

PERVIGILIVM VENERIS

*cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet!*  
 uer nouum, uer iam canorum: uere natus orbis est,  
 uere concordant amores, uere nubunt alites,  
 et nemus comam resoluit de maritis imbribus.  
 cras amorum copulatrix, inter umbras arborum 5  
 implicat casa uirentes de flæello myrteo,  
 cras Dione iura dicit fulta sublimi throno.  
*cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet!*  
 tunc cruore de superno spumeo pontus globo,  
 cæruleas inter cateruas, inter et bipedes equos, 10  
 fecit undantem Dionen de maritis imbribus.  
*cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet!*  
 ipsa gemmis purpurantem pingit annum floridis,  
 ipsa surgentes papillas de Fauoni spiritu  
 urget in nodos tepentes, ipsa roris lucidi 15  
 noctis aura quem relinquit spargit umentis aquas.  
 emicant lacrimæ trementes de caduco pondere:  
 gutta præceps orbe paruo sustinet casus suos.  
 en, pudorem florulentæ prodiderunt purpuræ:  
 umor ille, quem serenis astra rorant noctibus, 20  
 mane uirgineas papillas soluit umentis peplo.  
 ipsa iussit mane totæ uirgines nubant rosæ:  
 facta Cypridis de cruore, deque amoris osculis,  
 deque gemmis, deque flammis, deque solis purpuris,  
 cras ruborem, qui latebat ueste tectus ignea, 25  
 unico Noto marita non pudebit soluere.  
*cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet!*  
 ipsa nymphas diua luco iussit ire myrteo.  
 it puer comes puellis: nec tamen credi potest  
 esse amorem feriatum, si sagittas uexerit. 30  
 ite, nymphæ; posuit arma, feriatum est amor:  
 iussus est inermis ire, nudus ire iussus est,  
 neu quid arcu, neu sagitta, neu quid igne læderet.  
 sed tamen, nymphæ, cauete, quod cupido pulcher est:  
 totus est in armis idem quando nudus est amor. 35  
*cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet!*

*Those who've loved not, love tomorrow; love's initiates, rites renew!*  
 Spring, melodious season, burgeons, comes to term: rebirth is due.  
 Spring accords in mutual plighting; birds pair off among the leaves,  
 Verdant bridal tresses loosened at their spouse the rain-god's showers.  
 She who stirs these vital motions in the shadows of the trees  
 Winds tomorrow sprigs of myrtle round about her woodland bowers;  
 Venus sits at court tomorrow, mounts her throne and gives decrees.  
*Those who've loved not, love tomorrow; love's initiates, rites renew!*  
 Then the frothy deep, all foaming with the blood dripped from on high,  
 In amongst the flippers dolphins and the other watery crew  
 Birthed the rain-born, wave-borne goddess, washed her shoreward with a sigh.  
*Those who've loved not, love tomorrow; love's initiates, rites renew!*  
 Venus paints the new year purple, spangling gem-like blooms about,  
 Urging them with zephyr breezes first to bud and then to sprout  
 Suddenly in warm crescendos; she herself in damp of dawn  
 Sprinkles wet and dewy droplets left by night's departing yawn:  
 Lo! behold each glistening teardrop, poised and trembling, apt to fall,  
 Clinging drop on point of plashing, struggling straining little ball.  
 See the deep red blush of blossoms publishing their maidenhood:  
 Dewey moisture, dropped from heaven by the cloudless night's star-flood,  
 In the morning frees each virgin bud from its Minervan clothes.  
 Venus in the morning tolls the marriage knell for every rose,  
 Flowers born of her own blood, of her son Cupid's kisses sweet,  
 And of jewels and of flames, of purple sun's caressing heat,  
 On the morrow to be wedded with a single solemn vow,  
 Unashamed to loose the redness locked in fiery cloaks till now.  
*Those who've loved not, love tomorrow; love's initiates, rites renew!*  
 Maiden nymphs obey their mistress, into myrtle thicket sue;  
 Cupid goes as their companion, god of love on holiday:  
 Normally not to be trusted... but he's put his shafts away;  
 Go on, nymphs, he's not on duty: see, he's laid his arms aside,  
 Ordered to go forth unweaponed, naked too, lest tricks he hide;  
 Therefore fear nor bow nor arrow nor that fiery brand he wields;  
 Only heed his wanton looks as he gambols in the field:  
 Love's as in full battle dress just when he strikes out in the nude.  
*Those who've loved not, love tomorrow; love's initiates, rites renew!*

conpari Venus pudore mittit ad te uirgines:  
 una res est quam rogamus: cede, uirgo Delia,  
 ut nemus sit incruentum de ferinis stragibus, 39  
 et recentibus uirentes ducat umbras floribus 58  
 ipsa uellet te rogare, si pudicam flecteret, 40  
 ipsa uellet ut uenires, si deceret uirginem;  
 iam tribus choros uideres feriatis noctibus  
 congreges inter cateruas ire per saltus tuos.  
 floreas inter coronas, myrteas inter casas,  
 nec Ceres, nec Bacchus absunt, nec poetarum deus; 45  
 de tenente tota nox est peruiglanda canticis;  
 regnet in siluis Dione: tu recede, Delia,  
*cras amet qui nunquam amaui, quique amaui cras amet!*  
 iussit Hyblæis tribunal stare diua floribus :  
 præses ipsa iura dicet, adsidebunt Gratiaë. 50  
 Hybla, totos funde flores, quidquid annus adtulit;  
 Hybla, florum sume uestem quantus Ennæ campus est.  
 ruris hic erunt puellæ, uel puellæ montium,  
 quæque siluas, quæque lucos, quæque fontes incolunt.  
 iussit omnes adsidere pueri mater alitis, 55  
 iussit et nudo puellas nil amoris credere.  
*cras amet qui nunquam amaui, quique amaui cras amet!* 57  
 cras erit quom primus æther copulauit nuptias:  
 ut pater totis crearet uernus annum nubibus,  
 in sinum maritus imber fluxit almæ coniugis.  
 unde fetus mixtus omnis aleret magno corpore.  
 ipsa uenas atque mentem permeanti spiritu  
 intus occultis gubernat procreatrix uiribus  
 perque cælum, perque terras, perque pontum subditum 65  
 peruium sui tenorem seminali tramite  
 inbuit, iussitque mundum nosse nascendi uias.  
*cras amet qui nunquam amaui, quique amaui cras amet!*  
 ipsa Troianos nepotes in Latinos transtulit,  
 ipsa Laurentem puellam coniugem nato dedit, 70  
 moxque Marti de sacello dat pudicam uirginem,  
 Romuleas ipsa fecit cum Sabinis nuptias,  
 unde Ramnes et Quirites, proque prole posterum  
 Romuli parem creauit et nepotem Cæsarem.

Goddess, Venus sends you maidens equal to your sacred vow,  
 Asking but one favour: chaste Diana, quit your wood! allow  
 That the grove today may be unstained by gore of slaughtered beasts,  
 That its verdant folds unroll, that springing flowers bloom in peace!  
 She herself would ask you this, if she could bend your chastity,  
 She herself would seek your presence, were it fit for you to see  
 These three nights of festive revels taking place in your domain,  
 Dancing, singing, wild processions, gathered voices in refrain.  
 In the bowers entwined with myrtle, in among the flower-crowned throng  
 Are not absent Ceres, Bacchus, nor Apollo, god of song;  
 Night will ring with endless singing vigils which its length beguile;  
 Cede, Diana! yield to Venus, let her rule your woods a while.  
*Those who've loved not, love tomorrow; love's initiates, rites renew!*  
 Goddess bids her throne be dressed in garlands of Hyblæan bloom  
 Whence she'll hold forth, giving laws, with Graces seated round about.  
 Hybla, pour forth all your flowers, every one the year turns out!  
 Hybla, cloak yourself in colour wide and rich as Henna's sward!  
 Rural nymphs will soon repair here, as will those from nearby mountains  
 And the nymphs who dwell in forests, or in thickets, or in fountains.  
 Mother of the winged boy requests all come with one accord,  
 Yet against the naked Cupid warns her maiden retinue.  
*Those who've loved not, love tomorrow; love's initiates, rites renew!*  
 In the morning primal Æther celebrates his marriage bed;  
 Sire of spring, he'll usher in the new year with a thunderclap,  
 Showery husband falling in his fertile wife's receiving lap,  
 In which wide encircling bosom every living thing is bred.  
 By her permeating spirit surging in each mind, each vein,  
 Procreatrix Venus governs with an inward hidden force:  
 Through the sky and through the lands and through the wide and spreading main,  
 She ensures her flooding seed pervades each vital channel's course,  
 And commands the world to know once more the ways of bearing fruit.  
*Those who've loved not, love tomorrow; love's initiates, rites renew!*  
 Trojans came to Italy with their ancestress as their guide:  
 She betrothed Laurentum's princess to her own begotten son,  
 Gave to Mars a priestess from the chapel, chaste and virtuous,  
 And presided over Roman nuptials sworn by Sabine brides,  
 Whence the early Roman race; and for the sons of theirs to come  
 She created Cæsar, heir and equal match of Romulus.

*cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet!* 75  
rura fecundat uoluptas, rura Venerem sentiunt,  
ipse amor, puer Dionæ, rure natus dicitur:  
hunc, ager cum parturiret, ipsa suscepit sinu,  
ipsa florum delicatis educauit osculis.  
*cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet!* 80  
ecce, iam super genestas explicant tauri latus,  
quisque tutus quo tenetur coniugali fœdere,  
subter umbras cum maritis, ecce, balantum greges,  
et canoras non tacere diua iussit alites.  
iam loquaces ore rauco stagna cygni perstrepunt, 85  
adsonat Terei puella, subter umbram populi,  
ut putes motus amoris ore dici musico,  
et neges queri sororem de marito barbaro. 88  
*cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet!*  
illa cantat: nos tacemus. quando uer uenit meum? 89  
quando fiam uti chelidon, ut tacere desinam?  
perdidi musam tacendo, nec me Apollo respicit.  
sic Amyclas, cum taceret, perdidit silentium  
*cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet!*

*Those who've loved not, love tomorrow; love's initiates, rites renew!*  
Pleasure fills the countryside: it feels the touch of Venus too.  
Love himself, her little boy, they say was born upon the field  
And was carried at his mother's breast among the ripening yield,  
Nourished on that sweet and floral kiss by which his power grew.  
*Those who've loved not, love tomorrow; love's initiates, rites renew!*  
Now you see the bulls stretch out their flanks upon the brushy ground,  
Each secure in lawful bliss and lying with the mate he's found.  
See as well: the bleating ewes are taking husbands in the shade,  
And the goddess has decreed the birds must sing their serenade,  
So the stillness of the swamp is marred by squawking swans above,  
Philomela's voice floats out from underneath the poplar's gloom,  
Sounding such a pleasant tune that one would guess that it were love  
Moved her melody and not a sister's plaint of savage groom.  
*Those who've loved not, love tomorrow; love's initiates, rites renew!*  
She is singing: we are silent. When will springtime come for me?  
When shall I be as the swallow? when again my voice be free?  
I have lost my muse in silence; Phœbus shuns me, turns his back:  
Thus, according to the legend, mute Amyclæ went to wrack.  
*Those who've loved not, love tomorrow; love's initiates, rites renew!*