

**“The Night Is Long Without a Lover”  
Anonymous, Multiple Authors**

for Ashley Rian Hudson

**Translation and Commentary: Andrew P. Clark**

The Spring now is new, the new sweet-smelling Spring,  
The Spring comes to issue the World in Rebirth.  
The Spring brings the Lovers, the Music of Lovers;  
The Spring sends the Lovebirds to sing for the Earth.  
Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Tomorrow the Sun with its powerful Rays  
Will heat all the Moisture now building for Days;  
And in dripping Showers, in Sun-warmed wet Showers,  
On Branches like Cherries bloom fresh, Ruby Flowers.  
Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Tomorrow sweet young Couples, deep in the Trees,  
Their young, eager Limbs, green and budding, will weave.  
Tomorrow will Love echo all through the Branches  
Resounding in Moans come from virgin Romances.  
Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Tomorrow the Date when Love came from the Sky;  
And a Rain warmed in Heaven fell full in Supply,  
Then it coursed with the white spewing Foam in the Sea,  
And then naked rose Passion: our Reason to be.  
Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

The Goddess new-born marks the Spring as her Season,  
Thus Love, Sex, and Romance bloom not without Reason.  
Now by hot, panting Breaths of young Lovers entwined  
Are our Prayers accepted, our Sorrows resigned.  
Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

The wet Spring full-swelling, down deep in its Chasm,  
Bursts forth like the Thunder in Voice and in Spasm.  
The River now flowing from an unmaiden Source,  
To the Chaste sings her Secrets by Taste and by Force.  
Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Bright Pink and dark Red dye the Petals now flushing;  
 Blood-crimson the Bud, and the Rose soft and blushing.  
 Love beckons the Virgin to harvest her Flowers,  
 To wreath and to garland in pale Morning-Hours.  
 Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
 Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Buried deep in her Breast thrive her Love and Desire,  
 Oh my sweet Fiancée, set by Passion on Fire,  
 I lust for your Rubies and sweet, hidden Treasures!  
 I ache and I yearn for warm, unclothéd Pleasures!  
 Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
 Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Oh Love draws the Young out to wander the Wild,  
 Where in comes the Man from where out came the Child.  
 While Love may sprout lustless at a too-tender Age,  
 As the Earth so our Flesh; while we ripen we rage.  
 Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
 Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Though we stare not too listlessly, gaze not too long,  
 And we stand still unswayed by the Spring-Lovers' Song,  
 When our Eye catches Sight of an unburdened Form,  
 Stay our Blood we may not as it swells in the Storm.  
 Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
 Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Oh dear Love, send a Lover untouched as we've been!  
 Oh a Fruit yet unbitten with unpeeléd Skin!  
 Oh Judgment! Oh Doubt! Oh cruel, self-harming Powers!  
 May you all fade away in the Dawn's sprawling Hours!  
 Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
 Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

By her Eyes will she beg you, rarer by Word;  
 All but Eyes keep her modest while Love is preferred.  
 Day, Evening, and Night for her Life would she tremble,  
 In Fire-lit Forests where Lovers assemble.  
 Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
 Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

With freshly-laid Rose Petals strewn on the Bedding,  
 Cold Strawberries, Wine, and slow Music for Setting,  
 Let our whole Night be filled with warm Cries of Passion.

Let our Fears be undressed; let Love be our Fashion.  
Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

The Goddess erotic takes Feast at our Table;  
My Lover just like her, as graceful and able.  
Her Cherry-red Lips and her soft, milky Skin—  
How I long just to please her!—demand I begin.  
Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Girls from the Countryside, Girls from the Mountains,  
Girls deep in the Woods, and Girls swimming in Fountains,  
Your dear Mother Love bids you come at her Side,  
But be cautioned, your Passion will spoil with Pride.  
Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Oh our Love came in Fire, our Love filled the Hollow,  
Well-wooded, unseen, save by Stork and by Swallow.  
We've come far and we're tired; we're aching for Sleep.  
Now my Love well-injected, well-warmed may you keep.  
Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

As the soon-Mother, budding, first senses her Child,  
She now learns the Reason her Passions rove wild;  
For the Beauty we see in the Mates of our Kind  
Grows the Love in our Hearts by the Fruit in its Rind.  
Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

When the Seed finds its Cavern with wet and warm Soil,  
The Woman keeps careful and calm lest it spoil.  
Nine Moons barren to swelling have shone on the Earth;  
And the Daughter turns Mother through Labor of Birth.  
Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Throughout both Americas, every Nation,  
Will Love harvest Bounties of Springtime Sensation!  
In Europe, Australia, old-storied Asia,  
Africa, World-over Love-struck Aphasia!  
Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Over all the Country Meadows, Forest, City—  
     Hark, the Bellows!—Sounds of Spring ring fair and pretty  
 To claim Love a Native emerged in all Quarters,  
     Engaged in all Regions, exchanged at all Borders.  
 Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
     Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

In every Valley and every Den,  
     And all across Farmlands in every Pen,  
 All Creatures are stirring in bleating Accord;  
     All Nature World-over feels Love as its Lord.  
 Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
     Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Whether Human or Beast, for all Life Seasons change,  
     And the Spring becomes Summer as Dates rearrange;  
 Then the Autumn now aging turns Winter now old,  
     But our Love, Sex, and Passion need never grow cold.  
 Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
     Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

Thus the Music of Spring sends a Treat for the Ears,  
     And the Sound of its Pleasure sends Heat for the Soul.  
 Yet I lie here in Silence, warmed only by Tears;  
     May my Season come quickly, may Love make me whole.  
 Tomorrow by Night, and Tomorrow by Day,  
     Tomorrow let Lovers make Love while they may.

**Commentary:**

The *Pervigilium Veneris*, often translated as “The Eve of St. Venus” and literally rendered as “The All-night Vigil of Venus,” is an oft-forgotten love song in Latin from either the second- or fourth-century CE. Speaking strictly after its manner, it appears to me to be a composite song, perhaps with multiple contributing authors, many participants then originally using the same refrain to link the pieces together in a method similar to Responsion. It may of course be from a single author, as it has traditionally been understood to be, and its form and repetition have widely known classical precedents (Theocritus, *Idyll* 3; Catullus 64.323-381, the so-called *Song of the Fates*; and Virgil, *Eclogue* 8).

The Latin original is written in a meter called trochaic septenarius, each line having seven feet of trochees with an extra beat attached at the end. All lines in the Latin contain 8 beats and most lines have 15 syllables with the occasional line having 16. In my translation the lines vary between 11 and 12 syllables, and every line holds 4 beats. The music in the *Pervigilium Veneris* is found in its verbal repetition and alliteration and the echoes of its deep and long vowels. It has been put into music several times, perhaps most famously by George Lloyd in his nine part choral piece *The Vigil of Venus*. Vivaldi was also probably influenced by the *Pervigilium Veneris* in the spring concertos of

his *Four Seasons*, and the poem he wrote to accompany the spring pieces is so similar to the Latin that the influence seems apparent.

Rather than provide a literal translation, which would do the music no justice, I have instead decided to represent the imagery and symbolism over the diction. Aside from a single emendation I have marked in brackets, I have used the exact Latin text of the Fort (1922) edition and have followed the arrangement of his quatrains in my translation with one minor adjustment. I have expanded Fort's first stanza into two stanzas in translation to enlarge the opening and to turn the three lines in Fort into a full quatrain without introducing the refrain at the opening of the poem. The nouns in translation are capitalized after my own poetic custom influenced by the German practice.

This song is full of love and life and sex and passion and often uses imagery from nature in springtime as a metaphor for human desire and sexuality. I have attempted to do the same. Any lack of command, beauty, or music in the English is solely the fault of your translator and is not likewise found in the original Latin.

For more on the *Pervigilium Veneris*:

Clearly, Vincent J. and Theodore W. Wells. (1981).

*The Pervigilium Veneris*. Massachusetts.

Dobson, J. F. (1916). *A Study of the Pervigilium Veneris*. Cambridge.

Fort, J. A. (1922). *The Pervigilium Veneris in Quatrains*. Oxford.

### Pervigilium Veneris

*Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet:  
Vēr novum, vēr iam canōrum, vēre renātus orbis est;  
Vēre concordant amōrēs, vēre nūbunt ālītēs,  
Et nemus comam resolvit dē marītīs imbribus.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Crās amōrum cōpulātrix inter umbrās arbōrum  
Implicat casā[s] virentēs dē flagellō myrteō:  
Crās canōrīs fēriātōs dūcit in silvīs chorōs;  
Crās Diōnē iūra dīcit fulta sublīmī thronō.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Crās erit cum prīmus aether cōpulāvit nuptiās:  
Tunc cruōre dē supernō spūmeō et pontī globō,  
Caerul'ās inter catervās, inter et bipedēs equōs,  
Fēcit undantem Diōnēm dē marītīs imbribus.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Ipsa gemmīs purpurantem pingit annum flōridīs;  
Ipsa turgentēs papillās dē Favōnī spiritū  
Urget in nōdōs tepentēs; ipsa rōris lūcidī,  
Noctis aura quem relinquit, spargit ūmentēs aquās.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Ēmicant lācrimae trementēs dē cadūcō pondere,  
Gutta praeceps orbe parvō sustinet cāsūs suōs:  
Ūmor ille quem serēnīs astra rōrant noctibus  
Māne virginēs papillās solvit ūmentī pēplō.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Ēn pudōrem flōrulentae prōdidērunt purpurae  
Et rosārum flamma nōdīs ēmicat tepentibus.  
Ipsa iussit dīva vestem dē papillīs solvere,  
At recentī māne nūdae virginēs nūbant rosae.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Facta Cŷpridis dē cruōre dēque Amōris osculō,  
Dēque gemmīs dēque flammīs dēque sōlis purpurīs,  
Crās rubōrem quī latēbat veste tectus igneā  
Ūvidō marīta nōdō nōn pudēbit solvere.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Ipsa nymphās dīva lūcō iussit īre myrteō:  
It puer comes puellīs; nec tamen crēdī potest  
Esse Amōrem fēriātum, sī sagittās vexerit:*

*Īte nymphae, posuit arma, fēriātus est Amor.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Iussus est inermis īre, nūdus īre iussus est,  
Neu quid arcū neu sagittā neu quid igne laederet:  
Sed tamen cavēte nymphae, quod Cupīdo pulcher est:  
Tōtus est inermis īdem quando nūdus est Amor.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Conparī Venus pudōre mittit ad tē virginēs:  
Ūna rēs est quam rogāmus, cēde virgo Dēlia,  
Ut nemus sit incruentem dē ferīnīs strāgibus  
Et recentibus virentēs dūcat umbrās flōribus.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Ipsa vellet tē rogāre, sī pudīcam flecteret;  
Ipsa vellet ut venīrēs, sī decēret virginem:  
Iam tribus chorōs vidērēs fēriātōs noctibus  
Congregēs inter catervās īre per saltūs tuōs.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Flōreās inter corōnās, myrteās inter casās,  
Nec Cerēs nec Bacchus absunt nec poētārum deus.  
Dē tenente tōta nox est pervig'landa canticīs:  
Regnet in silvīs Diōnē, tū recēde Dēlia.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Iussit Hyblaeīs tribūnal stāre dīva flōribus;  
Praeses ipsa iūra dīcet, adsidēbunt Grātiae:  
Hybla tōtōs funde flōrēs, quicquid annus adtulit;  
Hybla flōrum sūme vestem, quantus Ennae campus est.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Rūris hīc erunt puellae vel puellae montium  
Quaeque silvās quaeque lūcōs quaeque fontēs incolunt:  
Iussit omnēs adsidēre māter ālītis deī,  
Iussit et nūdō puellās nīl Amōrī crēdere.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Ut pater tōtum creāret vērīs annum nūbibus  
In sinum marītus imber fluxit almae coniugis,  
Unde fētus perque pontum perque caelum pergeret  
Perque terrās mixtus omnēs alere magnō corpore.  
Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Ipsa vēnās atque mentem permeantī spīritū  
 Intus occultīs gubernat prōcreātrix vīribus.  
 Ipsa Trōiānōs nepōtēs in Latīnōs transtulit,  
 Rōmuleās ipsa fēcīt cum Sabīnīs nuptiās.  
 Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Pervium suī tenōrem sēminālī trāmite  
 Perque caelum perque terrās perque pontum subditum  
 Ipsa dūxit, ipsa vēnīs prōcreantem spīritum  
 Inbuit, iussitque mundum nōsse nascendī viās.  
 Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Ipsa Laurentem puellam coniugem nātō dedit,  
 Moxque Martī dē sacellō dat pudīcam virginem,  
 Unde Ramnes et Quirītes prōque prōle posterum  
 Rōmulum patrem creāret et nepōtem Caesarem.  
 Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Rūra fēcundat voluptas: rūra Venerem sentiunt:  
 Ipse Amor puer Diōnae rūre nātus crēditur:  
 Hunc ager cum parturīret ipsa suscēpit sinū,  
 Ipsa flōrum dēlicātīs ēducāvit osculīs.  
 Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Ecce iam super genestās explicant taurī latus,  
 Quisque coetus continētur coniugāli foedere:  
 Subter umbrās cum marītīs ecce bālantum gregem,  
 Et canōrās nōn tacēre dīva iussit ālitēs.  
 Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Iam loquācēs ōre raucō stagna cŷcni perstrepunt:  
 Adsonat Tēreī puella subter umbram populī,  
 Ut putēs mōtūs amōris ōre dīcī mūsicōs,  
 Et negēs querī sorōrem dē marītō barbarō.  
 Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*

*Illa cantat, nōs tacēmus: quando vēr venit meum?  
 Quando fiam utī chelīdon ut tacēre dēsīnam?  
 Perdidī mūsam tacendō, nec mē Apollo rēspicit:  
 Sīc Amŷclas, cum tacērent, perdidit silentium.  
 Crās amet quī nunquam amāvit quīque amāvit crās amet.*