

NOT A POET? NOT TO WORRY!

The University of Michigan is pleased to announce a third edition of *Inter Versiculos: a ten-day workshop in Latin verse composition* [<https://inter-versiculos.classics.lsa.umich.edu/upcoming-workshop/>]. This summer's workshop will take place in Sicily.

Vergil allegedly wrote only ten lines a day (or was it three?); Ovid reports that whenever he opened his mouth, the verses poured out:

*scribere temptabam uerba soluta modis.
sponte sua carmen numeros ueniebat ad aptos,
et quod temptabam scribere uersus erat.*
Ovid, *Tristia* IV.10.24-26)

I tried to write words free from poetic meter.
Of its own accord, my song arrived in perfect rhythm,
and whatever I tried to write turned out to be poetry. (trans. K. Herndon)

Few of us are likely to become latter day Vergils or Ovids, but the exercise of writing Latin verse can be unexpectedly compelling, illuminating and useful. As with many art forms, one of the best ways to understand what others have done is to try to do it yourself.

Here are some comments from past participants:

- Taught by a connoisseur of all the obstacles and traps in Latin poetry writing, we made the first stumbling steps on our newly discovered metrical feet; inspired by Sicilian sun, music, food, and wine, the stumble developed – little by little – into a dance
- The way Latin poetry is conventionally taught it can feel like trying to solve a puzzle and *nothing* else. Even before *IV*, I tried to breathe life into the language in any way I could on my own (learning pronunciations, getting a *feel* for the meter, learning about performance, etc.), but the process of learning how to *write* the poetry has augmented my understanding of it a thousand-fold
- Ovid and Vergil, they make it look so easy!
- Even if I do not continue writing poetry, *Inter Versiculos* has already improved my ability to read and appreciate Latin poetry. . . . my reading feels more natural and it is far easier to appreciate the poem's meaning
- I had never really considered trying to write Latin poetry before *IV* and it made me think about the language in an entirely different way
- Struggling with the mechanics and nuances of Latin verse composition, even in baby steps, has opened my ears to something I never heard before
- *Inter Versiculos* not only opened my eyes to Latin poetry and its many wonders but also to the gorgeous universe that is Sicily
- *IV* brought tenured professors, ancient armchair Latinists, and green undergraduates all down to the same level of expertise, and this fostered the sort of unique cooperative and mutually supportive environment that characterized *IV*
- I was never more aware of the importance of quantities
- Having previously only studied classics in very traditional and rigid European schools, it is good to get away from the cobwebs of Northern scholarship and dash into the burning Sicilian sunshine
- Writing poems gives us new perspective, we are no more with the audience, we are with the authors themselves

OPEN TO ANYONE LATIN POETRY CURIOUS. We invite you to join us in Trapani, Sicily, July 5-14, 2018.