

METER: elegiac couplet (see Catullus 70).

1 **praesente virō**: "while her husband is present."

***mala . . . dicit**: this and **dicit . . . male** (Catullus 92) are equivalent to **maledicō**, **maledicere** (3), **maledixī**, **maledictum** (+ *dat.*), to curse, heap abuse upon.

2 **haec**: i.e., the verbal abuse mentioned in line 1. Explain why **haec**, not **hoc**, is used here. Compare the use of **haec** in line 15 of Catullus 76. **illī fatuō**: i.e., Lesbia's husband. **fatuus**, -a, -um, foolish. **laetitia**: predicate nominative.

3 **mūlus**, -ī (*m*), mule. **nostrī**: genitive of **nōs**. **oblītus**, -a, -um (+ *gen.*), forgetful of. ***taceō**, **tacēre** (2), **tacui**, **tacitum**, to be quiet. **tacēret**: the subject is Lesbia. What mood and tense are **tacēret** here and **esset** in line 4? What type of conditional sentence is this?

4 **sānus**, -a, -um, sane, rational, "in her right mind." **ganniō**, **gannīre** (4), to snarl. **obloquor**, **obloquī** (3), **oblocūtus sum**, to interrupt, insist upon speaking.

5 **meminī**, **meminisse** (*perfect in form, present in meaning*), to remember. **quae . . . rēs**: a parenthetical remark that looks ahead to **īrāta est** (6); translate idiomatically, "and the following fact. . ."

ācer, **ācris**, **ācre**, sharp, revealing. How do you translate **multō** when it is used with a comparative adjective?

6 **Hōc est**: "That is. . ." **Hōc**: nominative singular, with the *o* pronounced as a long vowel.



Lesbia mī praesente virō mala plūrima dicit.

Lesbia's Stinging Words Are Not What They Seem.

Catullus lays out before us the logic of love and the rules by which we can read the symptoms of this love. What in Lesbia's behavior leads Catullus to the conclusion at the end of the poem?

1 Lesbia mī praesente virō mala plūrima dicit;
 2 haec illi fatuō maxima laetitia est.
 3 Mūle, nihil sentis? Sī nostrī oblīta tacēret,
 4 sāna esset: nunc quod gannit et obloquitur,
 5 nōn solum meminit, sed, quae multō ācrior est rēs,
 6 īrāta est. Hōc est, ūritur et loquitur.

1. Describe the situation in the first couplet. Why does Catullus call the husband a mule in the second couplet?
2. Catullus pays great attention to the design of his poems. You can often divide the poems into symmetrical units and see the development of his thoughts. In this poem, each couplet is a unit and part of a progression that builds up to the final words, *ūritur et loquitur*. Trace this progression.
3. How does the contrary-to-fact condition in lines 3–4 strengthen the conviction stated in lines 5–6?
4. In terms of love and the emotions of love, what special meaning might *sāna* (4), *īrāta* (6), and *ūritur* (6) have? Why do you think there are so many references to speech in this poem (*dicit*, *tacēret*, *gannit*, *obloquitur*, and *loquitur*)?