

Phaedrus Book 1 Fable 12

The Stag at the Stream

Ad fontem cervus, cum bibisset, restitit,
et in liquore vidit effigiem suam.
Ibi dum ramosa mirans laudat cornua
crurumque nimiam tenuitatem vituperat,
venantum subito vocibus conterritus,
per campum fugere coepit, et cursu levi
canes elusit. Silva tum exceptit ferum;
in qua retentis impeditus cornibus
lacerari coepit morsibus saevis canum.
Tum moriens edidisse vocem hanc dicitur:
'O me infelicem, qui nunc demum intellego,
utilia mihi quam fuerint quae despexeram,
et, quae laudaram, quantum luctus habuerint'.

A Stag, when he had drunk at a stream, stood still,
and gazed upon his likeness in the water.
While there, in admiration, he was praising his branching horns,
and finding fault with the extreme thinness of his legs,
suddenly roused by the cries of the huntsmen,
he took to flight over the plain, and with nimble course
escaped the dogs. Then a wood received the beast;
in which, being entangled and caught by his horns,
the dogs began to tear him to pieces with savage bites.
While dying, he is said to have uttered these words:
“Oh, how unfortunate I am, who now too late find out
how useful to me were the things that I despised;
and how much grief the things I used to praise, have caused me.”

METRE: IAMBIC TRIMETER

Lines:

1. **ad**: 'at'.

5. **venantum (venantium)**: 'of (the) hunters'.

10. **edidisse...dicitur**: 'he is said to have uttered';

11. **o me infelicem**: 'o unfortunate me',

'o how unfortunate I am!'; accusative of exclamation.

13. **quantum luctus**: 'how much grief';

laudaram: laudaveram.