

OVID: CURES FOR LOVE (REMEDIA AMORIS)



Translated by A.S.Kline

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Contents

Part I: Words with Cupid, and The Task.....	4
Part II: Treat it Early: Fill Your Time with War or Law.....	7
Part III: You Can Also Farm, Hunt, or Travel	11
Part IV: But Forget Witchcraft!	14
Part V: Contemplate her Defects	16
Part VI: Now About Sex.....	19
Part VII: Have More Than One Lover	23
Part VIII: Be Cool With Her	25
Part IX: Or Sate Yourself With Her.....	27
Part X: Forget Her, and Don't Be Alone.....	29
Part XI: Now, Keep Away From Her.....	32
Part XII: Don't Weaken.....	35
Part XIII: Get Rid of all Reminders	37
Part XIV: Avoid the Arts	39
Part XV: Love your Rival.....	40
Part XVI: The Doctor's Last Advice	42

Part I: Words with Cupid, and The Task

Love, having read the name and title on this book,
said: 'It's war, you declare against me, I see, it's war'.
'Cupid, don't condemn your poet for a crime, who has so
often
raised the standard, you trusted him with, under your
command.

I'm not Diomede, by whom your mother was wounded,
she, carried back to the clear heavens on Mars's steeds.

Other young men often grow cool: I've always loved,
and if you ask me now, too, what I do, I love.

Indeed I've taught, as well, by what art you can be won,
and what was passion before, is now reason.

Sweet Boy, I've not betrayed you or my art,
and this new Muse unravels no prior work.

Let him rejoice in happiness, any eager man who loves
and delights in love: let him sail with the wind.

But any man who suffers badly from the power of a
worthless girl,

shouldn't die, if he understands the help that's in my art.

Why should any lover hang from a high beam,
a sad weight, with a knotted rope round his neck?

Why should anyone stab himself with cold steel?

Lover of Peace, you earn dislike for such hateful death.

Let him who'll die of wretched passion unless he quits it,
quit it: and you'll be the cause of no one's funeral.

And you're a boy: you're not fit for anything but play:
play then: a sweet dominion suits your years.

For you might have used naked arrows with which to war:
but your shafts are free of deadly blood.

Your stepfather Mars may fight with swords and sharp
spears,

and as a victor stride through the carnage:

you cultivate your mother's arts, which are safe to use,
through whose fault no parent's ever bereaved.

Make doors burst open to nocturnal fights,

and the entrance be buried in many fine garlands:

have young men and shy girls meet secretly,

and cheat watchful husbands by whatever art:

and now let the lover who's shut out, speak flatteringly,

and now curse the rigid doorpost, and, weeping, sing.

You, be content with these tears, with no guilt for death:

it's not fitting for your torch to plunge beneath greedy
pyres.'

So I spoke: golden Love moved his jewelled wings,

and said to me: 'Finish the work you planned.'

Come to my teaching, young men who've been deceived,
you whose love has utterly betrayed you.

Learn how to be cured, from him who taught you how to
love:

the one hand brings the wound and the relief.

The same earth nurtures healing herbs as harmful,

and the nettle's often near to the rose:

Achilles's spear that once wounded Telephus, his enemy,
also brought the cure for the wound.

But believe me, girls, I tell to you whatever I tell the men:

I grant weapons to either side:

and if any of it does not apply to your needs,

it can still teach you a great deal by example.

It's a good idea to quench fierce flames,
don't let your heart be slave to your failings.
Phyllis would have lived, if she'd used me as her master,
and gone the way she went, nine times, more often.
Dido, as she died, would not have watched the Trojan
ships,
from the summit of her tower, as they set sail:
nor would pain have armed Medea against her children,
taking vengeance on her husband by harming his offspring.
By using my art, Tereus, when Philomela charmed him,
would not have deserved to become a bird for his crime.
Give Pasiphae to me, then, surely, she'd lose her love for
the bull:
Give me Phaedra: Phaedra's shameful love will vanish.
Trust Paris to me, Menelaus would have Helen,
and Troy not conquered to fall at the hands of Greeks.
If impious Scylla could have read my books,
Nisus, the purple lock would cling to your head.
With me as leader, quench your ruinous sorrows:
let ship and crew sail true, with me as leader.
You read your Ovid then, when you learnt about love:
now the same Ovid's to be read by you.
The public champion, I lighten hearts constrained
by their masters: each of you, thank the rod that frees.
Phoebus, source of the power of medicine and song,
may your laurel help me, I beg of you, as I begin,
Yours is the nurturing of doctor and poet alike:
the protection of both falls to your care.

Part II: Treat it Early: Fill Your Time with War or Law

If you've regrets, and moderate emotions touch your heart,
then halt your feet, while you can, at the first threshold.
Crush the evil germs of sudden illness while they're young,
and prevent your horse's gallop at the start.
For time gives strength, time ripens tender grapes,
and creates healthy crops from what were shoots.
The tree that spreads wide shadows for passers-by,
was only a slip at first that had been planted:
then a hand could pluck it from the topsoil:
now by its growth it stands, in all its immense power.
Let your swift mind encompass what it is that you love,
and withdraw your neck from the collar that hurts you.
Halt its beginnings: it's too late for the doctor to be called,
when the illness has grown stronger through delay.
But hurry, don't put it off to a later time:
who's not ready today, will be less so tomorrow:
all love deceives, and gains nourishment by waiting:
every next day is the best for freedom.
You see few rivers flow from mighty fountains:
by many inflowing waters they're multiplied.
Myrrha, if you'd realised sooner what sins you'd begun,
you'd not have hidden your face with tree-bark.
I've seen a wound that could at first be healed
suffer harm through enduring long delays.
But since it charms us to cull the fruits of Venus,
we always say: 'the same could happen tomorrow.'
Meanwhile the secret flames creep into our heart,
and the baleful tree drives its roots deeper.

If the moment for early help's been lost, however,
and ancient love's settled in the captive breast,
the greater the work that remains: but because I've been
called

to the illness later, it won't be abandoned by me.

That bit of Philoctetes that was wounded

he should surely have cut off long ago:

they say that, having been healed, many years later

he dealt the last blow of the Trojan war.

I who rushed to drive off the nascent illness,

now calmly bring you late relief.

Either you try, if you can, to quench a fire at the start,

or when it dies down, through its own violence:

while passion's in full flow, give way to the rush of

passion:

all of us find approaching its onrush difficult.

He's a foolish swimmer, who fights against the stream,

when he could descend the current obliquely.

The impatient spirit, that's not yet tractable, rejects my art,

and is possessed by hatred for my words of advice.

Better for me to approach him now when he'll let me touch

the wound, and is more suited to words of truth.

Who'd stop a mother weeping, unless he's mad,

at her son's grave? That's not the place to admonish her.

When tears are over, and the sorrowful spirit's done,

then grief can be given expression in words.

Medicine requires the art of timing: given at the right time

wine may help, at the wrong time it may harm.

Indeed you may even inflame and provoke the disease

by denying it, if it's not applied at the proper moment.

So when you're ready for my medical arts,

first ban idleness, on my advice.

This encourages you to love, and protects the love it encourages:

it's the pleasurable source, and the evil nourishment.

If you take away idleness, Cupid's bow's unstrung,
his torch is dark and held to scorn.

As plane trees like wine, as poplar trees like water,
as muddy reeds like the marshy ground,
so Venus loves idleness: you who seek to end love,
love gives way to business: be busy, you'll be safe.

Languor and excess sleep that go unchallenged,
and gambling, and time lost to too much drink
take away all vigour, without damaging the heart:
insidious Love enters the unwary.

That Boy's accustomed to following idleness: he hates the
busy:

give your vacant mind work to occupy it.

There are the courts, the laws, the friends you might
defend:

make your way through the splendid camp of city togas.
Or admire the youthful service of blood-drenched Mars:
then you'll turn your back on your delights.

Behold, the fleeing Parthian, fresh cause of a great triumph,
he sees Caesar's weapons now in his own country:

Conquer both the arrows of Cupid and Parthia,
and bring back twin trophies to your native gods.

As soon as Venus was wounded by Diomedes's spear,
she ordered the war to be fought by her lover.

You ask what made Aegisthus an adulterer?

the reason's obvious: it was idleness.

Others fought the long battles with Troy:

Greece had sent over all her fighting men.
If he'd wanted acts of war, there were none to be had:
if the courts of law, Argos was free of quarrels.
He did what he could, he loved: better than doing nothing.
So the Boy comes, and so the Boy stays.

Part III: You Can Also Farm, Hunt, or Travel

Country matters too delight the spirit, and the study
of agriculture. Any care will give way to those cares.
Order tame bulls to bow beneath the collar,
to furrow the hard soil with the curving blade:
sow the seed for your harvest, in the earth you've ploughed,
seed that the field will return to you with interest.
See the branches bowed with the weight of apples,
so the tree hardly bears the weight it carries.
See the flowing streams with happy murmurs:
see the sheep grazing on the fertile grass.
Behold, the goats seek the rocks and steep boulders:
soon they'll bring back full udders for their kids:
The shepherd blows a melody on his reed pipes,
no lack of dogs for company, a watchful crowd.
Lowing sounds from another part of the high wood,
and a mother complains the loss of her calf.
Don't the swarm fly, when you smoke them out,
to take the honey from the arching hive?
Autumn gives its apples: summer is lovely with harvest:
spring offers flowers: winter's eased with fire.
The farmer picks ripe grapes at the right time,
and the juice flows under his bare feet.
At the right time he binds the cut grasses,
and sweeps the stubble soil with wide comb.
You yourself can plant seedlings in your watered gardens,
you yourself can guide gentle streams of water.
Grafting comes: make a branch adopt a branch,
and the tree stands there concealed by strange foliage.

When once the mind begins to enjoy these pleasures,
Vain Love departs on weakened wings.
Or you can cultivate the art of hunting: often Venus
retreated in shame from her conquering sister Phoebe.
Now hunt the headlong hare with keen-scented dog,
now spread your nets across the leafy hills,
or fright the quivering deer with motley scares,
or the boar's brought down, stabbed by your hostile spear.
Sleep at night, not desire for girls, welcomes the weary
man,
and the limbs will be restored by calm rest.
Easier work, but still work, is capturing birds
following the humble prize with net or lime,
or, what greedy fish might swallow with eager jaws,
hiding a curved hook under a little bait.
This pursuit or that, till you forget your passion,
you've got to secretly beguile yourself.
You only need to journey far, though strong chains
hold you back, and start to travel distant ways:
you'll cry, and your lost girl's name will oppose it,
and your feet will often stop you on the road:
but the less you wish to go, the more you should go:
endure it, and force unwilling feet to run.
Don't hope for rain, or a foreign Sabbath, to delay you,
nor the River Allia noted for its losses.
Don't ask how many miles you've done, and how many
there are left: nor feign delays so you can stay around:
Don't count the hours, or keep looking back at Rome,
but fly: the Parthian flying from the enemy's safe.
Some might call my advice hard: it's hard, I acknowledge:
but you have to endure a lot of pain to be well.

Often when sick, unwillingly, I've drunk bitter juices,
and denied all food to my pleadings.
To save your body, you'll endure fire and steel,
won't relieve your dry thirsting mouth with water:
to heal your mind, what would you not accept?
So that part is worth more than the body.
Still, the entrance to my art is very gloomy,
and the greatest task's to survive the first few hours.
You see how the collar at first chafes new bullocks,
and a new girth irritates a fast steed?
Perhaps you'll be sorry to leave your fathers' home:
but all the same you'll leave: then want to return:
not your father's home but love for your little friend,
will call you back, fine words excusing your crime.
When once you've gone, the countryside, your comrades,
the long road, give you a hundred solaces for your cares.
And don't think it's enough just to leave: stay away a
while,
till the ashes have lost their power with their flame.
because unless, in hurrying back, your mind is strong,
rebellious love will fight you with cruel weapons.
And however long you're away, you'll return hungry and
thirsty,
and the interval will have done you nothing but harm.

Part IV: But Forget Witchcraft!

If anyone thinks he can be helped by harmful herbs,
and magic arts, from Thessalian lands, that's his affair.
That's the old way of witchcraft: my Apollo
offers innocent aid with sacred song.
With me in charge no spirits will be ordered from their
graves,
no witch, with wicked spells, will split the ground:
no crops will skip from one field to another,
nor Phoebus's orb suddenly grow pale.
As usual, Tiber's waters will run down to the sea:
as usual, the Moon will ride on snow-white horses.
No pains will be charmed away to ease the heart,
conquering love won't be put to flight by burning sulphur.
What use, Medea, to you were herbs of Colchis,
when you desired to stay in your father's house?
Circe, what profit to you were Perse's magic plants
when his breeze took Ulysses's ships away?
You did everything that your cunning guest might not go:
Love settled deep in your unwilling heart.
You could change men into a thousand shapes,
you could not change the commands of your heart.
Indeed it's said that when he wished to leave
you stopped the lord of Ithaca with these words:
'I don't pray now for what I recall, that I used to hope for,
that you might wish to be my husband:
and yet I might be thought worthy of being your wife,
who am a goddess, daughter of the mighty Sun.
I beg you not to hurry: I ask a little time as a gift:

what less could I ask for in my prayers?

And you see the waves are high, and you ought to fear them:

later the wind will better suit your sails.

What reason have you for flight? No new Troy rises here, no one calls their allies to arms again.

Here are love and peace, where I alone am badly wounded, and the land will be safe in future under your rule.'

While this was spoken, Ulysses loosed his ships: carrying away her fruitless words on familiar sails.

Circe was inflamed, and turned to her usual arts, but love was still not lessened by them.

So whoever you are who call for help from my art, put no faith in witchcraft and incantations.

Part V: Contemplate her Defects

If some overriding reason keeps you in the City,
(that mistress!), accept my advice from the City.
He's his own best liberator who snaps the chains
that hurt his heart, and ends the grief forever.
But the man who's brave as that, I marvel at it, and him,
and say: 'He'll not act out my prophecies.'
It's you, who love, and can scarcely forget your loving,
that wish to, but can't, who must be taught by me.
Tell yourself often what your wicked girl has done,
and before your eyes place every hurt you've had.
'She's had this and that, but she's not satisfied with
plunder:
the greedy girl's given the household gods notice to quit.
She swore to me, and, having sworn so, deceived me,
lying stretched out so often at her door!
She prizes others, despises my love: ah,
a pedlar has nights with her, she won't give me!'
Let all this embitter your every feeling:
recall it, look here for the seeds of your dislike.
And I want you to be fluent in them as well!
Suffer enough: you'll be eloquent yourself.
Recently my affections clung to a certain girl:
she was not conducive to my spirit:
sick, Podalirius was cured by his own drugs,
and, I confess, I was a shamefully sick doctor.
It helped to continually dwell on my friend's faults,
and it often was the thing that made me better.
'How ugly,' I'd say 'my girl's legs are!'

and yet they weren't, if the truth be told.

'How little are my girl's arms beautiful!'

and yet they were, if the truth be told.

'How small she is!' she wasn't: 'How much she asks of a lover!'

That was the main cause of my dislike.

And the bad is neighbour to the good: in that confusion virtue often bears the guilt for vice.

As much as you can, disparage your girl's attractions, and let your judgement fall a little short.

Let her be called 'plump' if she's full-figured, 'black' if she's dark:

in slenderness there's the charge of being 'lean'.

And she can be called 'pert', who's not naive, and she can be called 'naive', if she's too honest.

Then too, whatever talents your woman lacks, promote those, with flattering words and prayers.

Demand the use of song, if the girl's bereft of voice: make her dance if she doesn't know how to move her hands.

Her speech is barbarous? Make her talk with you a lot: she hasn't learnt to sweep the chords? Ask for the lyre.

She walks awkwardly? Make her walk up and down:

Her chest's all breasts? Let no bindings hide the fault.

If her teeth are bad, relate what she'll laugh at:

Her eyes are sensitive? Report what makes her cry.

And appear suddenly, when she's applied no make-up to herself,

having hastened your steps to your lady in the dawn.

We're carried away by adornment: in gold and gems all's hidden: the least part of it's the girl herself.

You often ask where what you love is amongst it all:
rich Love deceives the eyes with all that armour.
Be there unexpectedly, safe, you catch her defenceless:
the poor girl's undone by her faults.
But it's still not safe to trust in this rule too much:
since true beauty without art beguiles many.
So approach your lady's presence (don't let modesty deter
you)
when she's smearing her cheeks with blended potions.
You'll find little pots and a thousand coloured things,
and dripping greases flowing, over her warm breasts.
Those cosmetics smell like your table, Phineus:
more than once they've made my stomach sick.

Part VI: Now About Sex

Now I'll speak openly, about what I should offer, regarding
your sexual practice: love must be wholly driven away.
There's much of this in fact that it's shameful for me to
say:

but with wit you'll understand more than my words.

For lately there's been a sort of slandering of my books,
of which the criticism is my Muse is insolent.

While I please in my way, while I'm sung throughout the
world,

those few can attack my work as much as they like.

Envy disparages the genius of mighty Homer:

because of it Zoilus the critic (who was he?) has a name.

And sacrilegious tongues have savaged your poem, Virgil,
you who led the conquered gods here, carried from Troy.

Envy seeks the summits: wind blows across the heights:
the lightning seeks the summits, flung from Jove's right
hand.

But you, whoever you are, whom my licence offends,
if you're wise, consider everything in context.

Manly warfare rejoices to be told in Homeric measure:
what place can there be in that for our delights?

Tragedians sound sublimely: rage suits the tragic heights:
from public life comedy's realised.

The frank iambic is unsheathed against our enemies,
either as swift-paced trimeter, or dragging its last foot.

Let smooth-tongued Elegy sing Cupids with their quivers,
and play the gentle mistress, as she decides.

Achilles is not spoken of in Callimachus's rhythms,

sweet Cydippe's not for your mouth Homer.
Who could stand Andromache's part performed by Thais?
Whoever acted Andromache in Thais's role would err.
Thais is in my art: liberated playfulness is mine:
I've nothing to do with wives: it's Thais in my art.
If my Muse corresponds to light-hearted matters, I've won,
and the case against the defendant's a false charge.
Gluttonous Envy, burst: my name's well known already:
it will be more so, if only my feet travel the road they've
started.
But you're in too much of a hurry: if I live you'll be more
than sorry:
many poems, in fact, are forming in my mind.
Now I'm happy, and my enthusiasm for fame grows with
my esteem:
my stallion's panting for the start of the climb.
It's acknowledged the elegy owes as much to me,
as the epic owes to famous Virgil.
So far I've answered Envy: tighten the reins
more resolutely, and ride your course out, poet.
So when you're headed for bed and youthful labour,
and the time of night she promised you is near,
lest your girl's charms, if you spend you whole self on her,
captivate you, I'd like you to do it as much as you want to
first.
Take as much as you want, where your initial pleasure can
end:
after the first the next will be much more sluggish.
Sex postponed is most welcome: sunlight's delighted
by the cold, shade by sun, water's welcome in a drought.
I speak but I'm ashamed: make love too in a position

that you think makes love least likely, and becoming.
It's not hard to do: few truthful girls confess even to
themselves
that there's nothing they think unbecoming to them.
Then too order all the windows to be opened,
and note her worst features in broad daylight.
As soon as pleasure's reached the finishing post,
and the spirit lies there exhausted, and the whole body,
while you're repenting, and you'd rather never have
touched
a girl, and you don't think you're going to touch one for
years,
then impress your mind with whatever's wrong with her
body,
and keep your eyes fixed all the time on those faults.
Perhaps someone might call these things trivial (as they are
too),
but what has no benefit on its own, is useful in numbers.
And a little viper may kill a vast bull with its bite:
the boar is often gripped by a not very large hound.
You should only fight in strength, and assemble
all my rules together: from many one large heap will be
made.
There are so many methods, so many positions
there's no need to give them, all in my opinion.
The action that won't offend your feelings,
to another's judgement will seem a crime.
One man who saw the sexual organs on a naked body,
brought his lovemaking, that was in progress, to a halt:
one, on his girl's rising from Love's affairs,
considered those shameful tokens, in the stained bed.

O, you're just playing at it, if those things bother you:
your heart is being breathed on by tepid flames.
Let that Boy draw the straining bow more strongly:
you'll look for greater help for a mass of wounds.
What about the man who hid secretly to observe a girl,
and saw indecent things that custom forbids us seeing?
The gods forbid that I advise anyone to do such things!
While they might help, they just aren't suitable.

Part VII: Have More Than One Lover

I also urge you to have two girls at once
(You're very brave if you could consider more):
When the heart's divided it goes in both directions,
and one love saps the power of the other.
Vast rivers are thinned out through many channels:
fierce flames die down when the fuel's removed.
One anchor's not enough to hold a well-waxed hull,
a single hook's not enough in clear water:
Who long ago arranged a double solace for himself,
long ago was victor on the highest summit.
But you, who were foolishly trusting of one mistress,
at least now a fresh love is to be contrived for you.
Minos quenched the fires of Pasiphae in Procris:
Cleopatra, Phineus's first wife, left, conquered by Idaea.
Callirhoe made Alcmaeon share her bed
lest he always love Alpheisiboea.
And Oenone would have held Paris, to the end of time,
if she'd not been harmed by Helen, her Spartan rival.
His wife Procne's beauty would have pleased Tereus:
but Philomela, her imprisoned sister, was more beautiful.
Why dwell on more examples, a crowd that tires me?
Every love's defeated by a fresh successor.
A mother loses one son of many more resolutely,
than one in tears who cries: 'You were my only son.'
But don't think I'm writing new rules for you
(and I wish these discoveries added to my glory!)
Agamemnon witnessed it (what did he not see, in fact,
he who was in command of all the Greeks?)

The conqueror loved Chryseis, captured in the war:
but her old father wept everywhere, foolishly.
Why weep, so annoyingly, old man? They suit each other
well:
you wound you daughter, tactlessly, with your attentions.
When Calchas, later, safe, under Achilles's protection,
ordered
she be returned, and she was received by her father's house,
Agamemnon said: 'There's one Briseis, close to her in
beauty,
and, if you allow for the first syllable, her name's the same:
If he's wise, Achilles will hand her over to me, in lieu:
if he doesn't, he'll experience my power.
If your actions show mine to be at fault in this, you Greeks,
there's something, a powerful sceptre, grasped in my hand.
For if I'm king, and no girl sleeps beside me, then it's right
that impudent Thersites take my kingship.'
He spoke, and had, from her, much solace for the first girl,
and love was laid aside, driven out by new love.
So, from Agamemnon's example, take up with new flames,
in order for your love to be distracted, in twin directions.
You ask, where you can find her? Read my works:
you'll soon possess a boatload of girls.

Part VIII: Be Cool With Her

But if my suggestions have value, if Apollo
through my mouth teaches all to mortal men,
though, unhappy man, you're roasting in the midst of Etna,
make it seem to your girl that you're chillier than ice:
and if you're grieving deeply, look happy, lest she see it,
and laugh, when tears come to you.

Not that I order you to break off in mid-sorrow:
my commands aren't as cruel as that.

Pretend to what is not, and that the passion's over,
so you'll become, in truth, what you are studying to be.
I've often wished to seem asleep, lest it seem I've been
drinking,
while I seemed so, I gave my conquered eyes to sleep:
I've laughed at one caught, who pretended to himself he
was in love,
hunting birds, but fallen into his own net.

Love penetrates the heart by habit, through habit it's
forgotten:

he who can imagine he's well, will be well.

She might ask you to come: go on the night agreed:
you've come, and the door is locked: well endure it.
Don't speak fawning words, or abuse the doorpost,
nor lay your body on the hard threshold.

The new day will dawn: lose your words of grievance,
and show no signs of suffering in your face.

She'll soon drop her disdain, when she sees your
indifference:

this too's a gift you'll gather from my art.

Still, deceive yourself as well, don't let there be a plan
to stop loving: the horse will often fight against the bit.
Conceal your advantage: what's not declared will be:
the bird avoids the net that's too apparent.
Don't let her be too pleased with herself, nor have the
power
to despise you: be brave, so she gives way to your bravery.
The door's wide open? Though you're called to, pass by.
There's a night agreed? Hesitate to go on the given night.
To be able to endure it's easy, when, if patience fails,
it's fine to take your enjoyment with easy girls.

Part IX: Or Sate Yourself With Her

And who can call my suggestions difficult?
Look, I even play the matchmaker's role.
For since hearts vary, let me vary my arts:
there are a thousand kinds of illness, a thousand kinds of
health.
Some people are barely relieved by sharp knives:
while herbs and juices are a help to many.
You're too weak, unable to go, tenderly bound,
and cruel Love presses your neck beneath his foot?
Stop struggling: let your sails be brought before the wind,
where the tide calls, let your oars travel too,
That thirst's to be quenched, by which you're desperately
parched:
I allow it: it's fine now to drink from mid-stream:
but drink even more than your heart demands,
make your throat overflow, full of the water you've taken.
Go, and enjoy your girl, any time, nothing's forbidden:
let her steal away your nights and days.
Seek loathing for your sickness: and let loathing end it.
Now, too, when you believe you could be free, stay on,
till you're quite overwhelmed, and abundance destroys
love,
and disgusted you've no pleasure in her house.
Love's also lasting when mistrust feeds it:
if you seek to relinquish it, relinquish fear.
He who fears lest she's not his, and someone's taken her
away,
he'll scarcely be made well with Machaon's help.

Generally a mother loves the one of her two sons best,
whose return she's fearful for, because he bears arms.

Part X: Forget Her, and Don't Be Alone

There's an ancient shrine by the Colline Gate:
Venus of high Eryx gives her name to the shrine:
Lethean Love lives there, who heals the heart,
and adds his torches to the chilly water.
and it's there the young men pray they might forget,
and the girls captivated by hard-hearted men.
He spoke to me in these words (I'm not sure if it was Cupid
truly, or a dream: but I think it was a dream):
'O you who now incite love, and now quell it,
add this one, Ovid, to your maxims too.
He who calls to mind his ills, kills love:
the god gives more or less of those to all.
Let him who fears the swift months, and the money-
lenders,
torment himself with the whole sum he's borrowed:
who has a hard-hearted father, though his other prayers
prosper,
let him have that hard-hearted father before his eyes:
This poor man living with an ill-dowered wife,
let him believe his wife has harmed his fate.
Have you, on a fine estate, fertile vineyards,
full of vines? Fear, lest the new-born grapes are scorched.
You have a ship returning: think of ever-hostile seas
and the losses littering the vile shore.
Let a soldier son, you, and you, a marriageable daughter
torment:
and who hasn't reason for a thousand sorrows?
So you could hate her, Paris, you should have kept

your brothers' deaths before your eyes.'
Still speaking, the boyish image departed
from my gentle sleep, if sleep it was.
What to do? Palinurus slips from the ship in mid-ocean:
I'm forced to sail on unknown ways.
You who love, beware lonely places, lonely places are
harmful!
Why flee? You can be safer in a crowd.
You don't need secrecy (secrecy nurtures passion):
in future it's the crowd that will assist you.
If you're alone, you'll be sad, and the form of the girl
you've left
will be there before your eyes, so like herself.
Because of that, night's sadder than the daylight:
your crowd of friends missing, who might ease the gloom.
Don't shun conversation, or let your door be closed,
don't hide your tearful face in the shadows.
Always have some Pylades, to support Orestes:
here too the benefit of friendship is not slight.
What but the lonely woods caused harm to Phyllis?
The cause of her death is certain: she had no friend.
She went as the Thracian Bacchae go, marking the festival,
a savage troop of women with streaming hair,
and now, wherever she could, gazed at the distant sea,
now threw herself down exhausted on sandy earth.
'Faithless Demophon!' She cried to the dumb waves,
and her words were spoken punctuated by sobs.
There was a narrow path darkened by long shadows,
by which she often took her way to the shore.
The poor girl traversed it nine times: and said: 'I'll show
him!'

and with pallid face looked up at the branches, and gazed
down at her belt: uncertain, shrinking from what she might
dare,

and from fear, and lifting her fingers to her neck.

Thracian girl, I wish you'd not been so alone then: the trees
might not have wept for Phyllis, by shedding their leaves.

Fear too much seclusion, with Phyllis as your example,
men who've been hurt by women, girls by men.

Part XI: Now, Keep Away From Her

One young man performed whatever my Muse
commanded: and his life was nearly safe:
he relapsed, he'd come among some passionate lovers,
and Love picked up the weapons he'd laid down.
If you love, but don't wish to, avoid making contact:
it's often accustomed to harm cattle too.
When eyes look at wounds they're also wounded,
and many things harm our bodies through infection.
Not infrequently into an arid place with parched soil,
water permeates from a stream flowing nearby:
Hidden love permeates, if you don't depart your lover:
and in this we're all an ingenious crowd.
Another man was already cured: being near harmed him:
he couldn't bear any meeting with his mistress.
The wound, poorly healed, reopened at the old scar,
and not one of my arts had the least success.
Houses are barely defended from a neighbouring fire:
it's best to keep away from places nearby.
Don't take your walks in the colonnade where she's
accustomed to: and don't adorn the same functions.
What pleasure for a tepid heart to be rekindled by memory?
If you can do, you should find another sphere.
It's not easy if you're hungry to hold back from a laid table,
and splashing water rouses a huge thirst.
It's not easy to restrain the bull that's seen the heifer,
the stallion always whinnies strongly when he sees the
mare.
When you've done all that, for you still to reach dry land,

it's not enough for you to leave the girl.
Say goodbye to mother, sister, and the nurse who's in the
know,
and whoever plays any part in your girl's life.
Don't let her slave come by, or her maid, with lying tears,
humbly saying: 'Greetings!' in their mistress's name.
And if you want to know what she's doing, still, don't ask:
endure! It will profit you to hold your tongue.
You too, who relate the reason why your love ended,
and make so many complaints against your mistress,
beware of it: it's better to revenge yourself by silence,
so she'll vanish from your longing.
And I'd rather you were silent than say that you've left off:
he who says: 'I'm not in love', too often, is.
But put faith more in love being extinguished slowly
than suddenly: slowly abandon it, you'll be safe.
The deluge may run higher than the settled river:
but all the same it won't last, while the other's permanent
water.
Let love fail, and, vanishing, dissolve into thin air,
and let it fade away in gentle stages.
But it's wrong to hate the girl you loved, in any way:
that conclusion suits uncivilised natures.
It's enough not to care: who ends his love by hating,
is either still in love, or finds it hard to leave off being
sorry.
Shame for a man and woman, once joined, now to be
enemies:
Appian Venus, near the Court, herself frowns on those
quarrels.
Often they're defendants, and still love: while no dispute

has really occurred, love's strayed without a warning.
By chance I took on one young client: a litter held the wife:
his every word was bristling with cruel threats.
Intending to have her bound over, then bailed, he said:
'she ought to step down': she did: seeing her he fell silent:
his hands dropped, his double-tablets (the security) with
them:
he fell into her embrace, and said: 'You win.'
It's safer, and more fitting, to separate, in peace,
and not search out the law-court from the bedroom.
Tell her to keep the gifts you gave her, without any ruling:
small losses are usually a major gain.
But if some chance brings you together again,
keep in mind all the weapons I've given you.
Now you need my weapons: here, brave man's a fight:
Penthesilea's to be conquered by your spear.
Now let your rivals come to mind, now the lover's hard
threshold
now the useless promises she made amongst the gods.
Don't comb your hair because you're going to meet her,
don't wear your toga free to catch her eye.
She's nothing, so please yourself, and care for other girls,
let her be just one of many, to you, now.

Part XII: Don't Weaken

But I'll tell you what specially obstructs our efforts,
and everyone can learn by his own example.

We give way slowly, because we hope to be loved:
since each is pleased with himself, we're a credulous
crowd.

And don't believe that words carry any weight,
(well what's more deceptive?) or the eternal gods.

And beware that girls' tears don't move you:
their eyes have been instructed how to cry.

Innumerable arts oppose a lover's willpower,
as the waves beat on the rocks from every side.

Don't let the cause be known why you prefer divorce:
don't say what grieves you: just grieve silently the while.

Don't recall her sins, lest she dilutes them: favour yourself,
so that your own cause is better than hers.

Who's silent is strong: who pours abuse on his girl,
is only accusing himself, for his own satisfaction.

I wouldn't dare steal Love's arrows like Ulysses,
nor, having snatched his torches, quench them in the
stream:

nor would I ever clip the Boy's bright wings,
nor by my art slacken his sacred bow.

It's wisdom, whatever I sing: heed the singing,
and you, health-giving Apollo, support my work: be here.

Apollo is here: to the sound of quiver and lyre:

I know the god by his emblems: Apollo's here.

Compare wool dyed in the bronze cauldrons of Sparta
with Tyrian purple: it will be less beautiful:

compare your girl too with all the beauties:
each man will start to be ashamed of his girl:
to Paris the other goddesses might have seemed lovely,
but, compared with those beside her, Venus won.
Don't just compare the face, but their characters and skills:
so long as love doesn't cloud your judgement.

Part XIII: Get Rid of all Reminders

It's a trifle, what I sing next: but many have benefited from that trifle: amongst whom I was one.

Don't re-read the letters you've kept from your sweet girl: re-reading letters shakes the steadfast heart.

Put them all in the fierce flames (you'll hate to do it), and say: 'Let this be the funeral pyre for my passion.'

Althaea's brand set Meleager, her absent son, on fire: will you give false words to the flames reluctantly?

And remove the wax images of her, if you can: why weaken

at dumb likenesses? Once Laodamia died because of that.

And often places hurt you: flee the places where you slept guiltily together: they're a cause of grief:

'Here she was, here she lay: we slept in this room: here she granted me playful delights at night.'

Remembering reopens love, the wound's newly re-opened: trifling errors damage the weak-minded.

Consider how, if you touch ashes that are almost dead with sulphur, they revive, and a tall flame comes from nothing.

So, if you don't avoid whatever reawakens love, the flames will light again that once were quenched.

The Greek ships must wish they'd fled Cape Caphereus, while you, old man, take revenge with the light of your fires.

With Scylla past, the careful sailor's happy:

you too beware places that were once too dear.

This is your quicksand of Syrtes: Acroceraunia's living
Cape:
here fatal Charybdis spews out the water she sucks in.

Part XIV: Avoid the Arts

There are things no one can command to order,
yet often by chance things happen that delight.
Let Phaedra lose her wealth, you'll spare Hippolytus,
Neptune,
the grandfather's bull won't scare the nephew's horses.
Pasiphae rendered poor, would have loved more wisely:
voluptuous love is nurtured by riches.
Why did no woman court Irus, no man court Hecale
because the one was a beggar, and the other poor.
Poverty has nothing with which it can feed its love:
still it's not worth wishing to be poor.
But there's value in not indulging in the theatre,
till love's truly vanished from your empty heart,
The zithers, and lutes and lyres unman you,
and the sound and waving limbs of the troupe.
There lovers' parts are danced, continually:
the actor, with art shows, what delights: and what you must
avoid.
I speak unwillingly now: don't touch the tender poets!
Disloyally I banish even my own gifts.
Shun Callimachus: he's no enemy of Love:
and as well as Callimachus, you Philetas do harm.
I'm certain Sappho made me sweeter on my lover,
and Anacreon's Muse gave out no rigid rules.
Who can have read your songs, in safety, Tibullus,
or you, Propertius, whose work was Cynthia alone?
Who could depart harshly from reading Gallus?
And I'm not sure some such doesn't sound in my songs too.

Part XV: Love your Rival

Unless Apollo, the patron of our work, deceives the poet,
rivalry's the greatest cause that troubles us:
so don't let yourself imagine any rival,
and best believe she lies in bed alone.

That's why Orestes loved Hermione the more,
because she'd started to become another man's.

Why grieve, Menelaus? You went wife-less to Crete,
and could do without your bride for all that while.

Not till Paris snatched her, did you miss your spouse:
through another's love your own increased.

And, in Briseis's abduction, it was this Achilles cried for,
the pleasure to Agamemnon of taking her.

Believe me he didn't cry in vain: the son of Atreus took
her,

who'd have been shamefully timid if he hadn't.

Certainly I'd have taken her, and I'm no wiser than him:
she was the greatest reward of envy.

For he swore by his sceptre Briseis was untouched,
but he did not think the sceptre was a god.

May the gods let you shun the door of the girl you left
behind,

and your feet be adequate to your resolve.

And you can: only have the will to hold on: go hard now,
now the task's to plunge your spur into your swift horse.

Imagine in that lair are Lotos-eaters, Sirens:
add your oars' effort now to your sails.

He also, who once grieved you with excessive rivalry,
I want you to stop thinking of him as an enemy.

Now, though you still hate him, you should certainly greet him:

as soon as you can kiss him you'll be cured.

Part XVI: The Doctor's Last Advice

Behold, there's still your diet, to complete all the doctor's duties,
I'll give you what to swallow and avoid.
Italian onions, or the ones they send you, from the shores of Libya,
or the ones that come from Megara, every one will do you harm.
It's no less fitting to avoid that lustful garden rocket,
and whatever readies these bodies of ours for making love.
Better to eat rue, which sharpens up the eyesight,
and whatever stops these bodies of ours from making love.
You ask what I teach about the gifts of Bacchus?
Expect to be enlightened, by my warnings, very briefly.
Wine prepares your heart for love, unless you take enough,
and your wits are stupefied, overcome by the neat juice.
By wind a fire is fed, by wind it is extinguished:
light breezes fan the flames, heavier gusts will kill them.
So don't drink at all, or drink so much your cares all vanish:
if it's anywhere between the two it's bound to do you harm.
This work is done: hang garlands on my weary prow:
I've reached the port for which my course was set.
Soon you'll say your holy prayers to the shrine of the poet,
men and women, healed by my song.

End of The Remedia Amoris

