

LANGUAGE FAIR 2020
UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS
POETRY
Level 3

How to impress a girl with your speech

[Dē ēloquentiā litterārum]

Disce bonās artēs, moneō, Rōmāna iuventūs,
Nōn tantum trepidōs ut tueāre reōs; 460
Quam populus iūdexque gravis lēctusque senātus,
Tam dabit ēloquiō victa puella manūs.
Sed lateant vīrēs, nec sīs in fronte disertus;
effugiant vōcēs verba molesta tuae.
Quis, nisi mentis inops, tenerae dēclāmat amīcae? 465
saepe valēns odiī littera causa fuit.
Sit tibi crēdibilis sermō cōnsuētaque verba,
blanda tamen, praesēns ut videāre loquī.

OVID, *Ars amatoria* BOOK I, 459-468

Translation

Roman youth, I'm telling you, go learn the good arts
not only to protect trembling defendants:
like the people, and the serious judge, and the chosen senate,
the girl will surrender, defeated by your fluency.
But hide your strength-don't wear your eloquence on your sleeve;
your speech should flee from words that sound affected.
Who but a total dunce would declaim to a tender girlfriend?
Often a forceful letter was reason for hatred.
Your diction should inspire trust, using everyday words-
flirtatious, though, so you seem to be speaking in person.

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Ovid and his indelible words

lamque opus exēgī, quod nec Iovis ira nec ignis
nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolēre vetustās.
Cum volet, illa diēs, quae nīl nisi corporis hūius
iūs habet, incertī spatium mihi fīniat aeviī
parte tamen meliōre meī super alta perennis
astra ferar, nōmenque erit indēlēbile nostrum,
quaque patet domitīs Romana potentia terrīs,
ōre legar populī, perque omnia saecula fāmā,
siquid habent vērī vatum praesagia, vīvam.

(OVID, *Metamorphoses*, XV, 871-879)

TRANSLATION

And now, I have completed a great work,
which not Jove's anger, and not fire nor steel,
nor fast-consuming time can sweep away.
Whenever it will, let the day come, which has
dominion only over this mortal frame,
and end for me the uncertain course of life.
Yet in my better part I shall be borne
immortal, far above the stars on high,
and mine shall be a name indelible.
Wherever Roman power extends her sway
over the conquered lands, I shall be read
by lips of men. If Poets' prophecies
have any truth, through all the coming years
of future ages, I shall live in fame.

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Poetry

THE INVENTION OF THE SWORD

[The poet expresses to his friend Valgius his thoughts on what the sword has meant to mankind.]

Quis fuit, horrendōs prīmus quī prōtulit ēnsēs?
quam ferus et vērē ferreus ille fuit!
Tum caedes hominum generī, tum proelia nāta,
tum brevior dīrae mortis aperta via est.
An nihil ille miser meruit; nos ad mala nostra
vertimus, in saevās quod dedit ille ferās?
Dīvitis hoc vitium est aurī, nec bella fuerunt,
fāginus astābat cum scyphus ante dapēs.
Nōn arcēs, nōn vallus erat, somnumque petēbat
sēcūrus variās dux gregis inter ovēs.
Tunc mihi vīta foret, Valgī, nec trīstia nōssem
arma nec audīssem corde micante tubam.
Nunc ad bella trahor, et iam quis forsitan hostis
haesūra in nostrō tēla gerit latere.

(Tibullus I, 10 vv. 1-14, unabridged)

TRANSLATION

Who was he, who first forged the fearful sword?
How iron-willed and truly made of iron he was!
Then slaughter was created, war was born to men.
then a quicker road was opened to dread death.
But perhaps it's not the wretch's fault we turn to evil
what he gave us to use on savage beasts?
That's the curse of rich gold: there were no wars
when the beech-wood cup stood beside men's plates.
There were no fortresses or fences, and the flock's leader
sought sleep securely among the diverse sheep.
I might have lived then, Valgius, and not known
sad arms, or heard the trumpet with beating heart.
Now I'm dragged to war, and perhaps some enemy
already carries the spear that will pierce my side.