



Horace Odes

A Summary of Odes Book III

- 1 The poet as priest of the Muses sings new poems to a new generation: men must realise that they are all subject to Fate and the gods, and that the way to be happy and serene is to limit desires and be content with a little.
- 2 The young Roman soldier is idealised and his fate is declared to be sweet and glorious. True *virtus* is the path to heaven and discretion is vital to the safety of all.
- 3 The just man is fearless and can attain divinity. Speech of Juno granting the deification of Romulus on condition that Troy is never rebuilt.
- 4 The poet recalls his boyhood and claims that he owes his life to the protection of the Muses, who likewise refresh Augustus now that his campaigns are over. The Giants threatened to overthrow the Olympians but were unable to defeat the gods; force is wicked without wisdom.
- 5 Augustus will be declared a god after the defeat of Britain and Parthia: the disgrace of Roman soldiers marrying Parthian wives contrasted with the heroism of Regulus who rejected the pleas of his friends to stay and kept his oath to return to his torturers in Carthage.
- 6 Rome must rebuild the temples and the relationship with the gods which preserves Roman rule: impiety brings ruin and sexual immorality is now rife in Rome. Young people of old were virtuous and disciplined whereas our generation is worse than ever and leading to worse to come.
- 7 Don't weep, Asterie – your boyfriend will return to you in the spring and is faithful to you in his absence in Epirus for all the seduction attempts of his hostess. You too must resist the seduction of Enipeus and lock your doors at night.
- 8 Drink with me, Maecenas to celebrate the anniversary of my escape from a falling tree. Drink and forget your cares – and drink to celebrate the success Rome has enjoyed.
- 9 A dialogue between two ex-lovers. Each tells the other of their past happiness and their current relationships. The poem ends with the promise of their reunion.
- 10 A serenade to a heartless woman who will not let the poet into her chamber for all his pleading.
- 11 Mercury is invoked to help the poet sing and succeed in courting the virginal Lyde with the tale of the Danaids who slew their husbands except for Hypermnestra whose love should be a model to Lyde just as the fate of the other girls in the underworld should be a warning.



- 12 Neobule laments her lovesick state – unable to work and not allowed to drown her sorrows in drink either.
- 13 Address to the Bandusian Spring, which will have immortality conferred by this poetry which it inspires.
- 14 Augustus is returning healthy and happy from Spain – hurray! Bring wine for the celebration – and ask the girl Neaera to come too but do not insist. The poet is not so hot-blooded as he was in the year of the battle of Philippi.
- 15 Poem addressed to an older woman behaving like a young girl: know your age and behave accordingly!
- 16 The key to wealth is not excess of gold but reduction of desires to the ‘little which is enough’.
- 17 Tomorrow will be stormy, Aelius, so get some firewood while it is dry. Let us enjoy a feast tomorrow when the rain stops you working.
- 18 Faunus, god of the countryside, protect our lands and we will enjoy celebrating your feast.
- 19 Stop talking of boring things – let’s have a party to celebrate Murena being made an augur.
- 20 A love-triangle: Pyrrhus is warned not to take the good-looking youth Nearchus from his possessive female admirer, not to take the ‘cubs off a lioness’.
- 21 Ode to a wineflask as old as the poet: the virtues of wine expressed and praised.
- 22 Hymn to Diana, asking her to accept the dedication of a pine tree.
- 23 Ode to Phidyle (‘Thrifty’) with advice on religious practice to protect the crops and animals: a small offering is fine.
- 24 Similar in tone to the Roman Odes, this poem idealises the simple life of Scythian nomads and paints a dismal picture of contemporary Rome with feckless youth and corrupt parents. Money and self-indulgence are bad if they lessen the moral fibre of our people.
- 25 The poet is in a state of ecstasy brought on by Bacchus and proposes to celebrate the deification of Augustus.
- 26 The poet announces his retirement as a lover and proposes to hang up his lyre and ‘weapons of love’ but asks the goddess of love to make the arrogant Chloe pay for her disdain for him.
- 27 A *bon voyage* poem to Galatea with the myth of Europa who eloped with Jupiter (disguised as a bull) and who regretted her rash trust of her new lover, only to be consoled by Venus with the prospect of fame.
- 28 An invitation to Lyde to join the poet in celebration of the feast of Neptune.



29 Invitation to Maecenas to come to the poet's house and enjoy his simple hospitality. Cease to worry about the future and come and enjoy the present in peace and cool contentment.

30 The poet looks back on his book of *Odes*. I have made something imperishable, he says, which will allow me to outlive my death and be recognised as the first poet to bring the verse of Aeolic Greece to Italy.