

Verses in the manner of Strato's *Musa Puerilis*

by J. Darling

I

The body of Ioladas
Is smooth and supple as fresh clay
Just turned on the potter's wheel,
Before the fire bakes it into shape.

II

When your father asked me
To teach you poetry, Philoxenos,
It was not his hoard of gold
That brought back my Muse,
But the gold of your hair.

III

Broad as golden Darics
Are Hermiones' nipples,
And Hermiones is no miser.

IV

Twelve years is enough
For Samian wine, I say,
So fourteen for a Knidian
That is, when we talk of boys.

V

Do not play the 'father' too long,
Onesimos,
Lest your Philon think your kisses
That which they are not
– Respectable!

VI

Like rowing
On the lake of Latmos
Is boy-loving;
The one pushes forward,
The other back.

VIII

You waste your time, Antistius,
Lying at the front door.
All beautiful Evenus' friends
Enter by the back.

IX

When I saw Uliades
Helping with the olive harvest,
I reached to gather two
The others had missed.

X

In the palaestra
The beautiful Meriones,
Being thrown,
Lay laughing in the sand
And denied defeat:
For one part of the boy,
At least,
Still stood erect.

XI

If you open an oyster
Sometimes there is a pearl.
When you open a Rhodian boy,
You will find two.

XII

Many will call a boy's love
Too simple by far,
But I would rather eat the yolk
Than crunch the shell.

XIII

Passing through the stoa
On my way to dine with his father
I caught sight of Astyanax
With the other boys in the palaestra.

Grey-haired Myron, my host,
Did not know,
When I reached his house,
I had already consumed his dinner,
Though not the one he offered.

XIV

Ascending to Delphi, seeking Apollo's aid,
I found a lad with golden hair
Sweeping there the temple colonnade.
'Where bides the long-bearded priest of this place?
'Gone upon Parnassos,
'Watching for eagles and the Future Time,'
Said he with sparkling eye.
'Then the present must be mine,'
Cried I;
So bending low that head of flame

I my libations poured;
At the same invoking the divine name,
At the same receiving due reward.

XV

Smooth as the brazen krater
Is Therinos' breast;
His lips sweet
As the kylix cup, full of wine.
But it is hair that is golden
Like gifts at Delphi
Which brings me greatest joy.

XVI

Dark-haired and bright-eyed boy
Passing by me,
Bearing for Athene Parthenos
A coronet of flowers,
Smiled
And placed it upon my head.

XVII

When, Asander, you go ranging upon high Hymettos
In search of quail,
And with the other boys don
The traveler's hat wide-brimmed,
Do not think you may hide from me;
For even from afar
You tempt Apollo with your curls,
Though your smile be shaded.

XVIII

Playful among the dolphins, and as smooth,
He swims the Sporades, isle to isle.
Though upon the wave-tops Triton seeks him,

For me alone Perimedes, the beautiful,
Saves his halcyon kisses.

XIX

Richest in autumn
Are the vine-leaf curls
Of a boy, of lovely Timarion.
But harvester stay your hook:
Too soon winter devours the fruit
Of all my summer's toil.

XX

As the oak to the flame
Came I to Diophantos:
He warmed his hands and left.
Next morning he returned
And with a thorn brush
Swept away the ashes,
Though they were glowing still.