

## A LOVE-LETTER

*from the mariner Ulysses  
to his beloved lady-physician*

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That you're still, in a sense, a virgin,  
Drink like *George Best* and speak like *Charles  
Spurgeon*  
Are all the grounds for love a soul  
Like mine can bear and still stay whole.  
Two wretched things have kept me up of late,  
Which bruise an honest seaman's trust in fate:  
The young & winsome aged, or killed by traffic;  
A girl like you beguiled by all things sapphic.

Alas, I'm more like *Mars* than *Venus*,  
But does that have to come between us?  
I'm told I'm gifted with my fingers,  
And, though I've not tried cunnalingus,  
You're welcome to compare my lips  
To any temptress' tastebud-tips,  
And summon cries of joy, not laughter.  
(I'd even like to cuddle after.)

Although I cannot make my chest hair  
Go, and put a plump round breast there,  
Nor bid my size 10 feet farewell,  
The same goes for my love as well.  
Salt-laced hearts do not find in rejection  
Grounds for loss of ardour or dejection.  
Time will only say, I told you so;

Auden, "If I  
Could Tell You"

And yet it suits me more than you know  
To play *Tiresias* to your virago.