

## Vergil, *Eclogue 1*

### Meliboeus

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

### Tityrus

O Meliboee, 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

I am not envious, more amazed: the countryside's  
All in such turmoil. Sick myself, look, Tityrus,  
I drive goats forward; this one I can hardly lead.  
For here in the hazel thicket just now dropping twins,  
Ah, the flock's hope, on naked flint, she abandoned them.  
I keep remembering how the oak-trees touched of heaven,  
If we had been right-minded, foretold this evil time.  
But give us that god of yours: who is he, Tityrus?

Eclogue One: c. 40 BCE

Meter: Hexameter

Translation by Guy Lee

Synopsis: Dialogue between two shepherds, Tityrus and Meliboeus. Contrast of destinies: the former, helped by a divine young man at Rome, will enjoy his tranquil life; the latter, dispossessed, will wander far and wide.

**2: meditaris:** “meditate”, i.e practice, play

**tenui... avena:** “with a slender reed/shepherd’s pipe”

**3: nos:** subject of **linquimus**

**finis** = fines, object of **linquimus**

**5: doces silvas resonare** “**formosam Amaryllida**”; **Amaryllida** > Amaryllis, the Greek name of Tityrus’ lover.; the “-ida” ending is common in the accusative form of Greek names

**10: permisit ipsum (me) ludere quae vellem**

### **Tityrus**

Urbem quam dicunt Romam, Meliboeae, 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

**19: dicunt:** “they call”

**20: ego putavi [esse] similem:** as often, the verb “to be” is understood.

**cui:** antecedent is **huic nostrae**, “to which we were accustomed to...”

**24: tantum... quantum:** “to the extent that... so...”

**27: sera:** describes **Libertas**

**inertem [me]:** It is Tityrus who was **inertem**

**postquam:** subordinating conjunction shifted from first position, as often; **postquam candidior barba cadebat tondenti**

**tondenti:** abl. of means, “by (the action of) the barber”

**30: Galatea:** the name of Tityrus’ former lover; another Greek name, this one familiar from myth as a beautiful nymph.

**32f.:** Tityrus blames Galatea for his former spendthrift ways, which prevented him from accumulating the necessary funds to buy his freedom.

**35: gravis aere... dextra** “my right hand, weighted down with coin”

### **Meliboeus**

I wondered, Amaryllis, why you wept and called  
To the gods - for whom you left fruit hanging on the tree;  
Tityrus was away. The very pines, Tityrus,  
The very springs, these very orchards called to you.

### **Tityrus**

What could I do? For nowhere else could I escape  
From slavery or meet divinities so present.  
It was here I saw him, Meliboeus, the young man  
For whom twice six days every year our altar smokes.  
It was here to my petition he first gave reply:  
'Graze cattle as before, my children, and yoke bulls.'

### **Meliboeus**

Lucky old man, the land then will remain your own,  
And large enough for you, although bare rock and bog  
With muddy rushes covers all the pasturage:  
No unaccustomed feed will try your breeding ewes,  
And no infection harm them from a neighbour's flock.  
Lucky old man, among familiar rivers here  
And sacred springs you'll angle for the cooling shade;  
The hedge this side, along your neighbour's boundary,  
Its willow flowers as ever feeding Hybla bees,  
Will often whisper you persuasively to sleep;  
The pruner under that high bluff will sing to the breeze,  
Nor yet meanwhile will cooing pigeons, your own brood,  
Nor turtledove be slow to moan from the airy elm.

### **Tityrus**

Then sooner will light-footed stags feed in the sky  
And ocean tides leave fishes naked on the shore,  
Sooner in exile, wandering through each other's land,  
Will Parthian drink the Arar, or Germany the Tigris,  
Than from our memory will his face ever fade.

### **Meliboeus**

But we must leave here, some for thirsty Africa,  
Others for Scythia and Oäxes' chalky flood  
And the Britanni quite cut off from the whole world.  
Look, shall I ever, seeing after a long while  
My fathers' bounds and my poor cabin's turf-heaped roof,  
Hereafter marvel at my kingdom - a few corn-ears?  
Some godless veteran will own this fallow tilth,  
These cornfields a barbarian. Look where strife has led  
Rome's wretched citizens: we have sown fields for these!  
Graft pear trees, Meliboeus, now, set vines in rows.  
Go, little she-goats, go, once happy flock of mine.  
Not I hereafter, stretched full length in some green cave,  
Shall watch you far off hanging on a thorny crag;  
I'll sing no songs; not in my keeping, little goats,  
You'll crop the flowering lucerne and bitter willow.

### **Tityrus**

However, for tonight you could rest here with me  
Upon green leafage: I can offer you ripe fruit  
And mealy chestnuts and abundance of milk cheese.  
Far off the roof-tops of the farms already smoke  
And down from the high mountains taller shadows fall.

