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“What Should I Call This?” *Ovid Amores* 1.2 (Translation)

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WHAT SHOULD I CALL THIS?: Ovid *Amores* 1.2

What should I call this,
how the mattress seems so hard,
how the sheets won't stay on the bed,
how I've passed a night (A WHOLE NIGHT) sleepless,
and my dizzy sick body's exhausted ossa ache
?

Because I think I'd know if I were lovestruck.

Or does that strategist strike secretly?
That'll be it.

Undetected arrows have accumulated in the old Emotion-Pump,
and Amor wreaks whirlwinds, the bastard, in my captive chest.

So. Do we concede? Or do we fan aflame the smoldering with a struggle?

Concede it is--the load shouldered willingly has a lighter air.
I've seen the flames on a shaken torch flare,
and I've seen em die when no one shakes it.
The oxen more acutely feel the whip
who protest the toil
than those who resolutely yoke up
and plow some soil,
and a cantankerous horse collects mouthfuls bruises,
while one that submits feels less of the bit--blah blah blah,
the point:
Amor wages far dirtier onslaughts, and more rude,
upon the reluctant than those who admit servitude.

So, Cupid, I confess: I'm your freshest booty.
here; I fling these plundered hands at you
all subjugated-like
at your bidding.

War's no use; I seek peace and a pardon.
I'd be no praiseworthy prize for you,
unarmed, ash-pile-ified by your flamethrowers.

Go myrtle-up your hair, tack up your mother's doves.
Stepdad'll hail you a swank chariot.
While the people titter of your triumph,
you'll guide those harnessed birds with steady skill,
captive boys and girls in procession
splendorfying your pomp-stuffed parade.
I myself, a recent acquisition,
will exhibit my fresh wound and bear my new chains
complacently.

Common Sense will march along with bound-up hands
and Modesty, and Whosoever Else Dares Obstruct the Ranks of Love.

And they'll all fear you.

Saluting, they'll rumble at you with a mob's voice,
IO TRIUMPHE!

You'll have for a posse Mistake and Madness and Flattery
and your slew of persistent supporters,
without the advantage of whom you're just a
naked little boy.

From the tippymost top of towering Olympus
your delighted mother will clap for your triumph,
flinging wads of roses at your head.
Your wings bedazzled, your hair bejeweled,
you'll cruise, a golden kid in a golden car.

Then, if I know you at all,
you won't be preventing any forest fires.

It'll be a drive-by massacre.
You can't stop your arrows,
not even by begging;
your hard-by blaze burns bystanders.

Such was Bacchus in the conquered lands of the Ganges.

You tread em down with birds as he did with panzers.

As I'll be participating in the holy triumph, little sir,
don't waste resources on me.

Consider the victorious forays of your kinsman, Herr Caesar:

He protects the conquered with his conquering-hand.

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