
Senior Projects Spring 2018

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Spring 2018

Quare id faciam, fortasse requiris? An Analysis of the Poetry and Music of "Odi et Amo: Eight Songs of Catullus"

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Recommended Citation

Castellanos, Daniel Santiago, "Quare id faciam, fortasse requiris? An Analysis of the Poetry and Music of "Odi et Amo: Eight Songs of Catullus"" (2018). *Senior Projects Spring 2018*. 130.
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Quare id faciam, fortasse requiris? An Analysis of the Poetry and Music of “*Odi et Amo:*
Eight Songs Of Catullus”

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Languages and Literature
of Bard College

by

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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2018

Acknowledgements

I would like first to dedicate both this essay and my song cycle to the memory of Bill Mullen, who advised me on this project and inspired much of its form over last summer and for the first half of fall semester before his sudden and untimely death in November. When I began to have doubts over whether I should set the most obscene of Catullus' invective poetry to music, fearing the response of both students and older adults, Bill reassured me, saying, more or less, "to hell with them!" Bill, I wish you were still with us so you could read this paper and hear the raunchy bunch of songs I've worked so hard to put together!

I would like to thank Lauren Curtis, who, since mid-November, has been unbelievably patient and helpful as my senior project advisor. Thank you for agreeing to take time off from your leave to meet with me at Murray's over the last few months, while dealing with my oftentimes unpredictable tendencies. Thank you for always believing in the potential of both the essay and my vision of the song cycle, even as changes occasionally came along the way. I have really appreciated being in your classes and being your advisee throughout my five years here.

I would like to thank Jamie Romm as well, for being the first to read through the poems of Catullus with me, and for being so supportive of my endeavors while you were my advisor. I have enjoyed all our two-on-one and one-on-one tutorials during my time here, as well as occasionally house-sitting for your beautiful home. I hope Jonah continues playing piano!

Thank you to my mom, who has always supported me and the dream that I one day become a Latin professor at some liberal arts college who also is a commissioned composer. She is also one of those people I'm afraid to have come to my concert and hear all the bad words in my song cycle. To paraphrase Catullus himself from poem 16: it's not me; it's the verses.

Lastly, a thank you to all my friends and close ones over the last five years, old and new, who have provided some of my happiest memories during my time at Bard.

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Introduction, Narrative Synopsis and Overview of Musical Medium

Across centuries of the Western music tradition, countless composers have set Catullus' short text of poem 85, *Odi et amo*, to music. The earliest of these composers that I am aware of is late-Renaissance Jakob Handl, who set the text to a choral madrigal. The most well-known setting of the text comes from Carl Orff, who, in his much larger scale cantata, *Catulli Carmina*, set the text along with many other Catullan poems to be sung by choir, soprano and tenor solo, as well as a full "percussive orchestra" serving as part of his musical triptych alongside the famous *Trionfo di Afrodite* and the famous *Carmina Burana*. One of the most recent and well-known settings of this poetry comes from the late film composer Jóhann Jóhannsson who arranged the poem for vocoder and string quartet. Due to the brevity, the simplicity, and the potency of this single elegiac couplet, it has earned its place among the most accessible and relatable in Western literature.

Indeed, much of the poetry of Catullus contains a unique degree of accessibility even to this day in part because the feelings expressed within each poem resonate so immediately. Although closer readings show the complex inner workings of the syntax and the themes, first readings of many of his poems express clearly the conflicting thoughts and feelings bubbling within the Catullan speaker. These are feelings of love and hate, of happiness and heartbreak, of insecurity and machismo. Even within just the short two-line confines of poem 85, there is room for myriad interpretations.

So why did I choose *Odi et Amo* not just to set to music but to set as the title of my eight-movement song cycle? Like many others, I was drawn to the conflicting duality the poem presented, but perhaps unlike others, I wanted to create a narrative around this poem that

reflected my interpretation of the poem's central conflict: the Catullan persona in his invective poetry and the Catullan persona that is present in his love poetry. My actual setting of poem 85 is the shortest in the entire cycle, feeling more like a thesis statement to the work as a whole than an individual stand-alone piece. After reading nearly all of his poetry and translating a significant portion of them, I have carefully selected seven other poems from the book containing all 116 of his extant poems, in order to create an imaginary character of Catullus that undergoes the inner conflict between the hypermasculine, crass-humored, aggressive persona present in his invectives and the generous, loving, subversively effeminate persona that speaks to his lover, Lesbia.

The narrative of my song cycle centers on the development of Catullus' character through the lens of his famed fling with a woman he calls "Lesbia" (which scholars generally agree was a nickname for Clodia Metelli, wife of the wealthy and politically influential patrician Quintus Metellus Celer)¹. This song cycle chronicles the relationship from its meteoric highs to its fiery fallout. All the while, the cycle shows a contrast between what I refer to as his assertive, masculine persona and his soft, effeminate persona.

In the beginning of the song cycle's narrative, we encounter a Catullan character that is passionately in love with Lesbia, a young and wealthy married woman² who is having an illicit tryst with him. He is unashamed to relish his many kisses with her, but when two critics named Furius and Aurelius make fun of his lavish effeminacy, he quickly grows incensed and curses them out while mocking their own impotence. He is at the utter mercy of his volatile emotional whims, and to a degree he is aware of that fact. However, his relentless obsession and possessive tendencies along with his thin skin and penchant for crassness eventually begin to outweigh the

¹ Skinner, p. 218

² Catullus 51 provides one poetic hint that Lesbia was a married woman.

good parts of their relationship. Catullus begins to notice Lesbia's increasing distance, and starts to take their relationship more seriously, nearly making pleas of marriage in order to appease her. Eventually, he finds out the news from Furius and Aurelius that Catullus is not her only illicit lover, and that she is sleeping with several other men. This enrages Catullus more than ever; he demands them to tell Lesbia to go sleep with "all 300" of her adulterers along with some other not-so-nice words -- *non bona dicta*, as he calls them. Eventually, he can no longer hide his utter heartbreak caused by her betrayal, and breaks down. In the final movement, after some time alone to think, he tells himself *desinas ineptire* -- "stop acting a fool" -- and consider the happy highs of his relationship over. The end of the cycle wraps up with the character of Catullus telling himself over and over again to *obdura* -- "endure, stay strong." Forsaking his volatile nature will prove a difficult task for the song cycle's hot-headed protagonist.

In constructing the musical parameters of the song cycle, I sought to highlight the multifaceted personality of the man that comes through the poems. I ultimately chose a tenor to sing the role of Catullus as opposed to a baritone or bass. Lower voices sound inherently more masculine to the ear, but the voice of a tenor, even of the best tenors, adds a hint of insecurity and fragility to every high note. When male voices sing high in their range, there is always the danger of undergoing the most humiliating of vocal experiences: the voice-crack. However, since the tenor sings higher than the baritone -- and being a tenor I whole-heartedly feel this -- the risk of cracking not only becomes higher, but even more humiliating. On the contrary, the satisfaction of singing loud and powerful high notes without cracking is an emotional thrill that almost every baritone and bass envies. On my reading, this volatility and risk inherent in every tenor's voice parallels the volatility of the persona that is present in much of Catullus' poetry; the

Catullan character shifts between masculine and feminine personas, enjoying both the thrill of risqué invectives as well as unabashed declarations of love.

There are seven other players in the ensemble: two percussionists, and one each playing flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano. This kind of ensemble, known as a “pierrot plus” ensemble, provides an even balance of musical timbres, from light and airy winds, to heavy drums, to depict the full range of emotions and persona Catullus’ verses undertake. The two percussionists stand on opposite ends of the ensemble, allowing for the sheer brute force of Catullus’ invective poetry to fill the room with a stereo-like effect.

In writing this song cycle and setting these eight poems to music, I aim to show, out of all the aspects of Catullus’ poetry, the tumultuous conflict between masculine and feminine identities that the poet undergoes.

Soft Femininity vs Assertive Masculinity in Catullus’ Poetry

The sharp alternations between assertive masculinity and soft femininity in Catullus’ poetry offers a great deal of scope for musical interpretation in my song cycle. Catullus’ poetry switches tones between submissive, generous, and loving on the one hand, and on the other, dominant, aggressive and self-defensive -- often within the same poem. Understanding these contrasting dynamics within each of the Catullan poems that I included in this song cycle proved key in supplying my musical inspiration for each movement of the piece. After analyzing both feminine and masculine themes within certain poems, I will explain how I decided musically to evoke these opposing ideas within various movements of my song cycle.

“...sunt molliculi, parum pudici:” *Examining Effeminate Verse and the Rejection of Roman Manhood*

Catullus’ poetry does not hesitate to challenge conventional expectations of a Roman man through his effeminate persona. The most famous poetry Catullus wrote for his lover, whom he calls “Lesbia,” depicts the poet as a man unafraid to express his adoration and submission to both her and their ephemeral love as a whole. The first-person speaker portrayed in these kinds of poems lacks the *mores* expected of Roman men in the late republic. Those values promoted mental, physical and sexual strength above all else, while not allowing room for any kind of passivity or emotional vulnerability.³ Instead, his verses in these specific poems highlight raw, unbridled passion, and emotional surrender to his lover. Catullus the poet is aware that these verses do not hide or hold back from expressing feminine or non-masculine behavior, and employs these effeminate verses as a subversive tool against the expectations of his audience of largely male Roman readers, listeners, and critics. Examining the following two poems closely will reveal how Catullus creates his shamelessly and defiantly effeminate image to confound and even bewitch his audience.

Out of all the poems I included in my song cycle, Catullus 5 represents most clearly the poet’s emasculated persona: one that is delicate in tone, but still retains consciousness of its Roman male audience. That is, the Catullan speaker knows he is recklessly in love with Lesbia, but makes it clear that he does not mind what any potential Roman male critic thinks of them.

This attitude comes through in the first three lines of the poem:

³ In Chapter 8 of her book, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, Marilyn Skinner argues that “to be a Roman *vir*, a ‘real man’, was to be *hard* in every sense -- physically to be impervious to fatigue, mentally to be stern and unyielding, and, of course, inevitably to take the insertive position in sexual congress...” p. 212

Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus! 1
rumoresque senum severiorum
omnes unius aestimemus assis!

“Let us live, my Lesbia, and let us love! 1
 And let us take the rumors of stricter old men
 all together with a grain of salt!”

Essentially, the poet is inviting his lover to drop all social pretense or expectation and indulge in their shared affair regardless of what more traditionally-minded men might think. As well as wanting her to abandon all pretense, he wants himself to let loose -- to *vivere*, live -- and forget about the standards of masculinity that older, more traditional Roman men may have imposed upon him. There also lies a hint of an acknowledgment in the second and third lines of the poem towards the male Roman reader or listener that will become more apparent as the poem progresses. Catullus indirectly but purposefully makes reference to an audience right away in line 2 when referring to the “rumors of stricter old men” after laying his emotions bare in line 1. So even if the speaker wants to take their words with a grain of salt, the implied presence of these old men hovers throughout the rest of the poem. He is aware of their presence and will increasingly flaunt his non-masculine behavior throughout the poem in spite of them.

The next three lines set up an argument to defend the poet’s right to act as emotionally volatile as he wants:

Soles occidere et redire possunt;

nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux, 5
nox est perpetua una dormienda.

“Suns can rise and suns can fall;
 when this our brief light once falls, 5
 we must sleep one eternal night.”

In line 3 he conjures a metaphor of a rising and setting sun representing both life and love -- a metaphor which will reappear in a more nostalgic context in poem 8, “Miser Catulle.” Catullus simultaneously associates the brief span of a day with both his relationship with Lesbia and their lives as a whole. With such a short amount of time, Catullus and Lesbia need to be emotionally immediate, even reckless, in order to enjoy the fleeting highs of their illicit tryst. There is no time to conform to the steadfast, emotionally guarded demands of “stricter old men;” nothing, not even masculinity, is guaranteed to last forever.

Catullus’ argument in lines 4-6 establishes the rationale for the extremely irrational, uninhibited frenzy of *basia* in lines 7-9, set up in a dizzying yet intensifying *tricolon*:

Da mi basia mille, deinde centum;
dein mille altera, dein secunda centum;
deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum!

“Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred;
 Then another thousand, then a second hundred;

Then again another thousand, then another hundred!”

The number of kisses Catullus asks for grows in a lopsided, irrational order. He asks three times for *milia basia*, followed by a smaller *centum*. Over the course of lines 7-9, the number of kisses grows, but within each line, the number shrinks. The dissonance created from this in addition to the repetition intends to confound his audience of male Roman readers’ and listeners’ sense of proportion, while allowing the poet to express his *molliculi versiculi* to Lesbia. These lines express Catullus’ supple femininity, but the structure, as well as the subsequent lines, indicate that he is well aware of their emotional openness.

The last four lines of the poem further dilute the sense of scale while both illustrating the fervor Catullus and Lesbia have for each other, as well as the poet’s total abandonment of traditional Roman masculine values:

Dein cum milia multa fecerimus, 10
conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus,
aut ne quis malus invidere possit,
cum tantum sciat esse basiorum

“Then when we have kissed many thousands of times, 10
 we’ll mix them up, so we don’t know which one’s which,
 and so no bad man should envy us,
 when he learns of how many of our kisses there were.”

The mixing up of kisses in line 11 further eliminate the listener's sense of scale, allowing Catullus and Lesbia to live and love freely as they please. Again, Catullus indirectly but purposefully addresses any critic of his behavior (*quis malus*), claiming that they are in fact jealous of what they are missing out on. The poet at this point has completely rejected the standards of traditional Roman men in favor of his own "effeminate" professions of love, while also implying that those men secretly wish they could express themselves as openly as Catullus does. In short, Catullus' femininity is shameless, but it is still combative.

Poem 7, serving as the fourth movement of my song cycle, is similar to poem 5 in theme and feels like a direct continuation of the sentiments expressed in the former poem -- in the narrative of my song cycle, the two poems even share similar musical themes in their respective movements. In it, the poet asks, then counts how many kisses are enough for her to give him, giving two descriptive analogies. Not only does it elaborate upon the kiss motif expressed in poem 5, but it also resumes indirectly addressing the "stricter old men" from poem 5. In poem 5, the poet addresses these same, older men, but the tone in which he alludes to them in poem 7 seems less defensive of its femininity, but markedly more sensual and invitational. This sensuality is not strictly feminine, but it is definitely un-masculine by Roman standards, and invites a more fluid expression of masculinity.

The first instance in which Catullus expresses such fluidity appears in lines 7-8 of the poem: *aut quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox/ furtivos hominum vident amores*: "or as many stars that, when night falls silent, / see the secret trysts of men." While the first of Catullus' comparisons refers only to natural and manmade landmarks, the second turns its attention from nature to people. Just as he accuses *quis malus* in poem 5 of being secretly envious of Catullus' self-emasculatation, here the poet figuratively also points a finger at these same men. In having

their illicit affairs in secret, they themselves are no different from Catullus. The tone here, however, is less accusatory and more sensual and voyeuristic. The silence conveyed in line 7 (*cum tacet nox*) establish the sensuality in addition to the scenery set up by the countless stars in the sky. The voyeuristic feeling in line 8 comes from the choice in verb Catullus allots to the stars: *vident*. The stars do not just hang above these secret night trysts, but they are actively watching.

Catullus evokes this supple tone again in lines 11-12, the final two lines of the poem: *Quae nec pernumerare curiosi / possint, nec mala fascinare lingua* (“[Kisses] which neither the curious could count / nor an evil tongue bewitch.”). Once more, Catullus alludes to a third party of “curious” men. While one interpretation of these lines might suggest that he is assertively placing a barrier between him, his girlfriend, and the evil tongues of curious suitors, when reading these lines in conjunction with lines 7-8 (“aut sidera... amores”), they instead feel more like a playful dare. The word *fascinare*, meaning “to cast a spell on” or “to bewitch,” hints at the playful, magic element, while the inclusion of *lingua* (“tongue”) adds a degree of sensuousness. The speaker in these poems knows that his verses are *molliculi*, but, as he asserts in the much raunchier poem 16, which I will soon discuss in detail, “they can also stir a little itch down there.”⁴

“...male me marem putatis?” *Examining Catullus’ Assertive Masculinity*

⁴ Cat. 16.9

While Catullus reveals his effeminate side in his love poetry, his invective poems express the poet's hyper-masculine sentiments. Many of these poems involve the emasculation of another in order to elevate the poet's own manly honor. They exaggerate ideals of Roman manhood to a bawdy degree; the poet strives to defend his strength and honor by any means necessary. Catullus' invective poetry also provides a keen insight into Roman male sexuality, which, while similar to male sexuality in modern Western civilization, fundamentally differed in many ways. Closely examining the following two invective poems that appear in the song cycle, poems 16, *Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo*, and 69, *Noli admirari quare tibi femina nulla*, which respectively serve as the second and fifth movements of my song cycle, will uncover the ways in which the Catullan speaker expresses and protects his masculinity, while demeaning and satirizing that of his friends and enemies alike.

The famously vulgar poem 16 not only mocks Catullus' critics, but also crystallizes the elite masculine social and sexual psyche in ancient Rome; explaining the sexual standards for the Roman male will provide the necessary context for this poem's interpretation. While the insult uttered in the first and last lines of the poem is offensive to both modern and ancient ears, it would have offended Romans in an entirely different way. Men's sexuality in ancient Rome was not defined by attraction to the opposite gender, as is traditionally the case in mainstream Western society. Instead, one determined his or her sexuality based on whether they were dominant or submissive. Men were expected to be sexually dominant over their partners in bed, be it woman or another man. As for male-male sexual relationships, T.P. Wiseman notes in *Catullus and His World*:

a [mature] male who willingly allowed penetration by another was treated with contempt, and one who was compelled to allow it was thereby humiliated. But the penetrator himself was neither demeaned nor disgraced; on the contrary, he had demonstrated his superiority and masculinity by making another serve his pleasure.⁵

Therefore, as long as a man took the penetrative role during sex, he was a man. If he did not, he renounced his manhood.

The intense pressure on a Roman male not just to be mentally and physically strong, as mentioned before, but *sexually* strong (i.e. dominant), provided plenty of room for bawdy humor in both dramaturgical and literary spheres. Catullan invective fits squarely into the latter of the two, as Marilyn Skinner asserts, and employs purposefully vulgar language intended as much to shock as to entertain; “Catullus’ obscene abuse is attention-grabbing.”⁶ Thus, when Catullus viciously threatens his critics, Furius and Aurelius, with *pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo*, he is humiliating them with words that are both a brute threat and a crude joke, all the while asserting his own masculine dominance.

As poem 16 begins, the Catullan speaker distinguishes himself through wit from his “little verses” in order to justify and unleash a barrage of emasculating insults upon his critics, Furius and Aurelius:

Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo,

I

Aureli pathice, et cinaede Furi!

⁵ Wiseman, *Catullus and His World*, p. 11

⁶ Skinner, pp. 215-217

*qui me ex versiculis putastis,
quod sunt molliculi, parum pudicum!*
Nam castum esse decet pium poetam 5
ipsum, versiculos nihil necesse est.

“I’ll fuck you up the ass and make you suck my dick, 1
Anal-loving Aurelius, and Furius who loves to suck,
who’ve thought that from my little verses
just because they’re soft, that I have little shame!
Oh, sure, it’s proper for a pious poet to be pure 5
himself, but his little verses don’t need to do shit.”

The opening two lines use the specific sexual vocabulary of the Latin language to humiliate his two critics. *Pedicabo* and *pathice* take *Aureli* as their object and vocative noun respectively, while *irrumabo* and *cinaede* both refer to *Furi*. Although the lines are seemingly among the most crass in Western literature, Catullus ironically phrases them with syntactic eloquence; both lines are chiasmic in structure.⁷ Such a use of a rhetorical device with such obscene language hints that the speaker is in on the joke, so to speak. Line 4’s use of the word *molliculi*, referring to how these two men perceive the speaker’s poetry, is worth noting. The adjective *molliculus* comes from *mollitia*, “softness,” which Skinner argues is the opposite of Roman masculinity.⁸ By calling his verses *molliculi*, Furius and Aurelius are directly challenging the speaker’s manhood. In turn, the speaker taunts them with hyper-masculine verses to counterbalance any association

⁷ *Pedicabo* (A) *ego* (B) *vos* (B) *et irrumabo* (A); *Aureli* (A) *pathice* (B) *et cinaede* (B) *Furi* (A).

⁸ Skinner 212

he or his verses have with effeminacy. He clarifies in lines 5 and 6 that his verses do not represent him as person, and thus they can be as feminine or masculine, as pious or impious as he prefers.

In the next five lines, Catullus further elevates himself first by praising his own effeminate poetry, then by sharply changing tone to diminish Furius' and Aurelius' manhood further:

*Qui tum denique habent salem ac leporem
si sunt molliculi ac parum pudici,
et quod pruriat incitare possunt --
non dico pueris, sed his pilosis* 10
qui duros nequeunt movere lumbos!

“Yes indeed, they do have wit and charm,
even if they are a little soft and shameless,
and they can even stir a little itch down there --
I’m not talking to the boys, but to these hairy old men 10
who can’t even get their dicks hard!”

Line 9 serves as a pivot between two contrasting tones: one being delicate and effeminate, the other being direct and assailing. Lines 7 and 8 contain several definitively feminine words in addition to the already mentioned *molliculi*. *Lepor* means “grace,” or “charm” -- qualities that both define girlishness, and unmanliness. Catullus uses this word or its adjectival form *lepidus*

often when describing his poetry,⁹ or in describing non-men, be it a boy or a lover of his.¹⁰ *Pudicus*, meaning “chaste,” or “modest,” is another defining trait of Roman femininity; Catullus uses the adjective or its noun forms, *pudor* and *pudicitas*, to describe the sexual innocence of women in ways both ironic¹¹ and sincere.¹² In line 9 the speaker makes the half-innocent remark, using the word *pruriat*, a word that has a sexual double entendre, meaning both “itch” and “arouse,” to describe what his so-called effeminate verses can do to his critics. Catullus delves more fully into raunchy territory in the following lines when he specifies that he is addressing not *pueris*, “boys,” but *his pilosis*, “these hairy men,” who, due to their advanced age, are unable to get an erection. Skinner notes that both boys and old men were seen as emasculate in the eyes of late Republican society, “the former because they are not yet capable of functioning in a virile manner, the latter because that capacity has deserted them.”¹³ The insult the poet makes in lines 9-11 simultaneously praises the effectiveness of his poetry while lambasting the virility of his two denouncers -- i.e., “you might think my poetry is flowery and chaste but in fact it’s so hot that it doesn’t just turn on men, but innocent boys too -- even you two old geezers!”

The final three lines get to the heart of the poem’s theme: defending one’s own pride against men who are attempting to deny its existence:

Vos quod milia multa basiorum

legistis, male me marem putatis?

Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo!

⁹ Cat. 1.1; 6.17.

¹⁰ Cat. 12.8, 32.2.

¹¹ Cat. 42.24

¹² Cat. 61.77-79, 220-221

¹³ Skinner, p.213

“You think, just because you read about
 my many thousand kisses, that I’m not man enough?
 I’ll fuck you up the ass and make you suck my dick!”

These lines, abandoning both the pseudo-effeminate persona in lines 7-8 and the jocular one in lines 9-11, are the most assertive and masculine in the entire poem, for three different reasons: use of a pointed rhetorical device, use of self-reference, and one subtle but powerful syntactic alteration. The listener can hear his rage increasing to a boiling point from the alliteration in lines 12-13 -- *milia multa...male me marem* -- with each word shifting gradually away from effeminacy towards masculinity. *Milia multa* refer to the emasculate kisses Furius and Aurelius have mocked, while *male me marem* all refer to Catullus’ jeopardized manhood. The self-reference Catullus makes when mentioning the *milia multa basiorum*, echoing lines 7-9 of poem 5 (*da mi milia basia...deinde centum!*), adds an extra degree of intensity to the poem. The poet knows exactly which poems Furius and Aurelius made fun of, and is unafraid to call them out on it. Lastly, a shift from the perfect tense to the present tense makes Catullus’ rhetorical question feel all the more immediate. The present indicative form *putatis* in line 13 echoes and intensifies its perfect form counterpart *putastis* in line 3. The difference is small, but potent -- it serves as the the most direct confrontation of these critics thus far, a penultimate verbal jab before the poet delivers the knockout-punch in the final line, *pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo!*

While poem 16 validates the Catullan speaker’s own masculinity by demeaning that of his invective targets, poem 69 asserts his dominance over his addressee, Rufus, by augmenting and satirizing Rufus’ masculine traits to a repulsive degree. The character of Rufus appears in

only one other poem of Catullus, poem 77, in which the poet laments over Rufus' betrayal of their friendship. In poem 69, Rufus is the subject of mockery. Catullus portrays himself not as someone defending his pride, but as someone who feels secure enough in his own masculinity to give advice to someone whom the speaker implies feels less so. His advice, however, ends up making a farce out of Rufus' character, as the poet relentlessly blames this man's lack of success with women on his foul-smelling body odor.

The poet in the first four lines paint Rufus as a man wracked with insecurity, who has gone to drastic lengths to seduce women, to no success. The poet adopts a stern persona for humorous effect:

*Noli admirari, quare tibi femina nulla,
Rufe, velit tenerum supposuisse femur
non si, illam rarae labefactes munere vestis
aut perluciduli deliciis lapidis.*

“Rufus, don't wonder why no woman wants
to spread her tender legs open for you,
not even if you undermine her with a gift
like an expensive dress, or the charms of pretty jewelry.”

The sternness of the speaker's voice comes through from the first word *noli*, an imperative, as well as from *labefactes* in line 3, from *labefactare*, literally meaning “to shake” or “weaken,” but idiomatically meaning “undermine” in this context. He knows better than Rufus how to woo a

woman into bed: it is not achieved by passively wondering why they have abandoned him, and certainly not by humiliating himself and the woman's dignity by trying to buy her affection. The poet implies that Rufus is forsaking his own masculinity by doing so.

The next lines, in which Catullus mocks his friend's pungent odor, change the direction of the poem's invective from diminishing his manhood, to exaggerating it to a lampoonable degree. They center around a metaphor of a goat, of all animals:

Laedit te quaedam mala fabula, qua tibi fertur, 5
valle sub alarum trux habitare caper.
Hunc metuunt omnes, neque mirum: nam mala valde est
bestia, nec quicum bella puella cubet.

“A bad rumor pollutes your odor, so to speak: 5
 that a wild goat resides in the valley of your armpit.
 Everyone is scared of it, and it's no wonder: for it is a truly awful
 beast, not one with whom any pretty girl would sleep.”

Catullus compares the stench of Rufus' armpits to that of a *trux caper*, a wild billy-goat, a vivid symbol of grotesque masculinity. Catullus uses this goat imagery again prominently in poem 37, *Salax taberna*. In that poem, he asks a group of men at a bar in a rhetorical question whether they think they alone are entitled to sleep with any woman they desire, *et putare ceteros hircos* -- “and think of other men as he-goats.”¹⁴ The use of the word *hircos* in that context can compare to poem 69 -- both poems associate the goat with an uglier, unattractive attribute of masculinity. In

¹⁴ Cat. 37. 4-5

poem 69, however, the poet plays with this gross bestial exaggeration to a greater degree, showing in lines 7-8 how it frightens everyone around him, and repulses any woman Rufus attempts to seduce. If Rufus represents the traditional Roman male, whom Catullus the speaker has rejected in both feminine and masculine *versiculi*, this poem exposes the least attractive sides of Roman masculinity, and shows the hardy Roman man being reduced to a unintelligent horned animal that no one in society is willing to accept. At the same time, Catullus is silently asserting his own masculinity as a less reprehensible, more confident and refined alternative to the beast-like subject he illustrates in this poem.

His final advice to Rufus in the last two lines suggests that by eliminating his body odor, his most masculine of traits, he might have a better chance at succeeding with women: *Quare aut crudelem nasorum interfice pestem, / aut admirari desine cur fugiunt* (“So either kill the cruel and smelly pest, / or stop wondering why the girls are running”). This humorous ultimatum he offers Rufus shows a more condescending kind of masculine assertion, but also shows verve in the paradox it creates. By getting rid of his stench, a symbol of hyper-masculinity, Rufus could end up retaining his manhood. He would no longer have to sit and wonder idly why women reject him, nor compromise his manhood by buying lavish gifts in a desperate attempt to seduce them. In other words, Rufus will be more attractive, so asserts the poet, by acting somehow less than both a passive fool and a monster of a man. It is an impossible undertaking that inevitably makes Rufus look much less suave than the experienced and masculine Catullan speaker.

Masculinity and Femininity in Direct Conflict

While the poems analyzed so far present primarily feminine or masculine themes, none of them entirely root themselves in one sphere or another. Many of Catullus' poems further develop the ambiguity between these spheres, containing a turbulent mix of both tough machismo and tender emotionality. I have set three of these poems to music in my song cycle that show the poet's two personas in direct counterpoint with one another. I will first analyze the masculine/feminine conflict that lies at the center of poems 11 and 8, *Furi et Aureli* and *Miser Catulle*, which serve as the final two movements in my cycle, before analyzing the poem that bears the song cycle's namesake, poem 85, *Odi et amo*. A close examination of these poems will reveal how Catullus pits these two opposite identities against each other.

Poem 11, "*Furi et Aureli*," displays a masterfully crafted reversal of male and female roles between Catullus and his lover, which the poet establishes by manipulating the syntax to create ambiguity and anticipation before a surprising and tragic reveal. By the end of the poem, Catullus has been unwillingly forced into an effeminate and submissive role, while Lesbia assumes the dominant masculine position.

The first four stanzas at first portray Catullus as someone tough and in control, but this false front slowly crumbles by the middle of the fourth stanza, after constant shifting between dominant and submissive imagery:

*Furi et Aureli, comites Catulli:
sive in extremos penetrabit Indos
litus ut longe resonante Eoa*

tunditur unda,

sive in Hyrcanos Arabasve molles, 5

seu Sagas sagittiferosve Parthos,

sive quae septemgeminus colorat

aequora Nilus,

sive trans altas gradietur Alpes,

Caesaris visens monimenta magni, 10

Gallicum Rhenum horribilesque ulti -

mosque Britannos,

omnia haec, quaecumque feret voluntas

caelitem, temptare simul parati...

“Furius and Aurelius, followers of Catullus,

whether he will penetrate the Far East

where the shore is pounded by the long

echoing East wave,

whether he penetrates the Hyrcanian or soft Arab lands, 5

in Sagae or the arrow-bearing Parthian lands,

or the waters which the seven-mouthed Nile

variegates,

whether he will walk across the high Alps,

seeing the monuments of great Caesar,

10

the Gallican Rhine and the reaches

wild, of the Britons --

you who are prepared to tempt all these lands as well,

and whatever heavens' will brings..."

The sexually charged word *penetrabit*, meaning to “forcefully enter” or more literally “penetrate” takes *Catulli* in line 1 as its subject, and dominates the next two stanzas. It props up the speaker Catullus as a man’s man, with two loyal followers¹⁵ who with him have forcefully entered all the limits of the Roman Empire. With each stanza, however, his macho facade gradually begins to erode. The landmarks in the first two stanzas seesaw between masculine and feminine imagery, heightening suspense. The “Far East” and the “soft Arab lands” receiving the penetration connote submission, while the phallic, “arrow-bearing Parthians” connote domination. Images of water at the end of both stanzas figuratively wash the slate clean with a more gender-neutral depiction; Catullus even chooses words in the neuter gender such as *litus* and *aequora* to paint these images. In the third stanza, however, the passive *gradietur* replaces the active *penetrabit* as the main verb, diminishing the Catullan speaker’s power. The territories in this stanza do not belong to him as much as they did in the first two stanzas; Caesar owns the

¹⁵ Although addressing them as *comites* contains a layer of irony, considering how much Catullus berates and makes fools of them in poem 16 and in other poems.

great monuments in Gaul, not Catullus. The “wild reaches” of the Britannia in lines 11-12 seem indomitable when compared with the “soft Arab lands” in line 5. In her reading of the same poem, Marilyn Skinner also notes that the first-person speaker seems to lose control of his surround over time, arguing that Catullus goes from a traveller in the first two stanzas, to an observer in the third, to merely a passive mortal at the mercy of “whatever heavens’ will brings.”¹⁶ Indeed, the speaker is completely removed from the first two lines of the fourth stanza, reducing his power to nothing.

The last two lines of this stanza, however, along with the next stanza and a half, begin the reversal of gender roles, through the unexpected entrance of Lesbia:

...pauca nuntiate meae puellae 15

non bona dicta.

Cum suis vivat valeatque moechis

quos simul complexa tenet trecentos,

nullum amans vere, sed identidem

ilia rumpens! 20

Nec meum respectet ut ante amorem,

qui illius culpa cecidit...

“...give a few words to my girl. 15

They aren’t pretty.

¹⁶ Skinner 221

Let her live and let her go off with her manwhores
 all 300 whom she grips at once in a tight embrace
 loving none of them truly, but busting their nuts
 over and over!

20

And don't let her look again for my love as she did before,
 which by *her* fault died...

Line 14 mentions Lesbia for the first time. The poet-speaker labels her as “my girl” as a last ditch claim of possession over her. But as he reveals her betrayal by cheating on him with 300 men in the next stanza, all the language of dominance in the first four stanzas seems to suit her more than it does him.¹⁷ This fifth stanza represents one last attempt to claim his manhood in its harsh language and its repudiation of Lesbia’s character. Again, a verbal echo of poem 5 appears in line 17 of poem 1: “let her live and let her be well,” which, through its sarcasm and bitterness, expresses the opposite of the emotional freeness in the first line of poem 5 (“let us live and let us love”). However, even the harshest of his words -- *ilia rumpens* -- cannot hide how the speaker truly feels. His vulnerable effeminacy peeks through the moment the word *amans* appears. The poet claims that Lesbia loves none of the men she sleeps with, implying that she had more meaningful feelings for him. Perhaps the speaker hopes she still does, as he needlessly

¹⁷ Skinner cleverly notes the parallel between the first three stanzas’ reference to Roman generals’ nonstop military campaigns and territorial expansion to Lesbia’s relentless “sexual hunger” (220) While Skinner doesn’t mention this, perhaps Catullus was also making a subtle reference to the erosion of power in the senate that came from the gradual transfer of power to military generals like Sulla, Caesar, Pompey *et cetera*. Just as they ruptured the sovereignty of 300 senators, so too did Lesbia rupture the loins of her 300 adulterers!

emphasizes that she should never “look again for my love as she did before, which died by *her* fault.” He is projecting his own desire to resuscitate their love onto her, in an attempt to make himself feel validated, as an ex-lover might try and do after such a betrayal of trust. The mere mention of *amorem*, however -- and not just any *amorem*, but *meum amorem* -- breaks down the last of the dominant front that the Catullan speaker strives to protect.

The tragic flower metaphor that closes the poem epitomizes the total reversal of power roles between him and Lesbia both in terms of gender and sexuality:

...velut prati
ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam
tactus aratro est.

“... just as the flower
of the farthest meadow [died], after being struck down
by a passing plow.”

At last, Catullus reveals his raw hurt through an epic simile,¹⁸ after all the layers of his manhood have been stripped away. In comparing himself to an innocent flower in a meadow, he is mimicking the centuries-old Greek poetic tradition of comparing young maidens to suggestive natural imagery. Patricia Rosenmeyer’s essay “Girls at Play in Early Greek Poetry” cites several poems where the presence of a young woman frolicking in a natural setting invites the possibility of sexual danger; one of the poems by Anacreon, she notes, has a Thracian filly grazing through

¹⁸ The floral language used in this simile also echoes that of book VIII of the Iliad, in which Priam’s son Gorgythion’s crushed head is compared to a flower weighed down by rain and a heavy seed. (VIII.306-308)

a meadow that the speaker threatens to ride, in a potentially sexually suggestive manner.¹⁹ Catullus reverses traditional expectation however, by making the flower in the meadow symbolize him and his (male) heartbreak, rather than Lesbia. His female lover therefore takes the place of the sexual aggressor, and is compared to the “passing plow” that completely eliminates Catullus the flower from the meadow. Even the syntax suggests that Catullus has lost all control over Lesbia and his masculine dignity; *tactus est*, in the passive voice, describes the flower being crushed by the plow. While this helpless flower elicits sympathy, the plow, described as nothing else but “passing over,” feels impersonal, devoid of any feeling; the impartiality of this violent act almost adds to the tragedy. Thus, the final line completes the reversal of gender roles, and through her sexual conquests of the poet and many other men, Lesbia asserts her masculinity over Catullus, who is left abandoned, heartbroken and emasculated.

Just as poem 7 feels like a direct continuation of poem 5, poem 8, *Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire*, seems to pick up relatively soon after the fiery breakup of poem 11 in terms of the internal narrative of Catullus’ poetry. This is, in part, why I placed it right after poem 11 in my song cycle as the final movement. In this poem, the speaker goes through an inner dialogue between his masculine and feminine personas, in a way that feels less exaggerated than poem 11. At first he is slightly more willing to acknowledge his feelings of heartbreak, but still is determined not to let himself indulge his inner emotions. The authenticity in which his inner emotional turmoil slips in and out of his masculine facade is striking and poignant, worthy of analysis.

The poem opens up with Catullus addressing himself, trying to rally his own spirits. The tone seems rational, if a little unreasonably stern, devoid of any extreme emotional sentiment:

¹⁹ Rosenmeyer, “Girls at Play,” p. 174-176

Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire, 1
et quod vides perisse, perditum ducas

“Poor Catullus, quit being a fool 1
 and consider what’s done, done.”

The choice of the word *ineptire*, meaning “to play a fool,” bears worth noticing. The Catullan speaker is taking on the role of a traditionally minded Roman man, the kind that he himself used to mock in many of the poems already discussed. It is as if the speaker is realizing the consequences of submitting to *mollitia*, of enjoying all too much the highs of his passionate fling. Now, instead of letting himself further revel in his emotional pain, he asks himself to forget about the relationship altogether.

In the next few lines, he allows himself briefly to look back and review the happy parts of his now-ended relationship, but then resolves to keep a strong mind and persevere. These lines personify a man trying to reason through and compartmentalize a host of unwanted emotions:

Fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles,
cum ventitabas quo puella ducebat,
amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla; 5
ibi illa cum iocosa fiebant,
quae tu volebas nec puella nolebat.
Fulsere, vere, candidi tibi soles.
Nunc iam illa non volt: tu quoque impotens noli.

nec quae fugit sectare, nec miser vive, 10
sed obstinata mente perfer. Obdura.

“Bright suns once shone for you,
 when you used to come where the girl led you --
 a girl loved by us more than any girl will ever be. 5
 Back then, there took place many cheerful times,
 which you used to want nor did the girl refuse.
 Bright suns, yes, once shone for you.
 But now she does not want it -- and neither should you, undone.
 Don’t pursue what’s gone, don’t live miserably, 10
 but carry on, strong in mind. Be strong.”

Yet again another poem echoes the themes raised in poem 5; the speaker evokes the metaphor of a rising sun in lines 3 and 8 to call back on the ephemeral nature of their relationship, but this time in a more nostalgic, conciliatory tone. The poet lets himself acknowledge the bright and happy times of his and Lesbia’s relationship, while also acknowledging that he knew their relationship was never destined to last forever. Line 5 functions as a brief interruption the happy memories. The pain can be heard through the choliambic meter, also known as the “limping iambic;” the stressed syllable on *null - a* interrupts the flow of a normal iambic trimeter line, emphasizing that *no* other girl will ever receive the love that came from him.²⁰ Line 8 separates

²⁰ Poem 37, which I briefly mentioned before, is also in choliambic meter, and uses these same words in line 12, in the midst of the Catullan speaker’s bar rant. The line both serves to specify the lover as Lesbia without naming her, while also serving as an interruption to the tone established, as in poem 8. The tone that has been established in poem 37, however, is much more aggressive and full of vulgarities. I like to think of the limping iambs here

the memories of “cheerful times” from the emotional compromising the speaker attempts in line 9-11. Lines 7 and 9, syntactically near-perfect inverses of each other, further illustrate the change in tone from pleasant reminiscing to sober reconciliation. The word *impotens*, which prevents these two lines from being fully inverse of each other, bears importance. Like *ineptire*, it is another word that signifies the Catullan speaker’s frustration with himself for giving in too fully to his sensitive emasculating feelings. He is already “undone;” any further delving into his emotions will undo him even more. Instead, he must be a true Roman *vir* and carry on, mentally strong. Again, due to the “limping iambs” in the last foot of every line of this poem, all three syllables of *ob - du - ra* in line 11 are stressed, illustrating the mental hardening he is forcing himself to undergo.

The second part of this poem again like poem 11 sets up a scenario in which the poet’s constructed masculine guise slowly gives way into vulnerability:

Vale, puella. Iam Catullus obdurat.

Nec te requiret, nec te rogabit invitam.

At tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nulla.

Scelesta, vae te! Quis tibi manet vita?

15

Quis nunc te adibit? Cui videberis bella?

Quem nunc amabis? Cuius esse diceris?

Quem basiabis? Cui labella mordebis?

At tu, Catulle, destinatus obdura.

representing Catullus’ drunkenness at the bar, slurring his speech at the ending of every line with stressed syllables in the “wrong” place.

“Goodbye, my girl. Now Catullus is strong.
 He won’t need you, or ask you out against your will.
 But you will hurt when no one asks you out.
 Boo-hoo, you wretch! What life is left for you? 15
 Who will come to you now? To whom will you seem beautiful?
 Whom will you love? To whom will they say you belong to?
 Whom will you kiss? Whose lips will you bite?
 But you, Catullus, stay determined. Be strong.”

The stoicism he attempts to maintain lasts only a brief two lines before it turns into spiteful invective rage in line 14. Once his ire peaks in line 15 with *scelesta, vae te!* he asks a series of questions that gradually strip away his obdurate temperance. Each question slowly transitions from an invective tone, to slightly curious, to obsessive. Line 18’s tragic final two questions can hardly be considered as mocking in tone; they show the speaker starting to envision her with another lover, kissing and biting his lips like she used to bite his, an image that he cannot bear. He snaps out of this daze in final line reminding himself *obdura*, commit to masculinity. However, since this is the second reminder in this poem to “be strong,” Catullus’ striving towards mental and emotional callousness seems twice as doubtful, indicating insecurity instead of successful emotional detachment. In sum, the speaker in this poem attempts to erase any traces of emotional weakness from his mind, rejecting all the values and sentiments of poems 5 and 7. Nevertheless, this poem ends up suggesting the failures and fragility of masculine behavior, rather than its strength and success.

Perhaps no other poem in Catullus' oeuvre acknowledges the struggle between competing masculine and feminine identities as openly as one of his shortest ones, poem 85, *Odi et amo*. This poem, serving as the third movement in my song cycle, also bears its namesake. It expresses the core of what my cycle hopes to illuminate: the conflict between two different sides to Catullus' poetic persona, namely between his assertive masculinity and his soft embrace of femininity, and how the Catullan speaker attempts to deal with them.

This brief two line epigram, a single elegiac couplet, encompasses the essence of all the poems analyzed thus far:

Odi et amo. Quare id faciam, fortasse requiris?

Nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior.

I hate and I love. Why do I do this, you might ask?

I do not know, but I feel it happening and I am tortured.

The poem has our Catullan speaker placed not just between his conflicting feelings towards Lesbia, but between two diametrically opposing spheres in which he writes, between his hateful invectives and his love poetry. The addressee in the first line does not seem to connote anyone specific but rather anyone who has read or heard enough of Catullus' poetry. It could also be a question the poet asks himself, as he is prone to address himself in other poems, including poem 8. Line 2 responds to that question with a non-answer, but instead gets to the core of what the poet believes is his nature. That is, he cannot control how he will feel about something or someone. Instead, he is submissive to the whims of his volatile emotions. This passivity

however, does not necessarily indicate that Catullus, at heart, is not a true Roman man. His poetic personality can equally succumb to firmness, assertion, or self-defensive pride. Although often he puts up a tough facade, that in itself is just as natural an impulse as the impulse to break out of that front into emotionally vulnerable, shameless emasculation.

It will likely never be possible to know what the true Catullus was like. Yet the Catullan speaker in his poems presents a vivid, contradictory, multifaceted personality that shifts fluidly between a range of emotional extremes and gender identities. His poetry can be as aggressive as it can be gentle, and can transition from one extreme to another in a manner that always feels organically genuine. The craft within the syntax of each line prove the poet is self-aware of these shifts, even if the speaker seldom acknowledges the inner turmoils and insecurities that reside inside him. Catullus the poet manipulates these extremes deftly to illustrate the fleeting highs of his love for Lesbia, to lambast his critics and friends to assert and defend his masculine pride, or to detail the complex, conflicting inner workings of a poetic persona torn between a desire to be a gentle and sensitive lover, and an obligation to be a hard Roman man.

Musically Expressing Catullus' Femininity and Masculinity

My musical settings of these poems attempt to highlight both Catullus' themes of assertive masculinity and soft femininity, and it does so in directly opposing ways. In depicting femininity in the music, I generally opted for delicate, smoother textures in the instruments. The ways in which Catullus displayed his effeminacy and rejection of masculinity, whether more delicate, or outright passionate, influenced the textures as well. I will first describe the techniques and textures used in the ensemble's instruments before describing those used in the

voice. Throughout, I will cite examples of musical motives that embody the nature of Catullus' effeminacy.

Before delving into details, however, I am providing a small key for abbreviations to avoid any confusion between poem number and musical movement, as well as between poetic line number and musical measure number:

Longhand	Shorthand
Poem number (e.g. Catullus 85)	Cat. # (e.g. Cat. 85)
Musical Movement (e.g. movement III, <i>Odi et amo</i>)	mvt. Roman # (e.g. Mvt. III)
Poem number and line(s) (e.g. line 2-4 of Poem 16)	Cat. ## (e.g. Cat. 16.2-4)
Musical measure number(s): (e.g. measure 53 of movement II; measures 109-172 of movement VIII)	mvt. Roman #, m.# or mm.#-# (e.g. mvt. II m. 53; mvt. VIII mm.109-172)

In addition, I provide an appendix A at the end of this paper filled with various visual excerpts of the music depicting the textures that I describe here in writing. References to the figures (abbreviated as "Fig.") will appear in the footnotes.

In order to create textures in the percussion that sounded "feminine," I sought an absence of loud, unpitched percussion (i.e. tom-toms, bass drum, and suspended cymbal) in favor of lighter, pitched percussion (i.e. crotales, glockenspiel, and vibraphone). The percussion in movement I, *Vivamus atque amemus* (Cat. 5), for example, is almost exclusively vibraphone, which plays undulating tremolos, and occasional ethereal, bowed phrases throughout the piece. I also use light unpitched percussion in certain places to highlight the more sensual themes Catullus evokes in certain passages that reject the Roman masculine ideal to be hard and

unwavering to sexual urges. For example, in mm. 31-36 of mvt. IV, *Quaeris, quot mihi basiationes* (Cat. 7), I have the first percussionist rubbing together sandpaper blocks to create an airy hissing sound, evoking the *magnus numerus Libyssae harenae*, “the great number of Libyan sands” (Cat. 4.3).²¹ Certain percussion instruments highlight Catullus’ self-awareness of his effeminate verses; the climax of movement I (mm. 94-104) has a wind-up siren blaring among the other instruments as the tenor soloist sings the final line of the poem, *cum tantum sciat esse basiorum* (Cat. 5.14). This siren, which appears out of place compared to the glimmery, tremulous texture that the other instruments create, represents a degree of irony and self-awareness the Catullan character has concerning his zealous professions of love.²² The poet is aware that his love poem is effeminate, just as I will admit that the music in this movement is at times unashamedly tonal. The siren also represents the surreal, quasi-magical essence of the mixing up of kisses that Catullus and Lesbia create together in lines 10-14 of Catullus 5.

The rest of the instruments express femininity in several ways, through tonality, consonant intervals, lyrical melodic lines, and generally delicate textures. A myriad of textures appear within the eight movements between all five non-percussion instruments, but it would not serve well to label all of them. Instead I will mention a few textures that appear throughout multiple movements. The woodwinds often drop off the ends of their phrases by adjusting the embouchure of their lips to give the illusion of a sinking pitch, a tender, gentle texture. These same textures are present in movements I, IV and VI, *Iucundum, mea vita, mihi proponis amorem* (Cat. 5, Cat. 7, and Cat. 109, respectively).²³ Several times, the woodwinds feature aleatoric passages -- i.e., passages that are out of measured time based on chance (cf. Latin *alea*, “dice”) that leave extra room for the player to freely interpret. The ones featured in the winds are

²¹ See fig 1 in app. A

²² Fig 2 . in app A.

²³ Fig. 3 in app. A

texturally rapid and fluttery.²⁴ Both the violin and the cello have melodic lyrical soli that mimic the vocal line: movement I features one in the violin while movement VIII features a cello solo (mvt. I mm.??; mvt. VIII mm. ??). The strings also play artificial harmonics throughout all the movements, the texture of which sounds glassy, indicative of gentle effeminacy.²⁵ Lastly, the piano along with all of the instruments play delicate *tremolo* lines throughout movements I and IV as well as briefly in movement VI.²⁶ All of these textures provide a gentle ambience to accompany and aurally illustrate the poetry sung by the tenor.

The voice of the tenor itself adds to the creation of an effeminate aesthetic. It generally avoids any extended vocal techniques used to portray masculinity in this cycle (i.e. shouting, whispering, even intentional voice-cracking) in favor of lyrical, melodic lines. Often, he sings hushed, *piano* phrases in the low to middle part of his range to create a sense of intimacy or emotional vulnerability. Likewise, the tenor sings higher in his range to reflect a more passionate sentiment that reflected my own creative reading of the text. A particularly striking example of a combination of these two techniques comes in the final movement, “*Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire*” at the tenor entrance (mvt. VIII m.14). The tenor begins singing in his lower mid-range to reflect the emotional vulnerability the Catullan character is trying to hide after Lesbia has broken his heart. However, when singing line 2 of the poem, *et quod vides perisse, perditum ducas*, “and consider what’s done, done” (Cat. 8.2; mvt. VIII mm.20-28), I imagined Catullus’ emotions beginning to overtake him involuntarily, so the tenor begins to sing increasingly higher in his range until he reaches an emotionally charged arrival point on the second syllable of *ducas*

²⁴ Fig. 4 in appendix A

²⁵ Fig. 5 in app. A

²⁶ Fig. 6 in app. A

at measure 27.²⁷ This melodic lyricism defines much of the femininity within the vocal line of the tenor.

Both the tenor line and the accompanying chamber ensemble employ a wide range of pleasant-sounding scales and Greek modes that connote gentle femininity in the verses. While I provide a full list of scales and modes with examples of their use at the end of this essay, in appendix B, I will cite a few examples from movement I to give a sense of how specific modes and scales color the text. The first movement centers mostly on Mixolydian and Phrygian modes as well as the presence of the whole tone scale. The Mixolydian mode which appears at the beginning sounds relaxed and uninhibited, reflecting the free-spirited feeling I felt the first line of poem 5 evoked (*vivamus...atque amemus!*). The Phrygian mode that enters in measure 12 sounds a touch tenser and more pressing, reflecting the urgency Catullus' character places on Lesbia when he mentions how brief their lives and love will be in lines 4-6 of the poem (mvt. I mm. 12-28). The whole tone scale, differing from all other scales on a technical level because of its lack of a firmly grounded tonic chord, consequently sounds the most mysterious and dreamlike of all the scales. I employ it alongside the aforementioned siren to represent the confusion and magic of all the hundreds and thousands of kisses Catullus and Lesbia make and mix up to confound any bad presences.

In addition to an appendix B of scales, I included an appendix C of musical motives that appear across multiple movements. Some of the more feminine ones are worth mentioning. The "*mea Lesbia*" motif, named so because it often accompanies those words, is based on two three-note ascending stepwise units. The motif appears in full at the start of movement I, but features in movements III, IV and VIII, as well as in movement II, *Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo* (Cat.16) in a much more ironic context. Several of my motives derive themselves from

²⁷ See Fig 7 in app A

hendecasyllabic meter that Catullus writes a lot of his poetry in. These motives contain 11 notes each, reflecting the 11 syllables present in every line. The *molliculus* motif, although named for its effeminate melodic shape, first appears in full in the primarily masculine sounding movement II (mm. 66-69), with the tenor singing it in a high *falsetto* technique, representing the character of Catullus praising his own effeminate poetry in a tongue-in-cheek manner (Cat. 16.8). It later appears within a much less ironic, more sincere context in movement VIII. Although this movement's poem (Cat.8) is in choliambic, not hendecasyllabic meter, the feeling behind the motive is still *molliculus*, gently flowing throughout much of the movement as the gentle feminine interior to the harsh masculine exterior front that Catullus tries to uphold after ending his relationship with Lesbia.

Just as Catullus' masculine persona in his poetry starkly contrasts his effeminate one, my "masculine" music exists in an entirely different sphere of sounds and textures. While I color Catullus' effeminacy through relying on tonality, melodic lyricism, and smoother textures, I portray his masculinity through the use of loud percussive textures, the absence of lyricism in favor of angular rhythms and melodies, and the absence of any tonality or modality. I also musically paint his bawdy invective insults with ironic melodies and humorously paced rhythms and entries to mimic the playful nature of some of his most obscene verses. I will describe how I used the instruments to create dissonant or percussive textures and motives, before discussing a number of extended techniques in the tenor line that also contribute to the core of the Catullan character's masculine identity.

Two bass drums and six tom-toms shared between two percussionists represent the aggressiveness in Catullus' invective poetry. The percussionists stand on opposite ends of the ensemble, so when they play the tom-toms or bass drum in unison or in call-and-response, they

create a booming surround-sound effect. Such an effect represents the assertive, dominating presence the Catullan speaker tries to embody in his invective poetry especially when someone is threatening his masculinity. Examples of this effect appear in Movement II as well as in movement VII, *Furi et Aureli, comites Catulli* (Cat. 11). Both feature brief but rhythmically aggressive and driving drum interludes. The interludes in movement II on the one hand feature another hendecasyllabic motif, based strictly on the jagged rhythm of the hendecasyllable.²⁸ On the other hand, the adonic fourth line at the end of every Sapphic stanza inspires the interludes in movement VII, the poetry of which is in this very meter.²⁹ Flashes of this same aggression in the drums interrupt otherwise serene, docile passages in movements I, VI, and VII. These represent looming anxiety or a sudden impulse to protect the Catullan character's emotional vulnerability.³⁰ The piano also serves as a percussive instrument, from accenting drum beats in movements II,³¹ VII and VIII to providing low, rumbling tremolos in movement III. One particularly short but memorable recurring piano passage, labeled "percussive muted motif" at the bottom of appendix C, appears in movement VIII, as well as in an altered form in movement I.³² Using one hand to press down on the piano strings, the pianist plays one key repeatedly, creating a percussive sound reminiscent of a heartbeat.

The other instruments create textures that reflect both the Catullan character's aggressive side, as well as the obscene shock humor that he uses to demean other men. Among other

²⁸ See Appendix C .

²⁹ Fig. 9

³⁰ In movements VI and VII, these percussive interruptions go hand in hand with the "*foedus* plea" motif that is also present in both movements. Juxtaposing these two contrasting motives illustrates a point in the song cycle's narrative in which the character of Catullus, sensing the impending failure of his relationship with Lesbia, pleads that he will treat their tryst more like a true partnership, with a melody resembling plainchant denoting the pious language used in poem 109 (mm. 7-12, 18-24, 35-47). The percussive interruptions become more intense in movement VII, once Catullus has discovered Lesbia's betrayal. The "*foedus* plea" motif also becomes more angular and strained, representing Catullus' simmering anger.

³¹ Fig. 10

³² See Fig. 11 in app. A

techniques, both wind instruments (flute and clarinet) have passages in which they increasingly overblow through the air-hole or reed producing an increasingly tense, vigorous sound, mimicking the construction of the Catullan character's masculine facade. Movement VIII contains a passage in mm.79-93 which the winds do this very thing; as the character of Catullus repeats *obdura* over and over again, he slowly builds himself an emotional wall that the winds color by overblowing more and more into their instruments.³³ Movement V, "*Noli admirari*" (Cat. 69) promotes a less aggressive, more humorous instrumentation. Throughout the movement, the strings, playing tremolos *sul ponticello*, bowing near the bottom of the string, imitate buzzing flies circling around the character of Rufus whose body odor Catullus derides. The bass clarinet slugs around the lowest part of its range, producing an ugly, blunted texture, symbolizing the beast imagery to which Rufus is compared.³⁴

The voice, in portraying the masculine character of Catullus, abandons lyrical melodies in preference of a variety of vocal extended techniques. Several movements feature the tenor shouting or whispering the text, denoting a sudden eruption of male aggression. Movement I, although mostly involving lyrical feminine passages, has Catullus' character expressing his ire towards the "stricter old men" (Cat 5.2) or "any bad man" (5.12) by switching quickly from singing to shouting, or singing to whispering. In a lewder example, movement II features an extended passage in which the tenor sings in his *falsetto* range, aping a feminine persona. This feminine facade is broken, however, when the character of Catullus switches his address from the boys to the "hairy old men" (Cat. 16.10) -- his voice begins to crack from *falsetto* into the deeper chest voice, as if the Catullan character is going through puberty, quickly shifting from a

³³ Fig. 12

³⁴ Fig. 13

young boy to an old bearded man.³⁵ Another passage in movement V even asks the tenor to pinch his nose when singing about the rumor of a wild billy goat taking residence in Rufus' armpit, making his voice sound much more nasal in tone, to the effect of humor (mvt V. mm. 35-50; Cat. 69.5-6). All of these extended, often theatrical techniques and vocal styles embody both the raunchy and the violent sides of Catullan invective.

In sum, I employ two wholly opposing soundscapes to represent the masculine/feminine duality present throughout the poems of Catullus selected for this song cycle. In creating this stark divide in the music, I hope to embellish the character of Catullus that I see coming through these poems. The narrative's switching back and forth nearly every movement between "feminine" music and "masculine" music should create room for plenty of musical as well as quasi-theatrical drama, while creating a fluid character of Catullus that is at once a sensitive and generous lover swayed by his fluctuating feelings and a combative assertive man compelled to prove his manhood to all those who dare question it.

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³⁵ Fig. 14

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Appendix A: List of Musical Excerpts

The image shows a musical score excerpt for a piece titled "sandpaper blocks" (mvt. IV m.103). The score is written for four instruments: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Percussion (Perc.), and Vibraphone (Vib.). The music is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Flute and Clarinet parts are marked with *pp* (pianissimo) and feature a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The Percussion part is marked with *p* (piano), *f* (forte), and *pp* (pianissimo) and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Vibraphone part is marked with *pp* and features a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The score is divided into two measures by a double bar line.

Fig. 1: sandpaper blocks (mvt. IV m.103)

The musical score for 'Siren' glissandi consists of three systems. The first system shows a piano part with a glissando line and a mallet part with a glissando line. The piano part is marked *pp* and the mallet part is marked *f*. The second system shows a piano part with a glissando line and a mallet part with a glissando line. The piano part is marked *pp* and the mallet part is marked *p*. The third system shows a piano part with a glissando line and a mallet part with a glissando line. The piano part is marked *pp* and the mallet part is marked *p*. The lyrics are: *tan - tum ba - si - o - rum, tan - tum,*

Fig. 2. Siren glissandi (mvt. I mm.94-95)

The musical score for 'Fall' notation in winds shows a clarinet part (cl.) in 3/4 time. The first measure contains a quarter note with a small hook-shaped line protruding from its stem. The second measure contains a quarter note. The third measure contains a quarter note. The dynamic marking *f* is placed below the first measure.

Fig. 3: "Fall" notation in winds, notated via the small hook-shaped line protruding from the second quarter note (mvt. I m. 8); notation also appears in mvt. IV mm. 30-31; mvt. VI, mm.3-5

21

B play repeatedly as fast as possible

1. *f* *pp*

1. *f* *pp*

2. *p*

1.

2.

0. *oc - ci - dit bre - vis lux,*

Fig 4: Aleatoric fluttering as seen at rehearsal letter B in the boxed notes (mvt. I m. 22-23); also appears in mvt IV, mm. 58-61

pp

Fig 5: Example of artificial harmonic in violin line; the diamond-shaped note on top indicates to the player to delicately press on the string to cause the bottom note to sound two octaves higher; the sound can be defined as “airy”

Fig. 6: Example of *tremolo*; the violin and cello lines in this excerpt from movement IV alternate between these two notes as fast as possible

The musical score consists of three systems, each with four staves: T. Solo (Tenor Solo), Vln. (Violin), Vc. (Violoncello), and Pno. (Piano).

System 1:

- T. Solo:** Lyrics: "Mi - - - ser Ca - tull - - -". Dynamics: *p*.
- Vln. and Vc.:** Playing a rhythmic pattern with *gliss.* and *fp* markings.
- Pno.:** Playing a rhythmic pattern with a tempo marking: $4+3+4$ Flowing $\text{♩} = 80$ and *fp* dynamics.

System 2:

- T. Solo:** Lyrics: "- e de - sin - - as in - ep - ti - - re".
- Vln. and Vc.:** Playing a rhythmic pattern with *p* dynamics and "sul pont." and "on" markings.
- Pno.:** Playing a rhythmic pattern with *mf* dynamics and a boxed section labeled **A**.

System 3:

- T. Solo:** Lyrics: "et quod vi - des per - i - sse". Dynamics: *cresc.*
- Vln. and Vc.:** Playing a rhythmic pattern.
- Pno.:** Playing a rhythmic pattern with a $\frac{4}{4}$ time signature marking.

Fig. 7

The image displays a musical score for Mvt. VIII, measures 14-28. The score is arranged in a system with the following parts:

- Perc.**: Two staves for percussion, labeled "mid tom toms" and "low tom toms".
- T. Solo**: Tenor Soloist part with lyrics "per - di - tum du -".
- Vln.**: Violin part.
- Vc.**: Violoncello part.
- Pno.**: Piano part, featuring complex rhythmic patterns with time signatures $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, and $\frac{4+3+4}{8}$. Dynamic markings include *f* and *ff*.

The Tenor Soloist part shows the lyrics "per - di - tum du -" and "cas". The Piano part features complex rhythmic patterns with time signatures $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, and $\frac{4+3+4}{8}$. Dynamic markings include *f* and *ff*.

Fig 7(cont'd): Mvt. VIII highlighting the tenor line in mm. 14-28. The emotional hurt can be heard in his voice, which gradually rises upward higher in his range

The image shows two musical staves for Percussion. The top staff is labeled 'Percussion' and 'tomtoms'. It features a sequence of notes in 4/4 time, starting with a *p* (piano) dynamic and transitioning to a *f* (forte) dynamic. The bottom staff is also labeled 'Percussion' and 'tomtoms', mirroring the top staff's dynamics and rhythmic pattern. Below this, a section marked '24' and 'E' (Encore) shows two Percussion staves in 6/8 time. The top staff is labeled 'Perc.' and the bottom 'Perc.' with 'toms' written above it. Both are marked with a *f* dynamic.

Fig. 8: Example of drum interludes in Mvt II (top) and VII (bottom) (mvt. II mm. 1-3; mvt. VII mm.72-73)

The image shows a musical score with four staves. The top two staves are labeled 'Perc.' and contain rhythmic patterns in 3/4 time, marked with a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic. The middle two staves are labeled 'Vln.' (Violin) and 'Vc.' (Violoncello) and contain rests. The bottom staff is labeled 'T. Solo' (Tenor Solo) and contains the vocal line with the lyrics 'tun - di - tur un - da;'. The vocal line is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line that mimics the adonic meter.

Fig. 9: Example of adonic line interludes in tom-toms (mvt. VII m.6,) mimicking meter of *tunditur unda* (Cat.11.4)

The musical score for movement II, measures 22-25, consists of five staves. The top two staves are for Percussion (Perc.), showing tom-tom attacks. The third and fourth staves are for Violin (Vln.) and Violoncello (Vc.), with dynamic markings *fp* and *f*. The fifth staff is for Piano (Pno.), with a '(15)' marking above the staff and a '(8)' marking below the staff. The Trombone Solo (T. Solo) part is marked with a 'T. Solo' and a 'To' marking.

Fig. 10 Example of percussive piano chord used throughout movement II to highlight tom-tom attacks . Piano chords are near bottom of image (pno.), while tomtoms are seen above (perc.) (mvt. II mm. 22-25)

The musical score for movement I, measures 116-117, is for Piano (Piano). It consists of two staves: Treble Clef (T.C.) and Bass Clef (B.C.). The Treble Clef part is marked with a '116' and a 'Piano' marking. The Bass Clef part features a rhythmic pattern of notes with '+' notation above each note stem, indicating hand-muting. The score includes a '(8)' marking below the staff.

Fig. 11. Altered percussive muted passage (mvt. I, mm.116-117). The rhythmic pattern in the piano mimics hendecasyllabic meter, and foreshadows the hendecasyllabic rhythms that dominate movement II. The "+" notation above each note stem indicate that the piano is hand-muted.

Fig. 12 mvt VIII mm. 79 - 93 in winds. X-notehead notation indicates that the note is more overblown

Fig 13. Example of bass clarinet low slurred glissandi, representing “beast” imagery (mvt. V mm.7-8)
The rhythm bears similarity to the “percussive muted motif” in appendix C.

Fig 14. Example of tenor line cracking in and out of falsetto mvt. 2, mm. 76-77. Tiny grace notes above “sed,” “lo,” and “sis” syllables indicate where the soloist is supposed to crack.

Appendix B: List of modes and scales used in "Odi et Amo: Songs of Catullus"

I. "Vivamus, mea Lesbia"

B Mixolydian mode D# Phrygian mode Octatonic mode

4 whole tone 1 scale E# Locrian b4 mode whole tone 2 scale

Detailed description: This block contains six musical staves in treble clef, each showing a different scale or mode. The first three staves correspond to the labels above: B Mixolydian mode (B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5), D# Phrygian mode (D#4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5), and Octatonic mode (G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5). The next three staves correspond to: whole tone 1 scale (C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4), E# Locrian b4 mode (E#4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5), and whole tone 2 scale (C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4).

IV. "Quaeris, quot mihi basiationes"

7 G# hexachordal scale G# minor pentatonic scale C Lydian mode A Lydian

11 F# dorian mode plus overtones D hexachordal D Dorian

Detailed description: This block contains six musical staves in treble clef. The first four staves correspond to the labels above: G# hexachordal scale (G#4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5), G# minor pentatonic scale (G#4, A4, B4, C5, D5), C Lydian mode (C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4), and A Lydian mode (A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5). The last two staves correspond to: F# dorian mode plus overtones (F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5) and D hexachordal mode (D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4).

VIII. "Miser Catulle"

14 A hexachord A Dorian A Dorian b2

17 F# Mixolydian octatonic

Detailed description: This block contains five musical staves in treble clef. The first three staves correspond to the labels above: A hexachord (A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5), A Dorian mode (A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5), and A Dorian b2 mode (A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5). The last two staves correspond to: F# Mixolydian mode (F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5) and octatonic mode (F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5).

Appendix C: List of motives used in "Odi et Amo: Songs of Catullus"

Daniel Castellanos

Mea Lesbia motif octave displacement variation "feminine" tremolo clusters ... etc.

7 "*sol/nox*" motif whole tone variation/derivation

11-note motives (based on hendecasyllabic meter)

11 "sensual" motif *molliculus* motif insecurity/anxiety motif (based on last five notes of *molliculus* motif)

14 hendecasyllabic rhythm motif variation A variation B

Smaller, less prominent motives

20 angular, "masculine" motif

23 *foedus* plea motif

27 ornamentative melisma interruption jet whistle motif percussive muted motif

Appendix D: List of Poems in Concert Order (translations by Daniel Castellanos)

Latin Text	English Translation
<p>I. Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus! (5)</p> <p>Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus! rumoresque senum severiorum omnes unius aestimemus assis! Soles occidere et redire possunt; nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux, nox est perpetua una dormienda. Da mi basia mille, deinde centum; dein mille altera, dein secunda centum; deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum! Dein, cum milia multa fecerimus -- conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus, aut ne quis malus invidere possit, cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.</p> <p>[attacca]</p>	<p><i>“Let us live and let us love, my Lesbia!”</i></p> <p><i>Let us live and let us love, my Lesbia! and let us take the gossipings of strict old men all together with a grain of salt! Suns can rise and suns can fall; when this our brief light once falls, we must sleep one eternal night. Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred; Then another thousand, then a second hundred; Then again another thousand, then another hundred! Then, when we have kissed many thousands of times, we’ll mix them up, so we don’t know what’s what, and so no bad man should envy us when he learns how many of our kisses there were.</i></p> <p><i>[attacca]</i></p>
<p>II. Pedicabo ego vos, et irrumabo! (16)</p> <p>Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo, Aurelius pathice, et cinaede Furi, qui me ex versiculis meis putastis, quod sunt molliculi, parum pudicum. Nam castum esse decet pium poetam ipsum, versiculos nihil necesse est; qui tum denique habent salem ac leporem, si sunt molliculi ac parum pudici, et quod pruriat incitare possunt, non dico pueris, sed his pilosis qui duros nequeunt movere lumbos. Vos, quod milia multa basiorum legistis, male me marem putatis? Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo!</p> <p>[attacca]</p>	<p><i>“I’ll fuck you up the ass! I’ll make you suck my dick!”</i></p> <p><i>I’ll fuck you up the ass, I’ll make you suck my dick anal-loving Aurelius, and Furius, you cockslut, who think that, from my little verses, just because they’re pretty, that I have little shame. Oh, sure, it’s proper for a pious poet to be pure himself, but his poems don’t need to do shit. They indeed have wit and charm, even if they’re a little soft and shameless, and they can stir a little itch down there -- I’m not talking to the boys, but to these hairy old men who can’t even get their dicks hard. You think, just because you read about my many thousand kisses, that I’m not man enough? I’ll fuck you up the ass! I’ll make you suck my dick!</i></p> <p><i>[attacca]</i></p>
<p>III Odi et amo (85)</p> <p>Odi et amo. Quare id faciam, fortasse requiris? Nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior.</p>	<p><i>“I hate and I love.”</i></p> <p><i>I hate, and I love. Why do I do this, you might ask? I do not know, but I feel it happening and I am tortured.</i></p>
<p>IV Quaeris, quot mihi basiationes (7)</p> <p>Quaeris, quot mihi basiationes tuae, Lesbia, sint satis superque? Quam magnus numerus Libyssae harenae lasarpiciferis iacet Cyrenis oraclum Iovis inter aestuosi et Batti veteris sacrum sepulcrum; aut quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox, furtivos hominum vident amores. Tam te basia multa basiare vesano satis et super Catullo est. Quae nec pernumerare curiosi</p>	<p><i>“How many of your kisses, you ask?”</i></p> <p><i>How many of your kisses, you ask, would be enough and then some for me? As great a number as the Libyan sands lie in resinous Cyrene, between the oracle of tempestuous Jupiter and the sacred sepulchre of ancient Battus. or as many stars that see the secret trysts of men when night is silent. That’s how many kisses are enough and then some for your Catullus, mad in love, kisses which neither the curious could count</i></p>

<p>Possint nec mala fascinare lingua.</p> <p>V. Noli admirari quare tibi femina nulla, Rufe (69)</p> <p>Noli admirari, quare tibi femina nulla, Rufe, velit tenerum supposuisse femur non si, illam rarae labefactes munere vestis aut perluciduli deliciis lapidis. Laedit te quaedam mala fabula, qua tibi fertur, valle sub alarum trux habitare caper. Hunc metuunt omnes, neque mirum: nam mala valde est bestia, nec quicum bella puella cubet. Quare aut crudelem nasorum interface pestem aut admirari desine cur fugiunt.</p> <p>VI. Iucundum, mea vita, mihi proponis amorem (109)</p> <p>Iucundum, mea vita, mihi proponis amorem hunc nostrum inter nos perpetuum fore. Di magni, facite ut vere promittere possit, atque id sincere dicat et ex animo, ut liceat nobis tota perducere vita aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae.</p> <p>[attacca]</p> <p>VII. Furi et Aureli, comites Catulli (11)</p> <p>Furi et Aureli, comites Catulli -- sive in extremos penetrabit Indos litus ut longe resonante Eoa tunditur unda,</p> <p>sive in Hyrcanos Arabasve molles, seu Sagas sagittiferosve Parthos, sive quae septemgeminus colorat aequora Nilus,</p> <p>sive trans altas gradietur Alpes, Caesaris visens monimenta magni, Gallicum Rhenum horribilesque ulti- mosque Britanni,</p> <p>omnia haec, quaecumque feret voluntas caelitum, temptare simul parati -- pauca nuntiate meae puellae non bona dicta.</p> <p>Cum suis vivat valeatque moechis, quos simul complexa tenet trecentos, nullum amans vere, sed identidem omnium ilia rumpens.</p> <p>Nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem, qui illius culpa cecidit uelut prati ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam tactus aratro est.</p>	<p><i>nor an evil tongue bewitch.</i></p> <p><i>(Some Advice for Rufus)</i></p> <p><i>Rufus, don't wonder why no woman wants to spread her tender legs open for you, Not even if you try to undermine her with a gift like an expensive dress or some pretty jewelry. A bad rumor pollutes your odor, so to speak: that a wild goat resides in the valley of your armpit. Everyone is scared of it, and it's no wonder: for it is a truly awful beast, not one with whom any pretty girl would sleep. So, either kill the cruel and smelly goat or stop wondering why the girls are running.</i></p> <p><i>("O my life, you promise me this sweet love")</i></p> <p><i>O my life, you promise me this sweet love of ours will be perpetual between us. O great gods, make her promise her love truly, and let her say it sincerely and from her heart, so we may follow through all our life this eternal bond of our holy alliance.</i></p> <p><i>[attacca]</i></p> <p><i>("Furius and Aurelius, companions of Catullus")</i></p> <p><i>Furius and Aurelius, followers of Catullus -- whether he will penetrate the Far East, where the Eastern wave resounding beats down the long shore,</i></p> <p><i>whether into the Hyrcanian or soft Arab lands, in Sagae or the arrow-bearing Parthian lands, whether he will penetrate the Nile's waters seven-fold mouthed,</i></p> <p><i>whether he will walk across the high Alps, seeing the monuments of great Caesar, the Gallican Rhine and the reaches wild, of the Britons --</i></p> <p><i>you who are prepared to tempt all these lands as well, and whatever heavens' will brings -- give a few words to my girl. They aren't pretty.</i></p> <p><i>Let her live and let her go off with her man-whores, all 300 of whom she grips in a tight embrace, loving none of them truly, but busting the balls of them all over and over.</i></p> <p><i>And don't let her look again for my love, as before, which, by her fault, died like the flower in the farthest meadow, after being mowed over by a plow passing.</i></p>
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<p>VIII. Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire (8)</p> <p>Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire et quod vides perisse perditum ducas. Fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles, cum ventitabas quo puella ducebat amata nobis quantum amabitur nulla; ibi illa multa cum iocosa fiebant quae tu volebas nec puella nolebat, fulsere vere candidi tibi soles. Nunc iam illa non volt: tu quoque impotens noli, nec quae fugit sectare, nec miser vive, sed obstinata mente perfer. Obdura. vale, puella. Iam Catullus obdurat, nec te requiret nec rogabit invitam. At tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nulla. Scelesta, vae te, quae tibi manet vita? Quis nunc te adibit? Cui videberis bella? Quem nunc amabis? Cuius esse diceris? Quem basiabis? Cui labella mordebis? At tu, Catulle, destinatus obdura.</p>	<p><i>“Poor Catullus, stop acting a fool”</i></p> <p><i>Poor Catullus, quit being a fool and consider what’s done, done. Bright suns once shone for you, when you used to come where the girl led you, a girl we loved more than any girl will ever be. Back then, there took place many cheerful times which you used to want nor did the girl refuse -- bright suns, yes, shone for you. But now she doesn’t want it -- and neither should you, undone. Don’t pursue what’s gone, don’t live miserably, but endure, determined in mind. Be strong. Goodbye, my girl. Now Catullus is strong. He won’t need you, or ask you out against your will. But you will hurt, when no one asks you out. Boo-hoo, you wretch! What life is there left for you? Who will come to you now? To whom will you seem pretty? Whom will you love? To whom will they say you belong? Whom will you kiss? Whose lips will you bite? But you, Catullus, stay determined. Be strong.</i></p>
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