

SATIRE 6

Although, Maccenas, of all Lydians who inhabit Etruria's lands* no one is of nobler birth than you, although your ancestors* on your mother's and father's side alike held power over mighty legions in days gone by, you do not follow most men's habit and turn your nose up at those of unknown birth, such as myself, a freedman's son*. When you say it makes no difference what kind of parent each man has, if only he's a gentleman* himself, you are rightly acknowledging that, before Tullius* held royal power from humble origins, many men descended from ancestors of no account often lived virtuous lives and were honoured with high office; but you also are conceding that Laevinus*, scion of the Valerius who drove the proud Tarquin from his throne into banishment, was never considered to be worth tuppence, and it was that judge you know so well, the people, that gave him a black mark*, that in its stupid way often bestows honours on the unworthy and is foolishly enslaved to renown, that gapes in admiration at titles of honour and ancestral busts*. What is the right course for *us* to take, who are far, far removed from the common herd?

For let's allow that the people would rather give office to a Laevinus than to an unheard-of Decius*, and that Appius the censor* would strike my name from the senatorial roll, if I was not the son of a free-born father—I couldn't object either, seeing that I hadn't kept quiet and stayed in my own hide*! But Glory* draws all in her train, bound to her gleaming chariot, unknowns no less than high-born. What did you gain, Tillius*, by assuming once more the stripe you had doffed and becoming a tribune? Envy batted on you again, which would have been less if you were not in office. For the moment anyone has so lost his wits that he binds the black leather thongs* halfway up his leg and lets the broad strip fall down his chest, straight away he hears: 'Who's this fellow? Who's his father?' It's just like someone suffering from the same disease as Barrus* and longing to be thought a beauty: everywhere he goes, he makes the girls eager to ask about details—what his features are like, his calves, his feet, his teeth, his hair: so the man who promises to care for his fellow citizens, for the city, for Italy and empire, for the shrines of the gods, compels every living Roman to take an interest and to ask who his father is, whether he carries the shame of an obscure mother: 'Have

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you, the son of a Syrus*, a Dama, a Dionysius, the effrontery to cast
citizens of Rome from the rock*, or to deliver them up to Cadmus*?
'But,' you reply, 'my colleague Novius* sits* one row behind me, as
he's what my father was.' 'Do you think this makes you a Paulus or*
a Messalla? But in this fellow's case, even supposing two hundred
wagons and three funerals should clash in the forum, he'll make a
noise to drown the horns and trumpets; this at least makes him claim
our attention.'

Now I return to myself, the son of a freedman, the man everyone
snipes at for being the son of a freedman, and these days for being
one of your associates, Maecenas, but in earlier days* for commanding
a Roman legion as tribune. The two cases are different, since it
might perhaps be justified for anyone to grudge me that office, but it
wouldn't be in the case of your friendship as well, especially as you
are careful to admit as friends only those who merit it and have no
interest in disreputable self-seeking. I couldn't say that luck played
a part in that an accident assigned me to you as a friend, for it was
in no sense chance that presented me to you: the excellent Virgil*
some time ago, and after him Varius, told you what kind of man I was.

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When I came before you, I uttered a few faltering words, for a shyness
that tied my tongue was keeping me from speaking further, and
I told you, not that I was the son of a famous father, not that I rode
round my estates on a Tarentine nag*, but the reality of my life. Your
response was brief, as is your habit: I took my leave; nine months later*
you called me back and invited me to join the circle of your friends.
I consider it a great thing that I found favour with you, who can distinguish
between a man of honour and one of none, not because of a
distinguished father but because of integrity of life and morals. Yet
if my nature is marred by faults that are not too serious or numerous
and is otherwise sound, as you might criticize moles scattered over
an admirable body, if no one will be justified in accusing me of greed
or meanness or frequenting disreputable brothels, if (to give myself
praise) I live my life with integrity and free from guilt, and have the
love of friends, this is all due to my father. A poor man he was, with a
meagre plot of land, but he didn't want to send me to Flavius' school*,
attended as it was by the imposing sons of imposing centurions, their
satchels and slates dangling over their left shoulders, and carrying
their eightpenny fee to be paid on each Ides*. No, he was brave

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enough to transport his young son to Rome, to receive instruction
in the same accomplishments as any knight or* senator would teach
offspring of his own. Had anyone seen the clothes I wore and the
slaves attending me, as was habitual in a populous city, he'd have supposed
those expenses were paid for me from an ancestral estate. My
father was there in person and served as a guardian beyond reproach
while I went the rounds of all my teachers. I need not expand: he
kept me uncorrupted, which is virtue's foremost grace, free not only
from every shameful action but from every shameful accusation as
well; and he wasn't afraid that sometime later a man might find fault
with him if I earned a paltry wage advertising auctions, or, like himself
, a commission from collecting the buyers' money; nor would
I have complained, but, as things stand, because of this I owe him the
greater praise and thanks.

In no way, as long as I'm in my right mind, could I be ashamed
of such a father, and so I wouldn't defend myself as a great number
do, saying that it's not through any fault of their own that they don't
have freeborn or famous parents. Both what I say and what I think
are far different from this: for if nature ordered us after we'd reached

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a certain age to retrace the span of time experienced, and if each of
us chose any other parents he might wish to have in keeping with
his pride, I would be satisfied with my own and decline to take parents
ennobled by the rods and chairs*⁴ of high office, a madman in the
judgement of the mob but rational enough, I suspect, in yours, for
not wanting to carry a troublesome burden my shoulders have never
been used to supporting.

For straight away I'd have to increase my means, to give and receive
more morning calls*, and, when I went to the country or abroad, I'd
have to take one or two companions, to avoid travelling on my own;
I'd have to maintain more grooms and nags, and take along wagons.
As things are, if it suits me, I may ride a gelded mule even as far
as Tarentum, his hindquarters galled by the saddlebag's weight, his
withers by the rider's. No one will accuse me of meanness the way
they do you, Tillius*, when you travel as praetor to Tibur with five
slaves in attendance carrying a chamber pot and wine-container. In
this way and a thousand others I live a more comfortable life than
you, renowned senator. I stroll out alone, wherever the fancy takes
me; I enquire as to the price of greens and meal; many a time as evening

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draws on I wander through the Circus*, where hucksters gather,
 and the Forum; I mingle with the fortune-tellers; then I make my
 way home to a dish of leeks* and chickpeas and fritters; my dinner 115
 is served by three slave-boys, and a white slab of marble supports
 two cups with a ladle; next to them stands an inexpensive cruet, and
 an oil-flask with its saucer, Campanian ware. Then I go off to sleep,
 untroubled by any thought of having to rise early the next day, or
 having to appear before Marsyas*, who declares he can't bear the 120
 sight of the younger Novius' face. I lie in bed until four hours
 after sunrise; after this I take a stroll, or, after reading or writing
 something for my own private pleasure, I have oil applied, though
 not the sort used by the filthy Natta*, stolen from lamps. But when I 125
 get tired and the sun, grown fiercer, has warned me to go to the baths,
 I shun the Field¹* and the game* of ball. I have a light lunch, as much
 as keeps me from having to last the day on an empty stomach, and
 then take my ease at home. This is the life of men who are not the
 prisoners of* wretched and oppressive ambition; in these ways I 130
 comfort myself with the thought that I'll live more agreeably than if
 my grandfather had been a quaestor*, and my father and his brother

likewise.

SATIRE 7

How the cross-breed Persius avenged himself on the foul and poisonous
Rupilius Rex*, outlawed from the state, is known, I fancy, to
everyone suffering* from poor vision and every barber. This Persius,
a man of wealth, had a very large business at Clazomenae* and was
also engaged in a troublesome lawsuit with Rex. A tough character
and capable of outdoing Rex in offensiveness, he was overbearing and
bombastic, with such an acid tongue that he could leave a Sisenna* or a
Barrus standing. I return to Rex. After the pair of them failed to come
to any terms (for great warriors* who clash in battle are as aggressive
as their bravery dictates; between Hector*, Priam's son, and the fiery
Achilles such a deadly anger existed that in the end death alone parted
them, and this was entirely because each man's valour was supreme:
should two cowards come to blows, or an ill-matched pair meet on the
battlefield, as Diomedes and Lydian Glaucus*, the one of fainter heart
quits the field, and sends gifts into the bargain), well, when Brutus*
was commanding as governor the rich province of Asia, Rupilius and
Persius locked horns, a pair every bit as well matched as Bacchius*

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and Bitho. With fire in their hearts, they sally forth to court, the pair
of them a sight to thrill the eye. Persius sets forth his case; laughter
breaks out from the entire assembly; he praises Brutus, he praises
his staff: he calls Brutus 'sun of Asia', and his suite 'health-bringing
constellations', all except Rex; he had come, he said, like the Dog-star*
hated by farmers. He was rushing on like a winter torrent* where the
woodman rarely takes his axe. That was when the scion of Praeneste*
in answer to this rich stream of wit hurled back insults* squeezed
from the vineyard, as tough and invincible as any vine-dresser who,
on hearing the wayfarer's loud cries of 'Cuckoo!', has often made him
take to his heels.

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But Persius the Greek* after his drenching in Italian vinegar cries
out, 'Tell me, Brutus, in the name of the mighty gods, why don't you
cut this Rex's throat, when regicide* is nothing new to you? The job is
right up your street, believe me.'

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SATIRE 8

Once I was a fig-tree's trunk, a useless piece of wood, when a carpenter
, unsure whether to make a pedestal of me or a Priapus*, chose that
I should be a god. A god, then, I became, causing complete terror
in thieves and birds; for thieves are kept in check by my right hand
and by the red stake* that protrudes indecently from my crotch; as
for annoying birds, the reed* attached to my head gives them a fright
and keeps them from landing in the new gardens*. Before now a slave
would pay to have the corpses of his fellows carried here in a cheap
coffin, once they'd been thrown out from their narrow cells; this was
the communal burial place appointed for Rome's wretched poor, for
Pantolabus* the scrounger and good-for-nothing Nomentanus*: here a
pillar prescribed for a frontage of a thousand feet and a depth of three
hundred: 'the monument* not to pass on to heirs.' These days* one may
inhabit an Esquiline that is healthy, and stroll on the sunny Mound*,
which of late presented the melancholy sight of ground disfigured by
bleaching bones; and as for myself, I'm not troubled and worried by
the thieves and beasts that haunt this place so much as I am by the

hags* who bend people's minds with their spells and deadly potions;
as soon as the wandering moon* has lifted up her lovely face, I can in
no way destroy these creatures or prevent them from gathering bones
and pernicious herbs.

With my own eyes I have seen Canidia* walking with black cloak
hitched up, her feet bare and hair let loose, and shrieking with the
elder Sagana*: their pallid skin had made the pair of them a ghastly
sight. They began to dig up the earth with their nails and to tear a
black lamb* to pieces with their teeth; all its blood was poured into
a ditch so they could entice spirits from there, ghosts that would
give them answers. One effigy* was made of wool, the other of wax:
the woollen one was bigger so as to gain control over the smaller by
inflicting punishment; the waxen one stood there in an attitude of
submission, as if about to suffer death as a slave would*. One hag called
on Hecate*, the other on savage Tisiphone*, you could see snakes* and
hell-hounds roaming about and the blushing Moon* hiding behind
the tall tombs so she could not witness these deeds. No, if I'm telling*
any lie here, may my head be spattered with white crows' droppings,
and may Julius, the softy Miss Pediatius, and the thief Voranus come

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to piss and shit on top of me.

What need* have I to tell of every detail, in what manner, as they
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with Sagana, the ghosts returned a melancholic, shrill sound,

how they stealthily buried in the ground a wolf's beard* and the fang

of a dappled snake, how the waxen image* made the fire blaze higher,

how I shuddered at the words and actions of the two Furies, though 45

in witnessing these I did not go without vengeance? For I farted* and

my fig-wood buttocks split with a crack as loud as the sound of a balloon

bursting: off they ran, those two, into town. Then you'd have*
laughed loud and long with merriment to see Canidia's false teeth and

Sagana's high wig falling off, and the herbs and enchanted love-knots 50

tumbling from their arms.

SATIRE 9

As chance would have it, I was walking along the Sacred Way*, in my usual fashion turning over in my mind something of no importance whatever, completely absorbed in this. Someone I know only by name comes running up and seizes me by the hand. 'How are you, dear old thing?' he says. 'Pretty well, for the time being,' I reply, 'and I wish you all the best.' When he continued to keep up with me, I got in first with 'Anything more I can do for you?' But he came back, 'You should get to know the man you see before you; I'm literary*.' To this I say, 'I'll value you the more for this.' Desperately trying to get away, I now increased my pace, then sometimes stopped, muttering something or other in my slave-boy's ear, while the sweat
10 dripped all the way down to my ankles. 'Bolanus*, how lucky you are in having a short temper,' I kept saying under my breath, as he gabbled away about whatever took his fancy, praising the streets and the city itself. When I was making him no reply, he said, 'You're desperately keen to get away; I've noticed this for quite a while now: but it's no
15 good; I'll hang on to you all the way; I'll stick close to you from here

to your destination.' 'There's no need for you to be taken out of your way: I want to visit someone you don't know: he's confined to bed a long way away from here across the Tiber, near Caesar's gardens*.' 'I've nothing to do and plenty of energy: I'll accompany you the whole way.' I let my poor ears droop, like a bad-tempered donkey when it
20 receives a load too heavy for its back.

'If I don't deceive myself,' he begins, 'you won't regard Viscus* or Varius* as more important friends: for who can* write more verses, or more quickly? Who can cut a trimmer figure dancing? My singing
25 would make even Hermogenes envious.' Here was a chance to interrupt: 'Do you have a mother* or relatives who depend on your continued health?' 'Not a single one: I've laid them all to rest.' 'How lucky for them! Now I'm the one left. Finish me off; for it advances upon me now, the gloomy fate the Sabine* woman foretold for me when a
30 boy, as she shook her divining urn:

'This youth* no deadly poison shall consign to death,
No foeman's sword in battle wielded rob of breath,
No racking pleurisy, nor halting gout, nor cough;
A chatterbox shall one day see him off.

So, if he's wise, then talkers he should shun,
 When once, his childhood o'er, mature years have begun.'

Vesta's temple* had been reached, with a quarter of the day already
 gone, and at that time* by chance he had to give answer to a plaintiff;
 failure to do this would mean forfeiting his case. 'Just oblige me,' he
 says, 'and lend me your support* here for a while.' 'Damn me if I have
 the strength to stand, or know the laws of the land,' say I, 'and I'm
 hurrying off to that place you know about.' 'I just don't know what to
 do,' comes his reply, 'whether to lose your company or my case.' 'Oh,
 my company, please!' 'I won't,' he replies, and starts forging ahead.
 As for yours truly, I follow on, since it's hard to do battle with one
 who's stronger.

'How do you get on with Maecenas*?' he resumes after this. 'There's
 a man with few friends and a very sound mind; no one has ever made
 shrewder use of his luck. You'd have an able assistant, one who could
 play a minor role, if you saw fit to introduce your acquaintance here;
 damn me if you wouldn't send all the rest of them packing!' 'The
 relations we live under there are not as *you* suppose them to be: no
 household is as unsullied as that one, or less accustomed to distasteful

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behaviour such as that; it is no disadvantage to me whatever that
 someone is richer than I or has more literary talent; each one of us
 has his own position.' 'That's extraordinary, scarcely to be believed.'
 'Well, that's the way things are.' 'You're fuelling my appetite for getting
 really close to him.' 'You need only wish it, and, such is your
 prowess, you'll take him by storm. What's more, he's the sort of man
 one can win over, which is why he makes initial approaches so difficult
 .' 'I won't sell myself short; I'll bribe his slaves; if I'm denied
 access today, I won't give up: "On mortals* nought doth life bestow,
 save through toil untold."'

As he was holding forth in this fashion, Aristius Fuscus* suddenly
 bumps into us, a close friend of mine and one who knew the fellow all
 too well. We stopped. He asked me my destination and told me his. I
 started plucking at his sleeve and clutching his arms, which showed
 no response whatsoever, nodding my head and rolling my eyes for
 him to come to my rescue. But he smiled, practising a cruel joke, and
 pretended not to notice; rage made my heart seethe. 'You definitely
 said there was something you wanted to discuss with me in private,'
 I said. 'I remember it well,' he replied, 'but I'll tell you about it at

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a better time: today's a thirtieth Sabbath*: you don't want to offend 70

bob-tailed Jews, surely?' 'I don't have any religious qualms*,' I replied.

'Well, *I* do,' said he; 'I'm a bit too weak-minded, one of the many;
forgive me, but I'll speak to you another time.' To think so black a day
could have dawned on me! Without compunction the creature fled,
leaving me at the mercy of the executioner's blade*.

By chance the fellow's legal opponent* came face to face with him
and shouted loudly, 'Where are you off' to? Have you no principles 75

at all?' Then, turning to me, he asked, 'May I call upon you as a* witness

?' At once I extended my ear* towards him. He marched his man

away to court. Shouting broke out on all sides; everywhere there was

running this way and that. In this way Apollo* saved me.

SATIRE 10

It's true I said* that Lucilius' verses ran along with unpolished rhythm.
Who is so indiscriminating a devotee of Lucilius as not to concede
this? And yet on the same page you will find praise for the same poet
for having given the city a good scouring with the rich salt of his wit.
But in granting him this merit I would not allow him all others as
5 well: for on this principle I'd admire Laberius' mimes* also as beautiful
poems. It's not sufficient, then, to make the listener grin from
ear to ear: yet even in this there is some merit: one needs to be succinct
, so that the thought may run on and not become entangled in
wordiness that weighs upon weary ears; and a style is needed that is
10 sometimes grave, often merry, maintaining the role now of orator or
poet, sometimes of the sophisticated person who deploys his powers
sparingly and deliberately underplays them. A jocular approach often
cuts through more forcefully and effectively than one that is earnest.
15 This is where those writers of Old Comedy* had success, this is where
they deserve to find imitators: they haven't been read either by the
pretty Hermogenes* or by that ape* whose training fits him to drone

only the lines of Calvus and Catullus*.

'But his blending* of Greek and Latin words was a considerable
achievement.' Ah, you late learners*! Is it really, do you think, a task of
amazing difficulty to do what Pitholeon* of Rhodes achieved by luck?
'But a style that happily combines both languages gives more pleasure
, as when the Falernian* brand is blended with Chian.'

Is this the case only when you write verse, I put the question to
25 you, or is it also true when you have to plead the lengthy and challenging
case of the defendant Petillius*? Do I take it you'd rather forget
fatherland and father, and while Pedius Publicola and Corvinus*
work up a sweat pleading their cases in Latin, you'd prefer to mingle
with your native vocabulary words imported from abroad, like the
Canusian* who speaks two languages? I, too, though born this side
30 of the sea, once took to writing little verses in Greek, but Quirinus*
appeared to me after midnight, when dreams are true, and in such
words ordered me to refrain: 'It is just as mad to carry timber to a
forest as to wish to swell the teeming ranks of the Greeks.' So while
35 the bombastic Alpman* slays Memnon and fashions a muddy head
for the Rhine, I amuse myself with these diversions, which aren't

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meant to echo in the temple in competition for Tarpa's verdict* or
to return to be seen again and again in the theatre. Fundanius*, you 40
alone of living poets can rattle off charming volumes that show the
cunning courtesan and Davus fooling old Chremes; Pollio* in triplete
beat sings of the deeds of kings; Varius* unequalled in spirit spins
the heroic epic; on Virgil* the Muses* whose delight is the countryside 45
have bestowed tenderness and charm. This was the kind of writing
I could perform more successfully, a form that Varro of Atax* and certain
others had attempted in vain, though I fell short of its inventor*;
and it would be sheer presumption on my part to snatch from him the
garland that clings with such distinction to his head.

But I did say that his style resembles a muddy stream*, often carrying 50
along more you would prefer to remove than to leave behind.
Come, I ask you as a man of literary taste, do you find nothing to
criticize in great Homer? Does Lucilius, engaging though he is, wish
to change nothing in Accius' tragedies*? Doesn't he laugh at Ennius*
verses when they fall short in dignity, while describing himself as 55
no greater than those he censures? What's to stop me also, as I read
Lucilius' work, from asking if it was his own nature or the unfavourable

conditions of his day that denied him verses more finished and
smoother in rhythm than a writer's who was content simply to round
off something in six feet per line*, and prided himself in having written 60
two hundred lines before dinner, and the same number after it,
just like Etruscan Cassius*, whose inspiration had more energy than
a river in spate and who, as we're told, was cremated on a pyre of his
own books and their cases. Granted, I say, that Lucilius was engaging 65
and urbane in his wit. Granted also that he had more refinement than
the author of unpolished verse untouched by the Greeks and more
than the crowd of older poets: but that man, had fate postponed his
life until this present day of ours, would smooth away much of his
work and prune everything that trailed beyond the right limit, often, 70
as he composed verse, scratching his head and gnawing his nails to
the quick.

Often must you use the eraser, if you're going to write what deserves
a second reading, and you musn't worry about being admired by the
crowd, but satisfy yourself with a few readers. Or are you mad enough
to prefer that your poems be dictated in worthless schools? That's 75
not for me: 'I am satisfied if the knights give me their applause,'

as the dauntless Arbuscula* said when she was booed off the stage,
showing contempt for the rest of her audience. Should I be worried
by that louse Pantilius* or tormented that Demetrius* does me down
behind my back, or that the foolish Fannius*, who sits at table with
Hermogenes Tigellius, stabs me in the back? I wish for my work to 80
have the approval of Plotius and Varius*, of Maecenas and Virgil, of
Valgius* and Octavius*, of Fuscus*, best of men, and how I wish for the
commendation of both Viscus brothers*! With no fear of flattery I can
mention you, Pollio, and you, Messalla, together with your brother; 85
also you, Bibulus and Servius*; along with these also yourself, honest
Furnius, and several others, men of literary taste and friends, whose
names I deliberately omit here; they are the men I should like to be
delighted by these compositions, such as they are, and it would upset
me if they gave less pleasure than I'd hoped. As for you, Demetrius, 90
and you, Tigellius, I bid you go and whine among the easy chairs of
your female students.

Off* you go, boy, and lose no time in adding these lines to this little
book of mine.

- 91–2 *Canusium* . . . *Diomedes*: modern Canosa, main city of Daunia in northern Apulia. The Greek hero settled in this region on finding his wife unfaithful when he returned from the Trojan War.
- 94 *Rubi*: another Apulian town, modern Ruvo, 29 miles beyond Canusium.
- 96 *Barium*: modern Bari, famous for its fishing industry.
- 97–8 *Gnatia* . . . *angry*: usually called Egnatia. H. probably means simply that the town had a poor water supply, rather than any more elaborate charter myth.
- 99–100 *tried* . . . *melts without fire*: evidently a local *thauma* or natural wonder.
- Apella the Jew*: the name may play on *a* (without) *pellis* (skin) to allude to circumcision. Jews are often cited in Roman literature as notoriously superstitious.
- 101–3 *I've learnt* . . . *mood*: Epicurean sentiments, with clear Lucretian echoes. The tranquillity and separateness of the gods, and hence their lack of positive or negative intervention in earthly affairs, was a central tenet of the philosophy, and Lucretius in *DRN* 6 devoted much space to explaining the natural causes of apparent wonders.
- 104 *Brundisium* . . . *journey*: a very abrupt ending, especially if the ultimate goal of the journey was not Brundisium but Tarentum. The semi-apologetic claim to length is clearly ironic, since this is the shortest satire in the collection so far, considerably shorter than Lucilius' must have been, and marked throughout by brevity and omissions. The parallelism of story and journey in this line reflects their wider parallelism, notably as both reflect the principles of satiric composition expounded in the previous poem.

SATIRE 1.6

A discussion of the importance of birth and ancestry in contemporary society, especially as it relates to an obsession with political ambition, leads into two parallel descriptions of H.'s relationships with his two 'fathers': his adoption and rebirth into the circle of Maecenas, and his upbringing and education overseen by his freedman father. The satire closes with a sketch of the simple, unambitious life which H. leads as a result.

- 1 *Lydians who inhabit Etruria's lands*: according to tradition, Etruria was colonized by settlers from Lydia in north-west Asia Minor.
- 3–4 *ancestors* . . . *legions*: an odd claim, not paralleled elsewhere, and the explanation that these are *Etruscan* legions seems a little forced.
- 6 *a freedman's son*: a much-debated autobiographical claim. Unlike freedmen themselves, their children had full citizen rights.
- 8 *gentleman*: nicely captures the double sense of *ingenuus*, literally 'free-born' but also metaphorically 'noble'.
- 9 *Tullius*: Servius Tullius, sixth king of Rome, traditionally the son of a slave-woman, and a classic example of the overcoming of humble origins.

- 12–13 *Laevinus* . . . *into banishment*: an unknown, but evidently decadent, member of the *gens Valeria* and hence a descendant of P. Valerius Poplicola, involved with Brutus, Collatinus, and others in the expulsion of Rome's last king, Tarquinius Superbus.
- 14–15 *black mark*: usually assigned by the censors to strip senators of their rank for conduct unbecoming, but here the people pre-emptively and metaphorically assign it by refusing to elect Laevinus.
- 17 *ancestral busts*: busts or masks of distinguished ancestors (*imagines*), displayed in aristocratic homes and at funerals as reminders of the family's glorious past. Such ancestry carried much weight in elections.
- 20 *Decius*: P. Decius Mus, a *novus homo* or first senator in his family, became consul in 340 BC and traditionally died while 'devoting' himself and the enemy to the gods below.
- 20–1 *Appius the censor*: Appius Claudius Pulcher, censor in 50 BC with L. Calpurnius Piso, and severe in his examination of the senatorial roll.
- 22 *my own hide*: probably an allusion to the fable of the ass in the lion's skin.
- 23–4 *Glory* . . . *high-born*: the personified Glory, like a Roman general in a triumphal procession, leads those she has conquered, who ironically are precisely those who aspire to be at the head of such a triumph.
- 24–5 *Tillius* . . . *tribune*: evidently a man of low birth who has lost his status as a senator (and hence the right to wear the 'stripe' or *latus clavus*), perhaps through expulsion by the censors, but who has regained it by being elected tribune of the plebs. L. Tillius Cimber was one of Caesar's assassins, but the identification with this figure is uncertain.
- 26–7 *binds the black leather thongs* . . . *chest*: distinctive senatorial dress: the four leather thongs attaching the shoe to the leg and, once more, the *latus clavus*.
- 30 *Barrus*: his disease is the desire to be thought a beauty, but his name ('Elephant') might suggest that his desire is unattainable as well as excessive.
- 38 *Syrus* . . . *Dionysius*: typical slave-names, often appearing in Roman comedy.
- 39 *the rock*: see note to *Sat.* 1.3.82–3.
- Cadmus*: a contemporary executioner, according to Porph., which suits the context.
- 40 *Novius*: also mentioned at 1.3.21, but here his name's implication of 'new man' is central.
- sits* . . . *he's what my father was*: the imagery is from the theatre, where the *lex Roscia* assigned different seats for senators, knights, and lower orders, but should not be taken too literally and refers more generally to social rank. The implication that Novius is a freedman (like the speaker's father) is probably an exaggeration, since they could not hold office at this time.
- 41–2 *a Paulus or a Messalla*: paradigmatically noble families, with perhaps a specific nod at the contemporary Paullus Aemilius Lepidus and Messalla Corvinus.

- 47–8 *but in earlier days . . . as tribune*: H. was a military tribune in Brutus' army at Philippi.
- 55 *Virgil . . . Varius*: see note on *Sat.* 1.5.40.
- 59 *a Tarentine nag*: Tarentum, in southern Italy, was a byword for wealth and luxury.
- 61 *nine months later*: H.'s initiation into the circle of Maecenas is depicted as a sort of rebirth after nine months' gestation, with Maecenas as a surrogate father.
- 72 *Flavius' school*: presumably the local school in H.'s home-town of Venusia.
- 75 *Ides*: the 13th or 15th, depending on the month.
- 76–8 *as any knight or senator would teach offspring of his own*: there were three stages to a typical Roman elite education: an elementary grounding with a *ludi magister*, literary and linguistic study with a *grammaticus*, then the art of rhetoric with a *rhetor*.
- 97 *rods and chairs*: the *fascēs* and the curule chair are symbols of the higher magistracies.
- 101 *morning calls*: elite Romans received regular morning visits (*salutationes*) from their clients and their peers as a means of asserting their status.
- 107–9 *Tillius . . . wine-container*: the earlier tribune is now a praetor, the second highest magistracy, and expected to have an impressive entourage carrying satirically mundane objects on a very short journey.
- 113–14 *Circus . . . Forum*: the Circus Maximus and the Forum Romanum.
- 114–18 *a dish of leeks . . . Campanian ware*: simple food, simply served, is a typical way to symbolize and exemplify a simple life; this motif recurs throughout *Satires* 2. The Campanian bronze- or earthenware contrasts with luxurious gold and silver tableware.
- 120 *Marsyas*: a satyr, whose statue was in the Forum, near the praetor's tribunal, where legal cases were heard. The statue is imagined as having to hear endless cases argued by Novius.
- 124 *Natta*: an unknown miser. H.'s insistence on good oil shows moderation in the simplicity of his lifestyle.
- 126 *the Field*: the Campus Martius, Rome's exercise and military training area.
the game of ball: *trigon* seems to have been a three-player catching game. For H.'s aversion to ball games, see note on *Sat.* 1.5.49.
- 129 *prisoners of . . . ambition*: avoiding the evils of ambition by staying out of politics is another Epicurean doctrine, frequently asserted by Lucretius.
- 131 *quaestor*: the lowest of the three magistracies on the *cursus honorum*, which made the holder a senator. The reference to this, rather than the praetorship or consulate, emphasizes the futility of ambition, since so many fail to progress beyond the first step.

SATIRE 1.7

The first of the three anecdotal satires describes, in mock-epic terms, a legal dispute between a Roman exile and a half-Greek businessman held before Brutus, when he was proconsul of the province of Asia in 43–42 BC. Its pervasive imagery of sharp blades, cut throats, and curtailed freedom of speech culminates in a pun on the Roman's name *Rex* and Brutus' assassination of the would-be 'King' Julius Caesar.

- 1–2 *Rupilius Rex*: apparently a former praetor from Praeneste, possibly mentioned in one of Cicero's letters. He was 'outlawed' (*proscriptus*) in 43 BC by the triumvirate of Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus, and seems to be in Asia as part of Brutus' entourage. That his name *Rex* also means 'king' will provide the satire's punch-line. Persius is otherwise unknown, but his Roman name and business activities in Greek-speaking Asia suggest parentage drawn from both areas, hence 'cross-breed'.
- 3 *suffering . . . barber*: barber-shops, often doubling as the pharmacists where ointment for conjunctivitis could be bought, were places of gossip and joke-telling. As ever in the *Satires*, mention of poor vision suggests a refusal to 'see' political realities, while the barbers' razors are the first of many sharp blades in this poem.
- 5 *Clazomenae*: city on the south coast of the gulf of Smyrna, on the west coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey).
- 8 *a Sisenna or a Barrus*: probably ad hoc types of practitioners of bitter invective. L. Cornelius Sisenna was a historian of the Social War and Sulla's dictatorship.
- 11 *great warriors*: as in 1.5.51–4, the slanging match is incongruously depicted in terms of an epic battle.
- 12 *Hector . . . Achilles*: Homer's *Iliad* describes Achilles' killing of Hector to avenge his friend Patroclus.
- 16–17 *Diomedes and Lydian Glaucus*: in *Iliad* 6, these warriors, a Greek and a Trojan ally, meet but do not fight because of the guest-friendship between their families. Famously and puzzlingly, Glaucus exchanges his gold armour, worth eleven times as much, for Diomedes' bronze; H. cynically interprets this as a bribe from the cowardly Glaucus to save his life.
- 18–19 *when Brutus . . . Asia*: in 43 and 42, though his control of the province was the result of conquest rather than constitutional procedure.
- 20 *Bacchius and Bitho*: gladiators; *par* ('pair') is a technical term for two matched gladiators.
- 25–6 *Dog-star*: Sirius, whose rising coincided with the blasting heat of late summer, is common in similes and in its own right as a symbol of destruction, but Persius wittily gives special point to likening Rupilius to it in the context of praising Brutus and the rest of the staff as beneficent astral bodies.

- 26–7 *like a winter torrent . . . axe*: river imagery is common for speech (cf. note on *Sat.* 1.1.57) but this simile has a (mock-) epic feel. The point of the axe is a little obscure, but Gowers ('Blind Eyes and Cut Throats') suggests an allusion to the executioner's axe which cut off the power of Republican free speech.
- 28 *scion of Praeneste*: Rupilius, stressing his Italian identity in contrast to Persius' florid Greek rhetoric.
- 29–31 *hurled back insults . . . heels*: H. neatly links the imagery of Rupilius' insults as being like Italian vinegar with that of the man himself as being the vine-dresser. The Elder Pliny notes that the cuckoo's call was used to criticize those who had not finished pruning their vines before the bird itself arrived.
- 32 *Greek . . . Italian vinegar*: the placing of the national terms in the same line points the ethnic dimension of the dispute. Vinegar is often used of sour wit or abuse.
- 34 *regicide*: the untranslatable Latin pun, lit. 'killing kings/people called Rex (*reges*)', makes the punch-line clearer than is possible in English.

SATIRE 1.8

The speaker is a statue of Priapus in the gardens of Maecenas on the Esquiline Hill, which has been civilized and transformed from its grisly past as a mass cemetery. Two witches, representing the dark forces of disorder and unreason, threaten this stability, but Priapus routs them, using not his traditional threat of rape with his enormous erection, but, symbolizing H.'s brand of satire, the less aggressive, more comic expedient of an enormous fart.

- 2 *Priapus*: a fertility god, originally from Lampsacus in the Hellespont, whose statues were regularly placed in gardens to act as scarecrows and as deterrent to thieves. There is a whole genre of poetry about or spoken by the divine statue, much of it collected in the so-called *Priapea*.
- 5 *red stake . . . crotch*: a brightly coloured erect phallus was the standard attribute of Priapus, reflecting both fertility and, as here, the threat of rape against thieves and intruders.
- 6 *reed*: to scare birds when it waves in the wind, suggesting the scarecrow is alive and dangerous.
- 7 *new gardens*: built by Maecenas on the Esquiline Hill.
- 11 *Pantolabus*: in Greek, 'one who takes everything'; apt for the *scurra* who lives off his patron in return for entertainment.
- Nomentanus*: see note on *Sat.* 1.1.101.
- 13 *'the monument not to pass on to heirs'*: a common inscription protecting a burial site from being sold by one's heirs and hence disturbed. There is a double irony in its use at a mass paupers' grave and in its being ignored by Maecenas, who built his gardens there anyway.
- 14 *These days*: a symbolic transformation from death to fertile rebirth in the new gardens, particularly significant in a time of civil war.

- 15 *Mound*: the *agger* strengthened the wall of Servius Tullius where it had to cross the low-lying area between the Porta Collina and Porta Esquilina.
- 19–20 *hags . . . potions*: Priapus' main enemy is revealed. Their magic, like much of that in the ancient world, seems to be love-charms, but symbolizes a more general force of disorder, irrationality, and destruction.
- 21 *wandering moon*: essential for gathering ingredients for spells, while the hint of personification suggests the identification of Diana with both the moon and the goddess of witchcraft, Hecate.
- 24 *Canidia*: this witch appears in several of H.'s *Epodes* and very briefly at the beginning and end of *Satires* 2. Some attempt to identify her, but she is clearly a type, though also a symbol of broader negative forces in Roman life. Her name evokes her grey hair (*canities*).
- 25 *Sagana*: another stock witch, who also assists Canidia in *Epode* 5, and whose name (despite the short first -a-) evokes *saga*, 'witch'.
- 27 *black lamb*: black animals were traditionally sacrificed to the gods of the Underworld. The use of teeth is partly a gruesome perversion of ritual, but also in accordance with the avoidance of iron tools in magic rites.
- 30 *One effigy . . . the other of wax*: representing Canidia and the lover she wishes to influence. The wax figure's potential to be moulded and melted fits the lover's role. Wool is often used in spells for binding the beloved, and seems to have been associated with female flesh (C. A. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), 51–3).
- 32 *as a slave would*: a hint of the 'slavery of love' embraced by Roman elegists, but here enforced by Canidia.
- 33 *Hecate*: see note on line 21 above.
- 34 *Tisiphone*: one of the three Furies, also associated with the Underworld.
- 34–5 *snakes and hell-hounds*: Tisiphone's hair and Hecate's entourage, respectively.
- blushing Moon*: a humorous interpretation of the moon's reddening, but perhaps hinting that the witches are causing an eclipse, one of their regular spells.
- 37–9 *No, if I'm telling . . . top of me*: a typical oath amusingly adapted to the speaking statue. The figures are unidentifiable (despite the scholiasts) but Julius is striking immediately after the mention of regicide in *Sat.* 1.7; the effeminate Pediatius (the Latin even uses the feminine form *Pediatia*) may suggest *pedicare*, 'I bugger'; and the thief's name may suggest his voracity. Inscriptions show that micturition and defecation on statues were real concerns.
- 40 *What need . . . manner*: the common technique of *praeteritio*, claiming to pass over what one describes anyway.
- 42 *wolf's beard . . . snake*: the aim of this magic ritual is unclear.
- 43–4 *the waxen image . . . higher*: as the image is held over the fire to melt it (and the lover), the drips kindle flames (and perhaps flames of passion).

- 46–7 *For I farted . . . bursting*: Priapus' fart is a comical but gentle alternative to his habitual threat of violent anal rape, symbolizing H.'s approach to satire, using humour rather than violent Lucilian invective.
- 48–50 *you'd have laughed . . . from their arms*: laughter is the appropriate response to Priapus' fart and H.'s gently comic satire, but it is still effective in dispelling the dark forces represented by the witches. The loss of false teeth and wig represent a typically satiric stripping away of appearances to reveal the sordid reality underneath, but, in combination with the loss of their magic apparatus, also marks satire's ability to disarm these negative forces.

SATIRE 1.9

H. narrates how, on a walk through Rome, he was accosted by a loquacious social climber who would not leave him alone and who was determined to use H. to enter the circle of Maecenas, about which he held numerous cynical misconceptions. After many failed attempts, H. is 'delivered' when the 'chatterbox' is hauled away by his opponent in a legal case.

- 1 *Sacred Way*: the *Via Sacra* linked the Velian Hill with the Forum Romanum.
- 7 *literary*: lit. 'learned' (*doctus*), particularly associated with Roman followers of the Alexandrian school of poetry, which valued scholarly knowledge of other poetry and the display of that knowledge in one's own.
- 11 *Bolanus*: unknown, but clearly a type of an angry man, who would give the chatterbox the short shrift he deserves.
- 18 *Caesar's gardens*: on the west bank of the Tiber, where Caesar entertained Cleopatra in 44 BC, and which he left to the Roman people.
- 22 *Viscus*: linked with Varius among H.'s ideal readers in *Sat.* 1.10 and among Nasidienus' guests in *Sat.* 2.8, but otherwise unknown.
- 23 *Varius*: see third note on *Sat.* 1.5.40.
- 23–5 *for who can . . . envious*: rapid composition links the chatterbox with shoddy writers like Lucilius and Crispinus condemned in *Sat.* 1.4, while Hermogenes Tigellius' singing is ridiculed in *Sat.* 1.3. Effeminate dancing, though not explicitly condemned in *Satires* 1, would fit well among its targets.
- 26–7 *Do you have a mother . . . health?*: perhaps either a threat of violence or a reference back to the danger of contagion from H.'s sick friend.
- 29 *Sabine*: ancient Italian people living north-east of Rome, whose women were famously raped by Romulus' Romans. The Latin *Sabella* could also refer to the Sabelli, or Oscan-speaking people of southern Italy.
- 31–4 *'This youth . . . begun'*: another mock-heroic touch, as the stylistically convincing prophecy mixes lofty, epic language with lower references to gout and, of course, the threat of the chatterbox. The dangers of excessive and unguarded speech are, however, a serious and pervasive theme of *Satires* 1.

- 35 *Vesta's temple*: at the eastern end of the Forum Romanum, and hence its entrance for those approaching by the *Via Sacra*.
- 36–7 *at that time . . . case*: evidently the chatterbox is the defendant in a civil case, on the terms H. describes.
- 38 *support*: the chatterbox importunately asks H. to be his informal legal adviser.
- 43 *'How do you get on with Maecenas?'*: the chatterbox here reveals his misconceptions about the nature of Maecenas' circle.
- 59–60 *"On mortals . . . untold"*: the moralizing platitude in the chatterbox's mouth is the more jarring since it refers to social climbing rather than any worthwhile enterprise.
- 61 *Aristius Fuscus*: the addressee of *Odes* 1.22 and *Ep.* 1.10; his being a writer of comedies might contribute to his depiction as a joker here.
- 69 *a thirtieth Sabbath*: whether an actual festival or, more probably, a fabrication as part of Fuscus' deliberately feeble excuse, it is not one he would be expected to observe, even if he showed more reverence to Judaism than in his crude allusion to circumcision.
- 70–1 *religious qualms*: H.'s Epicureanism is put to desperate use.
- 74 *executioner's blade*: the *culter* might suggest that H. is like a sacrificial animal, but the image of impending doom is the same.
- 75 *legal opponent*: although the chatterbox would have forfeited the case by failing to appear, presumably the plaintiff still wishes to see justice done and have his day in court.
- 76 *May I call upon you as a witness?*: a legal formula for requesting a witness to the arrest of a defendant who refused to respond to a summons.
- 77 *extended my ear*: the witness's ear, as the seat of memory, was formally touched by the plaintiff; H. proactively volunteers himself.
- 78 *Apollo*: a Latin translation of Lucilius' quotation (in Greek) of *Iliad* 20.443, presumably in a broadly comparable context. The refusal to quote Greek puts into practice the principles espoused in the next satire. The reference to Apollo has added wit, since it refers to the statue of Apollo in the Forum which, like that of Marsyas at *Sat.* 1.6.120, is associated with the legal cases it 'hears' argued near it (see especially Juvenal 1.129).

SATIRE 1.10

H. returns to the theory of satire and 'responds' to some alleged reactions to his criticisms of Lucilius in *Sat.* 1.4. He reflects further on Lucilius' use of Greek words as well as his speed and carelessness of composition. More generally, H. asserts the importance of careful revision and of aiming, not for mass appeal, but for the discerning approval of those whose opinion matters, before giving a list of his ideal readership. A brief coda ends the book.

- 1 *I said*: in *Sat.* 1.4. As in that poem itself, H. looks back at 'earlier' satires and the alleged reaction to them.

- 6 *Laberius' mimes*: Decimus Laberius (c.106–43 BC), along with Publilius Syrus, produced a literary form of the southern Italian genre of mime, but evidently not literary enough for H.
- 16 *Old Comedy*: see note on *Sat.* 1.4.1.
- 18 *Hermogenes*: see note on *Sat.* 1.3.129.
that ape: unclear whether a specific imitator of the neoterics (see next note) is alluded to; 'training' translates *doctus*, an ironic application of the neoteric ideal of learnedness.
- 19 *Calvus and Catullus*: friends and members of the so-called 'neoteric' school of late-Republican poetry, following Alexandrian aesthetic principles of polish and erudition. C. Licinius Calvus, whose work only survives in fragments, was probably best known for his short epic, *Io*.
- 20 '*But his blending . . . achievement*': the fragments of Lucilius do show considerable use of Greek words.
- 21 *late learners*: H. immediately puts his principle into practice, giving a Latin version of the Greek word *opsimatheis*.
- 22 *Pitholeon*: perhaps the same as the Pitholaus mentioned in Suetonius' life of Julius Caesar as attacking him with abusive poems and the M. Otacilius Pitholaus whose ridicule of a consul Caesar appointed for one day Macrobius preserves.
- 24 *Falernian . . . Chian*: famous Italian and Greek wines respectively.
- 26 *Petillius*: see note on *Sat.* 1.4.94.
- 28 *Pedius Publicola and Corvinus*: the latter is probably M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus, later patron of Tibullus and Ovid; Pedius cannot securely be identified but may be the brother of Messalla referred to at line 85 below.
- 30 *Canusian*: on Canusium, see note on *Sat.* 1.5.91–2. Ennius and Lucilius call the Bruttii of nearby Calabria *bilingui*, presumably speaking native Oscan and the Greek of the many colonies in Magna Graecia.
- 32 *Quirinus*: the deified Romulus and hence the quintessentially Roman god. His insistence that H. write in Latin is a variation on Apollo's appearance to Callimachus in prologue of his *Aetia* insisting that he write fine-honed poetry rather than epic, a scene much imitated by, among others, Virgil, Propertius, and Ovid.
- 36 *Alpman . . . Rhine*: probably the Furius whose description of the Alps is mocked at *Sat.* 2.5.39–41, and whose identification with Furius Bibaculus is much disputed. Whether this notorious line or his birthplace makes him Alpine is also uncertain. The death of Memnon, an Ethiopian king, son of the Dawn and ally of Troy, was the subject of the cyclical epic *Aethiopis* and presumably of another by Furius. As often, a poet is presented as doing what he describes, but with the added implication that Furius makes a mess of the poem, perhaps even by using the unpoetic word *iugulat*. The description of the Rhine probably came from Furius'

- epic on Caesar's Gallic campaign, but the muddy river again evokes Callimachean imagery for bad poetry.
- 38 *Tarpa's verdict*: according to one of Cicero's letters, Pompey appointed Sp. Maecius Tarpa to choose plays to be staged at his new theatre, and he hence represents official, public critical judgement.
- 42 *Fundanius*: only mentioned here and as the narrator of Nasidienus' dinner at *Sat.* 2.8, but, from the character names and plot situations, evidently a successful writer of New Comedy in the manner of Plautus and Terence.
- Pollio*: C. Asinius Pollio, distinguished historian, among other accomplishments, but celebrated here as a great tragedian, writing in iambic trimeters.
- 44 *Varius*: see note on *Sat.* 1.5.40. His mastery of epic is only attested elsewhere in *Odes* 1.6, unless *epos* is taken broadly as 'hexameter poetry', so including his *De morte*.
- 45 *Virgil*: at this date, author only of the pastoral *Eclogues*.
Muses: H.'s choice of *Camenae*—Italian goddesses whose name the first Latin poet, Livius Andronicus, used to translate Homer's *Mousa*, before Ennius naturalized it as *Musae*—is particularly appropriate in the context of celebrating Latin poets using the Latin language.
- 46 *Varro of Atax*: known for his *Bellum Sequanicum* on Caesar's Gallic wars, his Latin version of Apollonius' *Argonautica*, and other poems, but not otherwise of satires; presumably his attempts were so much in vain that they were never published.
- 48 *its inventor*: Lucilius.
- 50 *muddy stream*: referring back to *Sat.* 1.4.11.
- 53 *Accius' tragedies*: youngest of the three great Republican tragedians (170–c.86 BC) and a frequent target of Lucilius' hostile literary criticism.
- 54 *Ennius' verses*: 239–169 BC, writer of tragedies, comedies, and other genres, but probably targeted by Lucilius as author of the epic *Annales*, as at fr. 413 *ROL*.
- 59 *six feet per line*: i.e. a hexameter.
- 61–2 *Cassius . . . a river in spate*: an unknown poet, also criticized using river imagery.
- 77 *Arbuscula*: an actress mentioned in one of Cicero's letters. The parallel with H. is not entirely clear: the knights could represent a discerning elite or, if we take the singular *equitem* literally, perhaps even Maecenas. H.'s list of those whose opinion of his work he does and does not value alludes to Lucilius (fr. 635 *ROL*).
- 78 *Pantilius*: unknown, but the Greek etymology of his name suggests a critic who picks at everything.
- 79 *Demetrius*: also linked with Tigellius in line 90 below, but otherwise unknown.
- 80 *Fannius*: see note on *Sat.* 1.4.21.

- 81 *Plotius and Varius*: see second and third notes on *Sat.* 1.5.40.
 82 *Valgius*: C. Valgius Rufus, writer of elegies, addressed in *Odes* 2.9.
Octavius: Octavianus Musa, a historian.
 83 *Fuscus*: see note on *Sat.* 1.9.61.
 85 *both Viscus brothers*: see note on *Sat.* 1.9.22 for one Viscus. Of his brother even less is known.
 86 *Bibulus and Servius . . . Furnius*: uncertain, though a Bibulus fought for Brutus at Philippi, a Servius is mentioned by Ovid as a love poet, and Plutarch refers to an orator called Furnius.
 92 *Off . . . this little book of mine*: H. orders a slave to add this final satire to the other nine. That the collection is a 'little book' (*libellus*) fits with H.'s principles of Callimachean satire, but 'lose no time' (*citius*, lit. 'quickly') smacks of Lucilian haste.

SATIRES, BOOK 2

SATIRE 2.1

H. defends his decision to write satire in dialogue (the dominant form of this second book) with the lawyer Trebatius and in the face of alleged complaints about its abusive content. In the process, he justifies not writing epic in praise of Octavian and again invokes the model of Lucilius. This influential poem became the template for the so-called 'programmatic satire' imitated by Persius and Juvenal.

- 4 *Trebatius*: C. Trebatius Testa (c.84 BC–AD 4), distinguished lawyer and apt source of advice on the legality of H.'s satires. Many of his responses to H. are couched in legal language.
 11 *the deeds of unvanquished Caesar*: Trebatius suggests H. write a panegyric epic about Octavian.
 12–13 *my strength fails me*: Augustan poets frequently excuse themselves for not writing such an epic, disingenuously claiming they are incapable of it, a strategy known as *recusatio*.
 13–15 *columns of men . . . horse*: typical epic motifs, with a particular Roman colouring, as the Gauls recall Julius Caesar's campaigns and the Parthians (ruling an area roughly corresponding to modern Iraq and Iran) being Rome's continuing *bêtes noires*, against whom an expedition by Octavian was repeatedly mooted.
 17 *Lucilius . . . scion*: Trebatius suggests that, if H. cannot write epic, he could praise Octavian in satire, as Lucilius did his contemporary Scipio Aemilianus.
 18 *Flaccus*: a rare use of H.'s *cognomen*, sometimes thought to suggest poetic impotence by alluding to a limp penis. More probably its meaning 'droopy-eared' contrasts with the 'attentive' ear of Octavian.
 22 *'Pantolabus . . . Nomentanus'*: a quotation of *Sat.* 1.8.11, reflecting on H.'s satiric practice in *Satires* 1.

- 24 *Milonius*: a contemporary *scurra*, according to Porph., but this would be odd behaviour for one.
 26–7 *Castor . . . boxing*: Castor and Pollux were sons of Jupiter, disguised as a swan, and Leda, who hence bore them in an egg.
 28–9 *rounding off words in feet as Lucilius did*: i.e. writing verse satire in metrical feet.
 33 *votive tablet*: such as a survivor of shipwreck might dedicate to a god, depicting his sufferings.
 34–9 *Apulia's sons or the fiery men of Lucania*: H.'s home town of Venusia was on the border of these two regions in southern Italy. It was originally a Samnite settlement but was resettled as a Roman colony in 291 BC. H. identifies himself as a satirist with the warlike Italians rather than the colonists and proceeds to develop the parallel between satiric invective and martial violence.
 47–9 *Cervius . . . judge*: further parallels for H.'s threat of reprisal against his enemies, but also incidental targets of satire. None are known. Cervius' name suggests a timid deer, perhaps undercutting his reputation for anger; the urn is that in which jurors would place their votes. On Canidia, see note on *Sat.* 1.8.24. Albucius is probably the supplier rather than the victim of the poison, though both scholiasts take him to be Canidia's father. There was a judge called Turius in the 70s BC.
 52 *the wolf . . . the bull with his horns*: the first of many allusions to and uses of beast fable in this book.
 53 *Scaeva*: meaning 'Left-handed' and so punning with 'dutiful right hand'.
 62 *deadly chill*: 'a frosty reception' from his patrons, but following the concern for H.'s life there must be a suggestion of the chill of death.
 65 *Laelius*: C. Laelius (190–c.129 BC), close friend of Lucilius' 'high-placed friend' Scipio Aemilianus and hence analogous to Maecenas.
 65–6 *man . . . Carthage*: P. Scipio Aemilianus took the *agnomen* Africanus after sacking Carthage in 146 BC.
 67–8 *Metellus . . . Lupus*: Q. Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus (d. 115 BC), prominent general and statesman, enemy of Scipio, and target of Lucilius. L. Cornelius Lentulus Lupus (d. 125 BC) was likewise a prominent opponent of Scipio, whose death prompts a council of the gods to discuss the destruction of Rome in Lucilius 1.
 70 *Virtue*: Lucilius defines and praises *virtus* in one poem (fr. 1196–1208 ROL).
 74 *vegetables*: simple food, exemplifying a simple lifestyle, as in *Sat.* 1.6 and especially in the next satire.
 80–3 *be warned . . . bad verses against another*: there were defamation laws at Rome from the Twelve Tables onwards, but it is unclear how serious was the threat of prosecution for satire.