

— Ode 3.26 —

*This ode is very similar to the elegies of Propertius, Tibullus, Gallus, and Ovid, and their predecessor Catullus. Like those poets, Horace's narrator has experienced love, and he seeks now to retire from battle. The martial metaphor, made most famous by Ovid's **militat omnis amans** (Amores 1.9), is employed here too. The end of the ode turns to Venus and asks for a sort of revenge upon the lover who spurns the speaker.*

vixi, puellis nuper idoneus,
 et militavi non sine gloria;
 nunc arma defunctumque bello
 barbiton hic paries habebit,

5 laevum marinae qui Veneris latus
 custodit. hic, hic ponite lucida
 funalia et vectis et arcus
 oppositis foribus minacis.

o quae beatam diva tenes Cyprum et
 10 Memphin carentem Sithonia nive,
 regina, sublimi flagello
 tange Chloën semel arrogantem.

2 **militavi:** The METAPHOR of battle for love is pervasive in both the ancient and contemporary worlds. What are some modern poems or songs that make use of this METAPHOR? Why do you think the image continues to find such purchase? Notice that in both lines 1 and 2 the verb stands in first position, placing emphasis on the actions. The tense of the verbs is emphasized by **nunc** in line 3 and the future-tense **habebit** in line 4.

non sine gloria: LITOTES; why might Horace choose to utilize this poetic device here?

- 3–4 **nunc arma . . . habebit:** As a soldier dedicates his weapons to a god by hanging them on the temple walls, so Horace retires from the practice of seduction by hanging up his “weapons.” We might compare this to the modern idiom “to hang up one’s boots.” Horace makes a similar dedication to Poseidon in *Ode* 1.5.
- 4 **barbiton:** a borrowed Greek term. The *-on* ending is accusative singular; thus **barbiton** is modified by **defunctum**.
- 5 **marinae:** modifies **Veneris** and refers to her birth from the sea.
- 7 **vectis:** from **vectis**, the noun, not **veho**. **Et arcus** is uncertain, and several alternative readings have been proposed. Some scholars believe a bow would be an inappropriate weapon for wooing someone and have supposed it is some tool to break into houses.
- 9 **diva:** should be taken with **o**, “**o diva**.”
- 9–10 **Cyprum . . . Memphin . . . Sithonia:** Venus is commonly associated with Cyprus, one of her birth sites and a chief site of worship. Memphis, in Egypt, is the site of a temple to the Mesopotamian goddess Astarte, with whom Venus/Aphrodite was roughly equivalent. Sithonia is a peninsula in northern Greece.
- 12 **Chloën:** the Greek accusative form. Notice that its modifier **arrogantem** is intentionally held off to the last word—it has an almost causal sense here, “because she is arrogant.”

semel can be taken with both **tange** and **arrogantem**, but it is likely to be taken more closely with **tange**, as if the poet is asking that Chloe “just once” feel the pangs of love that he himself has felt for her. The image of the whip (**flagello**, line 11) is evocative of the fearful pain that comes with infatuation or unrequited love. The poet hopes that Chloe’s arrogance is humbled by an experience of hopeless ardor.