

Saint Aldhelm's Riddles

TRANSLATED BY A.M. JUSTER

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Praefatio

Arbiter aethereo iugiter qui regmine sceptrA
Luciflumque simul caeli regale tribunaL,
Disponis moderans aeternis legibus illuD,
(Horrida nam multans torsisti membra VehemotH,
Ex alta quondam rueret dum luridus arcE),
Limpida dictanti metrorum carmina praesuL
Munera nunc largire, rudis quo pandere reruM
Versibus enigmata queam clandestina fatV!
Sic, Deus, indignis tua gratis dona rependiS!
Castalidas nimphas non clamo cantibus istuC (10)
Examen neque spargebat mihi nectar in orE.
Cynthi sic numquam perlustro cacumina sed neC
In Parnasso procubui nec somnia vidI.
Nam mihi versificum poterit Deus addere carmeN
Inspirans stolidae pia gratis munera menti;
Tangit si mentem mox laudem corda rependunT,
Metrica nam Moysen declarant carmina vateM
Iamdudum cecinisse prisci vexilla tropeI
Late per populus illustra qua nitidus soL (20)
Lustrat ab oceani iam tollens gurgite cephaL
Et psalmista canens metrorum cantica voceE,
Natum divino promit generamine numeN
In caelis prius exortum, quam Lucifer orbi
Splendida formatis fudisset lumina saecliS
Verum si fuerint bene haec enigmata versV,
Explosis penitus naevis et rusticitatE
Ritu dactilico recte decursa nec erroR

Preface

Arbiter, whose eternal reign aloft
Leads sceptres and the star-lit royal court,
Directing it with Your eternal laws,
(Hence You once tortured Behemoth's gross limbs,
Erupting as he fell aghast from Heaven),
Lord of those writing lucid lyrics, help me,
Misguided as I am, to lay out things'
Clandestine mysteries through spoken verse!
O God, freely bestow Your gifts on clods!
My verse won't summon the Castalian nymphs, (10)
Plus no bees sprinkled nectar on my lips.
Of course, I've never scaled Apollo's peak,
Stretched prostrate on Parnassus, nor seen visions.
Even for me, God will improve verse lyrics,
Dispensing blessings for my sluggish mind;
And if he sways a mind, hearts echo praise,
Thus verses say the prophet Moses once
Had sung of ancient trophies of the soldiers
Of all the tribes, as sun was shining brightly
Upon wild oceans as its head ascended. (20)
So too the Psalmist, singing hymns in verse,
Announced God came, divinely born, although
No morning star had risen in Earth's sky
Diffusing brilliance in this new-made age.
Long after flaws and crudeness are expunged,
If these verse riddles do, indeed, succeed
(No lines with dactyls overrunning, no

Seduxit vana specie molimina mentiS,
 Incipiam potiora, sui Deus arida servI,
 Belligero quondam qui vires tradidit IoB,
 Viscera perpetui si roris repleat HaustV.
 Siccis nam laticum duxisti cautibus amneS
 Olim cum cuneus transgresso marmore rubrO
 Desertum penetrat cecinit quod carmine DaviD.
 Arce poli genitor servas qui saecula cunctA,
 Solvere iam scelerum noxas dignare nefandaS.

(30)

INCIPIUNT ENIGMATA ET DIVERSIS RERUM
 CREATURIS COMPOSITA

I

Altrix cunctorum quos mundus gestat in orbe
 Nuncupor (et merito quia numquam pignora tantum
 Improba sic lacerant maternas dente papillas).
 Prole virens aestate; tabescens tempore brumae.

II

Cernere me nulli possunt prendere palmis;
 Argutum vocis crepitum cito pando per orbem.
 Viribus horrisonis valeo confringere quercus;
 Nam, superos ego pulso polos et rura peragro.

III

Versicolor fugiens caelum terramque relinquo,
 Non tellure locus mihi; non in parte polorum est.
 Exilium nullus modo tam crudele veretur,
 Sed madidis mundum faciam frondescere guttis.

Efforts at reason tricked with vacant vision),
 Someday I'll start on even greater themes
 If God, who gave His strength to warlike Job,
 Nourishes servants' thirsty organs with
 Vast draughts of dew; throngs crossing the Red Sea
 Entered the desert when You made dry rock.
 Repulse the streams, as David sang in song;
 So, Father who protects our age in Heaven's
 Exalted heights, forgive my heinous sins.

(30)

RIDDLES ABOUT DIVERSE THINGS MADE BY THE
 CREATOR BEGIN

1

I'm called the nurse of all that Earth must bear
 (and rightly so, since bratty babes don't bite
 their mothers' nipples with as much delight),
 sprouting in heat then wasting in cold air.

2

No one can hold me in his palms or sight;
 I scatter sudden clatter far and wide.
 I want to hammer oaks with mournful might;
 Yes, I strike sky and scour countryside.

3

Shades shifting as I leave the Earth and sky,
 My place is not on land; it's not up high.
 No one else dreads his exile with such fears,
 But I would make the world be lush with tears.

IV

Crede mihi, res nulla manet sine me moderante
Et frontem faciemque meam lux nulla videbit.
Quis nesciat ditione mea convexa rotari
Alta poli solisque iubar lunaeque meatus?

V

Taumantis proles priscorum fame fingor,
Ast ego prima mei generis rudimenta retexam:
Sole ruber genitus sum partu nubis aquosae.
Lustro polos passim solos; non scando per austros.

VI

Nunc ego cum pelagi fatibus communibus insto
Tempora reciprocis convolvens menstrua cyclis.
Ut mihi lucifluae decrescit gloria formae,
Sic augmenta latex redundans gurgite perdit.

VII

Facundum constat quondam cecinisse poetam:
'Quo Deus et quo dura vocat Fortuna, sequamur!'
Me veteres falso dominam vocitare solebant;
Sceptra regens mundi dum Christi gratia regnet.

VIII

Nos Atlante satas stolidi dixere priores.
Nam, septena cohors est, sed vix cernitur una.
Arce poli gradimur nec non sub Tartara terrae.
Furvis conspicimur tenebris et luce latemus;
Nomina de verno ducentes tempore prisca.

4

Trust me, without my guidance nothing stands
And eyes will not perceive my form and face.
Don't brilliant sun, high Heaven's arc though space,
And lunar phases crest at my commands?

5

I'm cast as "child of Thaumás" in quaint speech,
But basics of my birth I'll first reteach:
Born in cloud's water, I am sun's red daughter.
I seek clear skies; in storms I do not rise.

6

I share now with the surf one destiny
In rolling cycles when each month repeats.
As beauty in my brilliant form retreats,
So too the surges fade in cresting sea.

7

A polished poet wrote what's known to all:
"Let us pursue where God and hardship call!"
The ancients dubbed me "mistress," which was wrong;
Christ's grace ruled reigning sceptres all along.

8

"We're born of Atlas," ancient fools would write.
Yes, one's seen faintly, but our group is seven.
We go through Hell beneath the Earth - and Heaven.
We're seen at night and lurk when it is bright;
From spring our former name was brought to light.

IX

En ego non vereor rigidi discrimina ferri,
 Flammarum neu torre cremor, sed sanguine capri
 Virtus indomiti mollescit dura rigoris,
 Sic cruor exsuperat quem ferrea massa pavescit.

X

Sic me iamdudum rerum veneranda potestas
 Fecerat ut domini truculentos persequar hostes.
 Rictibus arma gerens bellorum praelia patro
 Et tamen infantum fugiens mox verbera vito.

XI

Flatibus alternis vescor cum fratre gemello;
 Non est vita mihi, cum sint spiracula vitae.
 Ars mea gemmatis dedit ornamenta metallis;
 Gratia nulla datur mihi, sed capit alter honorem.

XII

Annua dum redeunt texendi tempora telas,
 Lurida setigeris redundant viscera filis,
 Moxque genestarum frondosa cacumina scando
 Ut globulos fabricans tum fati sorte quiescam.

XIII

Quamvis aere cavo salpictae classica clangant,
 Et citharae crepitent, strepituque tubae modulentur,
 Centenos tamen eructant mea viscera cantus;
 Me praesente stupet mox musica chorda fibrarum.

9

Look! I'm not scared by iron's long, hard stress,
 Nor in flame's heat do I incinerate,
 But goat blood softens my fierce stubbornness,
 So gore defeats what scares an iron weight.

10

A holy force once made for me my chore
 So I would chase my master's nasty foes.
 Armed to the teeth, I brace for bouts of war,
 And yet I'm quickly fleeing children's blows.

11

Wheezing with my twin brother, I am fed;
 While there are vents for living, I am dead.
 My skill gives metals their bejewelled displays;
 I'm unthanked, though another steals the praise.

12

When times of year for weaving threads resume,
 My hairy threads fill sallow flesh with weight,
 And soon I climb the leafy tips of broom
 To craft small balls, then rest with twists of fate.

13

Though with their hollow brass the bugles clamour,
 Lyres rustle, and resounding trumpets yammer,
 Still from my guts a hundred songs are belched;
 With me stringed instruments are quickly squelched.

XIV

Sum namque excellens specie, mirandus in orbe;
 Ossibus ac nervis ac rubro sanguine cretus.
 Cum mihi vita comes fuerit nihil aurea forma
 Plus rubet et moriens mea numquam pulpa putrescit.

XV

Ignibus in mediis vivens non sentio flammam,
 Sed detrimenta rogi penitus ludibria faxo.
 Nec crepitante foco nec scintillante favilla,
 Ardeo, sed flammae flagranti torre tepescunt.

XVI

Nunc cernenda placent nostrae spectacula vitae;
 Cum grege piscoso scrutor maris aequora squamis.
 Cum volucrum turma quoque scando per aethera pennis,
 Et tamen aethereo non possum vivere flatu.

XVII

E geminis nascor per ponti caerulea concis
 Vellera setigero producens corpore fulva.
 En clamidem pepli necnon et pabula pulpae
 Confero sic duplex fati persolvo tributum.

XVIII

Dudum compositis ego nomen gesto figuris.
 Ut leo sic formica vocor sermone Pelasgo,
 Tropica nominibus signans praesagia duplis;
 Cum rostris avium nequeam resistere rostro.
 Scrutetur sapiens gemino cur nomine fungar!

14

Yes, I'm a world-wide wonder, a fine sight;
 With bone, red blood, and nerves I was begotten.
 While life's my friend, gold does not glow more light,
 And during death my flesh is never rotten.

15

I feel no flame while living in the fire,
 But mock the pains while deep within the pyre.
 As the hearth crackles and the embers glimmer,
 I do not burn, though wood's fierce flames grow dimmer.

16

Seeing life's spectacles now entertains;
 With fishy, scaly flocks, I search sea plains.
 With mobs of birds I also rise through sky,
 And yet I can't survive in breeze that's high.

17

I'm born with double shells in deep blue sea
 Producing tawny fleece from hairy meat.
 Behold! I offer flesh as food – complete
 With wool for robes – so twice I pay fate's fee.

18

My name's a hybrid since antiquity.
 I'm called a "lion," then an "ant" in Greek,
 A blended metaphor, a sign that's bleak;
 I can't defend birds' beaks with my own beak.
 May scholars probe my name's duplicity!

XIX

Dudum limpha fui squamoso pisce redundans,
 Sed natura novo fati discrimine cessit.
 Torrida dum calidos patior tormenta per ignes;
 Nam, cineri facies nivibusque simillima nitet.

XX

Mirificis formata modis sine semine creta,
 Dulcia florigeris onero praecordia praedis;
 Arte mea crocea flavescunt fercula regum.
 Semper acuta gero crudelis spicula belli,
 Atque carens manibus fabrorum vinco metalla.

XXI

Corpore sulcato nec non ferrugine glauca,
 Sum formata fricans rimis informe metallum.
 Auri materias massasque polire sueta.
 Plano superficiem constans asperrima rerum;
 Garrio voce carens rauco cum murmure stridens.

XXII

Vox mea diversis variatur pulcra figuris;
 Raucisonis numquam modulabor carmina rostris.
 Spurca colore tamen sed non sum sprete canendo,
 Sic non cesso canens fato terrente futuro.
 Nam me bruma fugat sed mox aestate redibo.

19

I was in sea where scaly fish once swarmed,
 But with changed fate my nature's frame reformed.
 I feel hot pains from fire's torrid glow;
 Indeed, my surface gleams like ash and snow.

20

Spawned without seed, produced in ways of wonder,
 I load my sweetened breast with floral plunder;
 Kings' honeyed fare grows gilded through my flair.
 Sharp spears of fearsome war are what I bear,
 And I beat – handleless! – craftsmen's metalware.

21

With flesh that's furrowed and a bluish glow,
 I'm formed to grind crude metal with each row.
 Smoothing gold hoards and ore is what I know.
 Remaining coarse, I keep a surface sleek;
 While lacking speech, I croak a raucous shriek.

22

My sweet voice warbles ways that are unique;
 I will not trill songs with a raucous beak.
 I'm drab, but still my singing's hard to spurn,
 So I keep singing though the future's bleak.
 Cold routs me, but in heat I'll soon return.

XXIII

Nos geminas olim genuit natura sorores
 Quas iugiter rectae legis censura gubernat;
 Ternere personas et ius servare solemus.
 Felix in terra fieret mortalibus aevum,
 Iustitiae normam si servent more sororum.

XXIV

Me caput horrentis fertur genuisse draconis.
 Augeo purpureis gemmarum lumina fucis,
 Sed mihi non dabitur rigida virtute potestas
 Si prius occumbat squamoso corpore natrix
 Quam summo spolier capitis de vertice rubra.

XXV

Vis mihi naturae dedit immo creator Olimpi,
 Id quo cuncta carent veteris miracula mundi
 Frigida nam chalibis suspendo metalla per auras,
 Vi quadam superans sic ferrea fata revinco.
 Mox adamante Cypri praesente potentia fraudor.

XXVI

Garrulus in tenebris rutilos cecinisse solebam
 Augustae lucis radios et lumina Phoebi;
 Penniger experto populorum nomine fungor,
 Arma ferens pedibus belli discrimina faxo
 Serratas capitis gestans in vertice cristas.

23

Twin sisters, Nature once produced us two
 Controlled by laws considered always true;
 We hate complainers and to law we hew.
 For mortals of our age joy would ensue,
 If they could heed the standard sisters do.

24

From a fierce dragon's head I'm born, it's said.
 With scarlet hues I help a gemstone's shine,
 Though firm control through virtue won't be mine
 If scaly serpent flesh has fallen dead
 Before I'm plucked, red, from atop its head.

25

Heaven's Maker, not power that's innate,
 Provided what all old world wonders lack
 For I command cold metals' airy track,
 Thus by my power changing iron's fate.
 Beside a Cyprus diamond, I'm soon slack.

26

I'm chatty, used to praising late at night
 Apollo's glow and rays of great red light.
 I'm feathered, named for people of renown;
 With foot-borne arms, I'm threatening a fight
 While sporting jagged crests upon my crown.

XXVII

Frigidus ex gelido prolatus viscere terrae.
 Duritiem ferri quadrata fronte polibo
 Atque senectutis vereor discrimina numquam
 Mulcifer annorum numerum ni dempserit igne.
 Mox rigida species mollescit torribus atris.

XXVIII

Sum mihi dissimilis vultu membrisque biformis.
 Cornibus armatus, horrendum cetera fingunt
 Membra virum. Fama clarus per Gnoissia rura:
 Spurius incerto Creta genitore creatus.
 Ex hominis pecudisque simul cognomine dicor.

XXIX

Quis non obstupeat nostri spectaculi fata
 Dum virtute fero silvarum robora mille?
 Ast acus exilis mox tanta gestamina rumpit.
 Nam volucres caeli nantesque per aequora pisces
 Olim sumpserunt ex me primordia vitae;
 Tertia pars mundi mihi constat iure tenenda.

XXX

Nos decem et septem genitae sine voce sorores
 Sex alias nothas non dicimus annumerandas;
 Nascimur ex ferro rursus ferro moribundae
 Necnon et volucris penna volitantis ad aethram.
 Terni nos fratres incerta matre crearunt.
 Qui cupit instanter sitiens audire docentes,
 Tum cito prompta damus rogitanti verba silenter.

27

From frozen bowels of Earth, my birth was frigid.
 With my square brow, I'll smooth where iron's rigid
 And never face the threat of age with fears
 As long as Vulcan's flame won't steal my years.
 My stiffness quickly softens as he sears.

28

In limbs and face my look is not the same.
 Armed with these horns, my other features frame
 A fearsome man. In Gnoissian fields my fame
 Is clear: Crete's bastard born unclaimed in shame,
 A beast and man when I am called my name.

29

Who is not stunned by my amazing fate
 When with great strength I prop up countless trees?
 Soon, though, a slender spike relieves great weight.
 Birds in the sky and fish that swim in seas
 Began their life from me in yesteryear;
 My hold on one third of the world is clear.

30

Seventeen sisters born without a cry
 Declare six other bastards have no worth;
 We're born from iron (and by iron die)
 Or from birds' feathers darting through the sky.
 Three brothers and some mother gave us birth.
 For those dead set to hear wise words we speak,
 We swiftly give them silent words they seek.

XXXI

Candida forma nitens necnon et furva nigrescens
 Est mihi, dum varia componor imagine pennae.
 Voce carens tremula nam faxo crepacula rostro,
 Quamvis squamigeros discernam dira colobros.
 Non mea letiferis turgescunt membra venenis;
 Sic teneros pullos prolemque nutrire suesco
 Carne venenata tetroque cruore draconum.

XXXII

Melligeris apibus mea prima processit origo,
 Sed pars exterior crescebat cetera silvis;
 Calciamenta mihi tradebant tergora dura.
 Nunc ferri stimulus faciem proscindit amoenam
 Flexibus et sulcos obliquat adinstar aratri,
 Sed semen segiti de caelo ducitur almum
 Quod largos generat millena fruge maniplos.
 Heu tam sancta seges diris extinguitur armis!

XXXIII

Roscida me genuit gelido de viscera tellus;
 Non sum setigero lanarum vellere facta.
 Licia nulla trahunt, nec garrula fila resultant,
 Nec crocea Seres texunt lanugine vermes,
 Nec radiis carpor, duro nec pectine pulsor,
 Et tamen en vestis vulgi sermone vocabor.
 Spicula non vereor longis exempta faretris.

31

My form is gleaming white and growing duller
 As I am made with plumes of changing colour.
 I do not warble since my beak just shakes,
 Although I fiercely slice up scaly snakes.
 No deadly toxins cause my limbs to swell,
 So I keep feeding chicks – my brood as well –
 With filthy serpent's blood and toxic steaks.

32

I got my start from honey-laden bees,
 And yet my outside part has grown from trees;
 Tough leather made my shoes. An iron spike
 Now cuts my gorgeous face and wanders like
 A plow that's carving furrows into rows,
 But lays down fruitful seed from Heaven's field
 Where, from vast harvests, countless bounty grows.
 Alas, cruel arms destroy the holy yield!

33

From frozen bowels of dewy Earth I'm bred;
 From woolen fleece with bristles I'm *not* made.
 They pull no yarn, no humming threads cascade,
 No Chinese silkworms weave their yellow thread,
 I am not plucked from wheels, no stiff combs beat,
 And yet I'm labelled "clothing" on the street.
 Long quivers' arrows do not stir my dread.

XXXIV

Quamvis agricolis non sim laudabilis hospes,
 Fructus agrorum viridi de cespite ruris
 Carpo catervatim rodens de stipite libros.
 Iamdudum celebris spolians Nilotica regna
 Quando decem plagas spurca cum gente luebant,
 Cor mihi sub genibus nam constat carcere saeptum,
 Pectora poplitibus subduntur more rubetae.

XXXV

Duplicat ars geminis mihi nomen rite figuris
 Nam partem tenebrae retinent partemque volucres.
 Raro me quisquam cernet sub luce serena
 Quin magis astriferas ego nocte fovebo latebras.
 Raucisono medium crepitare per aethera suescens.
 Romuleis scribor biblis sed voce Pelasga,
 Nomine nocturnas dum semper servo tenebras.

XXXVI

Corpore sum gracilis stimulis armatus acerbis.
 Scando catervatim volitans super ardua pennis,
 Sanguineas sumens praedas mucrone cruento,
 Quadrupedi parcens nulli sed spicula trudo
 Setigeras pecudum stimulans per vulnera pulpas.
 Olim famosus vexans Memphitica rura
 Namque toros terebrans taurorum sanguine vescor.

34

Although for farmers I'm an unloved guest,
 I harvest yields from rural, lush terrains
 While gnawing bark with swarms on trunks of trees.
 Once famed for plundering the Nile's domains
 When ten plagues struck their evil dynasties,
 My heart is trapped in skin below my chest,
 Since, like a toad's, it's tucked beneath my knees.

35

My nature rightly copies my twin name
 Since birds and shadows each retain a claim.
 I'm rarely seen by people in clear light
 For I will hide in star-borne nests at night.
 In midflight it is common that I shriek.
 I'm in Rome's books, but with a sound that's Greek
 As I protect the shadows with my name.

36

My frame is frail, with nasty spurs for arms.
 I rise in swarms, ascending high by wing,
 Obtaining bloody spoils with bleeding sword,
 Sparing no four-hooved beast, yet boldly sting
 And torture hides of herds with wounds I gored.
 I was once famed for plaguing Memphis farms
 And yes, I love bull blood while puncturing.

XXXVII

Nepa mihi nomen veteres dixere Latini,
 Humida spumiferi spatior per litora ponti
 Passibus oceanum retrograda transeo versis,
 Et tamen aethereus per me decoratur Olympus,
 Dum ruber in caelo bissono sidere scando,
 Ostrea quem metuit duris perterrita saxis.

XXXVIII

Pergo super latices plantis suffulta quaternis;
 Nec tamen in limphas vereor quod mergar aquosas.
 Sed pariter terras et flumina calco pedestris,
 Nec natura sinit celerem natare per amnem
 Pontibus aut ratibus fluvios transire feroces,
 Quin potius pedibus gradior super aequora siccis.

XXXIX

Setiger in silvis armatos dentibus apros
 Cornigerosque simul cervos licet ore rudentes;
 Contero nec parcens ursorum quasso lacertos.
 Ora cruenta ferens morsus rictusque luporum
 Horridus haud vereor regali culmine fretus;
 Dormio nam patulis non claudens lumina gemmis.

XL

Sum niger exterius rugoso cortice tectus,
 Sed tamen interius candentem gesto medullam.
 Dilicias epulas regum luxusque ciborum
 Ius simul et pulpas battutas condo culinae,
 Sed me subnixum nulla virtute videbis
 Viscera ni fuerint nitidis quassata medullis.

37

Dubbed "scorpion" by Romans of the past,
 I walk wet beaches of the foaming ocean
 And cross the seafloor with a backwards motion,
 And yet high Heaven's decked out when I rise,
 Along with twelve red stars, into the skies,
 Which makes the oysters, scared of stones, aghast.

38

I walk on water with four feet that bear me;
 In spite of this, submersion doesn't scare me.
 Although on land and streams alike I skim,
 In rapids Nature will not let me swim
 Or cross fierce torrents with a bridge or boat,
 Yet on still water, with dry feet, I float.

39

A whiskered beast of woods, I shred each boar,
 Though armed with tusks, and antlered stags that roar;
 Crushing bears' forearms doesn't give me pause.
 Lips bloody, I don't fear wolves' teeth or jaws
 And dread no terror by high royal right;
 I sleep wide-eyed, with my jewelled beams closed tight.

40

I'm black outside, concealed by wrinkled skin,
 And yet I hide a glowing core within.
 I season royal feasts and high-class treats
 As well as country stews and pounded meats,
 But you will never see why I am prized
 Until my bright core's guts are pulverized.

XLI

Nolo fidem frangas, licet irrita dicta putentur,
 Credula sed nostris pande praecordia verbis!
 Celsior ad superas possum turgescere nubes.
 Si caput aufertur mihi toto corpore dempto,
 At vero capitis si pressus mole gravabor,
 Ima petens iugiter minorari parte videbor.

XLII

Grandia membra mihi plumescunt corpore denso.
 Par color accipitri, sed dispar causa volandi,
 Nam summa exiguis non trano per aethera pennis.
 Sed potius pedibus spatior per squalida rura
 Ovorum teretes praebens ad pocula testas.
 Africa Poenorum me fertur gignere tellus.

XLIII

Lurida per latices cenosas lustru paludes
 Nam mihi composuit nomen fortuna cruentum
 Rubro dum bibulis vescor de sanguine buccis.
 Ossibus et pedibus geminisque carebo lacertis
 Corpora vulneribus sed mordeo dira trisulcis,
 Atque salutiferis sic curam praesto labellis.

XLIV

Me pater et mater gelido genuere rigore
 Fomitibus siccis dum mox rudimenta vigeant,
 Quorum vi propria fortunam vincere possum
 Cum nil ni latices mea possint vincere fata,
 Sed saltus scopulos stagni ferrique metalla
 Comminuens penitus naturae iura resolvam.
 Cum me vita fovet sum clari sideris instar
 Postmodum et fato victus pice nigrrior exsto.

41

Don't lose faith, though talk carries little weight,
 But through my words expose your trusting heart!
 Near lofty higher clouds I can inflate.
 If I'm beheaded, all my flesh is shed,
 Yet if I'm pressed by weight from someone's head,
 I always seem to want to shrink in part.

42

Plumes sprout from giant limbs on my huge hide.
 Hawklike in hue, but not in will to fly,
 For with frail wings I do not sail high sky.
 Instead, I plod through barren countryside
 Providing cups from bits of eggs I lay.
 Phoenician Africa's my home, they say.

43

Ghostlike, I haunt the filthy pools of mud
 For Fortune tagged me with a gory name
 While I was gulping mouthfuls of red blood.
 I lack bones, arms, both feet, but all the same
 I puncture fearful flesh with triforked nips,
 And thus I heal with therapeutic lips.

44

Born of my parents' frozen-hard resilience
 As tinder quickly added youthful brilliance,
 I can surpass their fate with my own force
 Since only water knocks me off my course,
 But, when I'm freed from Nature's law, I strike
 At forests, rocks, tin, iron, and the like.
 While I'm alive, I'm like a brilliant star,
 Then, crushed by fate, I stay more black than tar.

XLV

In saltu nascor ramosa fronde virescens,
 Sed fortuna meum mutaverat ordine fatum.
 Dum veho per collum teretem vertigine molam,
 Ex quo conficitur regalis stragula pepli;
 Tam longa nullus zona praecingitur heros.
 Per me fata virum dicunt decernere Parcas.
 Frigora dura viros sternant ni forte resistam.

XLVI

Torqueo torquentes sed nullum torqueo sponte
 Laedere nec quemquam volo ni prius ipse reatum
 Contrahat et viridem studeat decerpere caulem.
 Fervida mox hominis turgescunt membra nocentis,
 Vindico sic noxam stimulisque ulciscor acutis.

XLVII

Absque cibo plures degebam marcida menses,
 Sed sopor et somnus ieiunia longa tulerunt.
 Pallida purpureo dum glescunt gramine rura,
 Garrula mox crepitat rubicundum carmina guttur.
 Post teneros fetus et prolem gentis adultam,
 Sponte mea fugiens umbrosas quaero latebras;
 Si vero quisquam pullorum lumina laedat,
 Affero compertum medicans cataplasma salutis
 Quaerens campestrum proprio de nomine florem.

45

I sprang from branches growing greenery,
 But, in rank, Fortune altered fate for me.
 While on my rounded neck I'm twirling thread,
 Which makes the robes that cloak the royal line,
 No hero's belt surrounds as much as mine.
 The Parcae set men's fates through me, it's said.
 If I weren't steadfast, chills would strike men dead.

46

I torture torturers, but freely balk
 At harm or torturing - unless a prime
 And guilty suspect goes for my green stalk.
 His stained limbs swell up, fevered, in no time,
 Thus I avenge with barbs and conquer crime.

47

Deprived of food for months, I grew less strong,
 Though rest and slumber made long fasting pass.
 When purple spreads throughout pale fields of grass,
 My ruby throat soon croaks a chatty song.
 Once tender young and kindred kids are grown,
 I flee for shaded shelter on my own;
 Yet if one makes my hatchlings' eyes inflame,
 I bring a healing balm of great acclaim
 Produced from wildflowers with my own name.

XLVIII

Sic me formavit naturae conditor almus:
 Lustrum teres tota spatiosis saecula ciclis
 Latas in gremio portans cum pondere terras
 Sic maris undantes cumulos et caerulea cludo.
 Nam nihil in rerum natura tam celer esset,
 Quod pedibus pergat quod pennis aethera tranet,
 Accola neu ponti volitans per caerulea squamis,
 Nec rota per girum quam trudit machina limphae
 Currere sic posset ni septem sidera tricent.

XLIX

Horrida curva capax patulis fabricata metallis,
 Pendeo nec caelum tangens terramve profundam.
 Ignibus ardescens necnon et gurgite fervens,
 Sic geminas vario patior discrimine pugnas
 Dum lattices limphae tolero flammasque feroces.

L

Prorsus Achivorum lingua pariterque Latina
 Mille vocor viridi folium de cespite natum,
 Idcirco decies centenum nomen habeo,
 Cauliculis florens quoniam sic nulla frutescit
 Herba per innumeros telluris limite sulcos.

LI

Sponte mea nascor fecundo cespite vernans,
 Fulgida de croceo flavescunt culmina flore.
 Occiduo claudor sic orto sole patesco,
 Unde prudentes posuerunt nomina Graeci.

48

Nature's kind Maker formed me as these things:
 I'm round and roam all worlds in spacious rings
 With my chest lifting Earth's extremities
 So I envelop clouds and rough blue seas.
 Since nothing real could move with such swift motion –
 Nothing that walks or skims the sky with wings,
 No fishy friend that zigzags through blue ocean,
 No millwheel turning – nothing could surpass me
 That runs, except that seven stars harass me.

49

As pounded gaping metal – wide, gross, round –
 I hang untouched by boundless sky or ground.
 Glowing in flames and fevering with bubbles,
 I thus confront two fronts with different troubles
 As I survive both being scorched and drowned.

50

In Greek, much like in Latin, I became
 The "thousand leaf," which fruitful farmland yields,
 So I will have "ten hundreds" as my name,
 Since shoots on other plants don't grow the same
 In all the countless furrows of the fields.

51

Born in lush farmland, blooming on my own,
 Bright blossoms on my crown are glowing gold.
 I'm closed at sunset, then at dawn unfold,
 So wise Greeks picked the name by which I'm known.

LII

Materia duplici palmis plasmabar apertis.
 Interiora mihi candescunt viscera lino
 Seu certe gracili iunco spoliata nitescunt,
 Sed nunc exterius flavescunt corpora flore.
 Quae flammasque focosque laremque vomentia fundunt,
 Et crebro lacrimae stillant de frontibus udae,
 Sic tamen horrendas noctis repello latebras;
 Reliquias cinerum mox viscera tosta relinquunt.

LIII

Sidereis stipor turmis in vertice mundi;
 Esseda famoso gesto cognomina vulgo.
 In giro volvens iugiter non vergo deorsum,
 Cetera ceu properant caelorum lumina ponto.
 Hac gaza ditor, quoniam sum proximus axi
 Qui Ripheis Scythiae praelatus monibus errat.
 Vergilias numeris aequans in arce polorum,
 Pars cuius inferior Stigia Lethaeque palude
 Fertur et inferni manibus succumbere nigris.

LIV

Credere quis poterit tantis spectacula causis
 Temperet et fatis rerum contraria fata?
 Ecce! Larem laticem quoque gesto in viscere ventris,
 Nec tamen undantes vincunt incendia limphae,
 Ignibus aut atris siccantur flumina fontis.
 Foedera sed pacis sunt flammas inter et undas;
 Malleus in primo memet formabat et incus.

52

From two materials, palms molded me.
 My insides glow; these guts – for sure a looting
 Of flax or some thin reed – shine brilliantly,
 Though flesh produced from flowers yellows now.
 They're belching fire as flames and sparks are shooting,
 And maudlin tears keep dripping down my brow,
 So I still clear night's shadows that I feared;
 They leave ash smudges where my guts were seared.

53

I'm jammed by mobs of stars on Heaven's peak;
 I bear the nickname "wagon" when folks speak.
 Revolving endlessly, I never tend
 To sink toward sea as other stars descend.
 I am more blessed because the North Star nears,
 Which over Scythia's Ripheans veers.
 I match the Pleiades far overhead,
 Whose lower reaches drop to marsh, it's said,
 By Styx and Lethe with their dismal dead.

54

Who could believe such reasons for these shows
 And that Fate alters clashing fates of things?
 Behold! Deep innards hold both flame and juice,
 Though eddies do not quell their fiery glows
 And deadly fires aren't quenched by streams from springs.
 Instead, the waves and flames respect their truce;
 A sledge and anvil fashioned my first use.

LV

Alma domus veneror divino munere plena,
 Valvas sed nullus reserat nec limina pandit
 Culmina ni fuerint aulis sublata quaternis
 Et licet exterius rutilent de corpore gemmae
 Aurea dum fulvis flavescit bulla metallis.
 Sed tamen uberius ditantur viscera crassa
 Intus qua species flagrat pulcherrima Christi
 Candida sanctorum sic floret gloria rerum.
 Nec trabis in templo surgunt nec tecta columnis.

LVI

Hospes praeruptis habitans in margine ripis,
 Non sum torpescens, oris sed belliger armis.
 Quin potius duro vitam sustento labore
 Grossaque prosternens mox ligna securibus uncis.
 Humidus in fundo tranat qua piscis aquoso,
 Saepe caput proprium tingens in gurgite mergo.
 Vulnera fibrarum necnon et lurida tabo,
 Membra medens pestemque luemque resolvo necantem.
 Libris corrosis et cortice vescor amara.

LVII

"Armiger infausti Iovis et raptor Ganimidis,"
 Quamquam pellaces cantarent carmine vates
 Non fueram praepes quo fertur Dardana proles.
 Sed magis in summis cicnos agitabo fugaces
 Arsantesque grues proturbo sub aetheris axe.
 Corpora dum senio corrumpit fessa vetustas,
 Fontibus in liquidis mergentis membra madescunt;
 Post haec restauror praeclaro lumine Phoebi.

55

I'm worshipped, a kind house filled with God's gift,
 But no one opens doors or enters in
 Unless the roof's four corners rise up higher
 Though gems are glowing red upon my skin
 As gleaming, gilded baubles are ablaze.
 In fact, gross guts are more refined within
 Where Christ's most gorgeous splendour is on fire,
 So holy matters' glory streams its rays;
 With this church roof, no beams or columns lift.

56

I'm living on steep river banks, and yet,
 Armed to my teeth for war, I don't relax.
 In fact, I make a living through my sweat
 And quickly fell big trees with my curved axe.
 In murky depths of water where fish swim,
 I often dive through currents, my head wet.
 I heal both injured bowel and sickened limb,
 And ward off plague and other grave disease.
 I eat chewed rind and bitter bark of trees.

57

"Ganymede's thief and Jove's unlucky knight,"
 Glib poets sang in verse; it wasn't I
 Who was the bird who bore Troy's youth in flight.
 Instead, I chase escaping swans up high
 And drive cranes screeching under Heaven's sky.
 When weak from weary flesh that aging brings,
 My limbs refresh by dipping in clear springs;
 I'm then restored by Phoebus's bright light.

LVIII

Tempore de primo noctis mihi nomen adhaesit;
 Occiduas mundi complector cardine partes.
 Oceano Titan dum corpus tinxerit alnum
 Et polus in glaucis relabens volvitur undis,
 Tum sequor, in vitreis recondens lumina campis,
 Et fortunatus subito ni tollar ab aethra,
 Ut furvas lumen noctis depelleret umbras.

LIX

Me dudum genuit candens onocrotalus albam
 Guttur qui patulo sorbet de gurgite limphas.
 Pergo per albentes directo tramite campos
 Candentique viae vestigia caerulea linquo
 Lucida nigratis fuscans anfractibus arva;
 Nec satis est unum per campos pandere callem.
 Semita quin potius milleno tramite tendit
 Quae non errantes ad caeli culmina vexit.

LX

Collibus in celsis saevi discrimina Martis,
 Quamvis venator frustra latrante moloso,
 Garriat arcister contorquens spicula ferri,
 Nil vereor magnis sed fretus viribus altis,
 Belliger impugnans elefantem vulnere sterno.
 Heu! Fortuna ferox quae me sic arte fefellit;
 Dum trucido grandes et virgine vincor inermi!
 Nam gremium pandens mox pulchra puerpera prendit
 Et voti compos celsam deducit ad urbem.
 Indidit ex cornu nomen mihi lingua Pelasga,
 Sic itidem propria dixerunt voce Latini. (10)

58

The early evening stuck its name on me;
 I cloak the western world from my high height.
 When Titan dips life-giving flesh in sea
 And, lost in gray-blue waves, sky drops from sight,
 I follow glassy plains while hiding light –
 And I'm not snatched from Heaven, blessedly,
 As light keeps clearing gloomy shades of night.

59

The gleaming pelican, who gulps a stream
 Of sea in his broad throat, once made me pale.
 I'm crossing whitened fields on my straight trail
 And leaving deep-blue prints of routes that gleam
 While tainting shining land with twists of black;
 One pass is not enough for fields to spread.
 Indeed, a trail takes countless ways instead
 That head to Heaven's heights for those on track.

60

In high terrain a battle's fierce travails –
 A foiled hound bays despite the hunter's calling
 With iron arrows of the archer falling –
 Don't scare me, but bold, trusting my great might,
 I wound war elephants before my kill.
 Alas, fierce Fortune fooled me with such skill;
 I slay beasts – and this unarmed girl prevails!
 Breast bare, the beauty wins and brings me right,
 As prayed for, to the city on the height.
 In Greek my horn has given me my name,
 So Latinists proclaim I'm just the same. (10)

LXI

De terrae gremiis formabar primitus arte;
 Materia trucibus processit cetera tauris
 Aut potius putidis constat fabricata capellis!
 Per me multorum clauduntur lumina leto
 Qui domini nudus nitor defendere vitam.
 Nam domus est constructa mihi de tergore secto
 Necnon et tabulis quas findunt stipite rasis.

LXII

De madido nascor rorantibus aethere guttis
 Turgida concrescens liquido de flumine lapsu,
 Sed me nulla valet manus udo gurgite nanterem
 Tangere ni statim rumpantur viscera tactu
 Et fragilis tenues flatus discedat in auras.
 Ante catervatim per limphas duco cohortes
 Dum plures ortu comites potiuntur eodem.

LXIII

Dum genus humanum truculenta fluenta necarent
 Et nova mortales multarent aequora cunctos,
 Exceptis raris gignunt qui semina saeculi,
 Primus viventum perdebam foedera iuris,
 Imperio patris contemnens subdere colla,
 Unde puto dudum versu dixisse poetam,
 'Abluit in terris, quidquid deliquit in undis.'
 Nam sobolem numquam dapibus saturabo ciborum,
 Ni prius in pulpis plumas nigrescere cernam.
 Littera tollatur post haec sine prole manebo.

61

First I was finely crafted from Earth's breast;
 From brutal bulls he made up all the rest –
 Or, rather, made from goats with their foul smell!
 For many of the dead, I close their eyes
 As he who guards my lord (though I'm undressed).
 Yes, home is made of leather cut to size
 And shaved-down wood from lumber that they fell.

62

I'm born from dripping drops in soggy sky
 And grow in swelling froth where rivers flow,
 But no hand sways me while I'm swimming by
 Or else my guts are spilled out everywhere
 And fragile breath disperses in thin air.
 I lead my team downstream with throngs in tow,
 Since many friends have birthdates that we share.

63

When bloody flooding killed the human race
 And brand-new seas put mortals in their place
 (Except for those who carried mankind's seed),
 First among beasts, I snubbed what law decreed,
 Deriding yielding to the Lord's command,
 For which, I think, a poet would declare,
 "The sin revealed on surf was cleansed on land."
 Now I won't fill my brood with banquet fare
 Until I see plumes blacken on their skin.
 Remove a letter, I will lack my kin.

LXIV

Cum Deus infandas iam plecteret aequore noxas
 Ablueretque simul scelerum contagia limphis,
 Prima praecepti complevi iussa parentis,
 Portendens fructu terris venisse salutem,
 Mitia quapropter semper praecordia gesto
 Et felix praepes nigro sine felle manebo.

LXV

Fida satis custos conservans pervigil aedes,
 Noctibus in furvis caecas lustrabo latebras
 Atris haud perdens oculorum lumen in antris.
 Furibus invisus vastant qui farris acervos,
 Insidiis tacite dispono scandala mortis,
 Et vaga venatrix rimabor lustra ferarum,
 Nec volo cum canibus turmas agitare fugaces,
 Qui mihi latrantes crudelia bella ciebut;
 Gens exosa mihi tradebat nomen habendum.

LXVI

Nos sumus aequales communi sorte sorores,
 Quae damus ex nostro cunctis alimenta labore.
 Par labor ambarum, dispar fortuna duarum
 Altera nam cursat, quod numquam altera gessit,
 Nec tamen invidiae stimulis agitamur acerbis.
 Utraque, quod mandit quod ruminat ore patenti
 Comminuens reddit famulans sine fraude maligna.

64

When God's sea punished vile abomination
 And water cleansed our sin's contamination,
 I, first, fulfilled The Father's proclamation,
 Marking with fruit the start of Earth's salvation,
 So I will bear a heart that is serene
 And stay a joyous bird without dark spleen.

65

Home's watchful, somewhat faithful, guardian,
 I'll prowl dark shadows in the pitch-black night
 In gloomy caves without my losing sight.
 For unseen thieves who raid the barley bin,
 I stealthily arrange my fatal snares,
 And, a stray huntress, I will search beasts' lairs,
 But I don't wish to chase escaping game
 With baying dogs who'll pick a savage fight;
 A loathsome tribe supplied my given name.

66

We're sisters, partners in this lot we share,
 Whose work provides the world its daily fare.
 Our labour's paired; both fortunes don't compare
 For as one runs the other never stirs,
 Yet we're unmoved by envy's bitter spurs.
 What each, with our wide maws, has chewed and gnawed
 Returns in pieces - served without cruel fraud.

LXVII

Sicca pruinosam crebris effundo fenestris
 Candentemque nivem iactans de viscere furvo,
 Et tamen omnis amat quamvis sit frigida nimbo;
 Densior et nebulis late spargatur in aula.
 Qua sine mortales grassantur funere leti
 (Sic animae pariter pereunt dum vita fatescit
 Et qua ditati contemnunt limina Ditis).
 Liquitur in prunis numquam torrentibus haec nix,
 Sed, mirum dictu, magis indurescit ad ignem.

LXVIII

Sum cava bellantum crepitu quae corda ciebo
 Vocibus horrendis stimulans in bella cohortes.
 Idcirco reboans tanto clamore resulto,
 Quod nulla interius obtundant viscera vocem,
 Spiritus in toto sed regnant corpore flabra.
 Garrula me poterit numquam superare cicada,
 Aut arguta simul cantans lusciniæ ruscis;
 Quam lingua propria dicunt acalantida Graeci.

LXIX

Semper habens virides frondenti in corpore crines.
 Tempore non ullo viduabor tegmine spisso,
 Circius et Boreas quamvis et flamina Chauri
 Viribus horrendis studeant deglobere frontem,
 Sed me pestiferam fecerunt fata reorum.
 Cumque venenatus glescit de corpora stipes
 Lurcones rabidi quem carpunt rictibus oris,
 Occido mandentum mox plura cadavera leto.

67

While dry, through close-set windows I eject
 Bright, frosty snow that my dark guts reject,
 And though it's cold, it's still adored by all;
 Denser than clouds and mist, it sprays the hall.
 Without it, mortals march to rites of death
 (As when life fades away with failing breath
 And those with wealth despise the gates of Hell).
 This snow won't melt on embers, but, to tell
 Of miracles, near fire it does jell.

68

I'm hollow, I who'll rouse fierce hearts with din
 While stirring troops with dreadful calls to war.
 It's how I ring with such an echoed roar,
 Since my insides don't block a call within,
 Though all my body runs on bursts of air.
 No chirpy cricket ever could compare,
 Nor nightingales in shrubs who join what's sung;
 Greeks call them *acalanthus* in their tongue.

69

My leafy body's always crowned in green.
 At no time do I lack a woven screen,
 Though Circius and Boreas and surges
 Of Caurus try to strip my forehead clean,
 But still the fates of things have made me mean.
 When from my trunk a toxic limb emerges
 And frenzied gluttons grab with gaping jaws,
 I quickly kill if any body gnaws.

LXX

De terris orior candenti corpore pelta
 Et nive fecunda Vulcani torre rigescens,
 Carior et multo quam cetera scuta duelli.
 Nec tamen in medio clipei stat ferreus umbo.
 Me sine quid prodest dirorum parma virorum?
 Vix artus animaeque carerent tramite mortis
 Ni forsán validis refrager viribus Orco.

LXXI

Me pedibus manibusque simul fraudaverat almus
 Arbiter immensum primo dum pangeret orbem.
 Fulcior haud volians veloci praepetis ala
 Spiritus alterno vegetat nec corpora flatu.
 Quamvis in caelis convexa cacumina cernam,
 Non tamen undosi contemno marmora ponti.

LXXII

Omnia membra mihi plasmavit corporis auctor,
 Nec tamen ex isdem membrorum munia sumpsi.
 Pergere nec plantis oculis nec cernere possum,
 Quamquam nunc patulae constent sub fronte fenestrae.
 Nullus anhelanti procedit viscere flatus;
 Spicula nec geminis nitor torquere lacertis.
 Heu, frustra factor confinxit corpus inorme,
 Totis membrorum dum frauder sensibus intus.

70

I rise from earth, flesh shining like a shield
 That's forged in Vulcan's heat and gleams like snow,
 And dearer than most plate that takes a blow.
 No iron studs constrain my middle, though.
 When grim men lack me, what is armour's yield?
 Bodies and souls would hardly stop Death's course
 Were I not thwarting Orcus with great force.

71

The gentle Judge deprived me right from birth
 Of feet and hands as He produced vast Earth.
 A swift bird's wing won't cause my elevation
 And wheezing stirs no flesh with respiration.
 Although I scan sky's vaulted canopy,
 I still don't spurn the surging marble sea.

72

My body's maker made my body parts,
 Though my limbs' functions I don't utilize.
 I cannot walk on feet or see with eyes,
 Though now below my brow there's ventilation.
 No panting lung provides me respiration;
 With my twin arms I can't try throwing darts.
 The craftsman botched my giant body size,
 Alas, as in all parts I lack sensation.

LXXIII

Per cava telluris clam serpo celerrimus antra
 Flexos venarum girans anfractibus orbes.
 Cum caream vita sensu quoque funditus expers,
 Quis numerus capiat vel quis laterculus aequet
 Vita viventum generem quot milia partu?
 His neque per caelum rutilantis sidera sperae,
 Fluctivagi ponti nec, compensantur harenae.

LXXIV

Glauca seges lini vernans ex aequore campi
 Et tergus mihi tradebant primordia fati.
 Bina mihi constant torto retinacula filo
 Ex quibus immensum trucidabam mole tirannum
 Cum cuperunt olim gentis saevire falanges.
 Plus amo cum tereti bellum decernere saxo
 Quam duris pugnans ferrata cuspide contis.
 Tres digiti totum versant super ardua corpus;
 Erro caput circa tenues et tendor in auras.

LXXV

Aera per sudum nunc binis remigo pennis;
 Horridus et grossae depromo murmura vocis
 Inque cavo densis conversor stipite turmis
 Dulcia conficiens propriis alimenta catervis,
 Et tamen humanis horrent haec pabula buccis.
 Sed quicumque cupit dirumpens foedera pacis
 Dirus commaculare domum sub culmine querno.
 Exemplo socias in bellum clamo cohortes,
 Dumque catervatim stridunt et spicula trudent,
 Agmina defugiunt iaculis exterrita diris;
 Insontes hosti sic torquent tela nocenti
 Plurima quae constant tetris infecta venenis.

(10)

73

Unseen, unheard, I prowl deep cracks of Earth,
 Corkscrewing fast through curves in twisted strands.
 Devoid of life and any sense of touch,
 What number sets or chart equates the worth
 Of countless creatures I have brought to birth?
 No glowing stars in Heaven's sphere, or sands
 Below the choppy seas, provide as much.

74

My start began from flat and blooming fields,
 Some leather and the light-blue flaxen yields.
 They make me with twin bands of twisted string
 With which I slew with stone a brutish king
 Back when a crowd of brawlers longed for gore.
 I pick a polished stone that ends a war
 Instead of hard-tipped iron spears to fight.
 Three fingers fling my body to great height;
 I loop a head and in thin air I soar.

75

I thrash now through clear air on double wings;
 A terror, I exude low grumbings
 And in a hollow branch thick swarms increase
 While I collect sweet treats to feed our brood,
 Though human cheeks are puckered by this food.
 If someone wants to break the bonds of peace
 So that my oak-roofed house is plagued by woe,
 I'll quickly call for war to all my peers,
 And while they buzz in swarms and drive home jabs,
 The troops escape, afraid of savage stabs;
 Thus, guiltless, they propel their many spears,
 Which carry toxins, at a guilty foe.

(10)

LXXVI

Fausta fuit primo mundi nascentis origo
 Donec prostratus succumberet arte maligni.
 Ex me tunc priscae processit causa ruinae;
 Dulcia quae rudibus tradebam mala colonis.
 En iterum mundo testor remeasse salutem
 Stipite de patulo dum penderet arbiter orbis
 Et poenas lueret soboles veneranda Tonantis.

LXXVII

Quis prior in mundo deprompsit tegmina vestis
 Aut quis elementer miserum protexit egenum?
 Irrita non referam verbis nec frivola fingam.
 Primitus in terra proprio de corpore peplum,
 Ut fama fertur produxi frondibus altis.
 Carica me curvat dum massis pabula praestat,
 Sedulus agricola brumae quas tempore mandit.

LXXVIII

En! Plures debrians impendo pocula Bacchi
 Vinitor expressit quae flavescuntibus uvis
 Pampinus et viridi genuit de palmito botris
 Nectare cauponis complens ex vite tabernam.
 Sic mea turgescunt ad plenum viscera musto,
 Et tamen inflatum non vexat crapula corpus,
 Quamvis hoc nectar centenis hauserit urnis,
 Proles sum terrae gliscens in saltibus altis,
 Materiam cuneis findit sed cultor agrestis,
 Pinos evertens altas et robora ferro.

76

Our newborn race was fortunate at first
 Until The Devil's cunning made it cursed.
 I caused the ancient fall from innocence;
 I gave sweet apples to fresh immigrants.
 Behold, I witnessed Earth's renewed salvation
 When, spread on wood, the Judge of every nation
 (And Thunder's Holy Son) paid reparation.

77

Who in the world first covered us with clothes
 Or kindly sheltered wretches who were broke?
 I'll neither squeal nor make a useless joke.
 I was Earth's first, or so reports suppose,
 Who wove from lofty leaves a body's cloak.
 Figs weigh me down while serving food in clusters,
 Which busy farmers eat when winter blusters.

78

Look! I give many drunkards cups of wine
 For which the vintner presses golden fruit
 He grew on branches from the grape's green shoot
 So that a barkeep's tavern reeks of vine.
 This way new juice engulfs my bloated trunk,
 And yet my swollen frame is never drunk,
 Although a hundred nectar jugs may drain.
 I'm Earth's child growing in the high terrain,
 But peasants' wedges split my wood with whacks,
 Destroying pines and oaks by iron axe.

LXXIX

Non nos Saturni genuit spurcissima proles,
 Iupiter immensum fingunt quem carmina vatum,
 Nec fuit in Delo mater Latona creatrix.
 Cynthia non dicor nec frater Apollo vocatur;
 Sed potius summi genuit regnator Olimpi
 Qui nunc in caelis excelsae praesidet arci.
 Dividimus mundum communi lege quadratum;
 Nocturnos regimus cursus et frena dierum.
 Ni soror et frater vaga saecula iure gubernent,
 Heu! Chaos immensum clauderet cuncta latebris
 Atraque nunc Erebri regnarent Tartara nigri.

LXXX

De rimis lapidum profluxi flumine lento
 Dum frangant flammae saxorum viscera dura
 Et laxis ardor fornacis regnat habenis,
 Nunc mihi forma capax glacieque simillima lucet.
 Nempe volunt plures collum constringere dextra
 Et pulchre digitis lubricum comprehendere corpus.
 Sed mentes muto dum labris oscula trado,
 (Dulcia compressis impendens basia buccis)
 Atque pedum gressus titubantes sterno ruina.

LXXXI

Semper ego clarum praecedo lumine lumen,
 Signifer et Phoebi, lustrat qui limpidus orbem,
 Per caelum gradiens obliquo tramite flector.
 Eoas partes amo dum iubar inde meabit
 Finibus Indorum, cernunt qui lumina primi.
 O felix olim servata lege Tonantis!
 Heu! Post haec cecidi proterva mente superbus,
 Ultio quapropter funestum perculit hostem,
 Sex igitur comites mecum super aethera scandunt;
 Gnarus quos poterit per biblos pandere lector.

79

We are not spawned by Saturn's blighted son,
 Jove, called in bardic verse "The Mighty One,"
 And Delian Latona's not our mother.
 I'm not called "Cynthia," nor Phoebus "brother";
 The Lord who fashioned high Olympus reigns
 Instead now from His heavenly domains.
 We split the four-part world as we agreed;
 Days pass and nights progress as we decreed.
 If siblings won't rule passing time by right,
 Alas, vast chaos would eclipse the light
 And then in Hell dark Erebus would lead.

80

From seams in stone I slowly started streaming
 While fire split tough bowels of rock within
 And fetters broke as furnace flames were stoked,
 And now, like ice, my massive form is gleaming.
 Right-handed crowds, for certain, want me choked
 And fondle my attractively smooth skin.
 I change their minds, though, when I nuzzle lips
 (Giving sweet kisses to a mouth pressed thin)
 And nudge unsteady feet for nasty trips.

81

I always come before clear light with light,
 And, harbinger of sun, which makes Earth bright,
 I am deflected angling through air.
 I love the East, for brilliance starts out where
 India's lands detect an early glow.
 O service to God's law was once delightful!
 Alas! Proud, I then fell while feeling spiteful,
 And so revenge undid a deadly foe,
 And thus six friends and I ascend the skies;
 Books can reveal them when a reader's wise.

LXXXII

Discolor in curvis conversor quadripes antris,
 Pugnas exercens dira cum gente draconum.
 Non ego dilecta turgesco prole mariti
 Nec fecunda viro sobolem sic edidit alvus
 Residuae matres ut sumunt semina partus;
 Quin magis ex ore praegnantur viscera fetu.
 Si vero proles patitur discrimina mortis,
 Dicor habere rudem componens arte medelam.

LXXXIII

Arida spumosis dissolvens faucibus ora
 Bis binis bibulus potum de fontibus hausit,
 Vivens nam terrae glebas cum stirpibus imis
 Nisu virtutis validae dirumpo feraces,
 At vero linquit dum spiritus algida membra,
 Nexibus horrendis homines constringere possum.

LXXXIV

Nunc mihi sunt oculi bis seni in corpore solo
 Bis ternumque caput (sed cetera membra gubernant).
 Nam gradior pedibus suffultus bis duodenis.
 Sed decies novem sunt et sex corporis ungues
 (Sinzigias numero pariter similabo pedestres).
 Populus et taxus viridi quoque fronde salicta
 Sunt invisae mihi sed fagos glandibus uncas
 Fructiferas itidem florenti vertice quercus,
 Diligo sic nemorosa simul non spernitur ilex.

82

I live, a multicoloured quadruped,
 In burrows fighting snakes, a breed to dread.
 My mate's dear children don't increase my size
 Nor do I have a womb males fertilize
 To reproduce as other mothers do;
 My womb's impregnated by mouth instead.
 If children, though, remain near death, I brew
 A good folk remedy, or so it's said.

83

Relieving my dry mouth with foamy lips,
 From twice two fountains I keep taking sips,
 For while alive I smash rich clods of soil –
 With roots down deep – through my ferocious toil,
 But when no life remains in limbs gone cold,
 My horrible restraints on men can hold.

84

I've twice six eyes, but flesh that is one whole
 And three paired heads (though other parts control).
 Two dozen feet suspend me as I stroll.
 For nails, though, ninety-six are on my meat
 (I look in number like the basic feet).
 I hate green willows, poplar trees and yews
 But love the nuts of beeches bowing down
 And acorn-bearing oaks with flowered crown,
 And as for holm-oak shade, I won't refuse.

LXXXV

Iam referam verbis tibi quod vix credere possis
 (Cum constet verum fallant nec frivola mentem),
 Nam dudum dederam soboli munuscula grata
 Tradere quae numquam poterat mihi quislibet alter
 Dum Deus ex alto fraudaret munere claro
 In quo cunctorum gaudent praecordia dono.

LXXXVI

Sum namque armatus rugosis cornibus horrens.
 Herbas arborum buccis decerpo virentes,
 Et tamen astrifero procedens agmine stipor;
 Culmina caelorum quae scandunt celsa catervis.
 Turritas urbes capitis certamine quasso
 Oppida murorum prosternens arcibus altis.
 Induo mortales retorto stamine pepeli;
 Littera quindecima praestat quod pars domus adsto.

LXXXVII

De salicis trunco pecoris quoque tergore raso,
 Componor patiens discrimina cruda duelli.
 Semper ego proprio gestantis corpore corpus
 Conservabo, viri vitam ne dempserit Orcus.
 Quis tantos casus aut quis tam plurima leti
 Suscipit in bello crudelis vulnera miles?

85

I'll share words now you hardly can believe
 (since it's plain truth, not blather to deceive),
 For I once gave a blessing to a son
 That I could not receive from anyone
 As God above denied a gift that's bright
 In which the hearts of other men delight.

86

Yes, armed with wrinkled horns, I'm quite a fright.
 I chew huge mouthfuls of the meadow grass,
 Yet starry swarms escort me as I pass;
 They rise in hordes to Heaven's highest height.
 Headstrong, I bang the turrets of the town
 So its tall fortress walls will tumble down.
 With twisted thread I fill man's clothing needs;
 I'm right at home if letter fifteen leads.

87

I'm made, a willow-wood shaved-leather blend,
 For taking battles to the bitter end.
 A body's safety is my body's job
 So Orcus will not have a life to rob.
 What other soldier bears such hardship or
 So many fatal injuries in war?

LXXXVIII

Callidior cunctis aura vescentibus aethrae,
 Late per mundum dispersi semina mortis
 Unde horrenda seges diris succrevit aristas,
 Quam metit ad scelera scortator falce maligna.
 Cornigeri multum vereor certamina cervi,
 Namque senescenti spoliabor pelle vetustus
 Atque nova rursus fretus remanebo iuventa.

LXXXIX

Nunc mea divinis complentur viscera verbis
 Totaque sacros gestant praecordia biblos,
 At tamen ex isdem nequeo cognoscere quicquam.
 Infelix fato fraudabor munere tali
 Dum tollunt dirae librorum lumina Parcae.

XC

Sunt mihi sex oculi, totidem simul auribus hausii;
 Sed digitos decies senos in corpore gesto.
 Ex quibus ecce quater denis de carne revulsis.
 Quinquies at tantum video remanere quaternos.

XCI

Omnipotens auctor, nutu qui cuncta creavit,
 Mi dedit in mundo tam victrix nomen habendum
 Nomine nempe meo florescit gloria regum,
 Martiribus necnon dum vincunt proelia mundi
 Edita caelestis prensant et praemia vitae.
 Frondigeris tegitur bellantum turma coronis,
 Et viridi ramo victor certamine miles.
 In summo capitis densescit vertice vellus
 Ex quo multiplicis torquentur tegmina pepli;
 Sic quoque mellifluis escarum pasco saginis
 Nectare per populos tribuens alimenta.

(10)

88

More cunning than all creatures gulping air,
 I scatter seeds of death through every field
 So toxic crops produce a horrid yield,
 Which the Old Goat's grim sickle reaps for sin.
 My fights with antlered bucks make me beware,
 And, when old, I will shed my ancient skin
 And, spurred by newfound youth, again begin.

89

God's holy words now fill my inner part
 And bear the sacred books with all my heart,
 And yet from them I'm not much edified.
 By fate this gift has sadly been denied
 As fierce Fates steal the light that books provide.

90

I've six eyes, with as many ears to hear,
 But sixty digits on my frame were borne,
 Look! From these forty the flesh was torn;
 I see that only twenty persevere.

91

Almighty God, who made all with His powers,
 Has named me "victor" for world-wide renown,
 Since in my name kings' honour surely flowers,
 And martyrs too, while thwarting worldly strife
 And earning their reward of lofty life.
 Soldiers in troops have donned a leafy crown,
 And for the battle's victor: a green bough.
 The fleece is sprouting thick atop my brow
 From which folds tumble down my woven gown;
 This way I nourish with a sweetened treat
 So there is nectar everyone can eat.

(10)

XCII

Rupibus in celsis qua tundunt caerula cautes
 Et salis undantes turgescunt aequore fluctus,
 Machina me summis construxit molibus amplam
 Navigeros calles ut pandam classibus index.
 Non maris aequoreos lustrabam remige campos
 Nec ratibus pontum sulcabam tramite flexo,
 Et tamen immensis errantes fluctibus actos
 Arcibus ex celsis signans ad litora duco
 Flammiger imponens torres in turribus altis
 Ignea brumales dum condunt sidera nimbi.

XCIII

Quae res in terris armatur robore tanto
 Aut paribus fungi nitatur viribus audax?
 Parva mihi primo constant exordia vitae.
 Sed gracilis grandes soleo prosternere leto,
 Quod letum proprii gestant penetralia ventris
 Nam saltus nemorum densos pariterque fructecta
 Piniferosque simul montes cum molibus altos.
 Truxque rapaxque capaxque feroxque sub aethere spargo
 Et minor existens gracili quam corpore scnifes.
 Frigida dum genetrix dura generaret ab alvo
 Primitus ex utero producens pignora gentis.

XCIV

Sambucus in silva putris dum fronde virescit,
 Est mihi par foliis nam glesco surculus arvis
 Nigros bacarum portans in fronte corimbo.
 Quem medici multum ruris per terga virentem,
 Cum scabies morbi pulpas irreperit aegras
 Lustrantes orbem crebro quaesisse feruntur.
 Cladibus horrendae dum vexat viscera tabo,
 Ne virus serpat possum succurrere leprae,
 Sic olidas hominum restaurans germinare fibras.

92

Where ocean pounds the craggy cliffs in sky
 And surging surf is rising with the tide,
 A scaffold built my mighty structure high
 So I could point out sea-routes like a guide.
 I do not roam calm oceans with an oar
 Nor plow the deep with rowers as they lurch,
 Yet lead lost boats, pushed by huge waves, to shore
 While signalling from my exalted perch
 In lofty towers, setting inflagratons
 As clouds of winter shroud bright constellations.

93

What earthly thing is armed with such great might
 Or tries with equal force to terrify?
 At first my life's beginnings stayed quite slight.
 I tend to slay the great, though I am light,
 Since my internal organs carry doom
 To both the bushes and the leafy pass,
 And lofty piny peeks with rocky mass.
 Vile, wild, riled, dry, I spread below the sky
 And keep my body smaller than a fly.
 When she spawned offspring from her stony womb,
 My frigid mother bore me first in class.

94

In woods the elder grows green stinking leaves,
 As do I, for I sprout in fields, a shrub
 That bears dark berry clusters on its crown.
 They've often said that doctors stripping scrub
 Have sought me growing far outside of town
 When deadly lesions burst through sickened skin.
 As dreaded plague attacks your guts within,
 I can keep leprosy from creeping in,
 Thus, for man's putrid bowels, my bud relieves.

XCV

Ecce molosorum nomen mihi fata dederunt
 (Argolicae gentis sic promit lingua loquelis)
 Ex quo me dirae fallebant carmina Circae
 Quae fontis liquidi maculabat flumina verbis!
 Femora cum cruribus suras cum poplite bino
 Abstulit immiscens crudelis verba virago,
 Pignora nunc pavidi referunt ululantia nautae
 Tonsis dum trudunt classes et caerulea findunt.
 Vastos verrentes fluctus grassante procella
 Palmula qua remis succurrit panda per undas,
 Auscultare procul quae latrant inguina circum,
 Sic me pellexit dudum Titania proles,
 Ut merito vivam salsis in fluctibus exul.

(10)

XCVI

Ferratas acies et denso milite turmas
 Bellandi miseros stimulat quos vana cupido,
 Dum maculare student armis pia foedera regni,
 Salpax et sorbet ventosis flatibus auras
 Raucaque clangenti resultant classica sistro;
 Cernere non pavidus didici trux murmura Martis.
 Quamquam me turpem nascendi fecerit auctor,
 Editus ex alvo dum sumpsi munera vitae.
 Ecce tamen morti successit gloria formae,
 Letifer in fibras dum finis serpat apertas.
 Bratea non auri fulvis pretiosa metallis,
 Quamvis gemmarum constent ornata lucernis,
 Vincere non quibunt falerarum floribus umquam.
 Me flecti genibus fessum natura negavit
 Poplite seu curvo palpebris tradere somnos.
 Quin potius vitam compellor degere stando.

(10)

95

Behold my canine name – bestowed by fate
 (as Greek vocabularies demonstrate)
 When spells of dreaded Circe stained clear flow
 Of fountains – she whose words deceived me!
 The evil witch's bitter words relieved me
 Of shinbones, thighs with calves, along with knees,
 The wailing sailors claim now, as they row
 Their vessels with their oars and cleave blue seas.
 When thrashing through the tempests' driving spray
 With broad-blade oars that slice right through the water,
 From near my loins they hear my distant bay,
 Thus showing I was tricked by Titan's daughter
 As on salt waves I'm justly sent away.

(10)

96

As armoured troops and soldiers pack in tight
 (Wretches who with vain lust incite a fight
 While arms taint sacred civil loyalties),
 A trumpet sucks in air with bursts of breeze
 And raucous, clanging battle-horns resound;
 Fierce, bold, I've come to know their savage sound.
 Although God made me ugly at my start,
 I picked up gifts of life once I debuted.
 Behold! Death sneaks up on my pulchritude
 As doom is snaking through each helpless part.
 I can't be beaten by fine sheets of gold,
 Although the precious polished metal's decked
 With gleaming gems and stylish luxuries.
 Nature won't let me kneel when I feel old
 Or rest my eyelids while on bended knees.
 Indeed, I have to spend my life erect.

(10)

XCVII

Florida me genuit nigrantem corpore tellus,
 Et nil fecundum stereli de viscere promo,
 Quamvis Eumenidum narrantes carmine vates
 Tartaream partu testentur gignere prolem.
 Nulla mihi constat certi substantia partus
 Sed modo quadratum complector caerula mundum.
 Est inimica mihi, quae cunctis constat amica
 Saecula dum lustrat lampas Titania Phoebi.
 Diri latrones me semper amare solebant
 Quos gremio tectos nitor defendere fusco. (10)
 Vergilium constat caram cecinisse sororem:
 'Ingrediturque solo et caput inter nubila condit
 Monstrum horrendum, ingens, cui quot sunt corpore plumae,
 Tot vigiles oculi subter mirabile dictu
 Tot linguae, totidem ora sonant, tot subrigit auris.
 Nocte volat caeli medio terraeque per umbras.'

XCVIII

Ostriger en arvo vernabam frondibus hirtis
 Conquilio similis sic cocci murice rubro
 Purpureus stillat sanguis de palmite guttis.
 Exuvias vitae mandenti tollere nolo
 Mitia nec penitus spoliabunt mente venena.
 Sed tamen insanum vexat dementia cordis,
 Dum rotat in giro vecors vertigine membra.

IC

Consul eram quondam Romanus miles equester
 Arbiter imperio dum regni sceptrum regebat,
 Nunc onus horrendum reportant corpora gippi
 Et premit immensum truculentae sarcina molis.
 Terreo cornipedum nunc velox agmen equorum
 Qui trepidi fugiunt mox quadripedante meatu
 Dum trucis aspectant immensos corporis artus.

97

I was born dark, with flesh of Earth in bloom,
 And I am sterile with a childless womb,
 Though verse describing the Eumenides
 Blames me for Tartarus's progeny.
 I'm free of stuff with solid pedigrees
 But gather the four-cornered world in gloom.
 Apollo's torch of Titan, which men see
 As friendly light, incurs my enmity.
 Grim thieves, for whom I try to give protection
 In my dark bosom, always give affection. (10)
 Of my dear sister Virgil has expounded,
 "She hides her head in clouds, though she is grounded.
 From flesh of this gross monster there appears
 A lot of feathers, tongues and watchful eyes
 And, strange to say, a lot of mouths and ears;
 At night between the earth and sky she flies."

98

Look! Decker with purple in a field, I'll grow
 With hairy tendrils like an oyster so
 A red-stained branch is dripping crimson flow.
 I want no life or loot when men have dined
 Nor will my gentle juice destroy a mind.
 Although heart flutter makes these people crazed,
 Their limbs just whirl around when they are dazed.

99

I once was consul, when a Roman knight
 Controlled the royal sceptre as his right,
 But flesh now bears my hump's alarming freight
 And its large shape is pressed by crushing weight.
 Today I scare swift herds of hard-hoofed steeds
 Who flee in frightened gallops at high speeds
 When my wild frame's huge limbs are in their sight.

C

Conditor aeternis fulcit qui saecla columnis,
 Rector regnorum frenans et fulmina lege
 Pendula dum patuli vertuntur culmina caeli
 Me varium fecit primo dum conderet orbem.
 Pervigil excubiis (numquam dormire iuvabit),
 Sed tamen extemplo clauduntur lumina somno,
 Nam Deus ut propria mundum dicione gubernat,
 Sic ego complector sub caeli cardine cuncta.
 Segnior est nullus quoniam me larbula terret,
 Setigero rursus constans audacior apro. (10)
 Nullus me superat cupiens vexilla triumphi,
 Ni Deus, aethrali summus qui regnat in arce.
 Prorsus odorato ture flagrantior halans
 Olfactum ambrosiae necnon crescentia glebae
 Lilia purpureis possum conexa rosetis
 Vincere spirantis nardi dulcedine plena,
 Nunc olida caeni squalentis sorde putresco.
 Omnia quaeque polo sunt subter et axe reguntur
 Dum pater arcitenens concessit iure gubernio;
 Grossas et graciles rerum compreso figuras. (20)
 Altior en caelo rimor secreta Tonantis,
 Et tamen inferior terris tetra Tartara cerno;
 Nam senior mundo praecessi tempora prisca.
 Ecce tamen matris horno generabar ab alvo,
 Pulchrior auratis dum fulget fibula bullis,
 Horridior ramnis et spretis vilior algis.
 Latior en patulis terrarum finibus exto,
 Et tamen in media concludor parte pugilli;
 Frigidior brumis necnon candente pruina, (30)
 Cum sim Vulcani flammis torrentibus ardens.
 Dulcior in palato quam lenti nectaris haustus,
 Dirior et rursus quam glauca absinthia campi.
 Mando dapes mordax lurconum more Ciclopum,
 Cum possim iugiter sine victu vivere felix.
 Plus pernix aquilis Zephiri velocior alis
 Necnon accipitre properantior et tamen horrens
 Lumbricus et limax et tarda testudo palustris
 Atque fimi soboles sordentis cantarus ater.

100

The Maker, whose timeless columns lift the world,
 The Lord of lands, with reined-in bolts unhurled
 As towers turned in spacious skies, created
 My multitudes on lands He generated.
 I stay on watch (it never helped to doze),
 But still I sleep as eyes abruptly close,
 For while God rules the world as He propounds,
 I too embrace all things beneath its bounds.
 No one's more shy than I, nor fears ghosts more,
 Though I stay bolder than a bristly boar. (10)
 No trophy-taker causes my defeat
 Save God, who rules from His high airy seat.
 More fragrant than ambrosial scents (it's true!)
 Emitted by perfume, I can outdo
 The scarlet roses, lilies from the yard
 As well as, full of sweetness, whiffs of nard,
 Though now I rot in filthy, reeking stool.
 While God the Archer deigns, by right I rule
 The universe beneath the highest star;
 I grasp things, gross and graceful as they are. (20)
 Behold! I see God's secrets down through sky,
 Yet under land foul Hell attracts my eye;
 I lived before time, older than the Earth.
 Behold! My mother's womb begets my birth,
 More gorgeous than gold amulets that glitter,
 More gross than thorns, more vile than low-tide litter.
 Behold! I'm wider than the limits of Earth's lands,
 Yet can be held within a person's hands;
 Colder than gleaming frost and winter, though (30)
 In Vulcan's searing blazes I may glow.
 No nectar on the palate is as sweet,
 Nor wild gray wormwood quite as foul to eat.
 Like hungry Cyclops, I am never sated,
 But stripped of food I'd be no less elated.
 More swift than eagles, hawks, or Zephyr's wings,
 Gross worms, slugs, slow swamp turtles, and those things -
 Black beetles spawned in putrid dung - outpace
 Me faster than my talk about this race.

Me dicto citius vincunt certamine cursus
 Sum gravior plumbo scopulorum pondera vergo (40)
 Sum levior pluma cedit cui tippula limphae,
 Nam silici densas quae fudit viscera flammas
 Durior aut ferro tostis sed mollior extis.
 Cincinnos capitis nam gesto cacumine nullos
 Ornent qui frontem pompis et tempora setis,
 Cum mihi caesaries volitent de vertice crispae
 Plus calamistratis se comunt quae calamistro.
 Pinguior, en, multo scrofarum axungia glesco
 Glandiferis iterum referunt dum corpora fagis
 Atque saginata laetantur carne subulci. (50)
 Sed me dira famis macie torquebit egenam
 Pallida dum iugiter dapibus spoliabor opimis.
 Limpida sum fateor Titanis clarior orbe;
 Candidior nivibus dum ningit vellera nimbus,
 Carceris et multo tenebris obscurior atris
 Atque latebrosis ambit quas Tartarus umbris.
 Ut globus astrorum plasmor teres atque rotunda,
 Sperula seu pilae necnon et forma cristalli,
 Et versa vice protendor ceu Serica pensa
 In gracilem porrecta panum seu stamina pepli. (60)
 Senis ecce plagis latus qua panditur orbis
 Uterior multo tendor mirabile fatu.
 Infra me suprave nihil per saecula constat
 Ni rerum genitor mundum sermone coerens.
 Grandior in glaucis ballena fluctibus atra
 Et minor exiguo sulcat qui corpora verme
 Aut modico phoebe radiis qui vibrat atomo.
 Centenis pedibus gradior per gramina ruris
 Et penitus numquam per terram pergo pedester;
 Sic mea prudentes superat sapientia sofos, (70)
 Nec tamen in biblis docuit me littera dives
 Aut umquam quivi quid constet sillaba nosse.
 Sicciior aestivo torrentis caumate solis,
 Rore madens iterum plus uda flumine fontis,
 Salsior et multo tumidi quam marmora ponti;
 Et gelidis terrae limphis insulsior erro.
 Multiplici specie cunctorum compta colorum
 Ex quibus ornatur praesentis machina mundi,

I'm heavier than lead – no counterweight
 Of stone upon a scale could compensate – (40)
 Lighter than down that makes pond-spiders sprint,
 Tougher than flames that spew from bowels of flint
 Or iron, softer than a kidney stew.
 There are no ringlets on my head to do
 Up my high brow with curls or fringe for show,
 Though my style lets my forehead's tresses flow
 More than a curling iron's crimp allows.
 Look, I grow fatter than the greasy sows
 With flesh they fill with beechnuts as they eat
 While swineherds celebrate their plumper meat. (50)
 I'm drawn and pale; fierce hunger tortures me
 While I'm deprived of meals of luxury.
 I'm sheer, more clear than Titan's orb, I know;
 When clouds shed fleece, I'm brighter than the snow,
 Yet darker than a dungeon's blackest glooms
 And dismal spirits Tartarus subsumes.
 I'm made with round, smooth form or, to be clear,
 Like globes, stars' orbits or a crystal sphere,
 And, on the other hand, I'm stretched and spread
 Like Chinese silk for robes or slender thread. (60)
 Behold with words of wonder: I embrace
 Beyond the world's six zones that measure space.
 No life persists below or over me
 But God, whose Word controls totality.
 I'm bigger than black whales in gleaming waves
 And smaller than thin worms that bore through graves
 Or motes that shimmer in Apollo's glow.
 Through lush fields on a hundred feet I go,
 Yet never trod ground on a walking trip;
 This means my insight outstrips scholarship, (70)
 Though I have never learned books' precious signs
 Or anything of syllables' designs.
 I'm drier than a scorching summer sun,
 Bedewed and drenched more than a river's run,
 More salty than an ocean wave that gleams;
 I flow more freshly than Earth's crystal streams.
 Adorned with countless kinds of coloration
 That paint the present world's configuration,

Lurida cum toto nunc sim fraudata colore.
Auscultate mei credentes famina verbi
(Pandere quae poterit gnarus vix ore magister),
Et tamen infitians non retur frivola lector.
Sciscitor inflatos fungar quo nomine sofos.

(80)

EXPLICIUNT ENIGMATA

I'm wan and pale; no colour will remain.
Believers: note my words that *seem* arcane
(Which skilled speech teachers hardly could explain),
And yet no doubting reader thinks them lame.
I ask the windbag scholars for my name.

(80)

THE RIDDLES END

Answer Key

1. Terra/Earth
2. Ventus/Wind
3. Nubes/Cloud
4. Natura/Nature
5. Iris/Rainbow
6. Luna/Moon
7. Fatum/Fate
8. Pliades/Pleiades
9. Adamas/Diamond
10. Molosus/Mastiff
11. Poalum/Bellows
12. Bombix/Silkworm
13. Barbita/Organ
14. Pavo/Peacock
15. Salamandra/Salamander
16. Luligo/Flying Fish
17. Perna/Bivalve Mollusk (*pinna nobilis*)
18. Myrmicoleon/Ant-lion
19. Salis/Salt
20. Apis/Bee
21. Lima/File
22. Acalantida/Nightingale
23. Trutina/Scales
24. Dracontia/Dragon-stone
25. Magnes Ferrifer/Lodestone
26. Gallus/Rooster
27. Coticula/Whetstone

70 Answer Key

28. Minotaurus/Minotaur
29. Aqua/Water
30. Elementum/Alphabet
31. Ciconia/Stork
32. Pugillares/Writing tablets
33. Lorica/Armour
34. Locusta/Locust
35. Nycticorax/Night-raven
36. Scnifes/Midge
37. Cancer/Crab
38. Tippula/Pond Strider
39. Leo/Lion
40. Piper/Pepper
41. Pulvillus/Pillow
42. Strutio/Ostrich
43. Sanguisuga/Leech
44. Ignis/Fire
45. Fusum/Spindle
46. Urtica/Nettle
47. Hirundo/Swallow
48. Vertico Poli/Sphere of the Heavens
49. Lebes/Cauldron
50. Myrifyllon/Milfoil (Yarrow)
51. Eliotropus/Heliotrope
52. Candela/Candle
53. Arcturus/Arcturus
54. Cocuma Duplex/Double Boiler
55. Crismal/Chrismal
56. Castor/Beaver
57. Aquila/Eagle
58. Vesper Sidus/Evening Star
59. Penna/Pen
60. Monocerus/Unicorn
61. Pugio/Dagger
62. Famfaluca/Bubble
63. Corbus/Raven
64. Columba/Dove
65. Muriceps/Mouser
66. Mola/Mill
67. Cribellus/Sieve

Answer Key 71

68. Salpix/Trumpet
69. Taxus/Yew
70. Tortella/Loaf of Bread
71. Piscis/Fish
72. Colosus/Colossus
73. Fons/Spring
74. Fundibalum/Sling
75. Crabro/Hornet
76. Melarius/Apple Tree
77. Ficulnea/Fig Tree
78. Cupa Vinaria/Wine Cask
79. Sol et Luna/Sun and Moon
80. Calix Vitreus/Glass Cup
81. Lucifer/Morning Star
82. Mustela/Weasel
83. Iuvencus/Steer
84. Scrofa Praegnans/Pregnant Sow
85. Caecus Natus/Man Born Blind
86. Aries/Ram
87. Clipeus/Shield
88. Basiliscus/Serpent
89. Arca Libraria/Bookcase
90. Puerpera Geminas Enixa/Woman Bearing Twins
91. Palma/Palm
92. Farus Editissima/Tall Lighthouse
93. Scintilla/Spark
94. Ebulus/Dwarf Elder
95. Scilla/Scylla
96. Elefans/Elephant
97. Nox/Night
98. Elleborus/Hellebore
99. Camellus/Camel
100. Creatura/Creation