UNE ✦ SACRA

Ancient Rome

Hymns and Prayers of Rome

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The Arval Brothers, Horace and an anonymous poet

Wordsworth, Conington and Way

Credits

Author	The Arval Brothers, Horace and an anonymous poet
Date	Arval Hymn: very old (inscription of AD 218); Secular Hymn: 17 BC; Vigil of Venus: 2nd–4th century
Original language	Latin
Version	Wordsworth, Conington and Way
Edition	1.1
Translation	John Wordsworth (1874; em H. M. Posnett, Comparative Literature, 1886), John Conington (1863) e Arthur S. Way (1920)
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About:

Three songs of the Roman religion, from the oldest to the latest, each with the Latin alongside.

The Hymn of the Arval Brothers is one of the oldest texts in the Latin language. The Arval Brothers, twelve priests, sang it while dancing at the May festival of the fields, asking the Lares and Mars to keep plague and ruin away; it was found in an inscription of AD 218, in a Latin that even the priests no longer fully understood. English translation by John Wordsworth (1874).

The Secular Hymn was written by Horace (65–8 BC) at the request of Augustus for the Secular Games of 17 BC and sung by a choir of 27 boys and 27 girls on the Palatine and the Capitol: it asks Apollo and Diana, the Sun, the Fates and the Earth for prosperity, children and peace for Rome. English translation by John Conington (1863).

The Vigil of Venus (Pervigilium Veneris) is an anonymous poem of uncertain date (between the 2nd and 4th centuries), for the three nights of the spring festival of Venus, with

the refrain "Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn".

English translation by Arthur S. Way (1920), which follows a different order of the stanzas; that is why the Latin is divided differently.

Source: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Odes_and_Carmen_Saeculare/Carmen_Saeculare

Fontes: Canto dos Arvais, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Comparative_Literature/Book_2/Chapter_2 · Canto Secular, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Odes_and_Carmen_Saeculare/Carmen_Saeculare · Vigília de Vênus, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Sappho_and_the_Vigil_of_Venus/The_Vigil_of_Venus

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HYMN OF THE ARVAL BROTHERS

✦

1 Help us, O Lares, help us, Lares, help us!

2 And thou, O Marmar, suffer not
Fell plague and ruin's rot
Our folk to devastate.

3 Be satiate, O fierce Mars, be satiate!
Leap o'er the threshold! Halt! now beat the ground.
Be satiate, O fierce Mars, be satiate!
Leap o'er the threshold! Halt! now beat the ground.
Be satiate, O fierce Mars, be satiate!
Leap o'er the threshold! Halt! now beat the ground.

4 Call to your aid the heroes all, call in alternate strain;
Call, call the heroes all.
Call to your aid the heroes all, call in alternate strain.

5 Help us, O Marmar, help us, Marmar, help us!

6 Bound high in solemn measure, bound and bound again;
Bound high and bound again!

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SECULAR HYMN

✦

1 Phœbus and Dian, huntress fair,
To-day and always magnified,
Bright lights of heaven, accord our prayer
This holy tide,

2 On which the Sibyl's volume wills
That youths and maidens without stain
To gods, who love the seven dear hills,
Should chant the strain!

3 Sun, that unchanged, yet ever new,
Lead'st out the day and bring'st it home,
May nought be present to thy view
More great than Rome!

4 Blest Ilithyia! be thou near
In travail to each Roman dame!
Lucina, Genitalis, hear,
Whate'er thy name!

5 O make our youth to live and grow!
The fathers' nuptial counsels speed,
Those laws that shall on Rome bestow
A plenteous seed!

6 So when a hundred years and ten
Bring round the cycle, game and song
Three days, three nights, shall charm again
The festal throng.

7 Ye too, ye Fates, whose righteous doom,
Declared but once, is sure as heaven,
Link on new blessings, yet to come,
To blessings given!

8 Let Earth, with grain and cattle rife,
Crown Ceres' brow with wreathen corn;
Soft winds, sweet waters, nurse to life
The newly born!

9 O lay thy shafts, Apollo, by!
Let suppliant youths obtain thine ear!
Thou Moon, fair "regent of the sky,"
Thy maidens hear!

10 If Rome is yours, if Troy's remains,
Safe by your conduct, sought and found
Another city, other fanes
On Tuscan ground,

11 For whom, 'mid fires and piles of slain,
Æneas made a broad highway,
Destined, pure heart, with greater gain
Their loss to pay,

12 Grant to our sons unblemish'd ways;
Grant to our sires an age of peace;
Grant to our nation power and praise,
And large increase!

13 See, at your shrine, with victims white,
Prays Venus and Anchises' heir!
O prompt him still the foe to smite,
The fallen to spare!

14 Now Media dreads our Alban steel,
Our victories land and ocean o'er;
Scythia and Ind in suppliance kneel,
So proud before.

15 Faith, Honour, ancient Modesty,
And Peace, and Virtue, spite of scorn,
Come back to earth; and Plenty, see,
With teeming horn.

16 Augur and lord of silver bow,
Apollo, darling of the Nine,
Who heal'st our frame when languors slow
Have made it pine;

17 Lov'st thou thine own Palatial hill,
Prolong the glorious life of Rome
To other cycles, brightening still
Through time to come!

18 From Algidus and Aventine
List, goddess, to our grave Fifteen!
To praying youths thine ear incline,
Diana queen!

19 Thus Jove and all the gods agree!
So trusting, wend we home again,
Phœbus' and Dian's singers we,
And this our strain.

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VIGIL OF VENUS

✦

1 Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.
Spring is young, spring now is chanting, spring is all the world reborn.
Love in spring is knit to love, bird weds with bird in springtide hours,
And the wood unbinds her rippling tresses under nuptial showers.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

2 Tomorn the Queen who coupleth loves where trees make twilight of the day
Weaves her bowers of greenery, pavilions roofed with myrtle-spray.
To-morrow through the chanting woods she leads her festal dances on.
Tomorn Dione publishes her statutes from her skiey throne.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

3 Tomorn will be the day of primal Aether's earliest spousal-sleep:
Then from ichor dropped from heaven, and from foambells of the deep,
Mid the hyaline sea-maidens, mid the steeds whose feet are twain,
Aether wrought Dione, wave-like Goddess, from the nuptial rain.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

4 She it is that paints the crimson-flushing year with blossom-gems,
She that by the breathings of the west-wind lures from quickened stems
Swelling buds to break in glowing clusters, she that sprinkles spray
Of the glistering dews the night-airs drop along their viewless way.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

5 Flash the dewdrop-tears that tremble ere with their own weight they fall:
Headlong dropping never breaks in earthward flight each crystal ball.
And the moisture that the stars are raining through the cloudless night
From their dewy vest disrobes the maiden buds in morning light.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

6 Lo, the crimson-flushing petals have unveiled the blush of shame,
And from glowing clusters now is flashing forth the roses' flame.
She, the Goddess, bade them loosen from their buds the sheathing lawn,
That the naked virgin roses may be brides in breaking dawn.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

7 Mingled blend of Cypris' ichor and the burning kiss of Love,
Blend of gems, of flames, of sunlight, of the crimson dawn thereof,
Bride of spring, tomorn from dewy clusters shall she unashamed
Tear the veil from blushes hid by swathings red that round them flamed.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

8 Lo, the Goddess bids the maidens through her myrtle thicket go:
Handed pass they, boy and damsel; yet ye may not, must not trow
That, if still his shafts he beareth, Love is keeping holiday:—
Maidens, on! Love's holiday is this; his shafts are cast away!
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

9 Venus bade him fare unweaponed, naked forth she bade him fare,
That with bow nor shaft nor torch he might do mischief anywhere.
Yet, ah yet, beware, ye maidens, for that Love is fair to see!
Weaponless and naked Cupid may be, yet the same is he.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

10 Maid of Delos, Venus sends thee shamefast maidens chaste as thou.
One thing only we petition—leave to us thy forest now,
That the grove awhile with slaughter of its brood may be undyed,
And the shadows of its frondage o'er the new-born flowers may glide.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

11 She herself would fain beseech thee—might she move thy chastity;
Fain she were thyself wouldst come—if meet for Maiden this would be.
Now shouldst thou three livelong nights see festal troops that dance and chant
Pass mid thronging thousands through the forest-glades, thy chosen haunt.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

12 Mid the crowns of flowers, the booths where myrtle-boughs entwine and cling,
Shall the Harvest-queen, the Wine-god, wander, and the Poets' King.
We will lure the night to linger, we will watch her out with song.
Delian, let Dione queen it, yield thy forest to our throng!
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

13 "Heap my judgment-seat with flowers of Hybla!" thus the Goddess cried.
Thence shall she proclaim her laws, the Graces seated at her side.
Hybla, pour out all thy flowers, all the glad year's bounty-rain!
Hybla, now in blossom-vesture clothe thee o'er wide Enna's plain!
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

14 Here shall be the Meadow-maidens, here the Maidens of the Hills,
Forest-dwellers, Grove-abiders, they that haunt the fountain-rills.
For the Winged One's Mother biddeth one and all be here arrayed.
"Trust not Love, though he be naked!" so she warneth every maid.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

15 That the Sire may quicken all the year from clouds of April-tide,
Flows the bridegroom shower into the lap of his life-fostering bride,
So through every sea and every land to pass, and through the sky,
Mingle with the mighty frame, and nourish all their progeny.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

16 She, the Life-begetter, with her might invisible governeth
Inwardly the heart's blood and the soul with all-pervading breath.
She into the land of Latins warrior sons of Ilium brought;
She the spousals of the sons of Romulus with Sabines wrought.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

17 Through the sky and through the lands and through the under-heaving sea
By her fructifying paths she held her sway unswervingly.
She hath poured the generative breath through all the veins of earth.
She hath bidden all the universe to know the ways of birth.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

18 She bestowed Laurentum's daughter to be bride unto her son.
By her grace from Vesta's cloister Mars the shamefast maiden won,
Her from whom sprang Roman burghers, sprang a seed of blood divine,
Romulus our sire, and Caesar, far descendant of her line.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

19 Rapture quickens all the pastures, fields with Venus' coming thrill;
Love himself, Dione's babe, was born mid meadow-land and hill.
Him midst travail of the lealand Venus to her bosom pressed,
Fed on flowerets' dainty kisses Cupid cradled on her breast.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

20 Lo, with mighty flank extended bulls upon the heather lie;
All communities are knit together by the spousal-tie.
'Neath the shade around their hornèd lords are couched the bleating throngs;
And the Goddess bids the chanting birds to silence not their songs.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

21 Now the clamorous swans are hoarsely crying o'er the stirless mere;
Tereus' daughter 'neath the poplar shade is singing sweet and clear.
Ye would think that melodies of love are rippling from her throat,
No complaint of brutal husband, no despairing sorrow's note.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

22 Ah, she sings, but I am tongue-tied! When to me is spring revealed?
When shall I be as the swallow, and my lips no more be sealed?
Lost is all my gift of song; Apollo scorns to look on me!
So, because her lovers' lips were bridled, perished Amyclae.
Tomorn who ne'er hath loved shall love, and who hath loved shall love tomorn.

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