TIBULLUS, Albius

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| Nec iurare time: veneris periuria venti  inrita per terras et freta summa ferunt.  gratia magna Iovi: vetuit Pater ipse valere,  iurasset cupide quidquid ineptus amor. | Be not afraid to swear. Null and void are the perjuries of love ;  The winds bear them inffective over land and the face of the sea.  Great thanks to Jove ! The Sire himself has decreed  no oath should stand that love has taken in the folly of desire. |

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| Huc ades et tenerae morbos expelle puellae,  huc ades, intonsa Phoebe superbe coma;  crede mihi, propera, nec te iam, Phoebe, pigebit  formosae medicas applicuisse manus.  Effice ne macies pallentes occupet artus,  neu notet informis candida membra color,  et quodcumque mali est et quidquid triste timemus,  in pelagus rapidis euehat amnis aquis.  Sancte, ueni, tecumque feras, quicumque sapores,  quicumque et cantus corpora fessa leuant;  neu iuuenem torque, metuit qui fata puellae  uotaque pro domina uix numeranda facit;  interdum uouet, interdum, quod langueat illa,  dicit in aeternos aspera uerba deos.  Pone metum, Cerinthe: deus non laedit amantes;  tu modo semper ama: salua puella tibi est;  nil opus est fletu: lacrimis erit aptius uti,  si quando fuerit tristior illa tibi.  At nunc tota tua est, te solum candida secum  cogitat, et frustra credula turba sedet.  Phoebe, faue: laus magna tibi tribuetur in uno  corpore seruato restituisse duos.  Iam celeber, iam laetus eris, cum debita reddet  certatim sanctis laetus uterque focis;  tunc te felicem dicet pia turba deorum,  optabunt artes et sibi quisque tuas. | **A Prayer For Sulpicia In Her Illness** Phoebus, come, drive away the gentle girl’s illness,  come, proud, with your unshorn curls.  Trust me, and hurry: Phoebus, you won’t regret  having laid healing hands on her beauty.  See that no wasting disease grips her pale body,  no unpleasant marks stain her weak limbs,  and whatever ills exist, whatever sadness we fear,  let the swift river-waters carry them to the sea.  Come, sacred one, bring delicacies with you,  and whatever songs ease the weary body:  Don’t torment the youth, who fears for the girl’s fate,  and offers countless prayers for his mistress.  Sometimes he prays, sometimes, because she’s ill,  he speaks bitter words to the eternal gods.  Don’t be afraid, Cerinthus: the god doesn’t hurt lovers.  Only love always: and your girl is well.  No need to weep: tears will be more fitting,  if she’s ever more severe towards you.  But now she’s all yours: the lovely girl  only thinks of you, and a hopeful crowd wait in vain.  Phoebus, be gracious. Great praise will be due to you  in saving one life you’ll have restored two.  Soon you’ll be honoured, delighted, when both, safe,  compete to repay the debt at your sacred altar.  Then the holy company of gods will call you happy,  and each desire your own art for themselves.  *Translation: KLINE, A.S.* |

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| **I, III**  Ibitis Aegaeas sine me, Messalla, per undas,  O utinam memores ipse cohorsque mei.  Me tenet ignotis aegrum Phaeacia terris,  Abstineas avidas, Mors, modo, nigra, manus.  Abstineas, Mors atra, precor: non hic mihi mater  Quae legat in maestos ossa perusta sinus,  Non soror, Assyrios cineri quae dedat odores  Et fleat effusis ante sepulcra comis,  Delia non usquam; quae me cum mitteret urbe,  Dicitur ante omnes consuluisse deos.  Illa sacras pueri sortes ter sustulit: illi  Rettulit e trinis omina certa puer.  Cuncta dabant reditus: tamen est deterrita numquam,  Quin fleret nostras respiceretque vias.  Ipse ego solator, cum iam mandata dedissem,  Quaerebam tardas anxius usque moras.  Aut ego sum causatus aves aut omina dira,  Saturni sacram me tenuisse diem.  O quotiens ingressus iter mihi tristia dixi  Offensum in porta signa dedisse pedem!  Audeat invito ne quis discedere Amore,  Aut sciat egressum se prohibente deo.  Quid tua nunc Isis mihi, Delia, quid mihi prosunt  Illa tua totiens aera repulsa manu,  Quidve, pie dum sacra colis, pureque lavari  Te—memini—et puro secubuisse toro?  Nunc, dea, nunc succurre mihi—nam posse mederi  Picta docet templis multa tabella tuis—,  Ut mea votivas persolvens Delia voces  Ante sacras lino tecta fores sedeat  Bisque die resoluta comas tibi dicere laudes  Insignis turba debeat in Pharia.  At mihi contingat patrios celebrare Penates  Reddereque antiquo menstrua tura Lari.  Quam bene Saturno vivebant rege, priusquam  Tellus in longas est patefacta vias!  Nondum caeruleas pinus contempserat undas,  Effusum ventis praebueratque sinum,  Nec vagus ignotis repetens conpendia terris  Presserat externa navita merce ratem.  Illo non validus subiit iuga tempore taurus,  Non domito frenos ore momordit equus,  Non domus ulla fores habuit, non fixus in agris,  Qui regeret certis finibus arva, lapis.  Ipsae mella dabant quercus, ultroque ferebant  Obvia securis ubera lactis oves.  Non acies, non ira fuit, non bella, nec ensem  Inmiti saevus duxerat arte faber.  Nunc Iove sub domino caedes et vulnera semper,  Nunc mare, nunc leti mille repente viae.  Parce, pater. timidum non me periuria terrent,  Non dicta in sanctos inpia verba deos.  Quodsi fatales iam nunc explevimus annos,  Fac lapis inscriptis stet super ossa notis:  'Hic iacet inmiti consumptus morte Tibullus,  Messallam terra dum sequiturque mari.'  Sed me, quod facilis tenero sum semper Amori,  Ipsa Venus campos ducet in Elysios.  Hic choreae cantusque vigent, passimque vagantes  Dulce sonant tenui gutture carmen aves,  Fert casiam non culta seges, totosque per agros  Floret odoratis terra benigna rosis;  Ac iuvenum series teneris inmixta puellis  Ludit, et adsidue proelia miscet Amor.  Illic est, cuicumque rapax mors venit amanti,  Et gerit insigni myrtea serta coma.  At scelerata iacet sedes in nocte profunda  Abdita, quam circum flumina nigra sonant:  Tisiphoneque inpexa feros pro crinibus angues  Saevit, et huc illuc inpia turba fugit.  Tum niger in porta serpentum Cerberus ore  Stridet et aeratas excubat ante fores.  Illic Iunonem temptare Ixionis ausi  Versantur celeri noxia membra rota,  Porrectusque novem Tityos per iugera terrae  Adsiduas atro viscere pascit aves.  Tantalus est illic, et circum stagna, sed acrem  Iam iam poturi deserit unda sitim,  Et Danai proles, Veneris quod numina laesit,  In cava Lethaeas dolia portat aquas.  Illic sit, quicumque meos violavit amores,  Optavit lentas et mihi militias.  At tu casta precor maneas, sanctique pudoris  Adsideat custos sedula semper anus.  Haec tibi fabellas referat positaque lucerna  Deducat plena stamina longa colu,  At circa gravibus pensis adfixa puella  Paulatim somno fessa remittat opus.  Tum veniam subito, nec quisquam nuntiet ante,  Sed videar caelo missus adesse tibi.  Tunc mihi, qualis eris, longos turbata capillos,  Obvia nudato, Delia, curre pede.  Hoc precor, hunc illum nobis Aurora nitentem  Luciferum roseis candida portet equis. | **Home Thoughts**  Without me you will sail, Messalla, the Grecian waves;  may you and all our friends remember me!  Phaeacia holds me here, sick in a foreign land,  but hold far off, dark Death, your greedy hands!  Hold off, black Death, I pray: I have no mother here  to gather my burnt bones in grieving arms;  no sister, to pour Syrian incense on my pyre  and weep with streaming hair before my tomb;  nor Delia either, who, when sending me from Rome,  sought omens first (they say) from every god.  Three times she drew the boy's prophetic lots, and thrice  he answered her that all would yet be well.  All promised my return, yet she was not deterred  from shedding anxious tears for my campaign;  and I, although I gave her solace and farewell,  still fearfully kept seeking long delays.  I either pled fell omens from the flight of birds,  or claimed that Saturn's-day kept me at home.  How many times I said, when starting on the road,  I stumbled at the gate, an adverse sign.  Let no man dare depart against the will of Love,  or let him know his voyage defies a god!  What good now is your Isis, Delia, what good  the bronze so often rattled by your hand?  What good, to faithfully keep the rites, the sacred bath,  and (I remember!) chastely sleep alone?  Now, goddess, now sustain me (since within your shrine  so many painted plaques show you can heal) ,  so Delia may pay her promised vows, and sit  in linen gown before your sacred door,  and chant your praises twice a day, with loosened hair,  pre-eminent among the Pharian throng.  But be it mine to visit my ancestral gods  and give my old Lar incense every month.  How fine was human life in Saturn's reign, before  the earth was opened up to far campaigns!  No mast had then yet dared to tempt the azure waves  nor spread its billowing canvas to the winds;  no trader, wandering alien lands in search of gain,  had yet weighed down his ship with foreign wares.  No burly oxen then submitted to the yoke;  no broken horses tamely champed the bit.  No house had doors, no stones were fixed among the fields  to mark off acreage in rigid bounds.  The oaks themselves dripped honey, and of themselves the ewes  brought swollen udders to the carefree folk.  There were no battle-lines, no wrath, no wars, nor had  the harsh smith's ruthless cunning forged the blade.  Now, Jupiter's age is rife with slaughter and with blood:  the land, the sea now teem with sudden death.  Have mercy, Father! No false oaths weigh down my mind,  no impious words against the holy gods.  But if I have indeed fulfilled my fated span,  let this inscription stand above my bones:  Here lies Tibullus, snatched away by cruel death,  while following Messalla, land and sea.  But since I ever have been apt for tender love,  Venus shall lead me to the Elysian plains.  Here dance and singing flourish, and wandering everywhere  the birds trill sweetly from their slender throats;  the untilled meads bear cassia, and all throughout the fields  the kindly earth blooms forth the fragrant rose;  and ranks of youths, with tender girls mingled among,  here play and join love's never-ending wars.  All lovers overcome by ravening Death are there,  pre-eminent with crowns of myrtle boughs.  But the home appointed for the damned in deepest night  lies hid, and round it wail the gloomy streams.  Tisiphone, with savage matted snakes for hair  rages, and drives the wavering impious throng;  then at the gates black Cerberus with snaky mouth  shrieks, and stands watch at the brazen doors.  Ixion's guilty limbs are turned on the swift wheel  because he dared assault the wife of Jove;  and Tityos lies stretched across nine acre's ground,  and vultures pasture on his dark entrails.  There Tantalus thirsts fiercely 'midst the pools, but now  just as he stoops to drink, the wave recedes;  and Danaus' girls, who slighted the majesty of Love,  must carry Lethe's stream to leaking urns.  May he be there, whoever has sinned against my love,  by wishing me a long drawn out campaign!  But you, I pray, keep chaste; may your old chaperone  be ever near as sacred honor's guard,  diverting you with stories, and, when the lamp is lit,  from the full distaff to draw a long thread down:  while round about the girls, intent on their heavy wool,  yield bit by bit to sleep, and dropp their tasks.  Then suddenly may I come, no warning given before,  but may I seem to you dropped from the sky.  Then run to meet me, Delia, all unprepared,  barefoot, with your long tresses streaming down.  This is my prayer: to us may pale Aurora bring  that day's bright Dawnstar on her rosy steeds |

**Now slavery and my mistress**  
Now slavery and my mistress are readied for me here;

   farewell then, old ancestral liberty!

Stern slavery is my fate, and I am fettered fast,

   nor does Love ever loose my dismal chains.

Whether I deserve it or keep from sin, he burns me.

   I burn, ah! take the torch away, cruel girl!

O not to feel such torment, I would rather be

   a stone set in some frigid mountain range,

or some high crag that stands bare to the raging winds,

   pounded by the shipwrecking surge of the bleak sea!

Bitter now my days, night’s gloom more bitter still,

   for every hour is steeped in mournful gall.

Useless my elegies and Apollo, source of my song:

   with outstretched palm her one demand is money!

Then hence, ye Muses, if you cannot aid a lover:

   I do not worship you to sing of war,

nor do I tell the Sun’s career, nor how the Moon

   turns back her horses when her course is run.

My incantations seek quick access to my mistress:

   hence, Muses, if your songs cannot prevail!

But I by murderous crime must strive to get her gifts

   or sprawl despised and sobbing at her door.

I’ll steal the offerings that hang in the holy shrines,

   but Venus I will outrage first of all.

She prompts my crimes by giving me a greedy mistress:

   so let her suffer my defiling hands!

O curse whoever gathers verdant emeralds

   or stains with Tyrian purple snowy fleece!

The avarice of girls is fed on Coan silks

   and softly lustrous pearls from the Persian sea.

By these they are corrupted; these put locks on doors

   and post the dogs as sentinels at the gates.

But come weighed down with cash, and all the barriers fall,

   the keys turn for you, even the dog keeps still.

Whatever deity gave such beauty to greedy girls

   bestowed at once a blessing and a bane!

From this, laments and brawls ring out, this is the cause

   that Love now roams the world, a god disgraced.

But, you that spurn the lovers who cannot meet your price,

   may wind and fire despoil your ready wealth;

and more:  may youths rejoice to see your fiery ruin

   and none of them bring water to quench the flames;

nor, if your death shall come, will there be any to mourn

   or make an offering at your sad last rites.

But the true and generous girl, though she live a hundred years,

   will be lamented on her blazing pyre,

and some old lover, cherishing the love gone by,

   will lay a wreath each year on her high tomb,

and say as he departs, “Fair quiet and peace!  May Earth

   rest lightly over your untroubled grave!”

Indeed, I speak the truth, but what good does truth do?

   She makes the laws that rule how I must love.

If she should bid me put my family home for sale,

   then go, my Lares, mount the auction block!

Whatever potions Circe or Medea brews,

   whatever herbs the land of Thessaly bears,

even the fluid that drips from the loins of lusting mares

   when Venus inspires the untamed herds with love:

let Nemesis but look upon me with a smile,

   I'll drink them all, and a thousand drugs beside.

**Let others toil**Let others toil to mass a pile of gleaming gold

   and own vast acreage of well-tilled land,

and strive in endless fear when the enemy closes in

   and the martial clarion routs them from repose;

for me, may poverty induce an idle life,

   if only my hearth glow with warmth secure!

And may I, countrified, with my own skillful hand,

   implant my young vine shoots and tall fruit trees,

and let not Hope desert us, but ever grant us heaps

   of crops and rich new wine in brimming vats.

         For I revere, when on some lonely rural tree

   or ancient roadside stone flowered garlands lie,

and all first-fruits the freshening year bestows, I pour

   in offering before the farmer god.

Blonde Ceres, from my farm may you receive a wreath

   of grain to hang before your temple door;

and in my fruitful garden may red Priapus stand

   with his fierce pruning-knife to fright the birds.

And you, protective Lares of fields once fortunate,

   now poor, you also have your rightful gifts!

A slain calf sanctified abundant livestock then,

   a lamb, poor offering for my small plot now.

A lamb shall die for you, and round it country youths

   shall cry, “Ah!  send us harvest and good wine!”

Now be it mine to live content with low estate,

   nor always wandering on far campaign;

to shun the dog-star’s summery rising, in the shade

   beneath a tree beside some passing stream;

yet sometimes I would wield the hoe, an honest task,

   or chide the tardy oxen with the goad,

or, no unpleasant chore, bear homeward in my arms

   some lamb or kid its mother has forgot.

But you, ye wolves and thieves, forgo my meager flock,

   and seek your booty from some larger herd!

From mine, I purify my herdsman every year

   and sprinkle Pales with her soothing milk.

Be here with me, ye gods, nor scorn these offerings

   from a humble table and clean earthenware:

from earthenware the olden peasant made his cups,

   the first to fashion them of ductile clay.

I do not miss my forebears’ riches, nor the yield

   the garnered harvest brought my antique sires:

a small crop is enough, it is enough to lie

   relaxed, secure in my familiar bed.

What gladness, lying at ease, to hear the cruel wind

   and hold my mistress in my soft embrace,

or, when the chill sou’wester pours his frozen streams,

   to drowse off happily, lulled by the storm!

This be my lot; let wealth be justly his, who dares

   the ocean’s fury and the tempest’s gloom.

Let perish all the gold and jewels on earth, ere I

   make any girl bewail my long campaigns!

For you, Messalla, war by land and sea is fit,

   so that your house may show the enemy’s spoils;

but I am held enchained by the bonds of a lovely girl

   and stand ignoble watch at her cruel door.

I do not seek renown, my Delia; as long

   as I am yours, let reputation die!

When my last hour draws nigh, may I gaze on you then,

   and, dying, clutch you with my failing hand;

and you shall weep when I am laid on the smoldering pyre

   and give me kisses mixed with sorrowing tears;

shall weep:  the heart in your soft bosom is not bound

   with iron chains nor made of flinty stone,

and from those obsequies no youth shall travel home,

   nor any maiden, with unweeping eyes.

Yet do not pain my ghost, but spare your loosened hair,

   my Delia, and spare your gentle cheeks.

Till then, while fate allows, let us unite our loves,

   for soon comes death, with shadows hovering round;

soon creeps on slow old age, which is not fit for love,

   nor, white-haired, fit for murmuring soft delights.

Now we should seize soft Venus, when brawling is no crime,

   and breaking down the house-door is no shame.

This be my field of battle; away, ye pennants and horns,

   hold far, far off; bring wounds to greedy men,

and bring them riches!  Safe upon my gathered heap

   may I look down on wealth and want alike!  
  
  
*Translations: Jon CORELIS*