

Catullus 51: An English Translation

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Ille mi par esse deo videtur,
ille, si fas est, superare divos,
qui sedens adversus identidem te
spectat et audit

That man seems to me equal to a god. No,
if I may be bold, he surpasses divinity,
that man who is always seated before you
to behold you and hear you

dulce ridentem, misero quod omnes
eripit sensus mihi: nam simul te,
Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi
[vocis in ore;]

laughing sweetly—which robs me in my misery
of all senses: for when I look at you,
Lesbia, my voice dries
before reaching my lips;

lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus
flamma demanat, sonitu suo
tintinant aures geminae, teguntur
lumina nocte.

my tongue lies still. A delicate flame
shivers down my limbs, my ears
ring in the silence, and twin night
drapes over my eyes.

otium, Catulle, tibi molestumst:
otio exsultas nimiumque gestis:
otium et reges prius et beatas
perdidit urbes.

Leisure, Catullus, is troublesome to you:
you revel in and desire leisure excessively--
Idleness has, in times past, ruined both kings
and glistening cities.