

METER: second archilochian (named after the Greek poet Archilochus). The first line of each couplet is dactylic hexameter (see Catullus 70), and the second line is a shortened version of the hexameter. The pattern is:

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- In line 17, the word **adiciant** is pronounced **adiciant**, making the first syllable long, and in line 27, the *eu* in **Theseus** is a diphthong.
- 1 **diffugiō, diffugere** (3), **diffūgī**, to flee, disperse. **diffūgēre** = **diffūgērunt**.
 - 2 **coma, -ae** (*f*), hair, foliage, leaf. **comae**: nominative plural.
 - 3 **mūtat . . . vicēs**: "(it) undergoes changes." **dēcrēscō, dēcrēscere** (3), **dēcrēvī, dēcrētum**, to subside.
 - 4 **praetereō, praeterīre** (*irreg.*), **praeteriī, praeteritum**, to pass by.
 - 5 **Grātia, -ae** (*f*), a Grace. The three Graces were personifications of beauty. **geminus, -a, -um, geminisque sorōribus**: i.e., the other two Graces.
 - 6 **nūdus, -a, -um**, naked, unclothed. **chorus, -ī** (*m*), a group of dancers.
 - 7 **Immortālia . . . diem** (8): word order: **annus et hōra, quae alnum diem rapit, monet** (*tē*) **nē immortālia spērēs**. The object of this warning is Torquatus (23). **immortālia, -ōrum** (*n pl*), immortality. **almus, -a, -um**, nourishing, life-giving, bountiful.
 - 9 **mītēscō, mītēscere** (3), to become mild, be softened. **Zephyrus, -ī** (*m*), Zephyr, the west wind. **prōterō, prōterere** (3), **prōtrivī, prōtrītum**, to wear away, trample on.
 - 10 **intereō, interīre** (*irreg.*), **interiī, interitum**, to die, perish. **simul**: = **simul ac**.
 - 11 **pōmifer, pōmifera, pōmiferum** fruit-bearing. **frūgēs, frūgum** (*f pl*), fruit, produce.
 - 12 **brūma, -ae** (*f*), winter. **iners, -a, -um**, inactive, sluggish, lifeless.
 - 13 **damnum, -ī** (*n*), loss. **reparō** (1), to repair, restore. Horace is alluding to the monthly cycle of the moon. **caelestis, -is, -e**, heavenly. **lūna, -ae** (*f*), moon.
 - 14 **dēcidō, dēcidere** (3), **dēcidī**, to fall down, sink down, perish, die.
 - 15 ***quō**, to which place, to where, where. **pius, -a, -um**, dutiful, devoted. **Aenēas . . . Tullus . . . Ancus**: Aeneas, the son of Anchises and Venus, was a Trojan hero, who, as recounted in Vergil's *Aeneid*, journeyed to Italy to found the Roman race; Tullus Hostilius and Ancus Marcius were the third and fourth kings of Rome.
 - 16 **pulvis, pulveris** (*m*), dust.
 - 17 **an**, whether. **adiciō, adicere** (3), **adiēcī, adiectum**, to throw on, add. **hodiernus, -a, -um**, today's, of today. **crāstinus, -a, -um**, tomorrow's, of tomorrow. **summa, -ae** (*f*), sum, total. Here, a dative.
 - 18 **superus, -a, -um**, above, celestial.
 - 19 **cūctus, -a, -um**, all. **avidus, -a, -um**, greedy. **amicō**: take with **animō** (20), "to your own self," "on your self."
 - 20 **dederīs**: an idiomatic rendering of the verb **dare**, such as "to use" or "to spend," may work better in this context. Common sense and usage dictate that **dederīs** and **occiderīs** (21) are future perfect indicatives and not perfect subjunctives; the final *i* is long to fit the meter.
 - 21 **semel**, once. **occidō, occidere** (3), **occidī, occāsum**, to fall, die. **Mīnōs, Mīnōis** (*m*), one of three judges in the underworld.
 - 22 **arbitrium, -ī** (*n*), judgment, verdict.
 - 23 **Torquātus, -ī** (*m*), a Roman about whom we know little. What can you deduce about him from lines 23–24? **fācundia, -ae** (*f*), eloquence.
 - 24 **restituō, restituere** (3), **restitui, restitūtum**, to restore, bring back (to life).
 - 25 **īfernus, -a, -um**, lower, of the underworld. **tenebrae, -ārum** (*f pl*), darkness, shadows. **tenebris**: ablative of separation, with **liberat** (26).
Dīāna, -ae (*f*), the virgin goddess whom Hippolytus, the son of Theseus, worshiped. After Hippolytus was killed, Diana tried hard to have him resurrected and, according to Horace (note the present tense of **liberat**), is still trying, unsuccessfully.
 - 26 **pudīcus, -a, -um**, chaste, virtuous.
 - 27 **Lēthaeus, -a, -um**, of Lethe, of the underworld. **Thēseus, -ī** (*m*), slayer of the Minotaur and king of Athens, who went with his friend Pirithous to kidnap Persephone from the underworld. They were tricked into sitting on a bench (some say the bench of Lethe or forgetfulness), to which they were chained. Hercules rescued Theseus but did not succeed in freeing Pirithous. Theseus, now dead and in the underworld, cannot free his friend, either. **cārus, -a, -um**, dear.
 - 28 **vinculum, -ī** (*n*), chain. **Pirithous, -ī** (*m*), Pirithous.

HORACE IV.7

“ . . . the most beautiful poem in ancient literature.”

(A. E. Houseman, 1856–1936)

Horace celebrates the arrival of spring (1–6). Why does he introduce the Graces and the Nymphs? For us, what does the arrival of spring signify and how do we normally respond to the events described in the opening lines?

Diffūgēre nivēs, redeunt iam grāmina campīs
arboribusque comae;
mūtāt terra vicēs, et dēcrēscēntia rīpās
flūmina praetereunt;

5 Grātia cum Nymphīs geminīsque sorōribus audet
dūcere nūda chorōs.
Immortālia nē spērēs, monet annus et alium
quae rapit hōra diem.

10 Frīgora mītēscunt Zephyrīs, vēr prōterit aestās
interitūra, simul
pōmifer autumnus frūgēs effūderit, et mox
brūma recurrit iners;
damna tamen celerēs reparant caelestia lūnae:
nōs ubi dēcidimus,

15 quō pius Aenēās, quō Tullus dīves et Ancus,
pulvis et umbra sumus.

Quis scit an adiciant hodiernae crāstina summae
tempora dī superī?
Cūncta manūs avidās fugient hērēdis, amīcō
20 quae dederīs animō.

Cum semel occiderīs et dē tē splendida Mīnōs
fēcerit arbitria,
nōn, Torquāte, genus, nōn tē fācundia, nōn tē
restituēt pietās;

25 īnfernīs neque enim tenebrīs Dīāna pudīcum
liberat Hippolytum,
nec Lēthaea valet Thēseus abrumperē cārō
vincula Pīrithoō.

1. What does Horace abruptly tell us in lines 7–8? How do his choice and arrangement of words make his point stronger?
2. How do lines 9–12 differ from lines 1–6? What seems to be the point here? Show how Horace has chosen his verbs for the seasons carefully and effectively. How is *brūma recurrit iners* (12) an oxymoron?
3. Lines 13–16 are the exact middle of the poem. What general truth does Horace present here? What allusions does he use to enlarge this comment on the human predicament?
4. What common Horatian themes are expressed concisely in lines 17–20? What device do you find in line 23 and why is it forceful here?
5. In the final lines we are far from the opening vision of springtime. Explain Horace's use of myth to generalize a point he made in lines 23–24.