

THE LOVES
THE ART OF BEAUTY
THE REMEDIES FOR LOVE

and

OMD

THE ART OF LOVE

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A MIDLAND ORIGINAL

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BOOK

II

Give the victory cry, and give it over, and over!
 What I have sought, I have won: give the victory cry!
 Happy, the lover brings green palms to the poem I have written:
 Homer and Hesiod yield, in his opinion, to me.
 Paris was joyful, so, when he spread the sail from Amyclae,
 Bearing his stolen bride over the shine of the sea.
 Pelops knew this mood when his car was triumphant in Elis,
 When his foreign wheels took Hippodamia home.
 Not so fast, young man! Your vessel sails in mid-ocean,
 Far away, still, is the port; harbor and heaven are far.
 It is by no means enough to have won your girl through my singing;
 What you have won by my art, art must instruct you to hold.
 Seeking is all very well, but holding requires greater talent:
 Seeking involves some luck; now the demand is for skill.
 Now, if ever, be kind, be gracious, Venus and Cupid,
 Favor my work, O Muse named for the power of love!
 Great is the scope of my plan—to tell how to keep him a captive,
 Love, that vagabond boy, flitting all over the world.
 He has two wings for his flight, he is fickle and light and capricious;
 Pinning his pinions down—that is the problem we face.

Minos, you may recall, had blocked the land and the water,
 Daedalus made his escape, bold in his path through the air.
 Once the inventor contrived the labyrinth holding the monster,
 Bull and man in one, proving the guilt of the queen,
 Then he spoke to the king: "Be kind to me, Minos the righteous:
 Let my exile end; let me return to my home.
 There I might not live, because the fates were against me;
 There, in the land I love, let me be able to die.
 Or let my son return, if his father's service is nothing;
 If you must keep the son, then let the father return."
 That was all he said; he might have said more. To what purpose?
 Minos had less to say, only the one word, "No!"
 When he knew the truth, he spoke again, but in secret,
 Spoke to his heart alone: "Daedalus, now is the time,
 Use your master craft. Minos controls earth and ocean;
 Neither water nor land gives us a pathway of flight.
 But the way of the sky is free, and we shall attempt it;
 Jove on high, be kind: favor my desperate aim.
 Yours is the only way by which I can flee from the tyrant.
 I have in me no design on the bright stars of your crown.
 If we could go by the Styx, we would swim the Stygian waters;
 I must devise new laws strange to the nature of man."
 Troubles are good for the wits, for who would ever imagine
 Mankind could learn to rise, soaring the lanes of the air?
 Daedalus fashioned wings, arranged the feathers in order,
 Bound them with linen and wax; soon the marvel was done.
 Daedalus' son stood by, fooling with wax and the feathers,
 Happy, like any boy, all unaware of the why.
 Daedalus spoke: "My son, those are the ships we must sail on,
 Those are our comfort, our aid, fleeing this tyrannous land.
 Minos blocks everything else, but the air is not his dominion:
 There is our element; follow my art through the air.
 But be careful; avoid the sight of Callisto, Orion,
 Keep your gaze away from the Great Wain and the Bear.

Follow me where I lead, as I go flying before you;
 You will be safe if you go following where I may lead,
 For, if we go too high, toward the fierce and violent sunlight,
 The wax from the wings will dissolve under the heat of the air,
 And if we go too low, too closely skimming the waters,
 Feathers will lose their lift, weighted by spray and by wave.
 Fly between them both, and avoid the turbulence also,
 Where the breeze is light, son, let it bear you along."
 With the advice he fits the wings to the boy, and he shows him
 How the wings should be moved, fledgling instruction in flight,
 Then he puts on his own, attends to their careful adjustment,
 Hovers, a little afraid, for the new road of the air,
 And, about to take off, remembers, and kisses the youngster—
 Once is hardly enough—and there are tears in his eyes.
 There was a little hill, not half as big as a mountain,
 Rising above the plain; that was their launching-ground.
 Daedalus, moving his wings, looked back to watch his companion,
 Held on his level course, both of them truly air-borne.
 Now it's a wonderful way, and all the fear is forgotten;
 Icarus soars aloft, bolder, more proud of his skill,
 While far off, far down, some angler, watching below them,
 Looks at the sky, and his hand almost lets go of the line.
 Samos was off to their left; they had passed over Naxos and Paros,
 Passed over Delos, the isle where great Apollo was born.
 On their right was Lebynthus, Calymne, dark with its woodland,
 Astypalae's fort, ringed with the fish-haunted seas,
 When the boy, too bold, too young, too ambitious in daring,
 Forced his way too high, leaving his father below,
 So the bonds of the wings were loosened, the fastenings melted,
 Nor could the moving arms hold in the desert of air.
 Panic seized him: he stared from heaven's height at the water;
 In the rush of his fear, darkness brimmed in his eyes.
 All of the wax was gone: his arms were bare as he struggled
 Beating the void of the air, unsupported, unstayed.

"Father!" he cried as he fell, "Oh, father, father, I'm falling!"
 Till the green of the wave closed on the agonized cry,
 While the father, alas, a father no longer, was calling,
 "Icarus, where do you fly, Icarus, where in the sky?"
 "Icarus!" he would call—and saw the wings on the water.
 Now earth covers his bones; now that sea has his name.

So, if King Minos could not control the wings of a mortal,
 Why should a poet essay holding the wings of a god?
 It's a delusion and snare to resort to Thessalian magic,
 No use at all the charm snatched from the brow of the foal.
 None of Medea's herbs can keep a passion from dying,
 Nor are Marsian spells any more use in the end.
 If incantations were sound, Medea would still be with Jason,
 Nor would Ulysses have left Circe's enamoring isle.
 Philters are senseless, too, and dangerous; girls have gone crazy,
 Given a dose in disguise; philters can damage the brain.
 Let unholy things be taboo. If you want her to love you,
 Be a lovable man; a face and a figure won't do.
 You might have all the good looks that appealed to the sea-nymphs,
 or Homer;
 That's not enough, you will find; add some distinction of mind.
 Beauty's a fragile boon, and the years are quick to destroy it,
 Always diminished with time, never enduring too long.
 Violets always fade, and the bloom departs from the lily;
 When the roses are gone, nothing is left but the thorn.
 Look, my handsome young man, gray hairs will come in your life-
 time,
 Soon the wrinkles will plough furrows in cheek and in brow,
 So, make a soul to endure, a spirit to go with the body;
 Spirit and soul will abide, up to the ultimate fire.
 Culture is surely worth while, and the liberal arts are a blessing:
 Take some trouble to learn two great languages well.

Handsome, Ulysses was not, but his eloquence charmed with its
power

Goddesses out of the sea, burning to grant him their love.
Ah, how often Calypso grieved at his threat of departure,
Seeking to make him stay, saying the waves ran too high!
Over and over she begged to hear about Troy, all that story;
Often he varied the words, telling the story again.

They had come down to the shore, and even there she persisted:

"Tell of King Rhesus of Thrace, tell of his pitiful doom!"

He had a staff in his hand, and made a map for the story,
Sketching a plan in the sand. "This," he would tell her, "is Troy.

Here is Simois' stream, and here is my camp; now imagine
There is a plain near by—there we slew Dolon, the spy,
While he was lying in wait, and keeping his eye on the horses.

Here were the tents of the king, during the night when I came
Riding his captured steeds—"There would have been more to the
story,

Only a sudden wave washed away horses and Troy,
Washed away Rhesus, the king; and Calypso saw her advantage:
"How can you trust those waves? See what great names they
destroy!"

So, whoever you are, place little reliance on beauty,
Take some pains to acquire something beyond a physique.
Tactfulness, tolerance—these are more than desirable virtues.
Harshness arouses hate, rancor, resentment, and war.
Why do we hate the hawk? Because he lives by aggression.
Why do we hate the wolves, stalking the timorous fold?
But we set no snares for the swallow, because he is gentle,
Set no snares for the dove, haunting the eaves of the tower.
Keep far away, far off, all bitter tongue-lashing quarrels;
Love is a delicate thing, won with affectionate words.
Husbands and wives, by right, may harry each other with nagging;
Let them believe, as they must, this is their nature and law.

This is all right for wives: the dower of a wife is a quarrel;
Let your mistresses hear nothing but what they desire.
You have not come to one bed in the name of the law, but more
freely.

Love is your warrant and bond, love holds the office of law.
Bring her courtesies, and flattering words, and endearments,
Words that are sweet to the ear; make her be glad you are there.
I do not lecture the rich in my role of professor of loving:

If you have presents to bring, you have no need of my art.

"Here is something for you!" A man who can say that has genius!
I give up, I retire; he can learn nothing from me.

I am a poor man's poet, because I was always a poor man;

Loving, I made no gifts, only a present of words.

Poor men should watch their step and poor men should watch their
language,

Poor men should learn to bear more than the rich would endure.

I remember a time when I pulled my girl's hair in my anger:

How many days did that cost? More than I like to recall.

I did not know that I tore her dress, and I still do not think so:

Still, she said that I did; who do you think had to pay?

So, if you are wise, avoid the mistakes of your teacher,

Let my experience help, save you both time and expense.

Fight with the Parthian hordes, but keep the peace with your lady,

Have some fun, and enjoy all the inducements of love.

If she is somewhat rude, and none too polite to your loving,

Stick it out, endure; one of these days she'll be kind.

Gently, gently move, when you try to bend the bough over:

Don't make a show of your strength, or the bough will break in
your hand.

Gently, gently float, and go along with the river:

Rivers are not to be won forcing your way upstream.

Kindness, the trainers say, will tame even lions and tigers,

Little by little the bull learns to submit to the plough.

Who could have been more tough, less yielding than Atalanta?

Yet in the end, as we know, she was compelled to give in.
 Often Milanion wept, under the trees in the forest,
 Mourning his desolate lot, mourning her merciless ways.
 Often he carried the nets, as she told him to, on his shoulders,
 Often his violent spear pierced to the heart of the boar.
 Once he felt the wound of the arrow aimed by Hylaeus;
 He knew another bow, Cupid's, more potent to harm.
 Now, I don't tell you to go and sob in Maenalian forests,
 I do not tell you to bear nets on your shoulders and back,
 I do not tell you to bare your breast to a volley of arrows,
 My admonition will be cautious and easy to heed.
 Yield if she resists; if you yield, you will come away winner:
 Only one thing you must do—what she is asking you to.
 Blame whatever she blames; approve what meets her approval;
 What she says you must say; what she denies, you deny.
 Laugh when she laughs; if she weeps, remember to join her in weep-
 ing;
 Let her expression impose laws for your face to obey.
 If she is throwing the dice, whatever the point she is making,
 Talk to the dice as she rolls, hope she will pass every time.
 When your turn comes around, it is better to be a good loser:
 Let the snake-eyes fall; what do you care? After all!
 Or if you're playing at chess, let her capture a few of your pieces,
 Maybe a bishop or rook, let her cry "Mate!" at the end.
 Carry her parasol (they're always a struggle to open,
 Never mind that); be sure she can find room in a crowd.
 Be on hand with a stool when she's taking her ease on the cushions,
 Help her slip off her mules, help her, again, put them on.
 Often, when she is cold, though you yourself are all shivers,
 Hold her hands in your own, rub them to keep them warm.
 Do not think it a shame (it is, but still it will please her)
 That your hand, freeborn, holds up a mirror for her)
 When his stepmother tired of sending threatening monsters,
 Hercules, so they say, spun the Ionian wool,

Meeker than any girl—but he came at last to the heavens:
 Who do you think you are? greater than Hercules?
 If she tells you to come to the forum, where she will meet you,
 Be there before she expects, linger long after the hour.
 If it is somewhere else, postpone all other engagements,
 Run as fast as you can, don't let a crowd block your way.
 When she comes home at night, after the party is over,
 If you should hear her call, hurry in place of her slave.
 She may be out of town and say "Come!" Love despises the lazy;
 Maybe you haven't a car—then make the journey on foot.
 Do not be delayed by storms, by the sultriest weather;
 Don't be reluctant to go when the road whitens with snow.
 Love is a kind of war, and no assignment for cowards.
 Where those banners fly, heroes are always on guard.
 Soft, those barracks? They know long marches, terrible weather,
 Night and winter and storm, grief and excessive fatigue.
 Often the rain pelts down from the drenching cloudbursts of heaven,
 Often you lie on the ground, wrapped in a mantle of cold.
 Did not Apollo once, in bondage to King Admetus,
 Care for the heifers, and find sleep on a pallet of straw?
 What Apollo could stand is not disgraceful for mortals;
 Put off your pride, young man; enter the bondage of love.
 If you are given no path where the journey is level and easy,
 If in your way you find barricade, padlock on door,
 Use your inventive wits, come slipping down through a skylight,
 Clamber, hand over hand, where a high window swings wide.
 She will be happy to know that she was the cause of your danger;
 More than anything else, that will be proof of your love.
 Think of Leander, who could, no doubt, get along without Hero,
 Yet he would swim the straits, so his beloved might know.
 Do not feel ashamed to win her serving-maids over,
 Take them according to rank; also, win over her slaves.
 Greet each one by name—the courtesy can't be expensive—

Show them your *Noblesse oblige*, clasping their hands in your own.
 If, on the Day of Good Luck, some slave should ask for a present,
 Give him some little gift; this should cost nothing at all.
 On the Handmaidens' Day, recalling the Gauls and the fig tree,
 Think of the girls in the house, try to remember each one.
 Take my advice: it is worth your while to be good to the lowly,
 Even the guard at her gate, even the slave at her door.
 I do not say you should spend great sums on gifts for the lady:
 Let them, however small, seem to be chosen with care.
 While the fields are rich, and the boughs droop under their burden,
 Have a boy come to the door, bringing her baskets of fruit.
 Tell her they came from your farm, your little place in the country:
 She would not know, nor suspect fruit stands are easy to find.
 Have the boy bring her grapes, or the nuts Amaryllis was fond of,
 Send her a thrush or a dove, proof of your passionate love.
 But, don't send souvenirs suggestive of anything morbid,
 Death, or a childless old age, anything hinting of guilt.

What about sending her poems? A very difficult question.
 Poems, I am sorry to say, aren't worth so much in this town.
 Oh, they are praised, to be sure; but the girls want something more costly.
 Even illiterates please, if they have money to burn.
 Ours is a Golden Age, and gold can purchase you honors,
 All the "Golden Mean" means is, gold is the end.
 Homer himself, if he came attended by all of the Muses,
 With no scrip in his purse, would be kicked out of the house.
 There are a few, very few, bright girls with a real education,
 Some (perhaps) here and there, willing to give it a try.
 So, go ahead, praise both: the worth of the song matters little
 Just so you make it sound lovely while reading aloud.
 Whether or not she can tell one kind of verse from another,
 If there's a line in her praise she will assume, "It's a gift!"

What you were planning to do, provided it serves your advantage,
 Get her to think of first, get her to take the lead.
 There may be one of your slaves, to whom you have promised his freedom;
 Have him appeal to her, give him the gift in her name.
 If you release a slave from chains or the threat of a flogging,
 What you intended to do, make her beholden to you.
 Make the gain your own, but let her have all of the credit;
 You lose nothing, and she gains in her sense of *largesse*.
 But, whoever you are, if you're truly anxious to hold her,
 See that she thinks you are held, stunned by her beauty and charm.
 If she's in Tyrian dress, then praise her Tyrian dresses;
 If in the Coan mode, say that the Coan is best.
 Is she in gold? let her be more dear than her golden apparel;
 Is she in wool? approve woolen, becoming to her.
 If she appears in her slip, cry out, "You inflame me with passion!"
 Ask, in a timid voice, "Aren't you afraid you'll be cold?"
 Praise the new part in her hair, and praise the way she has curled it;
 Praise her dance and her song; cry "Encore!" at the end.
 Also, her ways in bed you should speak of with adulation,
 Calling them out of this world, praising the joys of the night.
 Though she is wild and fierce, untamed as any Medusa,
 She will be gentle and kind when the right lover is near.
 Don't give yourself away, if you have to resort to deception,
 Don't let a gesture or look spoil the effect of your words.
 Art is effective, concealed; but once it is out in the open
 Brings, as it should, disgrace, takes all your credit away.
 Often in autumn time, the year's most beautiful season,
 When the cluster swells, full of the crimsoning wine,
 When one day is cold, and the next is almost too sultry,
 In that uncertain air, languor takes hold of us all.
 Pray that she keeps her health, but if she happens to lose it,

If she is ailing, and feels all the caprice of the sky,
 Let her be perfectly sure of your constant love and devotion:
 Now, in the fall, you can sow what will be harvest in spring.
 Patience! Take no offense at even her fretfullest symptoms;
 What she will let you do, be at her side to attend.
 Let her see you in tears; don't weary of giving her kisses;
 Let her dry mouth drink teardrops that fall from your eyes;
 Make many vows, all aloud; and whenever it suits your good pleasure,
 Tell her of healing dreams, bringing good omens at night;
 Get some old woman to come, with sulphur and eggs for the bedroom,
 These are medicinal, both purification and cure.
 All such solicitude will prove your attentive devotion;
 This is the path that leads straight to a clause in her will.
 Yet, when a girl is sick, be careful, and don't overdo it:
 Keep your flattering zeal always within proper bounds.
 Do not force her to fast, nor compel her to drink bitter doses;
 Let prescriptions like those be for your rival to urge.

Once you have spread your sail, and are over the deeps of the ocean,
 Bear in mind that the breeze differs from zephyrs at home.
 While your love is young, let it err, but let it be learning.
 If you nourish it well, it will be healthy in time.
 You fear, now, the bull you used to pet in its calfhood;
 Saplings, in time, become trees with a welcoming shade;
 Rivers are small at their birth, but gain in the strength of their current,
 Taking, as on they run, many and many a stream.
 Let her grow used to you: no force is greater than habit:
 Till you establish that, never be tired of the toil.
 Always appear in her sight, and always contrive that she listen,
 Be a presence, on hand all of her nights and her days;
 Don't stay away, not once, until you are sure she will miss you,

Don't go away till you know she will be sorry you go.
 Then you can give her a rest: a field grows better when fallow;
 Thirsty, the dry soil thrives best in response to the rain.
 Phyllis's ardor was mild, at least, in Demophoon's presence;
 When his sail was spread, then she broke out into flame.
 So did Penelope fret, in the absence of crafty Ulysses;
 Protesilaus was gone, then Laodamia grieved.
 Still, a short absence is best: be away too long, she'll forget you:
 Hearts are inclined to grow fond, then, of available men.
 When Menelaus was gone, and the bed of Helen was lonesome,
 Paris and warmth were found in the embrace of the night.
 Menelaus, I think, was a fool to go off on a journey,
 Leaving his wife and his guest housed in identical walls.
 Only a madman would think that the dove was safe with the falcon,
 Only a madman leave sheep to the mercy of wolves.
 Helen was not to blame, and neither, so help me, was Paris;
 Given the chance that he had, who would do anything else?
 You were to blame, Menelaus: you gave him the time, the occasion;
 Why in the world should they not follow the counsel you gave?
 What did you think she would do? Her husband was gone, she was
 lonely,
 Paris was far from a boor—why should she sleep all alone?
 I acquit Helen outright, and put the blame on the husband.
 What did she do but make use of the occasion he gave?

No red raging boar is as fierce, in the foam of his anger,
 When his lightning tusks slash at the charge of the pack,
 No lioness is as fierce, when her cubs are still at her udders,
 No blunt adder as fierce, trodden under the foot,
 As a woman in love, when she learns that a rival has taken
 Part of the bed she has shared; see how her countenance burns!
 Out of the house she will rush, for fire and sword in her frenzy,
 All of her decency gone, wild with a Bacchanal's rage.
 Jason paid for his sin when Medea murdered the children;

Procne, a swallow now, holds the red stain on her breast.
 This is the kind of crime that breaks the strongest attachment,
 This, above all, is the crime vigilant husbands should fear.
 Yet far be it from me to say you should always be faithful.
 Heaven forbid! that would be more than a bride should require.
 Play around, but take care to practice a decent concealment;
 Don't go bragging about, counting them up like Don Juan.
 Don't give presents to one, if the news will get to the other;
 Don't have a definite time for your promiscuous fun;
 Don't always go to one place, where somebody else might surprise
 you;
 When you send letters, be sure you've the right name and ad-
 dress.
 Venus, when hurt, strikes back, a goddess vindictive and vengeful,
 Making you suffer the wound you were so ready to give.
 While Agamemnon was true, Clytemnestra also was faithful;
 His was the sin that brought on her retribution and fall.
 Had she not heard of that girl, the golden daughter of Chryses,
 Heard of Achilles' prize, Briseis, taking her place?
 These she had heard of, no more, but she saw the daughter of Priam,
 Booty brought home from the wars, lording it over the king.
 Not until then did she make her cousin, Aegisthus, her lover,
 Not until then was her sin conscious, an act of revenge.

If you are ever caught, no matter how well you've concealed it,
 Though it is clear as the day, swear up and down it's a lie.
 Don't be too abject, and don't be too unduly attentive,
 That would establish your guilt far beyond anything else.
 Wear yourself out if you must, and prove, in her bed, that you could
 not
 Possibly be that good, coming from some other girl.
 Some recommend Spanish Fly as useful on such an occasion:
 This I do not endorse; I think it poison or worse.
 Others say pepper is good, compounded with seeds of the nettle,

Or try a camomile brew, steeping pyrethrum in wine,
 But I very much doubt whether these can be very effective:
 Venus will hardly respond, called to the usual joys.
 Scallions might work, if you get the kind that are shipped from Meg-
 ara;
 Rocket and basil are good, culled from the gardens of home.
 Also, eat plenty of eggs, and the honey that comes from Hymettus,
 Nuts from the long-leaved pine, oysters (in months with an R).

Why fool around with all this medicinal magic and nostrums?
 There is a better way; turn your direction, and heed.
 Not long ago I said it was wise to dissemble your cheating,
 Now I reverse myself—let it be openly told.
 Inconsistent? Of course, but is that any reason to scold me?
 Winds do not always blow from the same reach of the sky.
 East, West, North, or South—and we plan our course in accordance.
 Drivers can hold the reins easy or tight at their will.
 There are some girls who are bored with over-devoted indulgence:
 Given no rival, their love languishes, fades, dies away.
 Spirit can grow too rank, when matters are going too smoothly,
 Nor is it easy to bear Fortune's continual smile.
 Just as a fire dies down, and weakens, little by little,
 While the embers lie hid under the gray of the ash,
 But if you rouse the flame, half-dead, by throwing on sulphur,
 Then it flares up again, brighter in light than before.
 So, when hearts grow dull with too much freedom from worry,
 They must be given the spur, given incentive to love.
 Heat her cooling mind, and let her grow anxious about you:
 Let her grow pale when she hears evidence you are untrue.
 Lucky beyond all count is the man whom a woman grieves over,
 Pales at the word of his wrong, falls in a faint to the ground.
 I would not mind, in that case, if she tried to snatch me bald-headed,
 Tore at my cheeks with her nails, frantic and weeping with rage,
 Gave me her angriest looks, and wanted to do what she could not,

Namely, live without me—what an impossible hope!
 If you should ask me, "How long is a suitable time for resentment?"
 I would say, Not too long; anger flares up with delay.
 While she is still in tears, put your arms gently around her,
 While she is still in tears, hold her close to your breast,
 Give her, while still in tears, kisses, and something much better—
 That is the only way; anger succumbs to that peace.
 When she has raged her fill, and seems an enemy, surely,
 Take her to bed; you will find she will be gentle and mild.
 There the arms are laid down in favor of concord and union;
 There, you can take it from me, harmony truly is born.
 The doves, who were lately at war, join bill to bill in affection;
 Soft is the *roucoulade*, murmuring, cooing of love.

First there was Chaos, the Void, a rude and shapeless confusion,
 Earth and the stars and the seas none from the other apart.
 Presently sky was set over earth, and earth girded with water,
 All things came to their place, Chaos withdrew from the world.
 Forests sheltered the beasts, the birds wheeled high in the heaven,
 Fish found their watery home deep in the caverns of sea.
 Then the human race wandered in desolate acres,
 Men were alone and lost, brutal and graceless, but strong.
 Woods were their home, and grass their food, and leaves were their
 bedding;
 None of them seemed to know creatures after his kind.
 Somehow, they learned of a pleasure, to tame their truculent spirits;
 Somehow, a woman and man stayed in one place for a while.
 What they did, they learned without a master to teach them;
 Sweet was the artless work, urged by the goddess of love.
 Birds found birds to love, and fishes mated with fishes,
 Serpent with serpent joined, the buck and the doe were one,
 Heifers were glad of the bull, and the mares would follow the stud-
 horse
 Wild with desire, and no stream ever would stand in their way.

Need I say more? You should know the cure when a woman is angry.
 Bring the specific she needs, warrant of rest and repose.
 You have medicinal arts beyond the lore of Machaon;
 You should know what to apply when you are fallen from grace.

While I was singing this song, I saw, of a sudden, Apollo,
 Clear in the golden light, sweeping the strings of his lyre.
 Laurel was in his hands, and his hair was crowned with the laurel,
 Poet from head to foot, something for eyes to behold!
 "Bring your pupils to me," he said, "O wanton instructor!
 In my shrine is a phrase known all over the world.
 Know thyself, it says; and no man can ever love wisely,
 Without knowing himself, no man can be at his best.
 If nature gave you good looks, then do your best to display them;
 If you are tanned by the sun, show an abundance of skin.
 If you can please by your talk, avoid long pauses and silence;
 If you're a singer, sing; if you're a drinker, drink.
 But, don't interrupt when a clever person is talking—
 Also, unless you're mad, don't read poems of your own!"
 That was Apollo's advice, and very good counsel to follow:
 Words from the mouth of that god all of us surely can trust.

I am called closer home. The man who learns to love wisely,
 Taught by my art, may be sure he will win out in the end.
 Soil does not always return the favoring interest of harvest;
 Wind does not always propel ships on a prosperous course.
 Little there is to help, and much to injure, a lover:
 Let him make up his mind he will have much to endure.
 Many as hares on Mount Athos, or bees in the valley of Hybla,
 Many as fruits that bend boughs of the gray olive-trees,
 Many as shells on the shore are the troubles that irritate lovers:
 Our frustrations are barbs, steeped in the bitterest gall.
 She will be said to be "out," when you know she's at home; you have
 seen her.

Best to believe she is out; don't take the word of your eyes.
The door will be locked in your face on the night she gave you her
promise;

Patience and fortitude! Sleep on the ground at her door.
Maybe some lying maid, with the nastiest kind of expression,
Comes to the door and remarks, "Why is this mendicant here?"
Say your prayers to the door, and say your prayers to the handmaid,
Hang on the post of the door roses removed from your brow.
Come when she wants you to come; when she avoids you, be going.
No man of breeding can bear ever becoming a bore.
Never let her say, "I can't get rid of this fellow!"

What do you think she is—always in passionate mood?
Do not think it a shame to suffer her blows or her curses;
Do not think it a shame, stooping, to kiss her feet.

Why do I talk about trifles, with greater matters before me?
Great is my theme; come close, listen with all your heart.
This is a difficult task, but manliness faces the challenge;
Difficult tasks are required if you would learn from my art.
Patience and fortitude! Suppose you do have a rival,
Victory comes to the brave; wait and endure, you will win!
Trust this word of advice, as if it came from Dodona,
Nothing in all I have said has more importance than this:
If she beckons, respond; let her alone if she's writing;
Let her come and go whence and wherever she will.
Even husbands extend this much to the wives of their bosom,
They concede this much, anyway when they're asleep.
In this art, I admit, I am far, myself, from perfection:
What can I do about this? Practice my preaching, I guess.
When I am there at her side, with somebody giving her signals,
This I should bear, I suppose? not lash myself into rage?
Once, I recall, she was given a kiss, just a peck, by her husband;
I complained of the kiss—what a barbarian boor!
More than once, I am sure, this fault has been my undoing:

Wiser the man whose consent leads to the opening door.
Not to know is the best; let her deceptions be hidden;
When she would blush to confess, let her spare blushes, and
hide.

So, young man, all the more, don't catch your girls when they're
cheating:

Let them behave as they will, let them think nobody knows.
Once they are caught, love grows: with two guilty parties to deal
with,

Each persists all the more, proud of his fate and his fall.
Everyone knows the tale, told over and over in Heaven,
All about Vulcan's net, capturing Venus and Mars.
Father Mars, driven wild by a frantic passion for Venus,
Changed from a captain of war into a captive of love,
Nor was Venus averse (no goddess was ever more willing),
Neither bashful nor coy in her response to his prayer.
How many times she is said to have laughed at the limp of her
husband,

Laughed at Vulcan's hands, calloused from work at the forge!
Mars would enjoy and approve her imitations of Vulcan;
Beauty and wit combined in her seductive appeal.
In the first stages, their loves were hidden by artful concealment,
Guilt had a sense of shame, modesty made its pretense.
Who can deceive the Sun? The Sun-god informed on the lovers,
Vulcan was told of it all—what an example to set!
Better, I think, to keep still, to suggest, in return for his silence,
Favors she surely would grant, only too glad to oblige.
So, around their bed, and over it, Vulcan with cunning,
Spread the invisible snares, meshes too fine for the eye,
Left for Lemnos (he said), and the lovers rushed to their meeting—
There, in the toils of the nets, naked and taken they lie.
Vulcan summons the gods—an Olympian spectacle, truly!—
Venus in tears, and Mars hiding his tool with his hand.
Somebody, laughing, cried out, "Oh Mars, most valiant of heroes,

If the chains are too much, why not transfer them to me?"
 Neptune said, "Let them go," and Vulcan, still grudging, relented,
 Mars hurried off to Thrace, she to her Paphian isle.
 That was by no means the end: what they concealed, at the outset,
 They do more freely now, everyone knowing their shame.
 Vulcan himself, they say, admitted his foolishness later,
 Called himself stupid and mad, many and many a time.
 This is a lesson for all: be warned by what happened to Venus;
 Don't fashion any such snare; think what she had to endure;
 Don't try to spring any traps for your rival, don't intercept letters—
 That's for a husband to do, not for a lover like you.
 Once again I repeat: the game is perfectly legal,
 Nothing but good clean fun; don't be a judge in a gown.

Who would dare to expose the ceremonies of Ceres,
 Who profane the rites held on the sanctified ground?
 Silence is little enough, a negative kind of a virtue;
 Blabbing the mysteries—what an unspeakable crime!
 Tantalus talked too much, and deserves to stretch for the apples
 Always out of his reach, thirsting, with water around.
 Venus expressly forbids her sacred rites to be broadcast;
 To her service, I warn, let no tattletale come.
 Not in boxes of bronze are her sacred mysteries hidden;
 Free for our daily use, they should be given their due,
 Modestly covered, as Venus herself will cover her secrets,
 Bending with left hand low, seen in the statue's pose.
 Only the animals mate where everybody can see them—
 Often a modest girl turns her eyes from the sight.
 Bedrooms and bolted doors are the place for our intimate unions;
 Even there we can lie under the covering sheet,
 Even there we prefer, if not an absolute darkness,
 Shadow, half-light, a shade, not the full blaze of the sun.
 In the old primitive days, when the sun and the rain were prevented
 Not by the sheltering roof, only by pine-tree and oak,

People made love in groves, in caves, not out in the open;
 Even the primitive folk recognized decency's claim.
 Now we make great boasts of the feats we perform in the night-time,
 Prize, more than anything else, loosing extravagant talk.
 Everyone has to try to make every girl in the city,
 Telling whoever you please, "I have been sleeping with her,"
 So there will be no lack of girls for a finger to point at,
 So there will be no girl out of the reach of your tale.
 This is a minor offense: some will go very much farther,
 Saying there's no one in town they haven't had in their time.
 Bodies they cannot touch, at least they can handle by naming;
 Bodies they could not touch, they can lay claim to in talk.
 Go now, hateful guard, barricade the doors of a lady,
 On the resolute posts placing your bolts by the score!
 What is the good of all this, if any concupiscent liar
 Enters in fancy, his wish making adultery true?
 I, for my part, believe my affairs are entirely my business;
 What I have done in the dark adamant secrecy hides.

Do not blame a girl for flaws of her nature or person:
 Where's the advantage in that? Better pretend them away.
 Andromeda, it would seem, was none too fair of complexion;
 Perseus, the sandal-winged, never voiced any reproach.
 All thought Andromache was much too big for a woman;
 Only in Hector's eyes was she of moderate size.
 If you like what you get, you will get what you like; love is captious
 In our salad days, growing more mellow in time.
 While the grafted shoot is new in the green of its growing,
 Even the lightest breeze makes it shudder and fall,
 But it will fasten with time, so even a gale cannot shake it,
 Bear, on the parent tree, increase after its kind.
 Time is a healer, and time removes all faults from the body;
 What was a blemish of old comes to be nothing at all.
 When we are children, we find the odor of leather obnoxious,

Hardly can stand it at all; when we are grown, we don't mind.
 Words have a magical power to mitigate many shortcomings:
 If she is blacker than tar, *tanned* is the term to employ.
 Cross-eyed? She looks like Venus! Albino? Fair as Minerva!
 Thin as a rail? What grace lies in her willowy charm!
 If she's a runt, call her *cute*; if fat, *a full-bodied woman*:
 Dialectic can make grace out of any defect.

Don't ask her when she was born, or under whose administration:
 That's for the censor to do, leave the statistics to him.
 All the more, if she's past the bloom of her youth, in her thirties,
 Plucking out whitening hairs, scanning her mirror for more.
 That's a good age, young man, and even a little bit older,
 That's a field that will bear, that's a field to be sown.
 Keep at the task for a while, as long as your vigor permits it;
 All too soon old age, silent, comes limping along.
 Plough the sea with your oars, or furrow the land with your
 ploughshare,
 Take your warlike tools for the fierce hazards of war,
 Or devote to the girls your strength, your vigor of body,
 This is a kind of war, this makes demands on your power.
 Don't forget, the mature have greater skill in the business:
 What experience brings, they are adept to employ.
 They have the talent, the knack, to turn the years to advantage,
 They are proficient, adroit; they know how not to seem old.
 They know a thousand ways of love, however you like it,
 They do not need any book, "What a Young Girl Ought to
 Know."
 They do not need to be teased, to be worked up into a frenzy,
 They can keep up with a man—yes, and a good thing, too.
 What I like is the deal that leaves both partners exhausted;
 That's why I find no joy in the embrace of a boy.
 What I hate is the girl who gives with a feeling she has to,
 Dry in the bed, with her mind somewhere else, gathering wool.

Duty is all very well, but let's not confuse it with pleasure;
 I do not want any girl doing her duty for me.
 What I like to hear are the words of utter abandon,
 Words that say, "Not too soon!", words that say, "Wait just a
 while!"
 Let me see my girl with eyes that confess her excitement;
 Let her, after she comes, want no more for a while.
 What does youth know of delight? Some things ought not to be
 hurried;
 After some thirty-odd years, lovers begin to learn how.
 Let the premature guzzle wine that is hardly fermented,
 I'll take wine from a jar mellowed in vintage with time.
 Only the full-grown tree resists the heat of the sunlight,
 Meadows too recently sown offer the barefoot no joy.
 Who wants Hermione, if Helen is his for the taking?
 Look for a woman, mature, not any slip of a girl.
 Love is an art learned late, but if you are willing, and patient,
 Playing your part like a man, you will have fitting reward.
 Now the bed has received two lovers; the bed seems to know it.
 Now the door has been closed; linger, O Muse, at the door.
 They will not need you, now, for the words they will whisper and
 murmur,
 Nor will the left hand lie idle along the bed.
 Fingers will find what to do in those parts where love plies his
 weapons:
 Hector could use his hands in more endeavors than war,
 So could Achilles, who lay with the captive from Lyrna beside him,
 Tired from the wars, but a man in the soft ease of the bed.
 Briseis did not object when his hands moved over her body,
 Hands that had always known slaughter and Phrygian blood.
 Or was it this, just this, that heightened her sense of excitement,
 Feeling a conqueror's hands come to her secretest parts?
 Take my word for it, love is never a thing to be hurried,

Coax it along, go slow, tease it with proper delay.
 When you have found the place where a woman loves to be fondled,
 Let no feeling of shame keep your caresses away.
 Then you will see in her eyes a tremulous brightness, a glitter,
 Like the flash of the sun when the water is clear.
 She will complain, but not mean it, murmuring words of endearment,
 Sigh in the sweetest way, utter appropriate cries.
 Neither go too fast, nor let her get there before you;
 Pleasure is best when both come at one time to the goal.
 Slow is the pace to keep when plenty of leisure is given,
 When you can dally at ease, free from the pressure of fear,
 But when delay is not safe, it is useful to drive with full power,
 Useful to give your mount spirited prick of the spur.

Here is the end of my work: be thankful, bring me the laurel,
 Bring me the palm, young men, grateful for what I have taught.
 The Greeks had their heroes of old, their specialists, Nestor in counsel,

Ajax, Achilles, in arms, wily Ulysses in guile,
 Calchas, prophetic seer, and Podalirius, healer,
 Automedon in his car—I am the master in love.
 Give me your praises, men: I am your poet, your prophet;
 Let my name be known, lauded all over the world.
 I have given you arms, as Vulcan gave arms to Achilles,
 Now that the gift is made, conquerors, go to the wars!
 But if your shaft lays low your Amazonian victims,
 Write on the votive spoil, "Ovid showed me the way."

Look! The girls are here, and asking me for some lessons.
 You will be next, my dears: turn the page to Book Three.

BOOK

III

I gave arms to the Greeks against the Amazon forces:
 Arms for the Amazons now; turn about is fair play.
 Go to the wars, well-matched, and win by the blessing of Venus,
 Win by the grace of her son, flying all over the world.
 It would be most unfair for the naked to fight men in armor;
 That is no victory, men; you would regard it with shame.
 I can hear somebody say: "Are you furnishing serpents with poison,
 Turning the mad she-wolves loose on the innocent fold?"
 Don't impute to them all the crimes of a few wicked women;
 Give a fair hearing to all, let their merits decide.
 If Menelaus had good warrant for railing at Helen,
 If Agamemnon's queen killed in adulterous lust,
 If Amphiaras drove his car to the Stygian caverns,
 Through Eriphyle's crime, bought with a necklace of gold,
 Did not Penelope keep true faith while her crafty Ulysses
 Fought ten years in the war, added ten wandering years?
 Think of Alcestis, who gave her days for the life of Admetus,
 Think of Evadne's love, true in the flames of the pyre.
 Virtue herself is portrayed in modest robes, as a woman;
 Virtue, in modest white, has her own people to please.
 Leave her subjects to her: I make no claim on her province;