

Catullus 3

Lūgēte, ō Venerēs Cupīdinēsque,
et quantum est hominum venustiōrum!
Passer mortuus est meae puellae,
passer, dēliciae meae puellae,
quem plūs illa oculīs suīs amābat.
Nam mellītus erat suamque nōrat
ipsam tam bene quam puella mātrem;
nec sēsē ā gremiō illius movēbat,
sed circumsiliēns modo hūc modo illūc
ad sōlam dominam ūsque pīpiābat;
quī nunc it per iter tenēbricōsum
illud, unde negant redire quemquam.



Birds drinking from a basin, eyed by a domestic cat; from a Pompeian mosaic (Naples; photo, James C. Anderson, Jr.).

- 1 lūgēō, lūgēre, lūxī, lūctum: to mourn, lament.
Venerēs Cupīdinēsque: "Venuses and Cūpids" (i.e., the feminine and masculine powers of love and desire).
- 2 venustus, -a, -um: charming, blessed by Venus.
quantum est hominum venustiōrum: "all the company of more charming men."
- 3 mortuus est: "has died."
- 5 plūs, comparative adverb: more.
oculus, oculī, M.: eye (here, abl. of comparison).
- 6 mellītus, -a, -um: honeyed, or "a honey."
nōrat = nōverat, from noscō, noscere, nōvī, nōtum: to know.
Poets dropped the *ve* or *vi* out of perfect system verb forms whenever necessary to fit the meter of the poem; this was not merely "poetic license" but a reflection of the pronunciation of conversational Latin.
- 7 suus, -a, -um: his (own), her (own), its (own), their (own).
ipsam: "mistress" (with *suam*).
tam . . . quam: as . . . as.
puella mātrem: sc. *noscit*.
8 sēsē: emphatic for *sē*, "itself."
gremium, gremiī, N.: lap.
9 circumsiliēns: "hopping around."
modo hūc modo illūc: "now this way, now that."
10 ūsque, adverb: continually.
pīpiō, pīpiāre, pīpiāvī, pīpiātum: to chirp.
11 eō, ire, īī, itum: to go.
iter, itineris, N.: journey.
tenēbricōsus, -a, -um: dark, shadowy.
12 unde, adverb: from where.
negō, negāre, negāvī, negātum: to deny, to say that . . . not.
quemquam: acc. of *quisquam*, *quaequam*, *quidquam*, any-one, anything.
redeō, redire, rediī, reditum: to return.

At vōbīs male sit, malae tenēbrae 13
 Orcī, quae omnia bella dēvorātis: 14
 tam bellum mihi passerem abstulistis. 15
 Ō factum male! Ō miselle passer! 16
 Tuā nunc operā meae puellae 17
 flendō turgidulī rubent ocelli. 18



*"At Lesbia's," by the Dutch painter Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1870
 (private collection, England; photo, courtesy Sotheby's).*

- 13 **at**, conjunction: but.
male, adverb: badly, ill.
sit: "may it be" or "may it go" (with **male**, a common curse in Latin).
tenēbrae, **tenēbrārum**, F. pl.: darkness.
14 **Orcus**, **Orcī**, M.: Orcus or Pluto, ruler of the Underworld.
bellus, -a, -um: beautiful.
dēvorō, **dēvorāre**, **dēvorāvī**, **dēvorātum**: to devour.
15 **mihi**: dat. of reference (Catullus assumes the position of the mourner), "to my great loss."
auferō, **auferre**, **abstulī**, **ablātum**: to take away.
16 **factum**, **factī**, N.: deed.
male = **malum**.
misellus, -a, -um: poor little (diminutive of **miser**, -era, -erum).
17 **opera**, **operae**, F.: deed (here abl. of cause).
18 **flendō**: "from weeping."
turgidulus, -a, -um: swollen little (diminutive of **turgidus**).
rubeō, **rubere**: to be red.
ocellus, **ocelli**, M.: diminutive of **oculus**.