

Otium

Section 1

Lines 1-10: Catullus and Calvus Compose Poetry

Catullus, Carmen 50

Grammar Key

	Subject		Object		Verb		Genitive		Dative
	Ablative		Preposition		Conjunction		Adverb		Vocative

The Playful Afternoon (Lines 1-3)

1 hesternō,^{1*} Licinī,² diē^{1*} ōtiōsī³

2 multum⁵ lūsimus⁴ in⁶ meīs⁷ tabellīs,⁸

3 ut⁹ convēnerat¹⁰ esse¹¹ dēlicātōs;¹²

Vocabulary

1 **hesternus, -a, -um** yesterday's, of yesterday

Licinius, -ī (m.) Licinius Calvus (poet)

diēs, diēī (m./f.) day

ōtiōsus, -a, -um at leisure, idle

2 **multum** (adv.) much, greatly

lūdō, lūdere, lūsī, lūsum to play, sport, compose

tabella, -ae (f.) writing tablet

3 **conveniō, -īre, -vēnī** to agree, be fitting

dēlicātus, -a, -um refined, playful, charming

Style Notes: Lines 1-3

1. Temporal Framing – hesternō... diē

Line 1

hesternō... diē ōtiōsī

2. Vocative Address – Licinī

Line 1

hesternō, Licinī, diē...

3. Key Theme – ōtiōsī

Line 1

...diē ōtiōsī

4. Ludic Vocabulary – lūsimus

Line 2

multum lūsimus in meīs tabellīs

5. Metonymy – tabellīs

Line 2

...in meīs tabellīs

6. Neoteric Term – dēlicātōs

Line 3

ut convēnerat esse dēlicātōs

Composing Verses (Lines 4-6)

4 scribēns³ versiculōs⁴ uterque¹ nostrum²

5 lūdēbat⁵ numerō⁸ modo⁶ hōc⁷ modo⁹ illōc,¹⁰

6 reddēns¹¹ mūtua¹² per¹³ iocum¹⁴ atque¹⁵ vīnum.¹⁶

Vocabulary

- 4 **scribō, scribere, scripsi** to write
versiculus, -ī (m.) little verse (diminutive)
uterque, utraque, utrumque each of two, both
5 **numerus, -ī** (m.) number, metre, rhythm
modo... modo now... now, sometimes... sometimes

- 6 **reddō, reddere, reddidī** to give back, return, exchange
mūtus, -a, -um mutual, reciprocal
iocus, -ī (m.) joke, jest, fun
vīnum, -ī (n.) wine

Style Notes: Lines 4-6

7. Diminutive — versiculōs

Line 4

scribēns versiculōs uterque nostrum

8. Anaphora — modo... modo

Line 5

lūdēbat numerō modo hōc modo illōc

9. Hendiadys — per iocum atque vīnum

Line 6

reddēns mūtua per iocum atque vīnum

Catullus Leaves, Inflamed (Lines 7-8)

7 atque¹ illinc³ abīi² tuō⁵ lepōre⁶

8 incēnsus,⁴ Licinī,⁹ facetiīs⁸ -que,⁷

Vocabulary

- 7 **atque** (conj.) and, and indeed
illinc (adv.) from there, thence
abeō, abire, abīi to go away, depart

- lepor, lepōris** (m.) charm, wit, grace
8 **incendō, -ere, incendi** to set on fire, inflame
facētiae, -ārum (f.pl.) wit, cleverness, humour

Style Notes: Lines 7-8

10. Neoteric Term — *lepōre*

Line 7

...abī tuō lepōre

11. Erotic Metaphor — *incēnsus*

Line 8

incēnsus, Licinī, facetiīsque

12. Neoteric Term — *facetiīs*

Line 8

...Licinī, facetiīsque

The Effects of Passion (Lines 9-10)

9 ut¹⁰ nec¹¹ mē¹⁴ miserum¹⁵ cibus¹² iuvāret¹³

10 nec¹⁶ somnus¹⁷ tegeret¹⁸ quiēte²⁰ ocellōs...¹⁹

Vocabulary

- 9 **ut** (conj.) so that, with the result that
nec (conj.) and not, nor
miser, misera, miserum wretched, miserable
cibus, -ī (m.) food
iuvō, iuvāre, iūvī to help, please, delight

- 10 **somnus, -ī** (m.) sleep
tegō, tegere, tēxī, tēctum to cover, conceal
quiēs, quiētis (f.) rest, quiet, sleep
ocellus, -ī (m.) little eye (diminutive)

Style Notes: Lines 9-10

13. Dramatic Self-Pity — miserum

Line 9

...nec mē miserum cibus iuvāret

14. Diminutive — ocellōs

Line 10

...quiēte ocellōs

15. Chiasmus — nec... nec clauses

Lines 9-10

ut nec... cibus iuvāret // nec somnus tegeret... ocellōs