With Muse prepared I meant to sing of arms,
Choosing a subject fit for fierce alarms.
Both verses were alike till Love (men say)
Began to smile and took one foot away.
Rash boy, who gave thee power to change a line?
We are the Muses' prophets, none of thine.
What if thy mother take Diana's bow?

Quemadmodum a Cupidine pro bellis amores scribere coactus sit
We which were Ovid's five books now are three,
For these before the rest preferreth he;
If reading five thouplaint of tediousness,
Two ta'en away, thy labour will be less.

P. OVIDII NASONIS AMORUM, LIBER PRIMUS

ELEGIA I

Quemadmodum a Cupidine pro bellis amores scribere coactus sit
We which were Ovid's five books now are three,
For these before the rest preferreth he;
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What if thy mother take Diana's bow?

Quemadmodum (...) sit: In what way he was forced by Cupid to write about love instead of war.
1-4 We (...) less: Ovid's first edition of the Amores contained five books; he reorganized them into three books for the second edition. The personification of the inanimate objects (i.e., giving them the faculty of speech) is a figure of speech known as "prosopopoeia."
5 Muus (...) arm: The opening word of the Amores (arma) is also the opening word of Virgil's Aeneid.
Thus Ovid shows his intent to write martial epic. Also, Marlowe mentions the muse at the beginning, as is customary, but Ovid does not.
7 Love: when capitalized, and often when not capitalized, denotes Cupid (also called Amor or Eros).
7-8 Both (...) away: The meter of Latin (and Greek) martial epic is dactylic hexameter. Cupid takes a foot away from the second line, leaving what is called an elegiac distich (couplet): a dactylic hexameter followed by what is called a dactylic pentameter. This is the traditional Latin meter for love poetry. Thus, Ovid had no choice but to write love poetry.
11 thy mother: Venus, goddess of love and beauty.
Shall Dian fan when love begins to glow?
In woody groves is't meet that Ceres reign,
And quiver-bearing Dian till the plain?
Who'll set the fair-tressed Sun in battle ray,
While Mars doth take the Aonian harp to play?
Great are thy kingdoms, over-strong and large,
Ambitious imp, why seek'st thou further charge?
Are all things thine? the Muses' Tempe thine?

Then scarce can Phoebus say, "This harp is mine."
When in this work's first verse I trod aloft,
Love slack'd my Muse, and made my numbers soft,
I have no mistress nor no favourite,
Being fittest matter for a wanton wit.
Thus I complained, but love unlocked his quiver,
Took out the shaft, ordained my heart to shiver,
And bent his sinewy bow upon his knee,
Saying, "Poet, here's a work beseeming thee."
O war is me! he never shoots but hits;
I burn, Love in my idle bosom sits.
Let my first verse be six, my last five feet;
Farewell stern war, for blunter poets meet.

Elegian muse, that warblest amorous lays,
Girt my shine brow with sea-bank myrtle sprays.

ELEGI A II

Quod primo amore corruptus, in triumphum duci se a Cupidino patiatur
What makes my bed seem hard seeing it is soft?
Or why slips down the coverlet so oft?
Although the nights be long, I sleep not tho,
My sides are sore with tumbling to and fro.
Were Love the cause, it's like I should descry him,
Or lies he close, and shoots where none can spy him?
'Twas so, he struck me with a slender dart,
'Tis cruel Love turmoil's my captive heart.
Yielding or struggling do we give him might;
Let's yield, a burden easily borne is light.
I saw a brandished fire increase in strength,
Which being not shaked, I saw it die at length.
Young oxen newly yoked are beaten more
Than oxen which have drawn the plough before;
And rough jades' mouths with stubborn bits are torn,
But managed horses' heads are lightly borne.
Unwilling lovers Love doth more torment
Than such as in their bondage feel content.
Lo, I confess, I am thy captive, I,
And hold my conquered hands for thee to tie.
What need'st thou war? I sue to thee for grace;
With arms to conquer armless men is base.
Yoke Venus' doves, put myrtle on thy hair,
Vulcan will give thee chariots rich and fair.
The people thee applauding, thou shalt stand.

33 Elegian muse: The muse of Elegy (love poetry) is named Erato.

34 shine: shining, myrtle. Myrtle is sacred to Venus, and thus is a signifier of love and of love poetry.
In the Latin it is the Muse's brow, and not the narrator's, which is circled with myrtle. Marlowe's narrator thus makes himself his own muse.

11-12 Diana's bow (...): Diana: Ovid mentions Minerva, nor Diana. Diana is the goddess of the hunt and forest; Minerva is the goddess of wisdom. One possible explanation lies in the fact that Nicer's commentary mentions "Dictyna" at this point. "Dictyna" is an alternative name for Diana. Marlowe might also have changed it to Diana in order to make a rhyme ("bow") with "glove": Diana; not Minerva, is known for her bow. Diana is otherwise appropriate to the sense of these lines, which is to emphasize the virginity of the goddess; since both Diana and Minerva are virgin goddesses, it is especially inappropriate that they should be taken by passion. So too, it is most inappropriate that Ovid, trying to write a martial epic, be interfered with by Cupid.

13 Ceres: the goddess of agriculture.

15 fair-tressed Sun: Apollo, the god of the sun, is known for his blond hair.

16 Mars: the god of war. Aonian: indicates Mt. Helicon, where the Nine Muses reside. Offspring of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory), the Muses are all female and blond, and they are under the sponsorship of Apollo, god of poetry and the sun. Each Muse presides over a distinct field of poetry, arts, and sciences, such as Epic, History, Tragedy, Lyric, Pastoral, Comedy, Dance, and Love Poetry.

19 Tempe: a vale in Thessaly. For poets it had come to be a generic term for any valley, and here Ovid calls it "Heliconian," and thus Marlowe puts "Muses" with "Tempe."

21-22 aloft (...): soft: The end-rhymes are especially appropriate, since line 21 corresponds to the brawnier Latin hexameter and line 22 corresponds to the "weaker" Latin pentameter of Ovid's text.

22 slack'd: weakened (also in a sexual sense). numbers: refers to the number of metrical feet.

26 shiver: break apart into small fragments.

29-30 0 war is me (...): I burn: The beginnings of these two lines are direct translations of the beginnings of Ovid's corresponding lines. Ovid's intent was to be mock-epic and mock-heroic, and also to imply a sexual innuendo.

31-32: the.

11 I saw a brandished fire increase in strength: In style and substance Marlowe carefully translates Ovid's vidi ego tactatas mota face crescre flammam. "I saw" renders the positioning of vidi; "brandished" renders the positioning of tactatas; "increase" renders both the etymology and the positioning of crescre.
Guiding the harmless pigeons with thy hand;
Young men and women shalt thou lead as thrall,
So will thy triumph seem magnifical.
I, lately caught, will have a new-made wound,
And captive-like be manacled and bound.
Good meaning, Shame, and such as seek love's wrack
Shall follow thee, their hands tied at their back.
Thee all shall fear, and worship as a king,
"Io," triumphing shall thy people sing.
Smooth Speeches, Fear and Rage shall by thee ride,
Which troops have always been on Cupid's side;
Thou with these soldiers conquerest gods and men,
Take these away, where is thine honour then?
Thy mother shall from heaven applaud this show,
And on their faces heaps of roses strow.
With beauty of thy wings, thy fair hair gilded,
Ride, golden Love, in chariots richly builded.
Unless I err, full many shalt thou burn,
And give wounds infinite at every turn.
In spite of thee, forth will thine arrows fly,
A scorching flame burns all the standers by.
So, having conquered Ind, was Bacchus' hue;
Thee pompous Birds, and him two tigers drew.
Then seeing I grace thy show in following thee,
Forbear to hurt thyself in spoiling me.
Behold thy kin's man's Caesar's conquering bands,
Who guards the conquered with his conquering hands.

26 harmless pigeons: Venus's doves. For Ovid's "ave," Niger comments imbollibus columbas ("peaceful, unwarring doves").
30 Good meaning: For Ovid's mala bona Niger offers, for example, bonum consilium ("good counsel"), animus ("spirit"), and ratio ("reason"), any of which can be construed as "Good meaning," which in turn is perhaps best understood as "good intent" or "goodness."
33 worship as a king: For Ovid's ad te sua bracchia tendens ("extending their arms to you") Niger comments, for example, te procehis adorahunt (... imperatorem ("they will with prayers revere you as a king")
34: the Roman cry of triumph.
35 Fear: irremque: modern texts, erroque ("error").
36 troops: derived not merely from militibus of the following line, but from Niger's gloss of milites for Blanditiae coniunxit.
37-48 So (... Bacchus' hue (... tigers drew: Bacchus (= Dionysus) was the god of wine (and therefore the grapevine). The large, wild felines were sacred to him, and his chariot was drawn by tigers. He was known for having cultivated the grapevine in India. "hue" means "appearance" or "show."
51 kin's man's Caesar's: the Caesars proclaimed themselves to be descended from Aeneas, who was a half-brother to Cupid, because the mother of both was Venus.
And she that on a feigned bull swam to land,
Gripping his false horns with her virgin hand.
So likewise we will through the world be rung,
And with my name shall thine be always sung.

ELEGIA IV

Amicam, qua arte, quibusve nutibus in caena, presente viro uti debat, admonet
Thy husband to a banquet goes with me,
Pray God it may his latest supper be.
Shall I sit gazine as a bashful guest,
While others touch the damsel I love best?
Wilt lying under him, his bosom clip?
About thy neck shall he at pleasure skip?
Marvel not, though the fair bride did incite
The drunken Centaurs to a sudden fight;
I am no half-horse, nor in woods I dwell,
Yet scarce my hands from thee contain I well.
But how thou shouldst behave thyself now know,
Nor let the winds away my warnings blow.
Before thy husband come, though I not see
What may be done, yet there before him be.
Lie with him gently, when his limbs he spread
Upon the bed, but on my foot first tread.
View me, my becks and speaking countenance;
Take and receive each secret amorous glance.
Words without voice shall on my eyebrows sit,
Lines thou shalt read in wine by my hand writ.
When our lascivious toys come in thy mind,
Thy rosy cheeks be to thy thumb inclined.
If aught of me thou speakest in inward thought,
At night thy husband clips thee: I will weep
And to the doors sight of thyself keep.
Then will he kiss thee, and not only kiss,
But force thee give him my stol'n honey bliss.

Constrained against thy will, give it the peasant;
Forbear sweet words, and be your sport unpleasant.
To him I pray it no delight may bring,
Or if it do, to thee no joy thence spring;
But though this night thy fortune be to try it,
To me tomorrow constantly deny it.

ELEGIA V

Corinnae concubitus

In summer's heat, and mid-time of the day,
To rest my limbs upon a bed I lay;
One window shut, the other open stood,
Which gave such light as twinkles in a wood,
Like twilight glimpse at setting of the sun,
Or night being past, and yet not day begun.

Such light to shamefast maidens must be shown,
Where they may sport and seem to be unknown.
Then came Corinna in a long loose gown,
Her white neck hid with tresses hanging down,
Resembling fair Semiramis going to bed,
Or Lais of a thousand wooers sped.

I snatched her gown; being thin, the harm was small,
Yet strive it should be covered therewithal,
And striving thus as one that would be cast,
Betrayed herself, and yielded at the last.

Stark naked as she stood before mine eye,
Not one wen in her body could I spy.
What arms and shoulders did I touch and see,
How apt her breasts were to be pressed by me!

How smooth a belly under her waist saw I,

22 How large a leg, and what a lusty thigh! Ovid's quantum et quale latus! is the more literally translated "how great (= long) and how beautiful (= of what sort) a side (= flank), how youthful a thigh." Marlowe's use of "large" is sanctioned by Niger's note on latus as "magnum"; his use of "lusty" for "youthful" is in keeping both with Niger's quam semilunum & semilunum quae iuvenculae bucum voront ("what delicate and sexy [thighs and sides] as very young women are wont to have") and with the fact that iuvencus is a more erotically charged adjective in Latin than the more prosaic and technical iuvencus. Finally, the triple "T" alliteration of Marlowe's line renders the triple "q" alliteration of Ovid's, and this partly accounts for Marlowe's incorrect translation of latus as "leg."

61 clips: embraces.
70 deny it: Marlowe's last word directly and exactly translates Ovid's last word (nega).

1 Corinnae concubitus: In bed with Corinna.
11 Semiramis: mythical queen of Assyria, known for her extraordinary beauty.
12 Lais: celebrated Greek courtesan. wooers: modern texts read viris (= "lovers"); Renaissance texts, including Niger's, read proci (= "wooers" or "suitors").
15 would be cast: wished to be defeated.
I am alone, were furious Love discarded.
Although I would, I cannot him cashier
Before I be divided from my gear.
See Love with me, wine moderate in my brain,
And on my hairs a crown of flowers remain.
Who fears these arms? who will not go to meet them?
Night runs away, with open entrance greet them.
Art careless? or it’s sleep forbids thee hear,
Giving the winds my words running in thine ear?
Well I remember when I first did hire thee,
Watching till after midnight did not tire thee;
But now perchance thy wench with thee doth rest—
Ah, how thy lot is above my lot blest!
Though it be so, shut me not out therefore;
Night goes away, I pray thee ope the door.
Err we? or do the turned hinges sound,
And opening doors with creaking noise abound?
We err: a strong blast seemed the gates to ope;
Aye me, how high that gale did lift my hope!

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11 Love hearing it: Earlier texts read audireatis (perfect indicative) for audiream (imperfect subjunctive). Niger acknowledges that alternative reading but says that audiream is the preferred one.

15 my life: This rendering of me may derive from Niger’s comment on the preceding line: a te uno vita mua dependet (“on you my life completely depends”)

17 en viata: Renaissance texts read in viandas (“envy”) for viandas (“see”).

20 entreats: entreaties.

25 Gratis thou mayst be free, give like for like. The Latin itself is vague and problematic (radde vicem meritis: gratis lecto esse quod optas). Its sense is “Give me back what I have deserved: you are gracious to me, you may have what you wish.” Two sections in Niger, though, shed light: (1) quandoquidem putes, neque gratiam referas (“since you are able, you may give me thanks”); (2) at in correctione codices legimus, loco gratis substituendum est gratis (“as we read in the more correct codices, gratis must be substituted in the place of gratis”).

26 servile water: literally, the water which a slave drinks, as opposed to the water which slave owners drink; metonymically, the state of being a slave.

30summaries: fortified.

35 cashier: dismiss.

37–38 See Love with me, wine moderate in my brain, /And on my hairs a crown of flowers remain. The Latin is ergo Amor et modicum circa mea tempora vinvum / necum est et madidis laptsa corona comis (“Therefore Love, and moderate wine around my temples (= in my brain) and a crown fallen from my perfumed hair will be my escort”). Marlowe’s departure from the original is significant and closely related to his departure from the original at the end of L.1 where he makes himself his own muse. Here, Marlowe will not relinquish the garland that Ovid has involuntarily lost, and thus Marlowe maintains the implication of the laurel crown, to wit, that he is a poet laureate, his own muse, or even Apollo, god of poetry. Moreover, the sense of the original is that even though the speaker says that he has only moderately imbibed, he is in fact quite drunk because he has lost the garland from his head; thus, Marlowe undermines and overcomes Ovid by maintaining not only the crown but also his own self-control, which Ovid has clearly lost, his proclamation to the contrary notwithstanding.

41 careless: uncaring, unconcerned, hard-hearted.

43 hire: The Latin, which reads primo cam to colere volare, means “when I first wished to hide myself from you (= escape your notice).” There seem to be only two possible explanations: (1) Marlowe incorrectly understood the Latin to mean that the doorkeeper, not the speaker, was hiding, and Marlowe thus translated “hide” (from colam), which somehow became “hire” through editorial error.; (2) He could be referring to line 23 earlier, where he is offering the doorkeeper a bribe by enticing him with the promise of freedom. The word “hire” at that time could imply such a quid pro quo.

52 did lift my hope: MacLure says, “The sense is reversed. The gust of wind carried away (tulit) his hope.” MacLure is ultimately, though not necessarily technically, correct: it should be noted that tulit can mean to uplift as well as to take away, and perhaps Marlowe took it as such without fully thinking through the overall sense of the verse.
If, Boreas, bears Orithyia's rape in mind,
Come break these deaf doors with thy boisterous wind.
Silent the city is: night's dewy host
March fast away; the bar strike from the post,
Or I more stern than fire or sword will turn
And with my brand these gorgeous houses burn.
Night, love, and wine to all extremes persuade;
Night shameless, wine and love are fearless made.
All have I spent: no threats or prayers move thee;
Or harder than the doors thou guard'st I prove thee.
No pretty wenches' keeper mayst thou be:
The careful prison is more meet for thee.
Now frosty night her flight begins to take,
And crowing cocks poor souls to work awake;
But thou my crown, from sad hairs ta'en away,
On this hard threshold till the morning lay,
That when my mistress there beholds thee cast,
She may perceive how we the time did waste.
Whate'er thou art, farewell; be like me pained,
Careless, farewell, with my fault not distained!
And farewell cruel posts, rough threshold's block,
And doors conjoined with an hard iron lock!

ELEGIA VII

Ad pacandam amicam, quam verberaverat
Bind fast my hands, they have deserved chains,
While rage is absent, take some friend the pains;
For rage against my wench moved my rash arm,
My mistress weeps whom my mad hand did harm.
I might have then my parents dear misused,
Or holy gods with cruel strokes abused.
Why, Ajax, master of the seven-fold shield,
Butchered the flocks he found in spacious field,
And he who on his mother venged his sire
Against the Destinies durst sharp darts require.

72 Careless: as earlier (41), uncearing, with my fault not distained: As McKee points out in Ovid's text, so too here the sense is that of a compliment to the doorkeeper, that because he has succeeded in keeping Marlowe out, he cannot be faulted for having failed at his job.

1 Ad (..) verberaverat: To placate his mistress, whom he had beaten.
2 While (..) is: The Latin dum can mean, for example, "while" or "until." Since the accepted text has abit ("goes away"), "until" is in order. However, some Renaissance texts have abit ("is away") for abit, and as such, only "while" would make sense. Niger's text had abest, though he comments that abit is a better reading; yet, he also comments how to construe it as abit. Marlowe seems to prefer the sense—especially since the preceding lines talk of the narrator's actions as having been executed in the past—that his furor has subsided, and while he is currently quieted down, a friend should restrain him in case the furor should return, as opposed to the idea that the rage is still current and that therefore he needs to be restrained until it has finally passed. Marlowe's construction insinuates much more ambiguity and uncertainty, and perhaps, therefore, excitement into the elegy and its speaker.

7-9 Ajax (..) flocks: A mock-epic, mock-heroic comparison by the speaker of himself to Ajax, who went into a rage because the dead Achilles's shield was given to Odysseus instead of him. While in—and as a result of—this rage, he slaughtered a flock of sheep, mistakenly believing them to be Agamemnon and Menelaus, the sons of Atreus, who had favored Odysseus in this matter. On the one hand, the comparison to an epic hero is so preposterous as to reinforce the clearly humorous tone of this elegy; on the other hand, there is the implication that perhaps the mistress had similarly favored others (sexually) over the speaker.

9e: A mock-tragic comparison to Orestes, who killed his mother Clytemnestra to avenge her murder of his father (her husband) Agamemnon. Clytemnestra had been carrying on an adulterous affair with her husband's first cousin Aegisthus, and this background once again insinuates sexual infidelity on the part of the speaker's mistress.

10 Destinies: While Ovid's aruntas abit is not precise, it seems as though the Furies are intended (which hounded Orestes, just mentioned). Niger seems also to think this the case. Marlowe's choice of "Destinies" is sanctioned by a mythographical and lexicographical tradition that confused the Fates and the Furies (see, e.g., Starnes and Talbot 360 ff.).
Could I therefore her comely tresses tear?  
Yet was she graced with her ruffled hair.  
So fair she was, Atalanta she resembled,  
Before whose bow th' Arcadian wild beasts trembled;  
Such Ariadne was, when she bewails  
Her perjured Theseus' flying vows and sails;  
So, chaste Minerva, did Cassandra fall,  
Delflowered except, within thy temple wall.  
That I was mad, and barbarous all men cried,  
She nothing said, pale fear her tongue had tied;  
But secretly her looks with checks did trounce me,  
Her tears, she silent, guilty did pronounce me.  
Would of mine arms my shoulders had been scanted,  
Better I could part of myself have wanted.  
To mine own self have I had strength so furious,  
And to myself could I be so injurious?  
Slaughter and mischief's instruments, no better,  
Deserved chains these cursed hands shall fetter.  
Punished I am, if I a Roman beat;  
Over my mistress is my right more great?  
Tydides left worst signs of villainy,  
Yet he harmed less; whom I professed to love  
I harmed; a foe did Diomedes' anger move.  
Go now, thou Conqueror, glorious triumphs raise,  
And let the troops which shall thy chariot follow  
"Io, a strong man conquered this wench," hollow.  
Let the sad captive foremost with locks spread,  
On her white neck but for hurt cheeks be led;  
Meeter it were her lips were blue with kissing,  
And on her neck a wanton's mark not missing.  
But though I like a swelling flood was driven,  
And as a prey unto blind anger given,  
Was 't not enough the fearful wench to chide,  
Nor thunder in rough threatings' haughty pride,  
Nor shamefully her coat pull o'er her crown,  
Which to her waisst her girdle still kept down?  
But cruelly her tresses having rent,  
My nails to scratch her lovely cheeks I bent.  
Sighing she stood, her bloodless white looks showed  
Like marble from the Parian mountains hewed;  
Her half-dead joints and trembling limbs I saw,  
Like poplar leaves blown with a stormy flaw,  
Or slender ears, with gentle Zephyr shaken,  
Or waters' tops with the warm south wind taken.  
And down her cheeks the trickling tears did flow  
Like water gushing from consuming snow.

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13 Atalanta: a beautiful, mythical huntress. There are two mythological versions of her story, both of which Niger mentions—the Arcadian and the Boeotian. The first is the hunter of the Calydonian boar who shunned men but finally gave in to the suit of Milanion. The second also shunned suitors by challenging them to a race, overtaking them, and then sparing them in the back. She was defeated by Hippomenes (another name for Milanion), who threw golden apples in her way and caused her to lose the race because she stopped to pick them up. Both she and Hippomenes were changed into lions. The comparison especially to the Boeotian Atalanta once again vilifies the mistress while appearing to praise her.

15 Ariadne: daughter of King Minos of Crete. She rescued Theseus from the labyrinth built by Daedalus to house the monstrous Minotaur. Theseus repaid her kindness by abandoning her on the island of Naxos.

18 Delflowered (collum): Most editors who annotate this line adjudge Marlowe to have misunderstood the Latin sic nisi vitfatis quod non Cassandra capillis ("thus was Cassandra except for the fact that her hair was bound with fillets"). Fillets were tokens of chastity, and the reference is to the final fall of Troy from which Cassandra sought refuge in the temple of Minerva but was raped there by the lesser Ajax. Orgel offers perhaps the most helpful reading: "the fact that the rape took place in Diana's [i.e.] temple was the only sort of chastity left to her."

51 Tydides: Diomedes, son of Tydeus: a prominent Greek soldier in the Trojan War.

52 goddess: Diomedes struck Venus in battle at Troy.
Then first I did perceive I had offended,
My blood the tears were that from her descended.
Before her feet thrice prostrate down I fell,
My feared hands thrice back she did repel.
But doubt thou not (revenge doth grief appease)
With thy sharp nails upon my face to seize;
Bescratch mine eyes, spare not my locks to break
(Anger will help thy hands though ne'er so weak),
And lest the sad signs of my crime remain,
Put in their place thy kembed hairs again.

ELEGIA VIII

Exequatur lenam, quae puellam suam meretricia arte instituebat

There is, who'er will know a bawd aright,
Give ear, there is an old trot, Dipsas hight.
Her name comes from the thing: she being wise
Sees not the morn on rosy horses rise,
She magic arts and Thessale charms doth know,
And makes large streams back to their fountains flow;
She knows with grass, with threads on wrong wheels spun,
And what with mares' rank humour may be done.
When she will, clouds the darkened heav'n obscure;
When she will, day shines everywhere most pure.
(If I have faith) I saw the stars drop blood,
The purple moon with sanguine visage stood.
Her I suspect among night's spirits to fly,
And her old body in birds' plumes to lie.

Fame saith as I suspect, and in her eyes
Two eyeballs shine and double light thence flies.
Great-grandfathers from their ancient graves she chides,
And with long charms the solid earth divides.
She draws chaste women to incontinence,
Nor doth her tongue want harmful eloquence.
By chance I heard her talk; these words she said,
While closely hid betwixt two doors I laid:
"Mistress, thou know'st thou hast a blest youth pleased,
He stayed, and on thy looks his gazes seized.
And why shouldst not please? none thy face exceeds;
Aye me, thy body hath no worthy weeds.
As thou art fair, would thou were fortunate!
Wert thou rich, poor should not be my state.
Th' opposed star of Mars hath done thee harm;
Now Mars is gone, Venus thy side doth warm,
And brings good fortune: a rich lover plants
His love on thee, and can supply thy wants.
Such is his form as may with thine compare,
Would he not buy thee, thou for him shouldst care."
She blushed. "Red shame becomes white cheeks, but this,
If feigned, doth well; if true, it doth amiss.
When on thy lap thine eyes thou dost deject,
Each one according to his gifts respect.
Perhaps the Sabines rude, when Tatius reigned,
To yield their love to more than one disdained;
Now Mars doth rage abroad without all pity,
And Venus rules in her Aeneas' city.
Fair women play, she's chaste whom none will have,
Or, but for bashfulness, herself would crave.
Shake off these wrinkles that thy front assault,

63 doubt: hesitate.
65 to break: not in the Latin.
68 kembed: combed (kempt).

1 Exequatur ( . . . ) instituebat: He curses the bawd who has been instructing his mistress in the art of the courtesan.
2 trot: hag.
3 Her ( . . . thing: The name itself means "thirsty." The Latin says that she was always drunk all night long, and thus she never saw the dawn sober. Cunningham suggested that "wise" was "one of the thousand and one euphemisms for 'inebriated,'" but we (and MacLure) can find no support for this meaning.
5 Thessale: home of Circe (Aea) and of witchcraft.
7 wrong: The Latin torto here demands "crooked." Marlowe uses "wrong" perhaps because Cooper offers it as one definition and because the wheels become "wrong" by metonymy, since they are perpetuating magic; also, Niger cites one meaning for it as sanctus (= "poisonous").
8 humour: liquid excretion from the genitalia of a mare in heat.
11 I have faith: you believe me.
15 Fame saith: Rumor has it.
16 Two eyeballs: double pupils (meant literally, but also metaphorical for the "evil eye").
23 blest: wealthy.
31—32 plants/His love on thee: While seemingly far removed from "has desired thee" (te cupiit), Marlowe likely used this term not only for the rhyme but also because part of Niger's note is dignus corpore cultus (= "worthy to be husbanded in the body").
39-40 Perhaps ( . . . ) disdained: The Sabine women, under their King Tatius, were construed to be people of simple morality.
42 Aeneas' city: Rome.
44 herself would crave: "herself" is nominative subject of "would crave."
Wrinkles in beauty is a grievous fault.  
Penelope in bows her youths' strength tried,  
Of horn the bow was that approved their side.  
Time flying slides hence closely, and deceives us,  
And with swift horses the swift year soon leaves us.  
Brass shines with use; good garments would be worn;  
Houses not dwelt in are with filth forlorn.  
Beauty not exercised with age is spent,  
Nor one or two men are sufficient.  
Many to rob is more sure, and less hateful,  
From dog-kept flocks come prey to wolves most grateful.  
Behold, what gives the poet but new verses?  
And thereof many thousand he rehearses.  
The poet's god, arrayed in robes of gold,  
Of his girt harp the well-tuned strings doth hold.  
Let Homer yield to such as presents bring;  
(Trust me) to give; it is a witty thing.  
Nor, so thou mayst obtain a wealthy prize,  
The vain name of inferior slaves despise.  
Nor let the arms of ancient lines beguile thee;  

their forehead, then many indiscretions will as a result fall down from those furrows." Dipsas is referring to women who affect, by furrowing their brow, an aura of moral austerity and continence, and she is admonishing the mistress here not to be like them lest no man approach her. 47–48 Penelope (...) side: a reference to book 21 of Homer's Odyssey where Penelope, a legendary model of chastity, tested her suitors with their prowess in stringing and shooting her husband's (Odysseus's) bow, which was made of horn; Odysseus won the contest. "Bow" and "horn" have sexual connotations, and as such, this couplet continues Dipsas's innuendos that even women unquestioned chastity have promiscuous desires and usually give in to them, approved their side: demonstrated their strength. 49 claudly: imperceptibly (oaculit). 50 And (...) as: Modern editions accept at celer admisit labitur annus aquis ("as a swift stream glides smoothly with its loose [== rapid] currents"); Marlowe's (and Niger's) edition had et celer admisit labitur annus aquis ("and the swift year glides by with swift horses"). 56 dog-kept: Here Marlowe has read the adjective ënis ("white haired," modifying "wolves") for the noun ënis (dog). This is the more remarkable both because Niger clearly indicates the correct definition and because Marlowe could also have understood the difference by metrically scanning Ovid's pentameter. 62 witty: smart. 64 The (...) sophist: Some texts had nomen ("name") instead of crimen ("crime"); Niger's has crimen but he discusses the variant and concludes that either is correct — Marlowe chooses nomen. "inferior slaves" were those who were imported from outside Rome and whose feet were marked with chalk to enslave that distinction. 65 Nor (...) thus: The accepted Latin reading is nőc te decipiant vetere circum atrae cerae ("do not let the wax masks [of the visages of their ancestors] around the halls [of their houses] deceive you"). Marlowe's text had nőc te decipiant vetere quinquatria cerae and thus Marlowe's translation: the quinquatria was a festival primarily honoring Minerva but secondarily honoring Mars, and thus

Ovid's Elegies

Poore lover, with thy grandsires I exile thee.  
Who seeks, for being fair, a night to have,  
What he will give, with greater instance crave.  
Make a small price, while thou thy nes doest lay,  
Lest thev should fly; being ta'en, the tyrant play.  
Dissemble so, as loved he may be thought,  
And take heed lest he gets that love for nought.  
Deny him oft; feign now thy head doth ache:  
And Isis now will show what scuse to make.  
Receive him soon, lest patient use he gain,  
Or lest his love ofr beaten back should wane.  
To beggars shut, to bringers ope thy gate;  
Let him within bear barred-out lovers prate.  
And as first wronged the wronged sometimes banish,  
Thy fault with his fault so repulsed will vanish.  
But never give a spacious time to ire,  
Anger delayed doth oft to hate retire.  
And let thine eyes constrained learn to weep,  
That this or that man may thy cheeks moist keep.  
Nor, if thou cozen'st one, dread to forswear,  
Venus to mocked men lends a senseless ear.  
Servants fit for thy purpose thou must hire,  
To teach thy lover what thy thoughts desire.  
Let them ask somewhat; many asking little,  
Within a while great heaps grow of a tittle.  
And sister, nurse, and mother spare him not,  
By many hands great wealth is quickly got.  
When causes fail thee to require a gift,  
By keeping of thy birth make but a shift.  

"arms" in Marlowe's construction. Niger's text has the latter reading, though he comments that he cannot understand it, and while he understands that atri might be an independent word, he seems to have no acquaintance with the textual tradition which substitutes circum for quinque. Finally, the point of the couplet (65–66) is "don't be taken in by a great pedigree if the money is not there to go with it."

71 Dissemble so: Not is it harmful for you to frug love. 74 lits: a moon goddess, and thus evocative of menstruation. 75 less (...) gain: lest be get used to suffering. 79 And (...) banish: And sometimes injure him with anger as if you are retaliating for having been injured first by him. 79–80 wronged (...) fault (...) faults: Marlowe's use of polyptoton here renders the same in Ovid's latae (... laco (...) culpa culpa. 86 mocked men: Marlowe's text has illatis, while modern texts have in laitis ("love's deceptions"). The distinction is largely negligible because the sense is ultimately the same. 94 but a shift: The Latin (natalen libo testificare tuum) is properly translated "show him it's your birthday by having a cake."
Beware lest he unrivalled loves secure;  
Take strife away, love doth not well endure.  
On all the bed men's tumbling let him view,  
And thy neck with lascivious marks made blue;  
Chiefly show him the gifts which others send;  
If he gives nothing, let him from thee wend.  
When thou hast so much as he gives no more,  
Pray him to lend what thou mayst ne'er restore.  
Let thy tongue flatter, while thy mind harm works,  
Under sweet honey deadly poison lurks.  
If this thou dost, to me by long use known,  
Nor let my words be with the winds hence blown,  
Oft thou wilt say, 'live well'; thou wilt pray oft  
That my dead bones may in their grave lie soft.  
As thus she spake, my shadow me betrayed,  
With much ado my hands I scarcely stayed;  
But her blear eyes, bald scalp's thin hoary fleeces,  
And rivelled cheeks I would have pulled a-pieces.  
The gods send thee no house, a poor old age,  
Perpetual thirst, and winter's lastling rage.

ELEGIA IX

Ad Atticum, amantem non oportere desidiosum esse, sicuti nec militem
All lovers war, and Cupid hath his tent,  
Attic, all lovers are to war far sent.  
What age fits Mars, with Venus doth agree,  
'Tis shame for ebd in war or love to be,  
What years in soldiers captains do require,  
Those in their lovers pretty maids desire.  
Both of them watch: each on the hard earth sleeps;  
His mistress' doors this, that his captain's keeps.  
Soldiers must travel far; the wench forth send,  
Her valiant lover follows without end.  
Mounts, and rain-doubled floods he passeth over,  
And treads the deserts snowy heaps do cover.

100 If (. . .) wend: The sense of the Latin—si dederit nemo Sacer roganda Via est—is "If nobody has given you presents, buy some yourself from the shopping center [to make it appear as if someone has]." Marlowe's text has si iubi nil dederit, which accounts for the first half of his line but not the second half.
112 rivelled: wrinkled.

5 years: Marlowe's text has anno; modern texts animo (courage).
The story is from *Odyssey* 8.266 ff, and Ovid reworks it at *Ars Amatoria* 2.561 ff and *Metamorphoses* 4.169 ff.

43 A *fair maid's care* loving a fair maid.

45 *watch:* Marlowe's text likely had *vigilem*; modern texts have *agilem* ("active").

i *Ad (. . .) poscat:* To his mistress, that she should not request money in return for her love.

2 *cause:* Helen of Troy.

3 *Europa:* Marlowe's text read *Europa,* but modern texts have *Eurota,* indicating the Eurotas River.

5 *Leda:* wife of King Tyndareos of Sparta, who was impregnated by Zeus in the form of a swan. That pregnancy brought forth Polixus and Helen, and a simultaneous impregnation by her husband brought forth Castor and Clytemnestra.

5 *Amynnone:* the daughter of Danaus, king of Argos, carried away by Poseidon while fetching water for her father.

7 *bull and eagle:* two of the many animal forms Jove would assume to hide his promiscuous adultery from his wife Hera. As a bull he carried off Europa; as an eagle, Ganymede.

13 *plain:* innocent, unduplicous.

15 *sans:* without.

16 *but open:* “but” misleads: The sense of both Marlowe and Ovid is “his lack of clothes indicates his innocence.”

---

Will you for gain have Cupid sell himself?  
He hath no bosom, where to hide base pelf.  
Love and Love's son are with fierce arms to odds;  
To serve for pay beseeems not wanton gods.  
The whore stands to be bought for each man's money,  
And seeks vile wealth by selling of her coney,  
Yet greedy bawd's command she curseth still,  
And doth, constrained, what you do of good will.  

Take from irrational beasts a precedent;  
'Tis shame their wits should be more excellent.  
The mare asks not the horse, the cow the bull,  
Nor the mild ewe gifts from the ram doth pull;  
Only a woman gets spoils from a man,  
Farms out herself on nights for what she can,  
And lets what both delight, what both desire,  
Making her joy according to her hire.  
The sport being such as both alike sweet try it,  
Why should one sell it and the other buy it?  
Why should I lose, and thou gain by the pleasure  
Which man and woman reap in equal measure?  
Knights of the post of perjuries make sale,  
The unjust judge for bribes becomes a stale.  
'Tis shame sold tongues the guilty should defend,  
Or great wealth from a judgement seat ascend;  
'Tis shame to grow rich by bed merchandise,  
Or prostitute thy beauty for bad prize.  
Thanks worthily are due for things unbought,  
For beds ill-hired we are indebted nought.  
The hirer payeth all, his rent discharged,  
From further duty he rests then enlarged.  
Fair dames forbear rewards for nights to crave,
Ill-gotten goods good end will never have.  
The Sabine gauntlets were too dearly won,  
That unto death did press the holy nun.  
The son slew her that forth to meet him went,  
And a rich necklace caused that punishment.  
Yet think no scorn to ask a wealthy churl;  
He wants no gifts into thy lap to hurl.  
Take clustered grapes from an o'er-laden vine,  
May bounteous loam Alcinous' fruit resign.  
Let poor men show their service, faith, and care;  
All for their mistress, what they have, prepare.  
In verse to praise kind wenches 'tis my part,  
And whom I like eternize by mine art.  
Garments do wear, jewels and gold do waste,  
The fame that verse gives doth for ever last.  
To give I love, but to be asked disdain;  
Leave asking, and I'll give what I refrain.

**ELEGIA XI**

*Nape, alloquitur, ut paratas tabellas ad Corinnam perferat*  
In skilful gathering ruffled hairs in order,  
Nape, free-born, whose cunning hath no border,  
Thy service for night's scapes is known commodious,  
And to give signs dull wit to thee is odious.

---

49–50 *The (. . .) nun*: Tarpeia, daughter of a Roman governor, betrayed Rome by opening the city gates to the Sabines in return for their gold bracelets; but as they entered, they threw not only their bracelets but also their shields at her, crushing her to death.

51–52 *The (. . .) punishment*: Eriphyle betrayed her husband Amphiarus in a way that led to his death, in exchange for a gold necklace. Their son Alcmaeon murdered his mother in revenge. The words “that [. . .] went” mistranslate; Ovid says, in effect, “from whom he had been born” (a quibus exteras [. . .] viseras).

54 *wants*: lacks.

56 *loam*: known for the fertility of his orchards, which yielded fruit all year long (Odyssey 7.112 ff). *resign*: yield.

61 *wear*: wear out.

63–64 *gave (. . .) asked (. . .) asking (. . .) give*: Marlowe renders the chiasmus of dare (. . .) posci (. . .) pascenti (. . .) abdeo.

1 *Nape, (. . .) perferat*: He implores Nape to take a love letter to Corinna.

2 *free-born*: a loose translation of *naupe ancillas inter habenda* ("not your usual handmaiden"). *whose (. . .) border*: This is not in the Latin.

3 *scape*: escapades.

4 *And (. . .) odious*: she is skilled in the giving of signals.

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Corinna clips me oft by thy persuasion,  
Never to harm me made thy faith evasion.  
Receive these lines, them to thy mistress carry,  
Be sedulous, let no stay cause thee tarry.  
Nor flint nor iron are in thy soft breast,  
But pure simplicity in thee doth rest.  
And 'tis supposed Love's bow hath wounded thee,  
Defend the ensigns of thy war in me.

If what I do, she asks, say “hope for night”;  
The rest my hand doth in my letters write.  
Time passeth while I speak, give her my writ,  
But see that forthwith she peruseth it.  
I charge thee mark her eyes and front in reading,  
By speechless looks we guess at things succeeding.  
Straight being read, will her to write much back,  
I hate fair paper should writ matter lack.  
Let her make verses, and some blotted letter  
On the last edge, to stay mine eyes the better.  
What need she tire her hand to hold the quill?  
Let this word, "Come," alone the tables fill,  
Then with triumphant laurel will I grace them,  
And in the midst of Venus' temple place them,  
Subscribing that to her I consecrate  
My faithful tables, being vile maple late.

---

5 *clips*: embraces (sexually).

6 *Neer (. . .) evasion*: Marlowe's and Ovid's sense is “often your faithfulness served me well when I needed you.”


10 *But (. . .) rest*: Ovid's sense is that she is not as simple and unsophisticated as an ordinary handmaiden. Marlowe's rendering is likely attributable to his text having read *ead* ("but") instead of *non* ("not").

12 *Defend (. . .) me*: Marlowe's and Ovid's sense is "use your own experience in the war of love to help me in mine."

17 *front*: forehead.

18 *succeeding*: to come.

19 *Straight*: immediately upon the letter. *will*: order.

21–22 *Let (. . .) better*: Ovid's sense is "See to it that her lines are written very close together and even that the margins are filled with her afterthoughts." The point is that he wants to have a lot to read, because he will take that as a sign that she has devoted much time and thought to her response.

24 *table*: tablets (pages).

25 *laurel*: While laurel crowns marked excellence in poetry, they also marked military success. Given the earlier references to the war of love, the implication here is that if Corinna's letter says what he wishes, then that letter will be a mark of his military success in his war of love with her.

27 *Subscribing*: "writing beneath them." *her*: Venus.

28 *My (. . .) late*: Marlowe's and Ovid's sense is "My faithful tablets (pages), which until now were but modest maple" (maple was used for writing-tablets).
ELEGIA XII

Tabellas quas miserat exccratar, quod amica noctem negabat

Bewail my chance: the sad book is returned,
This day denial hath my sport adjourned.
Presages are not vain; when she departed,
Nape by stumbling on the threshold started.
Going out again, pass forth the door more wisely,
And somewhat higher beart thy foot precisely.
Hence, luckless tables, funeral wood, be flying,
And thou the wax stuffed full with notes denying,
Which I think gathered from cold hemlock's flower,
Wherein had honey Corsic bees did pour.
Yet as if mixed with red lead thou wert ruddy,
That colour rightly did appear so bloody.

As evil wood thrown in the highways lie,
Be broke with wheels of chariots passing by,
And him that hewed you out for needful uses
I'll prove had hands impure with all abuses.

Poor wreaths on the tree themselves did strangle;
There sat the hangman for men's necks to angle.

To hoarse screech-owls foul shadows it allows,
Vultures and Furies nestled in the boughs.

To these my love I foolishly committed,
More fitly had they wrangling bonds contained,
From barbarous lips of some attorney strained.

---

i Tabellas ... negabat: He curses the tablets he had sent because his mistress would not spend the night with him.
1 chance: misfortune.
3 presages: omens.
4 started: stopped still.
7 tables: tablets (pages).
8 wax: The wood tablets Romans wrote on were covered with wax. notes denying: Ovid's and Marlowe's sense is "your written words rejecting my expressed desire for us to be together."
11-12 Yet ... bloody: Red was a common color for the wax on writing-tablets; the sense here is that the red on the tablet is not that wax but his (at least metaphorical) "blood." red lead: the Latin minium is commonly defined as "cinnabar" or "red lead"; Cooper defines it as "red lead."
13 evil: useless (inutile). highways: (triviis).
20 Furies: witches or hags. Even though strix is defined as a screech-owl, Niger supports this rendering: Cooper also notes strix as witch or bag; and there is an obvious relation to stiga, which means witch or bag.
21 these: these tablets (pages).
23 wrangling: noisy (garrula). bonds: writs at court, such as bail bonds.
24 barbarous: harsh-toned (doro ore). Niger employs the phrase barbarum loquendo ("speaking barbarously") in his comments not on doro ore but near them in his comments on garrula.

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ELEGIA XIII

Ad Auroram, ne properes

Now o'er the sea from her old love comes she
That draws the day from heaven's cold axle-tree.
Aurora, whither slighest thou? down again,
And birds for Memnon yearly shall be slain.

Now in her tender arms I sweetly bide,
And birds send forth shrill notes from every bough:
Whither runn'st thou, that men and women love not?

26 In ... debtor: The Latin says "And accounts wherein the miser bemoans money he has spent" (in quibus absumptas fuerit avarus opes). Niger's comment, though, does open the door for Marlowe to construe it as he does, and so the requirements of rhyme might not alone explain Marlowe's departure here from Ovid.
27 Your ... things: that is, they are double, folded tablets, and thereby connote duplicity as well as doubleness, as the next line elaborates. approves: proves.

---

1 old love: Aurora's husband, Tithonus, who was granted eternal life but not eternal youth to go with it.
2 cold axle-tree: a metaphor for the dawn. "tree" refers to the axle itself, made of wood, around which the wheel turns, and it is "cold" because it is at the end of the night and before the day. All the various times of day (morning, day, night, etc.) are often symbolized in classical literature by a "chariot," the synecdoche for which would be the axle and/or wheels. See Booth at 2.5.38.
3 slighest: hurry. down again: This is not an answer to the question just posed but an imperative behest to Dawn to reverse her rising. Moreover, "down again" can be traced to Niger's comment on quo properes ("where are you hurrying?") at line 9 later, which he implies there should apply here (he makes no comment on this quo properes here in his commentary on line 5): 1.2.5 ab incipio aliquem necessitatem vocamus ("from the beginning we want [her] to stop"). ab incipio refers to the beginning of the poem, and necessitatem can be literally translated as "stand down" ("down again").
4 Memnon: the son of Aurora and Tithonus. Orgel writes: "He was killed by Achilles at Troy, but Jupiter granted him immortality. A flock of birds rose from his funeral pyre and fought until half of them fell into the blaze to appease his spirit. The birds [called the 'Memnonides'] were said to return annually to the tomb of Memnon and repeat the battle."
7 sweats: from Niger's molles et suaves.
8 shrill: not indicated by liquidum, but again Niger: ( ... ) clamat ( ... ) horrendum stridens.
Hold in thy rosy horses that they move not.
Ere thou rise, stars teach seamen where to sail,
But when thou comest, they of their courses fail.
Poor travellers, though tired, rise at thy sight,
And soldiers make them ready to the fight.
The painful hind by thee to field is sent,
Slow oxen early in the yoke are pent.
Thou custom boys of sleep, and dost betray them
To pedants that with cruel lashes pay them.
Thou mak'st the surety to the lawyer run,
That with one word hath nigh himself undone.
The lawyer and the client hate thy view,
Both whom thou raisest up to toil anew.
By thy means women of their rest are barred,
Thou set'st their labouring hands to spin and card.
All could I bear; but that the wench should rise
Who can endure, save him with whom none lies?
How oft wished I night would not give thee place,
Nor morning stars shun thy uprising face.
How oft that either wind would break thy coach,
Or steeds might fall, forced with thick clouds' approach.
Whither goest thou, hateful nymph? Memnon the elf
Received his coal-black colour from thyself.
Say that thy love with Cephalus were not known,
Then kindest thou thy loose life is not shown?

14 them: themselves.
15 brig: archaic for "farmhand."
17 warrant: definite, rob.
18 pedants: schoolmasters.
19 lawyer: Marlowe's text read consulis instead of several other alternatives that evince a troubled textual history.
20 one word: Green writes: "The court referred to was the praetor's tribunal, which handled civil suits. The 'one-word-pledge' was the verb spondeo [hence sponsum], 'I guarantee,' and the official formula for going to bail was: 'I guarantee to render a like sum' (ego idem dare spondeo)."
26 were lies: "no woman sleeps."
29 with that: supply "wished I" (from line 27) between these words.
31-32 Whither (... thyself: Memnon was black; "hateful" is for spondeo, which means "envious," and in antiquity and the Renaissance, "black" was often thought to denote envy, as Niger mentions. Ovid is saying that Memnon is literally black because Aurora's heart is metaphorically black (envious, i.e., "hateful"). Aurora is envious of lovers who want to be with each other and therefore do not want the sun to rise because Aurora herself is not so situated; rather, she wants to get away from her aging, undesirable husband Tithonus as soon as possible (see line 37). The phrase "the elf" is used for the rhyme.
33-34 Say (... shown: The corresponding Latin lines do not appear in most modern texts: quid si non Cephalis quaundam flagrasset amore? / an putat ignotam noxissiam esse suam. Cephalus, the husband of Procris, was loved by Aurora. The clear implication here is that he fathered Memnon, since there is otherwise no explanation for why Memnon is black.
37 the: is, however, another possible explanation: In his commentary on this line Niger quotes from two of Petrarch's odes (22 and 73). Among the lines cited from ode 73 are 71 ff, which contain the word "fiso" ("fixed"). Given the similarity of the Renaissance "s" and "f," and if either Marlowe's text was hard to read or his Italian poor, he might have read it as "fifa," which means "scared."
47-48 morning scared me: Martin, MacLure, and Gill point out that these words are gratuitous. There is, however, another possible explanation: In his commentary on this line Niger quotes from two of Petrarch's odes (22 and 73). Among the lines cited from ode 73 are 71 ff, which contain the word "fiso" ("fixed"). Given the similarity of the Renaissance "s" and "f," and if either Marlowe's text was hard to read or his Italian poor, he might have read it as "fifa," which means "scared.

ELEGIA XIV

Puellam consolatam cui praes nimia cura comma desiderant
"Leave colouring thy tresses," I did cry;
Now hast thou left no hairs at all to dye.
But what had been more fair had they been kept?
Beyond thy robes thy dangling locks had swept.
Fear'dst thou to dress them being fine and thin,
Like to the silk the curious Seres spin,
Or threads which spider's slender foot draws out,
Fast'ning her light web some old beam about?
Not black, nor golden were they to our view,
Yet although neither, mixed of either's hue,
Such as in hilly Ida’s wat’ry plains,
The cedar tall spoiled of his bark retains.
And they were apt to curl an hundred ways,
And did to thee no cause of dolour raise.
Nor hath the needle, or the comb’s teeth rift thee,
The maid that kembed them ever safely left them.
Oft was she dressed before mine eyes, yet never,
Snatching the comb to beat the wench, out drave her.
Oft in the morn, her hairs not yet digested,
Half-sleeping on a purple bed she rested;
Yet seemly, like a Thracian bacchanal,
That tired doth rashly on the green grass fall.
When they were slender, and like downy moss,
Thy troubled hairs, alas, endured great loss.
How patientely hot irons they did take,
In crooked trammels crispy curls to make.
I cried, “’Tis sin, ’tis sin, these hairs to burn,
They well become thee, then to spare them turn.
Far off be force, no fire to them may reach,
Thy very hairs will the hot bodkin teach.”
Lost are the goodly locks, which from their crown
Phoebus and Bacchus wished were hanging down.
Such were they as Diana painted stands
All naked holding in her wave-moist hands.
Why dost thy ill-kembered tresses’ loss lament?

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10 Yet (... ) hue: the correspondence of dictional etymology and placement of English-to-Latin is remarkable: sed quamvis neuter mixtus uterque color.
12 spoiled: stripped.
15 neede: hairpin.
16 kembered: combed.
17 she: her hair (the mistress’s).
18 drave: drove.
19 digested: arranged.
21 Thracian bacchanal: Thrace was an indefinite stretch of land at the southeastern extremity of Europe, to the north of Greece. Bacchanals were people who engaged in frenzied, sometimes orgiastic festivals celebrating the god Bacchus (Dionysus).
26 trammels: braids.
30 bodkin: curling iron.
33 Diana: Dione is an alternative name for Venus, or sometimes the mother of Venus, and Ovid clearly was referring to the painting by Apelles— the most celebrated painter of ancient Greece who lived in the fourth century BCE— of Venus coming out of the ocean. Niger also talks at length about this reference. Gill observes: “I cannot believe that Marlowe would have mistaken Ovid’s Dione for Diana, although it is an error that might be expected of a compositor replacing the unknown by the known.”
Not that I study not the brawling laws,
Nor set my voice to sale in every cause?
Thy scope is mortal, mine eternal fame,
That all the world may ever chant my name. 5
Homer shall live while Tenedos stands and Ide,
Or into sea swift Simois doth slide. 10
Ascræus lives while grapes with new wine swell,
Or men with crooked sickles corn down fell.
The world shall of Callimachus ever speak;
His art excelled, although his wit was weak.
For ever lasts high Sophocles' proud vein,
With sun and moon Aratus shall remain. 15
While bondmen cheat, fathers be hard, bawds whorish,
And strumpets flatter, shall Menander flourish.
Rude Ennius, and Plautus full of wit,
Are both in fame's eternal legend writ.
What age of Varro's name shall not be told,
And Jason's Argos and the fleece of gold? 20
Lofty Lucretius shall live that hour
That nature shall dissolve this earthly bower.
Aenes' war, and Tityrus shall be read,
While Rome of all the conquered world is head.
So Cupid wills; far hence be the severe:
You are unapt my looser lines to hear.

Let maids whom hot desire to husbands lead,
And rude boys touched with unknown love, me read,
That some youth hurt as I am with Love's bow
His own flame's best acquainted signs may know,
And long admiring say, "By what means learned
Hath this same poet my sad chance discerned?"

I durst the great celestial battles tell,
Hundred-hand Gyges, and had done it well,
With earth's revenge, and how Olympus' top
High Ossa bore, Mount Pelion up to prop.
Jove and Jove's thunderbolts I had in hand,
Which for his heaven fell on the giants' band.
My wench her door shut, Jove's affairs I left,
Even Jove himself out of my wit was reft.
Pardon me, Jove, thy weapons aid me nought,
Her shut gates greater lightning than thine brought.
Toys and light elegies, my darts, I took,
Quickly soft words hard doors wide open strook.
Verses reduce the horned bloody moon,
And call the sun's white horses back at noon.
Snakes leap by verse from caves of broken mountains,
And turned streams run backward to their fountains.
Verses ope doors; and locks put in the post,
Although of oak, to yield to verses boast.

P. OVIDII NASONIS AMORUM, LIBER SECUNDA

ELEGIA I

Quod pro gigantomachia amore scribere sit coactus
I, Ovid, poet of my wantonness,
Born at Peligny, to write more address.

1 Quod [...] coactus: Why he is forced to write about love instead of about the wars in heaven.
2 Peligny: Ovid was born in Sulmo, which was inhabited by the Paetigny people. to [...] address: Marlowe means "set out to write more."