Immortalitas Poetica

Steven Merola ’16

Catullus, *Carmen* 1: *Cui dono*

Whom shall I give this charming little book,
New made and just touched up with arid rock?
To thee, Cornelius, for oft thou looked
On as a poem what was but idle talk;
Then thou had dared, in Italy alone,
An age’s span in three short sheets to shew
(Three sheets, by Jove, much shewing and bemoaned!).
So for thyself have these my poems few,
Whate’er they are. Oh patron maid! May it be
The keep a while and perish not with me!

Propertius, *Elegia* 1.19: *Non ego nunc vereor*

I do not fear, Cynthia, the sullen shades
Nor grudge the fates my final dust to pay.
But let my death not be without thy love:
*That* grieves me more than does my final day.
For not so light does Cupid touch mine eyes
That with thy love forgott’n my ash could lie.

There in wasted lands the hero’s shade
Could not forget his pleasing wife’s embrace
And driv’n to grasp these joys with hands not hands
He came a ghost into his former place.
Whate’er I’ll be, my likeness shall be yours:
Great Love even can land on death’s dark shores.

There let the graceful maids in choir come out,
Whom Trojan plunder gave to Argive men;
No grace of theirs delights me more than yours,
Cynthia, for (just Tellus permit it) when
Thy fated end is stayed by length of years
My bones will ever darken with thy tears.

May you know this, alive, when I am ash;
Then in no place will death possess its sting.
Yet how I fear, Cynthia, my urn contemned,
Some hateful love thee from my ash shall bring. 
And thee unwilling force thy grief to spurn: 
When driv’n by constant threats a sure girl turns.

So while we can let us each other love! 
For never can a love be long enough. 
Horace, *Carmen* 3.30: *Exegi monumentum*

I’ve raised a monument more fixed than bronze, 
Than a tomb in royal fashioning higher. 
Which raging storm and North Wind strong 
Cannot destroy, nor the chain unnumbered 
Of fleeting years, nor e’en the flight of time. 
I’ll not completely die and much of me 
Shall shun the Deathly Queen. Always I’ll climb 
Made young by future praise, whilom the priest 
With Vestal Virgin mute Jove’s mount ascends. 
I’ll be said, where th’Aufid river roars 
And dry Daunus o’er a country folk attends, 
From nothing raised the first man to have borne 
Aeolic song into Italian verse. 
Take up the pride by merits won and sought 
And round my head, Melpomene, disburse 
With joy the laurel flow’rs from Delphi brought.