

## READING 2

The rest of the Horace poems in this book will no longer feature the words in parentheses and the use of special fonts. Use the notes below the poem to help you.

In this ode the speaker exhorts Leuconoe not to worry about what tomorrow will bring; instead, she should enjoy the present. This is one of several odes that deal with the theme of life's brevity. In this poem Horace introduces the quite novel METAPHOR from viticulture of "plucking" the day. This phrase, which signifies "seizing an opportunity" or "embracing the present," is still commonly used today.

### SEIZE THE DAY

#### HORACE ODES 1.11

Meter: Fifth or Greater Asclepiadean

- 1 Tū nē quaesieris (scire nefās), quem mihi, quem tibi  
finem dī dederint, Leuconoē, nec Babylōniōs  
temptāris numerōs. ut melius, quidquid erit, patī!  
seu plūris hiemēs, seu tribuit Iuppiter ultimam,

#### NOTES AND VOCABULARY

Line 1: **tū** at the start of the poem is very emphatic. Latin poets may emphasize first or last words, or both, in a poem. For example, the word "nose" provides an unexpected and quite striking ending for Poem 13 of Catullus.

**nē quaesieris:** *nē* + the perfect subjunctive is used to express a prohibition or negative command. *Quaesieris* is the syncopated form of *quaesiveris*.

**nefās, n. indeclin.,** crime, offense against divine law, sacrilege; understand *est* with *scire nefās*. This phrase is parenthetical, "interrupting" the sentence.

Lines 1–2: **quem:** understand *finem* with each *quem*.



#### STUDY TIP

Be careful not to confuse *deus* (*dī*, line 2), the Latin word for "god," with *diēs* (line 8), which means "day," or with *dīvus*, *-a, -um* "divine." Compare and contrast *diēs* (nominative singular and accusative plural of "day"), *dī* (nominative plural of *deus*), *dīs* (dative and ablative plural of *deus*), and *dīvī* (nominative plural of *dīvus*).

Line 2: **dī:** alternate form of *deī*, nominative plural of *deus*.‡

**dederint:** perfect subjunctive in indirect question dependent on *quem finem*. *Quem* is an interrogative adjective here.

**Leuconoē, Leuconoēs,** f. Leuconoe, woman's name



## BY THE WAY

The name of the woman to whom the poem is addressed, Leuconoe, comes from the Greek *leukos* (“clear, bright, white”) and *nous* (“mind”) and may suggest equally “clear-minded” or “empty-minded” (“empty-headed”). The notion of “white” in her name ties in with the season of winter in line 4.

- Lines 2–3: **Babylōnius, -a, -um** Babylonian; Babylonian numbers or astrological tables predicting the future.
- Line 3: **temptō** (1) to try, attempt; *temptāris = temptā(ve)ris* This is the syncopated, or shortened, form of the verb.  
**ut**: translate “how.”  
**melius**: comparative adjective, nominative singular neuter. Translate as “better.” Understand *est*.  
**quidquid erit**: direct object of *patī*.  
**patior, patī, passus sum** to suffer, endure; the infinitive *patī* functions as the predicate nominative of the understood *est*. Translate “to suffer” or “to endure.”
- Line 4: **seu . . . seu**: translate “whether . . . or.” The first clause has subject and verb understood (to be supplied from looking at the second clause): *plūris hiemēs [Iuppiter tribuit]*; the second clause has the direct object understood (to be supplied from the first clause): *Iuppiter tribuit ultimam [hiemem]*.  
**plūris = plūrēs**; third declension adjective alternate ending, masculine/feminine accusative plural  
**hiems, hiemis**, f. winter, storm; this is METONYMY for “year.” The sense of “winter” as a way of reckoning years, however, is significant for the theme of death that pervades the poem.  
**tribuō, tribuere, tribuī, tribūtum** to allot, assign; *tribuit* can be present or perfect tense (same form).  
**ultimam**: understand *hiemem*.

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## HORACE ODES 1.11, CONTINUED

5 quae nunc oppositis dēbilitat pūmicibus mare  
Tyrrhēnum: sapiās, vīna liquēs et spatiō brevī  
spem longam resecēs. dum loquimur, fūgerit invida  
aetās: carpe diem, quam minimum crēdula posterō.

### NOTES AND VOCABULARY

Line 5: **quae:** a relative pronoun

**oppōnō, oppōnere, opposuī, oppositum** to place against, place in front, proffer; *oppositis* . . . *pūmicibus* is ablative of means. Translate “with its hostile pumice-stones.” Note that the stones are what make the sea become weakened, not the reverse.

**dēbilitō** (1) to weaken

**pūmex, pūmicis**, m. pumice-stone

Lines 5–6: **mare Tyrrhēnum:** direct object of *dēbilitat*

Line 6: **Tyrrhēnus, -a, -um** Tyrrhenian, Etruscan

**sapiās . . . liquēs:** volitive subjunctives

**vīna:** plural for singular

**liquō, liquāre** to melt, strain; before drinking their wine, the Romans strained it to remove the sediment.

**spatiō brevī:** best taken as a causal ablative. Translate “because of the brief time.” Understand after this phrase “of our lives.”

**spatium, spatiī**, n. space, period of time, span of life

Line 7: **resecō, resecāre, resecurī, resectum**, to cut back, prune, restrain; *resecēs* is a volitive subjunctive.

**loquor, loquī, locūtus sum** to speak

**fūgerit:** future perfect. Translate “will have fled.”

**invidus, -a, -um** envious, jealous



### BY THE WAY

Time, *aetās*, is personified in the poem when it is described as “jealous,” *invida*.

Line 8: **aetās, aetātis**, f. time, age

**carpō, carpere, carpsī, carptum** to pluck, seize

**quam minimum:** *quam* with the superlative (as . . . as possible). Translate “to the least extent possible” or “as little as possible.”

**crēdulus, -a, -um** credulous, trustful; *crēdula* takes dative *posterō*.

**posterus, -a, -um** next, following, future, later; understand the noun *diēi* with *posterō*.



### STUDY TIP

You read the word *aetās*, *aetātis*, f. “age” in line 8 above. Don’t confuse *aetās* with *aestās*, *aestātis*, f. “summer,” or with *aestus*, *aestūs*, m. “flood,” a word you saw in Vergil 2.706.



Horace’s famous phrase “seize the day” has been popularized in America beginning with the Robin Williams movie *Dead Poets Society*. Subsequently it has been placed on coffee mugs, t-shirts, sweatshirts, and the like.



### BY THE WAY

The *carpe diem* theme, which comes from this poem, encompasses time, the seasons, and even death.



### TAKE NOTE

The nouns *deus*, *diēs*, and *dīvus* (“god”) all belong to the same word family, which has the basic idea of “brightness.”

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## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is Leuconoe told not to do? Cite the Latin.
2. It is said to be better to endure what? Cite the Latin.
3. What three things is Leuconoe encouraged to do?
4. According to this poem, what should not be trusted?

## ► EXERCISE 1

1. In line 1, what part of speech is *quem*?
2. What is the case and use of *mihi* and *tibi* in line 1?
3. In line 2, what is the case and use of *Leuconoē*?
4. What is the case and use of *quidquid* in line 3?
5. What is the tense and form of *patī* in line 3?
6. What is the case and use of *hiemēs* in line 4?
7. What is the antecedent, case, and use of *quae* in line 5?
8. What is the case and use of *vīna* in line 6?
9. What is the case and use of *posterō* in line 8?

## VOCABULARY BUILDER

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The theme of time is a significant one in Horace's *Odes*. Here are some important "time" words from the *Odes* that would be good to learn.

### NOUNS

*hōra*, -ae, f. hour, time, season

*diēs*, *diēi*, m. (f.) day

*aetās*, *aetātis*, f. time, age

*aestās*, *aestātis*, f. summer

*vēr*, *vēris*, n. spring

*hiems*, *hiemis*, f. winter, storm

*spatium*, *spatii*, n. space, period of time

### ADJECTIVES

*ultimus*, -a, -um last

*posterus*, -a, -um next, following, future

*brevis*, *breve* short

*longus*, -a, -um long

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## ► EXERCISE 2

Translate the following phrases into English using the “time” words above. Identify the case of the time phrase. If there are two possibilities, list them both.

### Example:

| Latin     | English translation | case(s)    |
|-----------|---------------------|------------|
| vēr breve | short spring        | nom., acc. |

1. longa aetās
2. hiems postera
3. vēr longum
4. aestātis brevis
5. hōra ultima  
(translate *hōra* using three different meanings)
6. longum diem
7. spatiō longō
8. aetās postera
9. brevium diērum

## ESSAY

This ode makes a contrast between aspects over which an individual has no control and those aspects that an individual can control. In a short essay discuss how the speaker develops this contrast to help him set forth advice about how to live.

Support your assertions with references drawn from throughout lines 1–8. All Latin words must be copied or their line numbers provided, AND they must be translated or paraphrased closely enough so that it is clear you understand the Latin. Direct your answer to the question; do not merely summarize the passage. Please write your essay on a separate piece of paper.

## SCANSION

Name the meter and scan the following lines.

quae nunc oppositis dēbilitat pūmicibus mare

Tyrrhēnum: sapiās, vīna liquēs et spatiō brevī

spem longam reseces. dum loquimur, fūgerit invida

aetās: carpe diem, quam minimum crēdula posterō.