

- 15 Persephonen adiit inamoenaque regna tenentem  
 umbrarum dominum pulsisque ad carmina nervis  
 sic ait: 'o positi sub terra numina mundi,  
 in quem reccidimus, quicquid mortale creamur,  
 si licet et falsi positis ambagibus oris  
 20 vera loqui sinitis, non huc, ut opaca viderem  
 Tartara, descendi, nec uti villosa colubris  
 terna Medusaei vincirem guttura monstri:



- 15 **Persephonē, -ēs (f.):** *Persephone*, the daughter of Demeter and Zeus, and wife of Pluto. A Greek accusative object of *adiit*.  
**inamoenus, -a, -um:** *unpleasant, unlovely*. Often in Ovid's stories, he describes a *locus amoenus*, a place of rest, shade, water, greenery, and coolness. The underworld is completely opposite.
- 16 **dominum:** a second object of *adiit*.  
**pellō, -ere, pepulī, pulsum:** *to strike, beat*.  
**nervus, -ī (m.):** *string of a musical instrument or bow*.
- 17 **nūmen, -inis (n.):** *divine power, divinity*. Here, a vocative.  
**mundus, -ī (m.):** *the universe, the world, the earth*.
- 18 **recidō, -ere, -cidī:** *to fall back, sink*.  
**quisquis, quidquid (quicquid):** *anyone who, anything that*. Introduces a relative clause of characteristic.
- 19 **ambāgēs, -um (f.):** *long-winded, digressive speech, circumlocution*.
- 20 **sinitis:** a second verb in the *si* clause. Supply a missing *me* as its object.  
**non:** to be taken with *descendi*.  
**ut:** introduces a purpose clause dependent on *descendi*.  
**opācus, -a, -um:** *shady, dark*.
- 21 **Tartara, -ōrum (n. pl.):** *the infernal regions, the underworld*.  
**villōsus, -a, -um:** *hairy, shaggy*.  
**coluber, -brī (m.):** *snake, serpent*. Here, an ablative dependent on *villosa*.
- 22 **ternī, -ae, -a:** *three apiece*.  
**Medusaeus, -a, -um:** *of or relating to Medusa*, one of the Gorgons. Both she and Cerberus have snakes for hair.  
**vinciō, -īre, vīcī, victum:** *to fasten, bind, tie up*. This central verb in the line surrounded by two adjective/noun pairs in CHIASTIC word order creates a GOLDEN LINE.  
**guttur, -uris (n.):** *throat*. Here, the accusative object of *vincirem*.  
**monstrum, -ī (n.):** *a monstrous or horrible creature*.

- causa viae est coniunx, in quam calcata venenum  
vipera diffudit crescentesque abstulit annos.  
25 posse pati volui nec me temptasse negabo:  
vicit Amor. supera deus hic bene notus in ora est;  
an sit et hic, dubito: sed et hic tamen auguror esse,  
famaque si veteris non est mentita rapinae,  
vos quoque iunxit Amor. per ego haec loca plena timoris,  
30 per Chaos hoc ingens vastique silentia regni,  
Eurydices, oro, properata retexite fata.  
omnia debemur vobis, paulumque morati



- 23 **coniunx**: Ovid has yet to name Orpheus's wife.  
**calcō, -āre, -āvī, -ātum**: *to tread or trample on*.
- 24 **vipera, -ae (f.)**: *a viper or poisonous snake*.  
**diffundō, -ere, -ūdī, -ūsūm**: *to spread, diffuse*.  
**crescō, -ere, crēvī, crētum**: *to grow, increase; arise*.
- 25 **nec . . . negabo**: a LITOTES.
- 26 **deus**: Amor.
- 27 **an**: introduces an indirect question dependent on *dubito*.  
**hic**: the two instances of *hic* in this line are adverbial but recall the adjective *hic* of line 26.  
**auguror, -ārī, -ātus**: *to foretell, predict*.  
**esse**: supply a missing *Amor* as subject of this infinitive.
- 28 **fama**: Ovid refers here to the story of the kidnapping and rape of Persephone, a story he recounts in Book V of the *Metamorphoses*.  
**mentior, -īrī, -ītus**: *to tell a falsehood, to lie*.  
**rapīna, -ae (f.)**: *kidnapping, the forcible carrying off of a person*.
- 29 **vos**: Orpheus appeals directly to Proserpina and Pluto here.  
**ego**: the placement of this subject pronoun so early in the clause, and in a phrase where it has no syntactical purpose, creates suspense and intensifies the action of the verb when it is encountered two lines further on. The term for this sort of anticipation is PROLEPSIS.
- 30 **vastus, -a, -um**: *desolate, dreary, endless*.
- 31 **Eurydicē, -ēs (f.)**: *Eurydice*, wife of Orpheus. This is the first time she is named.  
**retexō, -ere, -xūī, -textum**: *to undo, cancel, retract*. Imperative plural here, calling on the *vos*, Pluto and Proserpina, of line 29.
- 32 **omnia**: a rather awkward use of the neuter accusative to encompass all humans. Ovid adds weight to the seriousness of the content here by using three SPONDEES.

serius aut citius sedem properamus ad unam.  
 tendimus huc omnes, haec est domus ultima, vosque  
 35 humani generis longissima regna tenetis.  
 haec quoque, cum iustos matura peregerit annos,  
 iuris erit vestri: pro munere poscimus usum;  
 quodsi fata negant veniam pro coniuge, certum est  
 nolle redire mihi: leto gaudete duorum.<sup>7</sup>

40 Talia dicentem nervosque ad verba moventem  
 exsanguis flebant animae; nec Tantalus undam  
 captavit refugam, stupuitque Ixionis orbis,

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- 33 **sēdēs, -is (f.):** *house, dwelling.* Here used metaphorically to refer to the underworld, death.
- 34 **tendō, -ere, tetendī, tentum:** *to proceed, progress.*
- 36 **haec:** taken with *matura*, refers to Eurydice.
- 37 **peragō, -ere, -ēgī, -actum:** *to carry out, perform.*
- 37 **iūs, iūris (n.):** *authority, jurisdiction, power, right.* Along with *usum*, this is language of the legal world. Orpheus is pleading a legal case here, *ususfructus*.
- poscimus:** a poetic plural.
- 38 **venia, -ae (f.):** *justification, excuse, indulgence.*
- 39 **redire:** to the upper world.
- mihi:** a dative case as the subject of an infinitive with an impersonal verb.
- letum, -ī (n.):** *death.*
- 40 **dicentem, moventem:** participles modifying an assumed accusative Orpheus.
- 41 **exsanguis, -is, -e:** *pale, bloodless, exhausted.*
- Tantalus, -ī (m.):** *Tantalus*, an immortal who, having abused the advantages granted to him by the gods and unable to be killed, had to endure everlasting punishment in the underworld for his offence. He remains continually hungry and thirsty, water and food always just beyond his grasp.
- 42 **stupeō, -ēre, -uī:** *to be amazed, gape, become paralyzed.*
- Ixiōn, -onis (m.):** *Ixion*, the father of the Centaurs who was bound to a perpetually revolving wheel in the underworld for his attempt to seduce Juno.

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