“Eclogue X”  
Virgil (37 B.C.E.)

GALLUS

This now, the very latest of my toils,  
Vouchsafe me, Arethusa! needs must I  
Sing a brief song to Gallus- brief, but yet  
Such as Lycoris’ self may fitly read.  
Who would not sing for Gallus? So, when thou  
Beneath Sicanian billows glidest on,  
May Doris blend no bitter wave with thine,  
Begin! The love of Gallus be our theme,  
And the shrewd pangs he suffered, while, hard by,  
The flat-nosed she-goats browse the tender brush.  
We sing not to deaf ears; no word of ours  
But the woods echo it. What groves or lawns  
Held you, ye Dryad-maidens, when for love-  
Love all unworthy of a loss so dear-  
Gallus lay dying? for neither did the slopes  
Of Pindus or Parnassus stay you then,  
No, nor Aonian Aganippe. Him  
Even the laurels and the tamarisks wept;  
For him, outstretched beneath a lonely rock,  
Wept pine-clad Maenalus, and the flinty crags  
Of cold Lycaeus. The sheep too stood around-  
Of us they feel no shame, poet divine;  
Nor of the flock be thou ashamed: even fair  
Adonis by the rivers fed his sheep-  
Came shepherd too, and swine-herd footing slow,  
And, from the winter-acorns dripping-wet  
Menalcas. All with one accord exclaim:  "From whence this love of thine?" Apollo came;  "Gallus, art mad?" he cried, "thy bosom’s care  Another love is following." Therewithal  Silvanus came, with rural honours crowned;  The flowering fennels and tall lilies shook  Before him. Yea, and our own eyes beheld  Pan, god of Arcady, with blood-red juice  Of the elder-berry, and with vermillion, dyed.  "Wilt ever make an end?" quoth he, "Behold  Love recks not aught of it: his heart no more  With tears is sated than with streams the grass,  Bees with the cytisus, or goats with leaves."  "Yet will ye sing, Arcadians, of my woes
Upon your mountains," sadly he replied-
"Arcadians, that alone have skill to sing.
O then how softly would my ashes rest,
If of my love, one day, your flutes should tell!
And would that I, of your own fellowship,
Or dresser of the ripening grape had been,
Or guardian of the flock! for surely then,
Let Phyllis, or Amyntas, or who else,
Bewitch me- what if swart Amyntas be?
Dark is the violet, dark the hyacinth-
Among the willows, 'neath the limber vine,
Reclining would my love have lain with me,
Phyllis plucked garlands, or Amyntas sung.
Here are cool springs, soft mead and grove, Lycoris;
Here might our lives with time have worn away.
But me mad love of the stern war-god holds
Armed amid weapons and opposing foes.
Whilst thou- Ah! might I but believe it not!-
Alone without me, and from home afar,
Look'st upon Alpine snows and frozen Rhine.
Ah! may the frost not hurt thee, may the sharp
And jagged ice not wound thy tender feet!
I will depart, re-tune the songs I framed
In verse Chalcidian to the oaten reed
Of the Sicilian swain. Resolved am I
In the woods, rather, with wild beasts to couch,
And bear my doom, and character my love
Upon the tender tree-trunks: they will grow,
And you, my love, grow with them. And meanwhile
I with the Nymphs will haunt Mount Maenalus,
Or hunt the keen wild boar. No frost so cold
But I will hem with hounds thy forest-glades,
Parthenius. Even now, methinks, I range
O'er rocks, through echoing groves, and joy to launch
Cydonian arrows from a Parthian bow.-
As if my madness could find healing thus,
Or that god soften at a mortal's grief!
Now neither Hamadryads, no, nor songs
Delight me more: ye woods, away with you!
No pangs of ours can change him; not though we
In the mid-frost should drink of Hebrus' stream,
And in wet winters face Sithonian snows,
Or, when the bark of the tall elm-tree bole
Of drought is dying, should, under Cancer's Sign,
In Aethiopian deserts drive our flocks.
Love conquers all things; yield we too to love!"
These songs, Pierian Maids, shall it suffice
Your poet to have sung, the while he sat,
And of slim mallow wove a basket fine:
To Gallus ye will magnify their worth,
Gallus, for whom my love grows hour by hour,
As the green alder shoots in early Spring.
Come, let us rise: the shade is wont to be
Baneful to singers; baneful is the shade
Cast by the juniper, crops sicken too
In shade. Now homeward, having fed your fill-
Eve's star is rising-go, my she-goats, go.

THE END