MEMORIES IN STONE: ANCIENT PET EPITAPHS AND POETRY BRIDGING

THE PAST AND PRESENT

By

LOUIS JOONGKI CHOI

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Approved by:

Dr. Sarah McCallum
Department of Religious Studies and Classics
This project explores the relationship between ancient Romans and their pet dogs by analyzing three Latin epitaphic inscriptions from the Roman world. I have divided the project into three distinct sections: *Roma*, *Mors*, and *Amor*. *Roma* (Rome) lays the foundation for the subsequent sections by discussing important poetic motifs and themes found in Latin literature, particularly those related to the elegiac genre, and Roman cultural attitudes towards canine companions. In the section entitled *Mors* (Death), I present my translations and analytical commentaries for each of the three epitaphs (*CLE* 1512, 1175, 1176). My commentaries focus on explaining the lexical, syntactical, and stylistic features of the commemorative inscriptions, as well as providing insights into their intertextual resonance and cultural significance. In the section entitled *Amor* (Love), I present an original Latin poetic composition, which engages with the language, style, and themes of the epitaphic inscriptions to create a living commemoration of my dogs, Nova and Luna. The entire project has broader implications for our understanding of the ways in which humans across different cultures and time periods have formed emotional connections with animals. By reflecting on our similarities with our ancient Roman counterparts, we may gain a deeper appreciation for the enduring bond between humans and animals and the profound role that pets play in our lives. Ultimately, this paper invites readers to consider the ways in which our relationships with pets reflect and shape our own identities and values.
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I. INTRODUCTION

The three Roman pet epitaphs express emotion of love and loyalty, highlighting the important relationships people in Antiquity had with their pet dogs. However, modern-day perceptions of ancient people’s relationships with animals often focus on practices such as animal sacrifice, rather than the affectionate bonds conveyed in these inscriptions. This project aims to challenge these perceptions by conducting a detailed analysis of the epitaphs and demonstrating the depth of the Romans’ love and care for their pet dogs.

This project is organized into three separate sections. The first section, entitled *Roma* (Rome), explores essential historical, cultural, and biographical information related to my project on the epitaphic commemoration of canine companions in the Roman world. The poetic inscriptions reflect the importance poetry had for Roman society. Poems were spoken out loud in the forums, written on scrolls and tablets, and carved into monuments and tombstones to commemorate the dead. This coexistence is highlighted in the intertextual quotes and references between the pet epitaphs and the poetry of Catullus, Statius, and Ovid. Understanding their poetic themes and motifs provides an essential foundation for understanding the inscriptions. In the second section, *Mors* (death), I analyze the tombstone inscriptions that describe three pet dogs, Myia, Patrice, and Margarita. The translations are intentionally clunky and unpolished as they are as grammatically accurate to the original Latin as possible. In my commentaries, I analyzed the grammatical, syntactical, and metrical devices of the poems while pointing out intertextual references and quotes to the Roman poets discussed in *Roma*. In the third section, called *Amor* (Love), I imitate the three epitaphs and their source material through an original Latin poem, commemorating my dogs, Nova and Luna. On the one hand, I wanted to
commemorate my pets as the owners of Myia, Patrice, and Margarita commemorate theirs, but I subvert the funerary aspect of the original inscriptions by emphasizing the life my dogs still have. My imitation reflects the ideology the Romans had towards art, where they would innovatively mimic the works of other poets as they made their own original pieces. The innovation of my poem resides in the living commemoration of my dogs. The specific quotes and references to the Roman inscriptions are discussed in detail within the commentary of Amor.

I designed the section titles to demarcate the triplicate design of the project, but also to reflect the themes and motifs of the epitaphs and Roman culture. The anagrams Roma and Amor act as reflections of one another. The Roman poets, especially Catullus and Ovid, engage deeply with love, often invoking the love goddess Venus and her son Cupid as their muses.¹ They were poets of Amor in the city of Roma. Furthermore, my imitation of the poets reflects my own love and appreciation for the ancient language. Mors divides Roma and Amor. People have a misconception that Latin is a dead language because it isn’t spoken by living people, but the language permeates western culture, adorning the very currency used by the United States. One of the ways Roman people overcome the annihilation of death is through their Latin words; by inscribing their language onto stone, pelt, and paper, they made the ephemeral permanent, the mortal immortal, and the dead alive. Their Amor carries on in the poetry, artifacts, and culture they left behind. Poems actively immortalize their writers with their words. Catullus cries, “Let us live, Lesbia, let us love…/ the suns are able to set and rise;/ for us, when once the brief light sets, eternal night is one sleep”; he and his girlfriend Lesbia will be immortalized by their love for each other in his poem, preventing their eternal night.² The inscriptions are physical artifacts

¹ Ovid’s Amores begins by discussing the power of Cupid and concludes the first section with, “Musa per undenos emodulanda pedes!” or, “Muse, having been measured through eleven feet” (Ov. Amores 1.1.30).
² “Vivāmus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus…/soles occidere et redire possunt;/nobis, cum semel occidit brevis lux,/nox est perpetua una dormienda” (Cat. c. 5.1–6).
that portray the love between pet dogs and their owners, immortalizing the animals, their people, and the poets who preserved them in marble. The culture permeates the poems and inscriptions, recalling different themes and motifs cultivated by the Romans. While the people of Roma have fallen into Mors, the Amor they left behind lives on, reminding us that the dead are not forgotten and the past lives on.
II. ROMA

A Brief History of Roman Elegy

Roman poems were inscribed into headstones to commemorate the lives of the dead, but they were also written on scrolls and tablets to be read aloud in forums. While the poems on the epitaphs act as commemorative inscriptions, they are also deeply engaged with the poetic culture of the Romans. Poems written on scrolls, read aloud in forums and symposiums, inspire poems carved into headstones, and poems on headstones inspire those written on scrolls. The strong, cyclical relationship between tombstones and written poetry requires that I ground my examination of the epitaphs in a brief introduction of Catullus and Roman elegy, both of which are importantly intertextual for the inscriptions.

The poet Catullus was born in the city of Verona in 87 BC and died in Rome at thirty years old.\(^3\) He was a member and figurehead of the neoteric poets, who diverged from the conventional epic poetry of the time. Epic poetry, such as Vergil’s *Aeneid*, focused on grand adventures, mythology, and the might of the Roman empire, while neoteric poetry instead described ordinary, mundane interactions people experience in their day-to-day life.\(^4\) Catullus centered many of his love poems around his beloved Lesbia, two of which commemorate Lesbia’s pet sparrow who passed away.\(^5\) These two poems, *Carmen* 2 and 3, set off a chain reaction leading to the creation of parrot poems by Ovid and Statius, and ultimately led to the carving of the three epitaphs this project is centered around. While Catullus wrote in a variety of

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\(^3\) Thomson (1997) 3.
meters and genres, his use of Roman elegy is especially relevant to the three inscriptions of this project.

The ancient etymological explanation of the word elegy (elegia) is that it derives from the Greek phrase ἔ ἔ λέγειν (to say “woe, woe”), an exclamation of mourning that points to the possible origins of the elegiac genre from funerary commemoration.\(^6\) Metrically, elegy contains the union of a hexameter line with that of a pentameter, creating the elegiac couplet. Many poets often playfully referenced the construction in their poetry, such as Ovid who states, “sex mihi surgat opus numeris, in quinque residat” or, “Let six for my number elevate (my) work, (and) in five abide.”\(^7\) The individual feet within the couplet must either be dactyls or spondees, with the fifth foot of both lines being dactyls. The pentameter line is formed from two, two and a half feet.\(^8\) Elegy falls into two categories: funerary and erotic. Funerary elegy mourns the loss of loved ones while commemorating the lives they lived. Catullus, for example, in Carmen 101 mourns the loss of his own brother, saying in the last line, “Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale”, which translates to, “And in forever, brother, hail and farewell.”\(^9\) Erotic elegy concerns itself with the concept of amor (love), but has a wide range of applications from sexually explicit scene descriptions to deep philosophical thought; Ovid, in Amores 1.1, openly mocks Virgil’s Aeneid while playfully discussing how much power Venus’ son Cupid has with his love-inducing arrows: “sunt tibi magna, puer, nimiumque potentia regna”, or, “(Your) royal powers are great, forceful, and too much.”\(^10\) Two of the commentaries embody the metrical elements of Roman elegy, and they each contain thematic characteristics of funerary poetry as they mourn and commemorate pet dogs.

\(^6\) McCallum (Forthcoming) 266.
\(^7\) (Ov. Amores. 1.1.27)
\(^8\) Califf (2002) 92.
\(^9\) (Cat. c. 101.10)
\(^10\) (Ov. Amores 1.1.13).
Dogs in Antiquity

The Greeks and Romans emphasize their relationship with dogs through visual art. Ancient vases, *stelai* (“pillars”), and mosaics depict different dogs working and playing with their humans, but generally, dogs may be split into two different categories: working and lap dogs. Working dogs either accompanied their owners on hunts to chase down and corral game animals or served as guards, protecting the property of their owners.\(^1\) Lean, sleek hunting dogs adorn the sides of pottery, staring into the eyes of their owners. This imagery parallels the depiction of children on vases as they stared into the eyes of their parents, highlighting the familial bond between dogs and their owners.\(^2\) The similar illustration between hunting dogs and children symbolically regards adopted pets on the same emotional level as their own offspring. The depiction of pet dogs as adopted children of their owners is further emphasized in the *stele* for a dog named Helena, which calls her “*alumnae*”, or “foster daughter.”\(^3\) Guard dogs were large animals similar in size and stature to the Molossian breed who guarded warehouses, homes, and herds of animals; the well preserved *Cave Canem* (“Beware of the dog”) mosaic in the ruins of Pompeii portrays a chained guard dog in an aggressive stance as it warns the reader to beware of the animal.\(^4\) Lap dogs, by contrast, were pampered little pets who enjoyed the pleasant life of lounging in domestic spaces, playing with young children, and cuddling with their owners.\(^5\) For example, tiny Maltese dogs are depicted on small vases pulling children around in carts.\(^6\) The visual arts of Antiquity depict the importance of pet dogs, regarding them as adopted children,  

\(^{1}\) Kitchell (2014) 48.  
\(^{2}\) Kitchell (1962) 49.  
\(^{3}\) *CIL* VI 19190.  
\(^{4}\) Kitchell (1962) 49.  
\(^{5}\) Kitchell (1962) 49.  
\(^{6}\) Kitchell (1962) 49.
through realistic images on pottery, *stelai*, and mosaics. Similarly, the pet epitaphs describe the lifelike qualities of their dogs through the textual art of poetry.
Quam dulcis fuit ista, quam benigna, 
quae cum viveret, in sinu iacebat 
somni conscia semper et cubilis 
O factum male, Myia, quod peristi. 
latrare modo, si quis adcumaret 5 
rivalis dominae, licentiosa. 
O factum male, Myia, quod peristi. 
altum iam tenet insciam sepulcrum, 
nec sevire potes nec insilire, 
nec blandis mihi morsibus renides. 10

How sweet that one was, how kind, 
who, while she was living, used to lie down in the folds of my toga 
always aware of sleep and a bed. 
O what a wicked deed, Myia, that you have perished. 
Just now you would bark, if any rival 
were lying down near your lady, wanton one. 
O what a wicked deed, Myia, that you have perished. 
Now the lofty tomb holds you unaware of life, 
you are neither able to rage nor leap, 
nor will you shine back to me with flattering bites.

\[17\] The Latin text of the three inscriptions (CLE 1512, 1175, 1176) is taken from Buecheler (1894).
Commentary

The Myia epitaph originates from Aquitania (southeastern France) in the 2nd century CE and was carved into marble. The poem, written from the perspective of her owner, describes Myia as a sweet, kind little lap dog who used to love to nap in her bed, snuggle into the toga folds of her owner, and jealousy bark at other dogs who interacted with her lady. From her description in the poem, little Myia was likely a Maltese lap dog who enjoyed a pampered life (Kitchell 1962, 49). The poet highlights the contrast between the endearing qualities of the small dog and the ferocity commonly attributed to wild animals.

The hendecasyllabic meter, lines of poetry with eleven syllables, combined with the direct quote of “O factum male” (Cat. c. 3.16), indicates that the author of the inscription took inspiration from Catullus 3. In this poem, Catullus describes the life, death, and burial of a pet sparrow, which was owned and cared for by his mistress (see line 4 below). The ancient Romans had a cyclical relationship between epitaphs and literature, which commonly quoted each other. This relationship persists to modern times as the 9/11 memorial features a quote from Vergil’s Aeneid: “nulla dies umquam memoris vos eximet aevos”, meaning “No day shall erase you from the memory of time” (Verg. A. 9.447). The quote demonstrates poetry’s interaction with inscriptions.

1–3 quam… cubilis contain biographical information concerning how Myia used to live; she was sweet, kind, snuggly and always ready to fall asleep on a couch or cushion.

1 quam … quam – adverbial “how … how.”
1 dulcis… benigna are predicate adjectives describing ista.
1 ista the demonstrative adjective ista (“this (one, referring to Myia)”) indicates that Myia’s owners considered her near to them, which the poem explains further in following lines (L-S s.v. iste I.A).
2 quae cum viveret a circumstantial and relative clause with an imperfect subjunctive verb further explaining her connection to her owners “who while she was living.”
2 sinus the ablative case with the preposition in (“in the folds of the toga”). The noun sinus generally refers to any curve but is particularly used to describe togas since their fabric folds about the wearer; it may also refer to one’s bosom (L-S s.v. sinus II.A).
2 iacebat is in the imperfect indicative which conveys an ongoing action in the past; this
implies that Myia was constantly lying on her master’s lap.
3 somni… cubilis are objective genitives receiving the verbal action of the adjective conscia.
3 conscia the adjective refers to Myia in the following line.

4 O… peristi expresses the grief Myia’s owners experienced at her passing by quoting Catullus.
4 O factum male the perfect passive participle factum works as an accusative of exclamation
with the adverb male. The entire vocative phrase forges an intertextual link to Catullus 3: “O
factum male! O miselle passer!” which translates to, “O what a wicked deed! O little wretched
sparrow!” (Cat. c. 3.16). There it is used to describe the death of a pet sparrow; here it is used
to describe the death of the dog Myia. The repetition of O factum male in line 7 of the Myia
epitaph emphasizes the grief of the speaker and imbues the epitaph with a hymnic tone.
4 Myia is in the vocative form. Her name is a Greek word (Μυῖα) meaning “fly” (as in the
insect). Other pet epitaphs have similarly cute names for the pets such as Margarita (Pearl),
Patrice (Lady), and Kalathine (Tiny), which reflect the familiar practice of giving pets cute
little names such as Spot, Teddy, and Penny (Lewis and Llewellyn-Jones 2018, 717).
4 quod peristi forms a substantive clause introduced by quod with a 2nd person singular
perfect indicative active verb meaning “the fact that you have perished.” The verb peristi is the
formation of the preposition per, which amplifies the verb its attached to, combined with the
verb eo. Its literal translation is “to go through”, but here it takes the transferred meaning of “to
pass away, die (L-S s.v. eo II.B.3).

5–6 latrares… licentiosa explain how Myia would jealousy bark whenever a rival dog would sit
on her lady’s lap.
5 latrares (“to bark”) is the main verb of the apodosis of a present contrary to fact conditional
and appears before the protasis si quis adcubaret (“if anyone were to lie down”). Both verbs
are imperfect subjunctives that contextually work with the word modo (“just now”) to describe
how Myia was recently alive, barking at other rival dogs who would try to lie down with her
mistress. The combination of the imperfect subjunctives and modo portrays the close
relationship Myia’s owners had with her since they remember her recent behavior.
5 modo the temporal adverb (“just now, just a minute ago”) heightens the pathos of the situation by highlighting how recently Myia was alive.

5 si (ali)quis: After si, nisi, num, and ne, the indefinite pronoun aliquis becomes quis.

5 dominae is the dative of indirect object with the compound verb accubo (“to lie near”).

6 rivalis is the subject that corresponds with (ali)quis (“any rival”).

6 licentiosa is in the vocative case and refers to Myia in the context of the conditional phrase. The base noun is licentia but has been combined with the -osus suffix, which denotes fullness, creating a noun that means “licentious.” The adjective also may mean unbridled, unrestrained, wanton, words that typically have negative connotations, but here it acts as a cute epithet for Myia. Modern pet owners could say to their pet in an endearing tone, “Oh you naughty little thing,” and licentiosa fulfills a similar purpose in Latin.

7 O… peristi The repetition of “O factum male, Myia, quod peristi” (cf. line 4) reinforces the anguish Myia’s owner feels at her loss and pays homage to the Catullus phrase “O factum male” (Cat. c. 3.16).

8–10 altum… renides describe Myia’s tomb and the hole that will be left in her owner’s lives now that she is gone. Myia will no longer be able to be fierce, leap around, or smile at her owners.

8 altum … insciam sepulcrum echoes back to line 3 in word play and reflective position. The words conscia (cf. line 3) and insciam starkly contrast each other. Myia, who conscia describes, was always aware of sleep and her bed, but her tomb is now insciam (“unknown, not knowing”) since she no longer knows life; she was always aware of her resting place while she lived, but now that she has passed away, she is no longer aware of it. The poem reflects the dichotomy between the two words and strengthens that contrast by placing conscia in the third from the first line and insciam from the third to last line. The word inscius has two meanings: active, meaning "not knowing," and passive, meaning “unknown.” Myia's tomb is inscius in both senses: actively because she no longer knows it, and passively because it is unknown to those who do not know Myia. However, despite this, readers come to know about Myia through the depiction of her life on the tombstone.
9 sevire is the archaic infinitive form of the word saevio (“to rage”). The verb describes wild savagery, which contradicts Myia’s sweet and kind nature described in line 1. The poet contrasts the savagery of wild animals with the tame gentleness of household pets; with the context of licentiosa in line 6, the poem may be reinforcing the cuteness of Myia by comparing her to wild beasts. Ovid uses the verb to describe wolves raging with hunger and madness: “qui quamquam saevit pariter rabieque fameque” (Ov. Met. 11.369).

10 blandis… morsibus this ablative of means describes how Myia would shine back at her owner “with charming bites.” In this context, morsibus departs from its usual meaning of “jaws or bite of animals” and takes on the figurative meaning of “teeth,” suggesting that Myia had an endearing smile. While blandis … morsibus could portray the savage bites of wild beasts, given Myia's nature as a sweet, kind lap dog, the phrase creates a humorous and whimsical contrast between fierce animals and a cuddly pet.

10 renides likewise contrasts the savagery of sevire since Myia would smile at her owner with a charming little grin. Additionally, when the Latin is translated in the original word order, renides isn’t referenced until the end of the sentence. The blandis morsibus hangs at the beginning of the phrase, and the reader is left wondering what action they describe until the line finishes with renides. The poem concludes with Myia smiling back at the reader.
III. MORS – SECUNDA PARS

Patrice
CLE 1176 (= CIL X 659)

Text and Translation

Portavi lacrimis madidus te, nostra catella,
   quod feci lustris laetior ante tribus.
ergo mihi, Patrice, iam non dabis oscula mille
   nec poteris collo grata cubare meo.
tristis marmorea posui te sede merentem
   et iunxi semper manibus ipse meis
morib(us) argutis hominem simulare paratam,
   perdidimus quales hei mihi delicias.
tu, dulcis Patrice, nostras attingere mensas
   consueras, gremio poscere blanda cibos,
lambere tu calicem lingua rapiente solebas,
   quem tibi saepe meae sustinuere manus,
accipere et lassum cauda gaudente frequenter
   [et mi omnes gestu dicere blanditias.]

I carried you wet with tears, our little puppy,
which I did more joyfully in the fifteen years before.
Consequently, Patrice, you will now not give a thousand kisses
nor will you beloved be able to lie down on my neck.
Sorrowfully I placed you worthy of merit in your marble tomb
and I myself joined you forever with the spirits of my ancestors
you having been prepared to imitate a human with your witty nature,
alas, how great a darling to me we have lost
you, sweet Patrice, had been accustomed to come up to our set tables, and you had been accustomed to sweetly demand food from (my) lap. You used to be accustomed to lick my cup with your snatching mouth, which my hands often held up to you, and frequently to receive me in my weariness with a rejoicing tail, and to say to me every cajoling thing with a gesture.

**Commentary**

The Patrice poem originates from Hispania Tarraconensis (northeastern Spain) in the 6th century CE and was carved into marble. The elegiac inscription describes the dog Patrice from the perspective of her owner, who carried her to be buried while remembering aspects of Patrice’ behavior. Their beloved pet would lick their cup clean, sweetly take food from their hands, and greet them with a wagging tail when they returned home. Her name roughly translates to “Lady,” and she was likely a lap dog that enjoyed the comforts of indoor life (Kitchell 1962, 49; Lewis & Llewellyn-Jones 2014, 717). The poem depicts the strong bond of love and friendship the pair had for each other through the use of first-person verbs and in how Patrice’s owner joined her with the spirits of their ancestors, which was a significant cultural act of love and admiration to Romans.

The inscription reflects the common themes of Roman funerary elegy by including a description of the tomb, a biographical description of Patrice, and the joining of her spirit with the family ancestors. The poem also incorporates the Catullan phrase *basia mille* (a thousand kisses, Cat. c. 5.7), which underscores the lover’s excessive passion for Lesbia. Catullus’ famous poem incorporates sound effects, especially assonance, and engages with numbers to reinforce its structural organization (Thomson, 2020 pages 218-219). Similarly, Patrice’s epitaph contains many “ah” sounds, especially in the first line: “portavi lacrimis madidus te nostra catella.” This repetition of sound fills the poem with mourning as it is read aloud. The inscription also utilizes numbers to reinforce its structural organization, employing forms of the pronoun *tu* five times (*te*, 1, 5; *tu*, 9, 11; *tibi* 12) which reflects *lustris* (cf. line 2), meaning a period of five years; *lustris* itself joins with *tribus* (cf. line 2) explaining how Patrice lived for fifteen years. Furthermore, the inscription references Catullus 5’s thousands of kisses through *oscula mille* (cf.
line 3). Catullus 5 also plays with numbers through the repetition of mille and centum, but the intention of the original numbering is not entirely known (Cat. c. 5). By utilizing assonance and number play in the epitaph, the poet reflects the amatory motif between Catullus and Lesbia in the sepulchral contemplation of the relationship between Patrice and her owner.

1–4 portavi… meo describes the burial of the beloved pet Patrice and provides biographical information about her. Her crying owner carried her to be buried after she had lived for fifteen years.

1 lacrimis is an ablative of cause construed with madidus to describe how Patrice’s owner carried her wet with tears.

1 nostra catella is a vocative phrase containing the diminutive catella meaning “little dog, puppy.” The diminutive construction was employed by neoteric writers to indicate cuteness and dearness of the diminutive noun and reinforce their emphasis on conversational idioms found in day-to-day life (Thomson 1962, 195). For example, Catullus states, “O miselle passer!” (“O wretched little sparrow!”) to describe Lesbia’s pet sparrow who passed away (Cat. c. 3. 16.). Patrice’s owner expresses his love for her with this construction (Lattimore §63).

3 oscula mille The accusative noun-adjective pair oscula mille is an intertextual reference to Catullus’ efforts to woo his beloved Lesbia in Catullus 5 which is discussed in more detail above.

5 grata The substantive adjective grata is the subject of the verb poteris to say “nor will you (my) beloved be able….” Catullus uses the adjective gratum in Carmen 96 to comfort his dear friend Calvus whose wife just died: “si quicquam mutis gratum acceptumque sepulcris” (Cat. Carmen. 96. 1). In poems inscribed on epitaphic markers, the adjective gratus appears frequently to commemorate the beloved and honored dead (see CCLE s.v. grata, gratus).

5 lustris tribus is an ablative of time duration which indicates that Patrice lived for fifteen years. Historically, a lustrum was a special purification ceremony which occurred every five years, and by extension it comes to mean a period of five years (L-S s.v. lustrum II.b).

5 tristis In a similar fashion to the substantive grata in the previous line, tristis acts as a nominative with the verb posui meaning, “Sorrowful I place…”, but to create a smoother translation in English, tristis can be translated as an adverb: “Sorrowfully I place….”
5 marmorea… sede is an ablative of place where that describes the tombstone of Patrice. The tomb was a tiny, marble grave for a small dog who was dearly loved by her owner who carried her crying to be buried under the small stone.

6–8 et… paratam explains how Patrice’s owner joined her with their ancestors, which was a culturally significant act of love and respect to Romans who placed much of their identity in their ancestors. The concept of manes does not originate from Greek culture, but rather finds its ancient roots in Italy; these “spirits” represent people’s souls who find power in mankind’s fortunes (Lattimore §17). In the context of this epitaph, manes refer to the household spirits and ancestors of Patrice’s owners. By joining her spirits with the spirits of their ancestors, her owner symbolically includes Patrice among their deceased family.

6 iunxi the 1st person perfect indicative active verb portrays the personal efforts made by Patrice’s owner in her burial. The first person of iunxi, in addition to portavi, indicates that Patrice’s owner was the one to join her spirit with their ancestors. The owner themself actively labors over Patrice’s burial, indicating a sense of care and responsibility.

6 manibus… meis is a dative of indirect object. Patrice’s owner joins their pet’s spirit with the spirits of their ancestors.

7 paratam is the perfect passive participle of paro and is feminine, accusative, singular, agreeing with te (cf. line 5). It takes the complementary infinitive simulare, which in turn takes the accusative object hominem. The phrase emphasizes the humanlike qualities of Patrice, a dog “prepared to mimic a person.”

7 moribus argutis meaning “with (your) bright nature” forms an ablative of means. While one could argue that this construction is an ablative of manner, or a combination of means and manner, Patrice actively uses her bright nature as an instrument to mimic humans. Argutis is a perfect passive participle from the verb arguo meaning “bright, lively, cunning, sharp.”

8 hei the conventional interjection of grief (“ah!”) stands in the half-foot of the pentameter line, cutting through the sentence with a cry of grief at the death of Patrice.

9–15 tu… blanditias contains many complementary infinitives of solebas (cf. line 11) which bring forth memories of how Patrice used to live and interact with her owner. She used to beg for food at their tables, lick the cup offered to her from their own hand, and greet them when they
came home from an exhausting day with a wagging tail. The repetition of pronoun *tu* is an anaphora, the repetition of a certain word or phrase, as assonance, the repetition of vowel sounds. The repetition places emphasis on Patrice, who *tu* refers to, and fills the poem with sounds of mourning which reflects the wet tears shed by Patrice’s owner in the first line.

9 *dulcis patrice* The vocative *dulcis patrice* echoes the vocative used in line 3, thematically linking lines 3 and 4 with lines 9 and 10. Just as lines 3–4 describe Patrice’s personality, so do lines 9 and 10 as they explain how she would beg for food from their feast-filled tables and greet them with a wagging tail when they returned home. Patrice’s owner, in their grief, receives happy flashes of memories about their sweet pet throughout the poem. *Dulcis* is also used to describe the dog Myia in the first line of *CLE* 1176.

9 *mensas* works in conjunction with *nostras* (“our tables”) and describes how Patrice would move to each person who was eating and beg, exhibiting behavior that is recognizable in our own dogs today.

10 *gremio* is an ablative of place where. Patrice would ask for food from her owner’s lap in a charming and flattering manner, which is described by the substantive adjective *blanda* (“flattering”).

11 *lingua rapiente* the instrumental ablative phrase indicates that Patrice licks the *calicem* with a snatching tongue.

11 *tibi* dative of indirect object with *sustinere*.

12 *meae* is nominative plural feminine agreeing with *manus*.

12 *cauda gaudente* the instrumental ablative describes how Patrice would receive her owner with a rejoicing tail. The assonance of the “au” diphthong adds a satisfying sound to the line when read aloud, but also reflects sounds of mourning; additionally, the repetition of sounds emphasizes the relationship between Catullus 5 and Patrice’s inscription (Thomson, page 218).

13 *lassum* (sc. *me*) The adjective *lassus* (“weary, tired”) denotes the weary owner, who is joyfully welcomed home after a long day by his canine companion Patrice.

14 *mi* is the shortened form of *mihi*, the dative form of the pronoun *ego*. It acts as the dative indirect object for the complementary infinitive *dicere*. Forms of *ego* occur six times (lines 3, 8, 14) and forms of the first-person possessive adjective occur three times (lines 4, 6, 12). Similarly, forms of *tu* occur five times (lines 1, 5, 9, 11, 12). Through the frequency and interchange of *ego/meus* and *tu*, the poet continuously bounces back and forth from owner to
pet, reinforcing the relationship between Patrice and her owner throughout the text. Additionally, the five instances of *tu* hearken back to *lustris* (cf. line 2), further emphasizing the relationship between numerical play in Catullus 5 and Patrice’s epitaph.

14 *gestu* the ablative of manner describes the flattering gestures Patrice used to greet her owner with non-verbal communication.
Gallia me genuit, nomen mihi divitis undae
       concha dedit, formae nominis aptus honos.
docta per incertas audax discurrere silvas
       collibus hirsutas atque agitare feras
non gravibus vinculis unquam consueta teneri
       verbera nec niveo corpore saeva pati.
molli namque sinu domini dominaeque iacebam
       et noram in strato lassa cubare toro
et plus quam licuit muto canis ore loquebar:
       nulli latratus pertimuere meos.
sed iam fata subii partu iactata sinistro,
       quam nunc sub parvo marmore terra tegit.

Gaul bore me, the shell of the rich sea gave me (my) name,
the honor of my name is suitable to my beauty/appearance.
I learned to boldly run to and fro through uncertain woods
And to chase shaggy beasts in the hills.
I was not ever never accustomed to be held by heavy chains
nor to endure savage strikes upon my snowy-white body.
Indeed I used to lie down in the soft toga folds of (my) lord and lady
and knew to lie down tired in the bed with covers laid out,
and I used to speak more than it was permitted with the speechless mouth of a dog.
No one was very afraid of my barks,
but now I have gone under death having been buffeted by an unlucky childbirth,
I whom the earth now covers under a small marble stone.

Photograph of CLE 1175 retrieved from the CIL online database.

Commentary

The Margarita tombstone is a marble epitaph 50cm tall and 61cm wide with an inscription depicting the life of a pet dog; it originates from Rome during the 1st or 2nd century CE. The size of the marble in addition to the inscription would have been quite expensive, revealing how dear Margarita was to their owner who was willing to spend a lavish amount on her funeral. The inscription itself contains a small mistake, a misspelling of the word *tegit* as *teget*, which was crossed out and corrected (see the photo above).
Certain Roman inscriptions attempt to grab the attention of passersby by speaking through the epitaph, much like Margarita speaks through this elegiac poem. The dead were typically buried outside of the cities, for either hygienic or religious reasons, causing the highways to be littered with gravestones which were occasionally designed to call out to the wayfarers traveling past them (Lattimore §63). Those who stop to read Margarita’s tombstone briefly learn about the dog’s life through her eyes. The tombstone recalls how she originates from Gaul, would run through the woods hunting animals, was never beaten nor struck on her white body, snuggled with her lord and lady, and how she passed away during childbirth. Margarita is described in terms evocative of both hunting and lap dogs, and thus she may have performed a combination of roles in the family. In some ways, Margarita shares characteristics with Odysseus’ dog, Argos, who was renowned for his ability to hunt using his tracking skills but was also dearly loved by Odysseus who kept him near the entrance of his home (Hom. Od. 17.375–90). Her description blurs the lines between the roles dogs played in Antiquity, but still carries the emotional connection between her and her owner.

1–4 Gallia… feras recounts biographical information about Margarita, explaining how she came from Gaul, was given her name due to her glossy, white coat, and how she used to run through unknown woods and hills hunting animals.

1 undae provides further background information on concha, and is modified by the adjective divitis (“of rich waves”), which reinforces the value of pearls harvested from the ocean as well as the preciousness of Margarita.

2 concha is originally a Greek word (κόγχη) that was adopted into Latin, which here denotes “shell.”

2 aptus (sc. est) Often in Latin, the omitted form of the verb esse is to be understood from context.

2 formae nominis aptus honos is translated as, “The honor of my name is suited to my appearance.” The appositional genitive nominis describes the subject honos, and formae is the dative with with aptus (“suited to”). This line implies that Margarita’s coat had a shine like a pearl, which is further reinforced in the following line with niveo corpore (“snowy-white body”).
The perfect passive verb construction takes the complementary infinitives *discurrere* and *agitare*.

To allow this line to sound smoother in English, I translated the adjective *audax* as an: “I was taught to boldly run….”

Collibus forms an ablative of place where, which is construed with the infinitive *discurrere*, describing how Margarita used to run on hills through unknown woods.

Feras modifies the feminine plural accusative *hirsutas* translating to “shaggy beasts.” The substantive form of the adjective *ferus* is *fera* meaning “a wild animal” (L-S s.v. *ferus* I.B.2). Margarita could have been a hunting dog chasing deer or boar, or she may have been a lap dog able to run about the woods, chasing squirrels and other small animals. Guard and hunting dogs were working animals who likely would have experienced the *gravibus vinculis* (“heavy chains”), which are described in more detail below, while lap dogs enjoyed a pampered life.

Gravibus... toro explains the treatment of Margarita by her owners, including how she was never beaten, used to snuggle into the togas of her owners, and would lie down tired on bedding.

5–8 *gravibus vinculis* invokes imagery of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* when hunters release their dogs from their chain leashes: “vincula pars adimunt canibus” (Ov. Met. 8.332).

6 *verbera* is from the neuter noun *verber* meaning “whip, a beating” and is the object of the deponent verb *pati* (“to suffer”).

6 *niveo corpore* meaning “white body” acts as an ablative of specification and hearkens back to the origin of the name as most pearls are white.

7 *molli... sinu* forms an ablative of place where describing how Margarita would snuggle into the soft, pliant toga folds of her lord and lady. The noun *sinus* generally refers to any curve, but is particularly used to describe togas since their fabric folds about the wearer; it may also refer to one’s bosom (L-S s.v. *sinus* II.A).

7 *domini dominaeque* are both possessive genitives and are satisfyingly placed next to each other generating both assonance and alliteration with the repeated consonant and vowel sounds.

8 *noram* is the syncopated form of the pluperfect verb *noveram*. Latin poets used syncopated forms for metrical convenience. It would be translated as “I had gotten to know”, and therefore “I knew.”

8 *lassa* is an adjective describing Margarita as “weary” and is used in *CLE* 1176 to describe Patrice’s owner wearily returning home (*CLE* 1176.13).
8 strato… toro “bed with covers laid out” torus, while typically meaning bump, may also refer to a bed or bolster cushion, and is modified by the perfect passive participle strato. The words torus and sterno, in addition to its participle strato, are etymologically connected (L-S s.v. torus).

8 iacebam The imperfect tense conveys the repeated, continuous nature of the action, underscoring the frequency with which Margarita used to lie down.

9–12 et… tegit plays with the idea that Margarita cannot speak with her mouth as humans do, but would bark in such a way that did not scare people. While she is unable to speak human language, the inscription gave her a voice of her own. The last line also describes her death by childbirth and rounds out the poem with a depiction of her small, marble tombstone.

9 loquebar In a similar fashion to iacebam from the previous lines, the imperfect tense describes how Margarita used to continuously speak and reflects the nature of speaking epitaphs calling out to the wayfarers (Lattimore §63).

9 licuit is from the impersonal verb licet and is construed with quam to mean, “more than it was permitted.”

9 muto… ore is an ablative of means as Margarita was speaking with the mute mouth of a dog. The adjective mutus (“mute”) does not imply that Margarita was unable to bark, rather she was just unable to speak as humans do (L-S s.v. mutus I).

10 nulli is the plural subject of the verb pertimuere.

10 latratus is a 4th declension action verb formed from the perfect passive participle of the verb latro.

10 pertimuere is the alternative third person perfect indicative active form (= pertimuerunt) of the compound pertimeo (“to be very afraid”). The prefix per- amplifies the meaning of the verb it is attached to.

11 sub when compounded with a verb of motion applies a sense of “beneath-ness”, “moving up from below” or “lighting fires from underneath” (L-S s.v. sub II.C). The coupling with eo (“I go”) in Margarita's epitaph serves to convey the idea of descent, evoking the image of the deceased making their way into Hades. This choice of wording could also suggest that Margarita believed she was fated to journey to a canine underworld, perhaps alluding to the
implied aviary afterlife of Catullus 3: “at vobis male sit, malae tenebrae/ Orci, quae omnia bella devoratis” (Cat. c. 13–14).

11 *iactata* (“buffeted”) is the perfect passive participle of *iaceo* and refers to Margarita, the implied subject. This participle intertextually associates Margarita’s difficult and perilous journey into the afterlife with the harrowing ideal of Aeneas in Virgil’s *Aeneid* who is buffeted by the elements on land and sea: “multum ille et terrīs iactātus” (Verg. A. 1.3).

11 *sinistro* modifies *partu* and is translated not as “left-handed”, but as “unlucky, wrong, or improper”; here it describes how Margarita died from an “unlucky childbirth”, meaning that she passed away while giving birth to her puppies. The Romans adopted the Greek superstition that left was unlucky, which was a belief held by most cultures around the mediterranean; interestingly, the Etruscans, who lived in northern Italy and were eventually absorbed into Roman culture, believed the left was lucky, since they placed augurs used in their rituals on the left (Aveni & Romano 1994, 562).

12 *sub parvo marmore* carries great emotional weight. The dog was laid to rest under a marble stone 50cm tall and 61cm wide, which would cover a dog’s grave well. The word *parvo* in Margarita’s epitaph may be used to compare her small tombstone to larger and more grandiose markers that were typically used for human burials. The repetition of *sub* and *subii* in the inscription serves to create a linguistic link between the two lines, emphasizing the close relationship between the ideas they express. The author of the epitaph reinforces the notion of Margarita’s descent into the underworld, echoing the theme of death and transformation. This use of repetition is a common stylistic device in Latin poetry, serving to underscore key ideas and create a sense of rhythm and unity. In the context of the epitaph, it also reflects broader cultural attitudes towards death and mourning, which emphasized the continuity of life beyond the grave and the importance of honoring the memory of the deceased.

12 *tegit* contains a small mistake on the actual inscription. The word was misspelled as *teget* originally, which caused the inscriber to cross out the “e” and replace it with an “i”.

25
IV. AMOR

Nova Lunaque

Text and Translation

O Nova Lunaque, stellatae lucete catellae!  
fulgete ut stent mortes orci procul hinc!  
O, si quis, Nova, perturbat lecto te in molle  
latras voce tua, parva canum cyclops!  
O, semper, Lunalla, utinam acre albo ore mices mi!  
quam tu dulcis dormis ala in calida.  
O factum bene, quod vixistis gentibus amplis!  
ac explevisti vitas laetitia  
O nostrae curae, umbra mortis strata in caelo,  
quae elucetis vivae, in lectum cadite.  

O Nova and Luna, shine our little dogs set with stars!  
Shine, so that the deaths of Orcus stand far away from here!  
O Nova, if anyone disturbs you in your soft bed  
then you, our small cyclops dog, bark with your voice.  
O little Luna, I wish that you will always smile at me with your sharp, white mouth!  
How sweetly you sleep in my warm armpit.  
O what a blessed deed, that you have lived with our esteemed families,  
and that you have filled our lives with happiness!  
O our darlings, with the shadow of night having been spread in the sky,  
you who shine forth living, fall into bed.
Artist’s Statement and Reflection

In writing my poem, I wanted to engage with the language, style, and themes of the Roman poets through innovative imitation, just as they would imitate each other. While I could have written a poem in English, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to capture the intricacies of the Latin language. In order to properly imitate the epitaphs, Latin had to be the language of my poem. The English rendering of my poem, like those of the three epitaphs, captures the grammatical structure of the Latin.

My process for writing the poem started with brainstorming the different themes and motifs of the Latin inscriptions I wanted to convey. I narrowed down the scope of the project to primarily focus on the contrast between lightness and darkness, life and death, *amor* and *mors*. After selecting the major themes, I created an outline in English for the topic of each couplet. Then I started writing and rewriting the Latin, paying close attention to the meter. Practically, I started with a Latin sentence, then began reformatting the words to fit into the meter. In this process of trial and error, I began to shift my strategy towards paying close attention to the length of the vowels which impacted the availability of words I could use. I began to construct little models outlining the lengths of syllables for words I wanted to include and the lengths of potential syllables, then filled in blank spaces with the appropriate vowel lengths needed to complete the line. Below you will find copies of my scribbled notes as I attempted to formulate elegiac meter. Composing my own poem reinforced my understanding of the natural lengths of Latin words, and my awareness of the challenges of fitting the words into the meter. Certain words do not fit into elegiac couplets, forcing me to rethink lexical and syntactical choices. My application of knowledge, combined with experimentation and creativity, produced the poem.

Through the process of writing the original Latin poem, I came to a better understanding of Latin grammar, syntax, meter, and vocabulary. I also had to engage more deeply with the language and themes of the epitaphs, as well as their intertextual source material. Since starting the writing process, my compositional Latin abilities and scansion have drastically improved. As the poem continued, I began to veer away from basic Latin syntax and began using more clauses, conditionals, and subjunctives that allowed for more descriptive and creative wordplay. My personal favorite couplet, lines 3 and 4, contain a present conditional in addition to an oxymoronic hyperbole describing Nova as a small, cyclops dog. Conditionals were always challenging to experience in class and incorporating one within the poem was a significant step
in showing how much I have learned over my Latin career. Wrestling with the language as the poets revealed how enigmatic and rewarding the process of writing Latin poetry is. It was incredibly satisfactory to fit each Latin word into its proper place within the metrical pattern, and I am proud of the final product. I can completely imagine Catullus, Vergil, and Ovid experiencing similar but likely heightened emotions as they completed their renowned works.

The poem shows the relationship between light and darkness. The names Nova and Luna reflect the celestial light language expressed in the first line; to an English speaker, the name Nova may invoke imagery of a supernova, and a Latin speaker would recognize Luna as the word for moon. Furthermore, Greek and Roman tombstones often catasterized their loved ones into constellations in the night sky to commemorate their life (Lattimore §3, 4). I reflect this practice by catasterizing Nova and Luna in the sky of the poem. The poem reflects the cycle of day and night by beginning with light and concluding with darkness, providing distinct closure to mark the end of the poem like the setting sun ends the day. The first line commands our dogs to shine brightly. The ninth line depicts the shadows of night stretching across the earth. The final couplet starts with language of closure by describing darkness, but the final line surprises the reader with light, further subverting the Roman poets. The sun rises in the morning, spreading light across the world, but, as it falls below its zenith, shadows stretch out along the ground, eventually consuming the planet. However, new lights rise into the night sky, and the earth becomes once more lit up by the moon and stars. This pattern reflects the cycle of life. My world was lit up when we adopted Nova and Luna. When they pass away, the world will be dead and dark, but memories of our time spent together will light up that darkness, providing dim but potent comfort in my grief. I believe this reflects the relationship described in the canine epitaphs analyzed in Mors. The owners of Myia, Patrice, and Margarita all mourn the loss of their beloved pets, but they remember glimpses of the past that fill their lives with light once more. All we must do is look to the stars, lights that stretch out through dead, empty space, and remember. Death may separate us from our pets, but our love still connects us.

Commentary

1–2 introduces the reader to Nova and Luna, telling them to shine brightly with starlight to postpone the death of Orcus from taking them away.
1 O Nova Lunaque The vocatives recall those found in Patrice’s epitaph *(CLE 1176.3–9)* and the Myia epitaph *(CLE 1512.4, 7).* My lexical choices reflect the names Luna, the Latin word for moon, and Nova, evocative of the supernova; the combination of participle *stellatae* evokes the sparkle of stars; and the imperative *lucete* requests that the dogs shine with light.

1 *stellatae* the perfect passive participle (“set with stars”) describes *catellae,* reinforcing the celestial light language of the first line. Moreover, *stellatae* reverberates with *catellae,* underscoring the connection between the participle and the diminutive.

1 *lucete* “shine!” the imperative *lucete* commands the addressed *stellatae catellae* to shine.

1 *catellae* “puppies” is a diminutive that reflects *catella* in Patrice’s epitaph *(CLE 1176.1).*

2 *fulgete* “Shine!” commands Nova and Luna to shine once more, as they do in the first line.

2 *ut stent mortes Orci* is a substantive clause saying, “so that the death of Orcus.” *mortes* is plural because there are two dogs who must shine to postpone their deaths, and *Orci* quotes Catullus 3 “malae tenebrae,/ Orci, quae omnia bella devoratis” or, “the wicked shadows of Orcus, which devour all beautiful things” *(Cat. c. 3.14).* Orcus himself was a god of the underworld.

2 *procul hinc* “far away from this place” are adverbs modifying *stent.*

3–4 describes the personality and characteristics of Nova, describing her as a cyclops dog (she only has one eye) who barks at those who disturb her from her rest. These lines also display an intention break of the usual elegiac meter since the fifth feet of the hexameter and pentameter lines are spondees, rather than the usual dactyls. My unconventional metrical choices emphasize the lumbering nature of the cyclops in addition to Nova’s clumsiness due to a lack of depth perception; she bumps into walls, chairs, and people from time to time, but always recovers quickly.

3 *si quis* “if anyone” sets up a present contrary to fact conditional phrase with the imperfect subjunctive verbs *perturbed* and *latras.* It also quotes the Myia epitaph *(CLE 1512.5).*

3 *lecto in te molle* the structural arrangement of the phrase (“you in your soft bed”), with the pronoun placed within the prepositional phrase, reflects Nova sitting in her soft bed. Additionally, the ellison between *te* and *in* illustrates the fact that Nova – whose gray color and markings blend into our carpets, blankets, and beds – appears to become one with soft resting places.
4 voce tua “with your voice” is an ablative of means describing how Nova barks with her voice, reflecting the muto canis ore (“silent mouth of a dog”) in Margarita’s inscription (CLE 1175.9). Nova often lets out suppressed barks and grunts to get our attention, letting us know she has to go outside or wants to be moved onto a tall bed or couch she cannot physically jump on.

4 parva canum cyclops “small cyclops dog” stands in the vocative referring back to Nova in the previous line. The oxymoronic pairing of parva (“small”) with cyclops associates Nova, a tiny one-eyed dog, with the monstrous mythological figure characterized by enormous size and ferocious behavior (e.g. Polyphemus, Hom. Od. 9). I thus reflect the humorous and tender association of tame, beloved dogs with animal savagery seen in Myia’s epitaph (CLE 1512.9–10).

5–6 describes the personality and characteristics of Luna, describing her sharp, white smile and how she loves to snuggle into people’s warm armpits.

5 Lunalla The diminutive reflects both Luna’s size and the fact that my family and I refer to her as “little Luna.”

5 utinam… mices “I wish that you would shine back” is an optative subjunctive construction. The verb mices is typically used to refer to the light of celestial bodies such as stars which reflects the first line of the poem as well as Luna’s name (L-S s.v. mico).

5 Lunalla utinam acre albo ore the multiple elisions are challenging to recite, requiring the reader to self-consciously sound out the phrase with their mouth, thereby embodying the poetic emphasis on Luna’s mouth.

5 acre albo ore “with a sharp, white mouth” is an instrumental ablative describing how Luna will shine back with her mouth. The adjective acre was chosen since her teeth are very sharp; when we play with her, she will sometimes mistake our hands for the dog toy which she is always sorry about when she realizes what she has done. The adjective albus superficially reflects the whiteness of Luna’s canine teeth, but in the funerary sense it describes the paleness of death, hearkening back to the contrast between life and death (L-S s.v. albus I.B.1).

5 mices mi “I wish that you shine at me” extends the meaning of the verb micro through the addition of the indirect object mi, which is the shortened form of mihi. The assonance and
alliteration of *mi*- and the monosyllabic ending of the line emphasize the significance of the wish.

6 **quam dulcis** the phrase, which describes the sweetness with which Luna rests in my armpit, is derived from the first line Myia’s epitaph (*CLE* 1512.1). The adjective *dulcis* has been rendered as an adverb (“sweetly”).

6 **dormis** the position of *dormis* (“you sleep”) in the line causes it to be cut in half by the meter, representing how the permanent sleep of death occurs too quickly. The verb itself falls in the middle of the line, just as Luna falls into my warm armpit.

6 **ala in calida** “in (my) warm armpit” The placement of *in* between *ala* and *calida* in combination with the elision between *ala* and *in* portrays the placement of Luna in my armpit.

7–10 subverts the Catullan phrase “*O factum male*” with “*O factum bene*” since Nova and Luna are alive. Instead of commemorating them in death as the previous inscriptions do, this poem commemorates them in life by describing how good it is that they have lived with our families and filled our lives with happiness. The final two lines engage with the contrast between light and dark, framing the poem with the first couplet.

7 **O factum bene** “O what a good deed (it is)” reflects the “*O factum male*” of both Catullus 3 (Cat. c. 3.16) and Myia’s epitaph (*CLE* 1512.4, 7), but the adverb *bene* is used rather than *male* to emphasize the gratefulness we have that our dogs are alive and well.

7 **quod vixistis** “that you (both) have lived” forms a substantive clause, referencing the Myia epitaph (*CLE* 1512.4).

7 **gentibus amplis** “With our renowned families” this ablative of association is plural to reflect the three different families, my brother, my parents, and mine, which Nova and Luna call home. The adjective *amplis* may be translated as “great, full” in reference to a large extent, but may also be translated as “esteemed, renowned” which conveys the relationship between pets and owners. Pet dogs, when treated with care, hold an immense amount of love, loyalty, and respect for their owners, holding them in high esteem.

8 **explevisti** “you (both) have filled” assumes *quod* from the previous line to form another substantive clause with the perfect verb *explevisti*.

8 **vitas** “(our) lives” acts as the accusative direct object of *explevisti*.
8 laetitia “with happiness” is an instrumental ablative with explevisti vitas (“you (both) have filled our lives with happiness”).

9 O nostrae curae “O our delights.” The noun cura is used by Romans to describe their loved ones and is best translated as “anxiety of love.” In Latin amatory and funerary verse, cura denotes the cares, pains, and anxieties related to love and loved ones (see L-S s.v. cura II.B.2; CCLE s.v. cura). Roman poets often described amor as illness, both physical and mental, to characterize the suffering caused by unrestrained passion. For example, Ovid offers this advice, “Discite sanari, per quem didicistis amare:/ una manus vobis vulnus opemque feret” or, “learn to be cured, through whom you learned to love:/ the same hand will bring to you a wound and a remedy (Ov. Rem. 43–44).

9 umbra strata mortis “with the shadow of death having stretched out” is an ablative absolute invoking images of darkness and death, recalling the ending of the Aeneid, “vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras” or, “and indignant life flees with a groan under the shadows” (Ver. A. 12.952). The participle strata quotes strato from Margarita’s epitaph and conveys the idea of the shadows being spread out like one would spread out sheets over a bed (CLE 1175.8). Furthermore, this phrase contains a fifth foot spondee emphasizing the fear of the shadows of death stretching across the sky.

9 in caelo “on the sky” captures the image of shadows stretching across the sky.

10 quae elucetis “you who shine” The antecedent of quae is curae, invoking imagery from the first line, framing the poem. This line counters the message of the previous couplet, reinforcing the living commemoration of Nova and Luna.

10 vivae “living” hearkens back to vitas (cf. line 8), reinforcing the living commemoration of the poem.

10 in lectum cadite “fall into bed” is a plural vocative calling the dogs to come fall into bed. In this instance, the dogs are commanded to fall into bed so they may sleep, but this phrase also invokes imagery of falling into their final resting place which will one day happen.
Poem Notes and Scribbles


**WORKS CITED**


