

Catullus 5, "Vivamus mea Lesbia" (c. 60 BCE)

Vivamus mea Lesbia, atque amemus,
rumoresque senum severiorum
omnes unius aestimemus assis!
soles occidere et redire possunt:
nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,
nox est perpetua una dormienda.
da mi basia mille, deinde centum,
dein mille altera, dein secunda centum,
deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum.
dein, cum milia multa fecerimus,
conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus,
aut ne quis malus invidere possit,
cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.

Gaius Valerius Catullus. Catullus. Tibullus.
Pervigilium Veneris, ed. by F. W. Cornish (Loeb
Classical Library, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University
Press, 1913), 6,8.

Let us live, my Lesbia, and let us love,
and the rumors of the old and strict
all value as a single penny!
The sun sets and dies but will return again:
But for us, when our brief light has died,
The night is eternal sleep.
Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred,
then another thousand, then a second hundred,
then yet another thousand, then a hundred.
Then, when we have made many thousands,
jumble the count, refuse to know the total,
lest anyone judge with an evil eye,
when he knows how many have been our kisses.

(Trans. M. Bryson)