

14. WHAT A BOOK! : TO CALVUS THE POET



f I didn't love you more than my eyes,
most delightful *Calvus* [p. 204], I'd dislike you
for this gift, with a true *Vatinian* [p. 237] dislike:

Now what did I do and what did I say,
to be so badly cursed with poets?

Let the gods send ill-luck to that client
who sent you so many wretches.

But if, as I guess, *Sulla* [p. 233] the grammarian
gave you this new and inventive gift,
that's no harm to me, it's good and fine
that your efforts aren't all wasted.

Great gods, an amazing, immortal book!
That you sent, of course, to your Catullus,
so he might immediately die,
on the optimum day, in the *Saturnalia* [p. 231]!
No you won't get away with this crime.

Now when it's light enough I'll run
to the copyists bookstalls, I'll acquire
Caesius [p. 203], *Aquinus* [p. 198], *Suffenus* [p. 233],
all of the poisonous ones.

And I'll repay you for this suffering.
Meanwhile farewell take yourself off, there,
whence your unlucky feet brought you,
cursed ones of the age, worst of poets.