

"Honour is a Mere Scutcheon: and so Ends my Catechism"

Translated by: Tanisha Chakma

Agathias

Τί στενάχεις; - Φιλέω. - Τίνα; - Παρθένον. - Ἡ ρά γε καλήν; -
Καλήν ἡμετέροις ὄμμασι φαινομένην. -
Ποῦ δέ μιν εἰσενόησας; - Ἐκεῖ ποτὶ δεῖπνον ἐπελθὼν
ξυνηὶ κεκλιμένην ἔδρακον ἐν στιβάδι. -
Ἐλπίζεις δὲ τυχεῖν; - Ναὶ ναί, φίλος· ἀμφοδίην δὲ
οὐ ζητῶ φίλῃν, ἀλλ' ὑποκλεπτομένην. -
Τὸν νόμιμον μᾶλλον φεύγεις γάμον; - Ἄτρεκὲς ἔγνων,
ὅτι γε τῶν κτεάνων πούλῳ τὸ λειπόμενον. -
Ἔγνων; οὐ φιλέεις, ἐψεύσασα· πῶς δύναται γὰρ
ψυχὴ ἐρωμανέειν ὀρθὰ λογιζομένη; (5.267)

Why do you sigh?

-- I am in love.

... With whom?

-- A lady.

Is she lovely?

-- To my eyes she appears lovely.

Where did you see her?

-- At the public feast where I had gone, I laid my eyes on her lying on a bed of straw.

Do you hope to have a chance with her?

-- Yes indeed, my friend. But it is not a public affair that I seek, but rather a clandestine one.

Then you do not intend to marry her?

-- I have learnt that she has not a penny to her name.

Is that so? Then it is not love that you feel; you're mistaken. For how can a soul be madly in love and yet so very calculating?