

Lesson 6: Comparing texts and translations: Poetry (c)

Propertius 2.xxiib

Aut si es dura, nega: sin es non dura, venito!
quid iuvat haec³ nullo ponere verba loco?
hic unus dolor est ex omnibus acer amanti,
speranti subito si qua venire negat.
quanta illum toto versant suspiria lecto,
cum recipi, quae non venerit, ipse vetat!⁴
et rursus puerum quaerendo audita fatigat,
quem, quae scire timet, †quaerere† fata iubet.

Variant text (Loeb)

Aut si es dura, nega: sin es non dura, venito!
quid iuvat at³ nullo ponere verba loco?
hic unus dolor est ex omnibus acer amanti,
speranti subito si qua venire negat.
quanta illum toto versant suspiria lecto,
cum recipi, quem non noverit ille, necat⁴!
et rursus puerum quaerendo audita fatigat,
quem, quae scire timet, quaerere fata iubet.

Translation A W.G. Shepherd (Penguin Classics) 1985

If you're harsh, say no: and if you're not, then come!
What pleasure to take your words as meaning neither?
This one pain above all is sharp to a lover,
That she abruptly declines to come to his hopes.
What great sighs roll him now all over his bed,
When he has banned admittance to her who will not come!
He wearies his slaves by asking anew things heard before,
Whom he tells to find out the fate he fears to know.

Translation B Guy Lee (Oxford Clarendon Press) 1994

Either say No if you're cruel, or, if you're not cruel, come.
Why do you treat words too with contempt?

This is the sharpest hurt of all for any lover,
When his hopes must accept her sudden backward.
How many sighs toss him from side to side of the bed
While he cannot admit that she will not come
And wearies his boy with questions, harping on what he has heard,
Bidding him question the doom he dreads!

Translation C H.E. Butler (Loeb)

Say "No!" if thou art unkind; or, if kind thou art, then come! But why take delight in waste of random words? This grief alone of all doth rack the lover's heart, if his mistress fails his hopes and comes not to the tryst. What sighs shake his frame as he tosses o'er all his couch, when the thought that now some unknown lover is admitted torments him even to death! Again and again he wearies his slave by asking, what he has heard already, and bidding him seek news of the fate he dreads to learn.

Questions

1. What forms of which verbs are the following?
 1. es (line 1)
 2. versant (line 5)
 3. nega (line 1)
 4. timet (line 8)
 5. iuvat (line 2)
 6. iubet (line 8)

2. What possible forms are the following (all version 1)?
 1. quid (line 2)
 2. haec (line 2)
 3. illum (line 5)
 4. quae (line 6)
 5. hic (line 3)
 6. ipse (line 6)
 7. quem (line 8)

3. Give the dictionary form and meaning of:
 1. loco (line 2)
 2. lecto (line 5)

3. *puerum* (line 7)

What case(s) might these be in, and what case are they in here?

4. Give the genitive singular of *dolori* (line 2).

5. Find the Latin for

"This one pain above all is sharp to a lover."

Try to give your own translation, sticking as close to the Latin sense and word order as you can while still making sense in English!

Compare translations A, B and C with the Latin.

To which noun does the Latin equivalent of "sharp" belong? Why do you think the Latin adjective is placed where it is in the line?

6. The Loeb text (version 2) is different in several ways from version 1 (do you know why this might be so?), especially in line 6.

Try to give a translation of line 6 as it appears in each version. Which Latin version seems to you to fit the sense of the poem better, and why?

7. How well do you think translations A, B and C give the sense and style of the original Latin? Illustrate from both the Latin and English versions.