

## BELLARIA (V)



*Saturnalia*, Antoine-Francois Callet, 1783

*'Bellaria' means 'sweets, dainties', and in these hard times Classics for All will try to lighten the mood and put a spring in the step by posting delicious extracts from ancient literature, the original text followed by a translation or translations, and very occasionally with explanatory notes. Responding to Literary Review's annual 'Bad Sex' Awards, Classics for All responds with 'Good Sex' awards.*

*Ausonius' wife was Sabina. They had three children. Iuvenis and puella (l. 4) are the language of love-poetry. In ll. 5-6 Ausonius envisages them growing old together (note the subjunctives, expressing possibility). His hopes of a long marriage were not fulfilled. Sabina died aged 27.*

### GOOD SEX AWARD (5)

#### **Married Love**

##### **To his wife**

uxor, vivamus quod viximus, et teneamus  
nomina quae primo sumpsimus in thalamo,  
nec ferat ulla dies ut commutemur in aevo,  
quin tibi sim iuvenis, tuque puella mihi.

5 Nestore sim quamvis provector, aemulaque annis  
vincas Cumanam tu quoque Deiphoben,  
nos ignoremus quid sit matura senectus:  
scire aevi meritum, non numerare decet.

**Ausonius (AD 310-394), Epigram 20**



*Roman couple*

Dear wife, let's live as we have lived, and hold on to those names  
We called each on the night of our first nuptial games;  
And may it never come, that day, when we'll no longer be  
I, to you, your 'Lover-boy' and you 'My girl' to me.

5 Though I'd outstrip old Nestor, and you, in rivalry,  
Would surely also overtake Cumae's Deiphobe,  
To debates about 'Mature Old Age', let's never give a thought:  
It's right to know time's real rewards, and count the years as nought.

### **Notes**

1.5 Nestor is the hero, famed for his years, in Homer's Iliad. Deiphobe (Day-iff-ob-  
bee) is an ageless Sibyl, a Greek prophetess who lived in Cumae, near Naples.



This is an extract selected for you as part of Classics for All's 'Bellaria' series to cheer us up during the COVID-19 pandemic. The full series of weekly instalments may be found on our website [classicsforall.org.uk/bellaria/](https://classicsforall.org.uk/bellaria/)