

## Catullus XI

Furius and Aurelius, you fine friends  
of Catullus, whether he forces his way  
to farthest India where the Eastern shore  
unrolls, booming in surf;

whether he trudges among Hyrcanians, languid  
Arabs, Scythians, Parthian bowmen, or  
along that delta stained by the seven  
mouths of the Nile;

whether he marches clear over the Alps and there  
surveys great Caesar's dominions,  
the Gallic Rhine, and savage, far-off, un-  
imaginable Britons—

you who would traipse with your dear friend all  
over the world, wherever the gods' design  
might call, just take to my darling  
this little message:

let her live, let her flourish, with all her lovers,  
let her seize in her cunt three hundred at a time  
loving none, but time and again exploding  
their bloated members.

But she'd better not look, like last time, for my  
love reviving. It's her fault it's fallen,  
& flower at the rim of the meadow, touched  
by the plow passing.

"Ille mi par . . ."

*(Catullus LI, from Sappho)*

He's like a god, that man; he seems  
(if this can be) to shine beyond  
the gods, who nestling near you sees  
you and hears you

laughing low in your throat. It tears me  
apart. For when I glimpse you,  
Lesbia, look—I'm helpless:  
tongue a frozen

lump, and palest fire  
pouring through all my limbs; my ears  
deafened in ringing; each eye  
shuttered in night.

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You're wasting your time, Catullus,  
laying waste to your life. You love it.  
Whole kingdoms and blissful cities  
have wasted away, like you.