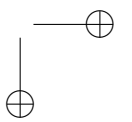
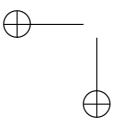
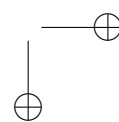
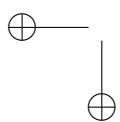
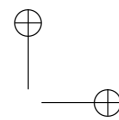
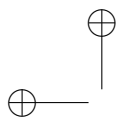
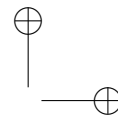
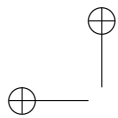


Horace's Eheu Fugaces
A Collection of Translations







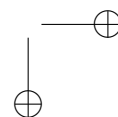
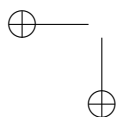
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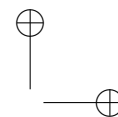
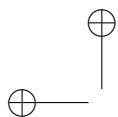
Isaac Waisberg

Ah, Postumus, we all must go:
This keen North-Easter nips my shoulder;
My strength begins to fail; I know
You find me older.

AUSTIN DOBSON, *A Legacy*

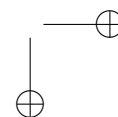
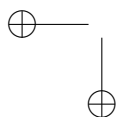
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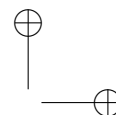
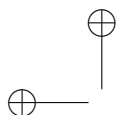




2023

Selection and Design by Isaac Waisberg





IN LIEU OF A PREFACE

“*Geneva, 11 January 1867.* I hear the drops of my life falling distinctly one by one into the devouring abyss of eternity. I feel my days flying before the pursuit of death. All that remains to me of weeks, or months, or years, in which I may drink in the light of the sun, seems to me no more than a single night, a summer night, which scarcely counts, because it will so soon be at an end.

“Death! Silence! Eternity! What mysteries, what names of terror to the being who longs for happiness, immortality, perfection! Where shall I be to-morrow – in a little while – when the breath of life has forsaken me? Where will those be whom I love? Whither are we all going? The eternal problems rise before us in their implacable solemnity. Mystery on all sides! And faith the only star in this darkness and uncertainty!

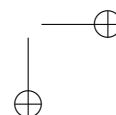
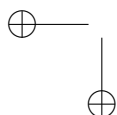
“No matter! – so long as the world is the work of eternal goodness, and so long as conscience has not deceived us. – To give happiness and to do good, there is our only law, our anchor of salvation, our beacon light, our reason for existing. All religions may crumble away; so long as this survives we have still an ideal, and life is worth living.

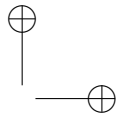
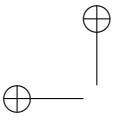
“Nothing can lessen the dignity and value of humanity so long as the religion of love, of unselfishness and devotion endures; and none can destroy the altars of this faith for us so long as we feel ourselves still capable of love.” (Amiel, *Journal Intime*, 1885)



“...were the Latin motto from Horace – ‘*fugaces labuntur anni*’ ever present to the mind – were wholesome reflections upon the never-ceasing, never-tiring flight of time, often harbored and cherished, procrastination would no longer commit its thieving depredations as now, but the soul would shake off that brooding incubus that paralyses its energies, and be as splendid in action as it is brilliant in purpose.

“Amid the bustle of business – the turmoil of the world – the emulation and rivalry of statesmen – the bickerings of party strife the insane scramble after wealth, and the aspirations of ‘vaulting ambition,’ it is wholesome, also, to permit such reflections to have a lodgment in the mind. They correct, in a great measure, the optical delusions of a diseased fancy. Things, that would otherwise enlarge into dimensions of immense extent and importance, dwindle down into puny insignificance, and take their proper place in the relative consequence of events and circumstances. If, for instance, some high place of honor swell into Alpine magnitude before





the eye of an ambitious man, and fill the whole area of his vision, how does that magnitude gradually fade away into nothingness, like the mists of the night before the radiance of the morning, if he but take a solitary walk in the cemeteries of by-gone ages, and there, prompted by the thoughts which must naturally crowd upon the mind, he thus soliloquizes – ‘Where are the men of other days, who strove hard to immortalize their names by learning, or wealth, or political wisdom, or the achievements of a daring valor? Dust and ashes are they. Time, the Destroyer, in his hurricane rush, hath swept them all into the grave, and is even fast obliterating the last faint vestiges of their remembrance from earth and its records.’ ‘*Sic transit gloria mundi.*’ ‘So passes away the glory of the world.’ So fades into midnight-darkness the light of its most brilliant hopes and aspirations.

“Envy, if surrounded on all sides by the brightness of another’s prosperity, like the scorpion, confined within a circle of fire, will sting *itself* to death.”
(George Brewster, *Flight of Time*, 1851)

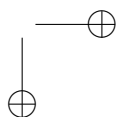
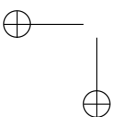


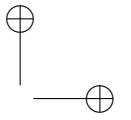
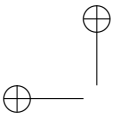
“*Sunday Evening, Dec. 11.* – I have preached my last sermon; my career of duty is closed; and I am about to quit my little, quiet, united parish for ever. Let me analyse my feelings. I find them to be a mixture of anxiety and regret. Have I done my duty to the very best of my ability? Have I prayed to be directed and supported from above? Can I look back upon this scene of my labours with tranquil composure, and forward to the great day of account with humble hope? This has been my first parish; and though the discharge of my duties has been accompanied by errors and imperfections – omissions and neglect – what would be my feelings were I sure it would be my last?

“Eighteen months ago and I – There is something awfully impressive in the rapid and perpetual flow of time. To eternity the stream is ever tending as a river to the ocean. Individuals – families – nations – float for an instant upon its surface; and are speedily borne away to that absorbing gulf whose dimensions no eye can measure, and over whose misty surface no wreck is seen. . . Ah, Horace! fascinating is thy style and flowing are thy numbers, but – there is no ‘Eheu’ for the CHRISTIAN! (Erskine Neale, *The Living and the Dead*, 1827)



“But one morning the old man, standing before the blackboard, his hands clutching his coat, – picture him with a mild and venerable and kindly face, spectacled, his big domed head scholastically bald above a fringe of close gray curls; clerically dressed in black, low-collared, white-tied; his eyes rather dim and vague behind his glasses, gazing peacefully: there he is! – one morning he stood in front of us at the beginning of the lesson,

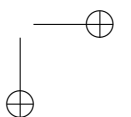
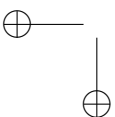


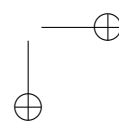
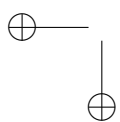
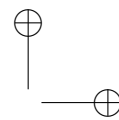
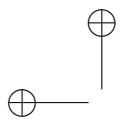


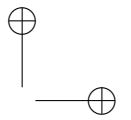
and instead of putting somebody on to construe he waited, he stared over our heads; and then he broke out in a gentle mournful chant upon the opening words of our ode. He seemed to be saying them to himself – he knew them by heart. *Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume* – he had a tuneful and flexible voice, and he threw into it a pensive lament as he dwelt upon the repeated name. *Postume – Postume* – oh, how time flies, how helplessly we see it vanish, how soon we are faced by the assault of age! He chanted the words very musically and appealingly – yet not quite seriously either, not sentimentally, but rather as if he liked to join company with an old friend, old popular Horace, in a plaintive strain that *he* did n't mean very seriously; for these regrets and laments, they belong to the smooth philosophy of an honest poet, comfortable enough in his worldly wisdom – and a companionable old poet, so life-seasoned, so familiar to a scholar who has known him by heart for fifty years. There is a touch of humor in their relation; Horace does n't pretend to be perfectly solemn, and the scholar drops easily into his mood; though after all it *is* true, sadly true, that time is fleeting and death is tameless – quite true enough to set an old man agreeably musing and mooning as he chants the words. He had forgotten our presence; he repeated the whole ode through to the end.” (Percy Lubbock, *A Lesson of Horace*, 1924)



“Happily, only a small proportion of Horatian translators have had the hardihood to give their lucubrations to the press. The first to do this extremely hazardous thing was, it would seem, one Thomas Colwell, whose effusions were originally seen in print three hundred and fifteen years ago. What a number of followers that bold man has had! ... And what a variety has been exhibited by these writers both in metre and in merit! To whom shall the palm be given among all the candidates – to Professor Conington, to the first Lord Lytton, or to Sir Theodore Martin? These take the lead, the rest being (in comparison) nowhere. Yet can any man lay his hand upon his heart, and say, honestly, that he is satisfied with any one of the three, learned and skilful and enthusiastic as they are? Is it, indeed, in the power of any one man – save he be another Horace, born in English guise, to supply us with ‘Englishings,’ even of any one section of the Works, which should obtain the suffrages of all men? Rather is the successful translation of Horace an affair of co-operation among many – of a lucky hit here, of a happy thought there – of a gradual accumulation of worthy specimens produced by individual effort from time to time. A collection of such specimens has been made, and it is much better worth our notice than any wholesale rendering which anybody, greatly daring, has produced of his own mind and motion.” (William Davenport Adams, *With Poet and Player*, 1891)

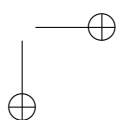
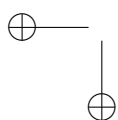


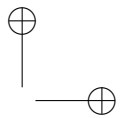
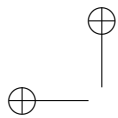




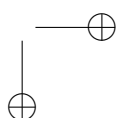
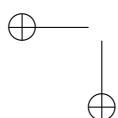
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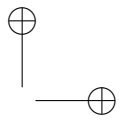
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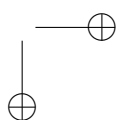
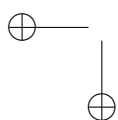


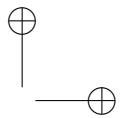
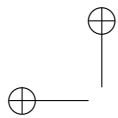
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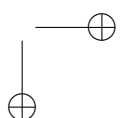
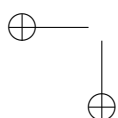


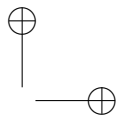
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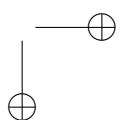
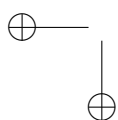


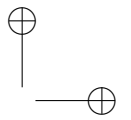
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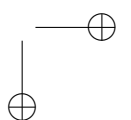
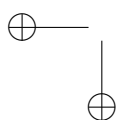


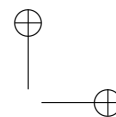
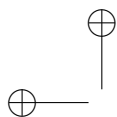
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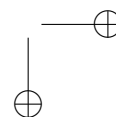
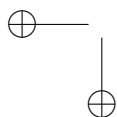
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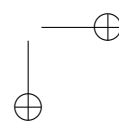
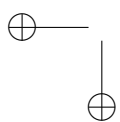
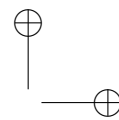
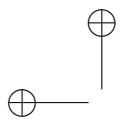


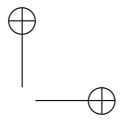


Two years ago, or it may be three,
Lord! how time passes,
Especially with me!
Eheu fugaces!
May we not play in the woods again,
Lads to the lasses!
Must we be men?
Eheu fugaces!
Still blows the wind and the rain comes down
All the window glasses
Of this dirty town.
Eheu fugaces!

HILAIRE BELLOC, *The Lamp*







Q. HORATI FLACCI, EHEU FUGACES, 23 B.C.

*Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume,
labuntur anni nec pietas moram
rugis et instanti senectae
adferet indomitaeque morti,*

*non, si trecentis quotquot eunt dies,
amice, places inlacrimabilem
Plutona tauris, qui ter amplum
Geryonen Tityonque tristi*

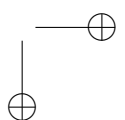
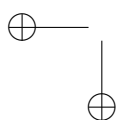
*conpescit unda, scilicet omnibus
quicumque terrae munere vescimur
enaviganda, sive reges
sive inopes erimus coloni.*

*frustra cruento Marte carebimus
fractisque rauci fluctibus Hadriae,
frustra per autumnos nocentem
corporibus metuemus Austrum:*

*visendus ater flumine languido
Cocytos errans et Danaï genus
infame damnatusque longi
Sisyphus Aeolides laboris.*

*linquenda tellus et domus et placens
uxor neque harum quas colis arborum
te praeter invisas cupressos
ulla brevem dominum sequetur.*

*absumet heres Caecuba dignior
servata centum clavibus et mero
tinguet pavimentum superbo,
pontificum potiore cenis.*



Liber Secundus

EVMEMDVM, per antiphrasim appellantur tres fures infernales Alecto Thelphonea Megera. m. f. PROMETHEVS. De hoc claudius in libro de iudiciis. De hoc ad plenum videtur superius odes. xxviii. libro i.

^{furterum} ^{delectantur}
Eumenidum recreantur angues
^{insaper} ^{is} ^{tantibus}
Quin & prometheus & pelopis parens
^{scilicet a sono obduciuntur labori}
Dulci laborum decipitur sono
^{ratio remanet}
Nec curat orion leones

hNECAURAT. Solus poetarum studium apud inferos quoque quod sectari. Vnde Virg. li. vi. an. que gratia curam amorumque fuit tuis. que cura materis patere equat eadem sequitur delire repostat.

Aut timidas agitare lyncas.

Argumentum odes. XIII.

Oscendit amico posthumo iuuentam effugere; nec pietas aliqua future senectute; aut immo inveni morti moram afferret. vnde & regibus & inopibus adeunda est charontis vnda. linquenda telus domus & vxor; heresque inde optimo cubo fruatur. & humi sparget pdigus qd ipse tantopere fetur uerat; per quod inuit quidem poeta posthumum ipm potius debere frui bonis suis: quam abutenda hereditibus relinquere. Hoc dicit.



Ode. XIII. ad Posthumum de morte inevitabili

h FUGACES anni. Quidius li. iii. de arte etiam ait. Ludite cum anni more fluens aque. & dixit fugaces quod plus est qua fugitius. in huiusmodi verba abdicantur demost. sic dicimus bibac et edac k POTHVME. In hoc loco nomen proprium est ceterum is posthumus appellatur qui posthuma tu patre nascitur Virg. Solius albam nomen tua posthuma proles. qd gemiat aut nomen. que cognatio oculis habet aut coquefione aut iurgatione Sic Ther. o thais thais Sic Vir. o choridon choridon que te demencia cepit.

h NEC pietas in. Out. quocq; de morte abuli li. si. de amo. Viue tu morte pe' colofara. colere mors grauis a seplis in caua busta trahet m PLVTONA. ad que pmet. na in aetna plusdis fut mortui. nec amplu' i supero custodia. hic vir. nec ta q; vi. debe. Pluto faturni. & iouis nepotiq; frater. q; cui in mu

^h Eu fugaces posthume posthume
^{velut aqua sine intermissione}

Labuntur anni: nec pietas moram

Rugis & instanti senectute

Afferret indomitiq; morti.

Non si trecentis quotquot eunt dies

Amice places ilachrymabilem

Plutona tatis: qui ter amplum

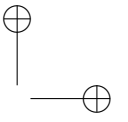
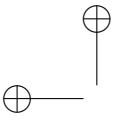
Geryonem tyronq; tristi

Composcit vnda. scz omnibus

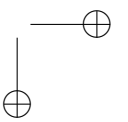
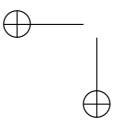
Quicumq; terre munere vescimur

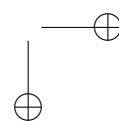
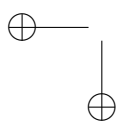
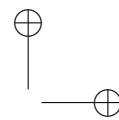
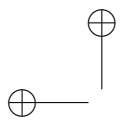
di diuisione infera regna cumille
h TER amplu' geryone tabullu'.
Vir. li. vi. et forma tricoposymbi. sine e poete geryon e esse tricopo re illiusq; vmbra apud inferos est. Iustinus ite li. vltimo scribit geryone ipm no triplicis nature vt labu lia pdit fuisse. Sed tres fratres ite e c o cordie exatit. vt vno aio ois re gy videret. nec cu armata sua ipse te indixerit. sed cu armata sua ipse vidissent. amissa bello repente Or do aut est. q copecit ter amplu' geryone & tuon tritu vnda. oib' ma uigada qelq; vesimur munere reitue enimus reges. siue enim in o ITY ONOYE (opescoloni. de hoc ad Vir. li. vi. Nec no & unu terre oiparens alimū comere ont q tota noue cui iugera corpus portu get. rostroq; imanis vult ad vno. i mortale iecur is des fecidac pce nis. viscera nimaq; opulis hitaq; sub alto pectore. nec fibris roquet datus vlla reuauis.

(First Illustrated Edition of Horace, Grüninger, 1498, LOC)



THE TRANSLATIONS



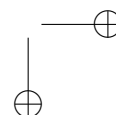
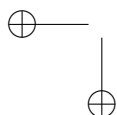




ANONYMOUS, C. 1620

(Newly Recovered English Classical Translations 1600–1800, Stuart Gillespie)

Thy flying years, alas, do slip away,
Nor can our piety make any stay
 Of wrinkles, and incroaching eld,
 Or Death, not tamèd, or repell'd.
Not if, with fruitless tears, thou every day
Three hundred bulls, t'appease grim Pluto, slay,
 Who Tityus, and Geryon bold
 Within his sullen lake doth hold,
Which sullen lake, by all must be passed o'er
Which live, or be we kings, or ploughmen poor.
 In vain we bloody warfare fly,
 And broken waves, when seas go high;
In vain, in Autumn, fear we southern wind,
Unto our bodies hurtful and unkind,
 Since black Cocytus' lazy flood
 We all must see, and Danai's brood
With infamy bescarr'd, and the sad stone
Which Sisyphus still keeps in motion:
 Thy house, and land, and pleasing wife,
 Thy soul's best half, joy of thy life,
Must all be left: nor among all the grove
Which thou so prun'st, and trim'st, and dost so love,
 Shall any follow short-liv'd thee,
 Except the hated cypress tree.
Thy worthier heir will spend thy wines that slept,
Useless for thee, with hundred lockings, kept,
 And stain, with wine, his proud pav'd hall,
 Better than prelates sup withal.





JOHN ASHMORE, 1621

(First Selection of the Odes Published in English)

O *Posthume*, *Posthume*, years doe passe away
Like glyding streames. Nor pietie can stay
The wrinkled brow, nor olde age hasting fast,
Nor death, that all attacheth at the last.

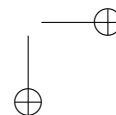
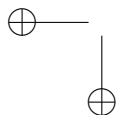
Not if my friend, each day in all thy yeares,
Stern *Pluto* thou should with three-hundred Steers
Seek to appease. Three-headed *Gerion*,
And *Tytius*, ore the *Stygian* streame are gone:
Which all must doe that heer do draw their breath;
Both Kings, and silly Labourers of the earth.

In vaine from bloody broyles we take our ease,
And from th'encounters of the *Adrian* Seas:
In vaine in Autumne seeke we to avoid
The Southern blasts, whereby we are annoyd.

We needs must see *Cocytus* heavie flood,
And *Danaus* cruell daughters staine with blood,
And *Sisyphus* that rowles against the hill
The stone that tumbles back upon him still.

Thy house, thy land, and wife to thee most deare,
Thou needs must leave: Nor to the mournfull beere
Will any of these trees that thou dost dress,
Attend on thee, but the sad *Cyparess*.

Thy heire, more worthy, riotously will waste
Thy Cæcube wines with many locks kept fast;
And die the pavement with high-spirited wine,
Better then Prelates drink of when they dine.



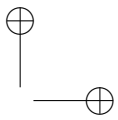


SIR THOMAS HAWKINS, 1625

(c. 1590–1640; Poet and Translator)

Ah *Posthumus*, swift yeares doe passe,
Nor can religious zeale (alas)
To wrinckles, or decrepit dayes,
Or Death untamed bring delays:
Not, if thou to harsh *Plutoe's* shrine
Each day three hundred Bulls assigne:
Who *Geryon*, and *Tytius* bound,
With sable River, doth surround.
A streame on which each man must sayle,
From royall Scepter to the slayle.
Wee bloody *Mars* decline in vaine,
Or broken waves of *Adrian* maine:
And (needlesse) feare in Autumne rife,
The South-wind's hurtfull to our life.
Wandring *Cocytus* Flood, with slow
And heavy Current, thou must know.
And *Danâus* infamous traine,
And *Sisyphus* with endlesse paine.
Thou House, Land, lovely Wife must want,
Nor of the Trees, which thou dost plant,
(Thou dead) will any wayt on thee,
But the despised Cypresse tree.
Thy worthier Heire, drinkes precious wine,
Which thou with hundred keies did'st shrine;
And with it the rich pavement dewes;
None such the high Priests Banquet shewes.





ROBERT HERRICK, 1627

(1591–1674; Poet)

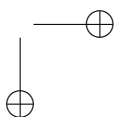
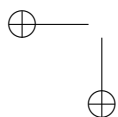
Ah Posthumus! Our yeares hence flye,
And leave no sound; nor piety,
Or prayers, or vow
Can keepe the wrinkle from the brow:
But we must on,
As Fate do's lead or draw us; none,
None, Posthumus, co'd ere decline
The doome of cruell Proserpine.

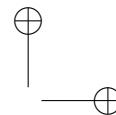
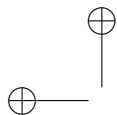
The pleasing wife, the house, the ground
Must all be left, no one plant found
To follow thee,
Save only the Curst-Cipresse tree:
A merry mind
Looks forward, scornes what's left behind:
Let's live, my Wickes, then, while we may,
And here enjoy our Holiday.

W've seen the past-best Times, and these
Will nere return, we see the Seas,
And Moons to wain;
But they fill up their Ebbs again:
But vanisht man,
Like to a Lilly-lost, nere can,
Nere can repullulate, or bring
His dayes to see a second Spring.

But on we must, and thither tend,
Where Anchus and rich Tullus blend
Their sacred seed:
Thus has Internall Jove decreed;
We must be made,
Ere long, a song, ere long, a shade.
Why then, since life to us is short,
Lets make it full up, by our sport.

Crown we our Heads with Roses then,
And 'noint with Tirian Balme; for when
We two are dead,
The world with us is buried.
Then live we free,





As is the Air, and let us be
Our own fair wind, and mark each one
Day with the white and Luckie stone.

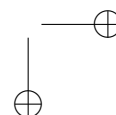
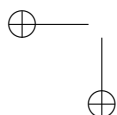
We are not poore; although we have
No roofs of Cedar, nor our brave
 Baiae, nor keep
Account of such a flock of sheep;
 Nor Bullocks fed
To lard the shambles: Barbels bred
To kisse our hands, nor do we wish
For Pollio's Lampries in our dish.

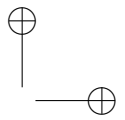
If we can meet, and so conferre,
Both by a shining Salt-seller;
 And have our Roofe,
Although not archt, yet weather prooffe,
 And seeling free,
From that cheape Candle baudery:
We'le eate our Beane with that full mirth.
As we were Lords of all the earth.

Well then, on what Seas we are tost,
Our comfort is, we can't be lost.
 Let the winds drive
Our Barke; yet she will keepe alive
 Amidst the deepes;
'Tis constancy (my Wickes) which keepes
The Pinnace up; which though she erres
I' th' Seas, she saves her passengers.

Say, we must part (sweet mercy blesse
Us both i'th' Sea, Camp, Wildernesse)
 Can we so farre
Stray, to become lesse circular,
 Then we are now?
No, no, that selfe same heart, that vow,
Which made us one, shall ne'r undoe;
Or ravell so, to make us two. . .

(Editor's Note: Ode II.14 and other odes. Abridged.)

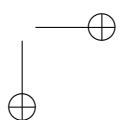
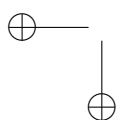


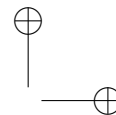
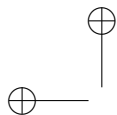


JOHN POLWHELE, 1620–40

(*John Polwhele's Horatian Translations*, Stuart Gillespie)

O Posthumous, Time runs alway:
For Piety cannot make him stay,
Wrinkled old age, fierce death will come:
Though thrice a day their Hecatomb
Bribe inrelenting Pluto: he
Where Geryon and sad Tityus be,
Must every sailing mortal drown:
So well the king, as needy clown
In vain we want a cruel war,
Or the infectious torrid star;
And scape the roaring angry wave:
Quiet Cocytus will us have.
See! Danaan murd'rous sisters grown,
And Sisyphus ever rolls a stone.
Houses, and home, and pleasing wife,
Green groves, forsake us with our life;
Only the faithful cypress tree
Will with his master buried be.
Forthwith the prodigal heir betrays
Wealth lock'd up with an hundred keys:
Washing proud floors with lustier wine
Then Brethren thirst, when sisters dine.

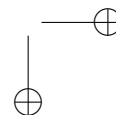
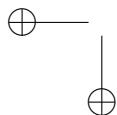


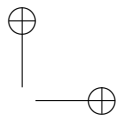
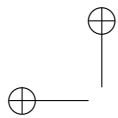


HENRY RIDER, 1638

(Born c. 1605; “Master of Arts of Emmanuel College, Cambridge”)

Ah, *Posthumus*, the swift yeares glide away,
Nor can thy pietie procure a stay
For wrinkles, swift age, and sterne death; though still
You should, my friend, relentless *Pluto* fill
With full three hundred Buls, through the yeares course,
Him who three bodied *Gerion* doth force,
And *Tityus* in sad frames; the which indeed,
By all of us (who on the blessings feed
Of this earth) must be throughly pass'd ore,
Whether that we be kings, or pesants poore.
In vaine we shall from stern death fly away,
And the dasht waves of bellowing *Adria*;
In vaine we from the South wind shall us arme
That very autumnne doth our bodies harme:
Foggy *Cocytus* we must all goe see,
Which wanders with his streames that lazie bee,
And *Danaus* hated stocke, and *Sisiphus*
The long-toile-suffering sonne of *Æolus*.
You land, and house, and pleasing wife must leefe,
Neither shall any one of all those trees
Which you possesse, save *Cypresses* abhorr'd,
Attend on thee their quickly perisht Lord.
A worthier heire shall drinke thy wines quite dry,
Kept with a hundred lockes, and he shall dye
His stately pavement with farre better wine,
Then that at banquets of the Priests divine.

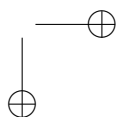
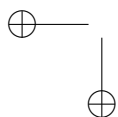




JOHN SMITH, 1649

(*The Lyrick Poet*)

Ah Posthume! Posthume swift years flie away,
Nor can thy zeal wrinckles and old age stay,
Much lesse bring back, nor canst thou death appease,
Nor with three hundred heifers thou shalt please,
Though daily offerd unto *Pluto* grim,
Great *Gerion*, *Tytius* in *Styx*-river swim:
Who so doth now enjoy the fruits of earth,
Whether they Kings or Peasants be by birth,
They must saile through, what boots it if we flie
From bloody *Mars*, if over-whelm'd we lie,
Bring toss'd along, on swelling *Adrias* shoare,
Where broken seas with hideous noise do roare.
In vain the hurtfull South-wind we do shun,
Or with moist *Autumne* fear to be undone;
When black *Cocytus* wandring with slow flood
Is to be seen, and *Danäus* defam'd brood.
And *Sisyphus* from labour never gone,
Who is condemn'd up hill to rowle a stone.
Thou must leave house, and lands, thy pleasant wife;
Nor of those broad spread-trees that in thy life
Thou did enjoy, shall any then attend,
Except the hatefull *Cypresse* thy short end.
Thy worthier heir shall thy rich wines soon wast,
Which with a hundred keyes were locked fast:
And thy proud pavements he shall wash in wine,
Beter then that with which Arch-pontiffs dine.



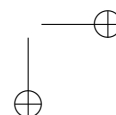
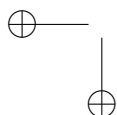


SIR RICHARD FANSHAWE, 1652

(1608–66; Poet, Translator, and Diplomat)

Ah Posthumus! The years of man
Slide on with winged pace, not can
Vertue reprieve her Friend
From wrinkles, age, and end.
Not, though thou bribe with daily Blood
Sterne *Dis*, who with the *Stygian* Flood
Doth *Gerion* surround,
And *Titus* Acres bound.

Sad Flood, which we must Ferry all
That feed upon this earthly Ball,
From the King to the Poor,
Beggars that howle at Door.
In vain avoid we *Mars* his fury,
And breaking waves that kill and bury:
In vain the sickly Falls,
Fruitful of Funerals.
Visit we must the Sootie shore,
Of dull *Cocytus*, th' empty store,
And *Sisyphs* restless Rock.
Thou must forgoe thy Lands and Goods,
And pleasing Wife: nor of thy Woods
Shall any follow thee,
But the sad Cypress Tree.
Thy worthier Heire shall then carowse
Thy hoarded Wines, and wash the House
With better Sack, then that
Which makes the Abbots fat.

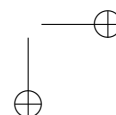
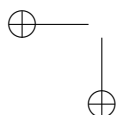


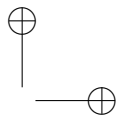


BARTEN HOLIDAY, 1653

(1593–1661; Dramatist, Translator, and Divine)

'Lass *Posthumus*, years swiftly glide away,
Nor can a pious conscience delay
 The approach of wrinkled age,
 Or Death's unconquer'd power assuage:
Not, should'st each day (friend) Buds three hundred kil
T' appease stern Pluto's unrelenting will:
 Who tri-membred Geryon pens
 And Titus in those Stygian fens,
Which all we mortals must be wafted o'r
Who ever feed on Tellus bounteous store:
 Though we Regal Scepters sway,
 Or as poor Country-swains obey.
In vain we Mars his bloody broyls refrain,
And broken billows of loud Adria's Main:
 In vain is the Southern-wind,
 Each Autumn noxious, declin'd.
Thou must go see Cocytus vagrant flood
Roll with dull stream, and Danaus wicked Brood,
 And Sisyphus too, Æol's son,
 Doom'd unto torments never done.
Thou must land, house, and dearest wife forgo,
And of these trees which recreate thee so,
 Except odious Cypress, none
 Will follow thee so quickly gone.
Thy worthier Heir Cæcubian Wines will spend,
Which at the least an hundred Keys defend:
 And o'th' proud flore better throw,
 Than at the High-Priests banquets flow.





ROBERT WOODFORD, 1666 (PARAPHRASED)

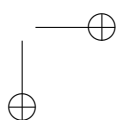
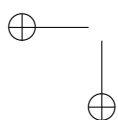
(*The Poems of Horace Rendered in English Verse*, Alexander Brome)

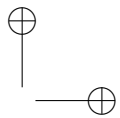
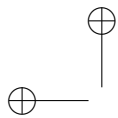
Time (*Posthumus*) goes with full sail,
Nor can thy honest heart avail
A furrow'd brow, Old-age at hand,
Or *Death unconquer'd* to withstand:
One long night,
Shall hide this light
From all our fight,
And equal *Death*
Shall few days hence, stop every breath.

Though thou whole *Hecatombs* shoud'st bring
In honour of th' *Infernal King*,
Who *Geryon* and *Titio* bold,
In chains of *Stygian* waves doth hold:
He'l not prize,
But more despise
Thy sacrifice:
Thou Death must feel
'Tis so decree'd by the *Fatal* Wheel.

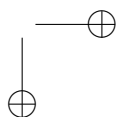
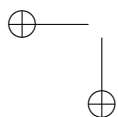
The numerous Off-spring of the Earth,
That feed on her who gave them birth;
Each birth must have it's *funeral*,
The *Womb* and *Urn's* alike to all:
Kings must die,
And as still lie,
As thou or I,
And though they have
Achievements here, there's none in th' Grave.

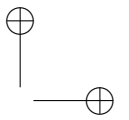
In vain we bloody *battels* flie,
Or fear to sail when winds are high;
The *Plague* or an infectious breath,
When every hour brings a new Death.
Time will mow
What e're we sow;
Both weal and woe
Shall have an end,
And this th' unwilling *Fates* must send.





Cocytus lake thou must wast o're
Thy totter'd *boat* shall touch that shore;
Thou *Sisyphus* ere long must know,
And into new acquaintance grow:
Shalt with life,
Leave house and wife,
Thy loves and strife,
And have no tree,
But the sad *Cypress* follow thee.
Mean while thy *heir* shall nobly quaff,
What thou with hundred *locks* keptst safe,
Cæcuban wines, and wash the floor
With juice would make an Emperor roar:
'Twill be thy lot,
Question it not,
To be forgot
With all thy deeds,
E're he puts on his Mourning weeds.

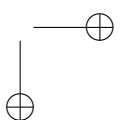
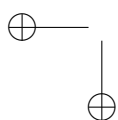




ANONYMOUS, 1669

(Newly Recovered English Classical Translations 1600–1800, Stuart Gillespie)

Alas, fond man, Time posts away
Whilst you muse how to bribe his stay;
Ease, then, your thoughts of all the pain
And cares you take: for 'tis in vain.
World-loving dotards fondly try
By vows, and smoking piety,
To slay invading, wrinkled Age,
Or Death's more fierce, resistless rage.
By an impartial destiny,
W' are hurried to eternity,
When princes and the vilest slaves
Both fall alike to Death's wild graves.
Fond of dull Life, in vain we fly
Rough seas, or War's fierce cruelty;
Fearful of Death, in each disease
In vain from doctors we seek ease.
Age hurries on, and Life decays,
In spite of health-preserving ways;
Forc'd on by Time, we must embark,
And ferry to a cave so dark
That Beauty, Wrinkles, Poverty, and Pride
There undistinguishdly reside.
Then must your hoards be left behind,
Your wealth, and wife so fondly kind:
A cypress branch and narrow grave
Are all the benefits you'll have
Of your tall groves and spacious lands,
Your stately house, and large commands,
Leaving to a licentious heir
The fruits of all your thrifty care,
Whose busy thoughts will be employd
How soonest they may be destroyd,
 Pampring his slaves in such luxurious wine,
 Would make fat prelates envy and repine.





ALEXANDER RADCLIFFE, 1682

(1608–54; Politician)

See, *Posthumus*, how years do fly;
Nor can the smoothest Piety
Fill up one wrinkle in the Face,
Or stop Old Ages certain pace,
Or quell Mortality.

When dying if thou shouldst design
To offer up at *Pluto's* Shrine,
As many *Bullocks* fat and fair,
As th'are days in every year,
One hour would not be thine.

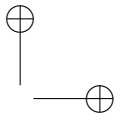
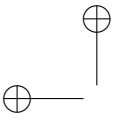
See the thrice bulky *Geryon* stand,
Shackled in Ropes of *Stygian*:
On t'other side the doleful Pool
See the extended *Tityus* roul,
Where all Mankind must land.

This irksom Shore must entertain
The greatest Prince that e'er shall reign
As great a welcom shall be there
Made to the meanest Cottager;
Distinctions are in vain.

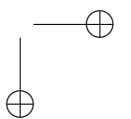
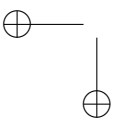
In vain we shun the chance of War,
Where the most frequent dangers are.
In vain we do secure our selves
From troubled Seas, or Sands, or Shelves,
Or a cold Winter fear.

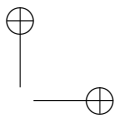
By all the Human Race at last
Muddy *Cocytus* must be past;
Where th'impious Daughters fill a Sieve,
Where *Sisyphus* in vain does strive
To stick the Rowler fast.

We bid Farwell to Land and House,
To th' joys of an untainted Spouse;
And to the silent Groves and Trees,
Whose Height and Shade at once do please:
But there sad Cypress grows.



Then shall rich Wines brought from *Campaign*,
Which you with Locks and Bolts detain,
Be by your worthy Heir let loose,
To give a Tincture round the House,
Where he does entertain.

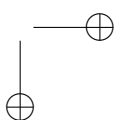
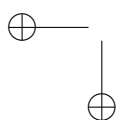


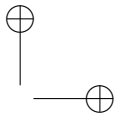
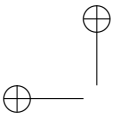


THOMAS CREECH, 1684

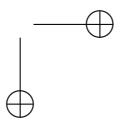
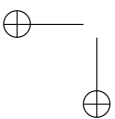
(1659–1700; Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford)

The whirling year, Ah Friend! the whirling year
 Rouls on apace;
And soon shall wrinkles plough thy witherd Face:
 In vain you wast your Pious breath,
 No prayers can stay, no vows defer
The swift approach of Age, and conqu'ring Death:
No, tho ten thousand Oxen stain'd his Shrines
 With sacred Blood,
Shouldst thou appease the inexorable God:
 He opens, and he shuts the Grave;
 Geryon's triple Soul confines,
And stubborn *Gyges* with the *Stygian* Wave:
That fatal Wave that must be past by all,
 The Rich, the Poor
Are doom'd alike to view the *Stygian* Shore;
 The Knaves and Fools, the Wise and Just,
 The Kings as well as Clowns must fall;
And undistinguisht lie with meaner dust:
In vain we all retreat from dangerous War,
 And live in ease;
In vain we shun the rage of angry Seas:
 The burning Fevers Autumn brings
 In vain we sly, and idly fear
The Plagues that South-winds bear on sickly Wings;
For all the *Stygian* Waves are doom'd to pass,
 We all must go
And view *Cocytus* wandring Streams below:
 We all must see the lasting Chains
 That hold curst *Danaus* his Race,
And *Sisyphus* condemn'd to endless pains:
Thy Children must be left, thy Lands and House,
 Thy pleasing Wife,
That happy Comfort and Delight of Life;
 Of all the Trees thy hands restor'd
 None but the *Cypress* hated Boughs
Shall follow their short-liv'd decaying Lord:





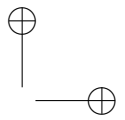
The Wines you keep so close thy worthier Heir
shall soon possess,
And wast midst wanton Luxury and Ease;
Much nobler Wine the squandring Youth
Shall pill and costlier Feasts prepare,
Than ever plead a Pamper'd Abbots Tooth.



JOHN HARINGTON, 1684

(c. 1627–1700)

Ah! Posthumus, swift years do glide;
Nor Piety, best means apply'd
 Can *Time's* furrow'd Front, old Age
 Retard; stout Death asswage
Not PLUTO though each day, for ease,
Thou with three hundred *Bulls* dost please;
 Example sad may *Titius* show,
 Three body'd *Gerion* too;
Whom that black Wave confines, where must
All Say! *Earth's* Sojourners and dust:
 Be it *King* wich haughty Brow,
 Mean Peasant from the *Plough*.
We shun *Wars* bloody chance in vain,
And billows tost i'ch' *Adrian* Main;
 Fondly *Autumn's* blast, South-wind,
 To the Body's health unkind:
Black *Coccyte's* wandring, drowzy *Flood*
Must we behold, besmear'd with blood;
 DANAUS *Girls*, SISIPHUS beside
 To th' *Stone's* long labour ty'd.
Thou *House*, fair grounds, Conjugal love
Must leave, nor of thy *planted* Grove
 Tree but *Cypress* loath'd, i'th' end,
 Shall their frail *Lord* attend.
Thy Wines *Cæcubian* nobler *Heir*,
(Now lock'd with hundred Keys) shall share;
 Wash thy *Marble* Pavement, though
 Priest-Feasts less choice oreflow.



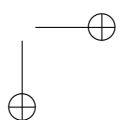
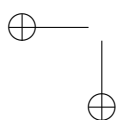
JOHN OLDHAM, 1684 (PARAPHRASED)

(1653–83; Poet)

Alas! dear Friend, alas! time hasts away,
Nor is it in our pow'r to bribe its stay:
The rolling years with constant motion run,
Lo! while I speak, the present minute's gone,
And following hours urge the foregoing on.
'Tis not thy Wealth, 'tis not thy Power,
'Tis not thy Piety can thee secure:
They're all too feeble to withstand
Grey Hairs, approaching Age, and thy avoidless end.
When once thy fatal Glass is run,
When once thy utmost Thred is spun,
'Twill then be fruitless to expect Reprieve:
Could'st thou ten thousand Kingdoms give
In purchase for each hour of longer life,
They would not buy one gasp of breath,
Not move one jot inexorable Death.

All the vast stock of humane Progeny,
Which now like swarms of Insects crawl
Upon the Surface of Earth's spacious Ball,
Must quit this Hillock of Mortality,
And in its Bowels buried lie.
The mightiest King, and proudest Potentate,
In spite of all his Pomp, and all his State,
Must pay this necessary Tribute unto Fate.
The busie, restless Monarch of the times, which now
Keeps such a pother, and so much ado
To fill Gazettes alive,
And after in some lying Annal to survive;
Ev'n He, ev'n that great mortal Man must die,
And stink, and rot as well as thou, and I,
As well as the poor tatter'd wretch, that begs his bread,
And is with Scraps out of the Common Basket fed.

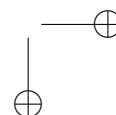
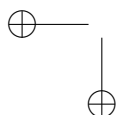
In vain from dangers of the bloody Field we keep,
In vain we scape
The sultry Line, and stormy Cape,
And all the treacheries of the faithless Deep:
In vain for health to forein Countries we repair,
And change our English for Mompellier Air,

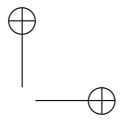




In hope to leave our fears of dying there:
In vain with costly far-fetch'd Drugs we strive
To keep the wasting vital Lamp alive:
In vain on Doctors feeble Art rely;
Against resistless Death there is no remedy:
Both we, and they for all their skill must die,
And fill alike the Bedrols of Mortality.

Thou must, thou must resign to Fate, my Friend,
And leave thy House, thy Wife, and Family behind:
Thou must thy fair and goodly Mannors leave,
Of these thy Trees thou shalt not with thee take,
Save just as much as will thy Coffin make:
Nor wilt thou be allow'd of all thy Land, to have,
But the small pittance of a six-foot Grave.
Then shall thy prodigal young Heir
Lavish the Wealth, which thou for many a year
Hast hoarded up with so much pains and care:
Then shall he drain thy Cellars of their Stores,
Kept sacred now as Vaults of buried Ancestors:
Shall set th' enlarged Butts at liberty,
Which there close Pris'ners under durance lie,
And wash these stately Floors with better Wine
Than that of consecrated Prelates when they dine.





WILLIAM OLDISWORTH, 1713

(1680–1734; Writer and Translator)

The fleeting Years post on apace,
And grey Old-age draws near,
Death knows no Mercy, no Delays,
Nor Vertue's self will spare.

No *Hecatombs* can e'er attone
The sullen King of Hell
He calls all Human kind his own,
Since the first Heroes fell.

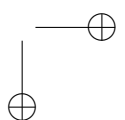
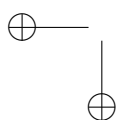
All, who of Breath and Food partake,
Must cross the gloomy Shore;
Be ferry'd o'er the *Stygian* Lake,
The Wealthy and the Poor.

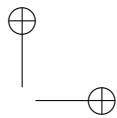
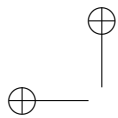
In vain we fly the Toils of War,
And Dangers of the Main;
Or *Autumn's* sickly Season fear,
When Plagues and Fevers reign.

Down to *Cocytus* we must go,
Where Ghosts are doom'd to turn,
With fruitless Toil and endless Woe,
The rolling Stone and Urn.

Here you must leave the Nymph you love,
Your Fields, and pleasant Home;
And only Cypress from the Grove
Attend you to your Tomb.

Then your rich Wines, your hoarded Store;
Fit for a Prelate's Feast,
Your Heir shall on the Pavement pour,
When you are gone to Rest.

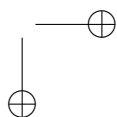
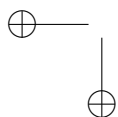


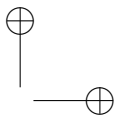


HENRY COXWELL, 1718

(The Odes of Horace)

Ah, Postumus, the Time hasts on apace,
And Age will stamp her Image on thy Face;
Nor will thy Piety, thy Wealth, or Pow'r,
Secure thee from th' inevitable Hour:
If thou whole Herds of Off'rings shouldest slay,
'Twould not procure one Moment of delay.
The num'rous Off-spring of the World must Die,
And all share equal in Mortality
All Heads alike must in the Dust ly down,
The Beggar's, and the Head that wears a Crown.
In vain we shun the Field all stain'd with Blood,
And 'scape the dreadful Dangers of the Flood:
In vain we to some purer Climate run,
When Autumn with infectious Air comes on;
Since all at last assuredly must go,
And be transported to the Shades below.
Thou must thy Wife, and stately Mansion leave,
And change thy spacious Mannors for a Grave;
Of all thy large Plantations in the end
The Cypress only shall thy Corps attend.
Then shall thy Son, when once thy Head is cold,
Profusely squander all thy hoarded Gold;
And make unhandsome waste of better Wine
Than Prelates tipple when they sup, or dine.





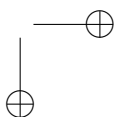
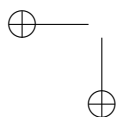
SIMON PATRICK, 1719

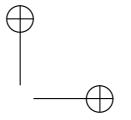
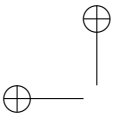
(1626–1707; Theologian and Bishop of Ely)

Friend, how fleeting are the Years of Man,
How are they shrunk, how dwindled to a Span!
Vertue it self adds not one Minute's Space,
Nor keeps an aged Furrow from the Face.
Death is a Tyrant neither loves nor fears,
Not scar'd with Threatnings, nor ev'n mov'd by Tears.
If the grim Shade once beckens you away,
Tho' Hecatombs you ev'ry Morning pay,
Ten Hecatombs will fail to bribe a Moment's Stay.
For Death with equal Boldness strikes the Door
Of rich Mens Courts, and Cottages of Poor,
That Foe to all our Race, comes on so fast,
Not one that lives but must submit at last,
And hurry'd blindly be to that one Place,
Where Kings and Slaves, and Wise and Fools embrace.
The mighty *Cæsar* now compell'd to lie
In the dark Dungeon of Mortality:
His Thoughts no more with Thirst of Empire burn,
Bounded within the Compass of an Urn.

To vain we shun the Cruelties of Arms,
In vain the roaring Ocean's rude Alarms:
In vain we Plagues and Southern Vapours fly,
Ills, that swarm thick in Autumn's sickly Sky:
For all must o'er the gloomy Waters ride,
Where black *Cocytus* rolls his lazy Tide,
With the least Shock th' immortal Substance flies,
Nature's undress'd, and the Clay Creature dies.
Happy the Man, who treads so just a Way,
That gladly he Death's Summons can obey.
But curs'd are they, who in their Stains retire,
Condemn'd to scorch in Streams of liquid Fire,
Where Murderers, and all the wicked Race,
Bear everlasting Marks of their Disgrace.

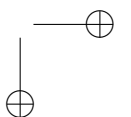
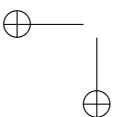
Nor shall your House, Estate, and charming Wife,
Be any longer yours, than for your Life:
The prattling Children, you so dearly prize,
Will yield to Joy to your benighted Eyes.
A Velvet Coffin, and a finer Shrowd,

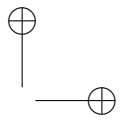




Can only serve to mark you from the Coud,
Of all the Trees you nurse with Cost and Care,
None will defend to the poor Master's Share,
But a few Cypress Boughs to dress your Herse:
Your very Name shall dye, except it lives in Verse.

Then will your Heir release th' imprison'd Wine,
A Treasure you with hundred Locks confine,
That the proud Floor shall with his drunken Triumphs sthine;
Such splendid Meals he'll double on his Guests;
As pamper'd Pontiffs when they treat their Priests.



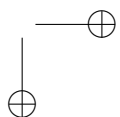
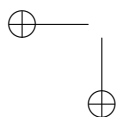


JOHN HANWAY, 1720

(*Translations of Several Odes of Horace*)

Ah! *Posthumus*, my old and worthy Friend,
How Time steals on, and bring us to our End!
Not all thy Virtues can its Course delay,
Or keep thy Age and Wrinkles back a Day;
Not all the Goodness of thy pious Mind,
Arm'd with his Scythe, the Hand of Death can bind.
Pluto is *Pluto*, tho' you every Day
Ten thousand Bullocks on his Altars lay:
Whose troubled Waters *Tityus* guard, and keep
The triple *Geryon* with their muddy Deep.
These Rich and Poor once, and but once, must pass,
Peasants and Kings, an undistinguish'd Class.

In vain from *Mars's* bloody Rage we run,
And boist'rous *Adria's* broken Billows shun;
In vain in *Autumn* Southern Blasts we fear,
And dread the sickly Season of the Year;
All to *Cocytus* must a Journey make,
And view his wandr'ing, dull, and gloomy Lake:
There *Danaus* see with all his wicked Crew;
And *Sisyphus's* endless Labour view.
Thy Lands, and House, and good condition'd Wife,
Must all be left, the sweetest Joys of Life;
Of all thy chosen Plants there's not a Tree,
But one poor *Cypres* Sprig, shall follow thee,
Whose Bloom upbraids thy own Mortality.
Cæcubian Wines thy more respected Heir
Shall will, which thou didst guard with so much Care;
And with such Liquor shall the Pavement stain,
As Princes drink, when Prelates entertain.





THOMAS KEN, 1721 (IMITATED)

(1637–1711; Cleric, Bishop of Bath and Wells)

Swift flies, dear Friend, Time's transient Wave,
To disembogue us in, the Grave,
Fate bears an universal Sway,
We moulder by degrees away,
Even Saints, who most Death's Sting defy,
Yet at their Call to Bliss must die.

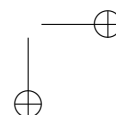
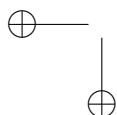
Should we to sullen Fate each Day
An Hecatomb for Off'ring pay,
We yet no Pity should excite,
Even *Og* and *Ishbebenob's* Might,
Whose Looks made Armies quit the Field,
Must to the King of Terrors yield.

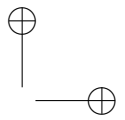
Poor Slaves with those who Scepters bore
Sink huddled into native Ore,
They who War, Shipwreck, Plague, survive,
In vain with Death for Mastery strive,
All pass the Gulf to mount on high,
Like *Laz'rus*, or with *Dives* fry.

This Paradise, my Joy of Life,
Those pretty Babes, this pleasing Wife,
These Plants, Flow'rs, Groves, which charm
I must forsake at Death's Surprize,
Cypress alone will with me stay;
To shrowd its short-liv'd Master's Clay.

Yet Death in vain exerts its Might
To rob me of one dear Delight;
Sweet Musick and devoted Song
I hope to perfect and prolong,
When I with Harp and Hymn divine
Adore the co-harmonious Trine.

O while we breath this fleeting Air
May we for endles Life prepare,
To heav'nly Love continue chaste,
All its sweet Effluences taste,
Till at the Source, when going hence,
We drink our Fill of Joy immense.



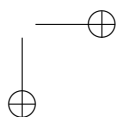
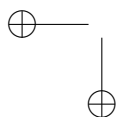


WILLIAM CONGREVE, 1730 (IMITATED)

(1670–1729; Playwright, Poet, and Politician)

Ah! no, 'tis all in vain, believe me 'tis,
This pious artifice.
Not all these prayers and alms can buy
One moment tow'rd Eternity.
Eternity! that boundless race;
Which Time himself can never run
(Swift, as he flies, with an unweary'd pace):
Which, when ten thousand, thousand years are done,
Is still the same, and still to be begun.
Fix'd are those limits, which prescribe
A short extent to the most lasting breath;
And though thou could'st for sacrifice lay down
Millions of other lives to save thy own,
'Twere fruitless all; not all would bribe
One supernumerary gasp from death.

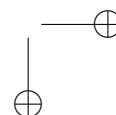
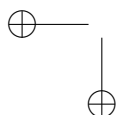
In vain's thy inexhausted store
Of wealth, in vain thy power:
Thy honours, titles, all must fail,
Where Piety itself can nought avail.
The rich, the great, the innocent, and just,
Must all be huddled to the grave,
With the most vile and ignominious slave,
And undistinguish'd lie in dust.
In vain the fearful flies alarms,
In vain he is secure from wounds of arms,
In vain avoids the faithless seas,
And is confin'd to home and ease,
Bounding his knowledge, to extend his days.
In vain are all those arts we try,
All our evasions, and regret to die:
From the contagion of mortality,
No clime is pure, no air is free:
And no retreat
Is so obscure, as to be hid from fate
Thou must forego the dearest joys of life;
Leave the warm boom of thy tender wife,
And all the much-lov'd offspring of her womb,
To moulder in the cold embraces of a tomb.

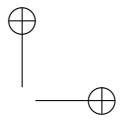




All must be left, and all be lost;
Thy house, whose stately structure so much cost,
Shall not afford
Room for the stinking carcase of its lord.
Of all thy pleasant gardens, grots, and bowers,
Thy costly fruits, thy far-fetch'd plants and flowers,
Nought halt thou save;
Or but a prig of rosemary shalt have,
To wither with thee in the grave:
The rest shall live and flourish, to upbraid
Their transitory master dead.

Then shall thy long-expecting heir
A joyful mourning wear:
And riot in the waste of that estate
Which thou hast taken so much pains to get.
All thy hid stores he shall unfold,
And set at large thy captive gold.
That precious wine, condemn'd by thee,
To vaults and prisons, shall again be free:
Bury'd alive though now it lies,
Again shall rise;
Again its sparkling surface show,
And free as element profusely flow.
With such high food he shall set forth his feasts,
That cardinals shall wish to be his guests:
And pamper'd prelates see
Themselves outdone in luxury.





ANONYMOUS, 1735 (IMITATED)

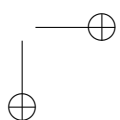
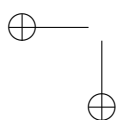
(*The Gentleman's Magazine*)

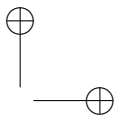
How swift alas! the rolling years
Haste to devour their destin's prey,
A moth each winged minute bears,
Which still in vain the stationers,
From the dead authors sweep away,
And troops of canker worms with secret pride,
Thro' gay vermilion leaves, and gilded covers glide.

Great B—nt—y! should thy critic vein,
Each day supply the teaming press,
Of ink should'st thou whole rivers drain,
Not one octavo shall remain,
To shew thy learning and address.
Oblivion drags them to her silent cell,
Where great king *Arthur* and his nobles dwell.

Authors of every size and name,
Knights, squires, and doctors of all colours,
From the pursuit of lasting fame,
Retiring there a mansion claim,
Behold the fate of modern scholars!
Why will you then with hopes delusive led,
For various readings toil which never will be read.

With silver clasp, and corner plate,
You fortify the favourite book,
Fear not from worms, nor time thy fate,
More cruel foes thy works await,
The butler, with th' impatient cook,
And pastry nymphs with trunk-makers combine,
To ease the groaning shelves, and spoil the fair.





THOMAS HARE, 1737

(“Master of Blandford School”)

Swift flies, my *Posthumus*, away,
Swift flies our Life with ev'ry Breath,
Nor can Devotion bring Delay
To wrinkled Age and conqu'ring Death.

Oh! cou'd you day by day afford
Three hundred mighty Bulls to burn,
Pluto inexorable Lord
Wou'd take you in your destin'd Turn.

Three-bodied *Geryon's* frightful Ghost,
And widely stretch'd along the Ground
Tityus he binds within his Coast,
And nine times throws the *Styx* around:

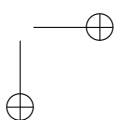
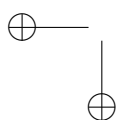
The *Styx*, sad Flood we all must pass,
That feed on Earth's corruptive Meat,
Of noble or ignoble Race,
Or Peasants mean, or Monarchs great.

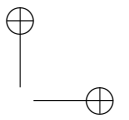
Alas! we shall decline in vain
The foaming Waves and bloody War,
Or, when destructive Autumns reign,
The sickly Breath of southern Air.

Cocytus wandring, gloomy, slow,
Fam'd *Danaus'* Race we all must view:
And *Sisyphus* condemn'd below
Eternal Labours to renew.

Thy Buildings, Lands, and pleasing Spouse
Must be forsook; and not a Tree
Of all thy Care but Cypress Boughs
Detested follow fleeting Thee.

Thy worthier Heir shall largely pour,
What now an hundred Locks enclose;
And tinge with nobler Wine the Floor,
Than at a Pontiff's Banquet flows.





PHILIP FRANCIS, 1743

(1708–73; Clergyman and Writer)

How swiftly glide our flying years!
Alas! nor piety nor tears
 Can stop the fleeting day;
Deep-furrow'd wrinkles, posting age,
And death's unconquerable rage,
 Are strangers to delay.

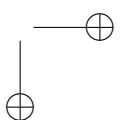
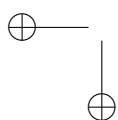
Though every day a bull should bleed
To Pluto; bootless were the deed,
 The monarch tearless reigns,
Where vultur-tortur'd Tityos lies,
And triple Geryon's monstrous size
 The gloomy wave detains.

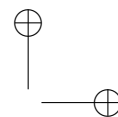
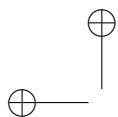
Whoever tastes of earthly food
Is doom'd to pass the joyless flood,
 And hear the Stygian roar;
The sceptred king, who rules the earth,
The labouring hind of humbler birth,
 Must reach the distant shore.

The broken surge of Adria's main,
Hoarse-sounding, we avoid in vain,
 And Mars in blood-stain'd arms;
The southern blast in vain we fear,
And autumn's life-annoying air
 With idle fears alarms.

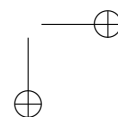
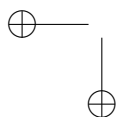
For all must see Cocytus flow,
Whose gloomy water sadly slow
 Strays through the dreary soil;
The guilty maids, an ill fam'd train!
And, Sisyphus, thy labours vain
 Condemn'd to endless toil.

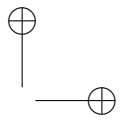
Thy pleasing consort must be left,
And you of villas, lands, bereft,
 Must to the shades descend;
The cypress only, hated tree!
Of all thy much-lov'd groves, shall thee
 Its short-liv'd lord attend.





Then shall thy worthier heir discharge
And set the' imprison'd casks at large,
 And dye the floor with wine
So rich and precious, not the feasts
Of pontiffs cheer their ravish'd guests
 With liquor more divine.





WILLIAM POPPLE, C. 1750

(1700–64; Poet and Playwright)

Flying years still glide away –
 Posthumus all care is vain,
Piety brings no delay –
 Wrinkles, Age, & Death remain!

Sacrifice an Hecatomb,
 Pluto will not be appeas'd;
Triple Geryon met his doom,
 Tityus' liver Vulturs seiz'd.

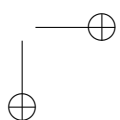
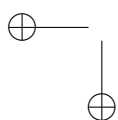
On Earth's fruits whoever feed;
 Pass alike the Stygian lake,
Kings, & Peasants, fate-decreed
 All alike the Voyage make.

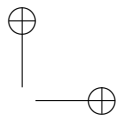
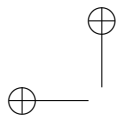
Shun the battle he who will,
 Shun the fierce Adriatic surge,
Fly from Autumn's winds that hill,
 Fatal death the dart will urge.

Slow Cocytus all must view,
 Danaids to all be shown,
Sisyphus his toil renew,
 Rolling still the falling stone.

Houses, Lands, what-e'er you have –
 Pleasing Consort, once so dear –
All must go, nor can you save,
 Aught, but Cypress, for your bier.

Guard thy Wine with Locks & Keys,
 Soon thy Heir will let it flow,
All thy treasures he will seize,
 Priests, less sumptuous feasts, shall know.





ANONYMOUS, 1751 (IMITATED)

(The Gentleman's Magazine)

See, see, my friend! the fleeting years,
How swift they glide away;
Nor virtue, piety, nor tears
Their rapid course can stay. –

In vain we wish, in vain we crave,
To shun th' impending doom;
All, all must die: the king, the slave,
Must fill alike the tomb. –

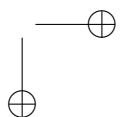
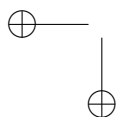
What tho' we shun the stormy sea,
Or Autumn's sickly breath;
What tho', where thund'ring cannons play,
The coward sculks from death:

Still death, insidious, subtle foe;
Pursues, where'er he flies;
And where he least expects the blow,
In bed the dastard dies. –

Then must we leave those social joys,
Which form'd our bliss before;
Our tender wife, our prattling boys
Must greet us then no more. –

Naked we left our parent's womb,
And naked must return;
Cypress alone shall grace our tomb,
And deck its owner's urn.

While some new lord with wanton mirth
Shall reap those joys we leave;
And as we moulder into earth,
Shall riot o'er our grave.





ANONYMOUS, 1752 (IMITATED)

(The Gentleman's Magazine)

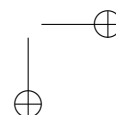
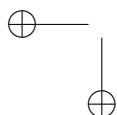
How swiftly glide the fleeting years!
Nor virtue, piety, nor tears,
 Their rapid course can stay.
Time blasts, alas! the fairest face,
Death hastens on with steady pace,
 To summon us away.

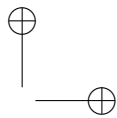
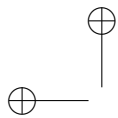
He mocks the feeble pow'rs of man;
Nor all the richest treasures can
 Protract the final doom:
The rich, the poor, the great, the small,
Must yield obedience to his call,
 And fill alike the tomb.

What tho' we shun the stormy sea!
What tho', where thund'ring canons play,
 From death the coward flies?
Death close pursues, a ruthless foe,
And where he least expects the blow,
 In bed the dastard dies.

Then must we leave those darling joys,
Our tender wife, our prattling boys,
 Which form'd our bliss before:
All must at last from earth retreat;
Our stately house, our peaceful seat,
 Shall know us then no more.

The waving wood, the shady grove,
With all the scenes of social love,
 We must for ever leave.
And while we moulder into earth,
Our sprightlier heirs with wanton mirth
 Shall riot o'er our grave.





CHARNO DE SYLVIUS, 1753 (IMITATED)

(The Gentleman's Magazine)

Dear *Joe*, the years whirl on a pace,
Nor can we stay their mad cap race,
 Whatever tricks we play:
Time prints thy brow with wrinkles deep
Death hastens with his scythe to sweep
 Each mother's child away.

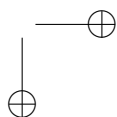
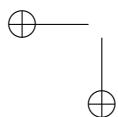
He meets us with scornful grin,
And marches on thro' thick and thin,
 In spite of all our pow'r:
The king, the miller, and the slave,
Are doom'd alike to fill the grave,
 And meet a fatal hour.

What, tho' we shun the sickly fogs
That rise among the lowland bogs,
 Nor venture out to sea?
What, tho' where shouting troops engage,
And death appears in tenfold rage,
 The coward runs away?

Still, still the foe is at his back,
And hunts him thro' he winding track,
 Where'er he trembling flies;
And where his coming least he fears,
Among the straw o'er head and ears,
 The raggamuffin dies.

Must we then leave thee joys behind?
My dusty friend no longer grind,
 And whistle in his mill?
To loving wife, and prattling bearsns,
And all our family concerns,
 Alas! a long farewell.

A grassy turf, with osiers bound,
Shall be our only portion found
 Of all that here we have,
And as we into dust decay,
Our spendthrift heirs shall dance the hay;
 And gambol o'er our grave.





WILLIAM DUNCOMBE, 1757

(1690–1769; Writer, Clerk in Navy Office)

Hours, Months, and Year, with gliding Pace,
O *Posthumus*! fly swift away;
Nor can, alas! your Piety
Th' Approach of wrinkled Age delay.

For *Age* and unrelenting *Death*,
Advancing, close behind us steal,
Nor would three Hecatombs, each Day,
Appeal the ruthless God of Hell.

For all that breathe must pass the Flood,
By which *Geryon* is confin'd
With triple Form, and *Tityus* bold;
No less the King than lowly Hind.

In vain we shun the foaming Rage
Of *Seas*, and *Mars's* crimson Plain;
In vain escape contagious Blasts,
Which gorge the Tomb in *Autumn's* Reign;

Cocytus' Stream, with torpid Wave
Mændring, we must all behold;
The Virgins doom'd to fruitless Toil,
The Stone by *Sisyphus* uproll'd.

From Lands, and House, and pleasing Wife,
Cut off, your brittle Life shall end:
Of all your Trees, their fleeting Lord
None but the *Cypress* shall attend!

Your worthier Heir shall burst the Vaults,
And the fair Marble Pavement stain
With richer Wine, than what regales,
At their proud Feasts, the *Salian* Train.



WILLIAM JONES, 1760 (IMITATED)

(1746–94; Philologist and Puisne Judge, Supreme Court of Judicature, Bengal)

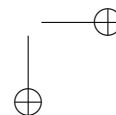
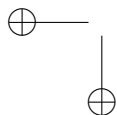
How quickly fades the vital flower!
Alas, my friend! each silent hour
 Steals unperceiv'd away:
The early joys of blooming youth,
Sweet innocence, and dove-eyed truth,
 Are destin'd to decay.

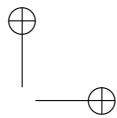
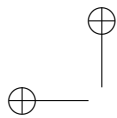
Can zeal drear Pluto's wrath restrain?
No; though an hourly victim stain
 His hallow'd shrine with blood.
Fate will recall her doom for none;
The sceptred king must leave his throne,
 To pass the Stygian food.

In vain, my Parnell, wrapt in ease,
We shun the merchant-marring seas;
 In vain we fly from wars;
In vain we shun the' autumnal blast;
(The slow Cocytus must be pass'd)
 How needless are our cares!

Our house, our land, our shadowy grove,
The very mistress of our love,
 Ah me, we soon must leave!
Of all our trees, the hated boughs
Of cypress shall alone diffuse
 Their fragrance o'er our grave.

To others shall we then resign
The numerous casks of sparkling wine,
 Which, frugal, now we store
With them a more deserving heir
(Is this our labour, this our care?)
 Shall stain the stuoco floor.



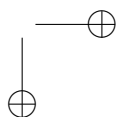
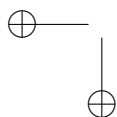


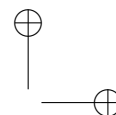
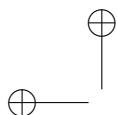
ANONYMOUS, 1762 (IMITATED)

(*Horace's Odes*, Charles Cooper)

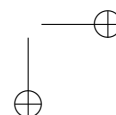
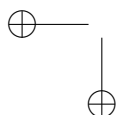
With how impetuous a career
Runs out of sight the rapid year!
Believe me, Langhorne, tho' we pray,
Like my good grandame, thrice a day,
Old age and coughs, and aches and agues,
In spite of piety will plague us.
Time, out of mem'ry has been mad,
And gallops over good and bad.
Titus and Geryon triple fold,
The Broughton and the Slack of old,
Felt both alack! a fatal day; –
And are we half as hard as they?
Assiduous Charon, quick as thought,
With ling'ring culls will cram the boat,
Nor will he bend or bate the least,
To Dick the squire, or you the priest.
What tho' you 'scape the wind and rain,
Nor teaze for gold the fretful main,
Ne'er be by grace or sense forsook,
To cut a purse, or make a book;
You soon must quit your cure, to be
With Sisyphus and Company.

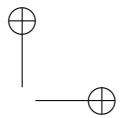
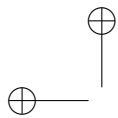
Ah! then at last the love-struck swain
Shall cease of Sylvia to complain!
You'll – won't you, think on many a day
That you and I have laugh'd away,
Of many a smiling social scene,
Of many a gambol on the green;
And look confoundedly askew
On sooty cypress and dull yew?
Indeed if grapes or barley grow,
Or snipe or woodcock fly below,
The sight some small relief may be;
But not a single trout you'll see.
“To fish, (you'll cry,) in such a flood!
O cursed Coccytean mud!
Was it for this I wore my eyes
In forming artificial flies?
Was it for this, that better far





I threw my line than J—y C—r?"
When you are dead, and fair and clear
Our common sheets of song appear,
Your son will think they serve to shew
Your brains and mine were but so-so,
He'll see how you have sliely stole
From Seed and South your sermons whole;
He'll wonder how you could for shame,
Then shake his head, and do the same.

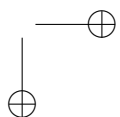
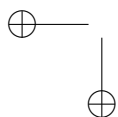


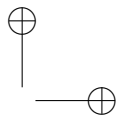


CHRISTOPHER SMART, 1767

(1722–71; Academic and Poet, Friend of Samuel Johnson)

Ah! Posthumus, the years, the years
Glide swiftly on, nor can our tears
Or piety the wrinkl'd age fend,
Or for one hour retard th' inevitable end.
'Twould be in vain, tho' you should slay,
My friend, three hundred beeves a day
To cruel Pluto, whose dire waters roll,
Geryon's threefold bulk, and Titus to controul.
This is a voyage we all must make,
Whoe'er the fruits of earth partake,
Whether we sit upon a royal throne,
Or live, like cottage hinds, unwealthy and unknown.
The wounds of war we scape in vain,
And the hoarse breakers of the main:
In vain with so much caution we provide
Against the southern winds upon th' autumnal tide.
The black Cocytus, that delays
His waters in a languid maze,
We must behold, and all those Danaids fell,
And Sisyphus condemn'd to fruitless toil in hell.
Lands, house, and pleasing wife, by thee
Must be relinquish'd; nor a tree
Of all your nurseries shall in the end,
Except the baleful cypress, their brief lord attend.
Thy worthier heir the wine shall seize
You hoarded with a hundred keys,
And with libations the proud pavement dye,
And feasts of priests themselves shall equal and outvie.





EDWARD BURNABY GREENE, 1768

(Died 1788; Poet and Translator)

See! with precipitated course,
Still hast'ning his career,
Sweeps along in rapid force
The whirling Year;

Nor vows can bend, nor pray'rs can stay
That stranger to delay;
Envious he posts to snatch thy bloom,
– And death rapacious points the tomb.

Though hecatombs luxuriant stain
(Each consecrated day)
Inexorable *Pluto's* fane,
The fruitless bribe we pay.

He – to th'infernal plains
Geryon's triple form refrains;
Nor from the shade will *Tityus* free;
– And dar'st thou think, he'll pity thee?

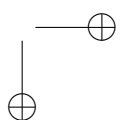
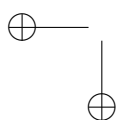
No – 'tis the lot of human birth,
The privilege of breath,
To linger for a while on earth,
Then – tread the realms of death.

Mid *labor'd* health the fated wound
Will pierce the peasant to the ground,
And monarchs tinseld round with show
Must, with their courtiers, feel the blow.

The thunder of the battle's roar
In vain the coward flies;
Or views, undaunted on the shore,
The billows strike the skies.

Ah! what avails it at the last
To shun intemp'rate *Auster's* blast?
To thield the tender frame, and fear
The fury of th'autumnal year?

Yes! all must pass *Cocytus'* wave,
Whose flow, dull streams surround
The ghastly regions of the grave;
– A melancholy round –





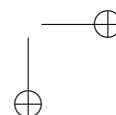
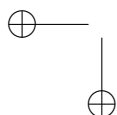
Yes! o'er the drear unsocial coast
Must see each agonizing ghost;
Must hear each guilty *Danaid's* groan,
And his, who toiling heaves the still-returning stone.

Yes! of thy lands, thy house, thy wife,
Those *envy'd* joys, bereft,
Not one, one solace of thy life
To mis'ry will be left.

The trees, that shade thy spacious land,
Still in unrival'd pomp shall stand
And scarce a cypress-twig, my friend,
Will from the world its lord attend.

Then shall the goblet's purple foam
Burst joyful to the sight;
The sweets shall revel through the dome
Too long involv'd in night.

I see the floor in blushing pride
Stream with the wine's luxuriant tide,
See priestly *Epicures* outdone
By thy triumphant, worthier Son.





BROCKILL NEWBURGH, 1769

(c. 1659–1741; Irish Politician)

Alas! my Friend, Years swiftly glide
And bear us with Life's ebbing Tide
 To Age and panting Breath,
No pious Victims can assuage
Grim Pluto's unrelenting Rage,
 Or stay the Tyrant Death.

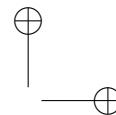
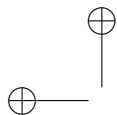
Visit thou must that baleful Flood
Whose Streams confine the Monster Brood
 That would have scal'd the Sky:
Whoe'er we are whom Earth sustains,
Or scepter'd Kings, or humble Swains,
 Thither we all must hie.

In vain we fly, in vain we brave
The Perils of the Land or Wave,
 Or War destructive shun:
In vain we cautious dread t'inhale
Th' autumnal Blast, or southern Gale,
 Or seek a milder Sun.

For flow *Cocytus* lazy Flood
Shall wast us to that impious Brood
 The blood-stain'd Dan'id Race:
New Scenes of Horror shall unfold,
The Stone the Mountain steep up-roll'd
 Then tumbling to its Base.

This must thou quit the Joys of Life
Thy Villas, Lands, and dearer Wise
 When Nature's Debt is paid:
Nor any of thy Trees ador'd
Shall follow thee, their short-liv'd Lord,
 But Cyprus, bafeul Shade.

Thy Hogsheads too thy wiser Heir
Tho' triply guarded, shall not spare,
 But lavish of the Store,
With Pomp pontifical hall feast
And in the Riot of his Waste
 Distain the Marble Floor.



JOHN PARKE, 1771 (PARAPHRASED)

(1754–89, First American Translation, Dedicated to George Washington)

On times swift pinions pass the fleeting years,
Nor can thy piety, alas! assuage
His ruthless hand, or floods of streaming tears,
Divert the current of his fatal rage.

Disease will soon thy languid frame assail,
Old age with wrinkles shall o'erspread thy face;
Death will demand thee, nor will sighs prevail,
Or wrest thee from the tyrant's cold embrace.

Though daily hecatombs, thy altars stain,
And untold off'rings should incessant bleed;
'Tis fruitless all! – the Dæmon hears, in vain,
Nor adds one blessing to the pious deed.

Down to th' infernal shades, where *Tityus* lies,
With growing lungs, by vultures ever torn;
Where three-form'd *Geryon* of stupendous size,
Beholds the sluggish waves of *Acheron*;

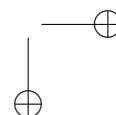
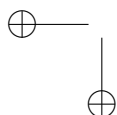
Whoever tastes of life's inspiring breath,
And earth's kind fruits benignantly partake:
Must fall, the victims of rapacious death,
And pass the waters of the Stygean lake.

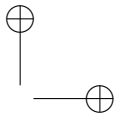
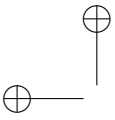
The haughty king who guides the wheels of fate,
Or rules the nations with a rod of steel: –
The humble cottager must yield to fate,
And both alike its mighty influence feel.

To 'scape a wat'ry grave we fly the main,
With all the dangers that in war assail:
Fruitless our caution, and our fears how vain!
The destin'd exit, will at last prevail.

Though southern winds pestiferous arise,
And sickly autumn breathes contagion round:
In vain we shun the pestilential skies,
To seek the blessings that in health abound.

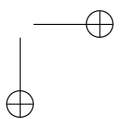
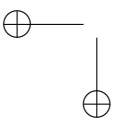
To Hades then, our fleeting souls must go,
There view the Danaids curs'd with ceaseless toil:
Where dark Cocytus' streams embitter'd flow,
With horrid murmurs through the dreary foil.

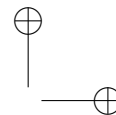
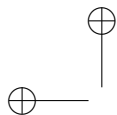




Where *Sisyphus* his fruitless talk pursues,
And lab'ring strives the arduous height to gain:
The stone recoils, and all his pain renews,
To heave it from the distant, lowly plain.

Thy wife and sweet domestic cares, alas!
With all the pleasures that on life attend,
As airy visions, idle dreams shall pass,
And to the silent grave must all descend.





WILLIAM GREEN, 1777

(A New Poetical Translation of All the Odes)

Oh! Posthumus, the flitting year,
Alas! unceasing glide away,
Nor can thy piety nor tears,
Or stay the steps of wrinkled Age,
Or th' adamantin Blow delay,
Of Death's indomitable rage

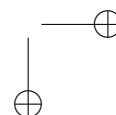
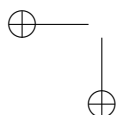
A hundred Hecatombs a day,
Can not the Stygian pow'r assuage,
The merciless! whose waves enfold
Geryon quell'd, of tenfold strength,
And Tityus thee, enormous length!
Outstretcht o'er many an Acre roll'd:

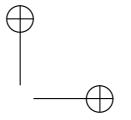
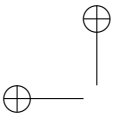
In vain we dread th' Autumnal damps;
And Sirius' pestilential reign,
And the Mavortian bloody camps,
Or Adria's hoarse resounding Main;

For whether low, or high our race;
From Heroes, or Plebeians base,
All, in the dreary realms below,
Thy irrenavigable flood,
Cocytus rowling sadly flow,
Must pass, who taste of earthly food,

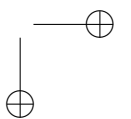
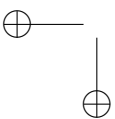
And see – where Danaus' impious train;
Must labours of the Urn sustain,
And doom'd Eternal toils to feel,
Thee Sisyphus, protruding vain,
Thy rock – And *vast* Ixion's wheel:

The treasures, thou'rt so fond to save,
Thy Dome, and Lands, and bosom-Wife,
And whate'er else is dear in life,
Alas! thou Posthumus, must leave,
Of all thy cultur'd trees, but One,
The hateful Cypress, She alone,
When thy short Day of Life is done,
Her Lord shall follow to the Grave.





Long fast with many a bolted Door,
Some worthier Heir shall drain and pour
Thy Hogsheads, and thy Parian floor
Distain, magnificently grac'd,
With foods of thy Falernian Vine,
Delicious! as the Flamens Wine,
When they pontifically feast.





D. HUGHES, 1780

(“Formerly Headmaster of Ruthin School and Rector of Llangynhafal, Denbigh”)

The rolling year, my friend, wheels on apace,
And age arrests the monarch and the slave;
All conquering time shall furrow o'er thy face;
Nor vows nor pray'rs can keep thee from the grave!

The tearless Pluto thou can'st never bend,
Tho' thousand bulls should stain his gloomy cave
The tripple Geryon feels his ruthless hand,
And Tityus compass'd by the Stygian wave.

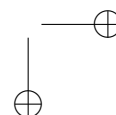
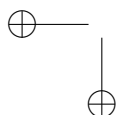
The wave which all mankind, or soon or late,
When the grim tyrant summons, must pass o'er;
The rich, the poor must bow t' imperious fate
And undistinguish'd tread th' infernal shore.

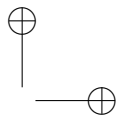
In vain we shun the madd'ning din of war,
In vain we court the blandishments of ease,
In vain we dread late autumn's noxious air,
And the fell rage of Adria's angry seas!

All, all must view Cocytus' stream below,
Which deals a ghastly horror thro' the gloom;
See the curst race of Danäus' endless woe
And Sisyphus' ever-toiling doom!

Thy pleasing children and thy loving spouse
With all thy land, reluctant, thou must leave,
Of all the lovely trees that front thy house,
None but the *Cypress* thine to deck thy grave.

The wines you stow so close, a worthier heir
In wanton luxury and ease shall waste,
And costlier wines and dainties shall prepare
Than e'er adorn'd the Persian monarch's feast.





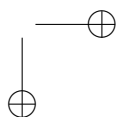
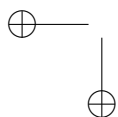
JOHN HOWE, 1780

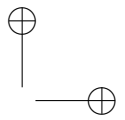
(A Select Collection of Poems, John Nichols)

Ah! friend, the posting years how fast they fly!
Nor can the strictest piety:
Defer incroaching age;
Or Death's resistless rage:
If you each day
A hecatomb of bulls should flay,
The smoaking host could not subdue
The tyrant to be kind to you.
From Geryon's head he snatch'd the triple crown,
Into th' infernal lake the monarch tumbled down.
The prince and peasant of this world must be
Thus wafted to eternity.

In vain from bloody wars are mortals free,
Or the rough forms of the tempestuous sea;
In vain they take such care
To shield their bodies from autumnal air.
Dismal Cocytus they must ferry o'er,
Whose languid stream inoves dully by the shore.
And in their passage we shall see
Of tortur'd ghosts the various misery.

Thy stately house, thy pleasing wife
And children (blessings dear as life),
Must all be left, nor shalt thou have,
Of all thy grateful plants, one tree;
Unless the dismal cyprefs follow thee,
The short-liv'd lord of all, to thy cold grave.
But the imprison'd Burgundy
Thy jolly heir shall straight set free.
Releas'd from lock and key, the sparkling wine
Shall flow, and make the drunken pavement shine.





SAMUEL JOHNSON, 1784

(1709–84; Writer)

Alas, dear Friend, the fleeting years
In everlasting Circles run,
In vain you spend your vows and prayers,
They roll, and ever will roll on.

Should Hecatombs each rising Morn
On cruel Pluto's Altar dye,
Should costly Loads of incense burn,
Their fumes ascending to the Skie;

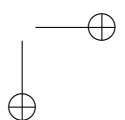
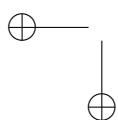
You could not gain a Moments breath,
Or move the haughty King below,
Nor would inexorable Death
Defer an hour the fatal blow.

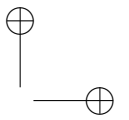
In vain we shun the Din of war,
And terrors of the Stormy Main,
In vain with anxious breasts we fear
Unwholesome Sirius' sultry reign;

We all must view the Stygian flood
That silent cuts the dreary plains,
And cruel Danaus' bloody Brood
Condemn'd to everduring pains.

Your shady Groves, your pleasing wife,
And fruitfull fields, my dearest Friend,
You'll leave together with your life,
Alone the Cypress shall attend.

After your death, the lavish heir
Will quickly drive away his woe,
The wine you kept with so much care
Along the marble floor shall flow.





THOMAS MAY, 1791

(Poems Descriptive and Moral)

The fleet-wing'd years, Posthumts I slide
Alas! nor piety can stay,
 Old age, or wrinkles fell,
 Nor death invincible.

Although, my friend you sacrifice
Three hundred bullocks every day
 To ruthless Pluto's shrine,
 Whose sluggish waves confine

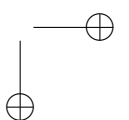
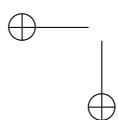
Tityos and Geryon dire;
The waves which all munt pass,
 Who fed on fruits of earth,
 Of high, or humble birth,

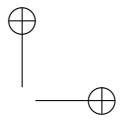
In vain the sanguine field we 'scape,
And roaring Adria's dashing gulph;
 When autumn rules the year,
 In vain the south we fear.

Cocytus' fable, languid stream,
And Danaus' race we must behold,
 Where cruel fate ordains
 Sisyphus to endless pains.

Thy land and house, and pleasing wife,
And groves, thine hands have set,
 Thou must behind thee leave;
 The cypress only deck, thy grave.

A worthier heir the wine shall spend,
Which once an hundred locks conceal'd;
 Not in our festivals is found
 Such cheer as then shall tinge the ground.

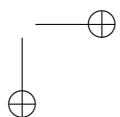
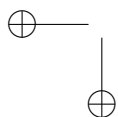


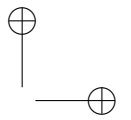


WILLIAM BOSCAWEN, 1793

(1752–1811; Barrister, Writer, and Translator)

Ah, Posthumus, how slits away
On rapid wings the transient hour!
No pious offerings can delay
Stern age, or death's all-conquering power,
No hecatombs thy life can save,
Or hell's relentless God assuage.
In vain, surrounded by his wave,
Huge Geryon and stern Tytios' rage.
Borne on that wave each child of earth
Explores the tyrant's shadowy reign,
The prince of high illustrious birth,
And the poor peasant of the plain!
In vain from ruthless war we fly,
Shun the hoarse seas where forms prevail;
In vain, beneath the autumnal sky,
Shrink from the baneful southern gale.
Still must we view that dreary space,
Where, with dull stream, Cocytus flows,
Where Sisyphus, where toil the race
Of Danaus, doom'd to endless woes.
Thy lands, thy dome, thy pleasing wife,
These must thou quit; 'tis nature's doom:
No tree, whose culture charms thy life,
Save the sad cypress, waits thy tomb.
Thy worthier heir, to waste thy stores,
Thy treasur'd liquors, shall destroy
Their hundred bolts, shall stain thy floors
With juice more rich than priests enjoy.





ANONYMOUS, 1793

(The Gentleman's Magazine)

Alas! my Postumus, the years
Glide rapidly away,
Nor aught avail our fervent prayers
Their fleeting course to stay,
Old Age t' avert, or smooch its wrinkled brow,
Or ward off Death's inevitable blow.

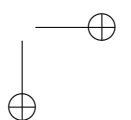
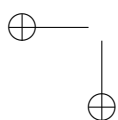
Tho' hecatombs should thrice each day
Stern Pluto's altar stain,
The God unpitying turns away,
Thy sacrifice is vain:
In vain, alas! three hundred victims bleed,
Still time moves on with unabated speed.

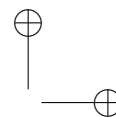
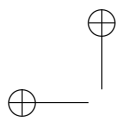
Those giant forms he now enchains,
To whom Earth being gave,
Within his dreary, dark, domains,
Beyond the oblivious wave,
O'er which, conducted to the realms below,
Princes and peasants undistinguish'd go.

In vain, th' ensanguin'd field we shun,
Or 'scape the boist'rous main,
And when autumnal gales come on,
We dread their force in vain.
Against th' unwholesome blast the noxious air,
In vain we essay to guard with studious care.

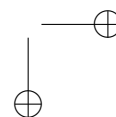
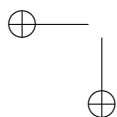
Near to the black Cocytus' wave,
That languid moves along,
Our dreaded lot we soon must have,
Amid th' unnumber'd throng,
Where Danäus' impious race their crime atone,
And Sisyphus uprears th' again-descending stone.

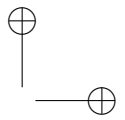
Thy pleasant seat, thy lovely bride,
Thou leav'st when Fate commands;
Those trees too, that in stately pride
Now own thy fost'ring hand;
Save that the cypress still bewails thy doom,
And waves its mournful branches o'er thy tomb.





Then will at last thy hopeful heir
Lavish, without reserve;
Those costly wines, which, by your care,
A hundred keys preserve:
In riotous excess, libations full, will pour,
And stain, in heedless mirh, the richly-polish'd floor.





GILBERT WAKEFIELD, 1795

(1756–1801; Classical Scholar and Politician)

Alas! my friend, the years glide on apace!
Vain thy pure homage to th' all-ruling Power,
To smoothe one wrinkle of that faded face;
Arrest old age, or Death's determin'd hour.

Tho' with three hecatombs, each circling sun,
Thy pious hands his streaming altar stain,
Down Pluto's iron cheek no tear would run;
But ev'n three hundred victims bleed in vain!

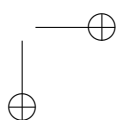
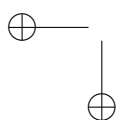
In his black realm those Giant-sons of earth
Enchains th' oblivious stream's revolving bed:
The rich that stream must pass, of royal birth;
The poor, who labours for his scanty bread.

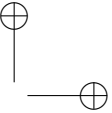
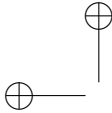
In vain, ensanguin'd war! we 'scape thy snare,
Thro' Ocean's bellowing waves securely sail,
Watch Autumn's blasting hour with trembling care,
When Death and Languor walk on every gale.

Where black Cocytus winds his lazy flood,
Where the huge stone is upheav'd o'er and o'er,
Where toil the Sisters stain'd with nuptial blood,
Our feet must journey, to return no more.

Thy house thou soon must quit, and charming bride;
Thy lands, those trees that wave, those fowers that bloom;
Cypress alone, of all thy garden's pride,
It's short-liv'd mater follows to his tomb.

Thy lavish Heir will waste those hoarded stores;
Stores, that a hundred massy keys confine:
Soon, midst luxurious riot, will thy floors,
With Parian stone resplendent, swim in wine.

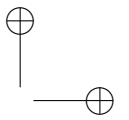




ANNA SEWARD, 1799 (IMITATED)

(1747–1809; Poet)

Alas! my Posthumus, the Years
 Unpausing glide away;
Nor suppliant hands, nor fervent prayers,
 Their fleeting pace delay;
Nor smooth the brow, when furrowing lines descend,
Nor from the stoop of Age the faltering Frame defend
Time goads us on, relentless Sire!
 On to the shadowy Shape, that stands
Terrific on the funeral pyre.
 Waving the already kindled brands.
Thou canst not slacken this reluctant speed
Tho' still on Pluto's shrine thy Hecatomb should bleed.
Beyond the dim Lake's mournful flood,
 That skirts the verge of mortal light,
He chains the Forms, on earth that stood
 Proud, and gigantic in their might;
That gloomy Lake, o'er whose oblivious tide
Kings, Consuls, Pontiffs, Slaves, in ghastly silence glide.
In vain the bleeding field we shun,
 In vain the loud and whelming wave;
And, as autumnal winds come on,
 And wither'd leaves bestrew the cave,
Against their noxious blast, their sullen roar,
In vain we pile the hearth, in vain we close the door.
The universal lot ordains
 We seek the black Cocytus' stream,
That languid strays thro' dreary plains,
 Where cheerless fires perpetual gleam;
Where the fell Brides their fruitless toil bemoan,
And Sisyphus uprolls the still-returning stone
Thy tender wife, thy large domain,
 Soon shalt thou quit, at Fate's command;
And of those various trees, that gain
 Their culture from thy fost'ring hand,
The Cypress only shall await thy doom,
Follow its short-liv'd Lord, and shade his lonely tomb!



JOHN NOTT, 1803

(1751–1825; Physician and Classical Scholar)

My Posthumus, my valu'd friend,
O with what unremitting pace
Our years will swiftly roll away;
Nor can thy piety delay
Wrinkles, or age approaching chase,
Or death that will our steps attend!

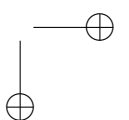
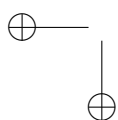
Three hundred bullocks duly slain,
Dear Posthumus, would not suffice
To sooth the unrelenting god,
Pluto, whose ever mournful flood
The threefold Geryon's monstrous size,
And tortur'd Tityos can detain:

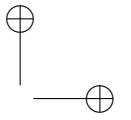
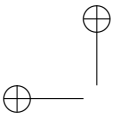
That mournful flood which, at the last,
By all, who of the teeming earth
The various products taste,
Whether with regal titles grac'd,
Or whether of ignoble birth,
Must to a certainty be past.

In vain shall we the God avoid
Whom blood distains, the billows' roar
Hoarse breaking on the Adrian main;
The noxious South-winds we in vain
May fly, that in the Autumn pour
Those gusts by which we are destroy'd.

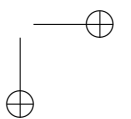
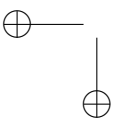
For all must visit the sad shore,
Where dark Cocytus sullen flows;
Visit that ignominious race,
Of Danaus the foul disgrace;
Æolian Sisyphus, who knows
A task he never can give o'er.

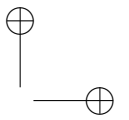
Thy soil, thy home, thy lovely wife
Thou soon art destin'd to forsake;
Nor any of those trees which thou
Hast rear'd, save the dire cypress bough,
Shall of thy fun'ral rites partake,
And witness thy small share of life.





Thy heir, more worthy than his sire
The choice Cæcubian flask to drain
Which now an hundred bolts confine,
With the most costly of thy wine
Shall the refreshen'd pavement stain,
Such wine as pontiff feasts require.

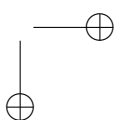
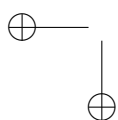


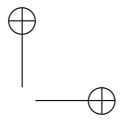


VALERIUS, 1806

(The Port Folio)

Alas! my friend our fleeting years
Roll fast away – nor prayers nor tears
Avail to save our wasting breath,
Or shun the unerring stroke of Death:
No! . . . should we offer every hour,
New victims slain to that dread power,
Hell's sov'reign lord – whose iron hand restrains
Gigantic Geryon's limbs in adamantine chains,
Where Tityrus 'gainst his rav'ning vulture raves,
While Styx confines them with its gloomy waves.
Sad stream! across whose sullen tide,
In Charon's bark must one day glide
All whom the fruits of earth sustain,
Whether the powerful prince, or humble rustic swain.
In vain we shun the battle's strife:
From roaring seas escape with life;
Vainly we guard, with anxious mind,
Against the bleak autumnal wind:
Condemn'd to wander thro' the shades below,
Where languid streams of black Cocytus flow:
Where murd'rous Danaids vent their fruitless moan,
And toiling Sisyphus pants with ceaseless groan.
Your house, your lands and cultivated farms,
The wife that fills your circling arms,
Must all be left – and not a tree,
Of all you rear'd, shall follow thee;
Cypress alone its mournful branches wave
O'er the green turf that marks its master's grave.
A worthier heir shall seize thy treasur'd hoard
Of mellow wines. . . and, at his festive board,
With richer streams the marble floor distain,
Than, at their sumptuous feasts, luxurious pontiffs drain.





CHARLES HERBERT, 1808

(Translations and Imitations)

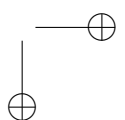
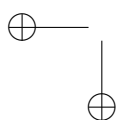
Alas! my love, how fly the hours
Of flatt'ring youth away,
Nor worth nor piety have pow'rs
To stop our quick decay:
T' impede the swift approach of age,
Or check his wrinkling hand,
Or death's convulsive throes assuage,
Or shun his stern command.

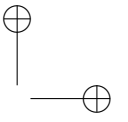
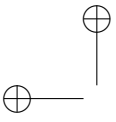
What, tho' each day our altars blaze,
Tho' victim'd oxen die,
Still heedless of the pray'rs we raise,
Deaf to th' adoring sigh,
Grim Pluto, dark and tearless god,
Still throngs th' infernal stream,
And kings and peasants at his nod,
Must quit life's pleasing dream.

In vain the waves, the battle's rage,
We cautiously avoid;
In vain may health our cares engage
Yet not the murky side
Of dark Cocytus can we shun,
Where groans the Danaan race,
Where Sisyphus, the eternal stone
Still hurls thro' breathless space.

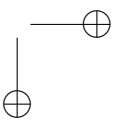
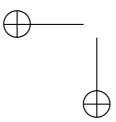
Soon must the house, the garden's bloom,
The tender wife be left,
All joys must meet the gen'ral doom,
And be of life bereft.
Of all whose sweets, whose graces own
Their transient master's reign,
The cypress o'er our graves alone
Shall, after death, remain.

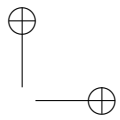
Our wealth, our works, our taste, our all,
The laughing heir must hold,
The park, the garden, and the hall,
The well-lock'd hoards of gold;
All, all must go, and never more





Regret their former lord:
Another's wine bedews the floor,
And warms the festive board.





MARY WARE, 1809

(Poems)

The years, my friend, glide on apace,
The fleeting years their constant race
 Insensibly maintain;
Tho' pure religion sway the soul,
Wrinkles and age defy controul,
 And death asserts his reign.

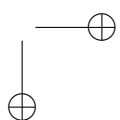
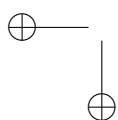
Tho' thrice an hundred bulls were slain,
The daily offering pleads in vain,
 Remorseless Pluto's nod;
Geryon's giant shadow fears,
And Tityon's bulky form appears
 Aw'd by the Stygian God.

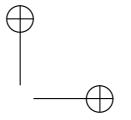
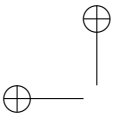
Beneath that gloomy wave confin'd
Which kings and peasants once shall bind,
 And all that breathe this air;
The bounteous earth her gifts may spread,
And plenteously her blessings shed,
 Or deal a scanty share.

Tho' bloody Mars they shun, and flee
From the hoarse murmurs of the sea,
 When restless billows roll;
Tho' from the south winds pois'nous breath,
Which deals around disease and death,
 With anxious care they stole; –

Yet fix'd the destin'd victim goes
Where the dark wand'ring current flows,
 Cocytus' languid stream;
Where troubled toiling spirits know
The horrors of eternal woe,
 Without hope's cheering beam.

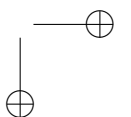
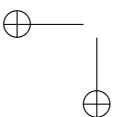
The dwelling neat, the fertile land,
That once your rapturous fancy plan'd,
 The wife to whom you cleave;
The plants and trees you toil'd to rear,
Which flourish'd by your tender care,
 Your sorrowing soul must leave.





Only the mournful Cypress bends,
And in funereal pomp attends
 Its fading master's grave;
Those choicest wines a worthier heir
Shall lavish, and profusely share,
 You labour'd hard to save.

Your hundred locks at once resign
Their treasures; and your costly wine,
 Deny'd a friend to taste,
Your wanton heir in riot great,
And more than at a Pontif's treat,
 In luxury shall waste.





JAMES SMITH AND HORATIO SMITH, 1813 (IMITATED)

(JS 1775–1839, HS 1779–1849)

Ah me! on his wide-waring pinions,
Time carries us on day by day,
And downwards to Pluto's dominions
We mortals are posting away.

Not *Huntingdon*, cleansed from his errors,
And dubb'd by diploma S. S.
Has yet taught the monarch of terrors
To dine on one mouthful the less.

Sage *Solomon's* Gilead potion
No chronic disease can assuage;
O *Gowland*, how vain is thy lotion,
To blot out the wrinkles of age!

Whole *hecatombs*, vainly we proffer
To hell's unappeasable chief,
Old Iron-cheek laughs at the offer,
And swallows down us and our beef!

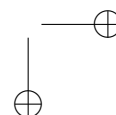
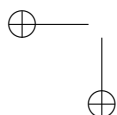
We all in one pinnacle are rowing,
The haven we seek is the grave;
The Stygian waters are flowing,
Alike for the monarch and slave.

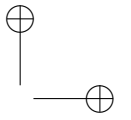
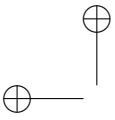
We shun the rude billows of Ocean,
We shrink from the wind and the rain,
We fly from the battle's commotion,
And dodge the grim serjeant in vain.

The bourn we have all such a dread of
We quickly must visit below,
And talk with the heroes we read of
In *Lyttleton*, *Lucian*, and *Rowe*.

Good bye to your farm and your stables,
Farewell to your liveried train;
Your well-jointur'd widow in sables,
Shall mourn like the twice mated *Dane*.

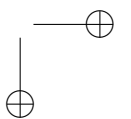
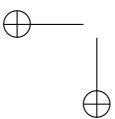
That nodding plantation to-morrow
For some other owner shall bloom,
The yew tree alone in mute sorrow
Shall sullenly ware o'er your tomb.

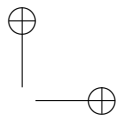
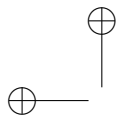




This house, when it boasts a new dweller,
 Shall bid thrifty prudence farewell;
Your son, with the keys of the cellar,
 Shall tinkle your funeral knell.

Your claret shall flow like a river,
 Your old bottled port set adrift,
Shall drown every thought of the giver
 In frolicksome love of the gift.

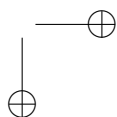
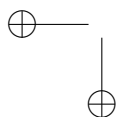




ANONYMOUS, 1816

(Moral Odes of Horace)

Ah, Posthumus! the lapse of years
More and more rapid still appears;
Nor can the power of suppliant breath
Protract the doom of age and death!
Not, if three hundred steers thou slay
To Pluto every passing day,
Who holds beneath his grim control
Huge Tityon's, and Geryon's soul;
And Styx o'er which, or soon or late,
Peasants and kings must transmigrate;
Canst thou e'er hope appeased to find
His stern, inexorable mind!
In vain, we shun the field of blood;
In vain, the wild tempestuous flood;
And guard, with every skilful care,
Against the chill autumnal air.
We still must see Cocytus flow,
Thick-rolling through the realms below,
Where Æolus' and Danaus' race
Bear lasting torment and disgrace!
We still must quit this scene of life;
And our dear home, and dearer wife.
And, of the trees thy toiling hand
Hath raised to flourish o'er thy land,
None but the gloomy cypress' shade
Shall witness where their lord is laid!
Thy gay and eager heir, far more
Convivial than is sire before,
Thy choice Cæcubian stores shall drain;
And thy bright pavements madly stain
With wine, and with the cheer of feasts,
More costly, than of Sovereign Priests.



PERCY, 1818 (PARAPHRASED)

(*The Monthly Magazine*)

Alas! O Posthumus, alas!
Our number'd years, how swift they pass,
 How brief is life's extent;
The hoary hairs, the wrinkling brow,
Old age, and Death, our mortal foe,
 Can piety prevent?

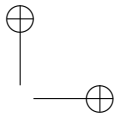
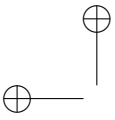
Ah no! wert thou each passing day,
An hecatomb of bulls to pay
 To hell's relentless lord, –
Pluto, whose mournful wave restrain
Two giants in his dark domain,
 No aid could those afford.

For all that live, – the fair, the brave,
The king, the husbandman, the slave,
 Must cross the Stygian food:
In vain we fly from war's alarms,
When martial chiefs contend in arms,
 And deluge fields in blood;

Or from the Adriatic hoarse,
When vex'd by tempests to its source,
 Its million wares complain;
Or when autumnal blasts prevail,
And Death rides on the southern gale,
 Even then our fears are vain.

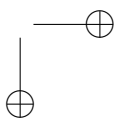
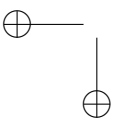
For we must pass Cocytus' tide,
Along whose banks sad spectres glide,
 Wild shrieking as they go:
Whose sable waves, slow o'er their bed,
Through the dim regions of the dead,
 With sullen murmurs flow.

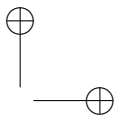
The Belides we there shall see,
Who for their crimes, by Fate's decree,
 Are doom'd to endless toils:
And Sisyphus, whose massy stone
Roll'd up the hill with many a groan,
 Back on his head recoils.



From all that gives a charm to life,
Our house, and farm, and tender wife,
 How soon we're called away:
Then of thy groves the cypress dark
Alone will serve thy tomb to mark,
 And shade thy lifeless clay.

Soon shall thy worthier heir resign
His grief to joy-inspiring wine,
 Drawn from thy secret hoard:
Woman's soft smile his cares will chase,
And feasts pontifical shall grace
 His sumptuous festive board.





THOMAS DALE, 1819

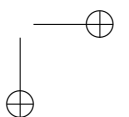
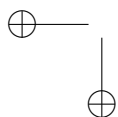
(1797–1870; Poet and Theologian)

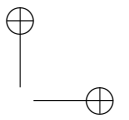
Alas! my friend, the fleeting years
 Glide rapidly away;
The fearful verge of life appears
 Involved in dark dismay;
The blighting touch of frozen age,
And Death's unconquerable rage,
 Are strangers to delay:
Nor prayers, nor Virtue's stronger charm
The tyrant of the tomb disarm.

The costly sacrifice might bleed,
 Could this avert thy doom;
But will the Power of Darkness heed
 The votive hecatomb?
No: – does the crown of empire glow
Bright on thy brow, or want and woe
 Thy cheerless date consume,
The same in Fate's impartial eye –
One doom awaits thee – thou must die!

In vain the battle strife is past,
 The whirlwind, and the wave –
In vain dank Autumn's sickly blast
 Hath ceased to swell the grave:
Where, through eternal gloom below,
The streams of cold Oblivion flow,
 And guilty spirits rave;
Those dreary realms thou soon shalt see,
Where thou – alas! where all must be!

Thy fair domain, and dearer bride, all
 With life shalt thou resign:
Of all thy garden's stately pride,
 One tree shall still be thine:
Sad o'er its short-lived master's grave,
The dark-browed cypress then shall wave –
 Thy store of spicy wine
Shall redden o'er the marble floor
In gay profusion – thine no more!





WILLIAM H. SIMMONS, 1820

(Prize Book of Publick Latin Schools)

Alas! O Posthumus, my friend,
The years glide on, which soon must end
 In wrinkles, age, and death;
Though piety your life adorn,
And sacrifice arise each morn
 T' arrest your fleeting breath.

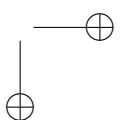
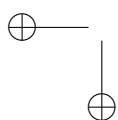
Vain your escape from bloody war,
And the rough Adriatic's roar,
 Or from the South's hot blast;
For you must cross the Stygian stream,
And black Cocytus must be seen,
 In Pluto's realm, at last;

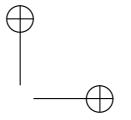
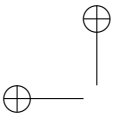
Where the thrice monstrous Geryon,
And giant Tityos, earth born,
 Beneath his fury groan;
There all must meet, by nature fed,
The peasant from his lowly shed,
 The monarch from his throne.

The daughters too, you there must see,
Of Danaus, whose infamy
 Will sound while time shall last;
And Sisyphus, the wind god's son,
Who, doomed to labours never done,
 Toils as in ages past.

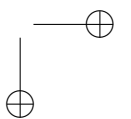
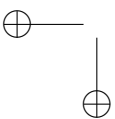
Your stately mansion must be left;
Your lovely wife, of you bereft,
 Will mourn in solitude.
And you must leave your broad domains,
Your lofty hills and fertile plains,
 To hands of strangers rude.

Of all your groves, one only tree,
The cypress sad, shall follow thee,
 Their transitory lord.
The casks you hoard with so much care,
Are kept but till your worthier heir,
 In revel at his board,





Shall set their precious contents free,
And stain the pavement lavishly,
 With wine, more rich and rare,
Than e'er a pontiff's table graced,
When the full bowl went round, in haste
 To banish pain and care.

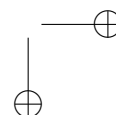
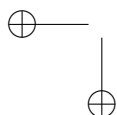


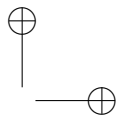


FRANCIS WRANGHAM, 1821

(1769–1842; Archdeacon of the East Riding, Writer, and Translator)

Ah! swiftly, Posthumus, they fly –
The fleeting years! Nor piety
From wrinkles or from age can save
Quick-hurrying, or th' unconquer'd grave:
Though thrice a hecatomb each day
Thou to unpitying Pluto slay,
Who with his gloomy river's bound
Fast girdles triple Geryon round,
And Titus huge – that joyless flood,
Which all who taste of earthly food
Must cross, or diadem'd be we,
Or heirs of lowly penury!
In vain from blood-stain'd Mars we run,
Adria's hoarse billaws vainly shun;
In vain th' autumnal siroc dread,
Which strikes th' unconscious breather dead –
We all Cocytus, all, must see
With black wave creeping sluggishly,
And Sisyphus, and Danaïds vile
Doom'd to interminable toil.
Lands, villas, wife's domestic loves
Must be resign'd; and of thy groves,
Save the scorn'd cypress, to his end
None shall it's transient lord attend.
Soon by thy wiser heir compell'd,
Thy cellar's hundred locks shall yield;
And costlier wine shall stain thy hall,
Than flows at pontiff's festival.





MARY BAILEY, 1822

(The Months and Other Poems)

Alas, alas, the flying years
Glide unperceiv'd away,
Old Age with furrow'd brow appears,
And Time bears no delay:
Nor even Piety can shield the heart
From cruel Death's resistless iron dart.

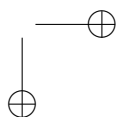
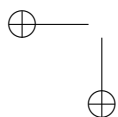
Tho' ev'ry day a bull should bleed
To Pluto's godhead dire,
Think'st thou by these thou shouldst succeed
To deprecate his ire?
Ah no, for he who rules th' infernal plains,
A tearless god, implacable remains.

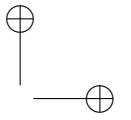
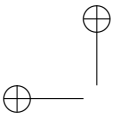
Where "triple Geryon's" monstrous size
Lies stretch'd o'er many a rood,
Where Tytius "vulture-tortur'd" lies
Bound by the Stygian flood;
There meet the poor, the rich, the warrior brave,
Alas, all, all must pass the gloomy wave.

The bloody field of cruel war
We shun, alas! in vain;
In vain we fear the crashing jar
Of Adria's broken main:
In Autumn vainly shun the deadly breeze
Of Auster wailing thro' the gilded trees.

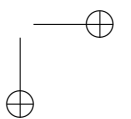
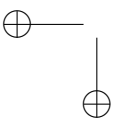
For all at that black stream arrive
Which flows with languid wave,
Where the sad sisters vainly strive
Some gloomy drops to save:
Where prone fast rolling down the pendent hill,
The stone of Sisyphus is echoing still.

Thy house, thy land, thy pleasing wife
Thou soon must leave below;
Of all the trees that during life
Around thee lov'd to grow:
None, none will follow, save the cypress gloom,
Which darkly shades its short-liv'd master's tomb.





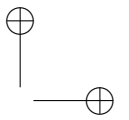
Thine heir shall quaff thy hoarded wine
In gay festivity,
Not generous liquors more divine
E'en pontiff's tables see:
Soon from the cask the purple tide shall flow,
While pavements blush with conscious shame below.



ANONYMOUS, 1824

(The Odes of Horace)

Alas, my Posthumus, how quickly fly
 The years of man's short destiny!
Not even Piety can stay the trace
 Of wrinkles o'er the aged face;
Can make life's lamp one moment longer burn,
 Or bid the bloom of youth return.
Though each returning day that springs on high
 Should see three hundred bullocks die,
Vain were your efforts to appease the God
 Who rules dark Tartarus' abode,
And binds in dungeoned keep, 'neath Stygia's fen,
 Tityos and Geryon, giant men –
That fen o'er which we all must one day sail,
 And bid those shores of horror hail,
Whether upon our lot misfortune lour,
 Or blest with wealth, and pomp, and power.
'Tis vain from toils of blood and war we run,
 'Tis vain the sailor's fate we shun,
'Tis vain in Autumn's sultry heat we fly
 The sickly South wind's injury;
For all alike to land unseen must go
 Through which the streams of sorrow flow,
And view the shade of Sisyphus still try
 To roll the stone up mountain high,
And them who gave Ægyptus' wedded race
 A dagger for a bride's embrace –
Alas, my Posthumus, you quit with life
 Your wide domains, and tender wife,
Followed by none of those loved trees you rear,
 Save the sad cypress o'er your bier.
Your spendthrift heir placed in the banquet hall
 For your Cæcubian stores shall call –
Stores – which contain as dark and rich a wine
 As stains the pavement of the shrine.

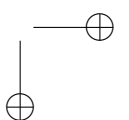
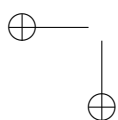


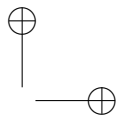
GEORGE FLEMING RICHARDSON, 1825

(c. 1796–1848; Geologist and Poet)

How fast, my friend, our moments waste,
Revolving years unnoted fly;
Nor can we check their eager haste,
Nor change the stern command – to die!
Though countless oxen daily fell
To sooth the gloomy Lord of hell,
Who, in Oblivion's dismal cave,
Surrounds his victims with that wave,
Across whose dark and dangerous ford
Must pass the peasant and his lord.
In vain we fly the deadly fight,
Or shun the ocean in its might;
In vain we shield our shrinking form,
From the rough chiding of the storm;
For soon, my friend, must we behold
The tales of terror darkly told,
And learn what sights and sounds of woe
Dwell in the cheerless realms below.

Yes! we must quit our cordial mirth,
And wife, and friends, and cheerful hearth,
And of yon trees that flourish now
In youth and beauty's vernal bloom,
'Tis but the cypress gloomy bough
Shall rest beside its master's tomb.
Another, soon, shall gaily pour
Thy treasur'd stores of costly wine,
And tinge the pavement's marble floor
With perfumed sweets, that once were thine!

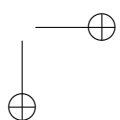
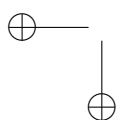


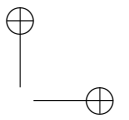


T. E., 1826 (IMITATED)

(The Literary Lounger)

Life ebbs so fast we scarcely glow
With manly warmth ere forc'd to go,
The weak and strong alike must yield,
When death in person takes the field;
None can avoid the gen'ral doom,
Nor Virtue's self prolong our bloom.
Pluto, my friend, was never known
To drop a tear, or heave a groan,
Though round his seat the spirits sigh
To bless with earth their glazed eye;
Declare the num'rous ties they have,
A father – mother – mourn'd their grave:
Parents with look and gesture wild,
Plead for their starving, orphan child,
For mercy ceaselessly implore,
But, once within, they stir no more.
In vain, when breathes the trump of war,
Or roaring billows lash the shore,
The coward wretch, afraid to roam,
Sits by a cosy fire at home;
In vain, if drizzling rain appears,
His great-coat's button'd to the ears.
When sounds the rattling in your throat,
Move to Cocytus, call a boat,
Then, if you pay the fellow well,
Be sure he'll row you safe – to hell.
Soon you shall leave your house, and land,
Your graceful wife, and high command,
And of the trees you lov'd to rear,
Cypress alone shall grace your bier.
New guests will fill the silent court,
Tap the brown ale, and crusted port,
Thy heir will give his pleasures scope,
And vie in splendour with the pope.





CHARLES WEST THOMSON, 1828

(1798–1879; American Poet and Episcopal Priest)

How sure, Postumus, and how fleet
Our moments glide away!
Thy piety can never cheat
Age of his wrinkles – nor defeat
Fell Death's unconquered sway.

No – should three hundred bulls be slain
At ruthless Pluto's shrine,
He would the sacrifice disdain,
And Geryon yet with Styx restrain,
And Tityus still confine.

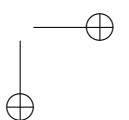
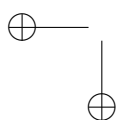
All that partake of earth must sail
That darksome river o'er –
Our rank in life will nought avail,
Peasant and prince alike must quail
Upon that gloomy shore.

In vain we fly the battle's din –
In vain we shun the sea –
In vain the care that shuts us in,
When bleak autumnal winds begin
To whistle o'er the lea.

For we at last our path must trace
On black Cocytus' soil;
And see Danaus' bloody race,
And Sisyphus, in fruitless chace,
Pursue his endless toil.

Country and home, and partner dear,
Must then relinquished be;
And midst the plants that flourish here,
None shall attend their master's bier,
Except the cypress tree.

Your spendthrift heir will waste the wine,
Now kept with so much care –
And stain your floors – nor e'er repine –
With better draughts than those which shine
Where priests the banquet share.





RALPH BERNAL, 1831

(1784–1854; Politician and Art Collector)

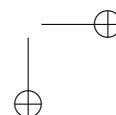
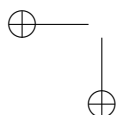
Swift fly the rolling years, my friend!
Nor can your anxious prayers extend
 The fleeting joys of youth;
The trembling hand, the wrinkled cheek,
Too plainly life's decay bestreak,
 With sad but silent truth.

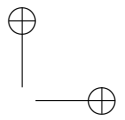
What though you daily offerings rise
In fragrant clouds of sacrifice
 To Jove's immortal seat;
You cannot fly death's cold embrace,
Where peasants, chiefs of kingly race,
 An equal welcome meet.

In vain, from battle fields afar,
You gently dream of raging war,
 Secure in peace and wealth:
In vain you shun the stormy wave,
The scorching breeze, that others brave,
 Profuse of vigorous health.

Though zealous friends your portals throng,
They cannot still your life prolong
 By one short lingering hour;
Whate'er our plans, whate'er our state,
We mortals own one common fate,
 One stern, unbending power.

When your parch'd lips shall faintly press
On your fond wife their last caress,
 And farewell murmurs breathe,
Your wandering eyes shall feebly rove
O'er each loved wood, and well-train'd grove,
 To seek a funeral wreath.





HENRY THOMAS LIDDELL, LORD RAVENSWORTH, 1833

(1797–1878; Statesman and Poet)

Oh, Postumus! how speedily
The wingèd years successive fly;
Nor for a single day
The wrinkles of advancing age,
And Death's indomitable rage,
Can Piety delay.

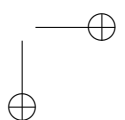
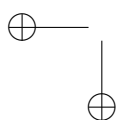
Not if whole hecatombs we bring
To th' shrine of that relentless king
Whose arm hath power to bind
Gigantic Geryon's triple frame,
And Tityos scorched with lightning's flame
By hell's dark wave confined.

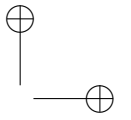
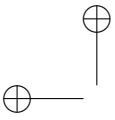
That wave which all must navigate,
Whether on earth a monarch's state
And titles proud they bear;
Or whether, doomed to till the soil
In rustic penury and toil,
A labourer's lot they share.

In vain from bloody Mars we run,
In vain the broken billows shun
Of Hadria's roaring seas;
And vainly timorous seek to shroud
Our bodies from th' autumnal cloud
And pestilential breeze.

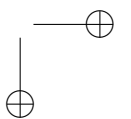
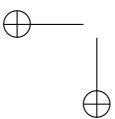
Cocytus, in his mazy bed,
Must soon or late be visited,
And Lethe's languid waters;
And Sisyphus despairing still
To mount th' insuperable hill,
And Danaus' guilty daughters.

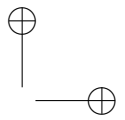
Thy lands, and home, and pleasing wife,
Must all be left with parting life;
And save the bough abhorred
Of monumental cypress, none
Of all the trees thy care hath grown
Follow their short-lived lord.





A worthier heir shall grasp thy keys,
And all thy hoarded vintage seize
 From bolts and bars released;
And stain thy floor with nobler wine
Than ever flowed at holy shrine,
 Or pontifical feast.





W. H. CHARLTON, 1834

(Poems)

Alas, alas! what art can save
The soul from time's devouring wave?
In silent lapse its currents glide,
And nought can stop the whelming tide.

E'en piety itself, in vain,
The fleeting moments would detain;
Wrinkles and age resistless come,
And death's inexorable doom.

E'en hecatombs would fruitless prove,
The awful terrors to remove
Of Pluto's frown; whose dreaded sway
Noble and mean alike obey.

That stream, which Terra's giant son
Confines, and triple Geryon,
Upon its bosom all must bear
Who now inhale the vital air.

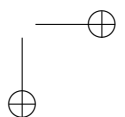
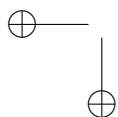
Its terrors to elude, in vain
We shun the sanguinary plain;
The stormy blasts of Adria's seas,
The baneful south's infected breeze.

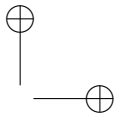
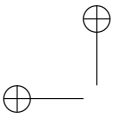
Thither all speed, where deep and wide
Cocytus rolls his sluggish tide;
Where mourn the Danaïds their guile,
And Sisyphus renews his toil.

Yes, Postumus, the end must come!
All must be left! thy lands, thy home,
Thy pleasing wife, whose gentle smile
Could many a painful care beguile.

The trees, that cultur'd by thy hand,
Around in rich luxuriance stand,
No more shall grateful shade afford
To thee, their transitory lord –

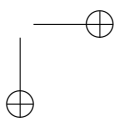
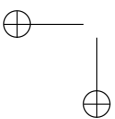
Save the sad cypress! sorrow's tree
Shall then its tribute yield to thee;
Thy friendly offices return,
And drooping, shade thy silent urn.

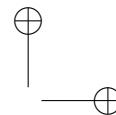
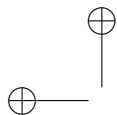




Ah, why untasted joys prepare
To glad the bosom of thine heir?
Those joys matur'd, his eyes shall see,
Beneath the shade that shelter'd thee.

The juice of the Cæcubian vine,
Which now thy jealous bolts confine;
He, rescued from its latent gloom,
Shall in luxurious waste consume.





THOMAS BOURNE, 1836

(The Maid of Skiddaw, Songs of Palestine, and Other Poems)

Alas, my friend, how swiftly glide
Our fleeting years – yet 'tis denied
 To prayers of pious breath;
Remorse or pity to engage,
To 'scape the wrinkled brow of age,
 Or respite gain from death.

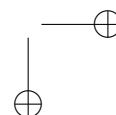
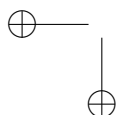
Not even, though, each passing day,
The tearless tyrant's stroke to stay,
 Three hecatombs you gave;
Still triple Geryon he detains,
And Tityas, doom'd to endless pains,
 Within that gloomy wave,

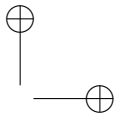
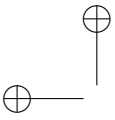
Which all, alas! of mortal birth,
Whoever tastes the food of earth,
 Must cross at his command;
Whatever birth or state we own,
The monarch on his lofty throne,
 The slave that tills the land.

In vain we shun the field of fight,
And stormy Adria's angry might,
 And hoarse-resounding roar;
In vain, when autumn's plagues prevail,
We shun the sickly southern gale,
 That poisons every pore.

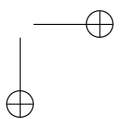
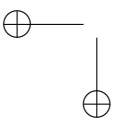
For, all the gloomy stream must see,
Cocytus wandering languidly,
 With silent wave and slow;
The maids ill-fam'd – and him condemn'd
To useless toil which ne'er shall end.
 Nor rest nor respite know!

Your house, your lands, your consort dear,
Must all be left, and o'er thy bier
 The hated cypress wave;
Of all thy trees, the only one,
That still its short-lived lord will own,
 And follow to his grave.





Thy old Cæcubian's guarded store,
Kept by thy worthier heir no more,
 Shall on the marble fall:
And stain it with a wine more rare,
Than that which holy pontiffs share,
 Within their banquet hall.





W. H. BUDDEN, 1836

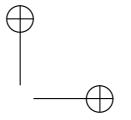
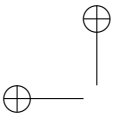
(*Poems*)

Mr friend! my friend! the fleeting years
 Alas! they glide away.
Old Age, with wrinkles and grey hairs,
 Advances day by day.
Unconquer'd Death awaits us all:
Three daily hecatombs may fall,
 But will not buy delay
From Pluto, who in Stygian folds,
Titus and thrice-buge Geryon holde.

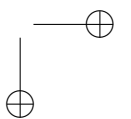
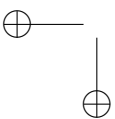
The dismal river, circling round
 Tartarean realms beneath,
Must bear us all from earthly ground
 To that dark land of death.
The Prince, the Boor that tills the field,
Alike to Destiny must yield,
 Alike resign their breath;
In vain ensanguin'd Mars we fly,
Or Adrian surges hoarse and high.

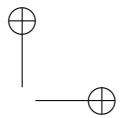
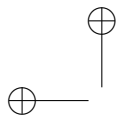
In vain, when deadly Auster raves,
 We shun bleak autumn's blast
Cocytos with its gloomy wares
 By all must soon be past:
And the dim forms of tortur'd souls
Round which the languid water rolls
 Must meet our gaze at last;
Tir'd Sisyphus who finds no case,
And those ill-famed Danäides.

Thou must depart from this fair earth,
 From thine own lov'd fire-side,
From thy sweet wife, whose chasten'd mirth
 'Twixt thee and care would glide.
Of all the trees that round thee grew
None but the drear and baleful yew
 Shall weep that thou hast died –
Yes, the dark yew, despis'd, forlorn,
Alone its short-liv'd lord shall mourn.



The choice Cæcubian which thy care
Had treasur'd up in vain,
With worthier use, thy liberal heir
Shall broach and quaff amain;
And that proud wine push'd round by all,
Shall tinge the pavement of thy hall
With deep, rich, crimson stain,
Though 'neath a hundred keys 'tis stored,
And fit to grace a Pontiff's board.





JOHN HERMAN MERIVALE, 1838

(1779–1844; Barrister and Man of Letters)

How soon, alas! how soon, my friend,
The winged seasons glide away!
Our life posts onward to its end;
No virtue can our wrinkles stay,
Nor restless time one little hour delay.

Pile the rich incense! Let the fires
Ascend, and altars stream with blood!
Alas! no sacrifice aspires
To soothe dark Pluto's tearless mood
Who binds the Titans to the Stygian flood.

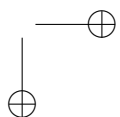
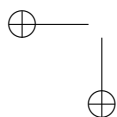
That dismal lake, at Fate's command,
All who have fed from Nature's store,
And taste the fulness of the land,
In common crowds must venture o'er
– The king's proud spirit, mix'd with baser poor.

Vainly with coward care we shun
The murderous field and whelming wave;
Vainly, when autumn's sickly sun
Puts us in memory of a grave,
Fly to the healthful bower and sheltering cave.

Soon shalt thou be where, black and slow,
Cocytus laves the languid coast,
Where sadly wanders, far below,
Of Danaus' line each guilty ghost,
And Sisyphus still plies his labour lost.

Soon shalt thou leave thy fair domain,
Thy tender spouse alone to sigh;
Nor, of those forests rear'd in vain,
Aught, save the cypress, shall supply
Sad fuel for thy last solemnity!

Thy wines, preserved with jealous care,
Costlier than monarch's valued store,
Soon, squander'd by thy happier heir,
Fenced by their hundred locks no more,
In midnight revel pour'd, shall stain the banquet floor.



FRANCIS WOLFERSTAN, 1840

(Eight Odes of Horace)

Alas, my Postumus, the fleeting years
Glide on! No prayer of mortal breath
Her wrinkles can delay, as Age appears,
And brings at last inexorable Death.
Were you three hundred bulls to sacrifice
To Pluto daily; 'twere a vain device –
None can propitiate the relentless God.
Tityon, and thrice-huge Geryon, he confined,
By Styx' dark waters, in his drear abode:
That lake which all shall pass, or king, or hind,
Who ought to Earth's munificence have owed.
In vain we brave not Mars' ensanguined field,
Nor on the hoarse Adriatic tempt the main;
In vain our frames from Southern fervours shield,
When Autumn's noxious vapours taint the plain:
All reach the black Cocytus' languid stream!
All shall behold the fell Danaïdes!
And Sisyphus, whose weary labours seem
(Sad son of Eolus!) to know no ease.
The time shall come when everything most dear,
Your land, house, gentle wife, must all be left –
The trees you planted once – of each bereft,
Save one (companion still) the Cypress drear.
A worthier heir (so, lavish fools may speak)
Your Cecuban, from Naples fruitful plain,
(A hundred keys now guard it) then shall seek,
And with a nobler wine the pavement stain
Than honours banquets at a sacred fane.

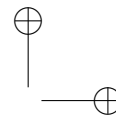
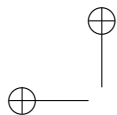


JAMES USHER, 1842

(Buonaparté, The Royal Exchange, Odes of Horace)

O Posthumus, with subtle speed,
The fleeting years glide on indeed,
Nor Piety can cause delay,
To creeping age with wrinkles grey;
Grim Death's insuperable claim,
Who triumphs o'er the noblest name.
From day to day could you devote
Three hundred bullocks, vain the thought,
To soften gloomy Pluto dread,
Who binds Geryon's triple head,
And Tityos, with that dismal flood
Which must be pass'd by vile and good;
All nurtur'd by the bounteous earth
Of rustic, as of royal birth.
In vain from savage Mars we're free,
The raging Adriatic sea;
Or shun, from south, the noxious breath
Of autumn, charg'd with subtle death,
To black Cocytus' languid maze,
With Danaus' foul detested race,
And Sisyphus, Æolus' heir,
At endless toil we must repair;
Your lands, and house, and charming wife,
Must be renounc'd on quitting life;
No nursling-trees will Fate accord,
T' attend their transitory lord;
The hateful cypress shall be known,
To grace your dismal bier alone;
That Cæcuban your heir shall seize,
Now kept secure by patent keys;
With nobler wine the pavement stain,
Than feasts pontifical obtain.





JOHN SCRIVEN, 1843

(The Odes of Horace)

Postumus, Postumus, alas!
The years in quick succession pass;
Nor can thy piety delay
Wrinkles – old age – and dying day:

Not though three hundred bulls should fall
Daily, at tearless Pluto's call;
Who Tityus huge, and Geryon vast
Holds by that dismal river fast;

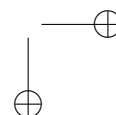
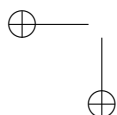
And all must sail that fatal flood,
All we who taste terrestrial food!
Whether – as monarchs – now we reign,
Or – pauper labourers – till the plain!

In vain from cruel Mars we flee,
And the hoarse waves of Adria's sea;
In vain the injurious south we fear,
So baneful to the autumnal year:

All – all must to Cocytus go,
Dark wandering with its languid flow;
To Danaus' race – to Æolus' son,
Condemn'd to roll the eternal stone.

Lands – house – and wife, so form'd to please,
Must all be left; – nor of these trees
Shall one attend their master brief,
– Save the detested cypress-leaf;

Thy Cæcuban, a worthier heir
Shall quaff – of countless keys the care; –
And dye the floor with nobler wine
Than decks the feasts where pontiffs dine.





HENRY GEORGE ROBINSON, 1846

(*The Odes of Horace*)

Posthumus, Posthumus, alas!
The fleeting years how quick they pass;
No piety will wrinkles stay,
Nor for a moment cause delay
To coming age's pressing course,
And death's indomitable force.

No, with three hundred bulls each day
You ne'er could tearless Pluto sway,
Who holds three-bodied Geryon bound,
And Titus encompass'd round
By that sad wave, which soon or late
We all, my friend, must navigate,
Who eat earth's bounties, whether we
Kings or needy tillers be.

We 'scape from bloody Mars in vain,
And the hoarse Adrian's broken main;
In vain we dread the southern breeze,
In Autumn freighted with disease.

Wandering in its sluggish course,
Black Cocytus' stream perforce
Visited by all must be;
And Danaus' vile race, and thee,
Æolian Sisyphus, with pain
For ever doom'd to toil in vain.

Your land, your home, must be foregone;
Your pleasing wife too, nor may one
Of all the trees you now, my friend,
With so much anxious labour tend,
(Save the cypresses abhorr'd)
Follow thee, their short-lived lord.

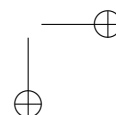
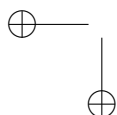
Thy Cæcuban, a worthier heir,
Though 'neath a hundred keys, will share:
And with such wine the floor imbue,
As ne'er Pontific revels knew.

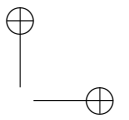


G. J. WHYTE MELVILLE, 1850

(1821–78; Etonian Former Army Officer, Country Gentleman and Novelist)

Alas! my Postumus, since day by day
The fleeting years glide by, no pious vow
The sure advance of wrinkled Age shall stay,
Unyielding Death no respite will allow.
Not if in daily sacrifice should die
Three hundred bulls his favour to obtain,
Would Pluto heed thine unavailing cry –
He who Geryon's threefold might can chain;
And Tityon, within the circling wave
Of that dark stream, which must be crossed by all
Whom upper Earth hath fattened for the grave –
The haughty monarch as the toiling thrall.
In vain the blood-stained God of war we shun,
The Adriatic roughening to the breeze;
In vain from Southern blast no risks we run,
When Autumn's heat bring's languor and disease
Since dull Cocytus must be seen at length
Where Danaus' cursed brood their fate deplore,
And Sisyphus, condemned with bootless strength
To strain in hopeless toil for evermore;
Since house and lands and wife, however dear,
Must all be left. Too soon alone shall wave,
'Mongst all the trees 'twas thy delight to rear,
The hated cypress o'er her master's grave.
Thy glorious Cæcuban a thirstier heir
Shall quaff, though hundred keys now guard thy store;
Worthy of Pontiff's feasts that liquor rare,
With lavish stains shall tinge thy splendid floor.

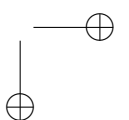
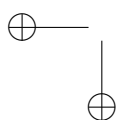




WILLIAM SEWELL, 1850

(1804–74; Divine, Tutor, and Writer)

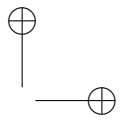
Posthumus! Posthumus! years, alas!
Onward are sliding with fleeting pace;
Nor unto wrinkles and menacing age
Will goodness an hour's delay engage,
And to death untamed. Not, though you try,
For as many days as are fitting by,
To soothe, friend, on each, with three hundred steers,
Pluto, who never melteth in tears;
Him who Geryon huge doth chain,
And Tityos thrice with his river of pain,
That river sooth to be sailed of us all,
Who are fed the bounties of earth withal,
Whether [mighty] kings we shall chance to be,
Or helpless children of husbandry.
All in vain shall we keep aloof
From the battle-god of bloody proof,
And the broken billows of Adria hoarse;
All in vain, through the Autumns' course,
The baleful South for our bodies dread.
By all alike must be visited
Sable Cocytus, wandering his way
With his listless flood, like one astray,
And kindred of Danaïus, famed for wrong,
And he condemn'd to his labour long,
Sisyphus, son of Æolus.
Quitted must be our land by us,
And hall, and charming spouse; nor of these,
Which thou cherishest now, thy stately trees,
Thee, shortlived lord, shall a single one, save
The loathed cypress, attend to the grave.
A worthier heir shall squander at ease
Cæcubans, kept 'neath hundred keys,
And with wine dye the pompous floor of thy hall –
Wine richer than feasts pontifical.



WILLIAM GEORGE THOMAS BARTER, 1850

(*Poems*)

Glide alas! the years away,
Postumus, Postumus, how fleet;
Nor piety will bring delay
To wrinkles, nor old age one whit
 That presseth urgent on,
 Nor death, whom conquers none.
Not though, my friend, appease wouldst thou
With bulls ev'ry day three hundred,
Pluto, by tears moved never, who
Triple huge Geryon and dread
 Tityus in doth hem
 By that sorrowing stream,
That we must all, whate'er our state
Upon earth's bounty here who feed,
Kings, or poor peasants navigate.
In vain from Mars the blood-stain'd freed,
 Or shatter'd waves shall we
 Of hoarse Adria be;
In vain the southern blast, that on
Our bodies worketh dole, shall we
Throughout the autumns careful shun,
Visited yet withal must be
 Cocytus' river black
 Wand'ring in sluggish track,
And race of Danaus ill-famed,
And Æolides Sisyphus,
To long-enduring toil condemn'd.
Relinquish'd earth must be, and house,
 And pleasing wife; nor these
 Thou tendest so, the trees
Save hated Cypresses, will one
Thee their brief lord accompany.
Take will thy worthier heir anon,
Thy Cæcubian casks away,
 By hundred keys lock'd in;
 And will the pavement stain
With the proud wine had better been,
At suppers of the Pontiffs ta'en.



FRANCIS WILLIAM NEWMAN, 1853

(1805–97; Professor of Latin, University College London; Brother of Cardinal Newman)

Póstumus! alas! the years,
Póstumus! are gliding fast:
Nor piety may retard our wrinkles,
Hurryng Age, and Death unconquer'd;

Not, if daily thou appease,
Friend! with thrice a hundred bulls
The tearless King, whose mournful current
Tityos curbs and threefold Geryon:

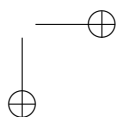
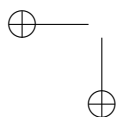
Ay! on which we all, whoe'er
Earth's benignant gifts enjoy,
Must take our voyage; whether princes'
Name we bear, or needy peasants'.

Vainly does our body scape
Gory Mars, and Adria hoarse
With broken surge; in vain avoid we
Deadly South autumnal breezes.

Black Cocytus' sluggish flood
Needs we visit; where resides
Æolides, in lingering labour
Curs'd, and Dánaus' ill-fam'd offspring.

Lands and house and pleasing wife
Quit thou múst. Of all the trees
Thou tendest, save the hateful cypress,
None their shortliv'd lord shall follow.

Thén a worthier heir shall waste
Cæcuban, by hundred keys
Kept safe, and spill on dainty pavement
Wine surpassing Pontiff's banquets.

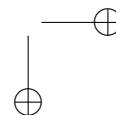
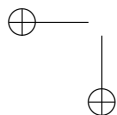


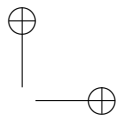


FRANCIS ADAMS, 1853

(1796–1861; Physician and Classical Scholar)

O Postumus! O Postumus!
Alas! the fleeting years to us
 Glide on, nor piety can stay
 The approach of wrinkled age, or matchless Death delay;
Nor can three hundred bulls atone,
My friend, each day that passeth on,
 Stern Pluto, who within his stream
 Doth Tityus confine, and Geryon's triple frame –
Sad stream! that must be ferried o'er
By all that feed upon the store
 Of Earth, whate'er our lot ordains,
 Whether we shall be kings, or live as abject swains.
Though bloody war we cease to brave,
And the hoarse Adria's shatter'd ware,
 'T is all in vain, and fraught with death
 In autumn we shall shun in vain Sirocco's breath:
By dark Cocytos' languid tide
Of wandering waves we must reside,
 With, Danaus, thine offspring vile,
 And Sisyphus, condemned to everlasting toil.
Your land, and home, and lovely spouse,
You must forego; save cypress boughs
 Detested, of the trees ye rear
 Shall no one then attend their short-lived master's bier.
A fitter heir will quickly drain
Your Cæcuban secured in vain
 By hundred keys, with better wine
 Shall your proud pavement stain, than as when Pontiffs dine.





J. T. BLACK, 1857

(Select Odes of Horace)

Alas! my Friend, my noble Friend,
Our fleeting years too quickly end,
 Robbed by each short-lived hour:
E'en Piety will nought delay
Dull wrinkled age, and swift decay,
 And Death's resistless power.

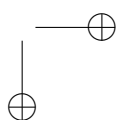
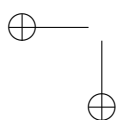
Not though to Hell's stern king, each day,
Full thrice an Hecatomb you slay,
 His pity to awake;
Who three-formed Geryon restrains,
And Tityos racked with endless pains,
 Bound by th' infernal lake.

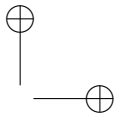
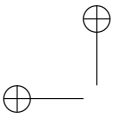
On whose dull wave, sad Charon's boat
Must once waft all to shores remote,
 Who taste earth's kindly fruits;
Whether we're fill'd a regal throne,
Or as poor hinds our life has flown
 In lowliest pursuits.

Vain shall we 'scape war's bloody tide,
And billows breaking far and wide,
 O'er hoarse-resounding seas:
Vain shall we shun the scorching glare
Of Autumn's sun, and sultry air
 O'erladen with disease.

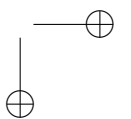
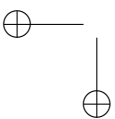
Cocytus roll'd with sullen pace
Dull-hued – and Danäus' wicked race,
 Must all in turn be known;
And Sisyphus, tormented soul,
Condemned through endless time to roll
 The still recoiling stone;

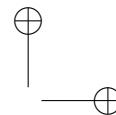
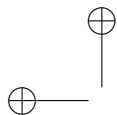
Soon must thou leave this pleasant earth,
The smiling wife, the sacred hearth,
 And of the trees you rear,
The hateful cypress' gloom alone,
Dark o'er its short-lived owner thrown,
 Shall shade thy mournful bier.





Thy heir shall drain the costly wine,
Which hundred keys and bars confine,
 For his more gen'rous waste;
And stain the glitt'ring marble's hue
With streams, which richer sweets imbue,
 Than pontiffs e'en may taste.





WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE, 1858

(1809–98; Statesman, Four Times Liberal Prime Minister)

Ah! Postumus! Devotion tails
The lapse of gliding years to stay,
With wrinkled age it nought avails
Nor conjures conquering Death away.

Think not with daily hecatomb
To alter iron Pluto's mind,
Him, that with rivers wrapt in gloom,
Can Geryon huge, and Tityus, bind.

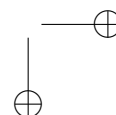
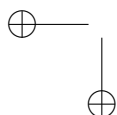
Not one that crops the fruits of earth,
King, starveling boor who cleaves the soil,
Whatever state, whatever birth,
Can from the fateful flood recoil.

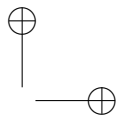
In vain from gory war we shrink,
And Adria's hoarse and tortured wave,
Nor breath of sickly Auster drink,
Through autumn, catering for the grave;

Visit we must the sluggish course
Of black Cocytus, and the cask
That faithless Danaids fill perforce,
And Sisyphus, his endless task.

Earth, home, and winsome wife, thy fate
Will have thee leave: and not one tree
Of all, save cypress that we hate,
O transient lord, shall follow thee.

A worthier heir thy wine will drain,
Behind a hundred padlocks cased,
And Caecuban the pavement stain,
More meet for pontiff's guests to taste.

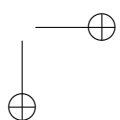
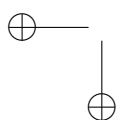


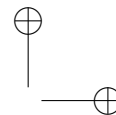
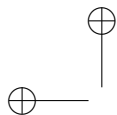


JOHN ROBERTSON, 1859

(1834–95)

Ah, friend! day hurries after day:
For piety is no delay;
 Thy wrinkles will not wait,
 Nor age nor certain fate.
Nay! feed with triple hecatomb
Each day the tearless king of doom;
 It boots not, that sad bourne
 Which Tityus forlorn,
Which threefold Geryon circles round,
Whatever breathes on mortal ground,
 Monarchs and ploughmen poor,
 Alike must ferry o'er.
In vain from war and blows you flee,
And breakers hoarse of Adrian sea;
 In vain you run from death
 In autumn's noxious breath.
Those eyes must see the dull, sad waters,
Flow darkling; the Greek king's curst daughters,
 And toil-damned Sisyphus,
 Base son of Æolus;
But see no more fields, home, and smile
Of wife; the trees you loved erewhile
 Own other masters now,
 Save one sad cypress bough.
The wiser spendthrift comes to drain
Wine fifty-fold secured in vain,
 And on the pavement waste
 Juice pontiffs seldom taste.





SIR THEODORE MARTIN, 1860

(1816–1909; Biographer of the Prince Consort)

Ah, Posthumus, the years, the fleeting years
Still onwards, onwards glide;
Nor mortal virtue may
Time's wrinkling fingers stay,
Nor Age's sure advance, nor Death's all-conquering stride.

Hope not by daily hecatombs of bulls
From Pluto to redeem
Thy life, who holds thrice vast
Geryon fetter'd fast,
And Tityus, by the waves of yonder rueful stream.

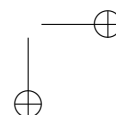
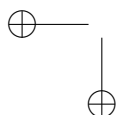
Sad stream, we all are doom'd one day to cross,
Ay, all that live by bread,
Whate'er our lot may be,
Great lords of high degree,
Alike with peasant churls, who scantily are fed.

In vain shall we war's bloody conflict shun,
And the hoarse scudding gale
Of Adriatic seas,
Or fly the southern breeze,
That through the Autumn hours wafts pestilence and bale.

For all must view Cocytus' pitchy tide
Meandering slow, and see
The accursèd Danaids moil,
And that dread stone recoil,
Sad Sisyphus is doom'd to upheave eternally.

Land, home, and winsome wife must all be left;
And cypresses abhorr'd,
Alone of all the trees
That now your fancy please,
Shall shade his dust, who was a little while their lord.

Then, too, your long-imprison'd Caecuban
A worthier heir shall drain,
And with a lordlier wine,
Than at the feasts divine
Of pontiffs flows, your floor in wassailry shall stain.





EDWARD SMITH-STANLEY, EARL OF DERBY, 1862

(1799–1869; Statesman)

Alas, my Posthumus, alas!
The fleeting years too quickly pass,
 And none may stay their course;
Nor purest life may respite seek
From wrinkled age, and furrow'd cheek,
 And death's resistless force.

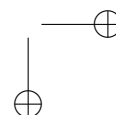
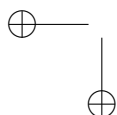
Three hundred bullocks, daily slain,
Would seek to mitigate in vain
 Th' inexorable King;
Whose drear dominion Titus holds,
And Geryon's giant bulk enfolds
 Within the wat'ry ring

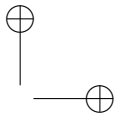
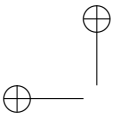
Of that sad flood, which all, whoe'er
Draw here the breath of vital air,
 Must cross, whate'er their lot,
Whether be theirs on earth to shine
In kingly palaces, or pine
 In peasant's lowly cot.

In vain from war's alarms we run;
In vain of Adria's billows shun
 The hoarse and broken flood;
In vain we dread the subtle death
Wherewith the south wind's pois'nous breath
 In Autumn taints the blood.

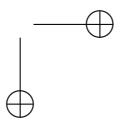
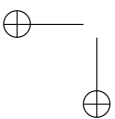
We all must see Cocytus flow
With sullen current, black and slow;
 And Danäus' hateful brood;
And Sisyphus, condemn'd by fate
His mortal crimes to expiate
 By labours still renew'd.

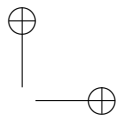
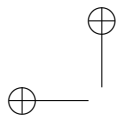
Thy land, thy house, thy pleasing wife,
Must all be left with parting life:
 The cypress, tree of gloom,
Alone, of all thou lov'st to tend,
Shall on its short-liv'd lord attend,
 And wave above thy tomb.





Thy cellars, guarded with such care
By hundred locks, thy lavish heir
 Shall ransack of their hoard;
And wine thy marble floors shall drown
More rich than e'er was seen to crown
 A pontiff's splendid board.

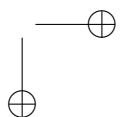
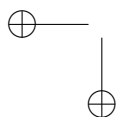


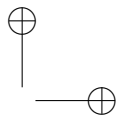


JOHN CONINGTON, 1863

(1825–69; Corpus Professor of Latin, Oxford)

Ah, Postumus! they fleet away,
Our years, nor piety one hour
Can win from wrinkles and decay,
And Death's indomitable power;
Not though three hundred bullocks flame
Each year, to soothe the tearless king
Who holds huge Geryon's triple frame
And Tityos in his watery ring,
That circling flood, which all must stem,
Who eat the fruits that Nature yields,
Wearers of haughtiest diadem,
Or humblest tillers of the fields.
In vain we shun war's contact red
Or storm-tost spray of Hadrian main:
In vain, the season through, we dread
For our frail lives Scirocco's bane.
Cocytus' black and stagnant ooze
Must welcome you, and Danaus' seed
Ill-famed, and ancient Sisyphus
To never-ending toil decreed.
Your land, your house, your lovely bride
Must lose you; of your cherish'd trees
None to its fleeting master's side
Will cleave, but those sad cypresses.
Your heir, a larger soul, will drain
The hundred-padlock'd Cæcuban,
And richer spilth the pavement stain
Than e'er at pontiff's supper ran.





GEORGE HOWLAND, 1865

(1824–92)

Ah! swiftly glide the seasons by,
O, Postumus, nor piety
Can wrinkles, or old age delay,
Or death inexorable stay;

Not with three hundred bulls, my friend,
Each day, can you stern Pluto bend,
Who three formed Geryon doth hold,
And Tityus, that giant bold,

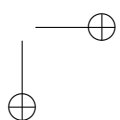
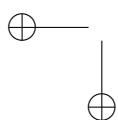
O'er that sad wave, once to be passed
By all whose lot on earth is cast,
If we to royal rank attain,
Or needy laborers remain.

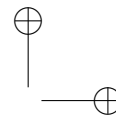
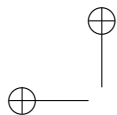
In vain from bloody Mars we run,
Or stormy Adriatic shun;
In vain avoid the southern breeze
Of Autumn, laden with disease.

Where dark Cocytus' waters flow,
With sluggish current, we must go,
See the vile race of Danaus,
And ever toiling Sisyphus,

Our fields and house and sweet wife left,
Of every tree we love, bereft,
Except the cypress dark to wave
Above its short lived master's grave.

Your heir the Cæcuban will seize,
Now kept beneath a hundred keys;
With richer wine the pavement stain,
Than pontiffs at their banquets drain.





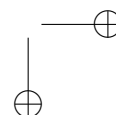
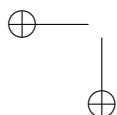
HUGO NICHOLAS JONES, 1865

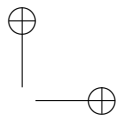
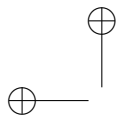
(The I and II Books of the Odes of Horace)

Ah Postumus! the years are glancing,
 Postumus, how fast they flee!
Quick is wrinkled age advancing,
 Herald of mortality;
Nor can piety restrain it:
 Not three hundred bulls a day
Can, my friend, one moment gain it,
 One poor moment of delay,
From that tearless, uncompliant
 Power that rules the Stygian throng,
Geryon, and the lusty giant,
 Victim of Latona's wrong.

On the mournful margin meeteth,
 Of that melancholy wave,
Every child of earth that eateth
 Of its bread, the lord and slave:
'Tis in vain you live a stranger
 To the Adriatic seas,
Storm and battle, and the danger
 Of the South's autumnal breeze;
View thou must, the dreary waters,
 Where the dark Cocytus flows,
Danaüs's direful daughters,
 Sisyphus's ceaseless woes.

When the homestead, and the meadow,
 And the grove, thine heir shall own,
Thy sweet wife, a sweeter widow,
 And the cypress shade alone
Mourneth o'er the sad bereavement,
 Then perchance a worthier man
Soon shall stain the flowing pavement,
 With the hoarded Cæcuban,
Whose rich stream, no longer darkling
 Under many a lock and key,
Shall outshine the brightest, sparkling
 For a Pontiff's revelry.





ANONYMOUS, 1865 (IMITATED)

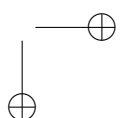
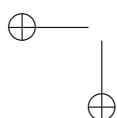
(Fun)

Ah, Posthumus, my Posthumus, the swift years
Glide away:
Your prayers won't stop your wrinkles; cometh
Death, and then decay.
In vain you stick to "Cockle's Pills;" old
PLUTO'S surely scorning
The dodges you would try to stop the dawn
Of your last morning.

We all must cross the Styxian stream, you
Know as well as I;
For be we serfs of kaisers, we who dwell
On earth must die.
What boots it that you're not at sea,
But safe within the city,
And guarded from bad odours by a
"Sanitary Committee?"

You'd die, of course, and your old eyes another
World will view;
You'll see if those old stories of the
Classic days are true;
If SISYPHUS still rolls his stone,
And it old DAHANS' daughters
Still weekly go with sieves to catch the
Aggravating waters.

You'll leave your lands and houses, and your jolly
Wife, also
The trees that you have planted with such
Care in many a row;
Your heir a splendid "feed" we'll give, and
Ask his friends to share it;
And, ah, my friend, the lads will "play
Old gooseberry" with the Claret.

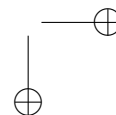
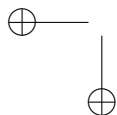


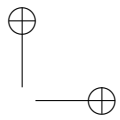


JAMES FRANKLIN FULLER, 1866

(1835–1924; Irish Actor and Architect)

Alas! my Posthumus, the fleeting years
Glide on, and with them comes the failing breath;
Nor piety, nor friends' imploring tears,
Can hold th' inevitable hand of death.
Should you three hundred victims daily slay,
You could not unrelenting Pluto charm;
Your passage 'cross the Stygian stream delay,
Nor the three-headed guardian disarm.
That stream which all – peasants and kings must pass.
In vain shall you escape from warring foes,
And the hoarse Adriatic's jarring wares;
The sickly south wind which in Autumn blows,
And the Physician's greatest caution craves.
The black Cocytus sulking in his bed,
Which guilty occupants of Tart'rus dread,
And Pluto's gloomy region you must tread.
Your lands, your house and pleasing wife,
You, ere long, must resign;
Funeral cypresses alone,
Of all the trees you call'd your own,
Will their mourn'd owner join.
Your choicest wine, secured by triple locks,
More choice than that attends the Pontiff's feast;
Your heir impatient, soon with joy unlocks,
And on the polish'd pavement lets it run to waste.

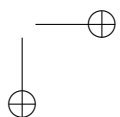
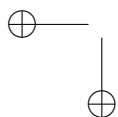


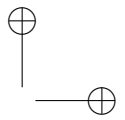


CHRISTOPHER HUGHES, 1867

(The Odes and Epodes of Horace)

Postumus, Postumus! Alas! my friend,
The flying years slip by,
Virtue prevents not wrinkles, nor our end:
Age comes, and we must die.
Stern Pluto, with three hundred bulls a-day
To move, how vain to try!
Vast, threefold Geryon, Tityon's self obey,
Forced back by Styx; we all
Alike must navigate that mournful stream,
Whatever lot befall,
The rank of kings, or exile's sad extreme.
In vain it is that we
From cruel war and from the storm-tossed wave
Of Adria's hoarse-voiced sea
Still strive to fly, hoping from harm to save
Ourselves; as vainly flee
In autumn from the baneful southern gale.
Cocytus we must trace,
Black, winding, sluggish stream; nought can avail;
We must behold the race
Of Danaus, infamous, and Sisyphus,
The son of Eolus, condemned
To that long task.
Earth must be left by us,
Home, and dear wife. Dark stemm'd
And odious cypress is the only tree
Of all which now you train,
Which shall, poor short-lived master, follow thee.
A luckier heir shall drain
Thy Cæcuban, locked up with hundred keys,
And tinge the pavement proud
With wine more rich than e'er, the taste to please,
The high priest's board allowed.





ICHABOD CHARLES WRIGHT, 1867

(1795–1871; Scholar, Poet, and Accountant)

Alas my friend, the years flow on;
Nor piety may stay
The rude assault of wrinkled age,
Nor death's strong hand delay.

Not, though with triple hecatomb
Thou daily dost renew
Prayers to stern Hades, who constrains
The monster giant crew

With his sad stream, which all must cross
The fruits of earth who share;
Whether poor rustic swains we be,
Or kings who sceptres bear.

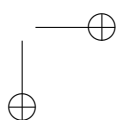
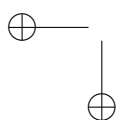
In vain from war shall we be free,
And Adrian's boisterous wave;
In vain from Auster's autumn blast,
Protection shall we crave.

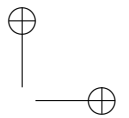
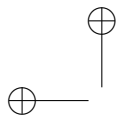
Cocytus' stream we needs must see,
That wanders black and slow;
The Danaän race, and Sysiphus
Condemned to endless woe.

Land, house, and wife must all be left,
However dear they be;
And of the trees now reared with care
Not one will follow thee,

Save the detested cypress. – One
Worthier than thou – thine heir –
Shall revel in thy choicest wine,
Preserved with utmost care;

And draining off thy Cæcuban,
Shall with it stain the foor –
Wine such as not the Pontifex
Draws from his plenteous store.

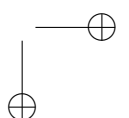
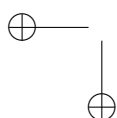


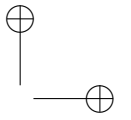
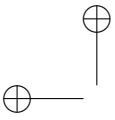


CHARLES STEPHENS MATHEWS, 1867

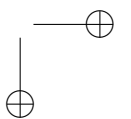
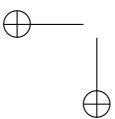
(“Formerly of Pembroke College, Cambridge”)

The years, the years, oh how the years
Slip, Posthumus, away!
To stop this frightful lapse of their's,
Th' advances of decay
And death, a monster none can chain,
Adoring, offering, all's in vain,
E'en though by immolated steers,
Three hundred in a day,
The peace of Pluto, whom no tears
Can soften, you essay.
By Stygian pool he Tityos ties,
He Geryon huge, three times our size,
And whosoever we that feed
On mother earth's good cheat,
None can repudiate his need
Of navigating here,
The wearer whether of a crown,
Or the hobnails that shoe the clown.
In vain shall bloody war and hoarse-
Resounding Adria's waves
Omit to furnish in due course
The same amount of graves,
In vain against autumnal harm
From Auster shall our bodies arm:
We have to see Cocytus' face,
Black, rambling, dull, addressed
To no broad neptune, Danaus' race
Of memory unblessed,
And Sisyphus the storm-god's son
Damned to long labour with the stone.
Th' old house, its mistress made to please,
The dear entailed domain,
Both are to leave: of all the trees
My friend delights to train
Which shall attend him where he goes,
Unless, least-loved, the cypress' boughs?





The tubs of Cæcuban you guard
 Beneath a hundred keys,
Your heir, perchance their worthier ward,
 Shall dissipate you these,
And marble pavements drench with hoards
Pontiffs might envy for their boards.





JAMES WALTER SMITH, 1867

(The Odes of Horace, Books I and II)

My Postumus, the years glide swift along,
My Postumus, nor can religion stay
Wrinkles or age, still urging on,
Or death, invincible, delay.

If every day were bulls three hundred slain,
'Twould not make Pluto, pitiless, propitious,
Whose floods, lugubrious, restrain
The thrice huge Geryon and Tityus.

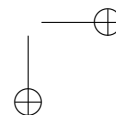
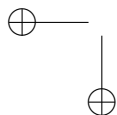
Each one of us who eats the gifts of earth
Must sail that self-same dismal river o'er,
Whether he be of royal birth
Or but a husbandman, and poor.

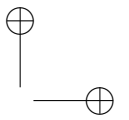
From bloody strife 'tis fruitless to refrain,
Or breakers of the roaring Adrian sea;
From Autumn's sickly blast in vain
We keep our timid bodies free.

We all must see the vile Danäides,
Cocytus' languid current wandering on,
And Sisyphus Æolides –
The man condemned to labours long.

The earth, your home, your wife you love so well,
You'll leave; and not one tree you cultivate
Its short-lived master's suite will swell,
Except the cypress, which you hate.

Your heir will drink – far worthier than you –
The Cæcuban you guard with hundred keys,
And o'er the floor that liquor strew
Which throats Pontifical would please.

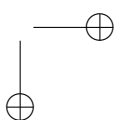
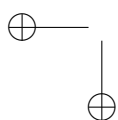


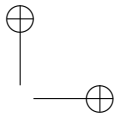
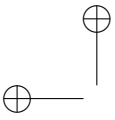


E. H. BRODIE, 1868

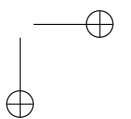
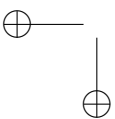
(“One of Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools”)

O Postumus, O Postumus,
How swift the fleeting years glide by us,
 No piety can stay
Time’s wrinkling hand, old ere we know
Comes conqueror Death to lay us low,
 And claim his lawful prey.
The tearless king no doom annuls,
Though bribed with thrice a hundred bulls,
 One for each day that goes,
Three-bodied Geryon in chains
He keeps, and Tityos restrain
 Where that dull water flows,
Whose ware indeed, or soon or late,
We one and all must navigate
 On earth’s kind gifts who feed,
No matter whether kings we’ve been,
Or poorest churls that e’er were seen
 To till the soil for bread.
What though war’s bloody end we shan,
Nor through hoarse Adria’s perils run
 Where breakers toss in foam,
And still in Autumn’s sickly hour
Escape the baleful Auster’s power
 Safe in a healthy home;
Still shall we see, no fabled dream,
Creeping Cocytus’ slow black stream,
 And Danaus’ evil race,
The weary Sisyphus behold
Damned to his task for years untold
 The endless path retrace.
All must be left, both lands and house,
And, dearer yet, the charming spouse,
 The trees he taught to ware
Their short-lived master cease to own,
Save gloomy cypresses alone
 Still rustling o’er his grave.
For better heir your wine shall glow
Kept with a hundred keys below,
 Grape of a finer juice





Flung by his hand shall stain the floor,
Than Pontiff e'er was known to pour
At the gods' feasts profuse.





T. HERBERT NOYES, JR., 1868

(An Idyll of the Weald, with Other Lays and Legends)

Fleeting, oh! how swiftly fleeting,
Speed the rolling years away!
Virtue will not smooth the wrinkles,
Will not thaw the snow that sprinkles
Locks of eld, nor serve to stay
Death's approaches for a day.

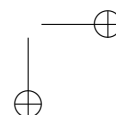
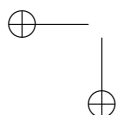
No, my friend, if thrice a hundred
Bulls were daily sacrificed,
On the red and reeking altars
Of the God who never falters,
Nor relaxes his firm hold
On the mighty men of old.

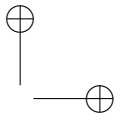
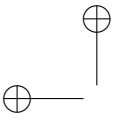
Thou wouldst not appease his craving;
All the souls that people earth,
Whatsoever their condition,
Whether peasant or patrician,
Must at length, by sure decree,
Sail across his gloomy sea.

Vainly shall we shirk the perils
Of the ocean and the land;
Vainly shun the fields of battle,
Or the rocks where tempests rattle;
Vainly take a timely flight,
From the East wind and the blight.

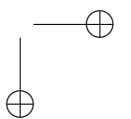
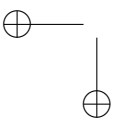
We must visit black Cocytus,
Flowing with its languid stream;
We must go where Danaus' daughters
Expiate those fearful slaughters;
Where his task, in shadowy guise,
Sisyphus for ever plies.

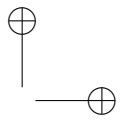
We must leave both wife and children,
We must leave both house and home;
None, of all thy pet plantation,
Coaxed by careful cultivation,
Save the hated cypress tree
Shall attend its brief lessee.





Some more worthy heir will revel
 In the choicest stoups of wine,
In thy secret cellar hoarded:
And, with liqueurs not accorded
 To the Pontiff's pampered suite,
 Stain the pavement at his feet.





EDWARD YARDLEY, JR., 1869

(1835–1908; Writer)

Ah! Postumus, swift disappears
Our youth, nor piety delays
The wrinkles of advancing years,
Nor Death's resistless power stays.

Three hundred bulls, a daily slaughter,
Friend, would not soften Pluto fell,
Who with the dreary Stygian water
Confines his victims safe in Hell.

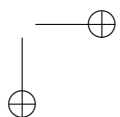
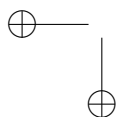
All, all, forsooth, in some near hour
Across that fatal stream must go,
Whoe'er the fruits of earth devour,
Both rich and poor, and high and low.

In vain we shrink from war's alarms,
Or shun the raging billows' might,
In vain th' Autumnal South wind's harms
That bears destruction in its flight.

For each of us at some time sees
Cocytos' black and sluggish river,
The infamous Danaides,
And Sisyphus condemned for ever.

Thy home and amiable wife
Thou must resign, nor follows thee
Aught thou hast planted in thy life
Except the hated cypress tree.

Thy heir will lavish at his feasts
That hoarded Cæcuban of thine,
So precious that luxurious priests
Show at their boards no equal wine.





JOHN BENSON ROSE, 1869

(Satires, Epistles, and Odes of Quintus Horatius Flaccus)

Postumus, Postumus, how do the rushing years
Pass by, alas! nor all our hopes and fears,
Nor deeds of virtue done, may stay
Old age and death upon their way.

No, nor three hecatombs of bulls will bribe
Inexorable Pluto – daily for each tribe –
Who holds triple Geryon
In three folds – and Tityus on –

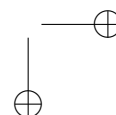
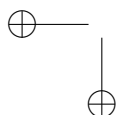
Banks of infernal Styx, which all must pass,
Kings and the lowly peasants in one mass,
Those who daintily are fed,
Those who eat their scanty bread.

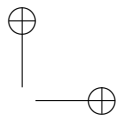
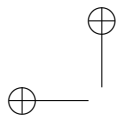
And it is vain absenting us to save
From cruel war or Adria's roughest wave,
Or from Autumn's hurtful gales,
When the baneful South prevails;

For all must pass the black and languid flood,
Cocytus, with its ghosts, a hateful brood,
Such as the curst Danaïdes
And Sisyphus Æolides.

Lands, house, and home, and pleasing wife,
And trees your hands have planted – all with life
Are left – save cypresses abhorred
To attend upon their lord.

A worthier heir shall quaff the Cæcuban
Guarded with hundred locks; another man
Shall tinge the pavement with the stains
Of wine, rich as the Pontiff drains.





ANONYMOUS, 1869

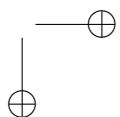
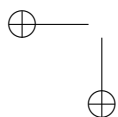
(The Month)

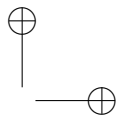
Ah, Postumus! ah, Postumus! our years are fleet and flying!
Soon, spite of godliness, thou must be wrinkled, old, and dying;
 Though hecatombs thou should'st each day
 In honour of grim Pluto slaughter,
Who holds the giants even 'neath his sway,
 Beyond the mournful water;

That water which we all must cross, that are sustained of earth;
All, whether we be simple clowns, or men of kingly birth.
 'Twere vain to shun the battle fray,
 To flee the perils of the seas;
To fence ourselves in Autumn's sickly day
 From fever-laden breeze,

The dark Cocytus' sluggish stream, one day we all must view;
We all must see the Danaids – that badly-famous crew,
 And aye, his labour wearisome
 Old Sisyphus condemned to ply;
To earth, to loving wife, to house and home,
 We all must bid good-bye.

Then shall the cypress-tree alone, that tree misliked and feared,
Attend on thee, its short-lived lord, of all that thou hast reared.
 And then the casks thou most dost hoard,
 Thine heir, more wise than thou, shall drain;
And shall, with wine unmatched at pontiff's board,
 The costly floor bestain.





EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON, LORD LYTTON, 1870

(1803–73; Politician)

Postumus, Postumus, the years glide by us,
Alas! no piety delays the wrinkles,
Nor old age imminent,
Nor the indomitable hand of Death.

Though thrice each day a hecatomb were offered,
Friend, thou couldst soften not the tearless Pluto,
Encoiling Titos vast,
And Geryon, triple giant, with sad waves –

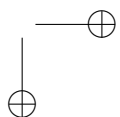
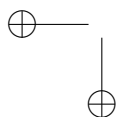
Waves over which we all of us must voyage,
All whosoe'er the fruits of earth have tasted;
Whether that earth we ruled
As kings, or served as drudges of its soil.

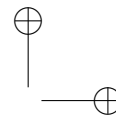
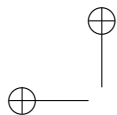
Vainly we shun Mars and the gory battle,
Vainly the Hadrian hoarse with stormy breakers,
Vainly, each autumn's fall,
The sicklied airs through which the south wind sails.

Still the dull-winding ooze of slow Cocytus,
The ill-famed Danaids, and, to task that ends not
Sentenced, Aeolides;
These are the sights on which we all must gaze.

Lands, home, and wife, in whom thy soul delighteth,
Left; and one tree alone of all thy woodlands,
Loathed cypress, faithful found,
Shall follow to the last the brief-lived lord.

The worthier heir thy Caecuban shall squander,
Bursting the hundred locks that guard its treasure,
And wines more rare than those
Sipped at high feast by pontiffs, dye thy floors.

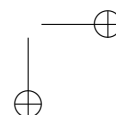
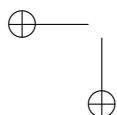


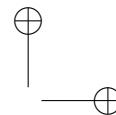
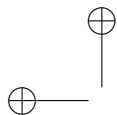


THOMAS CHARLES BARING, 1870

(1831–91; Banker and Politician)

Ah! Postumus, how swiftly glide away
The fleeting years, and goodness no delay
 Of wrinkles and old age can bring,
 Nor stay the beat of Death's strong wing.
Not though thy hand to Pluto day by day
Should thrice a hundred oxen duly slay,
 Could'st move his stony heart, that ne'er
 Hath melted at a suppliant's prayer.
Titos and triple Geryon he keeps
Within the circle of those woeful deeps,
 That all must cross, who walk the earth,
 Be royal, or unknown their birth.
In vain we shun war's blood-besprinkled plain;
And boisterous Adria's roaring flood in vain:
 In vain the treacherous softness fly
 Of south winds 'neath rich autumn's sky.
We all must see Cocytus' dull black flood
Of sluggish ooze, and Danaus' evil brood,
 And Sisyphus, who all alone
 Toils ever at the stubborn stone.
Lands, home, and tender wife thou must resign:
Not one of all these favourite trees of thine
 Shall, save the cypress' gloomy spray,
 Follow their short-lived master's clay.
Thy worthier heir shall drain the precious jars
That thou hast kept with countless bolts and bars,
 And with such wine the pavement stain
 As pontiffs long to quaff in vain.





MORTIMER HARRIS, 1871

(A Selection from the Odes of Horace)

Alas! my Postumus, alas!
These fleeting years how quick they pass
 Not piety can guard
From wrinkles – nor a single day,
Old age, still pressing on, delay,
 Nor certain death retard:

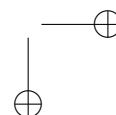
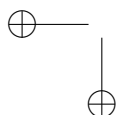
Not if, my friend, to him you doom
Each day a triple hecatomb,
 Can you stern Dis appease;
Bound by whose deadly waters lies
Great Tityus, and the three-fold size
 Of huge Geryones –

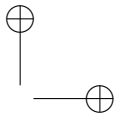
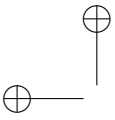
That fatal stream, which, small or great,
We all one day must navigate,
 Who eat the fruits of earth:
Whether in poverty we toil,
As husbandmen to till the soil,
 Or are of kingly birth.

From bloody war shall we, in vain,
And from the breaking waves abstain
 Of the hoarse Adrian sea:
In vain, too, from the southern wind,
Unto our bodies most unkind
 In Autumn, may we flee.

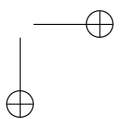
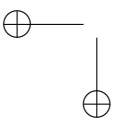
Cocytus, with its sluggish tide,
We must behold, whose waters glide
 In current dark and slow:
With Danaus' offspring infamous
And thee, Æolian Sisyphus,
 Condemned to endless woe.

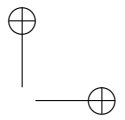
From earth and home you will be reft,
Your pleasing spouse too must be left;
 Nor of those trees, my friend,
Which now you cultivate, will one –
Except the cypress dark alone –
 Its short-lived lord attend.





The Cæcuban, preserved with care
By numerous locks, will by your heir
More liberal be decreased;
And the proud marble will be stained
With better wine than is obtained
At e'en a Pontitffs feast.

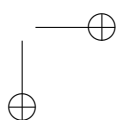
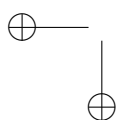


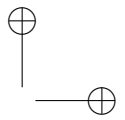


JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS, 1871

(1840–93; Poet, Literary Critic, and Cultural Historian)

Ah me, my friend: how fast away
 Fly the fleet years! no holy spell
 Time or Time's wrinkles can repel,
Or Death's resistless march delay.
Pile up each day your hecatomb –
 Pluto heeds not! The giant brood,
 Vast Geryon, floating many a rood,
And Titos writhe in ruthless doom,
Confined by that grim gulf below;
 And all who taste of earthly food
 Must cross that melancholy flood –
Princes and peasants all must go.
In vain from bloody wars we fly,
 And Hadria's roaring breakers shun:
 In vain shrink from the autumnal sun
And south winds breathing balefully;
That murky slow meandering river,
 Cocytus named, we all must view,
 And Danaus' dishonoured crew,
And him who heaves the stone for ever:
Abandoned land and home must be,
 And your sweet wife; of all your trees
 None but the hateful cypresses
May bear their brief lord company;
All your Cæcubian hoards your heir,
 Though guarded by a hundred doors,
 Shall waste, and stain his gorgeous floors
With finer wine than pontiffs share.





N. OR M., 1871

(Scraps of Verse)

Ah, swiftly fleeting into oblivion
Vanish thy few years. Nor can thy piety
From wrinkles and old age preserve thee,
Nor from the shaft of the grim destroyer.

Though thrice a day thou slewest an hecatomb,
Fail wouldst thou still to appease the implacable
Dis, who the triform monster herdsman
Geryon, and Tityus the earthborn

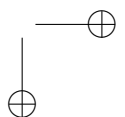
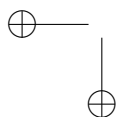
Girds with the dismal water, which all of us
Debtors wherein aught earthly we fed upon,
Whoe'er we once were, must pass over,
Princes, or hard labour's humble drudges.

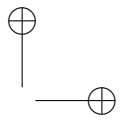
Vainly from war's fell carnage we keep ourselves,
Vainly shun harsh-voiced billows of Hadria:
In vain, at each autumn returning,
Shrink from the blast of the dread sirocco.

Gaze must we all on languidly wandering,
Wailing Cocytus: gaze on the Danaids
Accurst, and where still heaving upward
Sisyphus urges his endless vain toil.

Farewell, then, home, fields, and more than all beloved
Wife. Nor, of all those trees thou delightest in,
Will one, beside the gloomy cypress,
Shade thee any more, thy brief lordship ended.

Then shall thine heir, more splendidly prodigal,
Draining thy best long hoarded up Cæcuban,
Stain floors in his riot, with wine which
Pontifical suppers had been proud of.

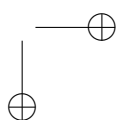
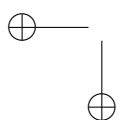


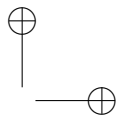


JOHN TUNNARD, 1874

(Some Odes of Horace)

Alas! O Posthumus, the fleeting years
Glide by, and piety grants no delay
To wrinkles, instant age, or death untamed.
Not with three hundred bulls, many as days
That equal run, may you, dear friend, appease
The tearless Pluto, who for aye restrains
The thrice huge Geryon and Tityon
With mournful wave, to be sailed o'er forsooth
By all whom earth sustains, whether we be
Kings, or the pauper tillers of the soil.
In vain each cruel war shall we avoid,
And breakers of resounding Adria.
In vain the approach of Autumn months shall dread
Our frames consuming with the hot South wind.
The black Cocytus must be seen, errant
With languid stream, and the whole race ill-famed
Of Danaus, and Sisyphus, the son
Of Æolus, condemned to ceaseless toil.
Yes! thou must leave the earth, thy home, thy wife
So pleasing; and of all the trees thou till'st
Not one, except the hateful cypresses,
Shall follow thee at last, their short-lived lord.
A worthier heir shall thy Cæcuban cask,
Kept by a hundred keys, exhaust, and stain
The pavement proud with wine of better proof
Than ere was served at banquets of High Priests.

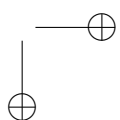
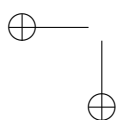


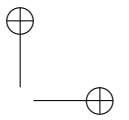


ROBERT M. HOVENDEN, 1874

(“Formerly of Trinity College, Cambridge”)

O Postumus, the stream of years
Runs by; no pious work can stay
The ravages of life's decay
Or death's inexorable shears:
Nay, though each morning you appease
With duly offer'd hecatombs
The cold, relentless Power, who dooms
Tityos and triform Geriones
To wander by the gloomy waves
Which all must pass of mortal birth
Who feed upon the fruits of earth,
Lords of the soil or abject slaves.
In vain we shun the battle-field
Or loud-voiced Hadria's chopping seas,
In vain from autumn's noxious breeze
Our fever-dreading bodies shield,
In black Cocytus must we gasp,
Where toiling Danaïds fill their urns,
And Sisyphus for ever turns
The stone that oft eludes his grasp.
Farewell to lands, to home and wife
Farewell! Of all the trees you plant
None but the cypresses will haunt
Your resting-place from busy life.
A liberal heir will turn the keys
Where Cæcuban is kept in store,
And pour libations on the floor
That might a pontiff's palate please.





W. H. A. EMRA, 1875

(The Death of Ægeus and Other Poems)

Ah! Postumus, the flying years glide past,
Nor Piety delays the coming blow;
The wrinkled brow – old age that presses fast –
And Death, unconquered foe.

Not even if each passing day should see,
As speeds its course, a threefold hecatomb
Offered to Pluto's tearless majesty,
Canst thou avoid thy doom.

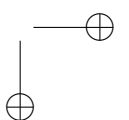
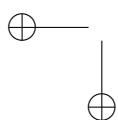
Vast though their strength, he binds the giant train
Beyond the joyless lake where all must moor;
King, peasant, all of bounteous Earth's domain
Must reach that distant shore.

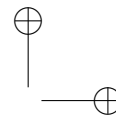
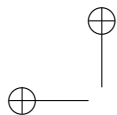
In vain we live a life of bloodless ease,
And dread the wind-tossed waves of Adria's main;
In vain we shrink before the poisonous breeze
In Autumn's dreary reign:

For we Cocytus, rolling dark and slow,
And Danaus' daughters, ill-famed progeny,
And Sisyphus, condemned to endless woe –
Must, all-reluctant, see.

Earth thou must leave, and wife beloved, and home,
And of the bowers thy hand in life hath made,
Its short-lived lord none follows, save alone
The hated cypress shade.

A more deserving heir thy wines shall drain,
'Neath hundred keys preserved – a chosen store:
And costlier draughts than priests e'er quaffed shall stain
Thy lordly pavement floor!





ARTHUR WAY, 1876

(1847–1930; Scholar and Translator, Headmaster of Wesley College, Melbourne)

Alas, O Postumus, O Postumus,
Glide on the fleeting years, and piety
 To wrinkles and impending eld
 And tameless death shall give no check;

No, though with bulls three hundred, every day
That passes, friend, thou shouldst propitiate
 Inexorable Pluto, who
 Doth prison Geryon thrice-gigantic

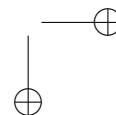
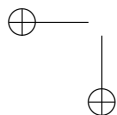
And Tityos with that doleful wave, which needs must
By all who eat the bounty of our earth
 Be sailed o'er, whether we be kings
 Or whether we be rustic poor.

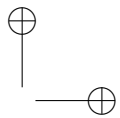
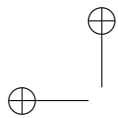
Vainly shall we from gory Mars be clear,
And hoarsely-roaring Hadria's broken surge,
 Vainly through Autumn-tides shall dread
 The south-wind, baneful to our frames.

We must repair to black Cocytus, roaming
With lazy flow, and Danaus' shameful race,
 And to the son of Aeolus
 To long toil doomed, even Sisyphus.

You must leave land and house and winsome wife,
Neither shall any of those trees you rear,
 Except the hateful cypresses,
 Follow their brief-possessing lord.

Your heir, more worthy of it, shall consume
The Cæcuban, kept by a hundred keys,
 And stain the floor with generous wine
 Richer than that of pontiffs' banquets.

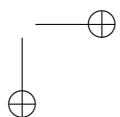
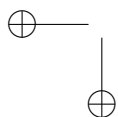




W. E. H. FORSYTH, 1876

(1845–81; Lawyer in Bengal)

Ah, Posthumus, old friend, the years are flying fast away,
No piety can death, or age, or wrinkled brows delay;
Dread Pluto's heart we can't cajole – no sacrifice will save –
Dread Pluto who his victims guards with Lethe's triple wave;
Whoe'er we are, whate'er we do, 'tis there the last scene laid is,
And king or commoner alike, we all are bound for Hades;
'Tis vain to hold yourself aloof from war and risk of death,
'Tis vain to flee the treacherous sea and autumn's sickly breath;
Still flows the gloomy river on, and all must see its shore,
Where wander by the tortured ghosts of those who went before.
Yes, you must leave your house and lands, and her, your darling wife,
The trees you've planted with your hands will have a longer life;
And when their short-lived master's gone, they still will gaily wave;
The cypress bough alone shall weep, companion of your grave;
Your heir will quaff your Cæcuban, preserved with so much care,
And stain the floor with better wine than even pontiffs share.

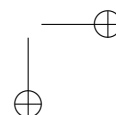
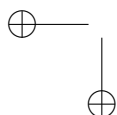


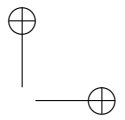


WILLIAM THOMAS THORNTON, 1878

(1813–80; Economist, Civil Servant, and Writer)

Ah, Postumus! ah, Postumus! ah me!
The fleeting years glide by, and no delay
From wrinkles or old age can piety
Win, or from death's indomitable sway.
Not although offering, oft as day recurs,
Three hundred steers, will you prevail upon
Inexorable Pluto, who immures
Tityon and triply monstrous Geryon,
Girdled by tristful water – that, to wit,
The which to navigate all we, who feed
On earth's munificence, must fain submit –
Rich lords, alike, and hinds in utmost need.
In vain do we ensanguined Mars abjure,
And the hoarse Adriatic's broken waves:
In vain we guard against the breath impure
Of southern gales that fill autumnal graves:
Visited must the black Cocytus be
Wandering with languid flow: the infamous
Danaan race; and sentenced endlessly
To labour, the Aeolid Sisyphus.
Your house and lands and comely wife must all
Be left behind, and from amongst the trees
You tend, shall follow their brief master's call
None except only hateful cypresses.
A worthier heir the Caecuban shall drain
Which you have guarded with a hundred keys,
And noble wine the rammered floor shall stain,
Choicer than that which pontiffs' banquet sees.





SIR PHILIP PERRING, 1880

(1828–1920)

Alas! how swiftly glide the years away!
Nor will devotion, Postumus, delay
 Wrinkles, and age fast pressing on,
 And Death that hath been tamed of none;

Not if three hundred bulls each day, my friend,
Thou offer Pluto, whom no tears can bend,
 Who Tityos, and that monstrous birth,
 The triple-bodied Son of Earth,

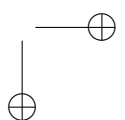
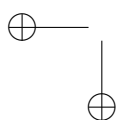
Confines by sullen wave, o'er which, be sure,
All we, who feed upon earth's bounteous store,
 Must sail perforce, whether kings we be,
 Or husbandmen of low degree.

In vain shall we from bloody Mars be free,
And the rough breakers of hoarse Hadria's sea:
 In vain throughout the Autumns fear
 The Auster's pestilential air.

Visit we must the slow meandering flood
Cocytus black, and Danaus' cursèd brood,
 And Sisyphus condemned to endure,
 Great Æolus' son, toil evermore.

Aye, leave thou must earth, house, and consort dear,
And of these trees which thou dost fondly rear,
 None but the cypresses abhorred
 Shall follow thee, their shortlived lord.

A worthier heir shall draw off to the lees
The vintage guarded with a hundred keys,
 And choicer wine the floor shall stain
 Than Pontiffs at their banquets drain.

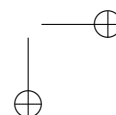
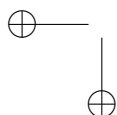


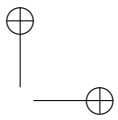


HENRY HUBBARD PIERCE, 1884

(1834–83; “Erudite Mathematician and Latin Scholar”)

Alas, Postumius, Postumius, the years glide swiftly by!
Advancing age will never heed the penitential sigh.
The deepening wrinkles on thy brow devotion cannot hide;
And pallid Death, resistless foe, will all thy vows deride.
Three hundred shapely bullocks killed by thee each passing day,
Would fail to win grim Pluto’s grace – the fatal hour delay –
Who circles monster Geryon, shaped like some thrice-hideous dream,
And Tityus, giant son of Jove, with Styx’ dismal stream.
That inky flood all men shall cross by earthly bounty fed –
The king who boasts a gilded couch, the swain without a bed.
From bloody Mars in vain we fly; from Adria’s raging seas;
And shield our forms when frosts are keen from every chilling breeze.
All flesh must view Cocytus foul that rolls its leaden wave;
The odious brood of Danaüs, and Sisyphus the slave
Condemned to hopeless toils that ne’er a kindly respite find.
Thy lands, thy home and charming wife must all be left behind.
No tree, except the cypress drear, that claims thy care to-day
Shall follow thee its master hence one step along the way.
A worthier heir shall freely quaff Cæcuban vintage old,
That five-score rusty keys now guard – as many gates enfold;
And stain thy marble floor with wine of choicer brand confessed
Than e’er at pontifical feast did warm a priestly breast.

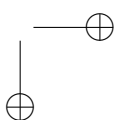
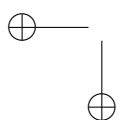


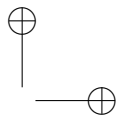


HERBERT GRANT, 1885

(Odes of Horace)

O Postumus! time slips away,
Nor 'en can piety delay
The wrinkles of advancing age,
Or the dread power of death assuage.
Friend I though a hectacomb by thee
Thrice on each day should offered be
Thy vows would pass unanswered by.
For Pluto heeds not mortal cry,
Who holds beyond sad Stygian waves
Huge Geryon, and Tityus slaves –
Those waves that must be passed by all
Nurtured on this terrestrial ball,
Monarch and peasant, great and small.
In vain we shun war's cruel strife
Hoarse Adria's storms endang'ring life
And the south wind in autumn time
Breathing infection on our clime
We must perforce the region view
Which dark Cocytus wanders through,
Dire Danaus' race by fame accurst
Must on our wond'ring vision burst;
And Sisyphus our sight surprise,
As his eternal task he plies:
The joys that life and home afford,
The loving wife, the social board,
Must loose at last their earthly lord;
No tree that claims thy culture now,
Save the dark cypress, hateful bough,
Can follow one short-lived as thou;
A worthier heir shall drain the lees
Of casks locked by a hundred keys,
And stain the tessellated stone
With wines of softer, mellower tone
Than the rich pontiff's feasts can own.





GEORGE M. DAVIE, 1885

(1848–1900; American Lawyer and Poet)

Posthumus, O, Posthumus! how swift the years are flying!
Alas! no piety can bring delay to wrinkling brows,
Nor stay the step of Age, that's pressing closer on us,
Nor check, but for a moment unconquerable Death!

Not even, O, my comrade! if, as the days are passing,
You should appease with sacrifice of hecatombs of kine
The unrelenting Pluto; – who Tityus imprisons,
And triply huge Geryon, within his somber waves.

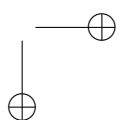
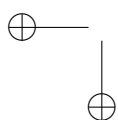
Those waves, ah! well we know, must some day be sailed over
By all of us who've tasted the bounties of this earth;
Whether, the time allotted, in regal wealth we're living,
Or struggling on through penury, poor tenants of the field.

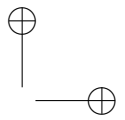
For, all in vain we guard us from bloody fields of battle,
And from the broken billows of Hadria's shrieking wave;
In vain we shun the hot winds, that blast the fields of autumn
And bring the deadly pestilence to blight the frames of men:

Still are we doomed, hereafter, to see the black Cocytus,
That wanders on forever with always languid stream;
To watch the foul Danaids; and Sisyphus, Æolid,
As hopelessly he labors on, at his eternal toil.

Your lands must be relinquished; the house that you inhabit,
And the dear wife, so pleasing, must all be left behind:
And, of the groves you cherish – a little while the master –
Shall not a leaf go with you but cypress wreaths accurst!

Then will your heir – more worthy! – bring forth that old Cæcuban
That you have kept so charily beneath un hundred keys;
And, splushing with profusion, the very floors be drinking
Your wines, more rare than those that crown the feasts of Pontiff kings!





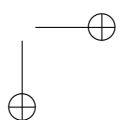
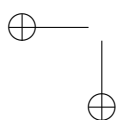
MARCUS J. WRIGHT, 1885

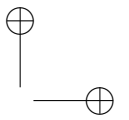
(The Southern Bivouac)

Alas! Posthumus, fleeting years
Glide rapidly away,
Nor can thy piety or tears
Old age or death delay;
Though thrice an hundred victims slain,
Thine offerings daily send –
He who holds dread Cerberus' chain
Shall not his purpose bend –
For all must pass the Stygian main,
Kings, serfs, and thou, my friend.

In vain from Adriatic's storm,
Or Mars, we deem us free,
Or from the unhealthy autumn's harm,
We must Danaus see;
We, with Cocytus wandering on,
Must tread that dreaded soil,
And see Æolus' wretched son
Doomed to eternal toil –
From home and pleasing wife be gone,
As from a hated spoil.

Nor shall thy trees, nursed with such cure,
Their changing master find,
All (save the hated cypress) are
Left mournfully behind;
A worthier heir Cæcuban wine
Shall lavishly consume,
Which now an hundred keys confine
Safe in its 'customed room;
And nobler wine he scatters o'er
The pavement with loose hand,
Than thou from golden goblets pour
To worthiest of the land;
Thus scatters he thy hard-earned store,
As winds do scatter sand.





CHARLES WILLIAM DUNCAN, 1886

(The Odes and Saecular Hymn of Quintus Horatius Flaccus)

Alas! oh Postumus! oh Postumus!
The flying years glide rapidly away
Nor piety to wrinkles, nor old age,
Nor to all-conqu'ring death can bring delay!

My friend, stern Pluto you could not appease,
E'en by three hundred bulls on ev'ry day
That passes by: he who Titus restrains,
With whom thrice-ample Geryon must stay

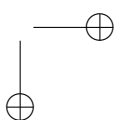
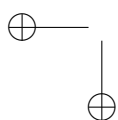
Under that awful river, thro' whose flood
We all must navigate, you may be sure,
Whom the rich bounty of the earth sustains,
Whether great kings we be, or rustics poor.

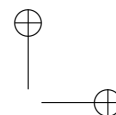
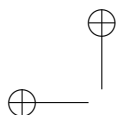
In vain we sanguinary war avoid;
The broken waves of Adriatic rough
In vain th' injurious South wind shall we fear,
In autumn fatal to our bodies' health.

Cocytus black, flowing with languid stream,
And the vile race of Danäus, and he,
Sisyphus the son of Aeolus, condemned
To everlasting labour, must we see.

Your land, your home, your well-belovéd wife,
All must be left. Nor of those trees, shall one,
Which now you plant, follow their short-liv'd lord,
Save the detested cypresses alone.

A worthier heir the Caecuban shall drink.
Which now preserve a hundred keys at least:
The pavement he shall stain with gen'rous wine,
Better than that which serves high pontiff's feast.





J. C. ELGOOD, 1886

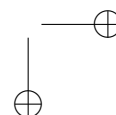
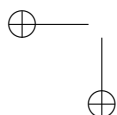
(Associate of King's College, London)

Alas! – Postumus, Postumus, the passing years glide swiftly by. Goodness can interpose no delay to wrinkles, to impending old age, and to invincible death.

No – my friend – even though thou shouldst, on every day in thy life, strive to appease inexorable Pluto by the sacrifice of three hundred bulls – Pluto who has conveyed along his dark river mighty three-bodied Geryon with Tytios, and which must be crossed by all who feed on the fruits of the earth, whether they be kings or peasants.

In vain do we escape on the bloody battle plain, or from the rock-broken waves of the howling Adriatic. In vain shall we, through fear for our bodies during the autumn, guard against the injurious south wind. The black slow-moving Cocytus must be seen by us, with the impious Danaides, and Sisyphus condemned to eternal labour. The earth must be left – thy house – thy beloved wife – and none of the trees thou cultivatest except the hateful cypress will accompany thee their short-lived master.

Thine heir, more deserving of it, will consume thy Cæcuban now guarded by a hundred locks, and stain thy superb floor with wine choicer even than that which the costly banquets of the Pontiffs afford.





T. RUTHERFURD CLARK, 1887

(The Odes of Horace)

Postumus, Postumus, they flit,
The swift years flit: your pious faith
Shall smooth no wrinkles age hath writ,
Win no delay from mighty death.

Albeit for your sake were slain
Day after day three hundred steers,
The intercession were in vain
With Pluto pitiless of tears,

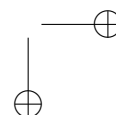
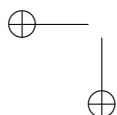
Who binds beyond that mournful firth
Huge Geryon and Tityos, –
Which we, the nursings of the earth,
Or prince or peasant, all must cross.

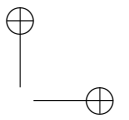
In vain you shun the God of gore,
And Hadria hoarse with breaking waves;
In vain you dread till Autumn's o'er
The fell sirocco filling graves.

You needs must watch Cocytus wind
His languid length o'er darkling leas,
And illfamed Danaïds, and, assigned
To endless toil, Aeolides;

You needs must leave this land of sun,
Sweet wife, and home; of all the bower,
Save the sad cypress, will be none
Leal to the lordling of an hour.

An hundred keys your cellars close,
A worthier heir shall drain their stores;
And wine no pontiff's banquet knows
Empurple these mosaic floors.

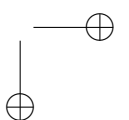
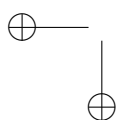


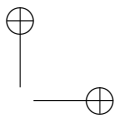


SIR STEPHEN DE VERE, 1888

(1812–1904; Poet and Country Gentleman)

Alas, my Postumus, our years
Glide silently away. No tears,
No loving orisons repair
The wrinkled cheek, the whitening hair,
That drop forgotten to the tomb.
Pluto's inexorable doom
Mocks at thy daily sacrifice:
Around his dreary kingdom lies
The fatal stream whose arms infold
The giant race accursed of old.
All, all alike must cross its wave –
The King, the noble, and the slave.
In vain we shun the battle roar,
And breakers dashed on Adria's shore:
Vainly we flee in terror blind
The plague that walketh on the wind:
The sluggish river of the Dead,
Cocytus, must be visited,
The Danaids detested brood
Foul with their fifty husbands' blood,
And Sisyphus, with ghastly smile,
Pointing to his eternal toil.
All must be left; thy gentle wife,
Thy home, the joys of rural life;
And when thy fleeting days are gone
Th' ill-omened cypresses alone
Of all those fondly cherished trees
Shall grace thy funeral obsequies,
Cling to thy loved remains, and wave
Their mournful shadows o'er thy grave.
A lavish, but a nobler heir
Thy hoarded Cæcuban shall share,
And on the tessellated floor
The purple nectar madly pour,
Nectar more worthy of the halls
Where Pontiffs hold high festivals.





J. LEIGH S. HATTON, 1890

(“Late of Worcester College, Oxford”)

O Postumus! the flying years
 Are gliding on their way,
And not one wrinkle on thy brow,
 One token of decay,
One touch of Death’s unconquered hand,
 Thy piety can stay!

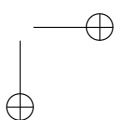
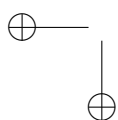
Not if a costly hecatomb
 Three times renewed should rise
To Pluto of the tearless soul,
 In humble sacrifice,
For every day of life, my friend,
 He gives thy longing eyes,

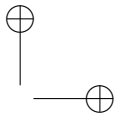
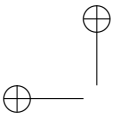
Pluto, who threefold Geryon keeps,
 Who holdeth Tytius fast
Within the bounds of that sad stream,
 Whose sombre waves at last,
By all who live, or kings or slaves,
 Must some dread day be passed.

In vain, alas! we fly from death
 On battle’s blood-red plain,
In vain we would escape the waves
 Of Hadria’s stormy main,
And hide from autumn’s deadly breath
 When southern winds complain!

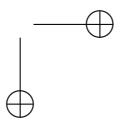
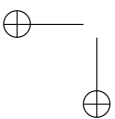
And we must view the sullen waves
 Of dark Cocytus glide,
Those evil brides, whose unwashed hands
 A husband’s blood hath dyed,
And Sisyphus the falling stone
 Roll up the mountain side!

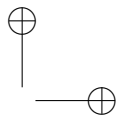
And we must part from home and lands,
 And wife so sweet and dear,
And of the trees we loved to plant
 The hateful cypress here
Alone shall follow to the tomb
 Its short-lived master’s bier.





While a more worthy heir shall quaff
Our wine's well-guarded store,
And with a costlier vintage far
Than lavish pontiffs pour
Within their stately banquet halls,
Shall stain the very floor.





ROSWELL MARTIN FIELD, 1891

(1807–69; American Lawyer and Politician)

O Postumus, my Postumus, the years are gliding past,
And piety will never check the wrinkles coming fast,
The ravages of time old age's swift advance has made,
And death, which unimpeded comes to bear us to the shade.

Old friend, although the tearless Pluto you may strive to please,
And seek each year with thrice one hundred bullocks to appease,
Who keeps the thrice-huge Geryon and Tityus his slaves,
Imprisoned fast forevermore with cold and sombre waves,

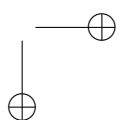
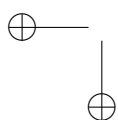
Yet must that flood so terrible be sailed by mortals all;
Whether perchance we may be kings and live in royal hall,
Or lowly peasants struggling long with poverty and dearth,
Still must we cross who live upon the favors of the earth.

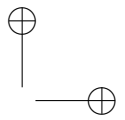
And all in vain from bloody war and contest we are free,
And from the waves that hoarsely break upon the Adrian Sea;
For our frail bodies all in vain our helpless terror grows
In gloomy autumn seasons, when the baneful south wind blows.

Alas! the black Cocytus, wandering to the world below,
That languid river to behold we of this earth must go;
To see the grim Danaides, that miserable race,
And Sisyphus of Aolus, condemned to endless chase.

Behind you must you leave your home and land and wife so dear,
And of the trees, except the hated cypresses, you rear,
And which around the funeral piles as signs of mourning grow,
Not one will follow you, their short-lived master, there below.

Your worthier heir the precious Cæcuban shall drink galore,
Now with a hundred keys preserved and guarded in your store,
And stain the pavements, pouring out in waste the nectar proud,
Better than that with which the pontiffs' feasts have been endowed.





EDWARD HENRY PEMBER, 1891 (IMITATED)

(1833–1911; Parliamentary Barrister and Poet)

Of all the little fools I know, there's none
Can come within a day's march of Sir Peter;
Prig, pietist, and *petit-maitre* in one,
Who could be meaner, fussier, or neater?

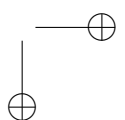
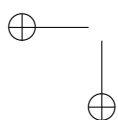
Death is to him a sempiternal fear,
Alas, alas, Sir Peter, oh Sir Peter!
Your ceremonious coddling makes each year
To seem, if anything, a little fleeter!

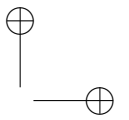
Tho' not a fop, each grizzling whisker is
A source of terror that he can't dissemble;
Each widening wrinkle on his wizen phiz
He measures with two hands that really tremble.

He never walks in London after dark,
Because he once heard someone was garotted;
Nor helps to shoot the game in his own park,
Because he lives in dread of being potted.

He flies from England to avoid the Spring,
And skips into a fur-coat in October;
He pushes to a vicious point one thing
That I could make a virtue of – he's sober.

By Jove, yes, there's a cellar thrown away!
I know his heir, and feel the worst of sinners
For hoping I may live to see the day
When that young man begins his course of dinners.

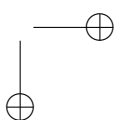
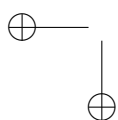


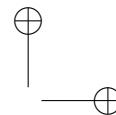
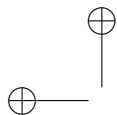


C. E. R., 1891

(Darling Downs Gazette)

Ah! Postumus, my friend, my friend,
The years are fleeting by,
And wrinkles and impending age,
The death that cannot die,
Brook no delay; no duty done,
No sacrifice of steers each day,
Stern Pluto's fiat to postpone,
Will aught avail. For he, they say,
Confines beneath the gloomy wave
Thrice-headed Geryon of Spain;
And Tityus – gigantic too –
Doomed ne'er to see the light again.
Those waters must be crossed by us!
Alas! it is not hard to see;
By all whom nature's bounty feeds,
Princes or peasants though we be.
And vainly shall we shun red War,
The roar of Hadria's broken waves,
The south wind too, in autumn-time,
Who sweeps his victims to their graves.
Meandering dark, with sluggish flow,
Cocytus see! – our destined strand;
Danaus' wicked offspring too,
And Sisyphus for ever damned.
Our land, our home, our charming wife,
Fate wills that we shall leave behind.
O lord and master of a day,
No tree you've tended you will find
Will follow to your grave, except
The hated cypress. Never mind:
An heir more worthy drinks the wine
By you with care preserved,
It stains the floor, that juice divine,
At Pontiffs' feasts preferred.





JOHN B. HAGUE, 1892

(The Odes and Epodes of Horace)

Ah, Postumus, the flying years
Glide on despite our prayers and tears,
Old age and wrinkles come each day,
All-conquering death knows no delay.

And if three hundred bulls each morn,
Thou hadst on Pluto's altar thrown,
That tearless face would still survey
Unmoved the realms beneath his sway,

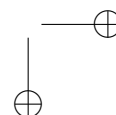
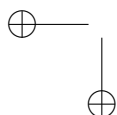
The tri-formed Geryon, Tityon vast,
Round whom th' unpitying Styx is cast,
Whose sullen wave receives us all,
From lowliest home or regal hall.

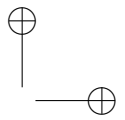
In vain we shun war's bloody graves,
Or Adria's hoarse and stormy waves,
Or fear when southern gales arise,
And bear disease through autumn skies.

For thou must see in realms below
Cocytus' dark and languid flow,
The Danäan race, Æolus' son,
Whose toils thro' long, long years shall run.

Your lands, and home, and pleasant wife,
All must be left with ending life,
Those cherished trees – none follow, save
The hated cypress, to your grave.

Your heir will take the wine you stocked,
And which a hundred keys have locked:
He'll make it tinge his marble floor,
Richer than Pontiff's feasts he'll pour.





JOHN OSBORNE SARGENT, 1893

(1811–91; Lawyer and Writer, Friend of Oliver Wendell Holmes)

My Postumus, the fleeting years
Pass swiftly. Neither prayers nor tears
 Can smooth the lines by age imprest
 Or Death's advancing step arrest, –

Not if three hundred bulls a day
You should to tearless Pluto slay,
 Whose Stygian waters' circling chain
 The Giants strive to break in vain, –

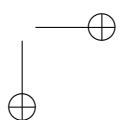
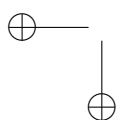
Waters that all of mortal birth
Must cross who eat the fruits of Earth.
 Whether they bask in wealth, or toil
 To win scant fare from stubborn soil.

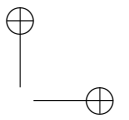
In vain from bloody Mars we're free,
Or hoarse surge of the Hadrian sea;
 In vain from noxious vapors fly
 That South winds breed in Autumn's sky;

To the sad shades we all must go,
See black Cocytus winding slow,
 See Sisyphus his long toil ply,
 And Danaus' hateful family.

Lands you must leave, and home, and wife;
And of the trees you nurse in life
 None, save the cypresses we hate,
 Shall mourn their short-lived master's fate.

A worthier heir shall drain the lees
Of casks you guard with countless keys,
 And stain the floor with choicer wine
 Than crowns the board where pontiffs dine.





T. A. WALKER, 1893

(The Odes of Horace)

Ah! Postumus, my Postumus!
The years glide fast away,
Nor will to wrinkled cheeks thy prayers
Cause 'en a brief delay,
Nor to advancing years, nor yet
To death invincible – a debt
Humanity must pay.

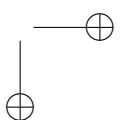
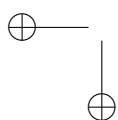
By slaughter of three hundred bulls,
As each day comes and goes,
Thou couldst not move stern Pluto, friend,
Who, where dark water flows
On which the sun hath never shone,
Doth thrice gigantic Geryon
And Titus enclose –

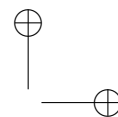
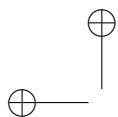
Dark water to be crossed by all,
Who on earth's bounty feed,
Whether as rich as kings, or poor
As hinds in greatest need.
In vain from bloody Mars we're free,
And from hoarse Adria's billowy sea,
Or noxious blasts we heed

In Autumn from the vapoury south;
For black Cocytus dread
Of current slow, and Danaids
Perfidiously wed,
And Sisyph Æolus's son
To never-ending labour gone,
Must all be visited.

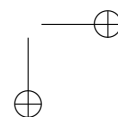
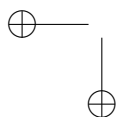
No house, no land, no pleasing wife,
To lodge and cheer thee there!
No tree of those thou nurtur'st
To shade thee anywhere,
Except the hated cypress! – thou,
A temporary master now,
Must leave them to thine heir.

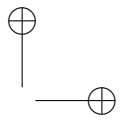
A more deserving heir at feasts





Thy Cæcuban shall drain,
And far too good for Pontiff's lips
Proud wine thy pavement stain.
Preserve it howsoe'er thou please,
And let it with a hundred keys
Securely locked remain.

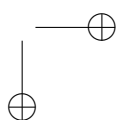
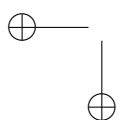


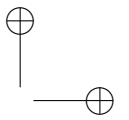


OSWALD A. SMITH, 1895

(Horace in Quantity)

Alas! the years glide past, O my Postumus,
Glide quickly! think not piety can delay
 Your wrinkles, or th' approach of Age, or
 Death's unavoidable law can alter.
'Twere vain to Pluto, Pluto the merciless,
Three hundred oxen daily to sacrifice,
 To soften him that captive holdeth
 Tityus, hemm'd by the gloomy Lethe,
And thrice enormous Geryon: all of us,
Ay! all we mortals fed by the gifts of earth,
 Both mighty kings and needy rustics,
 Must over it to the shore be ferried.
In vain we shun War's slaughter, or Hadria's
Waves hoarsely roaring, madly tumultuous;
 We vainly dread those blasts of Auster,
 Fear'd as unhealthy thro' days of autumn.
We must descend where, offspring of Aolus,
Toils on for aye doom'd Sisyphus, and the dark
 Cocytus winds, and dwell the guilty
 Maids, who by Danaus were begotten.
This earth's delights, home, partner adorable,
All must be some day quitted; of all the trees
 You tend, awhile their master, you shall
 Only by Cypress abhorr'd be follow'd.
Twice fifty keys will fail to preserve the flasks
You prize; an heir more worthy will empty them,
 And waste the proud vintage unequal'd
 E'en by the nectar a Pontiff offers.





CYRIL E. F. STARKEY, 1895

(Verse Translations from Classic Authors)

The rolling years, the rolling years
Are fleeting fast away.
Nor pious prayers nor piteous tears
Can gain an hour's delay
From wrinkled eld with all its fears,
And Death's resistless sway.

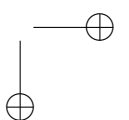
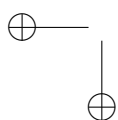
Three hundred bullocks duly slain
For every passing sun,
With iron Pluto plead in vain
When once our race is run,
Who holds in Styx's murky chain
Tityus and Geryon.

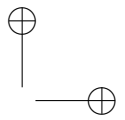
That river, all who live by bread,
Peasant and king, must sail.
In vain we flee the War-god's tread,
Or Hadria's hoarsest gale,
In vain the poisonous autumn dread
When Auster's blasts assail.

Cocytus black with sluggish flow
We each and all must trace,
We all must mark the tortures slow
Of Danaus' cursed race,
Sad Sisyphus, to endless woe
Condemned, we all must face.

Each one must leave his home and lands,
The wife he cherished;
His woods, dear labour of his hands,
Strew not his latest bed;
Only the gloomy cypress stands
To canopy the dead.

The hoarded Cæcuban will drain
A wiser worthier heir,
In drunken bouts he'll flood and stain
The floor with wine more rare
Than vintages the pontiff train
At their high revels share.

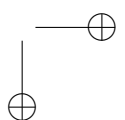
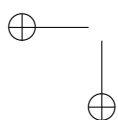


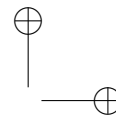
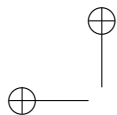


J. HOWARD DEAZELEY, 1895

(“Merton College, Oxford”)

Alas, my Postumus, the fleet years fade,
 And righteousness itself will not avail
 With wrinkled age to make its footstep fail,
Nor will unconquered Death be thus delayed;
Not though each day – he heeds no tearful cries –
 Three hundred bulls in sacrifice you gave
 To Pluto, who with fold of gloomy ware
Imprisons Geryon of triple size
And Tityon, a wave we all must face
 And cross, who on the bounty of the earth
 Are nourished, whether chiefs of kingly birth
Or husbandmen that spring of pauper race.
'Tis vain for us to shun Mars' bloody fields
 And Hadria's billows roaring into spray;
'Tis vain to dread throughout each autumn day
The harmful mischief that the South Wind wields.
We needs must journey where with stream of oil
 The black Cocytus strays, where cursèd clan
 Of Danaus lurks, and where the judge's ban
Dooms son of Aeolus to ceaseless toil.
The park, the mansion, and the comely wife
 Must all be left, nor of the trees you tend
 Will one, save hateful cypress, see the end
Of their frail owner and his fleeting life.
A worthier heir your Caecuban will drain
 That you had guarded with a hundred keys,
 And wine, more rich than pontiffs give to please
Their guests, will haughtily the pavement stain.





J. WORCESTER, 1895

(Nash's Pall Mall Magazine)

O Postumus, O Postumus,
How swiftly glide the years away!
And Piety brings no delay
To wrinkled age that hurries on,
Nor stays all-conquering Death;

Not though three hundred bulls each day
Thou should'st on Pluto's altar lay –
Pluto who never yields to tears;
Who with his gloomy wave

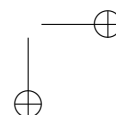
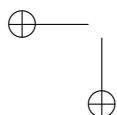
Binds Geryon's bulk and Tityus huge –
That wave which all of mortal seed
Must cross – or king or hind alike
Who on earth's bounty feed.

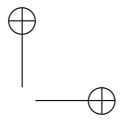
In vain we shun War's bloody field,
Hoarse Adria's broken waves:
In vain we seek ourselves to shield
From Autumn's deadly blast.

We cannot 'scape Cocytos' stream.
Winding with black and sluggish coil:
Danaus' curst brood, and Sisyphus
Doomed to eternal toil.

Earth, home, sweet wife must all be left;
And of the trees thy care has reared,
One, only one, shall follow thee –
The dark and hateful cypress-tree,
When life's brief day is done.

More worthy than thyself, thine heir
Shall quaff thy cellar's choicest store,
Locked with an hundred keys,
And stain with nobler wine the floor
Than that at Pontiffs' banquets poured.





SIR OWEN SEAMAN, 1895 (IMITATED)

(1861–1936; Writer and Poet)

I hinted in my postumous, or last,
 Ode that the flight of years is never-ending;
I find it is a state of things that's past
 Serious mending;

The more I think of it, the more I feel
 One cannot do much better than repeat it;
The Truth is always fresh, and takes a deal
 Of talk to beat it.

Behold, you may detect a shiny spot,
 Where through my hair the pericranium twinkles:
I, too, observe upon *your* brow a lot
 Of seamy wrinkles,

Signs of the crammer's art. For you and me
 The hour is come to join the dear departed;
To phrase it coarsely, it is time that we
 Already started.

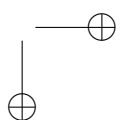
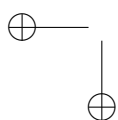
"There is no way but this!" as Lord Macaulay's
 Hero remarked, and drove the "whittle" home,
In one of those exceptionally raw lays
 Of Ancient Rome.

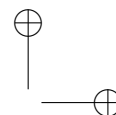
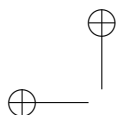
But steady on the rein, my Muse! sit tight!
 Five desultory stanzas fairly smother
One of old Flaccus! Even as I write
 This makes another.

All flesh eventually takes to grass,
 Browsing on Stygian plains, or else they row to
Those blessed islands which the better class
 Of niggers go to.

Not though you worked your eyes completely red.
 Thomas, and raised an astigmatic blister;
Not though you met the Dean point-blank and said
 She was your sister;

Not though you gave a yearly butt of rum
 To Aush the Fellows' Combination table,
Or penned a treatise lithe and long as some
 Atlantic cable,



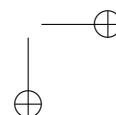
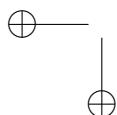


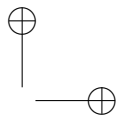
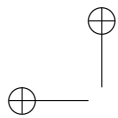
Could you escape to go where went the late
Apostles, apt to sweeten, apt to light us,
Profusely punting down the desperate
Pool of Cocytus.

Which is to say that we must e'en go down,
With dignity, of course, not cut and run it;
You'll find a heap of decent men in town
Who've been and done it.

So shall you leave your rooms, your bills, your buxom
Bedder, yea, all on which the fancy dotes,
Reaping no harvest save, by cursed luck, some
Crop of wild oats.

A better man than you, a nobler flier,
The pavement of your court shall rudely stain,
Playing at Heidsieck on a higher, drier,
Plan of Champagne.





M. H. TEMPLE, 1895 (IMITATED)

(*The Hawarden Horace*, Charles L. Graves)

Ah, Ellis, Ellis! Waning fame
Nor art nor eloquence can stay;
A dog, though hyphened be his name,
Can only have his day.

Though up and down the country you
Should daily thump three hundred tubs,
You would not soothe the Marquess, who
Rollit and Randolph snubs.

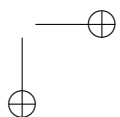
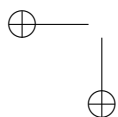
The common lot! We all at last
Receive the inevitable sack –
The Jingo, the Iconoclast,
The Peer, the Party Hack.

In vain to murderous war you urge
The armies of the Empress Queen,
In vain her navies o'er the surge
You steer to College Green:

Below the gangway must you sit
With Bartley, Hanbury, and Bowles;
A mark for journalistic wit,
A butt for all the Souls.

No Civil Lordship then for you;
England, your love, will disappear;
The *North American Review*
Alone your cry will hear.

Another patriot will arise,
A bolder guardian of the Guelph,
A coiner of more raucous cries,
More blatant than yourself.





A. S. AGLLEN, 1896

(“Archdeacon of St. Andrews”)

O Postumus, O Postumus,
 How fast the years glide by!
Old age and wrinkles threaten us,
 Nor pause for piety!
Nor may you death’s approach defer,
For death will still be conqueror!

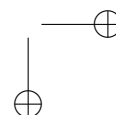
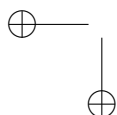
Three hundred bulls, a bull each day,
 Offer at Pluto’s shrine;
Nor bulls, nor tears, his destined prey
 Will tempt *him* to resign,
Who keeps huge Geryon below,
And Titos, where the waters flow

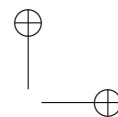
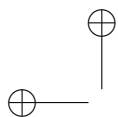
Of that sad stream, which all, alas!
 Who live by gifts of earth,
Must sail across, yes, all must pass,
 Though back to kings our birth
We trace, or with a peasant’s toil
We cultivate a needy soil.

In vain from blood-stained fields to run;
 In vain while breakers roar,
The noise of Hadria’s waves to shun
 In vain, till Autumn’s o’er,
To dread the wind that sets from East,
The wind nor good for man nor beast.

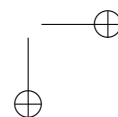
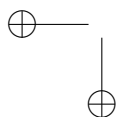
Cocytus we must visit, trace
 Him languid through the gloom
And see the Danaid’s cursed race,
 The Aeolid’s long doom;
Yes, we must look – we cannot choose –
While Sisyphus his task renews.

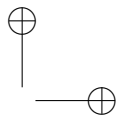
Earth you must leave and home, away
 From charming wife must go;
Of all the trees you plant to-day,
 The Cypress, type of woe,
Alone will follow when you yield
The short-lived mastery of your field.





Your heir will drink the Caecuban,
Kept under lock and key,
And think himself the better man,
His revels flow so free,
And sovereign pontiffs, when they dine,
Scarce drench the floor with lordlier wine.





PHILIP E. PHELPS, 1897

(The Odes of Horace)

Ah me! how quickly, Postumus, Postumus,
Glide by the years! nor even can piety
 Delay the wrinkles, and advancing
 Age, and attacks of unconquer'd Hades.

Not if three hundred bullocks were ev'ry day
Slain to appease Hell's monarch, the Tearless one,
 Who 'neath his sullen wave compresses
 Geryon and Tityos, held in bondage –

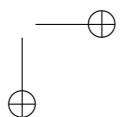
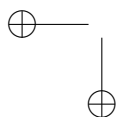
Wave, which forsooth we all have to navigate,
Whether on earth as monarchs in pride we live,
 Or whether in the humblest places
 We as poor husbandmen till the pasture –

Vainly we shun the horrors of bloody war,
And foaming breakers of the hoarse Adria,
 In vain throughout the length of Autumn
 Do we avoid the injurious Auster –

Still must we all see, flowing with darksome stream,
Wand'ring Cocytus, and the ill-fated race
 Of Danaus, and, condemn'd of old time,
 Sisyphus working in endless labour –

Fields must we leave, and house, and the amiable
Wife, nor, of all thy trees train'd so carefully,
 Shall any but the hated cypress
 Follow thee there – thee, its short-lived owner!

A worthier heir shall then drain thy Cæcuban,
Guarded tho' now it be by a hundred keys –
 And stain with wine thy polish'd pavement
 Richer than flows at the feasts of pontiffs.





EDWARD GEORGE HARMAN, 1897

(Died 1921)

Alas, the years, how soon they pass away!
And what can hold the ruthless band of Time?
Athwart the path, alike for you, for me,
Stands wrinkled eld, and, at the end, the grave.

Not if you brought in daily sacrifice
A hecatomb of bulls on altar slain,
Stern Pluto's gloomy power might you assuage,
Who winds about with his remorseless stream

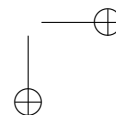
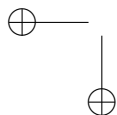
The huge Earth-monsters. To that dismal shore
We all must come, and all must cross that flood,
Whether on earth in palaces we dwell,
Or till the soil as lowly husbandmen.

'Tis all in vain we keep from cruel wars,
Vain that we shun the bursting billow's surge,
Vainly, with heedful care, when autumn comes,
We shield our bodies from its harmful airs.

Dark with its sobbing waters winding slow
We all must view Cocytus' wandering stream,
And that sad race condemned to endless toil,
For sins whose guilt no toil may purge away.

All must be left, lands, home, and charming wife,
Fondest of pledges, and of all these trees
Your hands have raised, except the cypress drear,
Not one shall follow thee, their short-lived lord!

In prouder state your lavish heir shall quaff
The wine you guarded with a hundred keys,
And dash its splendid wealth upon your floor,
A lordlier brand than pontiffs' feasts can boast!

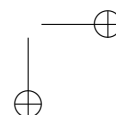
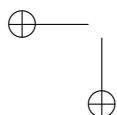


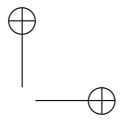


ALFRED DENIS GODLEY, 1898

(1856–1925; Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford)

Postumus, Postumus, the flying years, alas! glide on, nor shall piety delay wrinkles and hasting eld and unconquered death, – no, my friend, not if every day thou shouldst offer three hundred bulls to appease tearless Pluto, who enchains Geryon’s triple bulk and Tityus with that gloomy wave which all we who live by earth’s bounty must traverse, be we kings or poor husbandmen. ’Tis vain to shun bloody war and the hoarse Adriatic’s breaking surf: vain to guard against autumn’s unhealthy south winds: still must we behold black Cocytus’ dull meandering stream, and Danaus’ accursed kin, and Sisyphus, Æolus’ son, doomed to an eternity of toil. Thy lands, thy house, thy loved wife, – all must thou leave: nor of all yon trees that thou tendest shall any save the hated cypress follow their short-lived lord. Thy worthier heir shall drain the Cæcuban thou guardest with an hundred keys, and stain thy floors with royal wine that e’en priestly banquets cannot match.





ANONYMOUS, 1899

(The Academy)

How swift the years are gliding past,
My friend, be pious as you please,
Wrinkles and age must come at last,
And death in spite of bended knees.

Yes, you may slaughter every day
Three thousand bulls at Pluto's shrine,
Nor move the heartless king to stay
Your fate an hour for all your kine.

He holds, remember, in his grasp
Men, bigger men by far than you
The Stygian waters firmly clasp
Their coils around a stronger crew.

When comes the time all men below
Must navigate that dismal ditch,
'Tis not the poor alone who go,
'Tis also, Postumus, the rich.

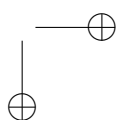
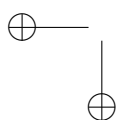
In vain you shun the bloody fight,
In vain avoid the tempest's roar,
And vainly in September's blight
Betake you to a healthier shore.

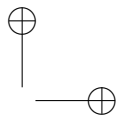
One scene which must be faced remains,
Of Acheron, the languid waters,
Of Sisyphus, the ceaseless pains,
Of Danaus, the damned daughters.

These you must visit, and for these
Resign your lands, your pleasing wife,
Your household snug, and growing trees,
The pride and pleasure of your life.

None but the hated cyprese tree
Will follow then their brief possessor,
And what a change, alas! shall be
When things have passed to your successor.

How quickly will that worthy set
Your hoarded vintages aflowing,
And make the rosy pavement wet
With wine beyond the pontiff's growing!





W. C. GREEN, 1903

(“Rector of Hepworth and Formerly Fellow of King’s College, Cambridge”)

Ah Postumus, they glide away, away,
Our fleeting years: nor can our pious heed
Stay wrinkles or the speed
Of coming age, or tameless death delay.

Not though with bulls three hundred, thou, my friend,
Each day that goes th’ unweeping god wou’dst win,
Who his sad flood within
Hath Geryon’s triple bulk and Tityos penn’d:

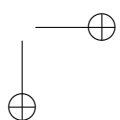
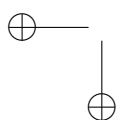
Sad flood, which we must sometime boat us o’er,
All whosoe’er are fed on fruits of earth,
Yea, boat us o’er that firth,
Whether proud kings we be or peasants poor.

In vain of war we shun the blood and bale,
And of hoarse Hadria’s sea the broken wave;
In vain our bodies save
With timorous care from autumn’s noisome gale.

The wandering sluggish stream we needs must see,
Cocytus black, and Danaüs’ shameful brood,
And Sisyphus the shrewd,
The Wind-god’s son, long labour doom’s to dree.

Lands thou must leave, and house, and wife so dear;
And of those trees, that thou dost tend and own,
Brief lord, shall one alone –
The hateful cypress – follow with thy bier.

A worthier heir will waste thy cellar’d store
Kept ’neath a hundred keys; and spilth of wine
Unmatch’d where pontiffs dine,
Proud liquor, shall distain thy redden’d floor.

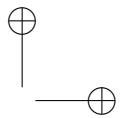
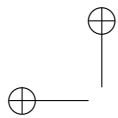




CLARENCE CARY, 1904

(1845–1911; American Lawyer and Sportsman)

Ah, how they fly now, Postumus, Postumus
Our on-gliding year-times! No piety hinders
 The furrows and grasp of old age, or
 May fend off implacable Death e'er!
Nay, not if with three hundred bulls, in each day's lapse,
O friend, thou may'st ask the appeasing of tearless
 Dread Pluto, that ever a thrice monst'rous
 Geryon, and Tityos, holds bound, near
The sad stream t'is certain we mortals alike – though
We linger awhile here, sustained by Earth's bounty –
 Must cross, 'en if sit we in king's seats,
 Or hinds of the field are, when summon'd.
Ay, vainly the bloodshed of wars we seek guard from,
Or rough, broken waves of the hoarse Adriatic;
 And eke too, in Autumn, the ills for
 Our bodies, of menacing south winds!
Soon visit must we the black river that slowly
By Cocytus wanders, and vile brood of Danaus,
 Condemned there to labor, forever,
 With Sisyphus, son of Aeolus.
Thou leavest thy lands here, and home, and thy pleasing
Fair helpmate: nor aught of the trees aye thus foster'd
 Save only the drear, hateful cypress,
 May follow their master scant-tenur'd!
Consumes, then, an heir, who is haply more worthy,
Thy wines by an hundred keys guarded, and stains thus
 Thy floors with a vintage more noble,
 Than hail'd is, at feasts of the Pontiffs.



ECCLESTON DU FAUR, 1906

(1832–1915; Public Servant and Patron of Arts and Letters)

Alas! the years too fleetly glide, –
The wrinkles of advancing age,
And Death's unconquerable rage,
No prayers can set aside.

No hecatombs of bulls, – each day
A victim, – Postumus, e'er won
Unpitying Pluto; Geryon,
And Tityus, giants, stay

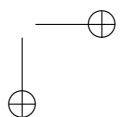
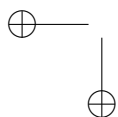
Compelled by his sad waves; which we
Must travel, all who bounteous earth
Enjoy, – the same, if kings by birth,
Or lowly hinds we be, –

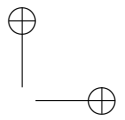
In vain, from blood-stained Mars to run
We strive, or Adrian waves; in vain,
Autumnal blasts, with fevered pain
So fraught to us, we shun.

With torpid stream, dark Cocytus
Has to be seen: and fated race
Of Danaus: and, doomed to face
Long labor, Sisyphus.

Earth, home, and loving wife must all
Be left: of trees, well-kept, none, save
Sad cypress, follow to the grave
The short-lived master's pall.

Thy Cæcuban, howe'er well stored
And locked, a luckier heir shall drain;
And costly juice his pavement stain,
Fitter for Pontiff's board.

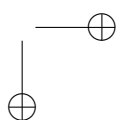
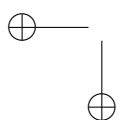




EDWARD R. GARNSEY, 1907

(The Odes of Horace: A Translation and an Exposition)

Alas! Postumus, Postumus, the fleeing years
Slip by, and duteousness does not give pause
 To wrinkles, or to hasting age,
 Or death unconquerable.
Not even if on each day that goes,
O friend, you favour with three hundred bulls
 Pluto inexorable, who holds
 Geryon triply huge, and Tityos,
Beneath a bitter flood, which verily must
By all who eat the bread of earth
 Be sailed, whether we princes be,
 Or starveling country-hinds.
In vain shall we be free from bloody war,
And from the broken waves of raucous Hadria,
 In vain shall we through autumns fear
 Auster, our bodies' enemy,
Our visit we must make to black Cocytus,
Wandering with languid flow, to Danaid race
 Ill famed, to Sisyphus, son of Æolus,
 Doomed to a lengthy toil.
Earth must be left, and home and darling wife,
And of those trees you cherish none
 Except the hated cypresses will be
 In company with their master of a day.
An heir more worthy shall consume the Cæcuban
Kept by a hundred keys, and drench
 The pavement with the lordly wine,
 More fit for banquets of the priests.





WILLIAM GREENWOOD, 1907

(1845–1931; “Formerly Professor of Languages, Highland Park College”)

Ah, Postumus, the years, the fleeting years
Still onwards, onwards glide;
Nor mortal virtue may
Time’s wrinkling fingers stay,
Nor Age’s sure advance, nor Death’s all-conquering stride.

Hope not by daily hecatombs of bulls
From Pluto to redeem
Thy life, who holds thrice vast
Geryon fettered fast,
And Tityus, by the waves of yonder rueful stream.

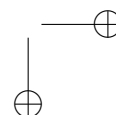
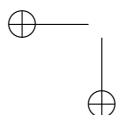
Sad stream, we all are doomed one day to cross,
Ay, all that live by bread
Whate’er our lot may be,
Great lords of high degree,
Alike with peasant churls, who scantily are fed.

In vain shall we war’s bloody conflict shun,
And the hoarse scudding gale
Of Adriatic seas,
Or fly the southern breeze,
That through the Autumn hours wafts pestilence and bale.

For all must view Cocytus’ pitchy tide
Meandering slow, and see
The accursed Danaids moil,
And that dread stone recoil,
Sad Sisyphus is doomed to upheave eternally.

Land, home and winsome wife must all be left;
And cypresses abhorred,
Alone of all the trees
That now your fancy please,
Shall shade his dust, who was a little while their lord.

Then, too, your long-imprisoned Caecuban
A worthier heir shall drain,
And with a lordlier wine,
Than at the feasts divine
Of pontiffs flows, your floor in wassailry shall stain.





JOHN MARSHALL, 1907

(1845–1915; “Rector of the Royal High School, Edinburgh”)

Ah! Postumus, Postumus, fast fly the years,
And prayers to wrinkles and impending age
Bring not delay; nor shalt assuage
Death’s stroke with pious tears;

No, not though on each day that comes to thee
With thrice a hundred bulls thou sought to gain
Grim Pluto’s pity, all were vain!
Great Geryon he’ll not free,

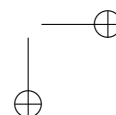
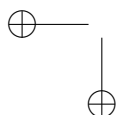
Or Tityos, from the gloomy stream, whose tide
Each child of earth must traverse shore to shore,
Whether a crown on earth we bore,
Or crofters lived and died.

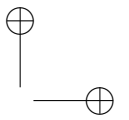
Vainly from bloody stroke of Mars we’ll run,
Or the hoarse Adriatic’s surge escape;
Vainly our autumn plans we’ll shape
The southwind’s blight to shun;

Still must our steps to dark Cocytus trend,
That sluggish stream, and Danaids’ ill-famed clan,
And Sisyphus who bears the ban
Of labour without end.

Forth must thou go from home and kindly sward
And wife beloved, nor shall one tree that late
Was thine, save funeral cypress, wait
On thee, its short-lived lord.

The heir, thy better now, shall quaff the wine
A hundred keys did guard; his reckless hand
Shall stain thy floors with vintage-brand,
For pontiffs’ feasts too fine.





FRANCIS LAW LATHAM, 1910

(“Brasenose College, Oxford”)

Ah Postumus, ah Postumus, away
 Glide the swift years; nor all your piety
Shall wrinkles and encroaching age delay
 And death's sure victory:

Not if, my friend, on every day that wanes
 With thrice a hundred bulls thou sacrifice
To tearless Dis, who Tityos restrains
 And Geryon's triple size

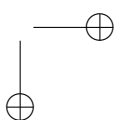
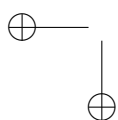
With that wan water which we all must sail
 Who feed upon the kindly fruits of earth,
Whether poor tillers of the hill and dale
 Or sprung of royal birth.

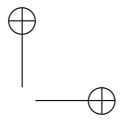
In vain we shun the bloody fields of war
 And broken billows of hoarse Hadria's main,
In vain through autumns Auster keep afar
 Our mortal bodies' bane:

We all must see Cocytus' inky coil
 Slow oozing, and the race of Danaus
Of evil fame, and doomed to endless toil
 Æolid Sisyphus.

Thy land thy mansion and thy wife adored,
 All must be left; and of thy trees' array
Save the loathed cypress none its short-lived lord
 Shall follow on his way.

A worthier heir thy Cæcuban shall win
 Kept 'neath a hundred keys; and stain thy hall
With the proud vintage richer than the bin
 At feasts pontifical.





HAROLD BAILY DIXON, 1910

(1852–1930; Sometime Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford)

The years, the swift years speed away!
No prayer can stay the encroaching power
Of wrinkled Age and Time's decay,
And Death's inevitable hour.

Think not by daily sacrifice
Your life from Pluto to redeem,
Who holds vast Geryon's triple size
Confined within his sullen stream:

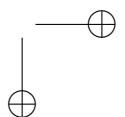
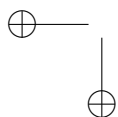
That stream which all are doomed to cross,
Who live by food that nature yields,
Be they the lords of earth, or dross
Of humankind who till the fields.

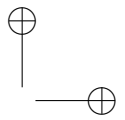
In vain from blood-stained War you fly,
From Hadria hoarse with broken seas,
In vain beneath the autumn sky
You shun the fever-bearing breeze;

You needs must see Cocytus coil
Its thick black flood, the infamous
Daughters of Danaus, and the toil
That never ends of Sisyphus;

Home, winsome wife, the trees you grew
All – save those cypresses abhorred –
You leave: they may not follow you
Who were, a little time, their lord!

That hundred-padlocked Caecuban
Your heir with larger heart will pour,
When richer wine than ever ran
At Pontiff's feast shall stain your floor!





CHARLES RICHARD WILLIAMS, 1910

(1853–1927)

Ah, Postumus, the fleeting years slip by,
Nor all your piety
Shall to old age or wrinkles cause delay,
Or Death, resistless, stay.

And not if you three hundred bulls each day
Upon the altar slay,
Shall you unpitying Pluto placate thus,
Who giant Tityus,

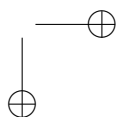
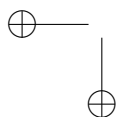
And monster Geryon within Styx holds fast –
Sad stream that must be past
By all that share earth's bounty, whether we
Kings or poor clowns may be.

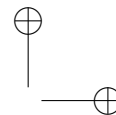
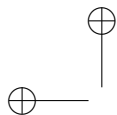
From gory Mars escape we boast in vain,
Or from the raging main;
Vain our anxiety, in autumn's glow,
When noxious south winds blow;

Cocytus' stream, which wanders sluggish, black,
Visit we must, alack!
See Danaus' wicked race, see Sisyphus bend,
To toil that shall not end.

Your land you must relinquish, and your house,
And your beloved spouse:
Of all the trees that your brief lordship own
The cypress mourns alone!

The wine you keep behind a hundred keys
Your worthy heir shall please –
Aye, wine that royal banquets might implore
Shall freely stain your floor!





KENNETH C. M. SILLS, 1911

(1879–1954; Eighth President of Bowdoin College)

O Postumus alas! The years in flight
Glide by; nor all your piety nor might
 May halt encroaching wrinkles nor old age
Nor death inexorable once in sight.

Not, friend, if with three hecatombs a day
You placate tearless Pluto, shall you stay
 His feet who holds the Geryon thrice vast
And Tityus within his gloomy sway;

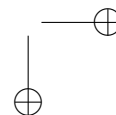
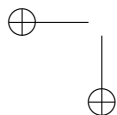
And binds them with that wave o'er which indeed
All we who now on earth's great bounty feed
 Must one day sail: no matter rich or poor,
Great kings or humble peasants in like need.

In vain we shun the war-god's bloody hand
And waves that hoarsely break on Hadria's strand,
 In vain through autumn tide our bodies fear
The pestilential winds from hot Sahara's sand.

The wandering river with its languid flow,
The black Cocytus and the Danaids' woe
 And Sisyphus, condemned to endless toil,
We all must one day go to see and know.

The lands and home and wife to you so dear
Must all be left; and of the trees you rear
 Not one shall follow you, their short lived lord,
Beyond the grave, except the cypress drear.

Your wine shall soon be quaffed by wiser heir,
The wine you locked and hoarded with such care
 In drunken pride the pavement white shall stain
In banquets richer than rich pontiff's fare.





G. M. WHICHER AND G. F. WHICHER, 1911 (1)

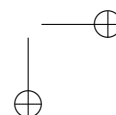
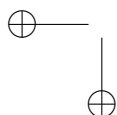
(GMW 1860–1937, GFW 1889–1954)

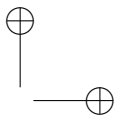
Quickly the seasons glide by us,
 Postumus, Postumus mine.
Time never stays for the pious;
Quickly the seasons glide by us,
Wrinkles and age come to try us,
 Death but awaits our decline.
Quickly the seasons glide by us,
 Postumus, Postumus mine.

Every expedient faileth,
 Pluto at length is supreme.
Sacrifice nothing availeth,
Every expedient faileth.
Geryon his bondage bewaileth
 Held by the sad Stygian stream.
Every expedient faileth,
 Pluto at length is supreme.

None can escape the dark water,
 Peasant nor monarch of men.
Father, son, mother, and daughter,
None can escape the dark water,
Vain to shun war with its slaughter,
 Ocean, or pestilent fen.
None can escape the dark water,
 Peasant nor monarch of men.

Villa and lands, we must leave them;
 Children and wife must resign,
Willing or no to bereave them.
Villa and lands, we must leave them,
Worthier heirs shall receive them,
 Draining the long-treasured wine.
Villa and lands, we must leave them;
 Children and wife must resign.





G. M. WHICHER AND G. F. WHICHER, 1911 (2)

(GMW 1860–1937, GFW 1889–1954)

Our Fleeting Years, alas! glide fast away.
 Gray, wrinkled Age invades with every breath;
Nor Pious Vows can interpose delay,
 And even Worth must yield the Palm to Death.

Can reeking Fane or oft-recurring Rite
 Avail thee, Friend, in thy predestined hour,
When all the monstrous brood of ancient Night
 Alike must own the illacrymable Power?

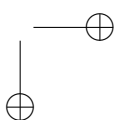
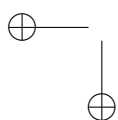
Full many a child of the all-bounteous earth
 O'er Lethe's dark, unfathomed wave has passed;
Nor pride of Power avails, nor Royal Birth;
 The weary Ploughman thither plods at last.

In vain we shun the blood-stained work of War;
 In vain th' infuriate Ocean's angry moan;
In vain from Autumn's heat we flee afar;
 For Pestilence will mark us for her own.

To view that sullen flood none may refuse,
 Where spirits unblest will fright thy wondering gaze,
Where Justice still her righteous doom pursues,
 And keeps the awful tenor of her ways.

No more thy child shall prattle at thy knees,
 Nor busy house-wife wait thy long return.
Thy land, thy house, thou 'lt leave; and of thy trees
 Naught but the hated cypress deck thy urn.

A worthier heir shall spill thy treasured wine
 That Luxury's self had envied thee to taste;
Then Wealth shall all her hoarded hopes resign,
 And Avarice sadly yield the realm to Waste.





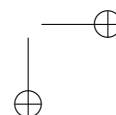
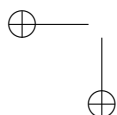
FRANKLIN P. ADAMS, 1912 (IMITATED)

(1881–1960; American Newspaper Columnist)

O Postumus, dear Postumus, Old Father Time's a sprinter,
The summer of my life is spent, approaches now the winter;
Nor all my Wit nor Piety, to quote Omar Fitzgerald,
Can keep my obit from appearing in the Sabine *Herald*.

If for a daily sacrifice you killed three hundred cattle,
Think you that it would keep from you the Dread and Final Rattle?
Nix! Though you build eight colleges and lib'ries eighty-seven,
You can't avoid what Rhyme demands I designate as Heaven.

Your home, your wife, your family, your uncles, ay! and your aunts –
You'll have to leave 'em all behind. (Have you enough insurance?)
And O, the rebarchbed Caecuban now aging in your cellar
You'll have to deed to some one who's a nice, deserving feller.





SIR WILLIAM S. MARRIS, 1912

(1873–1945; Civil Servant and Classical Scholar)

They go my Postumus, they go,
The flying years! no pious faith
Can stay the furrows on the brow
And rushing Age and conquering Death,

Not, though with every sun that shines,
Thou slay three hecatombs to woo
The tearless Pluto, who confines
Huge Geryon and Tityus too,

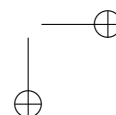
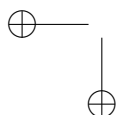
With yon sad flood that every man
Who feeds upon the gifts of earth
Must sail, be he of royal clan
Or hind of poor and lowly birth.

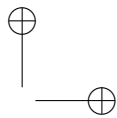
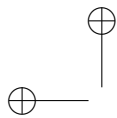
In vain from bloody war we run,
Or booming Adria's broken seas;
In vain through days of Autumn shun
Sirocco's poison-laden breeze.

We yet must see Cocytus coil
His crawling stream, and Sisyphus
Condemned eternally to toil,
And the fell race of Danaus.

Land, house and winsome wife must all
Be left; and of thy cherished trees
None follows its brief owner's pall
Except the woful cypresses.

Thy worthier heir will drain the store
Of wine that thou did'st guard so dear;
Yea, spill it on his marble floor,
Though pontiffs never drank its peer.

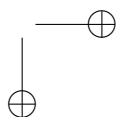
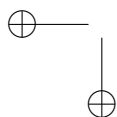


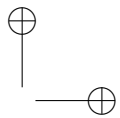
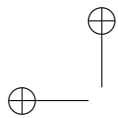


GEORGE MURRAY, 1912

(1830–1910; Canadian Educator and Journalist)

Oh! Postumus, my friend, my friend,
The years glide swiftly to an end:
No prayers can wrinkled age delay
Or Death's inevitable day.
Thrice yearly hecatombs of steers
From Pluto's eyes can draw no tears.
Sternly he holds Earth's giant brood
Encircled with a gloomy flood:
That flood which all must traverse soon,
All we who feed on Nature's boon,
Kings though we be, exempt from toil,
Or needy tillers of the soil.
What though we shun War's bloody plain
And the hoarse surge of Adria's main;
What though in Autumn's sultry hour
We dread the South wind's blighting power,
To black Cocytus, oozing slow
And the vile Danaids we must go.
Him we must view who rolls the stone
Condemned eternally to groan.
Earth, home, and charming wife must be
Abandoned, and no cherished tree,
Except the cypresses abhorred,
Shall follow there their short lived lord.
An heir thy Caecuban shall seize
Close guarded with a hundred keys,
And revelry thy floor shall stain
With choicer wine than Pontiffs drain.





H. W. HUTCHINSON, 1913

(Sonets and Translations)

O Postumus, my Postumus, the years glide swift away,
Nor shall the claim of piety in any sort delay
Oncoming age with furrowed brow or death's relentless day.

Nor think thou that 'twould aught avail if daily thou should'st bring
Three hecatombs to Pluto, god whose heart no tears can wring,
Who holds confinéd Tityos and the triple-bodied king.

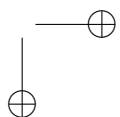
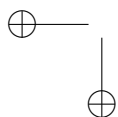
Behind his gloomy river's tide, which all alike, be sure,
That feed upon the fruits of earth in time must journey o'er,
No matter be they princes proud or peasants mean and poor.

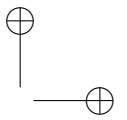
From battle and from bloody Mars in vain we seek to flee,
In vain we shun the breakers of the Adriatic sea,
In vain we guard 'gainst Auster's blast in autumn months: for we

Must all approach black Cocytus, with sluggish stream that flows,
Must see the race of Danaids, condemned to endless woes,
And the ill-fated Sisyphus, whose toil no finish knows.

'Tis fated thou shalt leave this earth, thy home and partner dear,
Nor shall these trees that thou didst tend go after thee to cheer
Their short-lived master, save alone the cypress sad and drear.

Thine heir, more worthy than thyself, Cæcuban wine shall pour:
The lordly wine that hundred bolts had prisoned heretofore,
At banquets rich as pontiffs hold, now spilled, shall stain the floor.





ALBERT EDMUND TROMBLY, 1914

(The Springtime of Love)

O Postumus, my Postumus, alas,
No piety, mid years that fleeting pass,
Can wrinkles and old age delay,
And death with its o'erwhelming sway.

Nor Pluto, hard of heart, can you allay
By sacrificing bulls each passing day,
Who vilest Geryon doth enslave
With Tityus by the doleful wave;

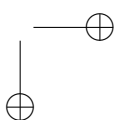
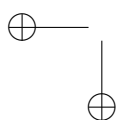
The doleful wave which we must journey o'er,
We who consume the earth's abundant store;
Nor boots it whether kings we be
Or men who know but poverty.

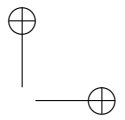
In vain from cruel war shall we emerge
And from the wailing Adriatic surge;
Through Autumn shall we fear in vain
The south wind, breathing woeful bane.

Cocytus, flowing sluggishly and dark,
And Danaid's odious children must we mark;
And Sisyphus must we behold
Doomed to toil for years untold.

You must forsake your pleasing wife, your land
And home; of trees now nurtured by your hand
Not one will follow you, their lord,
Except the cypresses abhorred.

And then an heir more worthy will consume
Your Cæcuban, now sealed as in a tomb,
With nobler wine the pavement stain
Than one at pontiff feast may drain.





A. L. TAYLOR, 1914

(The Odes of Horace)

Ah, how the fleeting years go by
And not the holiest vow
Shall make thee mark less fearfully
The wrinkles on thy brow;
Nor age its horrid onset stay
Nor Death his conquering march delay.

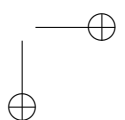
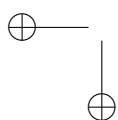
No mightiest hectacombs avail
With pitiless Pluto dread,
Where Tityus and vast Geryon quail
Amid the myriad dead,
And Styx its solemn waters winds
Round lofty kings and lowly hinds.

In vain the blood-stained sword we shun,
In vain hoarse Adria's wave,
And autumn's deadly breath, for none
His careful head can save:
All, all he waits to whom the Earth
Hath given its bounty and its birth.

Yes, we must travel towards the gloom
And see the sullen flow
Of black Cocytus and the doom
The souls accursèd know;
The impious Danaids, and how drees
His dreadful weird Aeolides.

The sunny earth, the cheerful blaze
Of home, the look serene
Of her who walked with thee life's ways
Shall never more be seen;
Of all thy forests not a tree
Save hated cypress follow thee.

And in thy stead thy wiser heir
Shall burst the guarded door
And, while thou sleep'st in gloom, lay bare
The cellar's priceless store;
And let the peerless vintage flow
In streams that stain the street below.

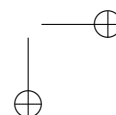
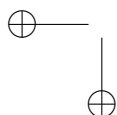


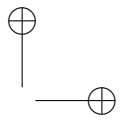


CHARLES E. BENNETT, 1914

(1858–1921; American Classical Scholar)

Alas, O Postumus, Postumus, the years glide swiftly by, nor will righteousness give pause to wrinkles, to advancing age, or Death invincible – no, not if with three hecatombs of bulls a day, my friend, thou strivest to appease relentless Pluto, who imprisons Geryon of triple frame and Tityos, by the gloomy stream that surely must be crossed by all of us who feed upon Earth's bounty, be we princes or needy husbandmen. In vain shall we escape from bloody Mars and from the breakers of the roaring Adriatic; in vain through autumn tide shall we fear the south-wind that brings our bodies harm. At last we needs must gaze on black Cocytos winding with its sluggish flow, and Danaus' daughters infamous, and Sisyphus, the son of Aeolus, condemned to ceaseless toil. Earth we must leave, and home and darling wife; nor of the trees thou tendest now, will any follow thee, its short-lived master, except the hated cypress. A worthier heir shall drink thy Caecuban now guarded by a hundred keys, and drench the pavement with glorious wine choicer than that drunk at the pontiffs' feasts.





CHARLES E. BENNETT, 1917

(1858–1921; American Classical Scholar)

Swiftly, alas! O Postumus, Postumus,
Glide by the years in their feverish flight;
Age lingers never, nor heedeth our piety
Death in his conquering might.

E'en though in hundreds victims thou numberest,
Daily thy life from the grave to redeem,
Merciless, pitiless, Pluto still mocketh thee,
Lord of the turbulent stream.

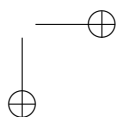
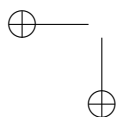
Dark is that stream, yet all shall encounter it,
Drawn by a doom unchanging and sure;
None shall escape, be he pauper or potentate,
Prince or the veriest boor.

Vainly we shun grim War with its slaughtering,
Vainly the wave and the tempest's wild breath;
Vain is our fear of the blight of the eastern wind,
Laden with fever and death.

Soon to Cocytus, sullenly wandering
Down through the darkness, we too must descend,
One with the band ever wearily, hopelessly
Toiling with never an end.

Lands, home and loved ones, thou must abandon them,
Gardens and orchards that gladden thy way;
There shall no trees save the cypress funereal
Follow their lord of a day.

Worthier heirs thy wines shall be squandering,
Carefully guarded with bolt and with bar,
Recklessly wasting thy costliest vintages,
Flinging thy treasure afar.



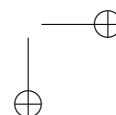
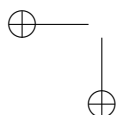


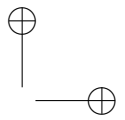
FRANKLIN P. ADAMS, 1917 (IMITATED)

(1881–1960; American Newspaper Columnist)

Time was when Sleep and I were well acquainted,
Time was when we walked ever hand in hand –
A slumbrous youth, with nervousness untainted,
No sleepier soul than I in all the land.
Time was when things like traffic regulations
Impressed me but as made for other men;
I never thought a thing of cells and stations –
Ah me! I was a fair young cyclist then!

Talked one of cars, I paid but scant attention;
Spoke one of gasolene, I gave no heed;
Magnetos were a thing I'd never mention;
And motor catalogues I would not read.
Time was when all my woes were paragraphic;
Time was when all my work was with a pen;
I used to have no trouble with the traffic –
Ah me! I was a fair young cyclist then!

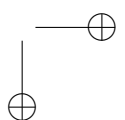
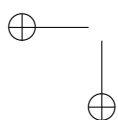


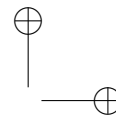
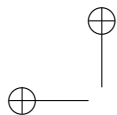


WARREN H. CUDWORTH, 1917

(1877–1927)

Ah, Postumus, my Postumus,
Fast glide the years, nor pious breath
Wards wrinkles and old age from us
Nor yet indomitable death:
No, friend, tho' thrice a hundred kine
To tearless Pluto daily bled,
Whose ambient, gruesome waves confine,
Vast Geryon, the triple dread,
And Tityos – the waves that all
Whom bounteous earth provides with food
Must voyage o'er nor hope recall,
Tho' men of wealth, tho' delvers rude.
In vain from gory Mars we shrink,
And booming Hadria's choppy surge,
In vain thro' autumn days we think
To shield our frames from Auster's scourge;
For we must see Cocytus coil
His sluggish current dark and dun,
Curst Danaids, and the endless toil
Of Sisyphus, rough Aeolus' son.
Thou soon must leave earth, winsome wife,
And home, while cypresses abhorred,
Of trees that know thy pruning knife,
Alone will mourn their short-lived lord.
Thy worthier heir the wine will pour,
Now guarded with a hundred keys,
And prouder juice shall tinge thy floor
Than that the pontiff's supper sees.





ALEC DE CANDOLE, 1917

(1897–1918; Poet)

Alack, the years fly by to greet the past,
Nor all thy piety can hold the vast
Threatenings of wrinkled age, nor stay the hand
Of death inevitable that cometh fast.

Not thrice a hundred heifers slain each day
Could e'er avail to alter or allay
The unpitying wrath of Him who hath inbound
Geryon and Tityon with Cocytus grey.

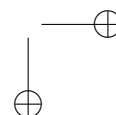
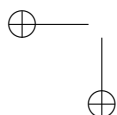
And all who feed upon the earth and air
Must cross that river and must travel there,
Alike the peasant tiller of the ground
And monarch on his throne in purples rare.

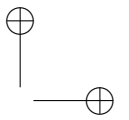
In vain we shun the wars where blood runs free;
In vain the angry ragings of the sea
Tumultuous, we avoid; and all in vain
The hurtful breezes of the autumn flee.

For all must stand by that black river's flow,
And see the sluggish stream that winds below,
Behold the race of Danaus foul with shame,
And Sisyphus' long toil of endless woe.

Thy mansion thou must leave, thy wife adored,
While of the spreading trees that deck thy sward
So proudly, save the hated cypress none
Shall follow thee, so brief a space their lord.

Thy richest wine, beneath a hundred keys
Fast locked, and nobler than the cups that please
Kings at their feasts, thy heir, more blest than thou,
Shall drink, and tinge the pavement with the lees.

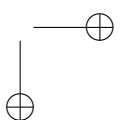
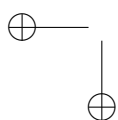


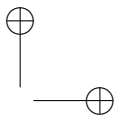


GERARD FENWICK, 1918

(Odes of Horace, Book II)

Alas, my Postumus, alas!
The fleeting years go swiftly by,
Nor will religion give a pause
To creeping eld or watery eye.
Not if you daily sacrifice
Three hundred oxen will it save
You, friend, from Pluto's iron rule
Or stop your crossing Lethe's wave:
Whether as slaves we till the soil
Or rule as kings o'er land and sea,
That last dread voyage waits us all
Whoe'er we are, whate'er we be.
In vain we shun the strife of Mars,
In vain return from Hadria's wave
In vain we dread the autumn airs –
No care can save us from the grave
Cocytus with his darkling flood,
The cursed race of Danaus' brood,
And Sisyphus' eternal task
Must one and all alike be viewed.
From land, and home, and loving wife
We soon must pass: the cypress tree
Of all you planted during life
Alone shall your companion be.
A better shall your goods possess,
Shall stain that floor with marble fine,
Though now protected by your seal,
With bumpers of your vintage wine.

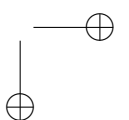
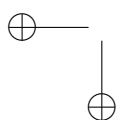


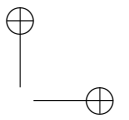


LOUIS UNTERMEYER, 1919

(1885–1977; American Editor and Poet)

Ah Postumus, my Postumus, the years are slipping by;
 Old age with hurrying footsteps draws nearer day by day;
And we will leave this friendly earth and every friendlier tie.
Soon Death, whose strength is never spent, whose sword is always high,
 Will beckon us, and all our faith will win us no delay.
Ah Postumus, my Postumus, the years are slipping by.
Grim Pluto waits for all of us; he waits with pitiless eye,
 Until we journey down the stream that carries us away;
And we will leave this friendly earth and every friendlier tie.
Though we be kings or worse than slaves, the eager moments fly;
 Though we be purer than the gods, Time will not halt or stay –
Ah Postumus, my Postumus, the years are slipping by.
Aye, we must go, though we have shunned the red sun of July,
 The bitter winds, the treacherous surf, the blind and savage fray,
And we will leave this friendly earth and every friendlier tie.
Too soon the stubborn hand of Fate tears all our dreams awry;
 Too soon the plowman quits his plow, the child his happy play –
*Ah Postumus, my Postumus, the years are slipping by,
And we will leave this friendly earth and every friendlier tie.*





KEITH PRESTON, 1919

(1884–1927; American Literary Critic)

Ah, me, how fleet they go,
 O Postumus, my Postumus,
The gliding years; no piety
Stays wrinkled age for you and me,
 Nor death indomitable.

Not if each passing day
 You slay three hecatombs of bulls
To tearless Pluto that still holds
Sad Tityos in thrall and folds
 Thrice ample Geryon

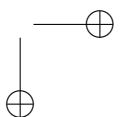
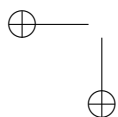
Within that dolorous tide
 Not wide, that each and all must sail,
Yea, whosoever eats earth's fare
The rich lord of a county there,
 Or needy tenantry.

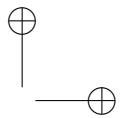
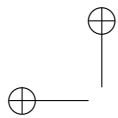
In vain we shun red war,
 The roar of Adriatic waves;
In vain through autumn days we fear
That death that haunts the dying year,
 The pestilent Sirocco.

Visit we must the black,
 The slack meandering stream,
The cursed spawn of Danaus,
With Æolus' son Sisyphus
 To lingering labor damned

Leave them you must, the soil,
 The toil, the home, the wife you love,
And of a-many trees you tend
But the dark cypress at the end
 Shall shade its short-lived master.

An heir shall drain the lees
 That keys an hundred ward today,
And stain your pavements with the drip
Of wines still prouder than men sip
 At pontifical banquets.





LIONEL LANCELOT SHADWELL, 1920

(1845–1925; Barrister)

Ah! Postumus, the years keep slipping past.
Thy piety cannot check the gathering fast
 Of wrinkles, nor the sure approach of eld
And death, the conqueror of all at last.

No, not if thou three hecatombs a day,
My friend, on pitiless Pluto's altar lay,
 To soften him whose power the triple bulk
Of Geryon huge and Tityos can stay

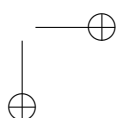
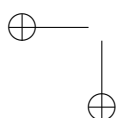
Within the bourn of that fell stream we all
Must traverse once, where'er our lot may fall,
 Who on Earth's bounty live, in cabin bare
Of peasant reared, or king's palatial hall.

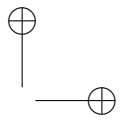
'Twill nought avail from reach of battle spear
Or of hoarse Hadria's breakers to keep clear.
 'Twill nought avail the south wind ague-fraught
Each autumn to elude with anxious fear.

We all alike must to that country go
Where black Cocytus winds with sickly flow,
 And see the Danaids vile, and Sisyphus
To weary sentence doomed of labour slow.

We all must leave earth, home, and wife adored;
And, save alone the cypresses abhorred,
 Not one of all the trees thou tendest here
Will follow thee, for but a day their lord.

Thy Caecuban with many a padlock vain
Secured, an heir of worthier mood will drain,
 And with thy cellar's pride, more choice than aught
At pontiffs' banquet served, the floor will stain.





FRANCIS COUTTS, 1920

(1852–1923)

Postumus, Postumus, alack-a-day,
The years, how swiftly do they glide away!
 No piety keeps wrinkles from the brow,
Nor makes old age his near approach delay,
 Nor never-mastered Death more time allow;

If thou should'st sacrifice three hundred steers
 Each morning, friend, 'twere futile hope to storm
The heart of Pluto, never touched to tears,
 Who prisons Geryon, of triple form.

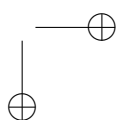
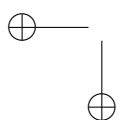
And Tityus, beyond the gloomy tide
 That all whom bounties of the Earth sustain
Must cross, who'er they be; the Prince beside
 The needy husbandman; because in vain

Shall we keep sate from Mars' ensanguined field,
 Or the hoarse Adriatic's surging death,
Or, as the autumn threatens, seek a shield
 Against the touch of Auster's baleful breath;

We shall behold Cocytus, all the same,
 That black and tortuous flows, with sullen coil,
And Danaus' progeny, of evil fame,
 And Sisyphus, condemned to ceaseless toil.

Earth must thou leave, thy home and charming wife,
 Nor, though thou tendest many, shall one tree,
Of all that thou didst own in this brief life,
 Except the hateful cypress, follow thee;

A worthier heir that Cæcuban of thine,
 Which thou behind a hundred locks dost hoard,
Shall drink, and splash the floor with lordly wine,
 More choice than decks a Pontiff's festal board.





WILLIAM FREDERICK LLOYD, 1920

(Versions and Perversions)

Oh Posthumus, Oh Posthumus, the years
Glide on, and neither piety nor tears
 Can stop the wrinkles of old age, or stay
The stealthy hand of Death, which naught deters.

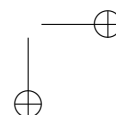
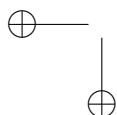
Ah, dwellers on this earth, when you go down
To Stygian Shores, where Pluto wears the crown,
 For you no sacrifice will then avail.
Damned are the blessed lot, from King to Clown.

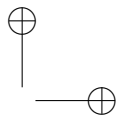
In vain, we sanguinary Mars defy,
In vain Miasma's baneful breath we fly,
 When broken billows break upon the shore
And noxious Sirius rules the southern sky.

By dark Cocytus' dreary banks we roam,
Where Sisyphus, with many a frightful groan,
 Toils ceaseless at his everlasting task
And upwards rolls the ever falling stone.

You leave your land, your house, your charming wife,
The trees on which you used the pruning knife;
 All but the hateful Laurel you must leave
And bid a final long farewell to life.

The trebly guarded juices of the vine,
Fit for the Gods – your noble vintage fine
 Will freely flow – that precious heir of thine
Will have his fling, and paint the town with wine.





JOHN FINLAYSON, 1921

(The Odes of Horace)

How swiftly glide, my Postumus,
The flying years! no pious faith
Can stay the wrinkled brow from us,
The press of age, and conqu'ring death.

Not though, each morn that lights the skies,
To tearless Pluto thou shouldst throw
Three hundred bulls in sacrifice,
Who holds huge Geryon, Tityus, low

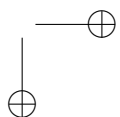
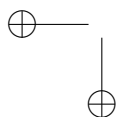
With that dark flood that each must sail
Who tasteth of the fruits of earth,
The king to whom we shout "All-hail."
The labourer of lowly birth.

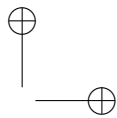
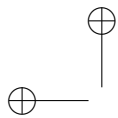
In vain from bloody war we fly,
Or hoarse-resounding Adria's surge,
In vain through Autumn days we try
To hide from the Sirocco's scourge.

We all must face Cocytus' stream,
That darkly winds his crawling pace,
See Sisyphus, without redeem
Condemned to toil, fell Danaids' race.

Land, home, and eke thy partner dear
Must all be left; of thy loved trees
Will follow their brief master's bier
Alone the mournful cypresses.

A worthier heir will quaff the wine
Thou guardedst with a hundred keys
Spill on the floor draughts more divine
Than ever pontiff's guests did please.

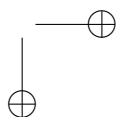
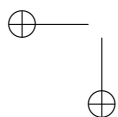


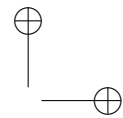
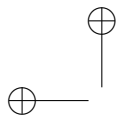


WILLIAM HATHORN MILLS, 1921

(1848–1930; Writer)

Ah Postumus, my Postumus, the fleeting years roll by;
Wrinkles and ever nearing eld stay not for piety:
Relentless they, relentless death's unconquered tyranny,
Ah no; tho' with three hecatombs of bulls each day
To soften Pluto's tearless heart, whose sad stream's custody
Prisons thrice ample Geryon and Tityon, you must die.
For, friend, that river must be crossed by each and every one
Of all whom Earth's large bounty feeds and rears beneath the sun:
By kings, by needy husbandmen, by every mother's son.
Vainly we seek to shun the risks and threats of bloody war:
The rage of waves that swell and break where Hadria's billows roar;
Vainly we fear the autumnal blights that blow from Afric's shore.
No soul may miss Cocytus' gloom – the languid streams that roil
Moaning along: the Danaid brides whose shame naught can assoil:
Sisyphus, son of Aeolus, doomed to unending toil.
Earth, home sweet wife – these must you leave – aye, all that you hold
 dear;
And, of the trees that you, their short-lived master, cherished here,
Only the hateful cypress shall at last attend your bier.
Your Caecuban – a hundred keys once locked it in your store –
A better wine than sacred feasts into priests' goblets pour –
A worthier heir shall drink it, and its pride shall stain the floor.





GEOFFREY ROBLEY SAYER, 1922

(1887–1962; Civil Servant and Historian)

The fleeting years slip fast away.
 Old age and wrinkles threaten us:
 Nor piety, my Postumus,
Can keep resistless death at bay.

Three hundred bulls may give their blood
 And daily Pluto's pity claim
 Who holds e'en Geryon's giant frame,
And Tityus with his dismal flood.

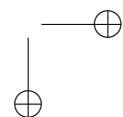
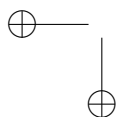
In vain, my friend! for on that tide
 All we who on earth's bounty feed,
 Both kings and husbandmen in need,
Must journey to the further side.

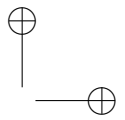
In vain we flee Mars' bloody field,
 And Hadria's breakers shun in vain:
 And from dread Auster, autumn's bane,
Our bodies vainly do we shield.

Those sluggish waters you must face
 Where dark Cocytus slowly coils,
 And Sisyphus unceasing toils,
And Danaus hides his shameful race.

For lands and home and mistress kind
 And every tree he nurtures now,
 Except the hated cypress bough,
Their short-lived lord must leave behind.

A worthier heir your wine will claim
 That now a hundred keys secure,
 And stain the floor with liquor pure
That puts the cups of priests to shame.





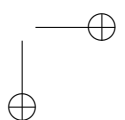
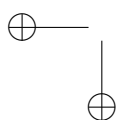
EDWARD DOUGLAS ARMOUR, 1922

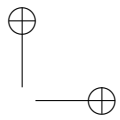
(1851–1922; Lawyer, Educator, and Poet)

Oh Postumus, the days are lying fast:
Each year glides swiftly backward to the past
No pious mind can stay the failing breath,
Advancing age, insuperable death:
Nor, though you sacrifice each passing day
A hecatomb to Pluto can you stay
The time when you must cross the dismal stream
Where ghostly shadows pass as in a dream.

In vain shall you from dreadful war be free
Escape the billows of a raging sea,
Or yet with care avoid the dread disease
Borne from the South on Autumn's baleful breeze
To one inevitable end we all are driven
Death claims his tribute and it must be given
'Tis vain to fabricate excuse or plea:
Unchanging Fate decrees that we must see
Cocytus wandering through his noxious soil,
And Sisyphus condemned to endless toil.

Your lands and houses and your pleasing wife
Must be abandoned at the close of life:
Your orchards and the groves that you have made,
All but the hated cypress' gloomy shade.
Your wines, selected with exquisite taste,
More rare than ever priestly banquets graced
Your heir will drink: and, if his moods incline,
Will stain the pavement with the wasted wine.





LEONARD CHALMERS-HUNT, 1925

(1901–60; Barrister, Founder and First Secretary of the Horatian Society)

Alas, O Postumus, how glide the years,
Which, for your piety, nor wrinkles spare!
Urging us on to Death's relentless spheres,
Nor do they brook delay for age nor care!

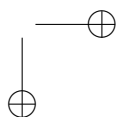
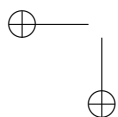
Not though you sacrifice full many a steer,
Will Hades, the inexorable, yield!
Though oxen number as the days in year,
Once Death's still wave its victims hath concealed.

That last sad wave o'er which we all must sail,
Who e'er the brief rewards of earth enjoy!
Then, shall not rank imperial avail,
Nor all the indigence of husbandry!

Sound we in vain the armistice of war,
In vain, the ocean wastes the billow's force!
Doth sallow Autumn insalubrious mar
The feeble life-stream in its vital course!

If Death's dull stream shall aye relentless flow,
And guilty shades pass by in sullen train!
If toil laborious shall no respite know,
And expiation never rest attain!

If, when you leave land, house and wife so true,
Of all the trees you wont to plant, but one
Shall rise and follow; the funereal yew,
Follow its short-lived master to the tomb!





HUGH MACNAGHTEN, 1926

(1862–1929; Vice Provost of Eton College)

Too swiftly, Postumus, my Postumus,
The years run by. Will goodness profit us?
 Can it delay the wrinkles and old age?
Or stay th' advance of death victorious?

Friend, though three hecatombs were offered on
Your altars every day, no grace were won
 From Pluto, tearless Pluto, who confines
Both Tityos and three-bodied Geryon

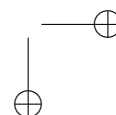
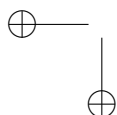
With that sad river, over which the dead,
Aye, each of us, whom bounteous Earth has fed,
 Must all be ferried, whether we be kings
Or country-folk who toil for daily bread.

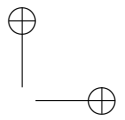
War we shall shun, red war, without avail,
Shun Hadria's waves out-thundering the gale;
 Without avail each autumn we shall dread
Sirocco and the South so full of bale.

The dark slow stream of Wail we needs must see,
And Danaus' children doomed to infamy,
 With Sisyphus, the son of Aeolus,
Condemned to suffer everlastingly.

All must be left behind, land, home, and she,
The winsome wife; alone the cypress-tree,
 Least loved of all the trees you tend and own,
Outliving you, will your companion be.

Your heir, as it becomes him to outshine
Yourself, will waste your closely guarded wine,
 Spilling such liquor on the lordly floor,
As men have rarely drunk, when Pontiffs dine.





ASCOTT ROBERT HOPE MONCRIEFF, 1927

(1846–1927; Scottish Writer)

Ah! how our years go by, one by one lost to us,
Going, Going, and soon to be Gone,
While rheumatics and wrinkles give you and me warning
Of what we must both of us come to anon!

Not though you paid doctors' fees by the dozen,
And swallowed their potions and pills by the score,
Could your money-bags serve but to muffle the knocker
That some day will rat-tat upon every door.

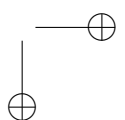
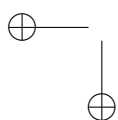
Appetite finally follows digestion
Whether you coax it by tripe or sweetbread.
Dives and Lazarus, more or less mournfully
Come to be laid in the same narrow bed.

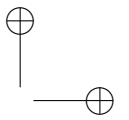
Vainly your conscience objected to khaki,
Vainly from bombs to the cellar you flew;
You need not have shrunk from the chill fogs of London,
To risk influenza at Bournemouth too!

Fate's bullet will hit you the harder for funking,
And you dodge it no surer in sun or in shade;
By land, air, or water, somewhere and somehow,
Meets you the summons which none can evade.

Yes – you must quit that commodious villa,
When, some day or other, an unbidden guest
Comes to call you away from your books and your pictures,
Your stable and garden – “No flowers, by request.”

The port you laid down at such cost and so carefully,
To some other cellar for storage will fall,
Or may torture your heir in his turn with *podagra*,
Harsh hint to remember the end of us all.





ROSELLE MERCIER MONTGOMERY, 1929

(1874–1933; American Poet)

Ah, Postumus, ah, Postumus, the years,
The fleeting years, are flying, flying by!
Thou canst not put off age with piety,
Nor stay indomitable death with tears.

Thou mightest bring to Pluto every day
Three hundred bulls – the sacrifice were vain;
Thou couldst not thus escape his dread domain;
His dark stream waits; it is the common way.

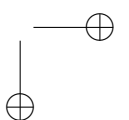
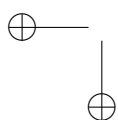
Where Tityus and thrice-dead Geryon wait
Imprisoned, all men, Postumus, must go;
Or prince or peasant, each must pass below;
All, rich and poor alike, must share one fate.

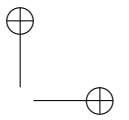
In vain to try to guard this mortal breath,
To shrink from war, to shun the restless sea,
Or to escape fierce storms that peril thee;
Thou canst not hide from fate or hold off death.

Where dark Cocytus rolls its sullen, slow
And turgid current; where doomed maidens pour
Their futile waters; and where ever more
Toils Sisyphus, thou, Postumus, must go.

Thy lands, thy house, thy wife thou canst not take;
And thou must leave each loved, well tended tree.
Only the somber cypress thou shalt see;
The wealth that's thine today thou must forsake.

Thou art its transient master, O my friend!
A better man may soon have what is thine.
Thine heir tomorrow may unlock thy wine
For guests who praise him while they quaff thy blend!





ALEXANDER FALCONER MURISON, 1931

(1847–1934; Professor of Roman Law, University College, London)

Alas! my Postumus, my Postumus,
The fleeting years glide swiftly past,
Nor piety can stay old age and wrinkles,
And death invincible at last.

In vain three hecatombs of bulls a day
You may to ruthless Pluto slaughter,
Who Titos and Geryon triply-huge
Imprisons by the gloomy water –

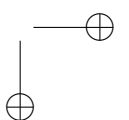
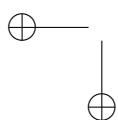
The water you and I and all that live
Upon the bounty of the soil
Must sail across from shore to shore, be we
Or lords or needy sons of toil.

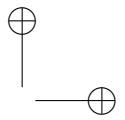
In vain we shall avoid the bloody field,
Avoid hoarse Hadria's broken wave;
In vain will be our anxious apprehensions
The noxious south wind's blasts to brave.

Cocytus, black and sluggish, we must visit,
And Danaus' race blood-stained, ill-starred,
And Sisyphus, the son of Aeolus,
Condemned to endless labour hard.

Leave must we land and house and charming wife
And, of the trees you tend alway
Not one, except the hateful cypress, will
Attend its master of a day.

Your worthier heir will swill your Caecuban,
Wines guarded by a hundred keys,
And drench the floor with lordly liquor, richer
Than banquets that the pontiffs please.

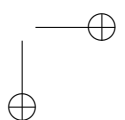
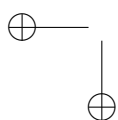




H. B. MAYOR, 1934

(“Late Scholar of King’s College, Cambridge”)

Ah, Postumus, the years fly fast,
Nor all your piety will ward
The creeping wrinkles, or retard
Old age, and death that comes at last;
Though day by day, dear friend, you weep
And with three hundred bulls would woo
Inexorable Pluto, who
Three-bodied Geryon doth keep,
With Tityos, guarded by the flood
Abhorred, which we all must pass,
Monarchs or peasants, all, alas!
To whom the kindly earth yields food.
Vainly we shun the field of death,
And the loud surge of Adria’s sea,
Vainly through autumn days we flee
From hot Sirocco’s feverish breath;
Cocytus’ dark and sluggish tide
We all must visit; Danaus’ seed
Accurst, and Sisyphus decreed
Unending torment to abide.
Your land and home and wife adored
You needs must leave with many a moan;
Of all your trees, the yew alone
Will follow then its short-lived lord.
A worthier heir your wine will drain,
In well-locked cellars guarded fast,
And liquor for a king’s repast
Your mansion’s marble floor will stain.

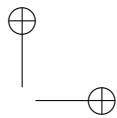
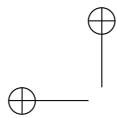




MAJOR ALFRED MAITLAND ADDISON, 1935

(1862–1949)

My Postumus! my Postumus! the years glide past apace;
Your piety to furrowed age gives not one moment's grace;
And Death, that undefeated foe, you yet will have to face.
Not daily, if three hundred bulls in sacrifice you slay,
Can you placate fierce Pluto, whose wrath no tears allay
Who in his floods Lethean, where shades of darkness sulk
Holds Tityos and Geryon, the giant of triple bulk.
These waters you and I, my friend, and all who taste earth's gifts,
Must cross in sorrow's sadness, as Time its pebbles sifts;
We all these straits must navigate, whether of lineage royal,
Or only needy husbandmen – poor tillers of the soil.
In vain we flee from gory Mars, or shun hoarse Hadria's
In vain, in Autumn's misty days, we dread the southern breeze.
The murky, errant, sluggish stream, Cocytus, we must view;
Must meet the breed of Daunus, a damned, accursed crew;
Must see the son of Aeolus, engaged in endless toil –
See Sisyphus, who, for his greed, must sweat in fruitless moil.
Your pleasant home, your pleasing wife, the land on which you dwell,
All these you'll have to leave behind – these things you love so well.
Alone the hated cypress trees, of all the trees you grow,
Pursue their short-lived master to the dusky shades below.
Your choice Caecuban vintage will regale more worthy heir –
Those wines that 'neath one hundred keys you guard with jealous care.
Perchance upon the pavement floor these costly drops he'll spill;
Such drops as should, more fittingly, a pontiff's goblet fill.



GILBERT F. CUNNINGHAM, 1935

(Horace: An Essay and Some Translations)

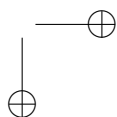
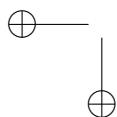
Ah, Postumus, how they evade you,
those years that are lost to you now;
nor your prayers nor your virtue can aid you
to banish their mark from your brow.
Though your bullocks in flocks on his altars
shall daily surrender their breath,
he repents not his purpose, nor falters,
the god of invincible death.

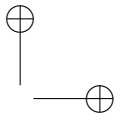
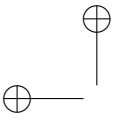
No giant in prowess excelling,
but his mandate at last overthrows,
and commits to the desolate dwelling
which Acheron's windings enclose.
So all whom earth's bounties now quicken
in their turn must embark from that strand,
and cotters and kings must be stricken
by the arrow which none can withstand.

All vainly from warfare's red welter
we flee, and the risks of the deep;
all vainly our bodies we shelter
from the south wind's pestiferous sweep.
We must look on Cocytus' black river,
whose slow-circling waters enchain
the Danaïdes, mourning for ever,
and Sisyphus, toiling in vain.

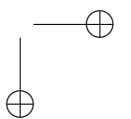
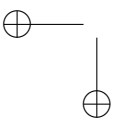
You must leave the bright earth and its splendour,
the treasures and comforts of life;
you must forfeit your home, and the tender
devotion of children and wife;
and out of the groves which you cherish
no tree shall remain to your sway,
save the cypress, whose sad leaves shall flourish
o'er the grave of its lord for a day.

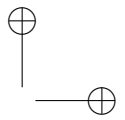
Then a worthier heir shall bestir him
to profit by what you have stored;
nor your bolts nor your bars shall deter him
when he enters to scatter your hoard.
Of your wine-casks, so jealously guarded,





unlocking the generous springs,
he shall dash to the ground, unregarded,
drops fit for the banquets of kings.





MAURICE BARING, 1936

(1874–1945; Poet, Novelist, and Man of Letters)

Oh, Posthumus, my Posthumus, alas!
The nimble-footed years, they pass, they pass...
Not all thy virtues will prevent
Old Age, nor bid cold Death relent.

Though Hecatombs thou slaughter thrice a day,
Yet Pluto, the untearful, claims his prey,
Who holds in his dominion
The triple-headed Geryon,

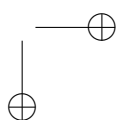
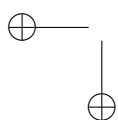
And Tityos by the melancholy floss,
Which all who taste the fruits of earth must cross;
Though mighty monarchs they should be
Or painful sons of husbandry.

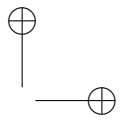
In vain we shun the grievous wounds of war,
The angry Adriatic's surge and roar;
And from the hot Sirocco hide,
That threatens us at Autumntide.

We must behold thy tide creep on apace,
Cocytus, and the shameful Danaan race,
And Sisyphus condemned to ply
A hopeless task eternally;

And bid farewell for ever to the earth,
To wife and home, the land which gave us birth;
Of all thy trees none follow thee
Except the hated cypress-tree.

A worthier heir shall drain to the last lees
Those casks now guarded by a hundred keys,
And drench the floor with wine more rare
Than priests for festal days prepare.





JOHN B. QUINN, 1936

(Educator and Translator)

Ah, Postumus, Postumus, rapidly glide
Our years, and no pious endeavors will force
The onpress of age with its wrinkles aside,
And Death from his sure, irresistible course;

Though you with three hecatombs daily implore
The tearless, inexorable Pluto to bend,
Who binds Geryon and Tityos evermore
Confined by the Waters of Sorrow, my friend!

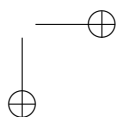
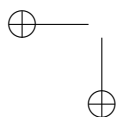
And so must it be for us all that enjoy
The pleasures and bounty of Nature on Earth
Alike on the journey one ferry employ
Must rulers or paupers, regardless of birth!

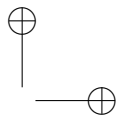
In vain do we shun gory Mars and his vales,
And vainly the billows that break on the seas,
Or Auster that sweeps with tempestuous gales
In Autumn diffusing the germs of disease!

By all, the meandering River of Gloom,
Cocytus, and impious Danaids, too,
And Aeolid Sisyphus, under the doom
Of tedious toil, must be passed in review!

Your lands and your home and agreeable wife
And even the trees that you raised as your own,
All these you must leave as a "tenant for life,"
With nothing to follow save cypress alone!

Then, throwing the hundred old padlocks aside,
Your worthier heir soon will drain off the wine,
Whose Caecuban stains on the floor stamp its pride
As rarer than Pontifs extol when they dine!





SIR EDWARD MARSH, 1941

(1872–1953; Scholar and Civil Servant)

Ah, Postumus! The moving years flow past,
And neither prayer nor faith
 Can stay their speed, nor save us at the last
From wrinkled brows, and age, and conquering death.

Not with the daily blood
Of thrice a hundred bulls canst thou appease
 Stern Pluto, who constrains Geryones
And Tityos in the bourne of that dark flood

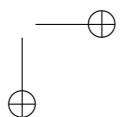
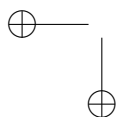
Which every man who eats the fruits of earth
One day must ferry over, once for all,
 Whether a kingly palace gave him birth,
Or the poor hovel of a thrall.

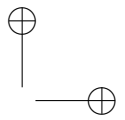
In vain we shun the shafts of Mars,
Or reefs and races of the Hadrian tide,
 Or far from dreaded Auster's region bide,
Who breathes his poison under autumn stars –

Still must thou view the black and sluggish coil
Of sad Cocytus, and the penance laid
 On those false Danaids, and the shade
Of Sisyphus at his eternal toil;

Still leave Earth's cheerful air, thy well-loved home
And dear familiar wife; sole tree
 Of all thy woods shall Cypress follow thee,
Thy brief reign over, to the silent tomb.

The precious wines of thy fast-bolted store,
No pontiff's feast could boast the like of, then
 Thy worthier heir shall drain,
And spill their glories on his blushing floor.





SIR JOHN SEYMOUR BLAKE-REED, 1942

(1882–1966; Judge)

Ah! Postumus, the seasons roll;
No piety a halt can call
To wrinkles; age will take its toll
And death, unconquered, waits for all.

No wealth of sacrifice can save;
Be sure no pitying tear can stain
Grim Pluto's cheek; the Stygian wave
Rings even Titans in their pain.

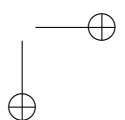
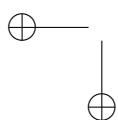
Come wealth or want, come gain or loss,
One is the doom of humankind:
The gloomy stream we all must cross,
Both sceptred king and simple hind.

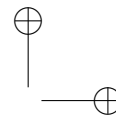
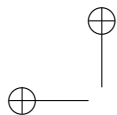
In vain we shun the embattled field,
Nor Hadria's storm-tossed billows dare;
In vain our sickly frames we shield,
Wrapped from the chill autumnal air.

For all alike Cocytus rolls
Its gloomy flood of sluggish waters,
Where Sisyphus for ever tholes
Eternal pains with Danaus' daughters.

Of all the trees your cares have sown,
When home and wife and lands you leave,
The hated cypresses alone
Follow their owner to the grave.

A hundred locks preserve in vain
The wines your lavish heirs shall pour;
Pontific Caecuban shall stain
The marbles of your stately floor.





FREDERICK CHARLES WILLIAM HILEY, 1944

(The Odes of Horace)

Ah, Postumus, too fleet, too fleet,
The gliding years; no worth can call
Halt to the swift-oncoming feet
Of Age, and Death that conquers all:

Three hundred bulls, for each day gone
Slay, 'twould not make stern Pluto kind,
Who Tityos huge, and Geryon,
That triple monster, holds confined

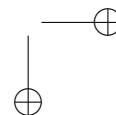
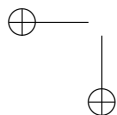
By that dank stream we all must ford,
Each one, whom bounteous Earth doth feed,
Be it his fate to reign, a lord,
Or toil, a hind, in direst need.

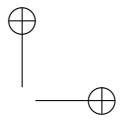
In vain rough Adria's seas, that stun
The ear, we 'scape, and bloody fights:
In vain Sirocco's breath we shun,
With fever-laden autumn nights.

Cocytus black we soon must see,
That stream that winds its sluggish coil,
And Danaüs' brood of infamy,
And Sisyphus eternal toil.

Farewell your lands, the wife you love,
Your house, those trees you cherish so;
Only the hated cypress-grove
Shall guard its short-lived lord below.

Your jars close-sealed of vintage wine
A worthier heir shall drain, and cast
Down on the flags those draughts divine
At pontiffs' banquets unsurpassed.





LORD DUNSANY, 1947

(1878–1957; English Writer and Dramatist)

Postumus, Postumus, alas the years
 Glide on, nor all thy piety can stay
 The wrinkles in thy cheeks, nor yet delay
Old age that rushes on us, nor the shears.

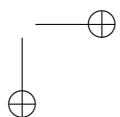
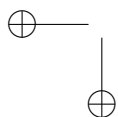
Not with three hundred bulls shalt thou placate
 Unpitying Pluto, though thou sacrifice
 Day after day: he holdeth Geryon, thrice
The size of man, by Styx incarcerate,
That sad unnavigable stream; and we,
 All that are nourished by the gifts of earth,
 Whether poor peasants or of royal birth,
With Geryon and Tityus shall be.

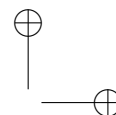
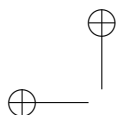
In vain shall we shun sanguinary war,
 In vain the breakers of hoarse Adriatic,
 Vainly in autumn shall we fear rheumatic
Winds of the South; still on the gloomy shore

Shall we behold Cocytus' languid flow,
 And the notorious tribe of Danaus,
 And Sisyphus, the son of Æolus,
Condemned to his long labours. We must go

From land and home and amiable spouse.
 Nor of these trees, for which we care today,
 Will any follow their brief lord away
Except the hated cypress. In thy house

A worthier heir thy Cæcuban will waste,
 Locked with a hundred keys; and, stained with wine
 Inestimable, thy paved floor will shine,
Wine which a pontiff's banquet should have graced.





GARDNER WADE EARLE, 1949

(Moments With (and Without) Horace)

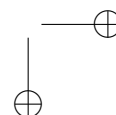
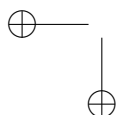
O Postumus, the years glide swiftly by,
Nor can your righteousness or sacrifice
Unmake a wrinkle or undim an eye.

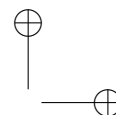
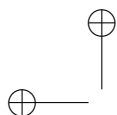
Yea, even should you offer such a prize
As countless hecatombs, you shall not stay
Advancing Age or sequent Death entice.

In vain surviving gory martial day,
Or sailing scatheless on a raging sea,
You reach at last the realm of Pluto's sway.

And whether husbandman or prince you be,
It matters not when comes the fateful sign –
You cross Cocytos to eternity –

And leave your home, your wife, your treasured wine.





GARDNER WADE EARLE, 1949 (PARAPHRASED)

(Moments With (and Without) Horace)

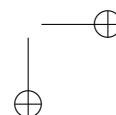
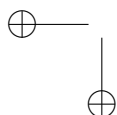
Well Posty boy, Old Tempus fugits fast
And all that you can do is let 'im fly.
Yuh can't bring back a moment when it's past.

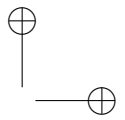
Those wrinkles on your pan, that bleary eye –
Can prayin', praisin', actin' like a saint
Do any good? I wouldn't even try.

You maybe been to war, and no complaint,
Or traveled far without unlucky breaks;
But some day when you think you're here – you AIN'T!

No matter if you played for bigger stakes,
Or dug a ditch, or walked behind a plow,
When Old Man Bones his finger shakes –

Yuh leave it all (and I mean ALL) RIGHT NOW!





LEWIS EVELYN GIELGUD, 1951

(1894–1953; Writer, Intelligence Officer, and Humanitarian Worker)

Oh, Peter, Peter, swiftly roll
The years, and crabbéd age is nigh
And will not spare the righteous soul.
The godly like the wicked die.

Three hundred candles every day
Will not the Lord of Death placate.
No tears his sentence can allay.
His prison moat, of which the gate

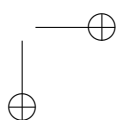
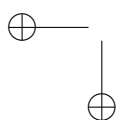
Withstands the strength of Giants, all
That taste the sweets of Earth must cross.
For this the King must leave his Hall,
The labourer his bed of moss.

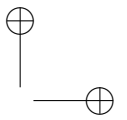
In vain will prudent men eschew
The fearsome risks of bombs and breakers –
In vain avoid exposure to
The Autumn winds, the ague-makers;

For all at last behold the coil
Of grim Cocytus circling Hell,
And Sisyphus' unending toil,
And Danaus' daughters terrible.

You will be torn from fields and home
And gentle wife, and you will lose
Your darling trees, except for some
Unpleasing clump of Churchyard yews –

And then a better man than you
Will fling your cellar keys away,
And use your vintage port to brew
Punch for a Prelate's Christmas Day.





SKULI JOHNSON, 1952

(1888–1955; Classical Scholar)

Ah, Postumus, ah, Postumus, fast flee
The flying years, nor pause will piety
Impose on wrinkles and approaching age
And Death's invincible supremacy,

Not though unweeping Pluto you essay
To please, my friend, by offering every day
Three hundred bulls; he Geryon's triple frame
And Titus also holds enfettered aye

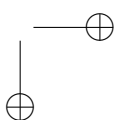
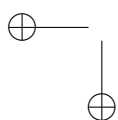
With sad stream, to be crossed by all indeed
Who'er upon earth's bountifulness feed –
Crossed by us, whether high and rich we are,
Or humble rustics, toiling and in need.

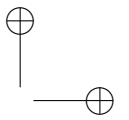
From blood-stained war shall we be free in vain,
And from the breakers of hoarse Hadria's main;
In vain each autumn shall we fearful be
Lest of our bodies south winds be the bane.

We all must view the waters langorous
Of black Cocytus, and the infamous
Danaides, and to eternal toil
Condemned, Aeolus' scion, Sisyphus.

You must leave country, home, and consort dear,
Nor of these trees that you so fondly rear,
Will any follow you, their short-lived lord,
Save loathèd cypresses that deck your bier.

Your heir will quaff your vintage Caecuban
Kept safe by countless keys, and – worthier man! –
Will stain the paved floor with a potion proud,
More potent than at pontiffs' banquets ran.





PAUL SHOREY, 1952

(1857–1934; American Classical Scholar)

Alas! the fleeting seasons, my Postumus,
Go gliding onward, nor can thy piety
Delay the wrinkles, stay old age, nor
Keep thee from Death, the unconquered monarch.

What though each day, dear friend, thou propitiate,
With blood of bullocks slain, and with hecatombs
The tearless god who binds the triple
Geryon fast and the monster Tityus?

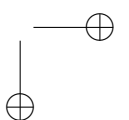
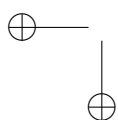
Beyond the wave that waiteth for all of us
Who draw from Earth's broad bounties a sustenance
To cross it, be we lords of lands or
Tillers who toil upon alien acres.

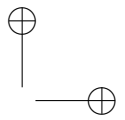
In vain we shun the weltering field of war,
In vain the noisy billows of Adria,
In vain the noxious breath of autumn,
Bearer of doom on the wings of south winds.

The dark Cocytus languidly wandering
We all must see, the daughters of Danäus,
Ill-famed and damned to toil unending –
Sisyphus Aeolides among them.

Thou must abandon Earth and thy home and wife
So dear, and of the trees that thou waterest
None, save the dark-browed cypress only,
Shadows the tomb of its short-lived owner.

Thine heir shall waste, more worthy, thy Caecuban
Barred with a hundred bolts, and his pride shall Spill
To stain thine inlaid floors a liquor
Richer than quaffed at the Pontiff's banquets.





FRED BATES LUND, 1953

(1865–1950; A Boston Physician)

O Postumus, the years fly by,
Nor piety may stay
Old age oncoming, nor deny
Unconquered death his sway;

Nor if, my friend, you sacrifice
Throughout the year, each day,
Fat oxen, it will not suffice
Grim Pluto's hand to stay,

Who Geryon and Tityos tall
Holds prisoned on that shore
Beyond the wave that mortals all
Must soon be ferried o'er,

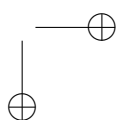
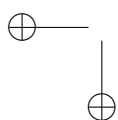
Both prince and pauper; for in vain
A bloody death we fear,
Or shipwreck, or the wind and rain
That mark the passing year.

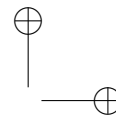
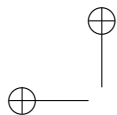
We all must view the Danaïd's toil,
Where winds Cocytos black,
And Sisyphus' eternal moil
And ever-bending back.

Yes, land and home and wife most dear
All must be left behind,
And none save cypress by your bier
Of cherished trees you'll find

Will follow their brief lord. Your heir
Will drink down to the lees
Wines ripened neath his father's care
Behind a hundred keys.

That Caecuban you used to save
For banquets rich and rare
Shall stain beneath his feet the pave,
Your rich and pampered heir.

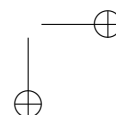
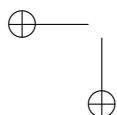


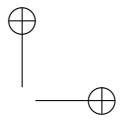


ARTHUR SALUSBURY MACNALT, 1955

(1880–1969; Medical Scientist and Chief Medical Officer of the UK)

Alas, Postumus, my Postumus, on glide the fleeting years.
Piety delays not wrinkles, nor old age with its fears.
Death comes to every mortal, and, if on every day
Three hundred bulls were sacrificed, they could not take away
Dread Pluto's fatal dictum, that all of mortal race
Should cross the Stygian ferry, and hide diminished face
With Geryon and Tityus, thrice monstrous in design,
Imprisoned by infernal king with others of their line.
Yea, all must cross that river, beggars as well as kings,
Fed by the bounty of the earth from whence their life-blood springs.
In vain from Mars' dread battlefields shall we at length be free,
In vain escape the billows of the Adriatic sea.
No longer apprehensive, when autumn chills the land,
Of pestilence that walks abroad with devastating hand.
The black Cocytus wanders on with ever sluggish stream,
Here are the race of Danaus, abhorred in the extreme;
And Sisyphus expectant pursues his endless toil;
All these await your coming on Pluto's hellish soil
Hail and farewell in greeting your well-beloved spouse,
Hail and farewell in greeting your fruitful lands and house.
Trees that you plant and cherish no longer shall be here,
Only the hated cypresses shall shadow o'er thy bier.
Though stored Cæcuban vintage is locked by keys of thine,
Libations from a worthier heir shall pour thy cherished wine.
Alas, alas, Postumus, thy wines of Gaul and Spain,
Richer than any Pontiff's, are stored for thee in vain.





JAMES BLAIR LEISHMAN, 1956

(1902–63; Scholar and Translator)

Ah, how they glide though, Postumus, Postumus,
the years, the fleeting! Neither shall righteousness
 cause wrinkles, cause onsetting Age or
unovercomeable Death to falter.

No, not if ev'ry vanishing day for you
three hecatombs of oxen were sacrificed
 to tearless Pluto, holding giant
Geryon and Titos for ever fettered

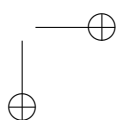
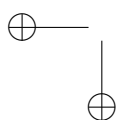
beside that glooming river which all of us,
sustained with earth's terrestrial nourishment,
 must fare across, no matter whether
kings we have been or penurious peasants.

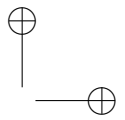
We, vainly saved from clutches of cruel war,
from roaring Adriatic tempestuousness,
 we, vainly anxious ev'ry autumn
whether the wind from the south will plague us,

shall see at last in sombre and sluggish course
Cocytus winding, see the Danaïdes
 pursuing fruitless tasks, and gaze on
Sisyphus damned to his endless labour.

Lands, home, and wife so dear to your heart shall then
be all relinquished; nor of the trees you tend
 shall any save that hateful cypress
follow its briefly-installed possessor.

A worthier heir shall open the Caecuban
a hundred keys now guard, and with vintages
 surpassing those that crown the pontiffs'
liberal feasting shall drench the pavement.





HELEN ROWE HENZE, 1961

(1899–1973; Poet and Translator)

Alas, the years glide, Postumus, Postumus,
The fleeing years; no piety shall delay
 The wrinkles and relentless aging,
 Neither the menace of death's insistence;

Not with three hundred bulls offered every day,
Could you, friend, placate Pluto the tearless one,
 Who holds three-bodied Geryon and
 Tityos, too, with that gloomy river

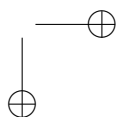
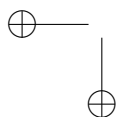
Which must indeed be voyaged by all of us
Who feed upon earth's bountiful gifts; though we
 Be lords of earth or needy farmers,
 Still must that river be crossed by all men.

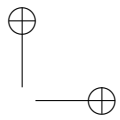
In vain from bloodstained Mars shall we hold aloof,
And from deep-sounding Adria's broken waves,
 In vain through autumns shall we fear the
 Harm to our bodies from scorching south winds:

For black Cocytus, wand'ring with sluggish flow,
We still must visit, Danaüs' wicked race,
 Must still see Sisyphus, the son of
 Aeolus, doomed to eternal labor.

Lands must be left, and home, and your pleasant wife;
Nor of these trees you cultivate with such care,
 Except alone the hated cypress,
 Shall any follow their short-lived master.

Your heir, more worthy, then shall consume your wine,
Your Caecuban locked up with a hundred keys,
 And stain your floor with noble vintage,
 Finer than that at the high-priests' banquets.





FREDERICK WILLIAM WALLACE, 1964

(Senior Scholar of Emmanuel College, Cambridge)

Ah! Postumus, the years glide on
And fleet away: on hasteneth
Old age and wrinkles, dauntless death,
That wait not piety upon.

Not if thou seek each day anew
With bulls three hundred to assuage
Pluto the tearless, who doth encage
Triple Geryon and Tityus too

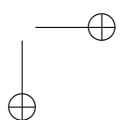
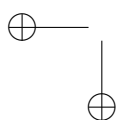
By that sad stream o'er which we all,
Yea, all who feed on bounteous earth,
Must sail, tho' we be kings by birth
Or farmers with no means at all.

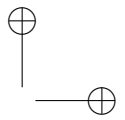
Freedom from bloody Mars is naught,
From Adriatic breakers' crash,
And fear of autumn winds that lash
Our bodies is a fruitless thought.

We must Cocytus winding see,
Black sluggish stream, the cursed brood
Of Danaus, the servitude
That Sisyphus condemned must dree.

We must from earth and homestead go,
From wife admired. From all thy trees
Will only loathsome cypresses
Attend their short-lived lord below.

A worthier heir thy vintage store,
Barred by a hundred keys, will waste,
And prouder wine than might have graced
A priestly banquet stain the floor.





BASIL BUNTING, 1970

(1900–85; Poet)

You cant grip years, Postume,
that ripple away nor hold back
wrinkles and, soon now, age,
nor can you tame death,

not if you paid three hundred
bulls every day that goes by
to Pluto, who has no tears,
who has dyked up

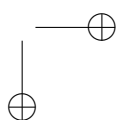
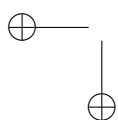
giants where we'll go aboard,
we who feed on the soil,
to cross, kings some, some
penniless plowmen.

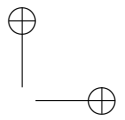
For nothing we keep out of war
or from screaming spindrift
or wrap ourselves against autumn,
for nothing, seeing

we must stare at that dark, slow
drift and watch the damned
toil while all they build
tumbles back on them.

We must let earth go and home,
wives too, and your trim trees,
yours for a moment, save one
sprig of black cypress.

Better men will empty
bottles we locked away,
wine puddle our table,
fit wine for a pope.





C. H. SISSON, 1974

(1914–2003; British Writer)

The years go by, the years go by you, nameless,
I cannot help it nor does virtue help.

Wrinkles are there, old age is at your elbow,
Death on the way, it is indomitable.

Not if you choose, as you will choose, to doctor
Yourself with hope, will you weep out your pain.

The underworld is waiting. There are monsters
Such as distended you before you died.

The subterranean food is there for every-
one who has taken food and drink on earth.

A light skiff will put out, you will be on it –
And, win the pools, you still will go aboard.

The blood dried on you and you came home safely
– Useless. You blew out an Atlantic storm.

– No need to fear the wind, it can do no harm.
It brings you where you will be brought at last.

The dark, the black and, in the blackness, water,
A winding stream, it will not matter to you.

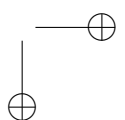
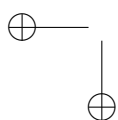
The fifty murderesses are there, the toiler,
Exhaustion beyond hope, condemned to dreams.

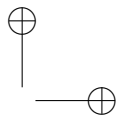
Your house, your wife, and the familiar earth,
All will recede, and of the trees you prune

Only the cypress follow you, ill-omened
You were here briefly, you are here no more.

The heir you leave is better than yourself,
What you kept closest he will throw away.

Your books are on the pavement, and his laughter
Sounding like broken glass through all the rooms.





ALAN MCNICOLL, 1979

(1908–87; Rear Admiral, Royal Australian Navy)

Alas, the fleeting years slip by,
Nor all thy prayers can stay
The hand of Age that closes nigh,
For Death must have his day.

Nor reckon Pluto to appease
With daily tribute paid,
Who rules the realm where Tityos
And Geryon are laid

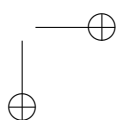
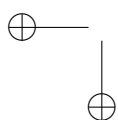
Beyond the waters all must cross
Who live this mortal span,
The proudest princes of the earth
And the poor husbandman.

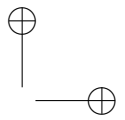
In vain avoid the bloody field,
The raging seas forswear;
Nor shelter from the scorching wind
That strips the branches bare –

On black Cocytus all must look –
Winding its sluggish way,
Where Danaids toil, and Sisyphus,
Forever and a day.

Earth, home, and gentle wife put by
And of these leafy glades
Only the hateful cypress greets
Its master in the shades.

Thy triple-guarded vintages –
More proud than pontiffs know –
A worthier heir will waste, and fast
The purple stream will flow.





STUART LYONS, 2007

(Born 1943; Former Scholar of King's College, Cambridge)

Alas, the fleeting years slip by,
 And wrinkles and insistent age
Won't be delayed by piety;
 Nor death that no man can assuage!

Not if three hundred bulls each day
 You sacrifice, will you placate
Cruel Pluto, whom no tears can sway
 And whose sad waves enclose the great

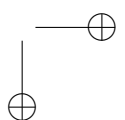
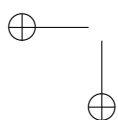
Geryon, thrice our human girth,
 And Tityos. We must all leave shore,
All who enjoy the fruits of earth,
 Whether we're kings or peasants poor.

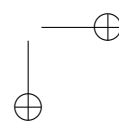
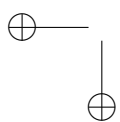
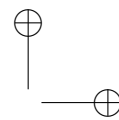
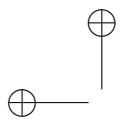
What use to escape the wounds of war
 Or raucous breakers on the seas?
What use on autumn days to fear
 The southern wind that brings disease?

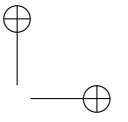
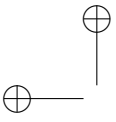
We must all see the languid flow
 Of errant Styx and the infamous throng
Of Danaus' daughters as we go,
 And Sisyphus damned to labours long.

We must leave our house, the land we till,
 Our pleasing wife; of these trees you tend,
None but the hated cypress will
 Follow their brief lord to the end.

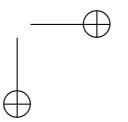
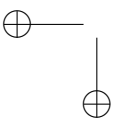
A worthier heir will quaff the wine
 That with a hundred keys you stored,
And stain the floor with port too fine
 To be served at a pontiff's board.

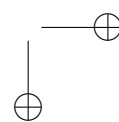
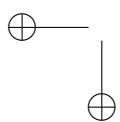
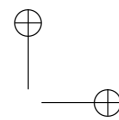
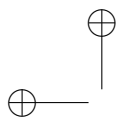






BACK MATTER







BIBLIOGRAPHY

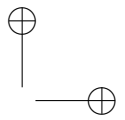
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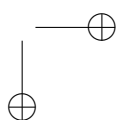
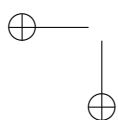
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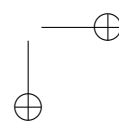
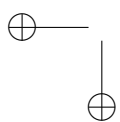
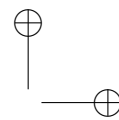
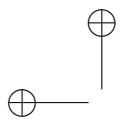
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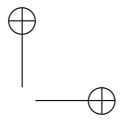
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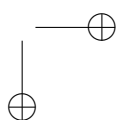
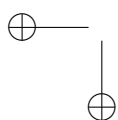


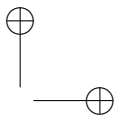




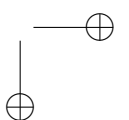
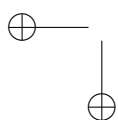
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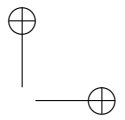
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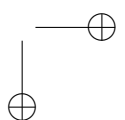
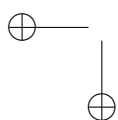
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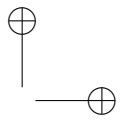
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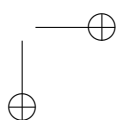
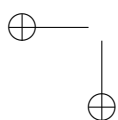
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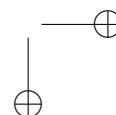
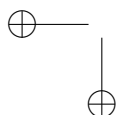
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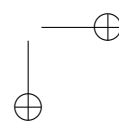
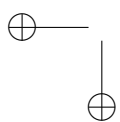
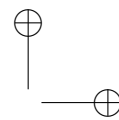
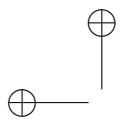
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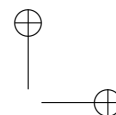
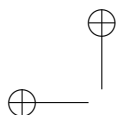
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