

SATIRE 1

There are some who think I hit too hard in my satire, and that I stretch my work beyond a legitimate point; the other half reckons all my writing is insipid, and that verses like mine can be spun a thousand a day. Trebatius*, give me advice on what to do. ‘You should take a rest.’ Not write verses at all, you mean? ‘Correct.’ Damn me utterly if that wouldn’t be the best course! But I can’t get to sleep. ‘Let those who need deep sleep oil themselves three times and swim across the Tiber; and, as night draws on, let them steep themselves in wine with no water in it. Or, if so strong a desire for writing has you in thrall, have the courage to tell of the deeds of unvanquished Caesar*, and many a reward you’ll win for your efforts.’ I have the desire, my excellent and worthy friend, but my strength fails me*: not anyone you like can portray columns of men* bristling with spears, or Gauls falling in death with spear heads shattered, or wounded Parthian sliding off his horse. ‘But you might take as your theme his justice and greatness of heart, as wise Lucilius* did of Scipio’s scion.’

I will not let myself down, when the moment presents itself; unless

the time is right, Flaccus* words will not find Caesar’s ear attentive, and should you flatter him clumsily, he’ll kick out all round to guard against trouble. ‘How much more sensible that would be than laying into ‘Pantolabus* the scrounger and good-for-nothing Nomentanus’ with verse that stings, making every man fear for himself, though not made a target, and hate you!’

What am I to do? Milonius* starts dancing once the heat has reached his wine-struck head and he sees twice as many lighted lamps; Castor* delights in horses, his brother, born from the same egg, in boxing; for every thousand living souls there are just as many fads: what gives me pleasure is rounding off words in feet as Lucilius did*, a better man than both of us. In earlier days he used to entrust his secrets to his books, as if to trusted friends, not turning to any other source at all, whether things went badly for him or well; and so it comes about that the old fellow’s entire life lies open to view, as if it were painted on a votive tablet*. This is the man I follow, unsure whether I hail from Lucania or Apulia, as the settlers of Venusia plough land close to the borders of each. To this region they were sent, so the old story goes, when the Samnites were driven out, so that no enemy might ever

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attack Romans through an open frontier, whether Apulia's sons or_ the fiery men of Lucania were hammering on the anvil of war. But this pen will never attack any living soul without provocation, and, like a sword sheathed in its scabbard, it will keep me safe; why should I try to draw it, while robbers' assaults can do me no harm? O Jupiter, father and king, I pray that this weapon be discarded and perish from rust, that no man may do me harm, as what I desire is peace! But the fellow who makes my temper rise (keep your hands right off, I'm warning you) shall be sorry for it, and become a marked man, his name on every citizen's lips.

Cervius_ threatens those who earn his anger with laws and the urn, Canidia her enemies with the poison of Albucius, Turius with 'big trouble', should you find yourself engaged in a lawsuit when he's a judge. How each man uses his own source of strength to frighten those he suspects, and how much this depends on all-powerful Nature's command, you must conclude with me from this: the wolf^* attacks with his teeth, the bull with his horns. From where did they receive this instruction if not from instinct? Put his long-lived mother in the care of spendthrift Scaeva*: no crime will his dutiful right hand

commit (not really surprising that the wolf attacks no one with a hoof or the ox with a fang!), yet dangerous hemlock in poisoned honey will carry the old lady off. Let me be brief: whether a peaceful old age awaits me or Death flits around me with her black wings, rich or poor, at Rome or in exile, should chance so determine, whatever hue my life takes on, I will be a writer.

'My poor lad, I'm afraid your life may be short, and that one of your high-placed friends may strike you down with a deadly chill*,' Really? When Lucilius first dared to write poetry of this kind and to strip off the skin in which each man strolled along, a splendid sight to all onlookers but rotten within, did Laelius_ take offence at his wit, or the man_ who took his well-deserved name from the conquering of Carthage, or were they hurt when Metellus_ was injured or Lupus was swamped by scurrilous verses? Yet he fastened on the leaders of the people, too, tribe by tribe, showing favour to Virtue_ alone, of course, and to her friends. What's more, when the gallant scion of Scipio and the wise and forbearing Laelius withdrew from the crowd, abandoning the public stage for a private place, it was customary for them to indulge in frivolity with Lucilius, and, changing their formal clothing,

SATIRE 2

What the virtue of frugal living is, and how great (and this is no talk
of mine but the teaching of the countryman Ofellus*, a man of selftaught
wisdom and rough learning) you should learn, my friends,
not at rich tables with lavish dishes, when the eye is spellbound by
senseless splendour and the mind, inclining to worthless attractions,
rejects what is of greater worth; no, here, before we take dinner, examine
the question together with me. ‘Why this subject?’ I will say, if
I can.

Every judge* who has accepted a bribe weighs truth badly. A man
who has been hunting the hare, or is worn out from failing to break
a horse—or if you’re used to playing the Greek and training for the
Roman army exhausts you, or you get exercise from the fast ball, when
passion for the game pleasantly beguiles the hard effort, or from the
discus, send that discus spinning through the yielding air—when work
has blunted the edge of your fussy tastes, and your throat is dry, your
stomach empty, *then* despise plain food, *then* drink only mulled wine
whose honey from Hymettus* has been mixed with Falernian*. The

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butler has gone out of doors, the sea is dark and stormy, protecting its
fish: bread and salt will be enough to pacify your growling stomach.

What is the cause of this, do you think, how does it come about? The
greatest pleasure* resides not in an expensive aroma but in yourself. So
make yourself sweat to earn your sauce; someone pale and overweight
from self-indulgence won’t be able to benefit from oysters or trout or
exotic grouse. And yet if a peacock is served up, I’ll not find it easy
to rob you of your desire to brush your palate with this rather than
with a chicken, seduced as you are by the outward show, since the bird
is rare and costs gold, and makes a fine show* with the palette of its
outspread tail; as if this had anything to do with the matter. You don’t
eat the feathers you so admire, do you? Is the bird such a fine sight
once it’s cooked? To think that you prefer the one to the other, taken
in by their different appearances, when in their meat there’s nothing
to tell them apart!

Very well: what leads you to suppose that this pike* with gaping jaws
was caught in the Tiber or out at sea, whether it was tossed about
between the bridges* or at the mouth of the Tuscan river*? Have you
taken leave of your senses, praising a three-pound mullet* that you

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have to cut up into single portions? The appearance is what attracts
35 you, I see; what, then, is the point of disliking lengthy pikes? It is,
of course, because Nature has given pikes size and mullets lightness of
weight. Only a stomach that rarely feels the pangs of hunger is scornful
of everyday sustenance. ‘What I’d like to see is a big fish stretched
40 out on a big dish,’ says the gullet worthy of the greedy Harpies*. Now
is the time for you to come in all your strength, you winds from the*
south, and make their side dishes inedible, even if their boar and fresh
turbot already give off a smell, as too much of a good thing troubles
the sick stomach, when, full up, it would rather have radishes and
tart pickles. Not yet has the poor man’s food been wholly banished
45 from the banquets of kings; for eggs, that cost little, and black olives
still have their place these days. It’s not so long ago that a sturgeon
brought disgrace on the table of Gallonius* the auctioneer. Was the
sea, we ask, less productive of turbot in those days? The turbot was
safe, and safe the stork’s nest, until you were taught to acquire this
50 taste by a praetor* who showed the way. So if anyone now proclaims
that roasted gulls* are delicacies, the young men of Rome, not slow to
learn bad habits, will fall into line.

In Ofellius’ judgement a mean style of living will differ from a
plain one; for it will be pointless* if you shun one fault only to embrace
another by going off at a tangent in your weakness. Avidienus*, who
55 quite rightly has the nickname ‘Dog’ attached to him, eats olives that
are five years old and cornel-berries from the forest, and he only opens
wine that has already gone off, while his oil has such a smell that you
couldn’t endure it; but even though he may be celebrating a wedding
60 or a birthday-feast or some other holiday in freshly cleaned toga,
he pours the rancid stuff on the cabbage with his own hands from a
two-gallon jar, and shows no stinginess when it comes to his aged
vinegar. What manner of lifestyle, then, will the wise man adopt, and
which of these two will he imitate? It’s just as the saying goes: a wolf*
65 attacks on one side, a dog on the other. He will show refinement to
the extent that he gives no offence through meanness, and his way
of living will not become wretched through following either direction
. He will not, like old Albucius*, show cruelty to his slaves while
assigning them tasks, or follow the example of unthinking Naevius*
in offering greasy water to his guests; this, too, constitutes a serious
faux pas.

Let me tell you now what advantages accompany plain living, and how considerable they are. First and foremost, there is good health: for you may believe the harm that a variety of dishes brings upon a man when you recall the simple food that pleased your stomach well enough in earlier days; but the moment you mix boiled and roasted, or shellfish and thrushes, sweetness will turn to bile*, and thick phlegm will play havoc with your stomach. Do you see how pale each guest is as he rises from a 'What should I choose' dinner? What's more, the body, weighed down by the previous day's excesses, drags down with it the mind as well, and nails* to the earth a portion of the divine spirit. The other man, after surrendering his body to sleep sooner than you can say, his appetite unsatisfied, rises up with vigour to carry out his appointed tasks.

But there will be times when he can turn his attention to better entertainment, whether the year's cycle brings round a holiday* or he wishes to put some vigour back into his shrunken body, and when the years mount up, and feeble old age wishes to be treated with more indulgence: but in your case, if ill health strikes or debilitating old age, what on earth will be added to that indulgence you enjoy prematurely while young and strong? Our forefathers* used to praise boar

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that was rank, not because they had no sense of smell, but with this thought, I imagine, that, should a guest arrive a bit late, it would be more appropriate for him to eat it tainted than for the master to eat it up greedily when it was fresh. Oh, if only the earth in its earliest years had given me birth to live among these heroes!

You set some store by a fine reputation, which, more welcome than song, charms the ear of man: big turbot on big dishes bring big disgrace, not just heavy expense: add to the mixture an angry uncle*, angry neighbours, and your own hostility to yourself, cheated of your longing to die, when you're so hard up you can't afford the penny to buy a rope to hang yourself. 'It's fair enough to scold Trausius* in such terms,' comes the reply, 'but *I* have large revenues and wealth enough to please three kings.' Is there, then*, nothing better for you to spend this surplus on? Why does anyone undeservedly suffer from poverty, while you are rich? Why are the ancient temples of the gods collapsing? Why, you selfish creature, don't you measure out something for your beloved country from that great heap? You alone*, of course, will always enjoy the prosperous life. What a laughing stock you will be to your enemies in days to come! Which of these two

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will rely on himself with more confidence when chance blows hot and cold? The one who has made his scornful mind and body accustomed to excess, or the one who, happy with little and fearful of the future, has in time of peace, like a wise man, prepared what is required in war?

To make you put more trust in these words of mine, I know, from the time I was a small boy, that this Ofellus* made no greater use of his means when untouched than he does of them now that they have been pruned back. You could see him on his plot* of land after the surveyors had done their work, a sturdy tenant-farmer* with his cattle and his sons, giving this account*: ‘On a working day it wasn’t my way to eat, without good reason, anything more than greens with a foot of smoked ham. And if ever, after a long interval, a guest came to see me, or, when rainy weather had given me a respite from work, a neighbour appeared as a welcome companion at table, we had a good time of it, not with fish* fetched from town, but with a chicken and a kid; then our second course was set off by hung-dried grapes, nuts and split figs. Next we’d play a game of serious drinking, with a forfeit* to rule our feast, and, once we’d made our prayers to Ceres*, “so might she

rise on lofty stalk”, she smoothed away with wine the worries of a frowning brow.

‘Let Fortune* rage and stir up fresh turmoil, how much will she take away from these pleasures? How much less prosperous, my sons, have you or I looked since this new settler came here! For Nature hasn’t established him or me or anyone else as owner of his own land: he has driven us out, and he in turn* will be driven out by his own uselessness or ignorance of the law’s quirky ways, or finally at any rate by an heir with time on his side. For the moment the land goes under Umbrenus’ name*, not long ago it was called Ofellus’, and no one will own it for good but instead it will pass now into my use, now into another man’s. And so live on with courage, and with courage in your hearts stand up to fate’s buffetings.’

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SATIRE 3

‘You write* so infrequently that in a whole year you don’t call for parchment,
unweaving the web of all your writing and angry with yourself
for being generous with wine and sleep but writing no poetry worth a
mention. What will come of this? But just when the Saturnalia* came
along, you say, you fled here for refuge. Well then, sober as you are,
give us some poetry worthy of your promises: begin. Not a jot: in vain
you blame your pen, and the poor undeserving wall, that was born
when the gods and poets were angry, suffers from your poundings.
And yet you had the look of one who threatened to produce no shortage
of brilliant material, once you had some free time and had found
welcome under the warm shelter of your little country house*. So what
was the point of packing Plato* with Menander, and of taking out of
the city Eupolis and Archilochus, such impressive companions? Do
you mean to appease envy by abandoning your own excellence? You’ll
be treated with contempt, poor fellow; you must turn your back on
that shameless Siren, laziness, or resign with equanimity all that
you’ve achieved in a more fruitful time of life.’

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Ah, Damasippus*, for this true counsel may the gods and goddesses
bestow on you—a barber*! But how come you know me so well? ‘Ever
since all my fortunes foundered at the central Janus*, I’ve been looking
after other people’s business affairs, now I’ve been flung over-board
and lost my own. There was a time, you see, when I used to
love trying to find out in what bronze piece cunning old Sisyphus* had
washed his feet, which work had been unskilfully carved, which cast
too rigidly; having an expert’s eye, I would value this or that statue
at a hundred thousand; when it came to gardens and fine houses,
I was unique in knowing how to do business profitably; this gave rise
to the crowds at street corners giving me the nickname “Mercury’s*
pal”.’ I know, and it amazes me you’ve been cleared of that disease.
‘But what’s really amazing is the way a new disease has displaced the
old, as normally happens when the pain of an aching side or head has
transferred itself to the stomach; it’s like when your lethargic man
turns into a boxer and starts punching his doctor.’ As long as you
don’t do anything like that, let it be as you please. ‘My good friend,
don’t deceive yourself; you are mad, and so are virtually all stupid
people, if there’s any truth in Stertinius*’ loud pronouncements.

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‘I myself’ took a note of these wonderful lessons from him in my eagerness to learn, at the time when by way of consolation he told me to cultivate a philosopher’s beard and retrace my steps from the Fabrician bridge*, no longer sad. For when my business had failed and I’d covered my head in preparation for throwing myself into the river, he stood at my right hand and said, “Mind you don’t do anything unworthy of yourself; what’s torturing you is a false sense of shame, since you’re afraid to be thought mad among madmen. Now, let me start by examining the question what it is to be mad: if this quality is found in you alone, I’ll add not one word more to stop you dying* bravely. Every man who is driven blindly on by perverse folly and ignorance of the truth Chrysippus’ portico* and flock maintain is mad. This is a general rule that applies to the masses and to mighty kings alike, with only the wise man as an exception.

“Now let me tell you the reason why all men who have labelled you mad are just as crazy as you. Just as in a forest, when some mistake drives men from the proper path, so they wander off this way and that, one going off to the left, another to the right, both of them victims of a single error but led astray in different directions; so you

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must only to this extent believe you are mad, that the one who laughs at you has a tail dragging behind him*, and is not a jot the wiser man. One class* of folly is when a man fears things that give no cause at all for fear, so that he complains that his way across an open plain is blocked by fire, by precipices, by rivers; the other type, diverging from this but none the wiser, would show a man rushing through fires and rivers right in his path. Though his dear mother, respected sister, father, wife, relatives may shout, ‘There’s a huge ditch here, there’s an enormous precipice, watch out!’ he’ll hear no more than drunken* Fufius did once, when he slept through the role of Iliona and twelve hundred Catienses were shouting, ‘Mother, I implore you!’

“I shall now demonstrate that the whole crowd suffers from a madness that resembles this derangement. Damasippus’ madness consists in buying up old statues. Damasippus’ creditor is sound of mind. Fair enough! Suppose I say to you, ‘Take this loan which you needn’t ever pay me back,’ will you be mad to accept it? Or are you more out of your wits to reject the profit that propitious Mercury offers? Make a record of ten thousand sesterces paid out on loan through Nerius*, the security isn’t sufficient: add a hundred bonds of

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the cunning Cicuta, add a thousand fetters: the blasted crook will still escape these chains, a regular Proteus*. Drag him to court and he'll be laughing with other men's jaws, then he'll turn himself into a boar, sometimes a bird, sometimes a rock, and, when he wants, a tree. If a man's madness appears in managing his affairs badly, and his sanity, by contrast, in managing them well, then, believe me, Perellius' brain* is much more addled, when he dictates that you are at liberty never to pay back.

“Now I invite to listen and arrange his toga anyone who is pale from sordid ambition or from love of silver, or who is feverish with the desire for gratification or depressing superstition, or any other disease of the mind; come closer to me here in due order, while I demonstrate that you are all mad.

“Lovers of wealth must be given by far the largest dose of hellebore*, and I'm inclined to think Reason would administer all of Anticyra to them. The heirs of Staberius* engraved on his tomb the total sum he had bequeathed, as, if they hadn't done so, they would have been legally bound to provide for the people's entertainment a hundred pairs of gladiators and a public feast that would satisfy

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an Arrius*, together with as much corn as Africa's harvest* yields. 'Whether this wish of mine is right or wrong, don't play the uncle* with me': this, in my view, is what Staberius in his wisdom foresaw. 'Well, what did he mean by requiring his heirs to engrave the total sum of his legacy on the stone?' For as long as he lived, he believed poverty was a massive fault and there was nothing he guarded against more keenly, so that, if he had happened to die less rich by a single farthing, he would think himself so much the more worthless a man: you see, everything, virtue, a good name, beauty, things human and divine give way to the loveliness of wealth; the man who has amassed this will be famous, brave and just. 'And will he be wise?' Yes, that too; he will also be a king*, and all that he wishes to be. He expected that great renown would come to him from this wealth, as if he had won it through merit.

“Did the Greek Aristippus* do anything like him? He was the man who in the middle of Libya told his slaves to throw away gold, on the ground that they were making too slow progress, weighed down by their load. Which of these two is madder? There's nothing to be said for an example that seeks to solve one puzzle by means of

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another.

““Should a man purchase lyres and then, once bought, stock them together when he feels no interest in the lyre or any Muse, should he do likewise with cutting tools and lasts, though not a cobbler*, or with ships’ sails when he strongly dislikes the life of a trader; everyone would describe him as a raving lunatic, and with good reason. Now, if a man hides away his cash and gold, not knowing how to use his store and fearing to touch it as if it were sacred, how does he differ from these others? Should a man lie outstretched beside a huge heap of corn, keeping constant watch over it with a long stick, without ever daring to touch one grain of this though owning it and feeling the pangs of hunger; but preferring to feast, miser-like, on bitter leaves; should he have laid down in his cellar a thousand jars—that’s nothing, three hundred thousand—of Chian* and old Falernian, and quaff sharp vinegar; look, should he lie on a bed of straw when a year short of his eightieth birthday, though fine coverlets lie mouldering in his chest, a banquet for moths and grubs, not many, believe me, would think him mad, since the self-same fever robs the vast majority of mankind of sleep. Tell me, god-forsaken old man, are you guarding

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these for a son, or even a freedman, to drink up as his inheritance?

Are you afraid of running short? I mean, what a trifling amount will each day clip off the total, if you begin using better oil to dress your vegetables, yes, and that head of yours, so unsightly with its uncombed scurf? Why, if the slightest thing meets your needs, do you resort to breaking oaths, to indiscriminate thieving and plundering? This is proof of your sanity, is it?

““Should you start to pelt the crowd with stones*, or your own slaves for whom you paid hard cash, everyone, young and old, would call you mad: when you hang your wife and poison your mother*, no harm comes to your head. Why is this? It’s not at Argos you’re doing it, you’re not killing the mother who gave you birth with a sword like mad Orestes*. Or do you suppose madness came upon him after he’d killed his mother, and he wasn’t driven insane by the fearsome Furies before he warmed his sharp blade in his mother’s throat? No, from the time Orestes was reckoned to be of unsafe mind, there is no action whatever he took that you can criticize: he didn’t dare* to attack with his sword Pylades or Electra, his sister, simply insulting both of them by calling her a Fury and him some other name prompted by

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his glittering black bile.

““Opimius*, a poor man for all the silver and gold he had stored
in his house, who on holidays was in the habit of drinking wine
from Veii* out of a Capuan ladle*, and on working days sour wine,
fell once into a lethargy so profound that his heir was already running 145
around his keys and coffers overjoyed and jubilant. He was
brought round by his doctor, a quick-witted and dependable fellow,
in the following way: he gave instructions for a table to be set up
and bags of coin to be poured out, and for a number of people to
come forward to count it, adding this remark: ‘If you fail to guard 150
what’s yours, a greedy heir will soon be off with it.’ ‘What, while
I’m alive?’ ‘So, to continue living, keep your eyes open: take care!’
‘What should I do, then?’ ‘You are weak, and your veins won’t provide
enough blood if your collapsing stomach doesn’t get the strong buttressing
of food. Are you hesitating? Come on, take this rice gruel.’ 155
‘What did the rice cost?’ ‘Nothing much.’ ‘How much, then?’
‘Eightpence.’ ‘Oh, dear! What’s the difference if I’m ruined by illness
or theft and pillage?’

““Who, then, is sane?” “The man who is not a fool.” “What about

the man in love with riches?” “He’s a fool and a madman.” “Well,
if someone were not in love with wealth, would he automatically be 160
sane?” “Far from it.” “How come, good Stoic?” “I will tell you. It’s
not dyspepsia (imagine Craterus* was speaking) that this patient has:
is he well, then, and will he get up? No, will be Craterus’ reply, since
the chest or kidneys are under attack from an acute disease. He is
not a cheat or miser: let him sacrifice a pig*, in that case, to the benevolent 165
Lares; but he is ambitious and a risk-taker: let him take ship
to Anticyra*. For what difference does it make, whether you commit
everything you have to a bottomless pit or never use what you have
accumulated?

““The story goes that Servius Oppidius*, a wealthy man by the
reckoning of early times, divided his two farms at Canusium between
his two sons, and said this to the youngsters when he had summoned 170
them to his deathbed: ‘From the day I saw you, Aulus, carrying your
knucklebones and nuts* in a loose fold of your tunic, giving them away
and gambling with them, and you, Tiberius, counting them with a
frown of concentration and hiding them in holes, I started to fear
that the pair of you would be driven by madness of opposing kinds,

that *you* would follow Nomentanus*, and *you* Cicuta*. And so I beg 175
 you both by our household's gods, *you* beware of reducing and *you*
 of increasing what your father considers sufficient and nature prescribes
 as a limit. What's more, in case ambition tickles your fancy,
 I shall bind you both by an oath: whichever one of you becomes aedile* 180
 or praetor, let him be outlawed and under a curse. Would you squander
 your wealth on chickpeas* and beans and lupins, so that you can
 strut for all to see in the Circus* and stand in bronze, stripped of the
 land, stripped, madman, of the money your father left you? All, no
 doubt, so that you may receive the applause that Agrippa* gets, you the 185
 cunning fox* striving to be like the noble lion.'
 ""Son of Atreus*, why do you give the order that no one bury
 Ajax*?' 'I am king.*' 'I am a mere commoner, so ask no more.' 'And
 this my edict is a just one; but if any man considers me unjust, I
 give him leave to voice his thoughts freely.' ' Mightiest of kings, the 190
 gods grant that you take Troy and bring your fleet back home! Am
 I, then, permitted to ask a question and respond in turn?' 'Put your
 question.' Why is Ajax, the hero next to Achilles, and famous for rescuing
 the Greeks so many times, mouldering in death? Is it so that

Priam and Priam's people* may delight in burial being denied the man 195
 who caused so many of their warriors to go without a grave in their
 native soil?' 'The madman slaughtered a thousand sheep, crying out
 that he was killing renowned Ulysses, Menelaus and myself at the
 same time.' 'And you, when at Aulis* you set your own sweet daughter
 at the altars in a heifer's place, sprinkling her head with salt and 200
 grain, you shameless man, are you keeping your mind on the path of
 right?' 'What point are you making?' 'Well, what did the madman
 Ajax do when he laid the flock low with his blade? He withheld violence
 from his wife and child*; many were the curses he hurled at the
 heads of Atreus' sons, but he brought no harm to Teucer* or even
 to Ulysses.' 'But to free the ships stuck fast on the unfriendly shore 205
 I showed sense in winning back the gods' favour with blood.' 'Yes,
 you maniac, with blood that was your own.' 'My own blood, I grant,
 but I was no maniac.' The man whose mind grasps presentations that
 differ from the true and are confused by the turmoil caused by crime
 will be thought deranged, and it will make no difference whether folly
 or anger makes him go astray. When Ajax puts harmless lambs to the 210
 sword, he is insane: when you deliberately commit a crime for the sake

of empty distinctions, are you in your right mind, and is your heart,
when swollen with ambition, free of fault? Should someone wish to
carry about in his litter a sleek lamb and provide it, like a daughter,
215 with clothes, maidservants and gold, calling it Rufa or Posilla*, and
planning to marry it off to a gallant husband, the praetor* would place
him under an injunction and remove all his legal rights, and guardianship
of him would pass to relatives in their right mind. Tell me,
if someone offers up his own daughter for a sacrifice as if she were a
dumb lamb, is he sound of mind? Don't say so. And so, where folly is
220 perverse, there is the height of madness; the man who has committed
crime will also be a maniac; the one who has been captivated by fame's
glittering mirror has thundering about his head Bellona* who delights
in bloody deeds.

“Come now, join me in hauling up for judgement self-indulgence
and Nomentanus: For Reason will prove that spendthrifts are
225 fools and madmen. This man no sooner received an inheritance of
a thousand talents than he decreed like some praetor that the fisherman
, the fruiterer, the fowler, the perfumer, the vile rabble of the
Etruscans' street*, the sausage-maker and the idle scroungers, too,

the whole market and Velabrum, should come to his house next
230 morning. What was the result? They came in big numbers. The
brothel-keeper opened the business: ‘Whatever I have, whatever any
of these men has at his disposal, believe me, is yours; send for it
today or, if you like, tomorrow.’ Hear the reply that the generous young
man gave to this: ‘You sleep with leggings on in the Lucanian* snow
235 so that I may have a boar for dinner: you sweep fish from a stormy
sea. I am the idle one, unworthy of possessing so much: take it
away: you take a million sesterces for yourself; you the same; and
you, whose wife* comes running from the house after midnight when
I send for her, take three times as much.’ Aesopus' son*, no doubt
240 wanting to swallow a solid million, dissolved in vinegar a wondrous
pearl he had taken from Metella's ear*: how is he saner than
if he were to toss that same thing into a fast-flowing river or sewer?

The offspring of Quintus Arrius*, a famous pair of brothers, twins in
depravity and frivolity and a love of the perverse, were in the habit
245 of breakfasting on nightingales* that had cost them a huge sum. What
category are they to go into? Marked with chalk* as sane, or with
charcoal?

“‘Should a man with a beard* show delight in building toy houses,
 in harnessing mice to a tiny cart, in playing at odds and evens and
 riding a hobby horse, he would be afflicted by madness. If Reason 250
 proves beyond doubt that being in love is more childish than these
 things, that it makes no difference whether you build in play in the
 sand, as before you did at the age of three, or you whine in torment for
 the love of a prostitute*, then, I ask, would you behave like Polemo* who
 was once converted? Would you abandon the emblems of your illness—
 the leg-bands*, arm-wrap, scarves—just as, we are told, when he was 255
 drunk that man surreptitiously plucked the garlands* from around
 his neck, the moment he was brought up short by what the teacher
 said before *he* had eaten lunch. When a child is sulking and you offer
 him apples, he turns them down: ‘Take them, pet!’ He says no: if you
 weren’t to give them, he’d crave them: how does the locked-out lover* 260
 differ from this, when he debates whether or not to go where he meant
 to return to, though not invited, and hangs about the doors he hates?
 ‘Shall I not go even now, though she asks me without my prompting?
 Or should I rather think about putting a stop to my suffering?’ She
 has shut me out; she calls me back: should I return? No, not even if

she begs me.’ Now, listen to his slave, wiser by far: ‘O sir, something 265
 that has no measure or judgement in it, can’t be treated with reason
 or measure. Love contains these evils, first war, then peace: these are
 things that drift about by blind chance, almost as unpredictable as the
 weather, so if a man should strive to impose some rule on them in his
 life, he would no more sort them out than if he aimed to go mad by 270
 means of reason or measure.’ Tell me, when you squeeze* the pips out
 of apples from Picenum and are delighted if you happen to have hit
 the ceiling with one, are you all right in the head? Again, when you
 strike out baby-talk from an adult’s palate, how does this make you
 saner than one who builds toy houses? Add bloodshed to folly and 275
 poke the fire with the sword. The other day, I say, when Marius ran*
 Hellas through and then flung himself headlong, was he possessed,
 or will you acquit the man of having a disordered mind and find
 him guilty of crime, applying* to things words that are related, as we 280
 often do?

“‘There was a freedman who in old age would run around the
 street-corner shrines* in the early morning before he had touched
 breakfast, his hands washed, and utter this prayer, ‘Save me from

death, me alone' ('Just me, it's a small enough request,' he would add); 'It's an easy task for gods*!' The fellow was sound enough in ears and eyes; but as for his mind, his owner would exclude that from warranty* when selling him, unless he enjoyed lawsuits. This crowd, too, Chrysippus will find a place for in the prolific clan of Menenius*. 'Jupiter, who send and take away grievous pains,' cries the mother of the child whom sickness has kept bedridden for five months, 'if the shivering quartan fever* leaves my boy, early on the morning of the day you appoint for fasting he will stand, naked, in the Tiber.' Whether chance or a doctor rescues the sick lad from the point of danger, his deranged mother will kill him, bringing back his fever by planting him on an ice-cold river bank; what evil has shaken her mind? Fear of the gods*."

"These were the weapons put in my hand by Stertinius my friend, eighth of the sages*, so that henceforth I should not be called names without exacting my revenge*. Whoever calls me mad shall hear as much said about him, and he shall learn to look behind at what hangs* from his back but escapes his notice.'

My Stoic friend, as you hope to sell everything at a profit after any

loss, what folly is it that causes my madness, since there is more than one type? For in my own mind I am sane. 'Look, when Agave* in her madness is carrying her poor son's head that she has torn off, does she at that moment think herself to be crazy?' I'm stupid, I admit it, let me yield to the truth, and I'm mad as well: but expound this only, what mental disorder do you think is the cause of my sickness? 'Listen: first you are engaged in building*, that is, you are trying to measure up to the high-headed, even though from top to toe your full height* is two feet; and yet you laugh at Turbo's* confident swagger in his armour as though it's too big for his physique: how do you cut a less laughable figure than he does? Or is it right that, whatever Maecenas does, you too should do, when you are so unlike him, and so unfitted in importance to compete with him? When a mother frog* was away from home, a calf squashed her young with his hoof. One of them got away and tells her the whole story, how a huge monster crushed his sisters and brothers to death. "What size was it?" asked the mother; "as big as this?" as she puffed herself out. "Half as big again." "As big as this, then?" As she blew herself up more and more, he said, "Not even if you burst yourself, will you be as large." This picture comes close to

capturing you. Add your poetry now, that is, add fuel to the flame, for
if any man has composed poetry when sane, then you are sane when
you write yours. I say nothing of your frightful temper.'

Stop there! 'And your lifestyle that goes beyond your means.' Just
mind your own business, Damasippus. 'The thousand passions you
have for girls, the thousand for boys.' O greater madman, please spare
a lesser one!

SATIRE 4

Catius*, where have you been and where are you off to? 'I've no time to stop, I'm so keen to make notes of some new teachings that are of a kind to outdo Pythagoras* and the man Anytus put in the dock* and learned Plato.' I admit my fault in interrupting you at so propitious a moment; but be a good chap and accept my apologies, please.

If any detail has slipped from your memory now, you'll recover it soon. Whether this skill you have is due to nature or to art, you're a wonder either way. 'No, I was just worried about how I could keep the whole lecture in my head, as its arguments were subtle and subtly expressed.' Make known the man's name. Is he a Roman or a stranger? 'The teachings themselves I will recite from memory, their author's name will be kept a secret*.

'Be mindful to serve up eggs* of an oblong shape, as they have a better flavour and are whiter than round ones; for they have hard skins and contain a male yolk. Cabbages that have grown in dry fields are sweeter than those from plots near the city; nothing is more lacking in taste than the produce of a watered garden. If a guest suddenly

surprises you in the evening and you fear a tough fowl may answer badly to his taste, you will not miss a trick by plunging it alive into diluted Falernian*; this will make it tender. Mushrooms picked in a meadow are best in quality; you do not put your trust wisely in the others. A man will get through summers in good health who concludes his lunches with black mulberries that he has picked from the tree before the sun becomes oppressive.

'Aufidius* used to mix his honey with strong Falernian, and here he was in error; as only what is mild should be put into veins that are empty; you would better soak the lungs in mild honeyed wine. If constipation afflicts your bowels, limpet and inexpensive shellfish will dispel the blockage, and low-growing sorrel, but don't forget to add white wine from Cos*. New moons fill up the slippery shellfish; but not every sea produces the choicest kind. Mussels from the Lucrine* are better than cockles from Baiac*, oysters come from Circeii*, sea urchins from Misenum*, and luxurious Tarentum* boasts of her broad scallops.

'Not anyone may lightly lay claim to knowledge of the art of dining, without having first mastered the subtle system of flavours. And it is not enough to sweep away fish from an expensive counter if one does

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not know which are better with sauce and which, when grilled, will
make the jaded guest rise up on his elbow* once more. Umbria* is home
to the boar that, fed on holm-oak acorns, makes the round serving-dishes
buckle, when the host will have no truck with tasteless meat, for
the Laurentian* beast is poor fare, fattened as he is on sedge and reeds.
Roe deer bred in vineyards are not always suitable for eating. The connoisseur
will hunt the forelegs of a hare that carries young. As regards
fish and fowl, what their qualities and best age should be, no palate*
before mine has investigated and made clear to anyone.

‘Some there are whose talent lies only in producing new forms of
biscuit. It is in no way sufficient to devote one’s attention to a single
detail of the menu; it would be like a man striving only to ensure that
his wines are not substandard while not caring about the quality of oil
he pours on his fish.

‘If you expose Massic wine* to a cloudless sky, any thickness it
possesses will evaporate in the night air, and the scent that harms
the sinews will pass off; but that wine when strained through linen
is spoiled and loses its flavour. A shrewd fellow mixes Sorrento’s*
wine with lees of Falernian, and carefully collects the sediment with

a pigeon’s egg, as its yolk sinks to the bottom and draws with it all
foreign matter. If a drinker is flagging you will revive him with fried
prawns and African snails; for lettuce rises on the dyspeptic stomach
after wine; ham and sausages are what it craves to be pricked and
freshened by; in fact, it would rather have any kind of meat brought
piping hot from dirty cookshops*.

‘It’s worth your while* getting to know properly the nature of the
two types of sauce. The simple consists of sweet olive oil, which
should be mixed with thick, undiluted wine and sea water, just like
the brine that makes your barrel of tunny from Byzantium* smell so
strong. Once this has been mixed with chopped herbs and has come
to the boil, then has been sprinkled with Corycian* saffron and left to
stand, you should add besides some juice produced from the pressed
berry of the Venafran* olive.

‘Tibur’s* apples yield to Picenum’s in flavour; I make this point,
since the former are of better appearance. Venuculum’s* grape suits
the preserving jar; the grape of Alba* you would do better to dry in the
smoke. You’ll find that I was first* to serve this last grape round the
table with apples, as I also invented the serving of wine-lees and

fish-pickle paste, and of white pepper sifted with black salt in clean
75 little bowls. It's a gargantuan error* to spend three thousand at the
fish-market, and then to confine the sprawling fish in a narrow dish.
It fairly turns the stomach if a slave has handled a wine-cup with
hands greasy from a mouthful of snatched food, or if unsightly mould
clings to your antique wine-bowl. What's so expensive about ordinary
80 brooms, napkins, and sawdust? But neglect them and how scandalous
is the disgrace! Think of it—you sweeping the mosaic floor with
a dirty palm-broom, or putting unwashed valences round covers of
Tyrian purple*, forgetting that the less care and expense these things
85 involve, the more justified someone is in blaming you for neglecting
them rather than for the absence of things only the tables of the
wealthy can afford!

O learned* Catus, in the name of our friendship, in the name of the
gods, I beg you, don't forget to take me to listen to the next lecture,
wherever you go to it. For though you report everything to me with a
90 retentive memory, yet by merely interpreting* you wouldn't give me as
much pleasure. And then there are the man's expression and bearing
to consider; you don't think much of having seen these, you lucky

fellow, because the good fortune came your way; but I have no moderate
longing to be able to draw near to those sequestered* springs and to
95 drink deep the teachings of the happy life.

SATIRE 5

Answer me this, too, Tiresias*, in addition to what you have told me,
by what ways and means I can regain my lost wealth*. Why do you
laugh? 'Is it no longer enough* for the man of many wives to sail back
to Ithaca and set eyes on his ancestral home?' O you who have never
uttered falsehood to any man, you see how, as you prophesied*, I am
returning home, naked and needy, and there neither wine-cellar nor
flock has been left untouched by the suitors; yet neither a man's birth
nor his courage is worth any more than seaweed if he lacks possessions
. 'Since, to put it in plain terms, poverty is what you dread, hear
by what means you can become rich. Suppose you are given a thrush*
or anything else for yourself, let it fly off to where great wealth shines
and the owner is old. Your sweet fruit and all the glorious produce
your tilled farm yields, let the rich man taste before your Lar* does,
the Lar who deserves less reverence than the rich man; however much
he may be a breaker of oaths, of no family, stained with the shedding
of a brother's blood, a runaway slave, you must still not refuse
to walk beside him on his outside*, if he asks you.' What? Cover the

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side of some filthy Dama*? I acted in no such fashion at Troy, always
taking the fight to better men. 'Then you will be poor.' I will bid* my
hardy soul endure this; in former days even greater trials did I bear.
But lose no time, seer, tell me from where I am to rake up riches and
piles of cash. 'I have told you, I say, and am telling you: you must
hunt craftily in every place for old men's wills, and, if one or two
are cunning enough to escape the fisherman after nibbling the bait
from your hook, don't abandon hope or give up the practice because
you've been baffled. If one day a case is argued over in the forum,
big or small, make yourself the advocate* of the man who is rich and
childless and has the shameless audacity to summon the better man
into court; have nothing* to do with the citizen whose case and reputation
are superior, if he has a son or fruitful wife at home. "Quintus,"
let's say, or "Publius" (sensitive ears delight in hearing first names*),
"your excellent character has made me your friend; I know the
complications of the law, I can defend cases; I'll let any man pluck
out my eyes sooner than he should hold you in contempt and make
you a nutshell the poorer; what concerns me is that you don't lose a
penny or give people cause to laugh at you." Tell him to go home and

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look after his precious skin; become his attorney* yourself, stand fast
 and show endurance, whether the red Dog-star* causes unspeaking
 statues to split or Furius*, stomach crammed with rich tripe, bespatters 40
 with white snow the wintry Alps. “Don’t you see,” someone will say,
 nudging a neighbour in the crowd with his elbow, “what tolerance he
 has, how accommodating he is to his friends, how energetic?” More
 tunny* will swim up, and your fish-ponds will swell. What’s more, if 45
 someone has a son who keeps poor health but has been acknowledged*
 by him and is being raised in wealthy circumstances, then to avoid
 being exposed by flagrant servility to one who is childless, by means
 of your attentiveness towards him creep unobtrusively into the hope
 that you may be named as his second heir*, and, should some mischance
 consign the boy to Orcus*, that you may occupy the empty 50
 place: it’s most unusual for this game* to fail. If ever a man gives
 you his will to read, be sure to decline and to push the documents
 from you, but in such a way that a sidelong glance steals for you the
 contents of the second line* on the first page; swiftly run your eye 55
 across to see if you are sole inheritor or you share with many others.
 Quite often a public clerk* cooked up from a humble magistrate

will make a fool of the raven with its gaping beak, and Nasica the
 fortune-hunter will give Coranus cause for laughter.’
 Are you raving? Or are you in your senses and mocking me by your
 oracular responses? ‘O son of Laertes*, all that I say shall be or not be:
 for prophecy is great Apollo*s gift to me.’ Nevertheless, if I may be 60
 told, tell me the meaning of this story of yours. ‘At that time when a
 youth* whom the Parthians dread, scion descended from lofty Aeneas,
 shall be mighty by land and sea, the stately* daughter of Nasica shall
 marry the brave Coranus, who is reluctant to pay back his debt in full. 65
 Then shall the son-in-law do this: he shall give his will to his father-in-law
 and beg him to read it; long shall Nasica refuse but then shall
 he take the will at length and read in silence, and he shall find nothing
 bequeathed to him and his but to go hang.
 ‘Here is another piece of advice: if by chance a crafty woman or 70
 freedman has influence with an old man whose wits have left him,
 join up with them as a partner; pay them compliments, so that they
 may compliment you in your absence. This too helps; but far better
 than this is to storm the chief stronghold himself. If he’s a lunatic
 writing bad poetry, praise it. If he chases after women, make sure 75

he doesn't have to ask you; without prompting hand over Penelope^{*}
obligingly to your better.' Do you think her services can be bought,
a woman of such honesty and virtue, whom the suitors could not
turn away from the right track? 'Yes, for it was young men who came,
who were frugal in giving a lot^{*}, and were more interested in the
kitchen's offerings than those of Venus. This is why your Penelope
is virtuous; give her just one taste of a nice bit of profit from one
old man, having you as her partner, and she'll be just like the dog^{*}
that can never be scared away from the greasy hide. When I was old^{*}
what I'm going to tell you did happen: a wicked old woman at Thebes
was carried out for burial in the following way, by the terms of her
will: her corpse, generously anointed with oil, was carried by her heir
on his bare shoulders, no doubt since she wished to see if she could
give him the slip in death; when she was alive, he had pressed her
too hard, I suppose. Be careful in making your approach: don't fall^{*}
short in service or overflow with it, losing all proportion. Someone
who is bad-tempered and peevish will find a chatterbox offensive;
but at the same time you shouldn't be silent beyond due measure. Be
Davus^{*} in the comedy and stand with head to one side, looking very

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much like one who is overawed. Make your advances with flattery;
warn him, if the breeze has grown stronger, to be careful to cover
his precious head; use your shoulders to get him clear from a crowd;
when he becomes talkative, make your ears prick up attentively. If he
insatiably loves being praised, give it to him strong, until, with hands
raised to the sky, he cries, "That's quite enough!" and blow up the
swelling bladder with hot air. When he has set you free from long
slavery and worry, and, convinced you're wide awake, you hear the
words, "Let Ulysses inherit one quarter", scatter continually such
phrases as, "So is my old friend Dama now no more? Where shall I
find a man so brave, so loyal?" and, if you can shed a few tears, drop
in some: it's possible to hide the expression that betrays joy. If the
tomb has been left to your discretion, build it without meanness; let
the neighbourhood praise a funeral managed especially well. If one
of your fellow heirs^{*}, older than yourself, happens to have a bad
cough, tell him that, should he wish to buy a farm or house from your
share, you would happily knock it down to him for a pittance. But
Proserpina^{*} drags me away, and she brooks no resistance; live long and
fare well.'

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SATIRE 6

This was what I prayed for: a piece of land of no great size, where there would be a kitchen garden, and next to the house a spring of ever-flowing water, and a little woodland above them. Larger and better than this has been my gift from the gods. I am satisfied. O son of Maia*, I ask for nothing more except that you make these gifts of yours for ever mine. If I have neither made my wealth greater by wicked means nor intend to make it smaller by excesses or carelessness, if I make no such foolish prayers as these: ‘Oh, if only that little corner nearby were added on, which now spoils the shape of my little farm! Oh, if only some piece of luck would show me a jar full of silver, as it did the man who found a treasure and purchased and ploughed the self-same fields he had worked for hire, made rich by the favour of Hercules*!’—if what I have makes me content and happy, then this is the prayer I make to you: make my flocks fat* for their master, and everything else apart from my wits, and, as is your custom, stay by my side as chief protector!

And so, once I have forsaken the city for my citadel* in the mountains

, what should I celebrate first in my satires with my Muse who* goes on foot? Here no wretched desire for advancement makes my life death, no leaden sirocco or unhealthy autumn*, from which heartless Libitina makes profit. Father* of the Morning, or ‘Janus’, if that title pleases you more, from whom men take the beginnings of life’s work and toil, for so is heaven’s will, be the prelude of my song. At Rome you hurry me off to stand surety for a friend: ‘Come on, stir yourself or someone else will answer duty’s call before you.’ Whether the north wind sweeps the earth, or winter drags out the snowy day in a narrower circuit, go I must. Later, once I’ve stated* loud and clear what may do me harm, I must battle in the crowd and shove out the way the slowcoaches. ‘What’s your problem, you lunatic, and what’s your business?’ So some rude fellow accosts me with angry curses; ‘do you have to batter anything in your way, if you’re running back to Maecenas, thinking of nothing else?’

This* delights me and is like honey, I’ll not pretend otherwise. But the moment I reach the gloomy Esquiline*, a hundred concerns of others dance on top of my head and all around me. ‘Roscius* begs you to meet him at the Well* tomorrow before the second hour.’ ‘Treasury*

officials beg you, Quintus*, to remember to return today on some new and important matter of business of common interest.' 'Make sure that Maecenas puts his seal to these papers.' Say to this, 'I'll try,' and his insistent response will be, 'You can, if you want to.'

The seventh year, no, closer to the eighth, will soon have sped by 40 since Maecenas began to count me among his friends, only to the extent that, when making a journey, he might want to take me along in his carriage and entrust small-talk to me such as 'What time is it? Is Chicken* the Thracian a match for Syrus? The morning* frosts are 45 nippy now for those who don't take enough care'; and such things as are safely dropped in a leaky ear*. Throughout all this time, every day and every hour, our friend* has been more and more the victim of envy. If he'd watched the games with him or played ball with him in the Campus*, every mouth would cry, 'Some people have all the luck!' A chilly rumour runs from the Rostra* through the streets: any man 50 who meets me asks my opinion: 'My good sir, for as one who comes into closer contact with the gods* you ought to know, have you heard any news about the Dacians*?' 'Not a thing, I assure you.' 'Ah, what a joker you will always be!' But may all the gods drive me to distraction

if I've heard a word. 'Tell me now, is it in Sicily or in the land of 55 Italy that Caesar means to give the veterans* the farms he has promised?' When I declare on oath that I know nothing, they marvel at me as, believe it or not, the one man on earth in possession of a silence extraordinarily profound.

With occupations like these I waste my day pitifully, while I utter prayer after prayer: 'O my country estate, when shall I set eyes on 60 you? When shall I be free to drink sweet forgetfulness of life's worries, now with books of ancient authors, now with sleep and hours of idleness! Oh, when shall beans, Pythagoras' kinsmen*, be served to me, and with them greens well oiled with fat bacon! O nights and 65 feasts of the gods! When I myself and my friends dine before my own household god and feed my cheeky house-bred slaves*, after making a food-offering. Just as each of them pleases, the guests drain the cups, well watered* or not at all, not bound by mad laws, whether one brave fellow takes his cups strong or grows mellow more happily with 70 moderate ones. And so conversation arises, not about other people's villas or town houses, or whether Lepos* dances badly or not; rather our discussions are about matters that concern us more, and which it

would be bad not to know: whether it is wealth or virtue that makes
men happy; or what attracts us to friendships, self-interest, or an
upright character; and what is the nature of goodness and what its
highest form.

My neighbour Cervius* on such occasions prattles on with old
wives' tales* that fit the case. For if someone praises the wealth of
Arellius*, not realizing the anxiety it causes, he begins in this fashion
: "They say that once upon a time a country mouse welcomed a
town mouse into his humble hole, host and guest both old friends.
A rough fellow and careful with his store he was yet capable of
relaxing his tight nature with acts of hospitality. Let me not detain
you. He did not grudge his hoard of chickpeas or long oats, and,
bringing in his mouth a dried raisin and half-eaten scraps of bacon,
he served them, wishing by such variety of fare to overcome the disdain
of his friend, who with lordly tooth was barely touching each
item; meanwhile the father of the house himself was stretched out
on fresh straw and eating emmer wheat and darnel, leaving the
better parts of the feast to his guest. Finally the city mouse said to
him, "What pleasure can you have, my friend, in living in such hard

conditions on the ridge of a steep wood? Put your trust in me and
take to the road with me as your companion; since earthly creatures
live with mortal souls as their lot, and there is no escape from death
for great or small, therefore, my good fellow, while you may, live a
happy life amid joyful things; live mindful of how brief your time
is." When these words had struck home with the countryman, he
leapt light-footed from his house; then the pair of them carried on
to the end of the journey they had planned, eager to creep under
the walls of the city by night. And now night held the mid-space of
heaven, when the two planted their footsteps in a wealthy mansion
where covers dyed with rich scarlet blazed on top of ivory couches,
and many dishes were left over from a dinner of the previous night,
lying in baskets that were piled up aside. So when the townsman had
made his guest seated, stretched out on purple* covers, he bustled to
and fro like a servant with tunic tucked up, serving one course after
another and performing all the duties of a home-bred slave, first* licking
everything he serves. His friend lay back, delighted by his change
of fortune, and in his prosperous state played the happy guest, when
suddenly a monstrous banging of the doors sent both of them tumbling

from their couches. Terrified, they ran the length of the room,
and still more they panicked, blood deserting their cheeks, when the
lofty dwelling rang to the baying of Molossian hounds*. Then the
countryman said, “I don’t need this kind of life; goodbye to you: my
wood and hole, secure from alarms, will keep me content with simple
vetch.”

SATIRE 7

‘I’ve been listening for a while now and wanting to say a few things to you but as a slave I’ve been afraid to.’ Is that Davus*? ‘Yes, it’s Davus, a bought slave* but one who’s a friend to his master and an honest fellow, that is, honest enough not to be considered too good to live.’

Come, make use of the freedom December allows*, as our forefathers wanted it so; say your piece.

‘Some men persist in delighting in vice and eagerly pursue their chosen course; most waver, at one time aiming at the right, at others yielding to the wrong. So Priscus*, who often got noticed for wearing three rings but sometimes for keeping his left hand bare, lived so unpredictably that he would change his stripe* each hour, emerging from a stately mansion only to bury himself suddenly in some dive that a fairly respectable freedman could barely come out of without tongues wagging; now choosing to be a philanderer in Rome, now to live as a man of letters* in Athens, he was a fellow born when every single Vertumnus* was against him. The jester Volanerius*, after the gout he had earned* had crippled his finger-joints, kept a man* hired at

a daily wage to pick up the dice for him and put them in their box; the more persistent he was in pursuing the same vices, the less unhappy he felt and the more well-off than the man who struggles with rope now taut, now slack.’

Won’t you tell me today what all this gibberish is aiming at, you con-man*? ‘At you, I say once more.’ How’s that, you rogue? ‘You praise the fortune and character of the people of old, and yet you’d also refuse every time, were some god suddenly to take you back to those times, either because you don’t really feel that what you proclaim is the sounder course or because you are shaky in defending what’s right and stick fast in the mire while longing vainly to pluck the sole of your foot out of it. In Rome you yearn to be in the country, in the country you praise the distant city to the stars without a second’s thought. If it happens that no invitations to dinner come your way at all, you praise your carefree greens* and, as though you wore chains when going anywhere, call yourself so lucky and hug yourself at not having to go out boozing somewhere. But should Maecenas bid you to join him for dinner late, just as the lamps are about to be lit, it’s “Won’t someone fetch me oil quicker? Isn’t anyone listening?” as

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you rant in a loud voice before scurrying away. Mulvius* and his fellow
parasites take their leave, cursing you in language not to be repeated.
“It’s true,” he would say, “I admit it, I’m an inconstant fellow, led by
his stomach, my nose leans back at a savoury smell, I’m weak, lazy,
and, if you like, call me a greedy-guts into the bargain. But when
you’re the same as me or maybe worse, why should you presume to
attack me as if you are superior and seek to cover up your vice with
fine words?” And what if you’re found out to be a greater fool than
even I, who cost you five hundred drachmas*? Don’t try to scare me
with a look; keep your hand and temper in check while I unfold the
lessons taught me by Crispinus’ doorkeeper*.

‘You* are captivated by another man’s wife, Davus by a whore:
which one of us is more deserving of the cross* for his sin? When insistent
nature has made me stiff, whatever woman, naked in the lamp’s
bright light, has taken my swollen tail’s* blows, or, entering into the
spirit, with bouncing bottom has ridden* me on my back as her horse,
she lets me go with no harm to my reputation and no worry that someone
richer or more good-looking may piss* in the same place. As for
you, once you’ve thrown off your badges of rank, your knight’s ring*

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and Roman dress*, and reveal yourself, not as a juror*, but as a Dama*,
a fellow of no breeding, your scented head concealed by your cloak,
aren’t you what your disguise suggests? With fear in your heart you are
let into the house, trembling to your bones as panic contends with lust.
What difference does it make whether you sell yourself as a glad*iator
to be scorched with whips and killed by the sword, or, shut up
in a demeaning chest where the maid who shares her mistress’ guilty
secret has stowed you away, you squat with crouched head touching
your knees? Does the erring lady’s husband have lawful power over*
both parties? His power* over her lover is still more justified. It’s not
the woman, after all, who changes her clothes or position, or who lies
on top as she sins. Because the woman is afraid of you and doesn’t
trust you, her lover, will you deliberately shove your head in the
stocks and put in the hands of a furious master, not just your body,
but all your fortune, your life, your reputation? Suppose you escape:
you’ll be afraid, I don’t doubt, and take care having learned your
lesson: no, you’ll look for chances of being able to know fear again and
again to come to ruin, you slave time and again! What wild beast that
has once broken its chains and escaped has the perversity to return

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to them?

“I’m no adulterer;” you say. And I’m no thief, believe me, when I wisely pass by silver plate: remove the risk and in no time at all our nature will leap out, the reins once removed, and go where it will. Are you my master, someone who is subject to the rule of so many men, so many things, whom a magistrate’s rod of liberty*, laid on three or even four times, would never rid of wretched fear? Consider this point, too, no less valid than those I’ve stated: for whether the man who does a slave’s bidding is a “deputy”*, as you free men put it, or a “co-slave”, which am I to you? It’s clear enough that you, who give me orders, are the miserable servant of another and, like a wooden puppet, are moved by strings that other hands pull*.

‘Who, then, is the free man? The wise man*, who wields authority over himself, who has no fear of poverty or death or chains, who is bold enough to stand up to his passions and to hold honours in contempt, who is a whole in himself, smooth and round*, so that nothing from outside can get a purchase on his polished surface, and who makes any attack of Fortune* fall ineffectually away. Can you recognize any of these virtues as your own? A woman* asks you for five talents, harasses

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you, drives you away from her door and drenches you in cold water, then summons you back again: wrest your neck from this shameful yoke; “I’m free, free,” come on, say it. You can’t; for your mind is driven hard by a pitiless master* and he applies the sharp spurs when you are weary and urges you on when you resist.

‘Or when you languish, you lunatic, in admiration of a painting by Pausias*, how is it you offend less than I, when with straining knees I stare in wonder at battles involving Fulvius* and Rutuba or Pacideianus, painted in red ochre or charcoal, just as if they were really fighting, striking out and parrying as they brandish their weapons, proper heroes? A “good for nothing dawdler”, is what they call Davus; but you yourself get described as a discriminating judge of old masters, a true aficionado. I’m a wastrel if I’m seduced by the smell of a hot cake: does your strength of character, your heroic virtue, resist the allure of rich dinners? Giving way to the belly’s demands is more dangerous to me. Why? My back gets a beating*, you see. But don’t you get punished just as much when you hunt out those fine foods that cannot be bought cheaply? Take my word for it, an endless succession of banquets begins to turn to gall, and the feet that have

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been duped refuse to support the weight of the over-indulged body.

Or is it the fault of the slave-boy who as night falls swaps for grapes

the body-scraper* he has stolen? Does the man who sells his estates 110

to comply with his stomach's demands have nothing of the slave

in him?

‘Then there's the fact that you can't bear your own company for an

hour, you can't make proper use of your leisure-time, and you try to

shun yourself like a runaway or truant slave, seeking to baffle anxiety

now with wine, now with sleep: all for nothing; for the black companion 115

dogs your steps and gives pursuit when you run away.’

Where can I get hold of a stone*? ‘What do you need that for?’

Where can I get arrows? ‘Either the man is crazy* or he's composing

verse.’ Clear off from here double quick or else* you'll make up the

ninth labourer on my Sabine farm.

SATIRE 8

How did you like your dinner with the wealthy Nasidienus? For when I sought to have you as my own dinner-guest I was told you were drinking there yesterday from midday*. ‘So much so that never in my life have I had a more enjoyable time.’ Tell me, if it’s no trouble, what tasty dish first won round your angry stomach*.

‘To start with*, boar from Lucania*; it was caught, as the father of* 5
the feast kept telling us, when a gentle* wind from the south was blowing
. Around it were sharp-tasting* things, turnips, lettuces, radishes,
such condiments as give the edge to a jaded appetite, parsnip, fishpickle
, lees of Coan wine. When these had been cleared away, a slave 10
with his tunic tucked up high* wiped* the maple table thoroughly with
a crimson cloth, and a second gathered up anything that lay useless
and might cause the guests offence; then, like* a maiden of Attica with
the sacred vessels of Ceres, dusky Hydaspes* steps forward, carrying
Caecuban* wine, and Alcon*, carrying Chian* wine without sea water*. At 15
this point our host said, “If Alban* or Falernian wine is more to your
taste than what has been served, Maecenas*, we have both.” ’ ‘Ah, how

the rich should be pitied! But I’m keen to know, Fundanius*, who your
table-companions were with whom you passed a lovely time.

‘I was at the top and next to me was Viscus* of Thurii, while below, 20
if I recall, was Varius; with Servilius the Jester* was Vibidius*, the extras*
brought along by Maecenas. Above our host was Nomentanus*, below
him the Hog, who made us laugh by swallowing entire cheesecakes at
one go; Nomentanus was there to point out* with his forefinger anything 25
that should happen to escape our attention: for the rest of the
crowd, ourselves, I mean, were dining on fowl, oysters, fish, which
harboured a taste far different from any we knew; this was apparent
right from the start, when he passed me livers of plaice and turbot 30
that I hadn’t tasted before. After this he informed me that honey-apples
are red if they’re picked when the moon is on the wane*. What
difference that makes you would better hear from the man in person.
Then Vibidius says to Jester: “Unless we drink him bankrupt, we’ll
die unavenged*,” and he calls for larger cups*. Then did paleness invade 35
the features of the caterer*, who feared nothing as much as hard drinkers
, either because they’re too free with their insults or because strong
wines dull the refined palate. Vibidius and Jester, with all following 40

suit, upend whole jugs of wine into Allifanian* cups; but no harm was done to the flagons by the guests on the bottom couch*.

‘Then is served a moray eel*, outstretched on a platter, and surrounded by swimming scampi. At this point the master says: “It was caught with the roe still inside, as after spawning it will deteriorate in the flesh. These are the ingredients of the sauce: oil from the first pressing of the Venafran* cellar; sauce* from the juices of fish from Spain; five-year-old wine, but produced this side of the sea, while it is being warmed (after heating Chian suits better than anything else); white pepper, with vinegar made from the fermenting of grapes from Methymna. I was first* to demonstrate the need to boil in the sauce fresh green rocket and bitter elecampane*, while Curtillus* advocated sea urchins, unwashed, as the yield of the seashell is better than fishbrine .”

‘This was the moment that the tapestries spread above fell heavily on to the plate, bringing down more black dust than the north wind blows up from Campania’s fields. We feared worse to come, but on realizing there was no danger, we recovered ourselves. Rufus* lowered his head and began to weep, as if at the death of a son before his

time. What would the end have been, if Nomentanus had not, like a philosopher, raised his friend’s spirits like this? “Alas, Fortune, what god shows us more cruelty than you? How you always enjoy making sport of men’s affairs!” Varius could scarcely suppress his laughter with his napkin. Jester, who looks down his nose at everything, was saying, “These are the terms* of life, and this is why your effort will never be equalled by your fame. To think that, just to ensure grand entertainment for me, you should be racked and tortured by all manner of anxiety, that the bread should not be served burnt, or the sauce badly seasoned, that all the slaves should be properly dressed and have smart hair when they serve! Then there are these accidents to consider, the curtains falling down, as they just have, or a stableboy tripping up and smashing a plate. But someone who entertains guests is like a general: misfortune usually lays bare his talent, good fortune usually conceals it.”

‘To this Nasidienus replied, “May the gods reward you with every prayer you make! You are so kind a man, so civil a guest,” and he called for his slippers*. That was when on every couch you would have seen the buzz of whispers exchanged in confidential ears.’ I’d have* preferred

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to watch no other shows than these; but come on, tell me the
things you found to laugh at after these. 'While Vibidius is asking the 80
slaves whether the flagon has also been broken, as he's not being given
any cups when he asks for them, and while we laugh at pretended
jokes, egged on by Jester, back you come^{*}, Nasidienus, with altered
looks, like a man intending to mend bad luck by means of skill: then 85
follow slaves, carrying^{*} on a huge trencher the disjointed limbs of a
crane sprinkled generously with salt, and with meal, and the liver of
a white goose, fattened on rich figs, and the forelegs of hares torn
off, to make more agreeable eating than if someone ate them with the 90
loins; then we saw blackbirds served up with their breasts burnt, and
wood-pigeons without the rumps, real delicacies, if only the master of
the house had not given us an account of their origins and properties^{*};
off we ran^{*}, taking our revenge on him by tasting nothing whatever, as
though Canidia, worse than African snakes, had breathed her poison 95
on them.'

- 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: Octavius 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.

- 83 *bad verses*: H. puns on the double sense of 'malicious' and 'poor quality'.
 84 *Caesar's judgement*: again playing on legal and literary judgement, with the suggestion of an appeal to the *princeps* against a verdict.
 85 *barked*: the common image of the satirist as an aggressive but vigilant guard-dog.
 86 *the case . . . scot-free*: laughter, as often in H.'s satire, resolves the situation.

SATIRE 2.2

The morality of food is the theme of this satire, as the simple fare associated with the countryside both symbolizes and reflects simple but honest values, while an obsession with luxurious gastronomizing epitomizes the vice and folly of the modern city. H. cites the rustic Ofellus as his authority but, unlike the speakers of the subsequent satires, Ofellus' actual words are not given until the very end; rather, H. provides his own synthesis of Ofellus' teachings.

- 2 *Ofellus*: a genuine Oscan name, but one which suggests *ofella*, 'small cutlet', an appropriately moderate meal.
 9 *Every judge*: referring to the stomach 'bribed' with luxurious food, in contrast to being honestly hungry.
 15 *Hymettus*: mountain in Attica famous for its bees and honey.
Falernian: see note on *Sat.* 1.10.24.
 19–20 *greatest pleasure*: the Epicurean ideal, as well as applicable in its more straightforward sense.
 26 *a fine show*: the contrast between outward appearance and inner reality is a common motif of satire.
 31 *pike*: or possibly a bass. The point is that expensively imported and locally caught fish are indistinguishable in taste.
 32–3 *between the bridges*: it is uncertain which are meant, but clearly the fish is caught in a stretch of the Tiber within Rome.
Tuscan river: the Tiber's source is in Etruria (modern Tuscany).
 34 *mullet*: an expensive and luxurious fish; the notion that one can only eat small portions of even the largest amount recalls *Sat.* 1.1.
 40 *Harpies*: monstrous bird-women sent to punish Phineus by devouring the feast daily set before him, and hence types of gluttony.
 41 *winds from the south*: the hot sirocco will make the food go off.
 47 *Gallionius*: an allusion to a poem by Lucilius (fr. 203–5 *ROL*) in which Laelius criticizes Gallionius for his gluttony.
 50 *praetor*: the scholiasts offer various possibilities, including Plotius Plancus, Asellius, and Sempronius Rufus.
 51 *roasted gulls*: not a delicacy at Rome, and hence an appropriately absurd extreme to which dedicated followers of fashion might be led.

- 54 *pointless . . . weakness*: chiming with H.'s own general emphasis on moderation, and especially on avoiding extremes in *Sat.* 1.2.
 55–6 *Avidienus . . . 'Dog'*: the name suggests *avidus* ('avaricious'), apt for a miser, while the nickname suits a scavenger with no regard for civilized values, and perhaps a Cynic (Gk.: 'canine') like Diogenes.
 64 *a wolf . . . on the other*: broadly 'a rock and a hard place' but perhaps in the context a more specific antithesis between the ravenous wolf and the stingy 'Dog', Avidienus.
 67 *Albucius*: perhaps with white (*albus*) hair; the point is that his excessive concern that everything be in order for his guests leads him to mistreat his slaves.
 69 *Naevius*: possibly the same as at *Sat.* 1.1.101, if the latter is a miser rather than a spendthrift (see note), though the main point here is his lack of attention to his guests' needs (in contrast to Albucius) rather than stinginess. The water is for washing hands rather than drinking.
 75 *bile . . . phlegm*: two of the four humours, central to ancient medical thought.
 79 *nails . . . a portion of the divine spirit*: a blend of Pythagorean, Platonic, and Stoic philosophy. Stoics believed the soul was part of the divine spirit, while Plato describes the soul being made part of the body by various physical experiences.
 84 *holiday*: one of Rome's many annual religious festivals. Allowing oneself occasional treats is part of the message of moderation.
 89–93 *Our forefathers . . . heroes!*: a puzzling section, mixing conventional Roman nostalgia for the rustic good old days with ironic satire of their boorishness. The connection with the argument is unclear, but perhaps the late guest corresponds to the old man, so that the host (like the man in his youth) should not enjoy the feast prematurely.
 97 *uncle*: proverbially strict.
 99 *Trausius*: unknown.
 101–5 *Is there, then . . . that great heap?*: public benefactions or euergetism were an important part of civic life in the classical world. The mention of collapsing temples adds a religious note; one of Octavian's most trumpeted achievements was the restoration of derelict temples and of the religious observance associated with them.
 106–10 *You alone . . . required in war?*: a change of tack from morality to self-interest, combining several different strands of argument: the common ancient fear of enemies' ridicule, the danger of a change in fortunes, the associated need for prudent preparation, and the contrast between a reliance on luxury and the ideal of self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*).
 112–14 *Ofellus . . . pruned back*: Ofellus' life, as opposed to his ideas, now validates the argument, especially the most recent one about prudence and self-sufficiency. Evidently, he lost much of his farm in the land

confiscations of the civil war period, when land was seized to be given as rewards to veteran soldiers.

114–15 *plot* . . . *their work*: the small parcel of land left to Ofellus after his farm had been divided and assigned to veterans.

tenant-farmer: no longer owning his farm.

116 *account*: Ofellus' speech closes the satire.

120 *fish*: an expensive luxury, as can be seen earlier in this satire.

123 *forfeit*: difficult, and emendations have been suggested, but perhaps the forfeit automatically dictates what the revellers must drink, taking the place of the *arbiter bibendi*.

124 *Ceres*: the goddess of grain, but also a metonymy for the grain itself which they pray might 'rise'.

126 *Fortune*: a capricious and random force. Ofellus' reflections match his general outlook, but are also typical of the drinking-party or symposium, so common in the *Odes*, of which this is a rustic variation.

131 *he in turn*: the motif of changes in fortune becomes a consolation rather than a threat.

133 *Umbrenus' name*: the name might suggest he is as transient as a shadow (*umbra*) or an interloper from Umbria some way to the north of Venusia.

SATIRE 2.3

The bankrupt dealer in luxury goods, Damasippus, has been saved from suicide and converted to Stoicism by the philosopher Stertinius. He recounts this to H. before reproducing a very long diatribe by Stertinius on the Stoic doctrine that everyone except the Stoic wise man (*sapiens*) is mad. The satire ends with a brief and inconclusive skirmish of words between H. and Damasippus. As with *Sat.* 2.7, the tone and some of the content of the 'satirized' diatribe is strikingly similar to that of H.'s own diatribes, especially *Sat.* 1.1–3.

1–4 *You write* . . . *mention*: Damasippus ascribes H.'s small output to laziness, aligning himself with Crispinus and others in *Satires* 1 who value rapid and prolific composition. The web suggests Penelope's ruse of refusing to marry her suitors until she had completed Laertes' shroud, which she unpicked nightly.

5 *Saturnalia*: festival of Saturn held for a week from 17 December, marked by revelry, and temporary licence (especially for slaves) and inversion of social hierarchies. H. implicitly denies Damasippus' charge of drunkenness since he shuns this festival's opportunities.

10 *country house*: probably the Sabine villa given to H. by Maecenas. The rural setting, in contrast to the bustle of the city, is significant.

11–12 *Plato* . . . *Archilochus*: Plato is included partly as a philosopher, partly as a writer of dialogues akin to those in *Satires* 2; Menander (c.344–292 BC) was the undisputed master of New Comedy, which was acknowledged as related to satire at *Sat.* 1.4.48–52; on Eupolis, see note on

Sat. 1.4.1; Archilochus was a seventh-century writer of *iambos*, or abusive poetry, H.'s main model in the *Epodes*, and a significant presence in the *Satires*.

16 *Damasippus*: may well be the man referred to in several of Cicero's letters as a dealer in luxury goods.

17 *barber*: because Damasippus, as a convert to Stoicism, has the beard which was the mark of the philosopher.

18–19 *central Janus*: the *Ianus medius*, an arch probably near the Basilica Aemiliana and a gathering place for bankers and speculators.

21 *Sisyphus*: mythical trickster, and object of divine punishment in the Underworld; Damasippus exaggerates his wares' antiquity but, since Sisyphus was also founder of Corinth, there is a connection with the popular Corinthian bronzeware.

25 "*Mercury's pal*": god of deceit and trade.

33 *Stertinius*: a Stoic philosopher, whose presence on the bridge may (or may not) suggest he preached on street-corners. Mentioned (jocularly) alongside Empedocles at *Ep.* 1.12.20 and so maybe real, but his name does suggest that he causes listeners to snore (*stertere*).

36 *Fabrician bridge*: linking the island in the Tiber with the left bank.

42 *dying bravely*: suicide per se was not condemned by Stoicism, and was indeed an approved means of escaping an intolerable situation, most famously practised by Cato the younger, but Damasippus' reasons are not appropriate.

44 *Chrysippus' portico*: see note on *Sat.* 1.3.127. The portico (*stoa*) was the school's location and source of its name.

55 *a tail dragging behind him*: Ps.-Acro suggests a proverb, Porph. a children's game; both are plausible.

53–6 *One class . . . the other type*: note the similarity to H.'s condemnation of extremes, especially in *Sat.* 1.2 and 2.2.

60–2 *drunken Fufius* . . . '*Mother, I implore you!*': in Pacuvius' tragedy *Iliona*, the eponymous heroine's dead son, Deipylus, appears to her in a dream. Fufius and Catienus act *Iliona* and Deipylus respectively, the latter with a little help from audience participation.

69 *Nerius* . . . *Cicuta*: evidently both financiers who process the loan; their names suggest a sea-god (apt for dealings with Proteus) and hemlock (a deadly businessman).

71 *Proteus*: the old man of the sea, who could change into all the forms listed here, and did so to try to escape Odysseus.

75 *Perellius' brain*: if 'you' is Damasippus, then his creditor; if generalized, another type-figure of a moneylender.

82 *hellebore*: a herb believed to cure madness; Anticyra, a port in Phocis, was a famous supplier.

- 84 *Staberius*: evidently a miser whose belief that wealth was the ultimate good led him to prescribe in his will that his heirs display that wealth, either as a figure inscribed on his tomb, or through lavish public munificence.
- 86 *Arrius*: mentioned in Cicero as a rich man who gave a banquet for thousands at his father's funeral.
- 87 *Africa's harvest*: the province, covering modern Tunisia and some of the Libyan coast, rather than the continent of Africa; an important source of grain for Rome.
- 88 *uncle*: proverbially strict, ironic in the mouth of one addressing his heirs.
- 97 *he will also be a king*: Staberius (incorrectly, in Stertinius' view) assigns to the rich man all the goods Stoics assign to the wise man.
- 100 *Aristippus*: philosopher from Cyrene in North Africa, associate of Socrates, notorious for luxuriant living and extravagance, the opposite extreme from Staberius.
- 106 *cobbler*: Stertinius' parallels for the 'mad' amassing but failing to use wealth curiously echo Stoic doctrine about the wise man being a good singer or cobbler, even if he does not practise those skills; see 1.3.124–33 above.
- 115 *Chian . . . Falernian*: see note on *Sat.* 1.10.24.
- 128 *pelt the crowd with stones*: considered a standard sign of madness.
- 131 *hang your wife and poison your mother*: both typical female means of suicide, as which the murder is disguised.
- 137 *Orestes*: son of the Argive king Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, who avenged the former by killing the latter and was driven mad by the Furies; the classic mythical example of madness. Stertinius' point is that he was mad to kill his mother, not driven so afterwards.
- 139–41 *he didn't dare . . . bile*: alluding to a scene from Euripides' *Orestes*, with his devoted friend and sister respectively, though there is no insult to the former and Stertinius' vagueness may suggest he has misremembered the play. Black bile (*melancholia*) is one of the four humours, an excess of which causes madness.
- 142 *Opimius*: suggests wealth (*opes*) and the consul whose name marked the vintage year 121 BC.
- 143 *Veii*: Etruscan city 10 miles north of Rome, not noted for its wine.
- 144 *Capuan ladle*: see note on *Sat.* 1.6.114–18.
- 161 *Craterus*: a famous doctor, mentioned by Cicero and Galen.
- 165 *pig . . . Lares*: a standard sacrifice to the gods of the roads and crossroads (among other things), presumably in thanksgiving at a (premature) diagnosis of sanity.
- 166 *Anticyra*: see note on line 82 above—he is mad after all.
- 168 *Oppidius*: suggests a provincial (*oppidanus*) opposed to the values of the big city. On Canusium, see note on *Sat.* 1.5.91–2. The anecdote initially

- reprises the danger of extremes of avarice and extravagance, before focusing on the new topic of political ambition.
- 171 *knucklebones and nuts*: common children's toys.
- 175 *Nomentanus*: see note on *Sat.* 1.1.101.
Cicuta: evidently a miser, just about consistent with the character at line 69 above.
- 180 *aedile or praetor*: specified since both had responsibility for putting on games, with the attendant expenses. Oppidius' veto on seeking political office goes against standard elite Roman values.
- 182 *chickpeas . . . lupins*: food which would be distributed to the people at games.
- 183 *Circus . . . bronze*: i.e. during chariot races at the Circus Maximus and as a statue memorializing your munificence.
- 185 *Agrippa*: M. Vipsanius Agrippa (c.63–12 BC), Octavian's right-hand man, who gave particularly munificent games when aedile in 33 BC. The contemporary reference might suggest that Stertinius resumed speaking at 'Would you squander . . . '.
- 186 *fox . . . lion*: imagery from fable, though matching no surviving example.
- 187 *Son of Atreus*: Agamemnon, leader of the Greek army at Troy. Stertinius imagines himself at Troy holding a dialogue with the mythical king.
Ajax: Greek hero of the Trojan War, embittered after the arms of Achilles were awarded to Ulysses rather than him, plotted to murder him along with Agamemnon and his brother Menelaus, but, driven mad by Athena so that he slaughtered livestock instead, he killed himself and was denied burial. The story is best known from Sophocles' *Ajax*, imitated by Ennius. Ajax is another exemplar of madness, but Stertinius again unexpectedly argues that Agamemnon is the true madman.
- 188 *'I am king'*: literally true, but not in the Stoic sense.
- 195 *Priam and Priam's people*: a phrase used several times in the *Iliad*.
- 199–200 *Aulis . . . a heifer's place*: Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia at the port of Aulis to gain fair winds for the expedition to Troy. Sacrificing a girl as though she were an animal inverts Ajax's 'madness' of killing sheep as if they were men.
- 203 *his wife and child*: Tecmessa and Eurysaces.
- 204 *Teucer*: Ajax's devoted half-brother.
- 216 *Rufa or Posilla*: common girls' names.
- 217–18 *the praetor . . . in their right mind*: the urban praetor was in charge of many legal matters, including decisions about rights and guardianship.
- 223 *Bellona*: goddess of war. The line has a mock-epic ring matching the mockery of martial glory.

- 228–9 *Etruscans' street* . . . *Velabrum*: the *Vicus Tuscus* was the main thoroughfare from the Forum Romanum to the Forum Boarium, famous for its shops, especially incense- and perfume-sellers. It formed the eastern boundary of the Velabrum, an area of low ground between the Palatine and Capitoline, noted as a commercial district and especially for its food-shops.
- 234 *Lucanian*: from a mountainous region of southern Italy, famous for its game.
- 237–8 *whose wife*: the mercenary complaisant husband is a common figure, and perhaps one of the targets of Augustan adultery legislation.
- 239 *Aesopus' son*: son of the actor M. Clodius Aesopus, whose extravagance with his massive inheritance is mentioned by Cicero and others.
Metella's ear: Caecilia Metella, daughter of Clodia, divorced wife of P. Lentulus Spinther.
- 244 *Quintus Arrius*: presumably the same as at line 84 above.
- 245 *nightingales*: not just expensive, but prized for their song rather than their flavour.
- 246 *chalk* . . . *charcoal*: imagery from the marking of auspicious and inauspicious days on a calendar.
- 249 *beard*: here a mark of an adult rather than a philosopher. Stertinius moves on to love.
- 252 *prostitute*: on the *meretrix*, see note on *Sat.* 1.4.111–12. They are common figures in New Comedy and the mistresses of Roman elegy share many of their features.
- 254 *Polemo*: philosopher of the fourth–third century BC and head of the Academy. When young he burst into a lecture on self-control by its then head Xenocrates and was converted.
- 255 *leg-bands* . . . *scarves*: the parallel between the physically ill invalid and the mentally ill lover is reinforced by the means they use to keep warm, one to recuperate, the other for spending cold nights outside his beloved's door as a locked-out lover (*exclusus amator*).
- 256 *garlands*: traditionally worn at drinking-parties (*symposia*).
- 259–60 *the locked-out lover*: a stock figure in Roman elegy, but H. here closely adapts a scene from New Comedy (one of elegy's influences), Terence's *The Eunuch*, which opens with the young man Phaedria soliloquizing outside the house of the courtesan Thais and receiving advice from his slave Parmeno. Compare also H.'s own attack on 'the thrill of the chase' at *Sat.* 1.2.96–110.
- 272–3 *when you squeeze* . . . *with one*: a game, not unlike that of throwing the dregs of a cup (*kottabos*), played at *symposia*, success at which was believed to augur success in love. Picenum (modern Marche) was a region on the central east coast of Italy whose apples are often mentioned with approval.
- 277 *Marius ran Hellas through*: evidently a Roman lover and his Greek (possibly courtesan) mistress, involved in a crime of passion showing how close the madness of love is to more widely acknowledged forms.

- 280 *applying* . . . *related*: i.e. since, to a Stoic, 'crime' and 'madness' are related concepts, the distinction commonly drawn between the two—as here in branding Marius a criminal not a madman—is false and purely linguistic.
- 281 *street-corner shrines*: to the *Lares Compitales*, tended by guilds of freedmen which were made illegal in the late Republic but restored by Augustus.
- 284 *easy task for gods*: a humorous application of a notion which goes back to Homer.
- 286 *warranty*: there was a legal obligation to declare any flaws when selling a slave.
- 287 *the prolific clan of Menenius*: evidently 'the mad', but the reference is obscure. The most famous Menenius persuaded the plebs to end their secession from Rome in 494 BC but any possible connection is unclear.
- 290 *quartan fever*: one recurring every three days, the fourth (*quartus*) day counting inclusively, and considered mild, hence the mother's actions are even more deranged.
- 295 *Fear of the gods*: Stertinius' lecture ends on a note closer to Epicureanism than Stoicism.
- 296 *eighth of the sages*: i.e. worthy to join the Seven Sages of archaic Greece.
- 297 *revenge*: Damasippus sees Stertinius' doctrine as a means and justification for petty reprisal.
- 299 *what hangs* . . . *notice*: Stertinius' reassurance at line 53 is turned into a basis for reciprocal name-calling.
- 303 *Agave*: another tragic type of madness, here from the final scene of Euripides' *Bacchae*; the mother of Pentheus, king of Thebes, driven mad by Dionysus, who tore him to pieces with the other Theban women and carried the head to her father Cadmus in the belief that it was a lion's.
- 308 *engaged in building*: as a sign of ambition and an attempt to 'get above himself'.
- 309 *your full height*: H. admits to being short in *Ep.* 1.20.
- 310 *Turbo's*: 'Whirlwind'; Porph. plausibly suggests a short gladiator, while Ps.-Acro adds a short soldier as an alternative.
- 314–20 *mother frog* . . . *large*: a fable found in Babrius and Phaedrus illustrating the dangers of the small imitating the great; some argue the details are inappropriate and show Damasippus' incompetence, but the meaning of fables tends to be based on the moral rather than the details.

SATIRE 2.4

A certain Catus is hurrying home from a lecture on gastronomy to write down what he has heard, but is persuaded by H. to recite it to him from memory. The speech absurdly treats the art of cookery and hospitality in terms more suited to natural and moral philosophy.

- 1 *Catius*: there is much debate over his identity, candidates including an Epicurean philosopher (playing on the misconception of that philosophy as advocating gourmandizing) and an Insubrian Gaul mentioned in Cicero's letters.
- 3 *Pythagoras*: sixth-century BC philosopher, whose advocacy of vegetarianism and abstinence from beans may add point to his inclusion here.
- the man Anytus put in the dock*: Socrates; Anytus was among those who successfully prosecuted him for corrupting the young and introducing new gods in 399 BC.
- 11 *secret*: probably a deliberate tease on the part of Catius and H.
- 12 *eggs*: traditional starter of a Roman dinner and hence of Catius' lecture.
- 19 *Falernian*: see note on Sat. 1.10.24.
- 24 *Aufidius*: unknown. It is typical of didactic to correct predecessors, but the quibble here is trumped by Ofellus' ridicule of mixing honey and wine at all at Sat. 2.2.15–16.
- 29 *white wine from Cos*: mixed with sea water as a laxative and not necessarily from Cos.
- 32 *Lucrine*: coastal lagoon between Puteoli and Baiae, famous for its shellfish.
- Baiae*: fashionable seaside resort on the Bay of Naples.
- 33 *Circeii*: modern Circeo, a promontory and colony on the west coast of Italy about 60 miles south of Rome.
- Misenum*: town near the cape at the north end of the Bay of Naples.
- 34 *Tarentum*: see note on Sat. 1.6.59.
- 39 *elbow*: Roman diners reclined on a couch, propped on one elbow.
- 40 *Umbria*: a region in eastern central Italy.
- 42 *Laurentian*: from Laurentum, on the west coast, south of Ostia.
- 46 *no palate before mine . . . anyone*: a parody of the philosopher's claim to original discoveries.
- 51 *Massic wine*: a type of Falernian from the Mons Massicus in Campania.
- 55 *Sorrento's wine*: Sorrento, on the Bay of Naples, was noted for its lighter wine.
- 62 *cookshops*: *popinae*, low shops selling basic 'take-away' food to the poor. The prawns and snails are an elegant substitute for the ancient equivalents of kebabs craved by the drunk.
- 63 *It's worth your while*: see note on Sat. 1.2.37.
- 66 *Byzantium*: modern Istanbul, not yet of course the capital of the Eastern Empire, but presumably a processor of fish from the Black Sea.
- 68 *Corycian*: from Corycus in Cilicia, southern Asia Minor, source of the best saffron.
- 69 *Venafran*: from Venafrum in northern Campania, a famed source of olive oil.

- 70 *Tibur's*: modern Tivoli, ancient city north-east of Rome.
- Picenum's*: see note on Sat. 2.3.272–3.
- 71 *Venuculum's*: unknown, but source of a famous grain as well as grape.
- 72 *Alba*: the Alban hills in Latium produced fine wine.
- 73 *I was first*: identifying the first inventor (*prōtos heuretēs*) of skills is a common motif, but both the self-glorification and the triviality of the discoveries are parodic.
- 76–7 *a gargantuan error . . . in a narrow dish*: what starts like a moralizing condemnation of extravagant expenditure on fish in the manner of Ofellus bathetically concludes as a ruling on elegance.
- 84 *Tyrian purple*: Tyre in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) was famous for its very expensive purple dye made from shellfish.
- 88 *learned*: *doctus* puns on the fact that Catius has been 'taught' all this and is merely parroting it. H.'s enthusiasm is ironic.
- 91 *interpreting*: suggests a priest or sibyl communicating the oracles of a god.
- 94 *sequestered . . . to drink deep*: an allusion to Lucretius, in keeping with the satire's odd relationship with Epicureanism.

SATIRE 2.5

The shade of the seer Tiresias continues his address to Ulysses where he left off in *Odyssey* 11 with advice on how to restore his wealth by the very first-century Roman practice of legacy-hunting (*captatio*), whereby people flattered and cultivated the childless rich in the hope of becoming their heirs. Much of the humour derives from the incongruity of the witty connections drawn between the world of heroic epic and that of contemporary satire.

- 1 *Tiresias*: blind Theban seer, featuring in numerous tragedies, but here in his Homeric role as a shade in *Odyssey* 11.
- 2 *lost wealth*: a recurrent motif of the *Odyssey* is the suitors' consumption of Ulysses' wealth by constant feasting.
- 3–5 *'Is it no longer enough . . . his ancestral home?'*: a metapoetic joke, since the aim of the Homeric epic hero is insufficient for his reimagining in Roman satire. The word for home, *penates* (lit. 'household gods'), helps to Romanize the scene.
- 6 *as you prophesied*: a tendentious reading of Tiresias' words in *Odyssey* 11 referring to Ulysses' disguise as a beggar. Again, note how Ulysses looks back to a prophecy uttered centuries ago in real time, but a moment earlier in dramatic time.
- 10 *thrush*: a deliberately anachronistic, Roman touch.
- 14 *Lar*: see note on Sat. 2.3.165. The offerings are probably the 'first fruits' (*primitiae*).
- 17 *on his outside*: to protect him from splashes and bumps from the road.

- 18 *Dama*: typical slave name; the juxtaposition with Troy is particularly (but still deliberately) jarring.
- 20 *I will bid . . . this*: an allusion to Ulysses' address to his soul in *Odyssey* 20, but 'this' turns out to be not poverty but the self-abasement necessary for legacy-hunting.
- 29–30 *make yourself the advocate*: defending someone in court was a common *officium*, or favour, in the reciprocal world of Roman elite relationships, and as such could be more cynically employed by the *captator*. The childless, of course, lack obvious heirs.
- 30–1 *have nothing . . . home*: having heirs or a wife capable of producing them makes the man who would otherwise be more deserving of no interest to the *captator*.
- 32 *first names*: the use of *praenomina*, the first of a Roman's 'three names', signals close friendship.
- 38 *attorney*: a *cognitor* had full authority to represent the plaintiff or defendant and present his case in court.
- 39 *Dog-star*: see note on *Sat.* 1.7.25–6.
- 40–1 *Furius . . . Alps*: i.e. it is cold and wintry. H. adapts a line later cited by Quintilian as an example of forced imagery, in which Jupiter spits snow on the Alps. H. makes the poet do what he describes, as he did with probably the same epicist at *Sat.* 1.10.36 (see note). Bramble argues that the poet bloated with tripe symbolizes the bloated rhetoric of the line, and he vomits the snow as a result (J. C. Bramble, *Persius and the Programmatic Satire* (Cambridge, 1974), 64–6).
- 44 *More tunny . . . swell*: picking up the fishing imagery of lines 24–6 above.
- 46 *acknowledged*: lit. 'lifted up', as a Roman father would to acknowledge that a son was his.
- 48–9 *second heir*: to inherit should the first heir die.
Orcus: the Underworld, in grandiloquent epic language.
- 50 *this game*: the image is of a throw of the die (*alea*).
- 53–4 *second line*: containing the legatee's name; the first gave that of the will's maker.
- 56 *public clerk . . . raven*: respectively, the actual status of Coranus and a metaphorical description of Nasica, stressing the greed and rapacity of the *captator*. Tiresias speaks in the riddling language of oracles, since this anecdote from 30s BC Rome must be a prophecy of the future in the era of the Trojan War. The names suggest the small-town man from Cora and an aristocrat, perhaps fallen on hard times.
- 59 *Laertes*: Ulysses' father; the patronymic is another jarring epic touch.
- 60 *Apollo*: god of prophecy.
- 62–4 *a youth . . . by land and sea*: Octavian, in more riddling oracular language, with a hint of panegyric. On the Parthians, see note on *Sat.* 2.1.13–15.

- Aeneas, as well as being the founder of the Roman people, was ancestor of the Julian *gens* through his son Iulus and hence of Julius Caesar and Octavian.
- 64–5 *stately . . . full*: clearly the marriage is an attempt by Nasica to ingratiate himself and become Coranus' heir; Nasica's debt is obscure, but probably not owed to Coranus and simply indicates his financial need and hence motive for legacy-hunting.
- 76 *Penelope*: Ulysses' wife; the suggestion of prostituting her is the more shocking since she was famous for her faithfulness during his twenty years' absence, despite many importunate suitors.
- 80 *frugal in giving a lot*: a cynical take on Penelope's demand in *Odyssey* 18 that the suitors bring gifts instead of eating up the palace's wealth. Tiresias implies that, if they had been more generous, she would have yielded.
- 83 *dog . . . hide*: based on a Greek proverb but translating the sound rather than the sense of the Greek *chorion* ('afterbirth') with the Latin *corium* ('hide').
- 84 *When I was old*: amusing variation on 'when I were a lad', relying on the two factors of Tiresias' being a ghost and his having a lifetime of seven generations.
- 89 *don't fall short . . . all proportion*: H.'s ideal of moderation, but perverted to immoral ends.
- 91 *Be Davus in the comedy*: a common slave name, especially in Roman comedy, where the cunning slave was a stock character.
- 106–9 *fellow heirs . . . pittance*: hence winning the favour of a new potential testator.
- 110 *Proserpina*: wife of Pluto and queen of the Underworld.

SATIRE 2.6

H. prays to Mercury for a simple life in the countryside and, from the quietude of his Sabine farm, contrasts the joys of rustic life with the bustle of the city and the business he has to conduct there. The comparison (*synkrisis*) is crowned by the description of a simple, rustic dinner-party at which Cervius tells the famous fable of the town mouse and the country mouse.

- 5 *O Son of Maia*: Mercury, son of Jupiter and Maia, one of the Pleiades. He is associated with property and transactions in general, as here, as well as trade specifically, as at *Sat.* 2.3.25.
- 13 *Hercules*: in Rome and Italy, a multi-faceted god who had a particular association with benefactions to individuals and communities.
- 14 *fat*: though we say 'fat-headed', it is hard to bring out the play on *pinguis*, which means 'plump' of livestock and 'dull' of wits.
- 16 *my citadel in the mountains*: a humorously incongruous designation for the Sabine farm, but one which does point to its remoteness and protection from the evils of the city.

- 17 *my Muse who goes on foot*: emphasizing the low subject matter and plain style of satire, in contrast to epic and other lofty genres, which might either soar or ride in chariots.
- 19 *unhealthy autumn*: season of fevers at Rome.
Libitina: goddess of funerals.
- 20 *Father . . . 'Janus'*: Pater Matutinus is otherwise unknown but may (actually or in invented wordplay) be related to the goddess Mater Matuta. Janus was the two-faced god of doorways and hence associated with beginnings (including that of the year, with January), but in the context of city life, there is probably also an allusion to the mercantile 'central Janus' (see note on *Sat.* 2.3.18–19).
- 27 *stated . . . what may do me harm*: either the promise to pay the debt if the friend defaults, or the terms of the oath stating what should happen to him if he breaks it.
- 32 *This . . . like honey*: i.e. the mention of Maecenas.
- 33 *Esquiline*: gloomy because of its former concentration of cemeteries, and the focus of H.'s visit because of Maecenas' house there (on both, see *Sat.* 1.8).
- 35 *Roscius*: unknown and a common name, but perhaps playing on *roscidus*, 'of the dew', since he wishes to meet at the (for H.) ungodly hour of 8 a.m.
the Well: the Puteal in the Comitium, near the Forum, was a common location for financial transactions.
- 36 *Treasury-officials*: such *scribae* were unelected public officials.
- 37 *Quintus*: H.'s *praenomen*.
- 44 *Chicken . . . Syrus*: gladiators. A Thracian was a type of gladiator, armed with a round shield and curved sword. 'Chicken' carries none of the modern connotations of cowardice, but the feminine *Gallina* is hardly complimentary.
- 45 *morning . . . care*: weather, the universal subject of small-talk.
- 46 *leaky ear*: meaning, not that Maecenas fears H. would let his words 'go in one ear and out the other', but that his indiscreet *mouth* would 'leak' what had been 'dropped' into his ear. Considering the depiction of their relationship elsewhere, this must be ironic.
- 48 *our friend*: H. himself, who continues to speak of himself in the third person in the next sentence where 'he' (H.) is at the games with 'him' (Maecenas).
- 49 *Campus*: see note on *Sat.* 1.1.91.
- 50 *Rostra*: the platform in the Forum from which orators spoke to the people, so called from the fixing of the beaks of ships (*rostra*) to it as trophies of war.
- 52 *closer contact with the gods*: sneering hyperbole for H.'s influential friends, probably with no reference to Octavian's future deification.

- Dacians*: a tribe from north of the Danube, best known from the much later expedition of Trajan commemorated on his column, but at this time hostile to Octavian's Rome owing to their allegiance to Antony.
- 55–6 *veterans . . . promised*: see note on *Sat.* 2.2.112–14.
- 63 *beans, Pythagoras' kinsmen*: a simple food suiting the simple life on the Sabine farm. Pythagoras forbade the eating of beans on the same grounds as meat, since human souls might have transmigrated into them. H.'s phrase humorously exaggerates the claim.
- 66 *house-bred slaves*: *vernae*, as opposed to bought slaves; they were often considered more loyal and more closely integrated into the household.
- 67–70 *well watered . . . with moderate ones*: Romans generally drank their wine diluted, and at symposia the level of dilution (as well as other arrangements) was determined by the *magister bibendi* ('master of drinking'). No such restrictions or sophistications apply at this relaxed, rustic party.
- 72 *Lepos*: evidently a dancer in pantomime, which bore no relation to its modern namesake, but was a sort of solo ballet on mythological themes accompanied by chorus. The name means 'Charm' or 'Sophistication'.
- 77 *Cervius*: unknown, but the name is attested.
- 77–8 *old wives' tales*: a felicitously literal translation of *aniles fabellas*, but the Latin lacks the English phrase's suggestion of superstition and traditions with no basis in fact; rather it marks this as a beast fable in the tradition of Aesop, appropriate for an old woman to tell by the fire, in contrast to the sophisticated repartee of an urban symposium.
- 78 *Arellius*: unknown, but presumably a city-dweller as well as a rich man.
- 106 *purple*: a mark of luxury, owing to expense of its production from seashells and of its importation.
- 109 *first . . . serves*: a murine variation on the slave 'first tasting' (*praelambens* as opposed to *praegustans*) the master's food to make sure it was not poisoned.
- 114–15 *Molossian hounds*: from the territory of the Molossi in Epirus, north-west Greece, noted for their strength.

SATIRE 2.7

H.'s slave Davus takes advantage of the licence granted slaves at the Saturnalia to speak freely to upbraid his master for his moral failings. In particular, he elaborates on ideas he has heard from the doorkeeper of the Stoic philosopher Crispinus to prove that, since by Stoic doctrine everyone except the wise man is a slave, H. is a slave to his passions for sex and food and hence no freer than he. H.'s response is to threaten Davus with hard labour.

- 2 *Davus*: a classic name for the crafty slave of Roman comedy and H. uses it to refer to the stock character at *Sat.* 1.10.40, 2.5.91, *AP* 237. H.'s slave is thus aligned with a theatrical type.

- 3 *bought slave*: such *mancipia* were considered less integrated into and hence less devoted to their master's household than house-bred *vernae* (cf. note on *Sat.* 2.6.66).
- 4 *the freedom December allows*: at the Saturnalia (see note on *Sat.* 2.3.5).
- 9 *Priscus*: the name means 'ancient', with connotations of old-fashioned morality, so is ironic for such a figure.
- 10 *change his stripe*: an allusion to the stripe on the toga, whose thickness differentiated senators, knights, and other ranks, but perhaps meant in a loose, metaphorical sense here.
- 13 *man of letters*: specifically a philosopher, for which Athens was famous and in contrast to the unethical philanderer.
- 14 *Vertumnus*: Etruscan god of change; the association with Priscus is obvious, but the reason for deducing his hostility is presumably that the latter does not benefit from his changeability.
- 15 *jester Volanerius*: on the *scurra*, see note on *Sat.* 1.4.87-9; Volanerius is unknown and his name has no obvious resonance.
gout he had earned: traditionally through overindulgence.
- 20 *man . . . now slack*: a figurative phrase for one who has equal difficulties in dealing with contrasting conditions, perhaps an allusion to towing a barge or adjusting the rigging of a ship.
- 22 *con-man*: lit. 'fork-bearer' (*furcifer*), a common term of generalized abuse for a slave in comedy alluding to a form of punishment in which a fork-shaped yoke was attached to the victim's arms.
- 30 *carefree greens*: on the ethical connotations of simple food, see note on *Sat.* 1.6.114-16 and *Sat.* 2.2 as a whole; indeed Davus is alluding to H.'s praise of the simple life in precisely these passages and others like them.
- 36 *Mulvius*: evidently a *scurra* who, with the other parasites, is robbed of their expected dinner with H. now that the latter is going to Maecenas'.
- 43 *five hundred drachmas*: an average price for a slave; the Greek currency may be an allusion to the Greek settings of Roman comedy.
- 45 *Crispinus' doorkeeper*: like Damasippus and Catius, Davus is parroting someone else's argument, but here filtered through another intermediary (also a slave). Since the argument is based on the Stoic doctrine that 'all fools are slaves', Crispinus is probably the Stoic philosopher of *Sat.* 1.1.120, 1.3.139, and 1.4.14.
- 46 *You . . . by a whore*: the first part of Davus' argument is almost precisely that offered by H. in *Sat.* 1.2.
- 47 *cross*: see note on *Sat.* 1.3.82.
- 49 *tail's*: the male genitalia, rather than the female, as in US slang.
- 50 *ridden . . . horse*: sex with the woman on top was considered less respectable, since it gave her a symbolically dominant position and, according to Lucretius, impeded conception, thus rendering the act purely sensual.

The prostitute's nakedness in full light, as well as the crude language, all contribute to the lowness of the scene.

- 52 *piss*: i.e. ejaculate, a common but crude metaphor.
- 53 *knight's ring*: a gold ring was a mark of equestrian rank.
- 54 *Roman dress*: the toga, as opposed to the slave's tunic.
juror: i.e. someone both eligible to serve on a jury and of suitably sound character.
Dama: another typical slave name, like Davus, meaning here a 'slave' in the Stoic sense.
- 59 *gladiator*: bankrupts might be reduced to making a living by becoming gladiators, and hence slaves.
- 62 *lawful power over both parties*: i.e. the right to kill them, always true of slaves and also of adulterers caught in the act until Augustus' adultery law of 18 B.C. A husband also had the right to kill his adulterous wife, which might be relevant to what follows.
- 63-7 *His power . . . reputation*: a difficult and controversial passage. In the context of Davus' overall argument and in particular the gladiator parallel, the comparison ought still to be between slave and adulterer; if so, the contrastive *illa tamen . . . non* ('she doesn't, after all . . .') must compare the adulterous matrona with the slave's prostitute, which would fit the contrast in sexual positions, though the sentence as a whole probably reads more naturally as contrasting the wife with the *adulterer*, the latter being more to blame, and that is how this translation renders it. The relationship of the wife's fear and mistrust to the lover's self-enslavement is not entirely clear either, and line 65 may be an interpolation, though it could make sense meaning 'although' the wife feels like this, and hence does not surrender to her emotions, the adulterer does. In any case, there is a double meaning in the lover's risk of actual degrading punishment more appropriate to a slave while also becoming a 'slave' to the 'furious master' passion according to Stoic doctrine. The stocks relate to the *furcifer* of line 22. It may be foolish to try to make totally consistent sense out of Davus' garbled diatribe, but we should beware of giving up too easily.
- 76 *magistrate's rod of liberty*: the *vindicta* was used symbolically by a magistrate in the act of manumission to give a slave his freedom; in some texts, the *vindicta* is the ritual and the rod called *festuca*. Davus, of course, is using it metaphorically of the Stoic 'slave'.
- 79-80 *"deputy" . . . "co-slave"*: a *vicarius* was a slave owned by another slave, and hence subject to his orders, but either because he was also ultimately under the control of his owner's master or simply because both were slaves, he could be conceived of as a *conservus*. Since H. is a 'slave' in Stoic terms, his real slave Davus could fall under either of these headings.
- 82 *strings that other hands pull*: primarily the passions to which H. is enslaved, but in the years of transition from Republic to principate, this must have some political resonance.

- 83 *The wise man*: specifically the Stoic ideal of the *sapiens*.
- 86 *smooth and round*: Davus is either elaborating on or misunderstanding the Stoic notion of god as like a perfect sphere.
- 88 *Fortune*: the capricious, unpredictable element of chance which still existed within, but was quite separate from, the Stoic notion of a grand providential Fate, and to whose whims the *sapiens* was immune.
- 90 *A woman*: evidently a courtesan or at least a mercenary girlfriend.
- 93 *pitiless master*: erotic passion, figured as a horse-rider.
- 95 *Pausias*: fourth-century BC painter from Sicyon in the northern Peloponnese, famous for his paintings of boys and flowers; the main contrast between these and pictures of gladiators is the sophistication of taste and social rank to which they appeal, but there is also a contrast between effeminacy (is H. 'languishing' over the boys as well as the pictures?) and virility.
- 96-7 *Fulvius . . . Pacideianus*: gladiators.
- 105 *a beating*: a regular punishment for slaves, over whom their masters had rights of life and death, in real life but also a stock motif in comedy.
- 110 *body-scraper*: a *strigil* was used to scrape oil, sweat, and dirt from the skin in bath houses.
- 116 *stone . . . arrows*: respectively suggest chasing a dog and the weapons of Apollo.
- 117 *crazy . . . verse*: the association of poetry with inspiration is distorted into one with madness also at the end of *Sat.* 2.3 and of the *AP*. Fitzgerald ingeniously notes that *versus* is an anagram of *servus* in the poem's first line (W. Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, 2000), 24).
- 118 *or else . . . farm*: a common threat in comedy.

SATIRE 2.8

The comic poet Fundanius tells H. about a dinner-party (*cena*) held by the nouveau riche Nasidienus, attended by Maecenas, Varius Rufus, and other notables. Though it can be hard for a modern reader to be sure exactly which aspects of the *cena* betray Nasidienus' lack of taste and 'class', his main—perhaps only—fault is to describe in tedious and socially inept detail the exotic provenance of each dish and the gastronomically precise techniques of its preparation. After an accident with some tapestries, Nasidienus brings in yet more dishes with yet more descriptions, provoking his guests to leave suddenly.

- 3 *from midday*: an early start for a Roman dinner, allowing more time for luxurious ostentation and indulgence.
- 5 *angry stomach*: the Latin *iratus uenter* plays on the two meanings of *stomachus*: stomach and anger.
- 6 *To start with*: the hors d'oeuvres (*gustatio*) usually consisted of lighter fare than *boar*, an early sign both of luxury and misjudgement.

Lucania: see note on *Sat.* 2.3.234.

- 7 *the father of the feast*: Nasidienus, ironically expressed.
gentle . . . blowing: H., citing Ofellus, warned at 2.2.41 that the hot sirocco can make *boar* go off; evidently this wind was less fierce, but it sounds as if Nasidienus means that it has positively beneficial effects on flavour.
- 7-9 *sharp-tasting . . . Coan wine*: closer to the normal fare of the *gustatio*.
- 10 *tunic tucked up high*: to show off the legs of a beautiful slave-boy.
- 11 *wiped . . . cloth*: an allusion to Lucilius (fr. 598 *ROL*), which might suggest further parallels to the *cena* given by Granius in one of Lucilius' satires.
- 13-14 *like . . . Ceres*: ceremoniously, like the *kanēphoroi*, most famously associated with the procession at the Panathenaia, but evidently also associated with rites of Demeter (Ceres) such as the Thesmophoria.
- Hydaspes*: the expensively imported Indian slave is named after a river in the Punjab.
- 15 *Caecuban*: famous wine from southern Latium.
Alcon: evidently a Greek slave to bear the Greek wine.
Chian: famous Greek wine from the Aegean island of Chios.
without sea-water: too good for such dilution, but *maris experts* also means 'lacking in manhood'.
- 16 *Alban . . . Falernian*: see notes on *Sat.* 2.4.72 and 1.10.24 respectively.
Maecenas: the first indication that he is present.
- 19 *Fundanius*: see note on *Sat.* 1.10.42; the identity of H.'s interlocutor is at last revealed and his being a writer of comedies is clearly appropriate.
- 20-1 *Viscus . . . Varius*: see notes on *Sat.* 1.10.85 and third on 1.5.40 respectively. The three poets are seated together.
Servilius the Jester: taking *balatro* as a name or nickname, rather than as his role, though he clearly is a *scurra*; the name Servilius might also hint at his slavish role.
- 22 *Vibidius*: unknown.
extras: lit. 'shadows' (*umbrae*), hangers-on brought along uninvited by invited guests.
- 23 *Nomentanus . . . Hog*: Nasidienus' clients. There is no strong reason for differentiating the former from the recurrent spendthrift (see note on *Sat.* 1.1.101). The latter's name, Porcius, is clearly and immediately linked to his gluttony.
- 25-6 *point out . . . our attention*: Nasidienus' tedious and socially inept insistence on detailing the sophistications of the *cena* to his guests is compounded by his employment of Nomentanus to cover any points he omits.
- 31-2 *moon is on the wane*: more likely than 'not yet full' as the meaning of *minorem ad lunam*. The claim is over-fussy as well as absurdly superstitious.
- 34 *we'll die unavenged*: a vague assertion of determination, with mock-epic colouring.

- 35 *larger cups*: usually reserved for the symposium after the *cena*.
- 36 *caterer*: a *parochus* provided food and other necessities to travelling magistrates; by reducing Nasidienus to this level, Fundanius denies him the social role of host.
- 39 *Allifanian*: from the town of Allifae (modern Alife) in Samnium; the point is evidently that such cups were large, but this is the only evidence for that.
- 40–1 *guests on the bottom couch*: Nomentanus and Porcius, showing respect to Nasidienus' feelings.
- 42 *moray eel*: fish were a luxury and this is at the top end of the scale; there does not seem to be anything wrong with his choice of fish, dish, or accompaniment here.
- 45 *Venafran*: see note on *Sat.* 2.4.69.
- 46 *sauce . . . fish from Spain*: the *garum* so widely used in Graeco-Roman cooking, of which Pliny claims the best was made from Spanish mackerel.
Methymna: city on Lesbos.
- 51 *I was first*: see note on *Sat.* 2.4.73.
elecampane: a herb also known as horse-heal, recommended by Ofellus at 2.2.44 (there translated 'tart pickles').
- 52 *Curtillus*: unknown, but the citation of an authority recalls the pseudo-scientific tone of Catius in *Sat.* 2.4.
- 58 *Rufus*: evidently Nasidienus' *cognomen*.
- 65–74 "*These are the terms . . . conceals it*": in contrast to Nomentanus' philosophizing consolation, which is ironically absurd to Fundanius and H., but sincerely meant by the sycophantic client, Jester is clearly mocking the aggrandizing application of such ideas to the trivialities of the *cena*. Nevertheless, Nasidienus takes him at his word.
- 77 *slippers*: a sign that he is about to leave the dining room.
- 79–80 *I'd have preferred . . . after these*: H.'s first words in *propria persona* for a while and his last in the *Satires*.
- 84 *back you come*: the apostrophe, or address of a character, could be a mock-epic touch or, conversely, add to the informal vividness of Fundanius' narrative.
- 86–92 *carrying . . . real delicacies*: the luxury and excess are part of the absurdity, but Fundanius makes it clear that the guests would have enjoyed them were it not for their host's pedantic and inappropriate description of every detail of their provenance and preparation, a description which Fundanius himself mimics here.
- 92–3 *origins and properties*: ironically evoking the language of natural philosophy.
- 95–5 *off we ran . . . them*: an abrupt ending to the *cena*, the poem, the book, and H.'s satiric corpus proper (though the *Epistles* are close kin), without even the unsatisfying comments of H. himself which close 2.3 and 2.7. On Canidia, see note on *Sat.* 1.8.24, though the emphasis is on her as

poisoner rather than witch (albeit the two were related) as at 2.1.48. The snakes of the province of Africa (roughly modern Tunisia) were proverbially venomous.

EPISTLES, BOOK 1

EPISTLE 1.1

H. writes to Maecenas to explain that he has 'retired' from the writing of trivial lyric and is now concentrating on philosophy—though without strictly adhering to any one school—and the question of how to live well. He provides some preliminary thoughts, stressing the superiority of virtue over wealth and political power, and that it is possible to improve a little, even if perfection is unattainable.

- 1 *my earliest Muse*: i.e. in *Satires* 1.
- 2 *wooden baton*: given to a gladiator when he retired, as H. has from writing lyric.
- 5–6 *Veianius . . . temple*: a gladiator who, like tradesmen, has marked his retirement by dedicating his 'tools' to a god; cf. *Sat.* 1.5.65–6. The Roman Hercules was particularly associated with gladiators.
- 7 *I have someone*: an allusion to Socrates' similar claim to hear an admonishing voice.
- 10 *verses*: i.e. the lyric of the *Odes*; the *Epistles*, as a form of satire, do not claim to be real poetry; see note on *Sat.* 1.4.42.
- 14 *there's no master . . . loyalty to*: H. denies being a doctrinaire adherent of any philosophical school, using military and gladiatorial imagery from the swearing of oaths to generals and trainers respectively.
- 16–17 *I become active . . . virtue*: i.e. as a Stoic.
- 18 *Aristippus*: see note on *Sat.* 2.3.100. He is prominent in *Ep.* 1.17 and his adaptability contrasts with the rigidity of Stoic ethics.
- 28 *Lynceus*: preternaturally and proverbially keen-sighted watchman of the *Argo*.
- 29 *blear-eyed*: the imagery of sight and conjunctivitis continues from the *Satires*.
- 30 *Glycon's physique*: a contemporary athlete competing in the *pankration*, a combination of boxing and wrestling.
- 33 *fever*: the medical imagery shifts from parallel to metaphor.
- 34 *sayings*: philosophical maxims acting like magical incantations.
- 37 *read the booklet three times*: as in rituals, but using a philosophical treatise rather than a book of spells.
- 38 *the slave*: this word is not in the Latin, but is consistent with the wider imagery of this epistle.
- 49 *villages and crossways*: alluding to the festivals associated with them (Paganalia at *pagi*, villages, and Compitalia at *compites*, crossways) at which prizefights would be held.