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The Poems of Catullus**

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The Poems of Catullus

Poem 1

cui dono lepidum novum libellum
arida modo pumice expolitur?
Corneli, tibi: namque tu solebas
meas esse aliquid putare nugas
5 iam tum, cum ausus es unus Itolorum
omne aevum tribus explicare cartis
doctis, Iuppiter, et laboriosis.
quare habe tibi quidquid hoc libelli
qualecumque; quod, o patrona virgo,
10 plus uno maneat perenne saeclo.

Poem 2

Varus (a friend of mine) had marched me off
Out of the forum – I had time to spare –
To his girl’s place, to meet the “little lady”.
My immediate impression of her, there and then:
5 Not the utterly clueless female I’d expected.
When we got there, we talked of this and that,
Including present day Bithynia:
How it was doing, the scenario there –
And how much money I had made out of it.
10 I told them what was what: not one last penny
For natives, governors or their merry men
To bless themselves with – especially when they had
A governor who was an “expletive deleted”,
And didn’t care two hoots about his men.
15 “But surely, at the very least,” they said,
“Surely you got a team of litter – bearers
Out of the place – that’s what it’s famous for.”
Not to lose face before the girl, I tried
To make it seem I’d been the only one
20 To do quite well – I said: “I know I’d got
A rotten province, but my rotten luck
Wasn’t so bad that it was beyond my power
To get a team of eight good men and true.”
(The truth: I had not one, either in Rome
25 Or Bithynia, to shoulder anything –
Even the broken leg of some old chair.)
Then, like the bitch she was, the female said:
“My dear Catullus, do please let me have
That team of yours, just for a little while -
30 I want to be carried to Serapis’ temple.”
“Wait though,” I told the girl. “What I just said
I owned – that wasn’t right; a friend of mine –
Gaius Cinna, that is – he got the team.
But whether his or mine – what’s that to me?
35 I have the use of them as readily
As if I’d got them for myself to own.
But with you (nasty girl, and quite uncouth),
One can’t get away with bending the truth!”

Poem 3

ni te plus oculis meis amarem,
iucundissime Calve, munere isto
odissem te odio Vatiniano:
nam quid feci ego quidve sum locutus,
5 cur me tot male perderes poetis?
isti di mala multa dent clienti,
qui tantum tibi misit impiorum.
quod si, ut suspicor, hoc novum ac repertum
munus dat tibi Sulla litterator,
10 non est mi male, sed bene ac beate,
quod non dispereunt tui labores.

di magni, horribilem et sacrum libellum!
quem tu scilicet ad tuum Catullum
misti, continuo ut die periret,
15 Saturnalibus, optimo dierum!
non non hoc tibi, false, sic abibit.
nam, si luxerit, ad librariorum
curram scrinia, Caesios, Aquinos,
Suffenum, omnia colligam venena,
20 ac te his suppliciis remunerabor.
vos hinc interea valete abite
illuc, unde malum pedem attulistis,
saecli incommoda, pessimi poetae.

Poem 4

paene insularum, Sirmio, insularumque
ocelle, quascumque in liquentibus stagnis
marique vasto fert uterque Neptunus,
quam te libenter quamque laetus invisio,
5 vix mi ipse credens Thyniam atque Bithynos
liquisse campos et videre te in tuto.
o quid solutis est beatius curis,
cum mens onus reponit, ac peregrino
labore fessi venimus larem ad nostrum,
10 desideratoque acquiescimus lecto?
hoc est quod unum est pro laboribus tantis.
salve, o venusta Sirmio, atque ero gaude
gaudente, vosque, o Lydiae lacus undae,
ridete quidquid est domi cachinnorum.

Poem 5

Dianae sumus in fide
puellae et pueri integri:
Dianam pueri integri
puellaeque canamus.

5 o Latonia, maximi
magna progenies Iovis,
quam mater prope Deliam
deposivit olivam,

10 montium domina ut fores
silvarumque virentium
saltuumque reconditorum
amniuumque sonantum:

tu Lucina dolentibus
Iuno dicta puerperis,
15 tu potens Trivia et notho es
dicta lumine Luna.

tu cursu, dea, menstruo
metiens iter annum,
rustica agricolae bonis
20 tecta frugibus explēs.

sis quocumque tibi placet
sancta nomine, Romulique,
antique ut solita es, bona
sospites ope gentem.

Poem 6

o funde noster seu Sabine seu Tiburs
(nam te esse Tiburtem autumant, quibus non est
cordi Catullum laedere; at quibus cordi est,
quovis Sabinum pignore esse contendunt),
5 sed seu Sabine sive verius Tiburs,
fui libenter in tua suburbana
villa, malamque pectore expuli tussim,
non inmerenti quam mihi meus venter,
dum sumptuosas appeto, dedit, cenas.
10 nam, Sestianus dum volo esse conviva,
orationem in Antium petitozem
plenam veneni et pestilentiae legi.
hic me gravedo frigida et frequens tussis
quassavit usque, dum in tuum sinum fugi,
15 et me recuravi otioque et urtica.
quare reffectus maximas tibi grates
ago, meum quod non es ulta peccatum.
nec deprecor iam, si nefaria scripta
Sesti recepso, quin gravedinem et tussim
20 non mihi sed ipsi Sestio ferat frigus,
qui tunc vocat me, cum malum librum legi.

Poem 7

- Acmen Septimius suos amores
tenens in gremio “mea” inquit “Acme,
ni te perdit amo atque amare porro
omnes sum assidue paratus annos,
5 quantum qui pote plurimum perire,
solus in Libya Indiaque tosta
caesio veniam obvius leoni.”
hoc ut dixit, Amor sinistra ut ante
dextra sternuit approbationem.
- 10 at Acme leviter caput reflectens
et dulcis pueri ebrios ocellos
illo purpureo ore suaviata,
“sic” inquit “mea vita Septimille,
huic uni domino usque serviamus,
15 ut multo mihi maior acriorque
ignis mollibus ardet in medullis.”
hoc ut dixit, Amor sinistra ut ante
dextra sternuit approbationem.
- nunc ab auspicio bono profecti
20 mutuis animis amant amantur.
unam Septimius misellus Acmen
mavult quam Syrias Britanniasque:
uno in Septimio fidelis Acme
facit delicias libidinesque.
- 25 quis ullos homines beatiores
vidit, quis Venerem auspiciorem?

Poem 8

- Of all the descendants of Romulus
The most eloquent – Marcus Tullius
From those who are living to those now dead
And those still to come in the years ahead.
- 5 Catullus, worst poet, to you does owe
A great debt of gratitude, Cicero.
I, so much worst of poets, as you are
The very best of all patrons at the bar.

Poem 9

Yesterday, Licinius, in leisure,
We played on my tablets with great pleasure.
A subtle little sport of pretty rhyme
Scribbling away we toyed with metric time.
5 This way and that, we mused each raucous line,
Laughter pouring, surpassed only by wine.
I left from there; that place I long to sit –
Ablaze – Licinius, from your fiery wit.
But now, I am so wretched food can't sate,
10 Nor silent sleep seduce my eyes with bait
Of dark reprieve. In bed I turn with grief
And frenzy all night long with no relief.
I long for dawn, overcome, weak, half-dead
That I might speak to you – not lie in bed.
15 So, sweet friend, I've written this poem for you,
That you might see my need and not renew
Your pretend pride which halts your hand in play
Lest Nemesis rejects the words we pray
And does on you a punishment inflict
20 For she's a goddess and known to be strict!

Poem 10

As my friend Calvus beautifully explained
The charges to counter Vatinius' claim
In court just now I laughed out loud
I don't know who – one from the crowd
5 Raising his hands cried out in admiration,
"Great gods, that man can spout a dissertation!"

Poem 11

According to the tale that once you told,
Catullus was the only one you knew,
Lesbia, and before me you would hold
Not even Jove. At that time I loved you.
5 Not just as common lovers love a lass,
But also with the love a father has
For sons and sons-in-law.
Now I know you.
Therefore I burn still more obsessively,
10 Though you're much more cheap and trivial to me.
"How so?" you say. Because such wrongs compel
The lover to lust more, but love less well.

Poem 12

- siqua recordanti benefacta priora voluptas
est homini, cum se cogitat esse pium,
nec sanctam violasse fidem, nec foedere nullo
divum ad fallendos numine abusum homines,
5 multa parata manent in longa aetate, Catulle,
ex hoc ingrato gaudia amore tibi.
nam quaecumque homines bene cuiquam aut dicere possunt
aut facere, haec a te dictaque factaque sunt.
omnia quae ingratae perierunt credita menti.
10 quare iam te cur amplius excrucies?
quin tu animo offirmas atque istinc teque reducis
et dis invitis desinis esse miser?
- difficile est longum subito deponere amorem,
difficile est, verum hoc qua lubet efficias:
15 una salus haec est, hoc est tibi pervincendum,
hoc facias, sive id non pote sive pote.
o di, si vestrum est misereri, aut si quibus umquam
extremam iam ipsa in morte tulistis opem,
me miserum aspicate et, si vitam puriter egi,
20 eripite hanc pestem perniciemque mihi,
quae mihi subrepens imos ut torpor in artus
expulit ex omni pectore laetitas.
non iam illud quaero, contra me ut diligat illa,
aut, quod non potis est, esse pudica velit:
25 ipse valere opto et taetrum hunc deponere morbum.
o di, reddite mi hoc pro pietate mea.

Poem 13

- iucundum, mea vita, mihi proponis amorem
hunc nostrum inter nos perpetuumque fore.
di magni, facite ut vere promittere possit,
atque id sincere dicat et ex animo,
5 ut liceat nobis tota perducere vita
aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae.

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