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XLII by Catullus

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XLII by Catullus

Jim Kastner

Abstract

Adeste, hendecasyllabi, quot estis omnes undique, quotquot estis omnes. locum me putat
esses moecha turpis, et negat mihi vestra reddituram pugillaria, si pati potestis. Persequamur eam
et reflagitemus...

XLII by Catullus

translated by Jim Kastner, English Grad

*Adeste, hendecasyllabi, quot estis
omnes undique, quotquot estis omnes.
Iocum me putat esses moecha turpis,
et negat mihi vestra reddituram
pugillaria, si pati potestis.
Persequamur eam et reflagitemus.
Quae sit, quaeritis? Illa, quam videtis
turpe incedere, mimice ac moleste
ridentem catuli ore Gallicani.
Circumsistite eam, et reflagitate,
'Moecha putida, redde codicillos,
redde, putida moecha, codicillos!'
Non assis facis? O lutum, lupanar,
aut si perditius potest quid esse.
Sed non est tamen hoc satis putandum.
Quod si non aliud potest, ruborem
ferreo canis exprimamus ore.
Conclamate iterum altiore voce
'Moecha putida, redde codicillos,
redde, putida moecha, codicillos!'
Sed nil proficimus, nihil movetur.
Mutanda est ratio modusque vobis,
si quid proficere amplius potestis:
'Pudica et proba, redde codicillos.'*

Come, my verses, as many of you as I
can gather from all sides, all of you.
The shameless slut thinks me to be a joke,
and she refuses to return to me
your books. Can you imagine that?
Let's hunt her down and harass her into submission.
Who is it, you inquire? She, you see there
with that shameless walk, bumping and grinding,
her laugh like the mouth of a young Doberman.
Surround her, and harass her into submission:
"Rotten slut, give back the books,
give back, rotten slut, the books!
Don't you think them worth a penny? O you scum, you
whore
or whatever else is more diseased."
But we must not let it go at this.
And if nothing else is possible, let's depict
her dog-faced, brazen-mouthed embarrassment.
One more time shout with a louder voice:
"Rotten slut, give back the books,
Give back, rotten slut, the books!"
But we are getting nowhere; she is totally unmoved.
Your rationale and method must change;
if you can get farther, try:
"Virtuous and honorable lady, give back the books."