

AMORES I. 12

In poem I. 11, the poet asks Nape to deliver a message to his mistress; in I. 12 we learn that Corinna has replied that she is unable to entertain her lover today. Ovid initially scolds the hapless Nape for tripping as she carried the tablets, thus bringing bad luck to his message, and even implies that she was drunk when she set out. He then devotes the major portion of this poem to a long and detailed curse directed against the wax and wood on which the poet's message was incised. Both wax and wood are described as ominous and death-bearing, and the poet castigates himself for having chosen to send a love message on such deadly materials.

When Ovid curses the writing tablets that provoked his lover's rebuke, he employs another conventional topic of lyric and elegiac poetry. Both Propertius (III. 23) and Horace (*Carm.* II. 13) had made similar protests. In this poem, Ovid's humorous and exaggerated anger is not that of a miserably disappointed lover; rather his "anger" is constructed to showcase the poet's skill and versatility and reflects his pleasure in his own clever virtuosity.



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