

Vergil *Eclogue* 1 (=1-83): loeb translation

Meliboeus

You, Tityrus, lie under the canopy of a spreading beech, wooing the woodland Muse on slender reed, but we are leaving our country's bounds and sweet fields. We are outcasts from our country; you, Tityrus, at ease beneath the shade, teach the woods to re-echo "fair Amaryllis."

Tityrus

O Meliboeus, it is a god who gave us this peace—for a god he shall ever be to me; often shall a tender lamb from our folds stain his altar. Of his grace my kine roam, as you see, and I, their master, play what I will on my rustic pipe.

Meliboeus

Well, I grudge you not—rather I marvel; such unrest is there on all sides in the land. See, heartsick, I myself am driving my goats along, and here, Tityrus, is one I scarce can lead. For here just now amid the thick hazels, after hard travail, she dropped twins, the hope of the flock, alas! on the naked flint. Often, I mind, this mishap was foretold me, had not my wits been dull, by the oaks struck from heaven. But still tell me, Tityrus, who is this god of yours?

Tityrus

The city which they call Rome, Meliboeus, I, foolish one! thought was like this of ours, whither we shepherds are wont to drive the tender younglings of our flocks. Thus I knew puppies were like dogs, and kids like their dams; thus I used to compare great things with small. But this one has reared her head as high among all other cities as cypresses oft do among the bending osiers.

Meliboeus

And what was the great occasion of your seeing Rome?

Tityrus

Freedom, who, though late, yet cast her eyes upon me in my sloth, when my beard began to whiten as it fell beneath the scissors. Yet she did cast her eyes on me, and came after a long time—after Amaryllis began her sway and Galatea left me. For—yes, I must confess—while Galatea ruled me, I had neither hope of freedom nor thought of savings. Though many a victim left my stalls, and many a rich cheese was pressed for the thankless town, never would my hand come home money-laden.

Meliboeus

I used to wonder, Amaryllis, why so sadly you called on the gods, and for whom you let the apples hang on their native trees. Tityrus was gone from home. The very pines, Tityrus, the very springs, the very orchards here were calling for you!

Tityrus

What was I to do? I could not quit my slavery nor elsewhere find my gods so ready to aid. Here, Meliboeus, I saw that youth for whom our altars smoke twice six days a year. Here he was the first to give my plea an answer: "Feed, swains, your oxen as of old; rear your bulls."

Meliboeus

Happy old man! So these lands will still be yours, and large enough for you, though bare stones cover all, and the marsh chokes your pastures with slimy rushes. Still, no strange herbage shall try your breeding ewes, no baneful infection from a neighbour's flock shall harm them. Happy old man! Here, amid familiar streams and sacred springs, you shall enjoy the cooling shade. On this side, as of old, on your neighbour's border, the hedge whose willow blossoms are sipped by Hybla's bees shall often with its gentle hum soothe you to slumber; on that, under the towering rock, the woodman's song shall fill the air; while still the cooing wood pigeons, your pets, and the turtle dove shall cease not their moaning from the elm tops.

Tityrus

Sooner, then, shall the nimble stag graze in air, and the seas leave their fish bare on the strand—sooner, each wandering over the other's frontiers, shall the Parthian in exile drink the Arar, and Germany the Tigris, than that look of his shall fade from my heart.

Meliboeus

[64] But we must go hence—some to the thirsty Africans, some to reach Scythia and the chalk-rolling Oaxes, and the Britons, wholly sundered from all the world. Ah, shall I ever, long years hence, look again on my country's bounds, on my humble cottage with its turf-clad roof—shall I, long

years hence, look amazed on a few ears of corn, once my kingdom? Is a godless soldier to hold these well-tilled fallows? a barbarian these crops? See where strife has brought our unhappy citizens! For these have we sown our fields! Now, Meliboeus, graft your pears, plant your vines in rows! Away, my goats! Away, once happy flock! No more, stretched in some mossy grot, shall I watch you in the distance hanging from a bushy crag; no more songs shall I sing; no more, my goats, under my tending, shall you crop flowering lucerne and bitter willows!

Tityrus

Yet this night you might have rested here with me on the green leafage. We have ripe apples, mealy chestnuts, and a wealth of pressed cheeses. Even now the housetops yonder are smoking and longer shadows fall from the mountain heights.

Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi
silvestrem tenui Musam meditaris avena;
nos patriae fines et dulcia linquimus arva.
nos patriam fugimus; tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra
formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas. 5

Tityrus

O Meliboe, deus nobis haec otia fecit.
namque erit ille mihi semper deus, illius aram
saepe tener nostris ab ovilibus imbuet agnus.
ille meas errare boves, ut cernis, et ipsum
ludere quae vellem calamo permisit agresti. 10

Meliboeus

Non equidem invideo, miror magis; undique totis
usque adeo turbatur agris. en ipse capellas
protenus aeger ago; hanc etiam vix, Tityre, duco.
hic inter densas corylos modo namque gemellos,
spem gregis, a, silice in nuda conixa reliquit. 15
saepe malum hoc nobis, si mens non laeva fuisset,
de caelo tactas memini praedicere quercus.
sed tamen iste deus qui sit da, Tityre, nobis.

Tityrus

Urbem quam dicunt Romam, Meliboe, putavi
stultus ego huic nostrae similem, cui saepe solemus 20
pastores ovium teneros depellere fetus.
sic canibus catulos similes, sic matribus haedos
noram, sic parvis componere magna solebam.
verum haec tantum alias inter caput extulit urbes
quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi. 25

Meliboeus

Et quae tanta fuit Romam tibi causa videndi?

Tityrus

Libertas, quae sera tamen respexit inertem,
candidior postquam tondenti barba cadebat,
respexit tamen et longo post tempore venit,
postquam nos Amaryllis habet, Galatea reliquit. 30
namque - fatebor enim - dum me Galatea tenebat,
nec spes libertatis erat nec cura peculi.
quamvis multa meis exiret victima saeptis
pinguis et ingratae premeretur caseus urbi,
non umquam gravis aere domum mihi dextra redibat. 35

Meliboeus

Mirabar quid maesta deos, Amarylli, vocares,
cui pendere sua patereris in arbore poma.
Tityrus hinc aberat. ipsae te, Tityre, pinus,
ipsi te fontes, ipsa haec arbusta vocabant.

Tityrus

Quid facerem? neque servitio me exire licebat 40
nec tam praesentis alibi cognoscere divos.
hic illum vidi iuvenem, Meliboe, quot annis
bis senos cui nostra dies altaria fumant,
hic mihi responsum primus dedit ille petenti:
'pascite ut ante boves, pueri, submitte tauros.' 45

Meliboeus

Fortunate senex, ergo tua rura manebunt
et tibi magna satis, quamvis lapis omnia nudus
limosoque palus obducat pascua iunco.
non insueta gravis temptabunt pabula fetas
nec mala vicini pecoris contagia laedent. 50
fortunate senex, hic inter flumina nota
et fontis sacros frigus captabis opacum;
hinc tibi, quae semper, vicino ab limite saepes
Hyblaeis apibus florem depasta salicti
saepe levi somnum suadebit inire susurro; 55
hinc alta sub rupe canet frondator ad auras,
nec tamen interea raucae, tua cura, palumbes
nec gemere aerea cessabit turtur ab ulmo.

Tityrus

Ante leves ergo pascentur in aethere cervi
et freta destituent nudos in litore pisces, 60
ante pererratis amborum finibus exsul
aut Ararim Parthus bibet aut Germania Tigrim,
quam nostro illius labatur pectore vultus.

Meliboeus

At nos hinc alii sitientis ibimus Afros,
pars Scythiam et rapidum cretae veniemus Oaxen 65
et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos.
en umquam patrios longo post tempore finis
pauperis et tuguri congestum caespite culmen,

post aliquot, mea regna, videns mirabor aristas?
impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit, 70
barbarus has segetes. en quo discordia civis
produxit miseros; his nos consevimus agros!
insere nunc, Meliboe, pios, pone ordine vites.
ite meae, felix quondam pecus, ite capellae.
non ego vos posthac viridi proiectus in antro 75
dumosa pendere procul de rupe videbo;
carmina nulla canam; non me pascente, capellae,
florentem cytisum et salices carpetis amaras.

Tityrus

Hic tamen hanc mecum poteris requiescere noctem
fronde super viridi. sunt nobis mitia poma, 80
castaneae molles et pressi copia lactis,
et iam summa procul villarum culmina fumant
maioresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.