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For the Drunken Lover

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For The Drunken Lover



—Miser inepte, ne desinas ineptire, sed obdura

These days (and there are so many like them)
Are misery for the obdurate lover
Since he, poor fool, resolved to spurn all others
And fastened hard his heart to the lady's whim.

Still, is it really better to unyoke
Him from the girl that drags his soul about
Or snatch the sterile mule from so devout
A man as he? For how long will he choke

His thoughts behind a woman dry as wind?
Or should we judge the whole affair no matter,
Dismiss his love and spare us all the patter?
Have we the proper tongue to speak his mind,

To wrench our feelings from his curse and say
What he so simply can at will achieve
(And other skidrow lovers after three,
Or surely four, depending on the day

And how much the belly therefore warrants?)
But to the point. The fool's a lovely master,
The drunk Bordeaux with a midnight bladder,
Who, in song, thereby unlooses torrents

That freely from his wine thus issues forth
Both verbally and naturally. Of course,
To us no doubt profuse and no less coarse,
To him life's only necessary mirth.

So do not harshly in your wrath eschew
The finer aspects of his jubilation;
For in the drunk's a sign of meek oblation
Whose honesty and pitch are often true

To that inebriated consciousness.
I wish myself at times to be so smashed
That I could feign a tune as unabashed
And sing my loves with simple foolishness

Until, so touched, a friend would sacrifice
A flower pot to ease my suffering
(And his) all at once, thereby proffering
To me the peace that comes of little vices.

Yet come, it is a consummation stoutly
To be endured as god's own just relief,
For there are other songs than lovers' grief
That only fools and drunkards sing devoutly.

Steven Wallace