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"The Countless Unmurmuring Dead": Echoing Voices in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and James
Joyce's Dubliners

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“And you should not let yourself be confused in your solitude by the fact that there is something in you that wants to break out of it.”

Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet, Letter #7 trans. M.D. Herter Norton

The modern poet Rainer Maria Rilke speaks to the conflict between the need for community and the desire for solitude. For many modern people in Rilke’s Europe, the ability to thrive with the support of community existed in tension with the drive to face the world alone. Rilke adopted Greek and Roman myths to reflect the sentiments of his culture, such as the lament for the past expressed in his “Sonnets to Orpheus”. I use excerpts from Rainer Maria Rilke’s writings as epitaphs for my analyses of Ovid and Joyce’s works. Rilke was a contemporary of Joyce, also a self-exile from his native land, who drew greatly upon the classics in his search for the extraordinary in everyday life. I have been reading Rilke for as long as I have been reading Ovid and Joyce. In this thesis I have drawn upon his words to help me frame the questions about the role of fate and the divine, and whether ordinary people can break free from cultural constraints.

In James Joyce and Ovid’s stories about paralysis and metamorphosis, the protagonists are their own antagonists, assuming the role of another by which they oppose their own intentions. Ovid's use of mythological conventions considers the impotency of agency, for even when his characters attempt to seize control of their own destiny, they are thwarted in their attempt to control their own fate. Joyce focuses on the moments when his characters have

stumbled across the opportunity to change the trajectory of their lives. Both authors examine characters through enforced change which compels the reader to consider whether the characters have the fortitude to overcome the psychological limitations upon their lives.

Ovid's retelling of Greek myths in his collection of stories *Metamorphoses* is not faithful to older works but is a metamorphosis of the myths themselves. While Ovid acknowledges and utilizes the allegorical resonance of characters such as Apollo (a representation of Reason) and Invidious (the embodiment of envy), he also builds their characters in a way to humanize the stories which they enact. In this interplay between both character and allegory, Ovid poses essential questions of the human condition, namely to what degree we truly control our own fate.

Joyce's turn-of-the-century collection of short stories Dubliners investigates the phenomenon of paralysis, exposing the city's stagnation of thought and emotion. He implicates Irish culture at large for its role in giving little option to the city's denizens but to conform to established norms. Personal and public shame are central to the static culture of Catholic Ireland, and Joyce represents the cultural damage of private shame in "Araby" and public shame in "The Boarding House." Joyce knits Ireland's culture so deeply within his characters' lives as to question a person's ability to truly extricate herself from her culture, and therefore question the role one's culture will always have upon one's actions and future. Fate in Ovid and Joyce's works is represented less as overt control over something in one's life and more as the inescapable influences impressed upon human actions by the omnipresence of the past. Ovid presents fate in the form of the gods who control humans' lives, and Joyce illustrates it as the cultural expectations which constrain one's actions, reminding the reader that it is impossible to live unaffected by one's own culture.

Both these authors question the roots of change, and the roles which external forces have upon an individual's life. In pairing superficially similar stories of the two authors, I am looking for similar commentaries upon the human condition vis-a-vis characters' ability to exert their will in the face of these forces. I will read these individuals not only as products of their culture and environment, but in part as representatives of living in tension with their culture, a culture shaming both its citizens and their culture which breeds their shame. I propose that Ovid and Joyce's stories are themselves metamorphoses from earlier stories, and in telling older stories in words fit for their era, Ovid and Joyce's tellings are but a step in the larger history of their culture, and create more stories for future storytellers to speak to and work against. These stories of metamorphosis and paralysis illustrate how intrinsically the two concepts are intertwined in their roles within the history of telling stories.

Ovid and Joyce provide equal opportunity for condemnation and absolution of characters who unknowingly strive against themselves. Characters struggle against themselves and against the idea of fate, acting within narratives with movements prescribed by fate and with human emotions proscribed by culture. As characters struggle with circumstances and with themselves, the syntax and diction of the texts parallel the way the stories test characters' limits. Piety becomes a calcified mockery of humanity, and chastity yields only to the wind blowing through branches and leaves. Words evaporate into painfully permanent futures, and compete with each other even as they construct stories in which toils recall those of the characters they describe. Joyce's investigation into the stagnation of Irish life similarly questions the relationship of fate and free will. Joyce's construction of character is so entwined with the Ireland which he depicts that his characters' epiphanies and subsequent paralysis could not have occurred with any less destruction to their lives and sanity.

Ovid and Joyce treat their culture as a subject equal to the characters, for characters' movement within their environment informs us of the worlds from which such stories might spring, and re-imbues them with their inherent magic. In analyzing their use of language for the rhythms and sounds of the words in addition to their actual meanings, Joyce critic Fritz Senn comments that "Ovid, like Joyce, used what he could find and changed it according to his needs; both, re-shapers, rather than inventors, make us aware of the predecessors and, ultimately, of the dynamic texturings across the ages" (561). Joyce, like Ovid, drew upon the works of previous literary eras to create a vocabulary for his own age. Joyce and Ovid both transform their source material into a new embodiment of myth for a new age. Joyce must have been aware of Ovid, as he is a central member of the classical canon from which Joyce drew heavily. In writing about Ireland's cultural stagnation, Joyce wrote stories which question the social and individual phenomenon of metamorphosis. The stories end with the question of human agency in the face of the gods and culture, and this question is mirrored in the very language of the tales.

Ovid embellishes the plot of his stories with their syntax, drawing the reader's attention to the language itself in addition to the images drawn by the words. In a similar manner, Joyce creates moments of excess when illustrating for the reader a self-realization which the characters are clearly avoiding acknowledging or accepting. Joyce's excessive construction sets his characters in opposition to their cultures. These moments of opposition illustrate the characters' slavish devotion to custom, perhaps out of fear for what exists beyond it. Senn describes the way Ovid and Joyce force readers to realize how "[o]rdinary speech is full of tropes that are noticed only in conspicuous excess. Most often they are muted" (Senn, 576). Both Ovid and Joyce use excess to make their own stories resound within their source material (Senn, 577). In giving credence to earlier works which resonate in their own writing, Ovid and Joyce simultaneously

liberate themselves to speak unencumbered by the already-acknowledged past and imply that their texts are inextricably bound to the past. At moments, the reader can discern the traditions which Ovid and Joyce are pushing against, but most often the history is subsumed by the culture which replaces it.

Ovid's stories are inherently about the transformation of human into the inhuman: they question the nature and mutability of humanity. William Meyers, commenting on a modern stage interpretation of *Metamorphoses* argues that Ovid tells us that "the final transformation is not out of the human condition but when we are made human" (Meyers, 58). The beauty of transformation lies within the lyrical quality of Ovid's text, and the power of the words' sound to emphasize the sense of their meaning. The ability to present life's contradictions in a way the reader can accept lies at the root of *Metamorphoses*'s strength: in changing, characters remain the same, and in remaining the same, characters inevitably change. Characters transform according to their natures, freezing them forever in a single aspect of themselves, and in becoming no longer human, their essential suffering amplifies their inherent humanity (Meyers, 58). The narrator of Joyce's story "Araby", however, is trapped within his youthful shame, both humanized by his lifelong suffering, and dehumanized in the single aspect of his persona defining his entire life.

In Mr. Doran's moment of Catholic guilt, Joyce depicts him as a child caught in a fib and attempting to lie his way out of trouble, for as much as his speech mirrors a Confession, he never truly acknowledges responsibility for his actions. Brown and Castle write that "[s]elf-confession thus becomes a way of repetition compulsion, a form of ritualistic memory associated with the affect of anxiety", indicating the self-calming mechanisms by which Joyce's characters cope with their situations (Brown and Castle, 149). The Confessional aspect of Doran's attempt to

unburden himself of his guilt recalls the Catholicism of Ireland which compels the empty ritual of confession (Brown and Castle, 146). In a confession, the unburdening of sins to a priest presents an image of repentance, be it heartfelt or not. In actuality, it seems rather that Mr. Doran seeks to glorify his role in the denouement of his life. Brown and Castle's definition of self-confession as repetition compulsion reduces Mr. Doran to his basic anxieties as a man worried about his reputation. Mr. Doran's inability to see himself beyond his role in Mrs. Mooney's plot indicates his paralysis, a state that Joyce accuses Ireland of fostering, for Mr. Doran is myopically worried about his immediate situation, not concerned about the emasculating implications of a culture which empowers women to blackmail men into wedlock. Because of his inability to see his situation for what it truly is, Mr. Doran is unable to change it, trapped by his own blindness to a culture which Joyce claims encourages and breeds national stagnation. Brown and Castle's reading of "The Boarding House" illuminates the psychology of humans in which living blind to the role one might play in his or her own suffering. Mrs. Mooney and Cupid are both agents of sexual repression despite being different genders, and prove that men and women alike are capable of destroying others' lives through meddling with their emotions and constraining their actions. The two couples ultimately fail to liberate themselves from the fates decided for them by Mrs. Mooney and Cupid, and the stories conclude with the sense that the matches will stand, but at the cost of the lovers' happiness.

In the story of Apollo and Daphne, culpability is also never truly acknowledged. Rather, Cupid - or Love - remains behind the action after having done his part to instigate the rape by proxy. Apollo - Reason itself - never recognizes his lust-driven actions as Cupid's arrow, instead assimilating his irrational need for Daphne into the rationality by which he lives. Self-confession acts here as a simultaneous emotional unburdening and emotional excess just as it does in "The

Boarding House.” At the story’s end, Apollo no longer embodies Reason when he implores the laurel tree to believe in his love, but attempts to use reason to feed his emotional servitude to love. In these last moments of the story, Apollo not only gives himself over to the emotions of love and infatuation, but he also enslaves his famed reason to them, “logically” claiming that in wearing a crown of laurels always, he and Daphne can forever proclaim their devotion to each other. In these last moments, Ovid inverts reason and emotion within Apollo, questioning whether humans are inherently reasonable, or whether they simply use reason to justify irrational emotions which they feel.

Just as Apollo supports his infatuation with the reason which is his nature, Araby’s young narrator sustains his delusions with his need for suffering to prove his right to move within the mature world defined by passion. “Araby”’s boy narrator presents his actions as separate from himself, “projecting the image of vanity outside of himself, the boy removes responsibility for his own behavior, taking instead responsibility for the vision” (Conrad and Osteen, 80). This separation of reality from perception allows the narrator to remove himself from his actions and absolve himself of responsibility for the consequences of them. Conrad and Osteen’s reading of “Araby” assists my own reading of the story in seeking out a demarcation between Irish culture and the individuality which the boy is attempting to build for himself. The boy imposes an emptiness upon the girl’s life which he can fill, rather than seeing one in himself which he would like to fill. In viewing himself as completing the girl, the narrator imagines himself as necessary to her life, rather than negligible (Conrad and Osteen, 73). Apollo conceives of Daphne as intrinsic to his being just as “Araby”’s narrator does Mangan’s sister. Projecting their desires for someone to both complete and validate their existence, these protagonists rationalize their actions in the language of love, and prove again the emptiness within themselves. Failing to

finding fulfilment within themselves, Apollo and “Araby”’s narrator attempt to fill their interior vacuums with fantasies of beautiful women to define who they are as males.

Joyce approximates for the reader through his language, the anguish of “Araby’s” young narrator. He accomplishes this in being ambiguous about what age the narrator is experiencing this shame at, and whether it truly is related to his failure with the girl, or whether his shame is a result of being a member of a repressed class, judged by the outsiders at the bazaar. Margot Norris notes that Joyce uses language “[n]ot to describe an experience, but so far as possible to duplicate it” (Norris, 45). When the narrator describes how he “pressed the palms of [his] hands together until they trembled, murmuring: “O love! O love!” many times” (25), he acts out the motions of prayer to the point of shaking in place. Joyce doubles the narrator’s words for the reader to hear the repetition before saying that this statement was repeated. This creates the sense of praying in the dark in the hopes that God is listening. The ambiguity that Joyce creates in the last lines of the story encapsulates the narrator’s difficulty in understanding his own emotions, both as a youth and as a grown man. The painful transition from childhood to manhood is still felt by the adult narrator, remembering not just his youthful follies, but re-experiencing them in a cycle of embarrassment which grows with each remembrance.

“Araby” is acted out and constructed within a world of closed blinds and darkened streets (Conrad and Osteen, 71). The narrator’s youthful moment of clarity occurs in the night time’s end of the bazaar, and his memory of this moment years later is felt through the embarrassed lens of a shame so acutely felt that the older narrator can only re-experience it in his attempt to relieve himself of its pain. Unfortunately, with each recalling, the story only reminds the narrator of his shame, and without a moment of clarity akin to his youthful epiphany of shame, the grown narrator has no method by which to extricate himself from his cycle of shame. Norris “suggests

that this story will be illuminated by blindness” (Norris, 46-47). The oxymoronic nature of blindness illuminating anything suggests that the thing being illuminated is so normalized that the only way to see it differently is to not see it at all. It is only when the narrator is lost in the dying lights and sounds of the closing bazaar by which he sees his actions in relation to himself, and in which he experiences the shame of his actions. The illuminating blindness remains for he is now trapped in his pubescent moment of shame long into his adulthood.

The narrator of “Araby” shows the reader who he is when he reveals who he thinks Mangan’s sister is. In projecting his insecurities onto another, he makes them more indelibly a part of himself. Conrad and Osteen’s insights about “Araby”’s narrator projecting his desires outside of himself apply similarly to Ovid’s tale of Mercury and Herse, a reinterpretation from earlier myths. Before Ovid, Aglauros and Herse both peered inside Athena’s basket that they were charged with guarding, and were driven mad in punishment, and flung themselves off of a cliff to their death. Ovid’s Herse is obedient to Athena’s commands while Aglauros alone opens the forbidden basket, and Aglauros must violate another of Athena’s possessions before going mad with envy and ossifying in punishment. Mercury imagines Herse as completing him and validating his sense of self-importance, just as the narrator of “Araby” fantasizes about a girl he barely knows, picturing her as completing him in ways he can only imagine. The fantasy of the unknowable pervades both “Araby” and “Mercury and Herse” both, questioning where human vanity ends and where rote enactment of cultural tropes begins.

Both Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and James Joyce’s Dubliners speaks to the struggle to both change while still retaining a sense of self. Ovid and Joyce are connected in their utilization of past myths and stories as material to create new stories about age-old struggles. (Porter, 473) *Metamorphoses* and Dubliners present the reader with a mirror in which she may recognize her

own actions, providing the opportunity to decide to change, or to stay the same. In her article “The Metamorphoses of *Ulysses*,” Ariella Freedman builds upon the acknowledged inversion of social order within Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* which transform hidden human emotions into flamboyant immortal transgressions. While agreeing with Porter, I also think that the stories of the *Metamorphoses* which she describes expand on the strictly physical transformations of the original myths to internal changes of character’s minds and psyches. The stories which Ovid inherited are not the stories which he returns to the reader, but are themselves metamorphosed. Ariella Freedman aptly raises a question I have about whether it is valid to juxtapose Ovid and Joyce. She asks whether to do so is to read too much into the literature, asking “[o]r is it fair to treat Ovid as a significant echo, and as a locus for a sustained allusive play and stylistic interplay in the text?” (Freedman, 85). Ultimately, Freedman leaves it to the reader to trust in the blatant Ovidian influences in Joyce’s works, and to appreciate the metempsychosis from the ancient into the modern. Similarly, I feel that Ovid and Joyce’s similar intentions of reinventing older works results in their own reimaginings, and validates a comparative reading of some of their stories alongside each other. The verbal excess and ambiguity taps into the metamorphosis of human psychology which draws upon the past to create a sense of the present.

Ovid and Joyce present the struggle between fate and free will in the guise of men and women in conflict with themselves and society. In *Metamorphoses* and *Dubliners*, we see the simultaneous paralysis and metamorphosis of the expression of characters’ humanity. Taken separately, these representations of change - or the inability to change - speak to the cultures against which these characters are struggling, cultures with strictly defined social codes against which one did not transgress without punishment. As a whole, however, these stories question the contradictory human compulsion to change and to remain the same. In Daphne’s attempt to

remain forever chaste, she is transformed into a laurel tree. In Aglauros's attempt to augment her circumstances, she was ossified in her own envy. Mr. Doran and the narrator of "Araby" are unable to see their situations for what they are, and as a result, they are constantly remanded to their initial, impotent state.

This thesis was my first foray into comparative analysis, and similar studies could be made between Ovid's "Echo and Narcissus" and Joyce's "A Painful Case". I was only interested in reading these stories for potential stylistic relationships between how the two authors presented their views of their cultures. I am not versed in the history of Ovid's era, nor am I an expert on early twentieth-century Ireland. Further study could be made to better compare these authors' works in regards to their cultures and time period, but that is work for another day.

Araby

Then, for the sudden sketchwork of a moment,
 a ground of contrast's painfully prepared,
 to make us see it. For they're very clear
 with us, we that don't know our feeling's shape,
 but only that which forms it from outside.

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*, Elegy #4, trans. J.B. Leishman

In his *Duino Elegies* in praise of the Hero, Rainer Maria Rilke supposes that seeing oneself as others do is an extraordinary feat for ordinary human beings. So too does Joyce question the possibility of people seeing themselves as they truly are and - even more extraordinarily - accepting responsibility for themselves and their future. The narrator of "Araby" tells the events of his youthful discovery of lust, but through the more mature perspective of his grown self. The distance from his youthful actions allows the narrator the opportunity to see himself and his actions as others might. The narrator concludes the story by telling the reader that "[g]azing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger" (30). Although the narrator says that he "saw" himself, he did so while looking into the darkness, void of light and reason, once again imbuing his story with an ambiguity of whether he felt this shame as a youth or a grown man. In this moment, the young narrator blinds himself in this darkness with his own tears, staining his vision with the pain of what he sees. This secondary veiling of sight works within the boy, as the night blinds him from without. Further, it is unclear whether the grown narrator still feels the weight of this shame, and whether it is directed at realizing the futility of trying to win

Mangan's sister, or at last understanding that he is but acting the role of the lover as society dictates he ought to.

The reader learns neither the boy's name nor the girl's names; they are only known to the reader as the narrator and as Mangan's sister. The anonymity of the characters further enables the narrator to impose his will upon the girl who has no identity outside of her brother and her young would-be lover. The narrator of "Araby" presents himself from the start as being separate from the boy he once was, attempting to possess his past actions with his evolved self-awareness.

When peeping through his blinds at the neighbor girl, the boy narrator sees her as Other: a creature wholly separate from himself. As the young narrator watches the girl, the reader has the opportunity to peep at the young voyeur with equal curiosity. In recollecting his pubescent fixation, the older narrator who is telling the story appropriates once again an aspect of the girl's identity over which she has limited control: how others choose to see her. As the narrator chooses the words by which the girl is seen by the reader, he puts himself in a position of power as the creator of this story. The narrator expresses a sort of shame in recalling his youthful passions. Secondary to hurt, shame is the mind's way of coping with the poisonous primary emotion. The depth of the narrator's shame is grossly out of proportion to the experience of embarrassing himself over a girl, and sours the reliability of the narrator's description, both of himself and the vehicle of his shame: the neighbor girl.

Failure of vision opens the story: "North Richmond Street, being blind, was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brothers' School set the boys free" (23). Failure of sight extends beyond the immediate street to the young narrator hiding behind the blinds from Mangan's sister. The blind street on which he lives conceals the goings-on of the street from the world just as surely as the blinds behind which he hides conceals him from the doe-brown

neighbor girl. Even while the girl is blind to her young admirer who is currently crouching behind the half-cracked blinds, the boy is blind to the institutions that guide not only how he learns to express his feelings, but also just what sort of feelings he is expected to have.

In the second paragraph of the story, the narrator assumes proprietary ownership of the domicile while simultaneously reinforcing the ubiquity of religion in his home: “[t]he former tenant of our house, a priest, had died in the back drawing-room” (23). Although this house now belongs to the narrator’s family and by extension the narrator himself, the home maintains its identification as a priestly residence. The priest who so charitably left his earthly possessions for his sister to sort out lived in the house until his own death. His presence lingers in the house, giving future tenants the knowledge that a man of God had drawn his final breaths there. Although free from the daily clutches of his Catholic education, the knowledge that a priest had previously resided in the same space forces the man to remain always in the shade of the Church. The narrator divulges that, “He had been a very charitable priest; in his will he had left all his money to institutions...” (23). In the ideal of the Church, over the course of his life, a man of God ought to redistribute any wealth which comes his way rather than hoarding it until his death. In the Catholic Ireland which Joyce describes, the priest’s inability to distribute his possessions while he was alive is celebrated as virtuous in his posthumous good intentions. The narrator’s suggestion that the priest had a sizable amount of money to will to charity plants the seed of uncertainty as to whether the priest abided by his vows to serve God, as he certainly did not give up his earthly possessions in his service.

The story focuses more upon the boy’s unawareness of himself and his own desires, rather than what he does or does not know of Mangan’s sister. Within the sightless Catholic community, he is unable to see his actions for what they truly are: self-serving and masturbatory.

He must go outside of his cultural neighborhood to the bazaar to break his routine of ignorance, and he only goes there because the girl of his infatuation spoke to him of it. The bazaar is unknowable in its foreign nature and beautiful in its gaudiness, just as Mangan's sister is unknowable in her distance from the narrator and beautiful in her simplicity.

The narrator's sublimated shame redirects the story from his own actions until the story's end, and remembering recounting the rosary beads of his youthful indiscretions, the older narrator continues to give in to his former shame and to acquiesce to his culture. By focusing upon the means by which he attempts to express himself, the reader sees himself through the lens of the girl and the bazaar. Only when he can step outside of himself and his environment can the narrator experience the force of his shame. The narrator recounts his boyhood actions as if done by another, distancing himself from the shame that permeates his memory. He is not unburdening himself as in *Confession*, but rather describing his former routines with no indication of any personal investment in his own words. The distance he thus creates, however, does not absolve him at all, for he never acknowledges any transgression in need of absolution. The flush of shame the boy experiences at the end is the shame of realizing his self-delusion, and perhaps shame that others have recognized it as well. The words and vision which previously gave him power over the girl are now directed at himself, and if the older narrator still reacts to this experience with his boyhood shame, one must wonder if Mangan's sister was the true source of it, or merely representative of a larger suffering.

The indelibility of religion throughout the street and house and the culture beyond haunts the narrator throughout the story. The narrator's obsession with his sins becomes a sort of mental masturbation refocusing his attentions always upon his lustfulness. The narrator is not in love with the girl, but with a vision of her; he is not even in lust with his idea of her as much as

with his ideas of how he would romance her. Not wholly aware of his own thoughts and feelings, the young narrator holds the girl accountable for ideas and emotions she likely never entertained. In projecting his own desires for romance and sex upon his neighbor, the mature narrator holds up his own actions as a mirror for the reader, who has no room to judge him for his faults, having surely committed them herself.

The narrator formerly indulged in watching his neighbor from afar and hidden low to the ground (Conrad and Osteen, 74). Distanced now by time instead of a blinded window, the narrator continues to recall how her hair flowed down her back in a braid against her light blue dress. Holding onto this memory which climaxes in the dark among people far more worldly than he, the narrator spins himself into a self-perpetuating connoisseur of shame and lust, unwilling to part with the memory which also empowered him to see women as culture sees them, and to show others how to see them in this way. Remembering constantly his young discovery of lust and women, the narrator works himself to an insatiable frustration, and finishes his memory always with feeling his cheeks burn in the dark of the bazaar and his mind.

The boy's former enactment of the role of the besotted lover worshipping the beautiful girl for whom he "pressed the palms of [his] hands together until they trembled, murmuring: *O love! O love!* many times" (25) ties him into the larger tradition of romantic idealism. His worship of this unattainable girl who gets sent to retreats with her convent initiates him into the world of romance. The narrator acts out the role of worshipping a lady on a pedestal, and the girl he chooses to so worship reveals the man that he thinks he is. If this doe-like neighbor girl is worthy of such exalted praise, then perhaps the young narrator was himself worthy of giving her such praise. In glorifying his neighbor's presence, the narrator elevates himself by winning her in his mind.

Expounding upon the virtue and beauty of his infatuation, the narrator tells the reader, “[b]ut my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires” (25). Even in retrospect, the young narrator continues to revel in the supposed romance of his boyhood infatuation. He objectifies himself in the folk-idea of Ireland as a harp to be played upon, singing only under another’s fingers. The narrator circuitously obsesses over his neighbor whose beauty plays upon his emotions as fingers on harp strings, encouraging the narrator to think of himself and his love on the grand, mythological scale to the point of excess. In the narrator’s personal construction of the romance story, Mangan’s sister alone has the power to draw unwilling sounds from him, speaking of wet dreams and fumbling masturbation when he confides the sounds this beautifully distant girl unknowingly draws from him. This scene offers itself as one of masturbation with the young narrator lying upon stomach, peeking through half-opened blinds as he awaits the object of his lust. The older narrator relates his younger habit in words which can only be sexually interpreted: hidden behind the portal to the outside world, the boy daily anticipates the arrival of his fantasy, striving always to come out the door with her, before passing by and leaving her in his wake. Behind the half-opened blinds crouches a young boy just beginning to learn about his sexuality, and behind the facade of streets and houses in Dublin lie the prurient needs to become a part of the world. Every day he chooses to play the role of unrequited lover, whether in action or in memory, makes it easier to do so by force of habit.

The girl having been described, the older narrator proceeds to tell us, “Every morning I lay on the floor in the front parlour watching her door. The blind was pulled down to within an inch of the sash so that I could not be seen. When she came out on the doorstep my heart leaped. I ran to the hall, seized my books and followed her” (24). The image of laying prostrate outside the window makes a mockery of morning prayers the young Catholic would be expected to offer

to God. Peeking through the blinds in anticipation of the virginal female, the young narrator spent his mornings not in the worship of the holy spirit, but in carnal admiration of the young neighbor girl. The regularity of these past events indicate not only the consistency with which this would occur, but also the repeated retelling of them by the narrator to himself. The morning ritual of putting off leaving for school until Mangan's sister has stepped out of her door reads like rosary beads, for "[t]his happened morning after morning" (25). In retelling this story to the reader, the narrator is building upon the former habit of waiting for the image of his obsession with reliving them in his mind in memoriam of his youthful lust. The boy's ritual of following the object of his lust imparts a sense of power, while the grown man's continued recollection of his past indicates a sort of helplessness in the face of a directionless anger and an endless shame. His ritual of self-confession is a search for absolution. As if each retelling were a Hail Mary, the narrator wallows in his shame and young lust rather than choosing a path unpaved by his own past and minimally dictated by culture.

The young narrator invokes the common Irish identity forged by the Celtic Twilight in reaction to the continued presence of English colonization, playing with his culture's mores just as he does his own memory. In reaching for the romantic image of the Irish harp as played by the young woman, the young narrator envisions himself as the object of worship being played upon. This role reversal of lover and loved one mirrors a desire for power reversal of colonizer and colonized. The young narrator's conception of himself as a harp also indicates a desire to be played upon and with, putting him at the mercy of the harpist, or, as it were, Mangan's sister. Besides the cultural connotations of the harp's representation of Ireland, a harp is also a many-stringed instrument which demands time and attention to keep in tune but that is also capable of creating such beautiful sounds. Just as Joyce focuses upon the earthly remains of the priest's

posthumous existence to define the narrator's boyhood home, the boy's desire to be worthy of the attention and love paid to the instrument of Ireland can be read as a desire not only for sexual congress with his beautiful neighbor, but also as the desire for acceptance by his community.

The older narrator who is telling us the story is relating the events of his childhood with sufficient distance to have told them to himself repeatedly over the years in an attempt to better understand them. The older narrator owns his actions, describing just how he and Mangan would dodge her attempts to call the boys in at the end of the day from the, "waiting for [them], her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door" (24). The boys hide in the shadows while watching the portal back into domesticity which Mangan's sister holds open for them.

Dispensing with the shame his culture demands of him and laying down the recitations of the past to create something new in the future would thrust him into an as-yet undefined path with no signposts to guide him. Each time he tells his story only reinforces the shame it draws from him, but at least it is a familiar shame, not a foreign terror. Whether the narrator is aware that the opportunity for change hinges upon whether he is merely recounting the shame of his youth, or whether he has been drawn back into his own story and still sees himself "as a creature driven and derided by vanity" (30). Unconsciously borrowing the language of St. Augustine's Confessions, the narrator's disgust with his actions could refer to his self-delusion in trying to win the girl as easily as his disgust could be directed at his lust-driven actions. As this line could apply just as easily to the sin of lust as to the embarrassment for how he acted upon his lust, this line illuminates how the narrator is learning to see himself anew both as a youth and a grown man. The excessive echo of St. Augustine elevates the narrator's travails to the struggles of religious proportions and emphasizes how far from such suffering the narrator truly is. Whether the final line of the story indicates an epiphany for the narrator depends on whether he is still

consumed by the guilt his Catholic upbringing tells him he ought to feel, or whether he now sees himself outside of the culture of his youth to see himself as the trope of a Catholic Irishman.

Whether or not the narrator achieves an epiphany at the end of “Araby”, the final line offers the chance for an epiphany for the reader. Joyce presents the opportunity for the man to recognize the reality of his actions in reliving his boyhood shame: the narrator has the opportunity to either remain in his current stagnant state, or to attempt to change himself and therefore his status in his own eyes. These two opportunities hover in undecided suspension as the bazaar closes up for the night and leaves the young narrator stranded in a land devoid both of the other and the familiar. The narrator’s suspended opportunity to discover who he truly is gives the reader the same option: stay the course and suffer the consequences, or change anything and embrace the future.

Mercury & Herse

for there is no place on this stone,
that does not see you. You must change your life.

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Torso of an Archaic Apollo* trans. Cliff Crego

These lines from Rainer Maria Rilke's celebration of Apollo's strength of presence illustrate one reading of Ovid's retelling of Aglauros's ruination: Rilke's poem warns the reader that the tracts of one's life are overseen by reason. Ovid warns the reader that staying the course of these tracts can be one's damnation. Ovid's *Mercury and Herse* tells the story of the god Mercury's infatuation with the virginal Herse who is dedicated to the service of the goddess Athena. Focusing upon the machinations of Mercury and Athena, the mortal Herse and her sister Aglauros become mere puppets subject to the whim of the gods. Although the story begins with Mercury's desire for Herse, the story ultimately focuses upon Aglauros's lust for material property and her final punishment at the hands of Athena.

In a previous story the smith god tried to rape Athena, but she brushed his sperm off of her leg to impregnate Gaia, the Earth goddess. This child was kept in a basket and given to Aglauros and Herse for safekeeping, with the understanding that they would not look inside it. Aglauros looked. For her crime of disrespecting Athena's property, Aglauros is made to suffer the unrequited desire to be Mercury's bride. The personification of envy, Invidious's poison manages not to make Aglauros feel remorse for having a part in Mercury's attempt to steal Herse as his bride, but rather the burning anger at being but Mercury's sister-in-law. Athena's chosen punishment for Aglauros's insolence does not give Aglauros the opportunity to feel remorse for

her actions, for Athena was not after justice, but vengeance. The possibility that a mere mortal should assume any rights over Athena's property seems to have made Athena burn with the same envy with which she sought to infect Aglauros.

Mercury's aerial glimpse of Herse gave him the same lust for the forbidden object of desire that Aglauros experienced when she violated Athena's sacred mysteries. Being presented with a beautiful young virgin, Mercury's flight over the courtyard of Athena taunts him with sexual treats which are forbidden. The extended description of Mercury sighting and circling as a kite does upon sighting its prey implicitly likens Herse to the prey - either already or soon to be dead - being circled by the carnivorous raptor. Ovid tells the reader that "As you see swift kite, the entrails having been seen / while the prey is afraid, and the crowd of priests standing about the sacred things, / the greedy bird dares not to leave for long, / and flies around its hope with moving wings" (lines 716-719). Compared to an offering bled and laid out by priests devoted to a single god, Herse enters the story with a value equal only to mortals' bartering with gods and fate. Mercury initially sees her as a kite would an offering meant for the gods, and he intends to steal her as the kite would. Even as a kite would, Mercury must wait for the victim's protectors to turn their backs before swooping down. As the god's prey, Herse is valued only for her ability to satisfy his sexual appetite as carrion does the kite's gastronomical appetite. Even in his immediate lust for Herse's person, Mercury sees her sister as a means to achieve his end. In this, Herse and Aglauros are obstacles to be overcome in his great quest.

In Ovid's retelling of this myth, Mercury's machinations for Herse's sexual affections are superseded by the consequences of Aglauros's graspings for what will never rightfully be hers, transforming the focus of the story from the titular characters to Aglauros. While Mercury and

Aglauros vie for the reader's attention in this story, Athena struggles against the vanity of one human to claim any agency over another mortal's fate.

Just as Mercury enters the courtyard of the Lyceum dedicated to Athena in the hopes of gaining Herse, Aglauros enters her compact with Mercury guided by her desire for his promised treasures. Just as "Araby"'s narrator defines himself against the object of his lust, Mercury sees not Herse, but the most beautiful of Athena's devotees. The reciprocated love of this lusted-after girl would prove his own worth as a god, reflecting not her beauty or worth, but the god that Mercury believes he is worthy of such a jewel. When Mercury busily preens before lighting to the ground, he believes is worthy of this most beautiful virgin dedicated to the worship of Athena. "Although his faith in his looks are grounded, he does however take care to help it along. / He strokes his hair and arranges his robe, that it hangs properly, / that the whole golden hem appeared" (lines 733-5).

The homing flight of Mercury, winding upon itself, expresses his desire for Herse, now the fixed locus of his flight. Not only is Mercury unable to draw his mind away from his lust for Herse, he is unable to draw his gaze from her beauty. As surely as his eye is caught by Herse, so too is his previously straight flight made circuitous upon itself. Once following a straight line, the change which Mercury represents turns inward on itself, focused around the beautiful Herse. Herse's mere presence is enough to draw change around her, attracting Mercury's eye to her unavailability as much as to her beauty. When Mercury changes his straight path to a circular flight over his sought-for prey, he demonstrates the ability of a single object to deter a fixed course, and thereby initiate change in others without trying.

Ovid describes the personification of envy as Invidious, in whom "Laughter is gone, unless a witnessed suffering so moves her" (line 778). This creature who exists solely for the

vicarious pleasure of others' pain both hates and is hated by Athena, the Goddess Reason. Mutually detesting one another, Invidious and Athena represent aspects of humanity which make us human, but taken as they are make Athena and Invidious caricatures of human emotion. In this story, Ovid shows the reader what happens when these emotions conflict, and how they may act in concert with one another. Athena's willingness to use Invidious to accomplish her own ends brings into question to what extent Athena truly is ruled by reason. Further, Invidious's willingness to be used as Athena's tool for revenge illustrates the blind destructiveness of envy.

Even as Athena's potency as a god depends upon the respect of the mortals who prove her own immortality, Mercury's ability to seduce the elusive Herse hinges upon first seducing Aglauros with gold. The gods are dependent upon humans to re-affirm their higher status, for even the gods' immortality is defined against humans' mortality. Abiding by their own rules, the gods of Roman mythology both live by and disregard human conventions for society. In this, the gods act on human desires with lesser consequences than humans. Exploiting the structure of mythology, Ovid explores human desires and ambitions on a fantastical level and a grander scale.

Aglauros moves within the realms of the gods, interacting with deities and mortals alike. This allows the reader to better connect with the events of the story, throughout which Aglauros makes informed decisions which result in her downfall. Limited by her mortality, Aglauros gambles with her destiny when she makes compacts with the gods. Ovid's telling of this story questions for the reader the power any given human truly has over her life, if fate is constantly threatening one's life. Although Aglauros is affected by the presence of the gods, she still exercises the free will which confirms her humanity and pollutes forever her earthly existence. Aglauros functions as a proxy for the reader when she acts upon monetary greed and then is

punished by Athena with overwhelming emotional greed.

Just as Mercury homes in on Herse as his ultimate goal and Aglauros as his method of achieving her, Aglauros sets her sights upon the riches which Mercury proffers in exchange for her assistance in winning Herse. Once Aglauros's greed seizes her, Herse and Hermes become but means to her own ends. Ovid does not need to go greatly into detail with Aglauros's lust for gold, as he has already so clearly described Mercury's own lust for Herse. This parallel construction between Mercury and Aglauros's actions brings into high relief Athena's need for revenge upon Aglauros. For Aglauros's crimes both past and present against the goddess of war, Athena overcomes her animosity towards Invidious in the desire to infect Aglauros with the mortal disease of envy.

The three characters' courses of lustful striving for sex, riches, and revenge parallel each other in their all-consuming nature, and the lengths to which they will go in order to achieve their ends. The only truly passive character is Herse, functioning as the threatened property of Athena, coveted object of Mercury, and bargaining chip for Aglauros. Everything in the story hinges upon Aglauros, for as the subject of Athena's rage and acting as Herse's sexual contractor to Mercury, Aglauros has the power to effect change over not only her own life, but her sister's and the gods'.

If Athena views Herse as a collector of beautiful items might, Mercury sees her with the eye of a thief walking by these items on display. Neither of the gods nor Aglauros appears to have any trouble acting upon their desires, acting without any apparent consideration, save for their own ends. Only Herse, virginal devotee to Athena, refrains from acting upon any version of the lust experienced by the other three, but she is also the character against whom all the other characters act. In seeing Herse as little more than a means to their own ends, the three active

characters successfully seek to rob Herse of her self-agency, questioning just how much control a person truly has in the world. Herse is the only purely acted-upon character, the only one who is seen only from afar and through others' eyes. She is depicted as little more than a representation of purity in a world which seeks to rob her both of chastity and self-determination. For Herse and perhaps for the reader, agency may be nothing more than a silly human conceit in light of a world which could crush us in an instant. This is Aglauros's story because the gods' actions and Herse's fate hang upon her actions. Aglauros represents free will in a world which appears to be wholly fated. Herse's fate is controlled by the gods and those around her. Aglauros can make some decisions in her life, but the outcomes and results are out of her control. Herse and Aglauros represent the tension between the attempt to control fate and absolute passivity: neither affords control, but Aglauros has at least the illusion of it.

As the god of change, Mercury embodies caprice, both in temperament and in flight. Invidious, the personification of envy, is presented as a creature consumed by her own poison. The bearer of this infection, she suffers a bilious repulsion before Athena's glory in all its manifestations. "Indeed, she saw the unwelcome achievements of man and is withered away / by watching, and she tears apart and is torn apart / and she alone is her own arbiter" (lines 778-9). Acting as the arbiter of her own fate, Invidious's nature predisposes her to having such a visceral repulsion in the face of others' accomplishments. Although she has only herself to blame for her eternal spite towards others, it is also in her power to infect others with her malice, and make them just as miserable as she. Invidious both consumes and is consumed by envy, and she manifests this envy in the bodies of her victims. The initial sight of Invidious upon Athena's arrival is one of self-consumption, for she is afflicted with the very sickness which she spreads. The dark abode in which Athena finds Invidious is "Always absent of fire, this place [which]

abounds always with darkness” (line 764) illustrates the punishment to which Athena consigns Aglauros for her crimes. Just as Invidious is forever being consumed by the unfulfilled need to see suffering all about her, so too does Aglauros experience the immobilizing weight of her emotional infection.

Ovid describes the living embodiment of envy to the point of excess, emphasizing the destructive nature of envy not upon the one who is envied, but upon the one who envies another. The outward manifestation of Invidious’s envious nature impels her to live in the darkest valley, to nourish herself upon the body of snakes, and to comport herself upon a walking stick snaked with twisted thorns. Upon breaking down the door of Invidious’s abode, Athena “sees Envy / eating snake flesh, the food of her evils. / Athena turned her eyes from the things she saw and from Envy; to her Envy / rose slowly from the ground and relinquished / the bodies of her half-eaten snakes, and went forward with a sluggish step” (lines 769-772). Ovid describes Invidious in all her malignant glory consuming the animal of humanity’s downfall, and moving with the slow inexorability of the poison which she spreads. The Invidious whom Ovid shows to the reader is chilling despite her slow pace, for having received her orders from Athena, “Envy seized her walking staff / which chains of thorns surround, and is covered by dark cloud, / and wherever she walks, she tramples all growth” (lines 789-791). Once Invidious has a target in her sites, the thorned staff and shadowy umbrage are reminiscent of the tenacity with which envy sinks into its victims and forever clouds their minds.

The unfulfilled lust of the narrator in “Araby” and Aglauros’s avarice in “Mercury and Herse” demarcate cultural boundaries which bind characters’ actions into the culture out of which they grow. Sight gives characters the tools to project the image they would like to see of themselves. Circumstances are ultimately outside of their control, and their ability to affect their

image is impotent in the face of these exterior forces. Trapped within a prison of her own avarice, Aglauros suffers a punishment equal to the life-long suffering “Araby”’s narrator reveals to the reader.

The Boarding House

“Did you really not know till now that joy is something terrible of which one is not afraid? One goes right through a terror to its very end: and that is just joy. A terror, of which one does not know even the first letter. A terror that one trusts. --Or were you afraid?”

-Rainer Maria Rilke, *From the Dream Book* trans. J.B. Leishman

The fourth story in James Joyce's Dubliners, “The Boarding House,” describes the romantic entanglement of a bachelor with the young daughter of the woman who runs the boarding house in which he stays. At face value, this story describes the social mores which impel Mr. Doran to do right by Polly's virtue and marry her, especially when confronted by Polly's mother, Mrs. Mooney. Joyce questions the blindness with which people follow these social constructs. Mrs. Mooney exploits her position as the mother of a ruined daughter, while Mr. Doran laments her entrapment of him into marriage with Polly. The machinations of the characters display less a devious storyline than bland conformity to idealized conventions.

Mrs. Mooney - The Madame - could not have been blind to what was going on between Bob Doran and her daughter. She found Polly work outside of the boarding house, but failing to have been properly accosted by single men at her workplace, Polly was returned once more to wading through bachelors in need of room and board from her mother. Rilke's definition of joy as the ability to perceive beauty within terror likens beauty to the sublime. Characters' implicit trust in the virtue of their actions and the absence of joy indicate an underlying terror of Dublin society.

At the beginning of the story, Polly sings, “I'm a ... naughty girl. / You needn't sham: You know I am” (59) introduces the reader to the simultaneously private and public aspect of

performing in which Polly sings these potentially intimate words to a roomful of people. A sham typically refers to a fraudulent image with the intention of deceit, such as a person who presents different images of themselves to accomplish their own ends. Existing somewhere between her private and public selves, the Polly performing this song for the boarders is not necessarily the same Polly who gets involved with Mr. Doran.

Polly the girl who gets involved with Mr. Doran may have been an instrument of her mother, but she still has to live with the consequences of her actions. Polly, the singer, impregnates the situation with an expectation of fraudulence and sets up a situation in which the reader has difficulty discerning the integrity of each character's' actions. Joyce introduces the concept of deception in projecting an image of innocence and in accepting it, cuing the reader to expect a degree of deception throughout the story. The sham of a courtship between Polly and Mr. Doran bore the implicit approval of Mrs. Mooney when she did not intervene, indicating a promise to carry its facade of a relationship into the two lovers' future.

Mrs. Mooney was aware of her boarder's "corruption" of her daughter, for "[a]s Polly was very lively the intentions was to give her the run of the young men... Mrs. Mooney began to think of sending Polly back to typewriting when she noticed that something was going on between Polly and one of the young men. She watched the pair and kept her own counsel" (60). Were Mrs. Mooney truly interested in preserving her daughter's honor, she would not have kept her own counsel upon seeing that an intimate relationship was developing between a boarder and her daughter. The reader learns here that the value of Polly's job lies in the opportunities it presents to a man foolish enough to involve himself with her. Mrs. Mooney is intent solely on ensuring that Polly's honor is compromised enough to force a marriage.

Private moments as divulged by the narrator show the reader not only how the characters

want to see themselves, but also how they feel others should see them. In the bedroom scene when Polly is composing herself, there is no one for whom she could be performing, save for herself. Joyce, however, describes Polly's routine of self-composure as a pretence and a process of dissociation from the situation at hand, liberating herself from her unknown future. Polly distances herself from the bedroom and her memories of it when "She regarded the pillows for a long time and the sight of them awakened in her mind secret amiable memories" (66). Removing the passion from a traditionally passionate act sets her further from having to accept responsibility for her part in the exchange. Within the walls of the room which ought to be her private space, Polly continues to censor her memories and conceptions of her relationship with Mr. Doran. The distance from which she views the bed, not gazing nor looking at, but "regarding" the space in which she lost an aspect of her innocence. As if she is not permitting any true emotions to slip into her self-narration, Polly is shaping these memories to be impersonal and distant, for though they may be secret, they are "amiable," less a sexual association with her bed than platonic. Rather than embracing the situation for what it is and accepting responsibility for her actions, Polly distances herself from the ramifications of her actions. In denying the possible beauty in her situation leaves not joy, but the terror to live through.

Standing alone in her bedroom with only herself privy to her thoughts, the only reason for Polly to continue acting coy and innocent would be to convince herself that she is a virginal maiden. Performing her role as a marriageable young girl for herself as well as for respectable society, Polly's unconscious distancing of these memories also distances her from any culpability. If she can recall her memories of being with Mr. Doran in wholly innocent tones and as if they happened to another girl, Polly might be able to trick herself into believing that she is

the victim, and that her maternally-enforced marriage is the only way to preserve her dignity on the streets of Dublin.

Joyce presents Polly's memories of some sort of sexual relationship with Mr. Doran alongside the innocuous language which describes liaisons between the two. In doing so, Joyce portrays Polly as the virgin-whore, able to act out various sexual roles as the situation calls for. Joyce teases the reader with a moment of potential joy when Polly considers either the fact of her relationship with Mr. Doran or the success of her plan to coerce him into marriage. The root of Polly's nascent joy is akin to the uninhibited joy that Rilke describes of a terror which has been liberated of its ability to terrify. This terror is not masked into beauty as a divine experience, but is the bare experience of the world which Polly must encounter. Considering what could be the overwhelming consequences of a youthful mistake, Polly's language reveals how she chooses to see her own role in her own fate. Faced with the uncertainty of her future, Polly must act, even if through an utter failure of action. Whether she acts with or out of fear depends upon the level of her complicity in the marriage into which Mrs. Mooney forces her and Mr. Doran.

The glimpses that Joyce gives the reader of Mrs. Mooney and Mr. Doran displays the self-calming mechanisms by which they prepare for the upcoming confrontation, betraying their restlessness to the reader. The basic plot of the story is crude and unrefined, but the characters inflate their roles to believe themselves to be greater than they are. Mr. Doran appears on the edge of a panic attack when remembering Mrs. Mooney's confrontation of his meddling with her only daughter, feeling again "against his shirt the agitation of her bosom" (64). Asking himself the words demanded of him by Polly, Mr. Doran despairs of his future, "echo[ing] her phrase, applying it to himself: *What am I to do?*" (65), placing himself in the traditionally more feminine role of needing to be rescued from an overwhelming situation. Incapable of ignoring the terror of

his situation to enjoy love and heady uncertainty, Mr. Doran embraces panic, despairing of being tied at last to a home and a wife, concerned equally about his reputation as a decent man as he is about needing to marry in order to preserve it. His panic further informs the role Mr. Doran imagines for himself in which he is more than a man who has been deceived into marriage by a young girl's mother. Joyless now, Mr. Doran has little choice but to acquiesce to Mrs. Mooney's demands and pray for his future to improve. No longer the active suitor of the loved one's affections, Mr. Doran is now locked within the passive role of one acted upon who sees only the uncertainty of the future and senses the impotence of his actions. The reader knows that Mr. Doran uses Polly's despairing words in his own situation because the narrator comments upon their parallel situations. Mr. Doran, however, appears to be blissfully unaware of his lack of control over his own fate. Mr. Doran yields his fate over to Mrs. Mooney, and he is trapped in an inescapable situation because he does not recognize that he can escape. This inability to affect his own fate is due in part to not acknowledging that he is partly to blame for it. He sees only the terror of his future, barely remembering the joy of his Polly's embrace.

In the story's chronology, Polly's breakdown with Mr. Doran that the narrator describes to the reader could have been a personal catharsis to her situation, resolving her distress into the moment in her bedroom when she views her bed with a distanced calm. Polly is essentially mute, shown to the reader only as a reflection of her actions and leaving few clues by which to discern her intentions. Her distressed weeping in Mr. Doran's arms and asking out loud what she is to do acknowledges her situation, ultimately allowing her the placid face to present to herself and her situation. Viewed against each other, the scenes of Polly weeping on Mr. Doran's breast and of collecting herself in private allow the reader a kindlier reading of Polly's character, planting the

possibility of Polly beginning to acknowledge that actions have results, and she must live with hers.

During the “interview which [Mrs. Mooney] had had the night before with Polly... Polly had been made awkward not merely because allusions of that kind always made her awkward but also because she did not wish it to be thought that in her wise innocence she had divined the intention behind her mother’s tolerance” (61). Primarily, the narrator describes Polly not of having an active reaction to her mother’s topic of conversation, but being “made” to feel awkward with it. In this, Polly has no control within her own life, relying on other people to even be discomfited by a situation. This conversation between mother and daughter took place after clearing the table of the bread pudding and other food scraps, free from the prying eyes of the boarders and staff. As Polly is concerned with preserving the appearance of her “wise innocence” with her mother, the plan to irreconcilably involve Mr. Doran with her was not openly discussed, and perhaps not fully understood by Polly. Polly’s attempts to preserve the public aspect of her “innocence” in the face of her mother’s interrogation suggest that being made aware of the implications her dalliances with Mr. Doran upon her virtue, she must reconcile herself with her fate and guard herself against it.

The terror that Polly trusts is the machinations of her mother, from getting her into the workforce - ostensibly to bring in money - to returning her home to catch a husband. Polly ultimately begins to wield an unperturbed acknowledgement of the future that Mr. Doran lacks: the ability to hold in one hand her past and present, and the other her future. Her simultaneous grasping of various fates bends her to the will of her mother’s desires even as she molds her own desires to her mother’s. The desires of Mr. Doran are negligible to Mrs. Mooney, and his own terror in the face of his impending marriage even more so. The terror that Polly perceives in the

situation is cousin to the terror of Mr. Doran's fate, stripped of its sublime beauty. She learns to receive her own fate with acceptance, contrasting sharply with the horror with which Mr. Doran accepts his future wife and mother-in-law. Mrs. Mooney's manipulation of both her daughter and boarder's lives forces both the young girl and the grown man to accept the consequences of their actions. The control Mrs. Mooney wields over their lives is terrible to both Polly and Mr. Doran, and without the veneer of the sort of affection which can sustain a marriage, there is no sublime beauty in the situation the lovers find themselves in, only terror.

Apollo & Daphne

“And now he has no covering. And he is naked as a saint. Shining and slender.”

-Rainer Maria Rilke, *Love and Death of Cornet Christoph Rilke* trans. J.B. Leishman

Cupid was born with the power to influence the emotions of others, and with the wings to carry himself above the earth. The nymph Daphne is inextricably bound to the earth, able to direct her fate only through cajoling her father. The daughter of a river, Daphne has the freedom to enjoy her chaste life long enough to catch Apollo's eye and transform into a tree.

Cupid has two arrows: the one “which begins love is gold and glitters brightly at its point” (line 470) proves Apollo's weakness against emotions despite his fame as the god of Reason. When the arrow “which dispels love is dull and has lead beneath the arrow shaft” (line 471) causes Daphne to repulse Apollo's advances, Cupid disproves Apollo's assertion that his fate lies purely within his power. Free neither to choose nor woo the girl whom he falls for, Apollo cannot even get close enough to speak to the object of his affections without terrifying her. With the imposition of Cupid's will upon Apollo and Daphne, they are both stripped naked of their will to act towards each other as they would have without Cupid's intervention. Daphne never has a greater purpose than teasing Apollo, and possesses no more agency than Apollo does when he is struck by Cupid's dart. The chase concludes with Daphne rooted in her flight and Apollo forever chasing a girl who is now a laurel tree. Thanks to Cupid, both Apollo and Daphne are grounded forever to earth and each other.

Ovid's story of Apollo and Daphne's cupidic chase implicates not only Apollo's submission to the excesses of male hormones, but Cupid's prurient desire to punish Apollo as he is wont. Daphne is little more than a means of Apollo's punishment. Cupid's arrows strip both

Apollo and Daphne of their sense of self, impelling them to act not according to their needs, but rather to externally-imposed desires. Having been stripped of any power over herself, at the close of the story, Daphne relies upon her father to provide her with a permanent new covering from Apollo's gaze. Ovid's excessive description of Cupid's aerial flight and of Apollo's pursuit of the terrified Daphne draws attention beyond the story and deeper into the drama of it. Through his language, Ovid parallels the gods' pursuit and the girl's fear of capture, showing that each character can only act according to his or her means. All the characters' actions are intertwined with one another, affecting others as uncontrollably as fate might. Cupid controls the emotions Apollo and Daphne feel for each other, but neither Apollo nor Daphne have any control over their own actions, or how their actions will affect the other. Apollo gives chase and Daphne flees, but both god and mortal are trapped in their tangle of fate and free will as surely as they are to each other.

Ovid places Cupid in the shadow of the gods' mountain when "into the air struck by his beating wings / [Cupid] pierces the shade of Mt. Parnasus with his dart" (lines 364-365). The image of the air around Cupid being "struck by his beating wings" calls attention to Cupid's aerial prowess. The violence inherent in Cupid's flight is seen in the passively struck-down air about him and in his actively beating wings holding him aloft. The slight excess in so describing Cupid's flight calls attention to the means by which he stays afloat in the air. This focuses the story upon Cupid's influence upon the emotions of both god and mortal and his forcible seizure of their agency. In this moment, Ovid calls explicit attention to Cupid's flight which places him above Apollo spatially just as he surpasses the sun god in matters of love. Cupid's prowess with a bow had been called into question by Apollo's mockery when he told Venus's son to "Content yourself instead with inciting love in others - / something of which I know nothing, and seek not

our praises!” (lines 460-461). Taking Apollo’s arrogant advice, the revenge Cupid wreaks heeds Apollo’s own words while proving his prowess over the other god in less reasoned matters.

In demanding of Cupid how he dares to bear arms of any sort, Apollo insults Cupid’s status as a god: “How do you, lascivious boy, come to be with these powerful weapons?” (line 456). Apollo reminds Cupid that he is a young creature aspiring to godly status. The god responsible for the path of the sun, Apollo is the god of reason and claims to be above petty emotions such as love. Apollo acknowledges his ignorance of love not as a vulnerability, but rather with a degree of pride that he is untouched by such petty emotions. Apollo begins this story in a position of presumed superiority due to his physical and intellectual prowess, leaving one to expect the Sun God’s initial pride to fall upon its own weight. At the end of his pursuit for Daphne, Apollo seems in some ways to have been humbled by love. Apollo wins Daphne when she is unable to continue running from him. Despite his failure to claim her sexually he yet claims a sort of victory over her in his final words to her new form of the laurel tree.

Ovid couches Daphne’s flight from Apollo in terms nearly as violent as Cupid’s looming over the two lovers. At the height of Daphne’s escape from Apollo, “the winds uncovered her body, / and her exposed clothing quivered in the opposing winds, / and the air made light gave back her beaten-back hair, / and her fleeing beauty was made greater” (lines 527-530). Daphne runs into a wind which further strips her of her modesty, and throws her beautiful hair back into her face. This wind is created by Daphne’s flight, rushing through otherwise still air, and accentuates the forces which Daphne opposes in not yielding to Apollo’s advances. Ovid’s excessive description of Daphne fighting against the wind to flee Apollo recalls the words which suspend Cupid in the shade of Mt. Parnassus. Mt. Parnassus looming behind Cupid reminds the

reader of the love god's desire to be fully acknowledged as a god, and supports the deification of the story in the foothills of Mt. Parnassus.

As powerful as Cupid proves himself to be in inciting unrequited love, so too does Ovid display his control of language in the sound and syntax of the story. Thought to carry the voice of inspiration and wisdom, the winds, which uplift Cupid and holds back Daphne parallel the freedom they have to decide matters of love for themselves. Ovid describes how in the beginning of Daphne's flight, "She flees more swiftly than a light breeze, / not even responding to the one calling her back" (lines 502-503). These words imbue Daphne's flight with a beauty foreign to her mortality, capable of running faster than wind and invalidating her pursuer by not responding to him. The wind which eventually battles against Daphne's flight hearkens to the words which describe it, and Ovid lets his presence be known in his excessively descriptive language.

Further along in Apollo's chase, Ovid tells the reader that "Through many places the fearful nymph ran / and when she fled those imperfect words she left them with him, / then it was fitting for his sight; the winds uncovered her body, / and her exposed clothing quivered in the opposing winds, / and the air made light gave back her beaten-back hair, / and her fleeing beauty was made greater" (lines 525-530). Winds grow in strength throughout the story, exposing her beauty to Apollo's searching eye and upraising it to a yet more admirable beauty for him, culminating in Daphne's sudden failure to escape Apollo's words and hands. Ovid's winds push back against the fleeing nymph, and their recursive nature remind the reader that in telling the story, Ovid's words compel the reader to repeatedly note the futility with which Apollo and Daphne struggle against each other akin to their battles with the wind, both invisible and omnipresent. Flowing throughout the story within the poet's words, wind pushes against people who both flee from and toward something. The description of Daphne as swifter than a light

breeze is recalled when tendrils of her hair fly loose about her face. The words by which Apollo means to cajole her are as weak as these light breezes, lost in the chase and returned to the unwanted sender.

Apollo's initial arrogance in mocking Cupid's status as a divine being is expected. The god who controls the sun's path allows life to flourish on Earth, and Cupid is the young offspring of his lascivious sister. Cupid's poetic justice of enslaving Apollo to the unreasonable emotions of lust and love punishes not just Apollo, but also Apollo's initial arrogance towards Cupid. Under the influence of Cupid's arrow, Apollo loses his famed reason to mundane lust. Infectious love poisons even Apollo's faculties of sight, for his gaze over Daphne's beauty represents the stereotypical male gaze, viewing and judging the female body which it puts on display and imagining the flesh which is concealed from view. The clarity with which Apollo might otherwise have viewed Daphne has been colored with the taint of Cupid's love arrow, hanging a lens of lust over the first person to next cross Apollo's path: Daphne. The Daphne in Apollo's sight does not exist but for how she is seen by Apollo when "He sees her mouth, and is not / satisfied with seeing. He praises her fingers, her wrists, / her neck, and the unclothed flesh of her upper arms. / If parts of her were covered, he imagines them more beautiful" (lines 499-502). It matters not how beautiful Daphne truly is, for under the infection of love with which Apollo has been struck, Daphne is incapable of imperfection. Enslaved now through love to his image of Daphne, Apollo is no longer able to hold himself as superior to men who have fallen prey to a love. Apollo's newfound ability to love humanizes his immortal glory in his inability to evade Cupid's wrath.

The youthful Daphne whom Ovid shows the reader is so lovely that "Even as her crime of hating marriage and everything associated with it / her beautiful face was suffused with a

modest blush.” (lines 483-484). Guilty of wanting to live for herself and not be tied to a future husband, the young nymph’s desire to preserve her chastity becomes a crime. Daphne’s unwillingness to participate in marital traditions implicates her not as a victim, but as deserving to be remanded back to her feminine role. Her beauty becomes reason enough for men to forcibly take her chastity from her, as her father warns her when he tells her “Your beauty forbids you that virginity / which you so desire, and your beauty opposes you and your vow of chastity” (lines 488-489). Just as Daphne committed a crime in not wanting to be wed to any man, her beauty strove to prevent her from keeping the chastity that she desired to keep to herself. Her father was aware of that Daphne’s beauty would draw men to her like bees to honey, but ultimately it was not Daphne’s physical attractiveness which appealed to Apollo, but her inaccessibility.

Apollo’s mind amended his eyes’ failure to see the beauty of Daphne’s covered skin. The pursuit itself drew him to Daphne: unable to have her by charm, Apollo was reduced to attempting to win her by force. Failing even this, Apollo ultimately claims the physical remnants of Daphne’s body: the laurel leaves which he now wears as the symbol of victory. Apollo has been stripped naked of the Sun God’s omnipotence, driven to pursue of a girl as if he were any mortal man. Cupid’s arrows transform Apollo into a male driven only by his desire to satiate his sex drive. Daphne’s father had warned her of just such an attack from one would appreciate her beauty too much to leave her be. It matters not that Apollo is a god, but only that he is a male who wants what Daphne is unwilling to give. The story of Apollo and Daphne becomes the story of Daphne’s inability to live in the world of men.

Cupid represents the instigation of love and repulsion, flitting in the shadows and striking at will regardless of how these feelings will be accepted. Ovid illustrates the personification of

love's impetus in the god who is belittled and mocked by the god of reason. Reason has no use for love, nor love for reason, and this story shows what happens when reason and love collide.

This episode began with Cupid's desire to overwhelm Apollo's godly dignity with reasonless emotions. Daphne's reciprocated love which Cupid denies Apollo punishes the indignity with which Apollo treated his fellow god, but Apollo ultimately responds to his situation with the reason for which he is famed. The laurel tree into which Daphne's father transforms her ends her physical flight from the god while still preventing him from being able to sexually rape her. The final words Apollo speaks to the laurel tree promises her "Since you cannot be my wife, / you will certainly be my tree. Mine!" (lines 557-8). A mockery to Apollo's previous fears of Daphne scratching her legs or tearing her flawless skin upon the forest brush, Daphne now embodies the sylvan foliage. Although she can no longer flee Apollo's arms, Daphne's transformation denies Apollo lustful Apollo the consummation of his love, and he can now only conquer her by wearing her leaves as the symbol of his prowess. Even after Apollo fails to win Daphne's love, Apollo forever wears the proof of his affections upon his head in a false testament to his victory over Daphne.

In "The Boarding House" Joyce never intimates to the reader Polly's opinion on marriage, but instead shows how her mother connived to tempt and entrap men into marriage with Polly. The story ends with the impending marriage looming over Mr. Doran and being accepted by Polly, just as Ovid concludes his tale with Apollo and Daphne fated to be forever linked by Apollo's wearing of a crown of laurels as a symbol of his love for her. Mrs. Mooney finishes her story satisfied with the match she has arranged for her daughter, and although the reader does not see Cupid again after he has shot Apollo and Daphne with his darts, one can imagine that he was satisfied with the outcome. "Apollo and Daphne" concludes with Apollo and

Daphne trapped forever in their role of pursuer and pursued, proving over again that Daphne's father was correct when he informed her that marriage was in her future regardless of her feelings towards it. Polly and Mr. Doran act out the time-worn roles of seducer and seduced, only to be locked forever in them by Mrs. Mooney's plan. Both of these stories show characters acting out their roles in traditional relationships, only for outside forces to effect change upon them. Mrs. Mooney and Cupid both impress their wills upon the lovers, and immortalize their control over them in laurel trees and marriage licenses.

Ovid and Joyce compose worlds in which characters strive against each other and themselves, but ultimately are affected by outside influences more than their own intentions. Like Rilke's search for the divine in the mortal, Ovid and Joyce uncover the ordinary in the sublime. Ovid humanizes his gods and enables the reader to relate to his humans, while Joyce critiques the romanticization of Ireland that inhibits his Dubliners' growth. Fate is depicted by Ovid as the gods who work their will upon mortals, and by Joyce as the culture which shapes one's life. Although both authors describe fate as inescapable, the characters who try to effect control over their own lives may succumb to fate, but assert their humanity before they fall.

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Mercury & Herse

Line 708

The one bearing the Caduceus bore himself aloft on level wings, / and flying, was looking down on Munychian fields upon the earth / which was pleasing to Pallas Athena, and the cultivated fields of the Lyceum. / By chance, on that day chaste girls were carrying the pure, sacred things, / according to the custom, in garlanded baskets / on their way to the festive stronghold of Athena. / The winged god saw these chaste girls returning, / and flew not in a straight line, but curves in the same orbit:

Line 716

As you see swift kite, the entrails having been seen / while the prey is afraid, and the crowd of priests standing about the sacred things, / the greedy bird dares not to leave for long, / and flies around its hope with moving wings. / In this manner, above the Athenean Fortress, agile Mercury inclines / his course and he circles the circled air. / Just as Lucifer shines more brilliantly / than the other stars, and just as golden Apollo shines more brilliantly than Lucifer, / so too did Herse go before all the other virgins, / ahead of the grace of the parade, and of her companions.

Line 726

The one born of Jove, astounded by Herse's beauty, was hanging in the air, / burning no differently than when Balearic slings cast lead: / it flies and, growing hot under the clouds, / it discovers flames which it did not have before.

Line 730

Mercury turned about his journey from the abandoned heavens, and makes for earth. / He does not disguise himself: so much faith does he place in his beauty, / although his faith in his looks are grounded, he does however take care to help it along. / He strokes his hair and arranges his robe, that it hangs properly, / that the whole golden hem appeared, / arranges his staff in his right hand, which both leads and puts off sleep, / and that his ankle-wings glow upon clean feet.

Line 737

A secret part of the house had three women's chambers with marriage beds elegantly / adorned with ivory and tortoiseshell, of which you, Pandrose, possess the right, / Aglauros the left, and Herse the middle. / The one who holds the left chamber noticed first / approaching Mercury, / and dared to ask the name of the god / and the reason for his arrival. The descendent of Atlantis / and Pleiones responded thus: "I am he who carries the words / commanded by my father through the air, and my father is Jupiter himself.

Line 745

I will invent no reasons for my presence. O, would that you wanted to be so faithful to your sister / and to be called the aunt of my descendents: / Herse is the cause of my flight, and we pray that you support our love." / Aglauris saw the god with the same eyes / by which she gazed upon the hidden secret things of golden Athena. / Aglaurus demanded gold of a great weight for herself / for this service: thus she coaxes him to leave the dwelling.

Line 752

The goddess of war turned her gaze of fierce light to this sister / and drew breath with such emotion from deep within herself / that her heart beat violently within her strong breast / and equally disturbed her breastplate: it entered her mind that this woman opened with her profane hand / the sacred mysteries, then then when she saw again the given covenants / the offspring of the Lemnicola born without a mother, / and now the greedy woman was about to be earning favour from the god and from the sister, / and wealthy with the gold she had demanded.

Line 760

Immediately Athena sought out the filthy house of Envy / upon black rock: this home is hidden / in a deep valley, without sun, unpassable for any breezes, / and full of a cheerless and numbing cold. / Always absent of fire, this place abounds always with darkness.

Line 765

When the fierce warrior arrived at this place, she was full of dread / and settled before the house, for it was forbidden / to enter this place, and she beat the door post with her staff / until the beaten doors stood open. She sees Envy / eating snake flesh, the food of her evils. / Athena turned her eyes from the things she saw and from Envy; to her Envy / rose slowly from the ground and relinquished / the bodies of her half-eaten snakes, and went forward with a sluggish step.

Line 773

When she saw the goddess adorned with beauty and weaponry, / she sighed and drew the longed-

for face of the goddess. / A pallor sits in her face, and she is emaciated in all her body. / Nowhere is there a virtuous line, her teeth are filmed with rust, / her chest is green with bile, and her tongue is suffused with venom. / Laughter is gone, unless a witnessed suffering moves so moves her, / nor is there any enjoyment in sleep, excited as she is by constant worries. / Indeed, she saw the unwelcome achievements of man and is withered away / by watching, and she tears apart and is torn apart / and she alone is her own arbiter.

Line 780

However much Athena hated Envy, / she spoke briefly with her: / “Infect with your disease the one born of Cecrops: / this is your task. Aglaurus is she.” Hardly had she spoken more words / when Athena fled and with her attacking spear, she struck off the ground.

Line 787

The Invidious One, discerning the fleeing goddess with a slanted eye, / gave a small grumbling, and resolved success to Athena. / Envy seized her walking staff / which chains of thorns surround, and is covered by dark cloud, / and wherever she walks, she tramples all growth / and tears down the highest points of the grasses / and with her breath she pollutes peoples, cities, and houses. / Finally, Envy saw the Athenian fortress / flourishing with great works and great peace / and she can hardly hold her tears, because she sees nothing worthy of tears.

Line 797

But hardly had she entered the bed-chamber of the girl born of Cecrops / Envy executed her

orders and with her rust-colored hand touched the girl's breast / and filled her heart with hooked
 briars / and breathed noxious vapors into Aglauros, and spread darkness / through her bones, and
 scattered poison into the midst of her lungs, / and lest the causes of her evil stray widely through
 space, / she placed before her eyes her true sister and her fortune, / and she placed before
 Aglauros the god-spouse under a beautiful likeness / and she made all things great.

Line 805

The daughter of Cecrops was stirred to ire by these things, / and was bitten by a hidden sadness.
 Uneasy by night / and uneasy by day, she sighed and melted away with a slow wasting, / and like
 ice melted by an inconstant sun, / Herse is burned unkindly by the good things of happy Herse, /
 as when fire is placed beneath thorny weeds, / they give no flames and are burned with a mild
 heat. / Frequently Aglauros wants to die, lest she see any such things; / frequently Aglauros
 wants to tell her stern father of her crime, / and finally she sits in the opposite doorway so she
 could keep out the arriving god.

Line 815

To the one throwing entreaties / and the gentlest words and flatteries Aglauros cried "Stop! / I
 shall not move myself from this place unless I keep you out." / "Let us stand by our compact!"
 said the swift Mercury / and with his heavenly wand opened the doors: / to that one trying to lift
 parts of her body, bent by sitting, / with a sluggish gravity she is unable to move. / Indeed, she
 fights and struggles to raise herself, / but the joint of her knee stiffens, and a chill / slips through
 her fingers, and her veins pale with lost blood.

Line 825

And as an incurable cancer is accustomed to spreading evil widely / and to bringing together the uninjured parts with corrupt ones, / thus the mortal winter enters little by little / Aglauros's heart and windpipe, and shuts up her bloodways and airways. / She does not attempt to speak, and if she were to, / her voice no longer has a pathway: a stone now holds her neck, / and her countenance has hardened, and only a bloodless statue remains, / made not of white stones, for her mind has infected them.

Apollo & Daphne

Line 452

The first love of Apollo was Daphne, daughter of Peneus, granted not / by aimless fortune but by the wrath of Cupid. / The Delian one, recently made arrogant by his victory over the great serpent, / saw Cupid applying his strength to bend the bow to the tautened string, / "What?" he cried, "How do you, lascivious boy, come to be with these powerful weapons? / They are more fitting for our shoulders, / which inflict sure wounds upon wild beasts and to our enemy / we who by such fatal wounds across so many acres of stomach struck down / the great, swollen Python with innumerable arrows. / Content yourself instead with inciting love in others - / something of which I know nothing, and seek not our praises!"

Line 462

The son of Venus answered "[Though] you shoot all things, Apollo, my arrow shoots you," / he said. "And just as so many animals fall / before a gods, so too is your glory slight before our own." / This he said and into the air struck by his beating wings / pierces the shade of Mt. Parnasus with his dart / and from his load readies two arrows from his quiver to his bow, / each with a different purpose: that one flees from love, the other creates love; / that which begins love is gold and glitters brightly at its point; / that which dispels love is dull and has lead beneath the arrow shaft.

Line 472

The god fixed upon the Peneian nympe the leaden arrow, and with the other / struck the Apollan one through the marrow of his bones. / Immediately the Apollan one falls in love with the one who flees from the name of love / rejoicing in the hidden parts of the forest / and the spoils of wild animals, striving after the maiden: a ribbon encircled without restraining her hair. / Many sought after the girl, [but] she repulses / their impatient petitions and traverses the woods of her grandmother without men, / caring neither for Hymen nor Love, and not even for marriage. / Often her father said [to her]: "My daughter, you owe me a grandson." / Often her father said [to her]: "You owe me grandchildren, daughter of mine." / Even as her crime of hating marriage and everything associated with it / her beautiful face was suffused with a modest blush / and clinging to his neck with her alluring arms asked of him / "Give to me, dearest Father," she said / " my virginity to enjoy forever! Give this to me as Diana's father gave first to her."

Line 488

He yields this to her, but tells her "Your beauty forbids you that virginity / which you so desire, and your beauty opposes you and your vow of chastity" / Pheobus loves Daphne and wishes to marry her, / and that which he desires, he hopes for, and his vows to do so lead him astray. / Just as the light stubbles on the plucked ears of grain are burned, / just as the hedges burn by the torch, which by chance a traveler / moved either too much under the light or abandons, / thus the god is left in flames, and thus in all his heart / he is burned and by wishing [for it] he feeds the sterile love.

Line 497

He sees her unadorned hair hanging about her neck / and said "what if it were combed?". He sees her eyes sparkle / as if they were stars. He sees her mouth, and is not / satisfied with seeing. He praises her fingers, her wrists, / her neck, and the unclothed flesh of her upper arms. / If parts of her were covered, he imagined them more beautiful. She flees more swiftly than a light breeze, / not even responding to the one calling her back: / "Nymphé, I pray, daughter of Peneus, stay! I follow not as your enemy; / Nymphé, stay! If the lamb flees the wolf, if the deer flees the lion, / if the dove on quaking wings flees the eagle, / they flee their enemies: love is my reason to follow you! / O, my misery! I fear lest you fall ingloriously, or brambles mark your bent legs / and that I should be a cause of suffering for you! These places to which you flee are harsh: more moderately, please, / run, and cease your flight, and more moderately will I follow.

Line 512

"Ask, however, whom you please: I am not an inhabitant of a mountain, / nor am I a shepherd, nor am I the uncouth / guardian of a herd of cattle. You do not know, rash one, from whom you flee: the Delphic Land is mine / and Claros, Tenedos, and the Patarea court serve me; / Jupiter is my father; through me, [so much? everything?] has been, will be, / and is, revealed; through me songs are in harmony with strings. / Indeed, this all is ours, however one arrow is more sure than ours, / and made a wound in our carefree heart! / Medicine is our invention, we are said throughout the world / to be helpful, and the power of herbs is under our domain. / O me! for whom there are no curable herbs for love, / nor would such herbs be useful for controlling love, which controls all!"

Line 525

Through many places the fearful nympe ran / and when she fled those imperfect words she left
 them with him, / then it was fitting for his sight; the winds uncovered her body, / and her
 exposed clothing quivered in the opposing winds, / and the air made light gave back her beaten-
 back hair, / and her fleeing beauty was made greater. But indeed, the young god / could not
 endure losing her great beauty, and since Love itself / moved him, he followed the remains of her
 footsteps. / Just as the Gallic dog sees the hare / in an empty field, and the one seeks its prey on
 foot, the other safety; / one as one about to grasp the prey now, and now to hold. / He strives and
 by extending the end of his snout, grazes the hare's footsteps, / the other is in doubt, if it has been
 caught, and snatches itself / from bites and leaves behind the edge of the seeker's mouth: / just so
 do the god and virgin run, he with hope, and she with fear.

Line 540

He, however, follows upon the wings of love, / he is swifter and denies her rest and hovers over
 the back of the fleeing one / and his breathing scatters the hair on her neck. She fears being
 destroyed by the man and turns pale with dread / renewed strength the fleeing one sees the
 waters of her father / "Save me, Father!" she cries, "If your waters have the power, / by changing
 it, destroy this body which pleases too well!" Hardly had she finished her prayer when a heavy
 numbness took over her joints / her soft breast is encircled by the bark of a tree, / her hair
 changes into leaves, branches spring from her arms, / her feet so recently swift remained cleaved
 in sluggish roots. Her face has a point now: her beauty remains within her.

Line 553

Pheobus still loves this one and places upon her trunk his right hand. / He feels beating under her

new bark her heart / and embraces her branches as if they were limbs with his upper arms / and gives his mouth to her wood; however he pulls back his face from her bark. / To her the god said "Since you cannot be my wife, / you will certainly be my tree. Mine! My hair will always have / you, my lyres will have you, my country, my quiver will always have you, Laurel; / you will be there for the Latin generals, when a happy voice / sings Triumph and when great celebration sees the white Capital; / you will be able to watch the Capitol of Augustus with the great loyalty of a guardian / before the gates and will stand firm for the common good with your down of leaves. And as my head is bearded with young hairs, / you too will always bear the leaves of honor!" / the Healer finished: the Laurel only just moved her branches / and as if a not her head seemed to move its sphere.