

# Virgil

## ECLOGUE V (“Daphnis”)

MENALCAS

Why, Mopsus, being both together met,  
You skilled to breathe upon the slender reeds,  
I to sing ditties, do we not sit down  
5 Here where the elm-trees and the hazels blend?

MOPSUS

You are the elder, 'tis for me to bide  
Your choice, Menalcas, whether now we seek  
Yon shade that quivers to the changeful breeze,  
10 Or the cave's shelter. Look you how the cave  
Is with the wild vine's clusters over-laced!

MENALCAS

None but Amyntas on these hills of ours  
Can vie with you.

15 MOPSUS

What if he also strive  
To out-sing Phoebus?

MENALCAS

Do you first begin,  
Good Mopsus, whether minded to sing aught  
Of Phyllis and her loves, or Alcon's praise,  
Or to fling taunts at Codrus. Come, begin,  
While Tityrus watches o'er the grazing kids.

MOPSUS

Nay, then, I will essay what late I carved  
20 On a green beech-tree's rind, playing by turns,  
And marking down the notes; then afterward  
Bid you Amyntas match them if he can.

MENALCAS

As limber willow to pale olive yields,  
25 As lowly Celtic nard to rose-buds bright,  
So, to my mind, Amyntas yields to you.  
But hold awhile, for to the cave we come.

MOPSUS

“For Daphnis cruelly slain wept all the Nymphs—  
30 Ye hazels, bear them witness, and ye streams—  
When she, his mother, clasping in her arms  
The hapless body of the son she bare,  
To gods and stars unpitying, poured her plaint.  
Then, Daphnis, to the cooling streams were none  
35 That drove the pastured oxen, then no beast  
Drank of the river, or would the grass-blade touch.  
Nay, the wild rocks and woods then voiced the roar  
Of Afric lions mourning for thy death.  
Daphnis, 'twas thou bad'st yoke to Bacchus' car  
40 Armenian tigresses, lead on the pomp  
Of revellers, and with tender foliage wreath  
The bending spear-wands. As to trees the vine  
Is crown of glory, as to vines the grape,  
Bulls to the herd, to fruitful fields the corn,  
45 So the one glory of thine own art thou.  
When the Fates took thee hence, then Pales' self,  
And even Apollo, left the country lone.  
Where the plump barley-grain so oft we sowed,  
There but wild oats and barren darnel spring;  
50 For tender violet and narcissus bright  
Thistle and prickly thorn uprear their heads.  
Now, O ye shepherds, strew the ground with leaves,  
And o'er the fountains draw a shady veil—  
So Daphnis to his memory bids be done—

55 And rear a tomb, and write thereon this verse:  
'I, Daphnis in the woods, from hence in fame  
Am to the stars exalted, guardian once  
Of a fair flock, myself more fair than they.'"

MENALCAS

60 So is thy song to me, poet divine,  
As slumber on the grass to weary limbs,  
Or to slake thirst from some sweet-bubbling rill  
In summer's heat. Nor on the reeds alone,  
But with thy voice art thou, thrice happy boy,  
65 Ranked with thy master, second but to him.  
Yet will I, too, in turn, as best I may,  
Sing thee a song, and to the stars uplift  
Thy Daphnis—Daphnis to the stars extol,  
For me too Daphnis loved.

MOPSUS

Than such a boon  
What dearer could I deem? the boy himself  
Was worthy to be sung, and many a time  
Hath Stimichon to me your singing praised.

70 MENALCAS

"In dazzling sheen with unaccustomed eyes  
Daphnis stands rapt before Olympus' gate,  
And sees beneath his feet the clouds and stars.  
Wherefore the woods and fields, Pan, shepherd-folk,  
75 And Dryad-maidens, thrill with eager joy;  
Nor wolf with treacherous wile assails the flock,  
Nor nets the stag: kind Daphnis loveth peace.  
The unshorn mountains to the stars up-toss  
Voices of gladness; ay, the very rocks,  
80 The very thickets, shout and sing, 'A god,  
A god is he,' Menalcas, 'Be thou kind,  
Propitious to thine own.' Lo! altars four,  
Twain to thee, Daphnis, and to Phoebus twain  
For sacrifice, we build; and I for thee  
85 Two beakers yearly of fresh milk afoam,

And of rich olive-oil two bowls, will set;  
And of the wine-god's bounty above all,  
If cold, before the hearth, or in the shade  
At harvest-time, to glad the festal hour,  
90 From flasks of Ariusian grape will pour  
Sweet nectar. Therewithal at my behest  
Shall Lyctian Aegon and Damoetas sing,  
And Alpheisiboeus emulate in dance  
The dancing Satyrs. This, thy service due,  
95 Shalt thou lack never, both when we pay the Nymphs  
Our yearly vows, and when with lustral rites  
The fields we hallow. Long as the wild boar  
Shall love the mountain-heights, and fish the streams,  
While bees on thyme and crickets feed on dew,  
100 Thy name, thy praise, thine honour, shall endure.  
Even as to Bacchus and to Ceres, so  
To thee the swain his yearly vows shall make;  
And thou thereof, like them, shalt quittance claim."

MOPSUS

105 How, how repay thee for a song so rare?  
For not the whispering south-wind on its way  
So much delights me, nor wave-smitten beach,  
Nor streams that race adown their bouldered beds.

MENALCAS

110 First this frail hemlock-stalk to you I give,  
Which taught me "Corydon with love was fired  
For fair Alexis," ay, and this beside,  
"Who owns the flock?—Meliboeus?"

MOPSUS

But take you  
This shepherd's crook, which, howso hard he begged,  
Antigenes, then worthy to be loved,  
Prevailed not to obtain—with brass, you see,  
And equal knots, Menalcas, fashioned fair!

## ECLOGUE X (“Gallus”)

This now, the very latest of my toils,  
Vouchsafe me, Arethusa! needs must I  
Sing a brief song to Gallus—brief, but yet  
Such as Lycoris’ self may fitly read.  
5 Who would not sing for Gallus? So, when thou  
Beneath Sicanian billows glidest on,  
May Doris blend no bitter wave with thine,  
Begin! The love of Gallus be our theme,  
And the shrewd pangs he suffered, while, hard by,  
10 The flat-nosed she-goats browse the tender brush.  
We sing not to deaf ears; no word of ours  
But the woods echo it. What groves or lawns  
Held you, ye Dryad-maidens, when for love—  
Love all unworthy of a loss so dear—  
15 Gallus lay dying? for neither did the slopes  
Of Pindus or Parnassus stay you then,  
No, nor Aonian Aganippe. Him  
Even the laurels and the tamarisks wept;  
For him, outstretched beneath a lonely rock,  
20 Wept pine-clad Maenalus, and the flinty crags  
Of cold Lycaeus. The sheep too stood around—  
Of us they feel no shame, poet divine;  
Nor of the flock be thou ashamed: even fair  
Adonis by the rivers fed his sheep—  
25 Came shepherd too, and swine-herd footing slow,  
And, from the winter-acorns dripping-wet  
Menalcas. All with one accord exclaim:  
“From whence this love of thine?” Apollo came;  
“Gallus, art mad?” he cried, “thy bosom’s care  
30 Another love is following.” Therewithal  
Silvanus came, with rural honours crowned;  
The flowering fennels and tall lilies shook  
Before him. Yea, and our own eyes beheld  
Pan, god of Arcady, with blood-red juice  
35 Of the elder-berry, and with vermilion, dyed.  
“Wilt ever make an end?” quoth he, “behold

Love recks not aught of it: his heart no more  
With tears is sated than with streams the grass,  
Bees with the cytissus, or goats with leaves.”  
40 “Yet will ye sing, Arcadians, of my woes  
Upon your mountains,” sadly he replied—  
“Arcadians, that alone have skill to sing.  
O then how softly would my ashes rest,  
If of my love, one day, your flutes should tell!  
45 And would that I, of your own fellowship,  
Or dresser of the ripening grape had been,  
Or guardian of the flock! for surely then,  
Let Phyllis, or Amyntas, or who else,  
Bewitch me—what if swart Amyntas be?  
50 Dark is the violet, dark the hyacinth—  
Among the willows, ’neath the limber vine,  
Reclining would my love have lain with me,  
Phyllis plucked garlands, or Amyntas sung.  
Here are cool springs, soft mead and grove, Lycoris;  
55 Here might our lives with time have worn away.  
But me mad love of the stern war-god holds  
Armed amid weapons and opposing foes.  
Whilst thou—Ah! might I but believe it not!—  
Alone without me, and from home afar,  
60 Look’st upon Alpine snows and frozen Rhine.  
Ah! may the frost not hurt thee, may the sharp  
And jagged ice not wound thy tender feet!  
I will depart, re-tune the songs I framed  
In verse Chalcidian to the oaten reed  
65 Of the Sicilian swain. Resolved am I  
In the woods, rather, with wild beasts to couch,  
And bear my doom, and character my love  
Upon the tender tree-trunks: they will grow,  
And you, my love, grow with them. And meanwhile  
70 I with the Nymphs will haunt Mount Maenalus,  
Or hunt the keen wild boar. No frost so cold  
But I will hem with hounds thy forest-glades,  
Parthenius. Even now, methinks, I range  
O’er rocks, through echoing groves, and joy to launch  
75 Cydonian arrows from a Parthian bow.—

As if my madness could find healing thus,  
Or that god soften at a mortal's grief!  
Now neither Hamadryads, no, nor songs  
Delight me more: ye woods, away with you!  
80 No pangs of ours can change him; not though we  
In the mid-frost should drink of Hebrus' stream,  
And in wet winters face Sithonian snows,  
Or, when the bark of the tall elm-tree bole  
Of drought is dying, should, under Cancer's Sign,  
85 In Aethiopian deserts drive our flocks.  
Love conquers all things; yield we too to love!"

These songs, Pierian Maids, shall it suffice  
Your poet to have sung, the while he sat,  
And of slim mallow wove a basket fine:  
90 To Gallus ye will magnify their worth,  
Gallus, for whom my love grows hour by hour,  
As the green alder shoots in early Spring.  
Come, let us rise: the shade is wont to be  
Baneful to singers; baneful is the shade  
95 Cast by the juniper, crops sicken too  
In shade. Now homeward, having fed your fill—  
Eve's star is rising-go, my she-goats, go.