: Cupid, with his graceful mother, laughed, so that I could hear him, and he softly said, "Thou too wilt become bold." Without delay, love came *upon me*; then, I feared not spectres that flit by night, [063](#) or hands uplifted for my destruction.

I only fear you, *thus* too tardy; you alone do I court; you hold the lightning by which you can effect my destruction. Look (and that you may see, loosen the obdurate bars) how the door has been made wet with my tears. At all events, 'twas I, who, when, your garment laid aside, you stood ready for the whip, [064](#) spoke in your behalf to your mistress as you were trembling. Does then, (O shocking thought!) the credit which once prevailed in your behalf, now fail to prevail in my own favour? Give a return for my kindness; you may *now* be grateful. As you wish, [065](#) the hours of the night pass on; [066](#) from the door-post [067](#) strike away the bar. Strike it away then may you one day be liberated from your long fetters and may the water of the slave [068](#) be not for ever drunk of by you. Hard-hearted porter! you hear me, as I implore in vain; the door, supported by its hard oaken *posts*, is still unmoved. Let the protection of a closed gate be of value to cities when besieged; *but* why, in the midst of peace are you dreading warfare? What would you do to an enemy, who thus shut out the lover? The hours of the night pass on; from the door-post strike away the bar.

I am not come attended with soldiers and with arms; I should be alone, if ruthless Love were not here. Him, even if I should desire it, I can never send away; first should I be even severed from my limbs. Love then, and a little wine about my temples, [069](#) are with me, and the chaplet falling from off my anointed hair. Who is to dread arms *such* as these? Who may not go out to face them? The hours of the night pass on; from the door-post strike away the bar.

Are you delaying? or does sleep (who but ill befriends the lover) give to the winds my words, as they are repelled from your ear? But, I remember, when formerly I used to avoid you, you were awake, with the stars of the midnight. Perhaps, too, your own mistress is now asleep with you; alas! how much superior *then* is your fate to my own! And since 'tis so, pass on to me, ye cruel chains. The hours of the night pass on; from the door-post strike away the bar.

Am I mistaken? Or did the door-posts creak with the turning hinge, and did the shaken door give the jarring signal? Yes, I am mistaken; the door was shaken by the boisterous wind. Ah me! how far away has that gust borne my hopes! Boreas, if well thou dost keep in mind the ravished Orithyia, come hither, and with thy blast beat open this relentless door. 'Tis silence throughout all the City; damp with the glassy dew, the hours of the night pass on; from the door-post strike away the bar.

Otherwise I, myself, [073](#) now better prepared *than you*, with my sword, and with the fire which I am holding in my torch, [074](#) will scale this arrogant abode. Night, and lore, and wine, [075](#) are persuasive of no moderation; the first is without shame, Bacchus and Love *are without fear*.

I have expended every method; neither by entreaties nor by threats have I moved you, O *man*, *even* more deaf yourself than your door. It becomes you not to watch the threshold of the beautiful fair; of the anxieties of the prison, [076](#) are you more deserving. And now Lucifer is moving his wheels beset with rime; and the bird is arousing [077](#) wretched *mortals* to their work. But, chaplet taken from my locks joyous no longer, be you the livelong night upon this obdurate threshold. You, when in the morning she shall see you *thus* exposed, will be a witness of my time thus thrown away.

*Porter*, whatever your disposition, good bye, and *one day* experience the pangs of him who is now departing; sluggish one, and worthless in not admitting the lover, fare you well. And you, ye cruel door-posts, with your stubborn threshold; and *you, ye doors*, equally slaves, [078](#) hard-hearted blocks of wood, farewell.

## ELEGY VII

He has beaten his mistress, and endeavours to regain her favour.

Put my hands in manacles (they are deserving of chains), if any friend of mine is present, until all my frenzy has departed. For frenzy has raised my rash arms against my mistress; hurt by my frantic hand, the fair is weeping. In such case could I have done an injury even to my dear parents, or have given unmerciful blows to even the hallowed Gods. Why; did not Ajax, too, [080](#) the owner of the sevenfold shield, slaughter the flocks that he had caught along the extended plains? And did Orestes, the guilty avenger of his father, the punisher of his mother, dare to ask for weapons against the mystic Goddesses? [081](#)

And could I then tear her tresses so well arranged; and were not her displaced locks unbecoming to my mistress? Even thus was she beautiful; in such guise they say that the daughter of Schoeneus [082](#) pursued the wild beasts of Mænalus with her bow. 'Twere more fitting for her face to be pale from the impress of kisses, and for her neck to bear the marks of the toying teeth.

In such guise did the Cretan damsel [083](#) weep, that the South winds, in their headlong flight, had borne away both the promises and the sails of the forsworn Theseus. Thus, *too*, chaste Minerva, did Cassandra [084](#) fall in thy temple, except that her locks were bound with the fillet.

Who did not say to me, "You madman!" who did not say *to me*, "You barbarian!" She herself *said* not a word; her tongue was restrained by timid apprehensions. But still her silent features pronounced my censure; by her tears *and* by her silent lips did she convict me.

First could I wish that my arms had fallen from off my shoulders; to better purpose could I have parted with a portion of myself. To my own disadvantage had I the strength of a madman; and for my own punishment did I stoutly exert my strength. What do I want with you, ye ministers of death and criminality? Impious hands, submit to the chains, your due. Should I not have been punished had I struck the humblest Roman [085](#) of the multitude? *And* shall I have a greater privilege against my mistress? The son of Tydeus has left the worst instance of crime: he was the first to strike a Goddess, [086](#) I, the second. But less guilty was he; by me, she, whom I asserted to be loved *by me*, was injured; against an enemy the son of Tydeus was infuriate.

Come now, conqueror, prepare your boastful triumphs; bind your locks with laurel, and pay your vows to Jove, and let the multitude, the train, that escorts your chariot, shout aloud, "*To triumphe!* by *this* valiant man has the fair been conquered!" Let the captive, in her sadness, go before with dishevelled locks, pale all over, if her hurt cheeks [087](#) may allow.

In short, if, after the manner of a swelling torrent, I was impelled, and if impetuous anger did make me its prey; would it not have been enough to have shouted aloud at the trembling girl, and not to have thundered out my threats far too severe? Or else, to my own disgrace, to have torn her tunic from its upper edge down to the middle? Her girdle should, at the middle [089](#) have come to its aid. But now, in the hardness of my heart, I could dare, seizing her hair on her forehead, to mark her free-born cheeks [090](#) with my nails. *There* she stood, amazed, with her features pale and bloodless, just as the marble is cut in the Parian mountains. [091](#) I saw her fainting limbs, and her palpitating members; just as when the breeze waves the foliage of the poplars; just as the slender reed quivers with the gentle Zephyr; or, as when the surface of the waves is skimmed by the warm South wind. Her tears, too, so long repressed, flowed down her face, just as the water flows from the snow when heaped up.

Then, for the first time, did I begin to be sensible that I was guilty; the tears which she was shedding were *as* my own blood. Yet, thrice was I ready, suppliantly to throw myself before her feet; thrice did she repel my dreaded hands. But, *dearest*, do not you hesitate, (*for* revenge will lessen your grief) at once to attack my face with your nails. Spare not my eyes, nor *yet* my hair; let anger nerve your hands, weak though they may be.

And that tokens so shocking of my criminality may no longer exist, put your locks, arranged anew, in their proper order. [092](#)

## ELEGY VIII

He curses a certain procuress, whom he overhears instructing his mistress in the arts of a courtesan.

There is a certain—(whoever wishes to make acquaintance with a procuress, let him listen.)—There is a certain old hag, Dipsas by name. From fact does she derive [094](#) her name; never in a sober state does she behold the mother of the swarthy Memnon with her horses of roseate hue. She knows well the magic arts, and the charms of *Ææa*, [095](#) and by her skill she turns back to its source [096](#) the flowing stream. She knows right well what the herbs, what the thrums impelled around the whirling spinning-wheel, [097](#) and what the venomous exudation [098](#) from the prurient mare can effect. When she wills it, the clouds are overspread throughout all the sky; when she wills it, the day is bright with a clear atmosphere.

I have beheld (if I may be believed) the stars dripping with blood: the face of the moon was empurpled [099](#) with gore. I believe that she, transformed, [101](#) was flying amid the shades of night, and that her hag's carcass was covered with feathers. *This* I believe, and such is the report. A double pupil, too, [102](#) sparkles in her eyes, and light proceeds from a twofold eyeball. Forth from the ancient sepulchres she calls our great grandsires, and their grandsires [103](#) as well; and with her long incantations she cleaves the solid ground. She has made it her occupation to violate the chaste bed; and besides, her tongue is not "wanting in guilty advocacy. Chance made me the witness of her language; in such words was she giving her advice; the twofold doors [105](#) concealed me.

"You understand, my life, how greatly you yesterday pleased a wealthy young man; *for* he stopped short, and stood gazing for some time on your face. And whom do you not please? Your beauty is inferior to no one's. *But* woe is me! your person has not a fitting dress. I *only* wish you were as well off, as you are distinguished for beauty; if you became rich, I should not be poor. The adverse star of Mars in opposition [106](#) was unfortunate for you; Mars has gone; now Venus is befriending you with her planet. See now how favourable she is on her approach; a rich lover is sighing for you, and he makes it his care [107](#) what are your requirements. He has good looks, too, that may compare with your own; if he did not wish to have you at a price, he were worthy himself to be purchased."

*On this the damsel* blushed: [108](#) "Blushing," *said the hag*, "suits a fair complexion indeed; but if you *only* pretend it, 'tis an advantage; *if* real, it is wont to be injurious. When, your eyes cast down, [109](#) you are looking full upon your bosom, each man must *only* be looked at in the proportion in which he offers. Possibly the sluttish Sabine females, [111](#) when Tati us was king, were unwilling to be accommodating to more men *than one*. Now-a-days, Mars employs the bravery of *our men* in foreign warfare; [112](#) but Venus holds sway in the City of her own *Æneas*. Enjoy yourselves, my pretty ones; she is chaste, whom nobody has courted; or else, if coyness does not prevent her, she herself is the wooer. Dispel these frowns [113](#) as well, which you are carrying upon your lofty brow; with those frowns will numerous failings be removed. Penelope used to try [114](#) the strength of the young men upon the bow; the bow that tested *the strength* of their sides, was made of horn. Age glides stealthily on, and beguiles us as it flies; just as the swift river glides onward with its flowing waters. Brass grows bright by use; good clothes require to be worn; uninhabited buildings grow white with nasty mould. Unless you entertain *lovers*, beauty *soon* waxes old, with no one to enjoy it; and *even* one or two *lovers* are not sufficiently profitable. From many of *them*, gain is more sure, and not so difficult to be got. An abundant prey falls to the hoary wolves out of a *whole* flock.

"See now! what does this poet of yours make you a present of besides his last verses? You will read many thousands of them by *this* new lover. The God himself of poets, graceful in his mantle [116](#) adorned with gold, strikes the harmonious strings of the gilded lyre. He that shall make you presents, let him be to you greater than great Homer; believe me, it is a noble thing to give. And, if there shall be any one redeemed at a price for his person [117](#), do not you despise him; the fault of having the

foot rubbed with chalk [118](#) is a mere trifle. Neither let the old-fashioned wax busts about the halls [119](#) take you in; pack off with your forefathers, you needy lover. Nay more, should [120](#) one, because he is good-looking, ask for a night without a present; *why*, let him first solicit his own admirer for something to present to you.

"Be less exacting of presents, while you are laying your nets, *for fear* lest they should escape you: *once* caught, tease them at your own pleasure. Pretended affection, too, is not a bad thing; let him fancy he is loved; but have you a care that this affection is not all for nothing. Often refuse your favours; sometimes pretend a head-ache; and sometimes there will be Isis [121](#) to afford a pretext. *But* soon admit him again; that he may acquire no habits of endurance, and that his love, so often repulsed, may not begin to flag. Let your door be deaf to him who entreats, open to him who brings. Let the lover that is admitted, hear the remarks of him who is excluded. And, as though you were the first injured, sometimes get in a passion with him when injured *by you*. His censure, when counterbalanced by your censure, [127](#) may wear away. But do you never afford a long duration for anger; prolonged anger frequently produces hatred. Moreover, let your eyes learn, at discretion, to shed tears; and let this cause or that cause your cheeks to be wet. And do not, if you deceive any one, hesitate to be guilty of perjury; Venus lends *but* a deaf hearing [128](#) to deceived *lovers*.

"Let a male servant and a crafty handmaid [129](#) be trained up to their parts; who may instruct him what may be conveniently purchased for you. And let them ask but little for themselves; if they ask a little of many, [130](#) very soon, great will be the heap from the gleanings. [131](#) Let your sister, and your mother, and your nurse as well, fleece your admirer. A booty is soon made, that is sought by many hands. When occasions for asking for presents shall fail you, call attention with a cake [132](#) to your birthday Take care that no one loves you in security, without a rival; love is not very lasting if you remove *all* rivalry. Let him perceive the traces of *another* person on the couch; all your neck, too, discoloured by the marks of toying. Especially let him see the presents, which another has sent. If he gives you nothing, the Sacred Street [133](#) must be talked about. When you have received many things, but yet he has not given you every thing, be continually asking him to lend you something, for you never to return. Let your tongue aid you, and let it conceal your thoughts; [134](#) caress him, and prove his ruin. [135](#) Beneath the luscious honey cursed poisons lie concealed. If you observe these precepts, tried by me throughout a long experience; and if the winds and the breezes do not bear away my words; often will you bless me while I live; often will you pray, when I am dead, that in quietude my bones may repose."

She was in the middle of her speech, when my shadow betrayed me; but my hands with difficulty refrained from tearing her grey scanty locks, and her eyes bleared with wine, and her wrinkled cheeks. May the Gods grant you both no home, [136](#) and a needy old age; prolonged winters as well, and everlasting thirst.

## ELEGY IX

He tells Atticus that like the soldier, the lover ought to be on his guard and that Love is a species of warfare.

Every lover is a soldier, and Cupid has a camp of his own; believe me, Atticus, [138](#) every lover is a soldier. The age which is fitted for war, is suited to love as well. For an old man to be a soldier, is shocking; amorousness in an old man is shocking. The years which [139](#) generals require in the valiant soldier, the same does the charming fair require in her husband. Both *soldier and lover* pass sleepless nights; both rest upon the ground. The one watches at the door of his mistress; but the other *at that* of his general. [140](#) Long marches are the duty of the soldier; send the fair *far* away, *and* the lover will boldly follow her, without a limit *to his endurance*. Over opposing mountains will he go, and rivers swollen with rains; the accumulating snows will he pace.

About to plough the waves, he will not reproach the stormy East winds; nor will he watch for Constellations favourable for scudding over the waves. Who, except either the soldier or the lover, will submit to both the chill of the night, and the snows mingled with the heavy showers? The one is sent as a spy against the hostile foe; the other keeps his eye on his rival, as though upon an enemy. The one lays siege to stubborn cities, the other to the threshold of his obdurate mistress: the one bursts open gates, and the other, doors. [142](#) Full oft has it answered to attack the enemy when buried in sleep; and to slaughter an unarmed multitude with armed hand. Thus did the fierce troops of the Thracian Rhesus [143](#) fall; and you, captured steeds, forsook your lord. Full oft do lovers take advantage of the sleep of husbands, and brandish their arms against the slumbering foe. To escape the troops of the sentinels, and the bands of the patrol, is the part *both* of the soldier, and of the lover always in misery. Mars is wayward, and Venus is uncertain; both the conquered rise again, and those fall whom you would say could never possibly be prostrate.

Whoever, then, has pronounced Love *mere* slothfulness, let him cease *to love*: [144](#) to the discerning mind does Love belong. The mighty Achilles is inflamed by the captive Briseis. Trojans, while you may, destroy the Argive resources. Hector used to go to battle *fresh* from the embraces of Andromache; and it was his wife who placed his helmet on his head. The son of Atreus, the first of *all* the chiefs, on beholding the daughter of Priam, is said to have been smitten with the dishevelled locks of the raving *prophetess*. [146](#) Mars, too, when caught, was sensible of the chains wrought at the forge; [147](#) there was no story better known than his, in all the heavens.

I myself was of slothful habit, and born for a lazy inactivity; [148](#) the couch and the shade [149](#) had enervated my mind. Attentions to the charming fair gave a fillip to me, in my indolence; and *Love* commanded me to serve [150](#) in his camp. Hence it is that thou seest me active, and waging the warfare by night. Let him who wishes not to become slothful, fall in love.

## ELEGY X

He tells his mistress that she ought not to require presents as a return for her love.

Such as she, who, borne away from the Eurotas, [151](#) in the Phrygian ships, was the cause of warfare to her two husbands; such as Leda was, whom her crafty paramour, concealed in his white feathers, deceived under *the form of* a fictitious bird; such as Amydone [152](#) used to wander in the parched *fields of* Argos, when the urn was pressing the locks on the top of her head; such were you; and I was in dread of both the eagle and the bull with respect to you, and whatever *form besides* Love has created of the mighty Jove.

Now, all fears are gone, and the disease of my mind is cured; and now no longer does that form *of yours* rivet my eyes. Do you inquire why I am changed? *It is*, because you require presents. This reason does not allow of your pleasing me. So long as you were disinterested, I was in love with your mind together with your person; now, *in my estimation* your appearance is affected by this blemish on your disposition. Love is both a child and naked; he has years without sordidness, and *he wears* no clothes, that he may be without concealment. Why do you require the son of Venus to be prostituted at a price? He has no fold in his dress, [153](#) in which to conceal that price. Neither Venus is suited for cruel arms, nor yet the son of Venus; it befits not such unwarlike Divinities to serve for pay. The courtesan stands for hire to any one at a certain price; and with her submissive body, she seeks for wretched pelf. Still, she curses the tyranny of the avaricious procurer; [154](#) and she does by compulsion [155](#) what you are doing of your own free will.

Take, as an example, the cattle, devoid of reason; it were a shocking thing for there to be a finer feeling in the brutes. The mare asks no gift of the horse, nor the cow of the bull; the ram does not woo the ewe, induced by presents. Woman alone takes pleasure in spoils torn from the man; she alone lets out her nights; alone is she on sale, to be hired at a price. She sells, too, *joys* that delight them both, *and* which both covet; and she makes it a *matter* of pay, at what price she herself is to be gratified. Those joys, which are so equally sweet to both, why does the one sell, and *why* the other buy them? Why must that delight prove a loss to me, to you a gain, for which the female and the male combine with kindred impulse? Witnesses hired dishonestly, [156](#) sell their perjuries; the chest [157](#) of the commissioned judge [158](#) is disgracefully open *for the bribe*.

'Tis a dishonourable thing to defend the wretched criminals with a tongue that is purchased; [159](#) 'tis a disgrace for a tribunal to make great acquisitions. 'Tis a disgrace for a woman to increase her patrimonial possessions by the profits of her embraces, and to prostitute her beauty for lucre. Thanks are *justly* due for things obtained without purchase; there are no thanks for an intercourse disgracefully bartered. He who hires, [160](#) pays all *his due*; the price *once* paid, he no longer remains a debtor for your acquiescence. Cease, ye beauties, to bargain for pay for your favours. Sordid gains bring no good results. It was not worth her while to bargain for the Sabine bracelets, [161](#) in order that the arms should crush the head of the sacred maiden. The son pierced [163](#) with the sword those entrails from which he had sprung, and a simple necklace [164](#) was the cause of the punishment.

But yet it is not unbecoming for a present to be asked of the wealthy man; he has something to give to her who does ask for a present. Pluck the grapes that hang from the loaded vines; let the fruitful soil of Alcinous [165](#) afford the apples. Let the needy man proffer duty, zeal, and fidelity; what each one possesses, let him bestow it all upon his mistress. My endowments, too, are in my lines to shig the praises of those fair who deserve them; she, whom I choose, becomes celebrated through my skill. Vestments will rend, gems and gold will spoil; the fame which poesy confers is everlasting.

*Still* I do not detest giving and revolt at it, but at being asked for a price. Cease to demand it, *and* I will give you that which I refuse you while you ask.

## ELEGY XI

He begs Nape to deliver his letter to her mistress, and commences by praising her neatness and dexterity, and the interest she has hitherto manifested in his behalf.

Nape, skilled at binding the straggling locks [166](#) and arranging them in order, and not deserving to be reckoned [167](#) among the female slaves; *known*, too, *by experience* to be successful in the contrivances of the stealthy night, and clever in giving the signals; [168](#) you who have so oft entreated Corinna, when hesitating, to come to me; who have been found so often faithful by me in my difficulties; take and carry these tablets, [169](#) so well-filled, [170](#) this morning to your mistress; and by your diligence dispel *all* impeding delay. Neither veins of flint, nor hard iron is in your breast, nor have you a simplicity greater than that of your *clever* class. There is no doubt that you, too, have experienced the bow of Cupid; in my behalf defend the banner of your service. If *Corinna* asks what I am doing, you will say that I am living in expectation of the night. The wax inscribed with my persuasive hand is carrying the rest.

While I am speaking, time is flying; opportunely give her my tablets, when she is at leisure; but still, make her read them at once. I bid you watch her eyes and her forehead as she reads; from the silent features we may know the future. And *be there* no delay; when she has read them through, request her to write a long answer; [172](#) I hate it, when the bleached wax is empty, with a margin on every side. Let her write the lines close as they run, and let the letters traced in the extreme margin long detain my eyes.

*But* what need is there for wearying her fingers with holding the pen? [175](#) Let the whole of her letter contain this one word, "Come." Then, I should not delay to crown my victorious tablets with laurel, nor to place them in the midst of the temple of Venus. Beneath them I would inscribe "Naso consecrates these faithful servants of his to Venus; but lately, you were pieces of worthless maple." [176](#)

## ELEGY XII

He curses the tablets which he has sent, because his mistress has written an answer on them, in which she refuses to grant his request.

Lament my misfortune; my tablets have returned to me with sad intelligence. Her unlucky letter announces that she cannot *be seen* to-day. There is something in omens; just now, when she was preparing to go, Napè stopped short, having struck her foot [178](#) against the threshold. When sent out of doors another time, remember to pass the threshold more carefully, and *like* a sober woman lift your foot high *enough*.

Away with you; obdurate tablets, fatal bits of board; and you wax, as well, crammed with the lines of denial. I doubt the Corsican bee [180](#) has sent you collected from the blossom of the tall hemlock, beneath its abominable honey.

Besides, you were red, as though you had been thoroughly dyed in vermilion; [181](#) such a colour is exactly that of blood. Useless bits of board, thrown out in the street, *there* may you lie; and may the weight of the wheel crush you, as it passes along. I could even prove that he who formed you to shape from the tree, had not the hands of innocence. That tree surely has afforded a gibbet for some wretched neck, *and* has supplied the dreadful crosses [182](#) for the executioner. It has given a disgusting shelter to the screeching owls; in its branches it has borne the eggs of the vulture and of the screech-owl. [183](#) In my madness, have I entrusted my courtship to these, and have I given soft words to be *thus* carried to my mistress?

These tablets would more becomingly hold the prosy summons, [184](#) which some judge [185](#) pronounces, with his sour face.

## ELEGY XIII

He entreats the morning not to hasten on with its usual speed.

Now over the Ocean does she come from her aged husband *Tithonus*, who, with her yellow locks, brings on the day with her frosty chariot. Whither, Aurora, art thou hastening? Stay; *and* then may the yearly bird, with its wonted death, honour the shades [189](#) of thy Memnon, its parent. Now do I delight to recline in the soft arms of my mistress; now, if ever, is she deliciously united to my side. Now, too, slumbers are sound, and now the moisture is cooling the birds, too, are sweetly waronng with their little throats. Whither art thou hastening, hated by the men, detested by the fair? Check thy dewy reins with thy rosy hand. [190](#)

Before thy rising, the sailor better observes his Constellations; and he wanders not in ignorance, in the midst of the waves. On thy approach, the wayfarer arises, weary though he be; the soldier lays upon his arms the hands used to bear them. Thou art the first to look upon the tillers of the fields laden with the two-pronged fork; thou art the first to summon the lagging oxen to the crooked yoke. 'Tis thou who dost deprive boys of their sleep, and dost hand them over to their masters; [192](#), that their tender hands may suffer the cruel stripes. [193](#) 'Tis thou, too, who dost send the man before the vestibule of the attorney, [194](#) when about to become bail; [195](#) that he may submit to the great risks of a single word.

Thou art no source of pleasure to the pleader, [198](#) nor yet to the counsel; for fresh combats each is forced to rise. Thou, when the labours of the females might have had a pause, dost recal the hand of the worker in wool to its task.

All *this* I could endure; but who could allow the fair to arise *thus* early, except *the man* who has no mistress of his own? How often have I wished that night would not make way for thee; and that the stars when put to flight would not fly from thy countenance. Many a time have I wished that either the wind would break thy chariot to pieces, or that thy steed would fall, overtaken by *some* dense cloud. Remorseless one, whither dost thou hasten? Inasmuch as thy son was black, such was the colour of his mother's heart. What if [199](#) she had not once burned with passion for Cephalus? Or does she fancy that her escapade was not known? I *only* wish it was allowed Tithonus to tell of thee; there would not be a more coarse tale in *all* the heavens. While thou art avoiding him, because he is chilled by length of years, thou dost rise early in the morning from *the bed of* the old man to thy odious chariot. But if thou wast *only* holding some Cephalus embraced in thy arms; *then* wouldst thou be crying out, "Run slowly on, ye horses of the night."

Why should I be punished in my affections, if thy husband does decay through *length of years*? Wast thou married to the old fellow by my contrivance? See how many hours of sleep the Moon gave [201](#) to the youth beloved by *her*; and yet her beauty is not inferior to thine. The parent of the Gods himself, that he might not see thee so often, joined two nights together [202](#) for *the attainment of his desires*.

I had finished my reproaches; you might be sure she heard them; *for* she blushed'. However, no later than usual did the day arise.

## ELEGY XIV

His mistress having been in the habit of dyeing her hair with noxious compositions, she has nearly lost it, becoming almost bald. He reminds her of his former advice, and entreats her to abstain from the practice, on which there may be a chance of her recovering it.

I always used to say; "Do leave off doctoring your hair." [203](#) *And* now you have no hair *left*, that you can be dyeing. But, if you had let it alone, what was more plenteous than it? It used to reach down your sides, so far as ever [204](#) they extend. And besides: Was it not so fine, that you were afraid to dress [205](#) it; just like the veils [206](#) which the swarthy Seres use? Or *like* the thread which the spider draws out with her slender legs, when she fastens her light work beneath the neglected beam? And yet its colour was not black, nor yet was it golden, but though it was neither, it was a mixture of them both. A *colour*, such as the tall cedar has in the moist vallies of craggy Ida, when its bark is stript off.

Besides, it was *quite* tractable, and falling into a thousand ringlets; and it was the cause of no trouble to you. Neither the bodkin, [208](#) nor the tooth of the comb *ever* tore it; your tire woman always had a whole skin. Many a time was it dressed before my eyes; and *yet*, never did the bodkin [210](#) seized make wounds in her arms. Many a time too, in the morning, her locks not yet arranged, was she lying on the purple couch, with her face half upturned. Then even, unadorned, was she *beauteous*; as when the Thracian Bacchanal, in her weariness, throws herself carelessly upon the green grass. Still, fine as it was, and just like down, what evils, alas! did her tortured hair endure! How patiently did it submit itself to the iron and the fire; [211](#) that the curls might become crisp with their twisting circlets. "'Tis a shame," I used to cry, "'tis a shame, to be burning that hair; naturally it is becoming; do, cruel one, be merciful to your own head. Away with all violence from it; it is not *hair* that deserves to be scorched; the very locks instruct [212](#) the bodkins when applied."

Those *beauteous* locks are gone; which Apollo might have longed for, *and* which Bacchus might have wished to be on his own head. With them I might compare those, which naked Dione is painted [213](#) as once having held up with her dripping hand. Why are you complaining that hair so badly treated is gone? Why, silly girl, do you lay down the mirror [214](#) with disconsolate hand? You are not seen to advantage by yourself with eyes accustomed *to your former self*. For you to please, you ought to be forgetful of your *former* self.

No enchanted herbs of a rival [215](#) have done you this injury; no treacherous hag has been washing you with Itæmonian water. The effects, too, of no disease have injured you; (far away be all *bad* omens; [216](#)) nor has an envious tongue thinned your abundant locks; 'twas your own self who gave the prepared poison to your head. Now Germany will be sending [217](#) for you her captured locks; by the favour of a conquered race you will be adorned. Ah! how many a time will you have to blush, as any one admires your hair; and *then* you will say, "Now I am receiving praise for a bought commodity! In place of myself, he is now bepraising some Sygambrian girl [218](#) unknown to me; still, I remember *the time* when that glory was my own."

Wretch that I am! with difficulty does she restrain her tears; and she covers her face with her hand, having her delicate cheeks suffused with blushes. She is venturing to look at her former locks, *placed* in her bosom; a treasure, alas! not fitted for that spot. [219](#)

Calm your feelings with your features; the loss may still be repaired. Before long, you will become *beauteous* with your natural hair.

## ELEGY XV

He tells the envious that the fame of Poets is immortal, and that theirs is not a life devoted to idleness.

Why, gnawing Envy, dost thou blame me for years of slothfulness; and *why* dost thou call poesy the employment of an idle mind? *Thou sayest* that I do not, after the manner of my ancestors, while vigorous years allow me, seek the prizes of warfare covered with dust; that I do not make myself acquainted with the prosy law, and that I have not let my tongue for hire [221](#) in the disagreeable courts of justice.

The pursuits of which thou art speaking, are perishable; by me, everlasting fame is sought; that to all time I may be celebrated throughout the whole world. The Mæonian bard [222](#) will live, so long as Tenedos and Ida [223](#) shall stand; so long as Simois shall roll down to the sea his rapid waves. The Ascræan, too, [224](#) will live, so long as the grape shall swell with its juices; [225](#) so long as the corn shall fall, reaped by the curving sickle. The son of Battus [226](#) will to all time be sung throughout the whole world; although he is not powerful in genius, in his skill he shows his might. No mischance will *ever* come to the *tragic* buskin [227](#) of Sophocles; with the Sun and Moon Aratus [228](#) will ever exist. So long as the deceitful slave, [229](#) the harsh father, the roguish procuress, and the cozening courtesan shall endure, Menander will exist. Ennius, [230](#) without any *art*, and Accius, [231](#) with his spirited language, have a name that will perish with no lapse of time.

What age is to be forgetful of Varro, [232](#) and the first ship *that sailed*, and of the golden fleece sought by the chief, the son of Æson? Then will the verses perish of the sublime Lucretius, [233](#) when the same day shall give the world to destruction. Tityrus, [234](#) and the harvests, and the arms of Æneas, will be read of, so long as thou, Rome, [235](#) shalt be the ruler of the conquered earth. So long as the flames and the bow shall be the arms of Cupid, thy numbers, polished Tibullus, [236](#) will be repeated. Gallus [237](#) *will be known* by the West, and Gallus *known* by the East, [238](#) and with Gallus will his Lycoris be known. Though flint-stones, then, *and* though the share of the enduring plough perish by lapse of time, *yet* poetry is exempt from death. Let monarchs and the triumphs of monarchs yield to poesy, and let the wealthy shores of the golden Tagus [239](#) yield.

Let the vulgar throng admire worthless things; let the yellow-haired Apollo supply for me cups filled from the Castalian stream; let me bear, too, on my locks the myrtle that dreads the cold; and let me often be read by the anxious lover. Envy feeds upon the living; after death it is at rest, when his own reward protects each according to his merit. Still then, when the closing fire [240](#) shall have consumed me, shall I live on; and a great portion of myself will *ever* be surviving.

## BOOK THE SECOND

### ELEGY I

He says that he is obliged by Cupid to write of Love instead of the Wars, of the Giants, upon which subject he had already commenced.

This work, also, I, Naso, born among the watery Peligni, [301](#) have composed, the Poet of my own failings. This work, too, has Love demanded. Afar hence, be afar hence, ye prudish matrons; you are not a fitting audience for my wanton lines. Let the maiden that is not cold, read me in the presence of her betrothed; the inexperienced boy, too, wounded by a passion hitherto unknown; and may some youth, now wounded by the bow by which I am, recognise the conscious symptoms of his flame; and after long wondering, may he exclaim, "Taught by what informant, has this Poet been composing my own story?"

I was (I remember) venturing to sing of the battles of the heavens, and Gyges [302](#) with his hundred hands; and I had sufficient power of expression; what time the Earth so disgracefully avenged herself, and lofty Ossa, heaped upon Olympus, bore Pelion headlong downwards. Having the clouds in my hands, and wielding the lightnings with Jove, which with success he was to hurl in behalf of his realms of the heavens, my mistress shut her door against me; the lightnings together with Jove did I forsake. Jupiter himself disappeared from my thoughts. Pardon me, O Jove; no aid did thy weapons afford me; the shut door was a more potent thunderbolt than thine. I forthwith resumed the language of endearment and trifling Elegies, those weapons of my own; and gentle words prevailed upon the obdurate door.

Verses bring down [303](#) the horns of the blood-stained Moon; and they recall the snow-white steeds of the Sun in his career. Through verses do serpents burst, their jaws rent asunder, and the water turned back flows upward to its source. Through verses have doors given way; and by verses [304](#) was the bar, inserted in the door-post, although 'twas made of oak, overcome. Of what use is the swift Achilles celebrated by me? What can this or that son of Atreus do for me? He, too, who wasted as many of his years in wandering as in warfare? And the wretched Hector, dragged by the Hæmonian steeds? But the charms of the beauteous fair being oftentimes sung, she presents herself to the Poet as the reward of his verse. This great recompense is given; farewell, then, ye illustrious names of heroes; your favour is of no use to me. Ye charming fair, turn your eyes to my lines, which blushing Cupid dictates to me.

## ELEGY II

He has seen a lady walking in the portico of the temple of Apollo, and has sent to know if he may wait upon her. She has replied that it is quite impossible, as the eunuch Bagous is set to watch her. Ovid here addresses Bagous, and endeavours to persuade him to relax his watch over the fair; and shows him how he can do so with safety.

Bagous, [305](#) with whom is the duty of watching over your mistress, give me your attention, while I say a few but suitable words to you. Yesterday morning I saw a young lady walking in that portico which contains the choir *of the daughters* of Danaus. [306](#) At once, as she pleased me, I sent *to her*, and in my letter I proffered my request; with trembling hand, she answered me, "I cannot." And to my inquiry, why she could not, the cause was announced; *namely*, that your surveillance over your mistress is too strict.

O keeper, if you are wise (believe me *now*), cease to deserve my hatred; every one wishes him gone, of whom he stands in dread. Her husband, too, is not in his senses; for who would toil at taking care of that of which no part is lost, even if you do not watch it? But *still*, in his madness, let him indulge his passion; and let him believe that the object is chaste which pleases universally. By your favour, liberty may by stealth be given to her; that *one day* she may return to you what you have given her. Are you ready to be a confidant; the mistress is obedient to the slave. You fear to be an accomplice; you may shut your eyes. Does she read a letter by herself; suppose her mother to have sent it. Does a stranger come; bye and bye let him go, [307](#) *as though* an *old* acquaintance. Should she go to visit a sick female friend, who is not sick; in your opinion, let her be unwell. If she shall be a long time at the sacrifice, [308](#) let not the long waiting tire you; putting your head on your breast, you can snore away. And don't be enquiring what can be going on at *the temple of* the linen-clad Isis; [309](#) nor do you stand in any fear *whatever* of the curving theatres.

An accomplice in the escapade will receive everlasting honour; and what is less trouble than *merely* to hold your tongue? He is in favour; he turns the house [310](#) upside down *at his pleasure*, and he feels no stripes; he is omnipotent; the rest, a scrubby lot, are grovelling on. By him, that the real circumstances may be concealed, false ones are coined; and both the masters approve [311](#) of, what one, *and that the mistress*, Approves of. When the husband has quite contracted his brow, and has pursed up his wrinkles, the caressing fair makes him become just as she pleases. But still, let her sometimes contrive some fault against you even, and let her pretend tears, and call you an executioner. [312](#) Do you, on the other hand, making some charge which she may easily explain; by a feigned accusation remove all suspicion of the truth. [313](#) In such case, may your honours, then may your limited savings [314](#) increase; *only* do this, and in a short time you shall be a free man.

You behold the chains bound around the necks of informers; [315](#) the loathsome gaol receives the hearts that are unworthy of belief. In the midst of water Tantalus is in want of water, and catches at the apples as they escape him; 'twas his blabbing tongue caused this. [325](#) While the keeper appointed by Juno, [326](#) is watching Io too carefully, he dies before his time; she becomes a Goddess.

I have seen him wearing fetters on his bruised legs, through whom a husband was obliged to know of an intrigue. The punishment was less than his deserts; an unruly tongue was the injury of the two; the husband was grieved; the female suffered the loss of her character. Believe me; accusations are pleasing to no husband, and no one do they delight, even though he should listen to them. If he is indifferent, then you are wasting your information upon ears that care nothing for it; if he dotes *on her*, by your officiousness is he made wretched.

Besides, a faux pas, although discovered, is not so easily proved; she comes *before him*, protected by the prejudices of her judge. Should even he himself see it, still he himself will believe her as she denies it; and he will condemn his own eyesight, and will impose upon himself. Let him *but* see the tears of his spouse, and he himself will weep, and he will say, "That blabbing fellow shall

be punished." How unequal the contest in which you embark! if conquered, stripes are ready for you; *while* she is reposing in the bosom of the judge.

No crime do we meditate; we meet not for mixing poisons; my hand is not glittering with the drawn sword. We ask that through you we may be enabled to love in safety; what can there be more harmless than these our prayers?

## ELEGY III

He again addresses Bagous, who has proved obdurate to his request, and tries to effect his object by sympathising with his unhappy fate.

Alas! that, [327](#) neither man nor woman, you are watching your mistress, and that you cannot experience the mutual transports of love! He who was the first to mutilate boys, [328](#) ought himself to have suffered those wounds which he made. You would be ready to accommodate, and obliging to those who entreat you, had your own passion been before inflamed by any fair. You were not born for *managing* the steed, nor *are you* skilful in valorous arms; for your right hand the warlike spear is not adapted. With these let males meddle; do you resign *all* manly aspirations; may the standard be borne [329](#) by you in the cause of your mistress.

Overwhelm her with your favours; her gratitude may be of use to you. If you should miss that, what good fortune will there be for you? She has both beauty, *and* her years are fitted for dalliance; her charms are not deserving to fade in listless neglect. Ever watchful though you are deemed, *still* she may deceive you; what two persons will, does not fail of accomplishment. Still, as it is more convenient to try you with our entreaties, we do implore you, while you have *still* the opportunity of conferring your favours to advantage. [330](#)

## ELEGY IV

He confesses that he is an universal admirer of the fair sex.

I would not presume to defend my faulty morals, and to wield deceiving arms in behalf of my frailties. I confess them, if there is any use in confessing one's errors; and now, having confessed, I am foolishly proceeding to my own accusation. I hate *this state*; nor, though I wish, can I be otherwise than what I hate. Alas! how hard it is to bear *a lot* which you wish to lay aside! For strength and self-control fail me for ruling myself; just like a ship carried along the rapid tide, am I hurried away.

There is no single style of beauty which inflames my passion; there are a hundred causes for me always to be in love.

Is there any fair one that casts down her modest eyes? I am on fire; and that very modesty becomes an ambush against me. Is another one forward; *then* I am enchanted, because she is not coy; and her liveliness raises all my expectations. If another seems to be prudish, and to imitate the repulsive Sabine dames; [332](#) I think that she is kindly disposed, but that she conceals it in her stateliness. [333](#) Or if you are a learned fair, you please me, *thus* endowed with rare acquirements; or if ignorant, you are charming for your simplicity. Is there one who says that the lines of Callimachus are uncouth in comparison with mine; at once she, to whom I am *so* pleasing, pleases me. Is there even one who abuses both myself, the Poet, and my lines; I could wish to have her who so abuses me, upon my knee. Does this one walk leisurely, she enchants me with her gait; is another uncouth, still, she may become more gentle, on being more intimate with the other sex.

Because this one sings *so* sweetly, and modulates her voice [334](#) with such extreme case, I could wish to steal a kiss from her as she sings. Another is running through the complaining strings with active finger; who could not fall in love with hands so skilled? *And now*, one pleases by her gestures, and moves her arms to time, [335](#) and moves her graceful sides with languishing art *in the dance*; to say nothing about myself, who am excited on every occasion, put Hippolytus [336](#) there; he would become a Priapus. You, because you are so tall, equal the Heroines of old; [337](#) and, of large size, you can fill the entire couch as you lie. Another is active from her shortness; by both I am enchanted; both tall and short suit my taste. Is one unadorned; it occurs what addition there might be if she was adorned. Is one decked out; she sets out her endowments to advantage. The blonde will charm me; the brunette [338](#) will charm me *too*; a Venus is pleasing, even of a swarthy colour. Does black hair fall upon a neck of snow; Leda was sightly, with her raven locks. Is the hair flaxen; with her saffron locks, Aurora was charming. To every traditional story does my passion adapt itself. A youthful age charms me; *an age* more mature captivates me; the former is superior in the charms of person, the latter excels in spirit.

In fine, whatever the fair any person approves of in all the City, to all these does my passion aspire.

## ELEGY V

He addresses his mistress, whom he has detected acting falsely towards him.

Away with thee, quivered Cupid: no passion is of a value so great, that it should so often be my extreme wish to die. It is my wish to die, as oft as I call to mind your guilt. Fair one, born, alas! to be a never-ceasing cause of trouble! It is no tablets rubbed out [339](#) that discover your doings; no presents stealthily sent reveal your criminality. Oh! would that I might so accuse you, that, *after all*, I could not convict you! Ah wretched me! *and* why is my case so stare? Happy *the man* who boldly dares to defend the object which he loves; to whom his mistress is able to say, "I have done nothing *wrong*." Hard-hearted *is he*, and too much does he encourage his own grief, by whom a blood-stained victory is sought in the conviction of the accused.

To my sorrow, in my sober moments, with the wine on table, [342](#) I myself was witness of your criminality, when you thought I was asleep. I saw you *both* uttering many an expression by moving your eyebrows; [343](#) in your nods there was a considerable amount of language. Your eyes were not silent, [344](#) the table, too, traced over with wine; [345](#) nor was the language of the fingers wanting; I understood your discourse, [346](#) which treated of that which it did not appear to do; the words, too, preconcerted to stand for certain meanings. And now, the tables removed, many a guest had gone away; a couple of youths *only* were *there* dead drunk. But then I saw you *both* giving wanton kisses; I am sure that there was billing enough on your part; such, *in fact*, as no sister gives to a brother of correct conduct, but *rather such* as some voluptuous mistress gives to the eager lover; such as we may suppose that Phoebus did not give to Diana, but that Venus many a time save to her own *dear* Mars.

"What are you doing?" I cried out; "whither are you taking those transports that belong to me? On what belongs to myself, I will lay the hand of a master, [347](#) These *delights* must be in common with you and me, *and* with me and you; *but* why does any third person take a share in them?"

This did I say; and what, *besides*, sorrow prompted my tongue to say; but the red blush of shame rose on her conscious features; just as the sky, streaked by the wife of Tithonus, is tinted with red, or the maiden when beheld by her new-made husband; [348](#) just as the roses are beauteous when mingled among their *encircling* lilies; or when the Moon is suffering from the enchantment of her steeds; [349](#) or the Assyrian ivory [350](#) which the Mæonian woman has stained, [351](#) that from length of time it may not turn yellow. That complexion *of hers* was extremely like to these, or to some one of these; and, as it happened, she never was more beauteous *than then*. She looked towards the ground; to look upon the ground, added a charm; sad were her features, in her sorrow was she graceful. I had been tempted to tear her locks just as they were, (and nicely dressed they were) and to make an attack upon her tender cheeks.

When I looked on her face, my strong arms fell powerless; by arms of her own was my mistress defended. I, who the moment before had been so savage, *now*, as a suppliant and of my own accord, entreated that she would give me kisses not inferior *to those given-to my rival*. She smiled, and with heartiness she gave me her best *kisses*; such as might have snatched his three-forked bolts from Jove. To my misery I am *now* tormented, lest that other person received them in equal perfection; and I hope that those were not of this quality. [352](#)

Those *kisses*, too, were far better than those which I taught her; and she seemed to have learned something new. That they were too delightful, is a bad sign; that so lovingly were your lips joined to mine, *and* mine to yours. And yet, it is not at this alone that I am grieved; I do not only complain that kisses were given; although I do complain as well that they were given; such could never have been taught but on a closer acquaintanceship. I know not who is the master that has received a remuneration so ample.

## ELEGY VI

He laments the death of the parrot which he had given to Corinna.

The parrot, the imitative bird [353](#) sent from the Indians of the East, is dead; come in flocks to his obsequies, ye birds. Come, affectionate denizens of air, and beat your breasts with your wings; and with your hard claws disfigure your delicate features. Let your rough feathers be torn in place of your sorrowing hair; instead of the long trumpet, [354](#) let your songs resound.

Why, Philomela, are you complaining of the cruelty of *Tereus*, the Ismarian tyrant? *Surely*, that grievance is worn out by its *length of years*. Turn your attention to the sad end of a bird so prized. It is a great cause of sorrow, but, *still*, that so old. All, who poise yourselves in your career in the liquid air; but you, above the rest, affectionate turtle-dove, [360](#) lament him. Throughout life there was a firm attachment between you, and your prolonged and lasting friendship endured to the end. What the Phocian youth [361](#) was to the Argive Orestes, the same, parrot, was the turtle-dove to you, so long as it was allowed *by fate*.

But what *matters* that friendship? What the beauty of your rare plumage? What your voice so ingenious at imitating sounds? What avails it that *ever* since you were given, you pleased my mistress? Unfortunate pride of *all* birds, you are indeed laid low. With your feathers you could outvie the green emerald, having your purple beak tinted with the ruddy saffron. There was no bird on earth more skilled at imitating sounds; so prettily [362](#) did you utter words with your lisping notes.

Through envy, you were snatched away *from us*: you were the cause of no cruel wars; you were a chatterer, and the lover of peaceful concord. See, the quails, amid *all* their battles, [363](#) live on; perhaps, too, for that reason, they become old. With a very little you were satisfied; and, through your love of talking, you could not give time to your mouth for much food. A nut was your food, and poppies the cause of sleep; and a drop of pure water used to dispel your thirst. The gluttonous vulture lives on, the kite, too, that forms its circles in the air, and the jackdaw, the foreboder [364](#) of the shower of rain. The crow, too, lives on, hateful to the armed Minerva; [366](#) it, indeed, will hardly die after nine ages. [367](#) The prattling parrot is dead, the mimic of the human voice, sent as a gift from the ends of the earth. What is best, is generally first carried off by greedy hands; what is worthless, fills its *destined* numbers. [368](#) Thersites was the witness of the lamented death of him from Phylax; and now Hector became ashes, while his brothers *yet* lived.

Why should I mention the affectionate prayers of my anxious mistress in your behalf; prayers borne over the seas by the stormy North wind? The seventh day was come, [369](#) that was doomed to give no morrow; and now stood your Destiny, with her distaff all uncovered. And yet your words did not die away, in your faltering mouth; as you died, your tongue cried aloud, "Corinna, farewell!" [370](#)

At the foot of the Elysian hill [371](#) a grove, overshadowed with dark holm oaks, and the earth, moist with never-dying grass, is green. If there is any believing in matters of doubt, that is said to be the abode of innocent birds, from which obscene ones are expelled. There range far and wide the guiltless swans; the long-lived Phoenix, too, ever the sole bird *of its kind*. *There* the bird itself of Juno unfolds her feathers; the gentle dove gives kisses to its loving mate. Received in this home in the groves, amid these the Parrot attracts the guileless birds by his words. [372](#)

A sepulchre covers his bones; a sepulchre small as his body; on which a little stone has *this* inscription, well suited to itself: "From this very tomb [377](#) I may be judged to have been the favorite of my mistress. I had a tongue more skilled at talking than other birds."

## ELEGY VII

He attempts to convince his mistress, who suspects the contrary, that he is not in love with her handmaid Cypassis.

Am I then [378](#) 'to be for ever made the object of accusation by new charges? Though I should conquer, *yet* I am tired of entering the combat so oft. Do I look up to the *very* top of the marble theatre, from the multitude, you choose some woman, from whom to receive a cause of grief. Or does some beauteous fair look on me with inexpressive features; you find out that there are secret signs on the features. Do I praise any one; with your nails you attack her ill-starred locks; if I blame any one, you think I am hiding some fault. If my colour is healthy, *then I am pronounced* to be indifferent towards you; if unhealthy, *then* I am said to be dying with love for another. But I *only* wish I was conscious to myself of some fault; those endure punishment with equanimity, who are deserving of it. Now you accuse me without cause; and by believing every thing at random, you yourself forbid your anger to be of any consequence. See how the long-eared ass, [379](#) in his wretched lot, walks leisurely along, *although* tyrannized over with everlasting blows.

*And* lo! a fresh charge; Cypassis, so skilled at tiring, [380](#) is blamed for having been the supplanter of her mistress. May the Gods prove more favourable, than that if I should have any inclination for a faux pas, a low-born mistress of a despised class should attract me! What free man would wish to have amorous intercourse with a bondwoman, and to embrace a body mangled with the whip? [387](#) Add, *too*, that she is skilled in arranging your hair, and is a valuable servant to you for the skill of her hands. And would I, forsooth, ask *such a thing* of a servant, who is so faithful to you? *And*

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