

CATULLUS PROJECT

THE INTERPRETER

Guidelines

The Late-Republican poet, Catullus, has become most famous for the poems he wrote detailing his passionate love affair with the mysteriously titled “Lesbia.” His lyric technique was exceptional for its time and, like Vergil’s *Aeneid*, served to bridge the gap from Greek literature to a new and independent Roman style of writing.

Each year, Loyola University in Maryland used to sponsor a competition called *The Interpreter* to judge English interpretations of classical Latin literature. As a summer assignment (and test grade), I am asking you to each work on a different poem of Catullus.

The text will be judged primarily (1) on style and elegance, (2) effectiveness in conveying not just the meaning but the nuances, subtleties and flavor of the original, and (3) facility with English and the art of translation as much as ability in Latin.

Bona Fortuna, Discipulī et Discipulae!

Due Date

You must submit your translation by **Monday, August 25, 2025** via **Canvas** (Join Code: ARHPNE).

Summer Reading

Catullus, Gaius Valerius. Edited by Daniel H. Garrison. *The Student’s Catullus*. 3rd edition. Vol. 5. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013.

Rent E-Book for \$26.93 from Amazon: <https://a.co/d/8ntn7iI>

Poem Assignments

Your poem assignments are listed below. Attached to this document are the texts of your poem and accompanying notes! You must rent or purchase the *Student’s Catullus* to aid in your research and translation. To the right of your poems, you will see the accepted standard translation from the [Loeb Classical Library](#). Make your translation a zippy version with modern allusions in colloquial English. Capture the sense and intent of Catullus’ poetry, but lend your own perspective and experience to it.

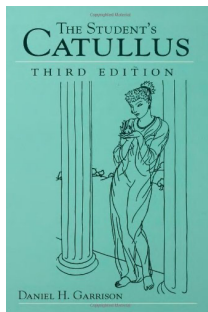
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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ◆ RJ Bernard, Poem 2 | ◆ Rory Lennon, Poem 36 |
| ◆ Vincent DeSomma, Poem 7 | ◆ Stephen Polityka, Poem 43 |
| ◆ Clara Desrocher, Poem 8 | ◆ Connor Polk, Poem 44 |
| ◆ Tyleyia Dunbar, Poem 12 | ◆ Maddie Smith, Poem 46 |
| ◆ Laila Jackson, Poem 13 | ◆ Dale Stenberg, Poem 72 |
| ◆ Christian Larson, Poem 35 | |

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Student-Teacher Contract

By signing this contract, I acknowledge that I am aware of the deadlines and requirements outlined in the syllabus for the Honors Latin IV Summer Assignment.



Summer Reading

Catullus, Gaius Valerius. Edited by Daniel H. Garrison. *The Student's Catullus*. 3rd edition. Vol. 5. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013: <https://a.co/d/8ntn7iL>.

Important Dates:

Signed Contract
Catullus Project

Fri., May 2
Mon., August 25

Submit to Canvas
Submit to Canvas

Print Name

Student Signature

Date

Student Name: RJ Bernard
Catullus, Poem 2

To Her Sparrow

Passer, deliciae meae puellae,
quicum ludere, quem in sinu tenere,
cui primum digitum dare appetenti
et acris solet incitare morsus,
cum desiderio meo nitenti
carum nescio quid lubet iocari,
et solaciolum sui doloris,
credo, ut tum gravis acquiescat ardor:
tecum ludere sicut ipsa possem.
et tristis animi levare curas!

...

tam gratum est mihi quam ferunt puellae
pernici aureolum fuisse malum,
quod zonam soluit diu ligatam.

II

5

SPARROW, my lady's pet, with whom she often plays whilst she holds you in her lap, or gives you her fingertip to peck and provokes you to bite sharply, whenever she, the bright-shining lady of my love, has a mind for some sweet pretty play, in hope, as I think, that when the sharper smart of love abates, she may find some small relief from her pain—ah, might I¹ but play with you as she does, and lighten the gloomy cares of my heart!

10

Meter: hendecasyllabics.

2. **quicum:** an old alternative for the ablative **quocum**.
5. **cum:** the conjunction (when) rather than the preposition (with).
7. The text of the poem becomes disturbed from about this point. It is unclear whether **solaciolum** is a subject or object because it lacks a verb. Quinn understands it as an extension of **carum nescio quid**. The diminutive **-olum** is colloquial, giving a sense of intimacy, as often in Catullus.

Student Name: Vincent DeSomma
Catullus, Poem 7

How Many Kisses

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
possint nec mala fascinare lingua.

5

10

VII

YOU ask how many kissings of you, Lesbia, are enough for me
and more than enough. As great as is the number of the Libyan
sand that lies on
silphium-bearing Cyrene, between the oracle of sultry Jove and the
sacred tomb of old Battus; or as many as are the stars, when night is
silent, that see the stolen loves of men,—to kiss you with so many
kisses, Lesbia, is enough and more than enough for your mad
Catullus; kisses, which neither curious eyes shall count up nor an
evil tongue bewitch.

Meter: hendecasyllabics.

3. **quam:** half of the correlative with *tam* (line 9); likewise with the *quam* on line 7.
9. **te:** Subject Accusative in Indirect Statement with *basiare*.
11. **quae:** “so that/to”
12. **possint:** subjunctive verb in a relative clause of purpose.

Student Name: Clara Desrocher
Catullus, Poem 8

Be Done With Her, Catullus

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; 5
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, 10
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? 15
Quis nunc te adibit? Cui videberis bella?
Quem nunc amabis? Cuius esse diceris?
Quem basiabis? Cui labella mordebis?
At tu, Catulle, destinatus obdura.

VIII

POOR Catullus, 'tis time you should cease your folly, and account as lost what you see is lost. Once the days shone bright on you, when you used to go so often where my mistress led, she who was loved by me as none will ever be loved. There and then were given us those joys, so many, so merry, which you desired nor did my lady not desire. Bright for you, truly, shone the days. Now she desires no more—no more should you desire, poor madman, nor follow her who flees, nor live in misery, but with resolved mind endure, be firm. Farewell, my mistress; now Catullus is firm; he will not seek you nor ask you against your will. But you will be sorry, when you are a nobody in favours asked for. Ah, poor wretch! what life is left for you? Who now will visit you? to whom will you seem fair? whom now will you love? by whose name will you be called? whom will you kiss? whose lips will you bite? But you, Catullus, be resolved and firm.

Meter: limping iambics.

- 3, 8. **fulsere** is the alternative form of pf. **fulserunt**.
4. **ventitabas**: iterative form of **veniebas** to emphasize the frequency with which Lesbia led Catullus around; Catullus has been a bit of a puppy, which must have been boring for Lesbia.
quo is the adverb: where, to what place, whither.
19. **destinare**: adverbial, from **destino**: determined, stubborn.

Student Name: Tyleyia Dunbar
Catullus, Poem 12

To a Napkin Thief

Marrucine Asini, manu sinistra
non belle uteris, in ioco atque vino:
tollis lintea neglegentiorum.
Hoc salsum esse putas? Fugit te, inepte:
quamvis sordida res et invenusta est. 5
Non credis mihi? Crede Pollioni
fratri, qui tua furta vel talento mutari velit;
est enim leporum differtus puer ac facetiarum.
Quare aut hendecasyllabos trecentos 10
exspecta, aut mihi lintheum remitte,
quod non me movet aestimatione,
verum est mnemosynum mei sodalis.
Nam sudaria Saetaba ex Hiberis
miserunt mihi muneri Fabullus 15
et Veranius; haec amem necesse est
ut Veraniolum meum et Fabullum.

XII

ASINIUS MARRUCINUS, you do not make a pretty use of your left hand when we are laughing and drinking; you take away the napkins of people who are off their guard. Do you think this is a good joke? You are mistaken, you silly fellow; it is ever so ill-bred, and in the worst taste. You don't believe me? believe your brother Pollio, who would be glad to have your thefts redeemed at the cost of a whole talent; for he is a boy who is brimful of all that is witty and amusing. So now either look out for three hundred hendecasyllables, or send me back my napkin—which does not concern me for what it is worth, but because it is a keepsake from my old friend; for Fabullus and Veranius sent me some Saetaban napkins as a present from Spain. How can I help being fond of these, as I am of my dear Veranius and Fabullus?

Meter: hendecasyllabics.

1. **Marrucine Asini:** vocative and backwards; his name was Asinius Marrucinus.
6. **Pollioni:** Dative.
7. **qui...velit:** “who would like your thefts to be exchanged even for a talent”.
12. **quod:** Accusative; antecedent is *lintheum* (line 11).
15. **muneri:** Dative of Purpose, “for a gift”
17. **Veraniolum:** diminutive.

Student Name: Laila Jackson
Catullus, Poem 13

Invitation

Cenabis bene, mi Fabulle, apud me
paucis, si tibi di favent, diebus —
si tecum attuleris bonam atque magnam
cenam, non sine candida puella
et vino et sale et omnibus cachinnis;
haec si, inquam, attuleris, venuste noster,
cenabis bene; nam tui Catulli
plenus sacculus est aranearum.
Sed contra accipies meros amores,
seu quid suavius elegantiusve est:
nam unguentum dabo, quod meae puellae
donarunt Veneres Cupidinesque;
quod tu cum olfacies, deos rogabis,
totum ut te faciant, Fabulle, nasum.

5

10

XIII

You shall have a good dinner at my house, Fabullus, in a few days, please the gods, if you bring with you a good dinner and plenty of it, not forgetting a pretty girl and wine and wit and all kinds of laughter. If, I say, you bring all this, my charming friend, you shall have a good dinner; for the purse of your Catullus is full of cobwebs. But on the other hand you shall have from me love's very essence, or what is sweeter or more delicious than love, if sweeter there be; for I will give you some perfume which the Venuses and Loves gave to my lady; and when you snuff its fragrance, you will pray the gods to make you, Fabullus, nothing but nose.

Meter: hendecasyllabics.

1. **apud me**, like French *chez moi*, is idiomatic: at my place.
2. **paucis ... diebus**: the vagueness of the invitation is part of the joke, as is the parenthetical qualification **si tibi di favent**.
5. **sale** plays on two meanings, salt and wit. Besides food, Fabullus will have to bring everything else that makes a dinner party successful.

Student Name: Christian Larson
Catullus, Poem 35

An Invitation to Caecilius

Poetae tenero, meo sodali,
velim Caecilio, papyre, dicas
Veronam veniat, Novi relinquens
Comi moenia Lariumque litus.
Nam quasdam volo cogitationes
amici accipiat sui meique.
Quare si sapiet viam vorabit,
quamvis candida milies puella
euntem revocet, manusque collo
ambas iniciens roget morari.
Quae nunc, si mihi vera nuntiantur,
ilium deperit impotente amore.
Nam quo tempore legit incohatam
Dindymi dominam, ex eo misellae
ignes interiorem edunt medullam.
Ignosco tibi, Sapphica puella
musa doctior; est enim venuste
Magna Caecilio incohata Mater.

XXXV

5 I ASK you, papyrus page, to tell the gentle poet, my friend
Caecilius, to come to Verona, leaving the walls of Novum Comum
and the shore of Larius: for I wish him to receive certain thoughts
of a friend of his and yours.¹ Wherefore if he is wise he will devour
the way with haste, though his fair lady should call him back a
thousand times, and throwing both her arms round his neck beg
10 him to delay. She now, if a true tale is brought to me, dotes on him
with passionate
love. For since she read the beginning of his "Lady of Dindymus,"
ever since then, poor girl, the fires have been wasting her inmost
marrow. I can feel for you, maiden more scholarly than the Sapphic
15 Muse; for Caecilius has indeed made a lovely beginning to his
"Magna Mater."

Meter: hendecasyllabics.

2. **velim ... dicas:** optative subjunctives of polite request: I should like you to tell.
3. **Veronam:** to Verona; the preposition is regularly omitted with names of cities.
14. **Dindymi dominam:** i.e., Cybele, the Asiatic goddess whose worship Catullus himself describes in poem 63: hence, no doubt, his particular interest. **eo:** sc. **tempore.**

Student Name: Rory Lennon
Catullus, Poem 36

A Book Fit For Burning

Annales Volusi, cacata carta,
votum solvite pro mea puella.
nam sanctae Veneri Cupidinique
vovit, si sibi restitutus essem
desissemque truces vibrare iambos, 5
electissima pessimi poetae
scripta tardipedi deo daturam
infelicibus ustulanda lignis.
et hoc pessima se puella vidit 10
iocose, lepide, vovere divis
nunc o caeruleo creata ponto,
quae sanctum Idalium Uriosque apertos
quaeque Ancona Cnidumque harundinosam
colis quaeque Amathunta quaeque Golgos
quaeque Durrachium, Hadriae tabernam 15
acceptum face redditumque votum,
si non illepidum neque invenustum est.
at vos interea venite in ignem,
pleni ruris et infacetiarum
annales Volusi, cacata carta 20

XXXVI

CHRONICLE of Volusius, shitty sheets, discharge a vow on behalf of my love; for she vowed to holy Venus and to Cupid that if I were restored to her love and ceased to dart fierce iambics, she would give to the lamb-footed god and choicest writings of the worst of poets, to be burnt with wood from some accursed tree: and my lady perceived that these were the “worst poems” that she was vowing to the merry gods in pleasant sport.¹ Now therefore, O thou whom the blue sea bare, who inhibitest holy Idalium and open Urii, who dwellest in Ancona and reedy Cnidus and in Amathus and in Golgi, and in Dyrhachium the meeting-place of all Hadria, record the vow as received and duly paid, so surely as it is not out of taste nor inelegant. But meanwhile, into the fire with you, you bundle of rusticity and clumsiness, chronicle of Volusius, shitty sheets!

Meter: hendecasyllabics.

1. **Volusi:** Genitive. Volusius was an epic poet;
cacata: 4th principal part of *caco*; modifies *carta*.
7. **daturam:** sc. *se* and *esse* for indirect statement set up by *vovit* (line 4).
8. **ustulanda:** “to be burned”; gerundive modifying *scripta* (line 7).
9. **se vovere:** Indirect Statement set up by *vidit*.
11. Beginning of a prayer to Venus.
12. **quae:** take with *colis* (line 14), “you who dwell/inhabit”.
- 12ff. *Idalium, Urii, Ancon, Cnidos, Amathus, Golgi, and Durrachium* were places sacred to Venus.
All are direct objects of *colis*;
apertos: with *Urios*;
harundinosam: with *Cnidum*;
Hadriae tabernam: in apposition with *Durrachium*, “the inn of the Adriatic Sea”.
16. **face:** imperative setting up indirect statement, “make it so *that...*”. Sc. *esse* with *acceptum* and *redditum*;
Subject Accusative of the indirect statement is *votum*.

Student Name: Stephen Polityka
Catullus, Poem 43

Mamurra's Ugly Girl Friend

Salve, nec minimo puella naso
nec bello pede nec nigris ocellis
nec longis digitis nec ore sicco
nec sane nimis elegante lingua,
decoctoris amica Formiani
tene provincia narrat esse bellam?
tecum Lesbia nostra comparatur?
o saeculum insapiens et infacetum!

5

XLIII

I GREET you, lady, you who neither have a tiny nose, nor a pretty foot, nor black eyes, nor long fingers, nor dry mouth, nor indeed a very refined tongue, you mistress of the bankrupt of Formiae. Is it you who are pretty, as the Province tells us? is it with you that our Lesbia is compared? Oh, this age! how tasteless and ill-bred it is!

Meter: hendecasyllabics.

- 1ff. several Ablatives of Description, e.g., *minimo naso*.
5. **decoctoris**: referring to Mamurra of Formiae, who was actually quite wealthy. Catullus calls him *decoctor* to emphasize his excessive spending habits.
6. **ten** = *tene* (*te* + *-ne*)

Student Name: Connor Polk
Catullus, Poem 44

Thanks to my Villa, None to Sestius

O funde noster, seu Sabine seu Tiburs
(nam te esse Tiburtem autumant, quibus non est
cordi Catullum laedere; at quibus cordi est,
quovis Sabinum pignore esse contendunt),
sed seu Sabine sive verius Tiburs, 5
fui libenter in tua suburbana
villa, malamque pectore expuli tussim,
non inmerenti quam mihi meus venter,
dum sumptuosas appeto, dedit, cenas.
Nam Sestianus dum volo esse conviva, 10
orationem in Antium petitozem
plenam veneni et pestilentiae legi.
Hie me gravedo frigida et frequens tussis
quassavit usque dum in tuum sinum fugi,
et me recuravi otioque et urtica. 15
Quare refectus maximas tibi grates
ago, meum quod non es ulta peccatum.
Nec deprecor iam, si nefaria scripta
Sesti recepsio, quin gravedinem et tussim
non mi, sed ipsi Sestio ferat frigus, 20
qui tunc vocat me, cum malum librum legi.

XLIV

MY farm, whether Sabine or Tiburtine (for those affirm that you are Tiburtine, who do not love to annoy Catullus, but those who do will wager anything that you are Sabine)—but at all events, whether you are Sabine or more rightly Tiburtine, I was glad to be in your retreat between town and country and to clear my chest of a nasty cough, which my greediness gave me (not undeservedly) whilst I was running after costly feasts. I wanted to go to dinner with Sestius, and so I read a speech of his against the candidate Antius, full of poison and plague. Thereupon a shivering chill and a constant cough shook me to pieces, till at last I fled to your bosom, and set myself right again by a diet of laziness and nettle broth. So now, having recovered, I return you my best thanks because you did not punish my error. And henceforth, if I ever again take in hand the abominable writings of Sestius, I freely consent that the chill shall bring catarrh and cough, not upon me, but upon Sestius himself, for only inviting me when I have read a nasty book.

Meter: limping iambs.

1. **Sabine, Tiburs:** vocative adjectives, Sabine or Tiburtine. Tibur (mod. Tivoli) was a fashionable address for summer homes; beyond it lay Sabine country, which was considered outside the pale and lacking in class. Catullus' place was in between, near the edge of town.
10. **Sestianus ... conviva:** a dinner guest of Sestius
11. **in Antium:** with **oratio**, **in** + acc. = against. **petitozem:** an office seeker, i.e., a candidate for election. Antius could be C Antius Restio, who proposed a sumptuary law that was passed soon after 78 B.C., restricting the freedom of officials to accept dinner invitations (which were seen as a corrupting influence).

Student Name: Maddie Smith
Catullus, Poem 46

Spring Travel

Iam ver egelidos refert tepores,
iam caeli furor aequinoctialis
iucundis Zephyri silescit aureis.
linquantur Phrygii, Catulle, campi
Nicaeaeque ager uber aestuosae:
ad claras Asiae volumus urbes.
iam mens praetrepidans avet vagari,
iam laeti studio pedes vigescunt.
o dulces comitum valete coetus,
longe quos simul a domo profectos
diversae varie viae reportant.

5

10

XLVI

Now spring brings back balmy warmth, now the sweet gales of
Zephyr are hushing the rage of the equinoctial sky. Deserted be the
Phrygian plains, Catullus, and the rich land of burning Nicaea: away
let us fly to the renowned cities of Asia. Now my soul flutters in
anticipation and yearns to stray; now my eager feet rejoice and grow
strong. Farewell, dear bands of fellow travellers, who started
together from your faraway home, and whom different ways from
different directions are bringing back again.

Meter: hendecasyllabics.

3. **aureis**: an archaic spelling of *auris*; probably the form Catullus used.
4. **linquantur**: Jussive subjunctive.
10. **longe**: with *profectos*.

Student Name: Dale Stenberg
Catullus, Poem 72

Rufus' Unlucky Rival

Dicebas quondam solum te nosse Catullum
Lesbia, nec prae me velle tenere Iovem.
dilexi tum te non tantum ut vulgus amicam,
sed pater ut gnatos diligit et generos.
nunc te cognovi: quare etsi impensius uror,
multo mi tamen es vilior et levior.
qui potis est, inquis? quod amantem iniuria talis
cogit amare magis, sed bene velle minus.

5

LXXII

You used once to say that Catullus was your only friend,
Lesbia, and that you would not prefer Jupiter himself to me. I
loved you then, not only as the common sort love a mistress, but as
a father loves his sons and sons-in-law. Now I know you; and
therefore, though I burn more ardently, yet you are in my sight
much less worthy and lighter. How can that be? you say. Because
such an injury as this drives a lover to be more of a lover, but less
of a friend.

Meter: elegiacs.

1. **nosse:** *novisse*.
6. **mi:** *mihi*.
7. **amantem:** "lover".