

The Envious Shore Competes with the Floating Gardens

While enjoying this vibrant picture of the shores around Lake Texcoco, in dealing with lines 216–217, remember that Landívar was not an ornithologist, and passeridae is a large group of birds. He could have seen one of the many grosbeaks.

205 Hās āgrī fluitantis opēs, hunc aemula cultum
 Proxima rīpa dolet, sēsēque vīrentibus ulmīs
 Et cerasīs, faetāque pyrō, mālōque rubentī
 Et laurō et pīnū cēdrōque et quercubus altīs,
 Vēreque certātīm distinguit prāta perennī.
 210 Quīn etiam lūcō volucrēs tot condit opācō,
 Ut blandō percussa sonet modulāmine silva.
 Hinc pennāta cohors variō distincta colōre
 Gaudet iter liquidum pictīs abscindere pennīs
 Gutturē festivōs lūsūs per ināne canōrō
 215 Effingēns, dulcēsque ciēns per littora cantūs.
 Dulce canit passer, roseīs quem fūsa capillīs
 Crista tegit, plūmaeque fluunt per colla rubentēs.

TRANSLATION

These riches of the floating field, this cultivation
 The jealous nearby lakeshore grieves (envies),
 And eagerly itself with flourishing elms
 And cherry trees, the fertile pear, and the blushing apple
 And the laurel and pine and cedar and strong oaks,
 It adorns, and (it adorns) its meadows with perpetual spring.
 In fact it also hides so many birds in its dark grove
 That the forest resounds with pleasant pulsing music.
 Here the winged company, feathered and adorned with varying color

Rejoice to cut through the flowing journey on painted feathers
 Shaping festive games with melodious hollow throat(s)
 And moving sweet songs through the shores.
 Sweetly sings the sparrow, whom a flowing crest adorns with rosy hair,
 And reddish feathers flow around his neck.

GRAMMAR AND WORD USE QUESTIONS

1. Explain the personification in lines 205–206.
The shore envies the new beauty of the lake.
2. What one main verb serves the last half of line 206 as well as lines 207, 208, and 209? Translate it.
Distinguit “it decorates (itself).”
3. How is the personification continued in these lines?
The shore dresses herself up with many beautiful trees.
4. List the adjectives used in lines 206–208 to describe the elm, the pear, the apple, and the oak trees. Translate each phrase.
Virentibus ulmis “flourishing elm,” ***facta pyro*** “fruitful pear,” ***malo rubenti*** “blushing apple,” ***quercubus altis*** “strong oaks.”
5. Discuss the use of polysyndeton in these lines.
Et is used to link all the phrases.
6. What kind of subjunctive clause is found in line 211?
Clause of result—so many . . . that.
7. The two present participles in line 215 are central to two figures of speech. Explain.
Effingens is central to personification of the birds creating games, and ***ciens*** is central to the hyperbole that they are shaking the shore with song.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the lakeshore's reaction to these new fields?
Jealousy, envy, grief.
2. What does it do first?
Adorns itself with beautiful trees, many of which the floating islands probably could not accommodate.