

55. WHERE ARE YOU? : TO CAMERIUS



beg you, if it's not too much trouble,
point out where your shade might be.
You, little *Camerius* [p. 204], I've looked for you,
you, in the Circus, you, in the bookshops,
you, in the sacred shrine of great *Jove* [p. 216].
I've detained all the girls together
in *Pompey's* [p. 228] Arcade, my friend,
whose faces were blank, however.
'Worst of girls, reveal my *Camerius*',
so I demanded of them.
One replied, revealing her nudity...
'Look he's hiding in these rosy breasts.'
But, oh it's a labour of *Hercules* [p. 214] to bear with you:
as much as your pride denies it, my friend.
Since I'm not that *bronze guardian* [p. 234] of Crete,
not *Ladas* [p. 216] or wing-footed *Perseus* [p. 226],
since I'm not carried by *Pegasus* [p. 224] in flight,
nor by *Rhesus's* [p. 230] swift snowy-white team,
add to that feathered-feet and swiftness
and the collective speed of the winds,
Camerius you might have said who you were with:
but I'd be weary right down to my marrow
and devoured by excessive fatigue
if I went on searching for you, my friend.

Tell us where you'll be in future, utter
boldly, commit yourself, trust to the light.
Do the milk-white girls hold you now?
If your tongue's stuck in your mouth,
you'll banish all the rewards of love.
Venus [p. 237] delights in copious language.
Or, if you want, fasten your lips,
while letting me share in your loves.



'Hercules Steals the Oxen of Geryon'
Joos de Momper (II) (Dutch, 1590 - 1635)
The Rijksmuseum