

At ego: An Unsettling Refrain in Apuleius' Metamorphoses

Textual Passages

1) Apuleius *Met.* 1.26

Et ecce Photis ancilla 'Rogat te' inquit 'hospes.' At ego iam inde Milonis abstinentiae cognitor excusavi comiter, quod viae vexationem non cibo sed somno censerem diluendam. Isto accepto pergit ipse et iniecta dextera clementer me trahere adoritur. Ac dum cunctor, dum modeste renitor, 'Non prius' inquit 'discedam quam me sequaris.' Et dictum iure iurando secutus iam obstinationi suae me ingratis oboedientem perducit ad illum suum grabattulum...¹

And voilà! The slave-girl Photis said, 'your host requests you.' **But I**, already long since acquainted with Milo's stinginess, excused myself courteously on the grounds that I considered the exhaustion from my trip ought to be alleviated not with food, but with sleep. When he heard this, he himself came forward and inserting his right hand began calmly to drag me. And when I resisted, when I discretely withstood him, he said, 'I won't leave until you accompany me,' and he followed up by swearing an oath and he led me, at last yielding to his obstinance, even though I was unwilling, to that tiny little cot of his...

2) Apuleius *Met.* 1.26

ubi me post itineris tam saevi vexationem sensit fabularum quoque serie fatigatum in verba media somnolentum desinere ac nequicquam, defectum iam, incerta verborum salebra balbuttire, tandem patitur cubitum concederem.

When he perceived that I, after the vexation of a cruel journey, and exhausted by the series of tales, was sleepily breaking off in the middle of my words and was already so lost that I was uselessly babbling an obscure stuttering of words, finally he permitted me to go lie down.

3) Apuleius *Met.* 2.6

*At ego curiosus alioquin, ut primum artis magicae semper optatum nomen audivi, tantum a cautela Pamphiles afui, ut etiam ultro gestirem tali magisterio me volens ampla cum mercede tradere et prorsus in ipsum barathrum saltu concito praecipitare. Festinus denique **et vecors animi** manu eius velut catena quadam memet expedio et, 'Salve' propere addito, ad Milonis hospitium perneciter evolo.*

But I, being curious, as soon as I heard that always hoped-for name of the magical arts, I was so far removed from caution against Pamphile that I hungered even of my own accord to give myself over voluntarily to such an apprenticeship, even with its steep cost, and to hurl myself with a hasty leap headlong into that abyss. Rushing **and out of my mind**, I extracted myself from her hand as if from a chain and, adding a hasty 'Good-bye,' I flew swiftly to Milo's lodging.

¹ Quotations from Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* are from Zimmerman's 2012 edition; citations refer to book and chapter numbers. All English translations are my own.

4) Apuleius *Met.* 3.4

Ac me statim praeco, si quid ad ea respondere vellem, iubebat incipere. At ego nihil tunc temporis amplius quam flere poteram, non tam hercules truculentam accusationem intuens quam meam miseram conscientiam.

And immediately the herald commanded me to begin if I wanted to respond in any way to these charges. **But I** wasn't able at that time to do anything more than to weep, caused not, by Hercules, by such a savage accusation but rather by contemplating my own miserable conscience.

5) Apuleius *Met.* 3.7

Haec profatus, rursum lacrimis obortis porrectisque in preces manibus per publicam misericordiam, per pignorum caritatem maestus tunc hos, tunc illos deprecabar.

After speaking thus, tears burst out again and I stretched out my hands in prayer, despondently beseeching now these men, now those, for public compassion and for the affections they held for their kinsfolk.

6) Apuleius *Met.* 3.10

Tunc ille quorundam astu paulisper cohibitus risus libere iam exarsit in plebem...Et certe laetitia delibuti meque respectantes cuncti theatro facessunt. At ego ut primum illam laciniam prenderam, fixus in lapidem steti gelidus nihil secus quam una de ceteris theatri statuvis vel columnis.

At that point the laughter, restrained for a short while by the cunning of some, burst out freely to engulf the whole populace...And assuredly steeped in their hilarity, they kept looking back at me as they left the theatre. **But I**, once I had seized that cloth, I stood fixed in place, frozen into stone, no different from one of the statues or columns of the theatre.

7) Apuleius *Met.* 3.10

Nec prius ab inferis emersi quam Milo hospes accessit et iniecta manu me renitentem lacrimisque rursum promicantibus crebra singultientem clementi violentia secum adtraxit. Et observatis viae solitudinibus per quosdam anfractus domum suam perduxit, maestumque me atque etiam tunc trepidum variis solatur affatibus. Nec tamen indignationem iniuriae, quae inhaeserat altius meo pectori, ullo modo permulcere quivit.

Nor did I emerge from the dead until Milo, my host, approached me and, grabbing me by the hand, drew me along with himself with calm ferocity, as I was resisting and my tears were bursting out again and I was sobbing incessantly, and he led me by a circuitous route, where he found empty streets, to his home, and he consoled me, feeling dejected and even then still terrified, with various sayings, but nevertheless he wasn't able to soften in any way the indignation at the insult which clung so deeply to my heart.

8) Apuleius *Met.* 3.11

'At tibi civitas omnis pro ista gratia honores egregios obtulit; nam et patronum scripsit et ut in aere stet imago tua decrevit.'

'But for you the entire city has offered outstanding honors in return for your favor to us; namely, it has inscribed you as its patron and has decreed that your image be erected in bronze.'

9) Apuleius *Met.* 3.12

Haec adhuc me loquente, manu firmiter iniecta Milo, iussis balnearibus adsequi, producit ad lavacrum proximum. At ego vitans oculos omnium et, quem ipse fabricaveram, risum obviorem declinans, lateri eius adambulabam obtectus. Nec qui laverim, qui terserim, qui domum rursum reverterim, prae rubore memini: sic omnium oculis, nutibus ac denique manibus denotatus inpos animi stupebam.

While I was still talking, Milo grabbed me firmly by the hand, ordered the equipment for bathing to follow, and led me to the nearest baths. **But I**, avoiding everyone's eyes, and protecting myself from the laughter of passers-by (laughter which I myself had created), was walking slunk down by his side. Neither how I washed myself nor how I dried myself nor how I returned home again can I remember because of my shame: branded by the eyes and nods and pointing fingers of everyone, **I was stupefied, not in control of my mind.**

10) Apuleius *Met.* 3.22

Et illa quidem magicis suis artibus volens reformatur. At ego nullo decantatus carmine, praesentis tantum facti stupore defixus, quidvis aliud magis videbar esse quam Lucius. Sic exterminatus animi, attonitus in amentiam vigilans somniabar. Defrictis adeo diu pupulis, an vigilarem, scire quaerebam.

And she at any rate was transformed willingly by her magic arts. **But I**, although I had not been enchanted by any incantation, **nevertheless I was transfixed in such a stupor at the present occurrence that I seemed to be something other than Lucius. I had been driven so far out of my mind**, thunderstruck into senselessness, that I was dreaming even though awake. I rubbed my eyes a long time, seeking to determine whether I was still awake.

11) Apuleius *Met.* 3.23

'Sed, quod sciscitari paene praeterivi, quo dicto factove rursum exutis pinnulis illis ad meum redibo Lucium?'

'But I nearly forgot to inquire, with which word or deed can I pluck off those flighty feathers and return again to my own Lucius?'

12) Apuleius *Met.* 3.25

*‘Sed bene quod facilius reformationis huius medela suppeditat. Nam rosis tantum demorsicatis exhibis asinum statimque **in meum Lucium** postliminio redibis.’*

‘But all is well because a cure for this re-formation is easily available. For merely by nibbling at roses you will depart from the ass and immediately you will return with a restoration of privileges **to my Lucius.**’

13) Apuleius *Met.* 3.25

...sed iam humano gestu simul et voce priuatus

...but now deprived simultaneously of human gesture and voice

14) Apuleius *Met.* 11.2

*‘Sit satis laborum, sit satis periculorum. Depelle quadripedis diram faciem, redde me conspectui meorum, **redde me meo Lucio.** Ac si quod offensum numen inexorabili me saevitia premit, mori saltem liceat, si non licet vivere.’ (11.2)*

“Let this be enough labor, enough danger. Remove this accursed quadruped form, return me to the sight of my people, **return me to my own Lucius.** But if I am oppressed with unyielding savagery by some godhead that I have offended, at least allow me to die, if I am not allowed to live.”

15) Apuleius *Met.* 11.14

At ego stupore nimio defixus tacitus haerebam...

But I, immobilized by amazement, was stuck fast, silent...

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