

Metamorphoses IV.55-166

This second selection from the *Metamorphoses* is quite unlike the first. The story of Daphne and Apollo was one of unreciprocated love, of power and violence, of male (and divine) aggression, and feminist resistance, told in variously epic and comic tones, and, though set in a primordial epoch, resonating in its final scene with the Roman world of imperialism and Augustan order. Ovid's tale of Pyramus and Thisbe comes in Book IV of the *Metamorphoses*, much later in his cosmic scheme; civilization has advanced from its emergent state in Book I; we are now in the exotic, mystical world of the East, in the Babylon of Queen Semiramis.

And although the unhappy circumstances of our hero and heroine are reminiscent of the frustrated lovers of Roman comedy, as well as of elegy (with its *amâtorēs exclusi* and its secret encounters), and while Ovid's drama certainly does have some lighter moments, the action is ultimately not comic at all, but unexpectedly tragic. Pyramus and Thisbe have many admirable and heroic traits (Thisbe in particular is strikingly courageous and perceptive—like Daphne in certain respects), but their story lacks the divine action and heroic conflict of epic and the ambiguous political associations with Roman empire and emperor of the poet's Daphne tale; it is instead a purely human and private drama, a sentimental story of youthful romance that comes to a dark and bloody conclusion. In a reversal of the point made at the outset of "Daphne and Apollo," the crisis here is created, not by "the savage wrath of Cupid," but by "blind chance," the impetuosity of two innocent young lovers, and the stern prohibitions of their doubtless well-intended but overly protective parents.

We have no literary sources for this story earlier than Ovid, who describes it as "a little-known tale" (*vulgâris fâbula nōn est, Met. IV.53*). Because of its Babylonian setting and the fact that there were rivers named "Pyramus" and "Thisbe" in Cilicia and elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean, the tale is generally supposed to have originated in the East. Like many of Ovid's episodes, this one is presented as a tale within a tale (hence the quotation marks enclosing the entire Latin text that follows), the first of three love stories narrated in the first half of *Metamorphoses* IV by the three daughters of Minyas, king of Orchomenos in Boeotia. While their fellow townspeople are celebrating a festival in honor of Bacchus, the Minyades, ignoring the example of the Theban king Pentheus (whose destruction for a similar impiety had just been recounted at the end of Book III), reject the god's divinity and remain at home, spinning wool and exchanging stories to pass the time. Of their three amatory tales, only this first one tells of an untainted love—the "ideal" Ovidian love, as Brooks Otis has

remarked and as we can see both from the progress of the narrative itself and from the sympathetic comments interjected along the way by Ovid's own "partisan narrator" (as distinguished by Otis from the vile daughter of Minyas who tells the tale and who, in effect, deliberately contrives its unhappy ending). When all three of the tales were concluded, Bacchus' spirit descended on the palace, causing grapevines and ivy to grow out of the sisters' tapestries and looms, and transforming the Minyades themselves into hideous bats.

The tale may be summarized as follows: Pyramus, a handsome Babylonian youth, and his beautiful young neighbor Thisbe (we should imagine them in their teens) fall in love, but are forbidden by their parents to marry or even to meet. At first they communicate only by whispering through a crack discovered in the wall connecting their two houses; like the elegiac lover who reproaches the door that keeps him from his mistress, both Pyramus and Thisbe often scold their wall as though it were alive, but then thank it for the passage it has given to their speech. Eventually, however, longing to share more than just words, the two conspire to leave their homes by night and to meet under a mulberry tree—a tree whose berries were in those days white—near the tomb of king Ninus on the outskirts of the city. Arriving first, Thisbe sees a lioness, drenched with blood from a recent kill and drinking from the nearby stream; she rushes to take refuge in a dark cavern and, in her flight, drops her veil, which the lioness soon finds, shreds with her bloody maw, and then leaves behind. When Pyramus arrives, he sees the animal's tracks and Thisbe's mutilated, blood-stained garment, and mistakenly concludes the worst; blaming himself and rushing to the tree where the two had planned to rendezvous, the youth first kisses Thisbe's veil, then plunges his sword into his groin, spattering the tree's berries and soaking its roots with his blood as he lay dying. Soon Thisbe emerges from the cave, still fearful but determined to see her beloved. When she discovers his body instead and realizes what has happened, she tries at first to arouse him, but then, failing in that, commits suicide with Pyramus' own sword. But before plunging the sword into her breast, Thisbe utters two final prayers, first to their parents, that they allow the cremated remains of both lovers to rest in a single urn, and then to the mulberry tree where they had made their fatal rendezvous, that its own "offspring," its berries, should be forever altered from white to the dark-red hue of blood, to serve both as the tree's own cloak of mourning and as a perpetual reminder of the lovers' suicides. In the story's closing lines we see both of Thisbe's prayers realized—one fulfilling the myth's etiological function (explaining the origin of the purplish-red mulberry), the other bringing the folktale's plot to closure by joining the two lovers at last in death as their parents had forbidden them in life.

With its implicit warnings for young people who may exercise too little control over their passions, and for parents who try to exercise too much, Ovid's story is a folktale rather than a myth in the usual Greco-Roman sense, one that

quickly transcends its eastern setting and assumes, as the poet intended, a universal quality that has insured its appeal to subsequent generations. One of Ovid's most beautiful tales of love, and beautifully told, "Pyramus and Thisbe" has inspired countless imitations and adaptations over the centuries. An early version appears in the *Fabulae* of the 2nd-century A.D. mythographer Hyginus. Dante alludes to the tale, which is retold later in the 14th century by both Boccaccio and Chaucer (in his "Legende of Goode Women") and which provides the subject of several plays, both comic and tragic, the best known of them the burlesque play-within-a-play performed by the "mechanicals" in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* (and of course *Romeo and Juliet* takes up the themes of parental restriction and the suicide of young lovers). Other poets have been captivated by the tale, among them John Donne in an epigram composed in 1631, the year of his death. Countless representations have appeared in the visual arts as well, including paintings, woodcuts, and engravings, among them a series of drawings by both Rubens and Rembrandt from the 17th century and even, from the same period, an etching by Stefano Della Bella for a set of playing cards. We have besides, from the 18th into the 20th century, several cantatas, more than half a dozen ballets, and about 20 operas, including Federico Ghisi's *Piramo e Tisbe*, composed in the 1940's and based upon Shakespeare's adaptation.

Like so many others over the centuries who have treasured the story of "Pyramus and Thisbe," modern readers of Ovid's original will appreciate the easy, dynamic flow of his narrative, the brilliant effects of sound and sight (not least the poet's manipulation of dark/light imagery and sexual metaphor), and especially the humanity of his star-crossed hero and heroine, the tenderness of their love, the depth of their courage, and the intensity of passion that compels both, inexorably, to the act of suicide.

At every tyme when they durste soo,
Upon the o syde of the walle stood he,
And on that other syde stood Tesbe,
The swoote soun of other to receyve.

Chaucer, Legende of Goode Women, lines 749-52



- 5 *P̄yramus, -ī, m., *Pyramus* (a Babylonian youth).
- *Thisbē, Thisbēs, f., *Thisbe* (a Babylonian maiden, Pyramus' neighbor and inamorata; for the Greek case endings, see on *Daphnē Met.* I.452).
- iuvenum pulcherrimus alter, / altera . . . praelāta puellīs (56): chiasmus; the entire phrase is in apposition to P̄yramus et Thisbē, the subjects of tenuēre (57).
- 5 quās: the antecedent is puellīs.
- oriēns, orientis, m., *the rising sun, dawn; the eastern world, the orient.*
- praelāta: with altera; here, *preferred.*
- 7 contiguus, -a, -um, *adjacent, connected.*
- tenuēre: = tenuērunt, *had or occupied.*
- ubi . . . urbem (58): an epic periphrasis for the ancient city of Babylon; positioning of the adjective/noun pair *altam / . . . urbem* at the ends of the verses adds to the epic effect.
- 3 coctilis, -is, -e, *baked; made of fired bricks.*
- mūrīs: the vast walls and gardens of Babylon were among the wonders of the ancient world.
- Semīramis, Semīramidis, f., *Semiramis* (legendary queen of Assyria, wife of Ninus, and founder of Babylon).
- nōtitia, -ae, f., *acquaintance.*
- Nōtitiam primōsque gradūs: sc. amōris, *their acquaintance and the first steps (of their love);* or possibly a hendiadys, *the first stage of their acquaintance.*
- gradus, -ūs, m., *step, pace; phase, stage* (in a process).
- vicīnia, -ae, f., *nearby area, vicinity; nearness, proximity.*
- Taedae . . . iūre: *in the bond of marriage* (metonymy— lit., *with the sanction of the [wedding] torch.*)
- *iūs, iūris, n., *law, legal sanction; legal authority, right.*
- *coeō, coīre, coī, coitus, *to come together, meet; to form an alliance* (here, *of marriage.*)
- coīssent: potential subj., *they would have come together.*
- vetuēre patrēs . . . potuēre vetāre: understand patrēs with potuēre, and note the sound-play and chiasmic arrangement.
- quod: the entire clause in 62 is the antecedent (*but—what they could not prevent—they both burned . . .*).
- aequus, -a, -um, *level, even;* ex aequō, idiom, *at the same level, equally.*
- *mēns, mentis, f., *the mind.*
- cōnsciūs, -ī, m., *accomplice, witness.*
- abest . . . aestuat (64): here and often throughout the story (cf. 84–92) Ovid lapses into the historical present to engage the reader and add vividness to his narrative.
- nūtus, -ūs, m., *a nod of the head* (especially a nod of assent).
- quōque: i.e., quō + que; quō . . . magis . . . (eō) magis, *the more . . . the more.*

- 55 "P̄yramus et Thisbē, iuvenum pulcherrimus alter, altera, quās oriēns habuit, praelāta puellīs, contiguās tenuēre domōs, ubi dīcitur altam coctilibus mūrīs cīnxisse Semīramis urbem. Nōtitiam primōsque gradūs vicīnia fēcit;
- 60 tempore crēvit amor. Taedae quoque iūre coīssent, sed vetuēre patrēs; quod nōn potuēre vetāre, ex aequō captīs ardēbant mentibus ambō. Cōnsciūs omnis abest, nūtū signīsque loquuntur, quōque magis tegitur, tēctus magis aestuat ignis.
- 65 "Fissus erat tenuī rīmā, quam dūxerat ōlim, cum fieret, pariēs domū commūnis utrīque. Id vitium nūllī per saecula longa notātum—

Discussion Questions

1. How is the chiasmus in 55–56 appropriate to the description of Pyramus and Thisbe and the houses in which they lived?
2. How is the symmetry of 62 appropriate to the circumstance described? And what may the series of spondees and hard consonants be intended to suggest?
3. Comment on the metaphor in 62–64. How is the image enhanced through the anaphora and word order in 64?
4. Explain the aptness of the interlocked word order in 66.

*tegō, tegere, tēxī, tēctus, *to cover; to hide, conceal.*
 aestuō, -āre, -āvī, -ātus, *to burn fiercely, blaze; to burn with desire.*
 ignis: subject of both tegitur and aestuat.

- 65 findō, findere, fidī, fissus, *to split apart; to open up.*
 dūxerat: *it had developed;* pariēs . . . commūnis is subject of all three verbs in the sentence.

66 *pariēs, parietis, m., *wall.*
 domū . . . utrīque: dat. with commūnis.

- 67 *vitium, -ī, n., *defect, fault; flaw, imperfection; vice.*
 nūllī: dat. with notātum, known to nobody.

quid . . . amor: the question, out of the narrator's own sense of excitement, anticipates the discovery in **prīmī vidistis amantēs**.

prīmī: as often in Latin, the adj. has adverbial force (cf. **tūtae** 69).

amantēs: the participle of **amō** often functions as a noun, *lovers* (cf. 73, 108, and *Am.* 1.9.25 below).

iter facere, idiom, *to clear a way, grant passage*; with **vocis**, *to create a pathway to speech*, a personification elaborated in **tūtae . . . blanditiae . . . trānsire solēbant** (70).

***tūtus**, -a, -um, *safe, secure*.

tūtae . . . minimō (70): interlocked order.

illud: i.e., **iter**.

***hinc**, adv., *from this place; from or on this side*.

illinc, adv., *from that place; from or on that side*.

hinc Thisbē, Pȳramus illinc: the chiasmic arrangement brings the two lovers together, but the strong diaeresis (like the wall) keeps them apart—more marvelous Ovidian wordplay!

in vicēs, idiomatic adv., *(each) in turn, alternately*.

fuerat captātus: = **captātus erat**; not just *had been felt or listened for*, but far more passionately, *had been seized at and inhaled*—the lovers' lips cannot quite touch (see lines 75, 79–80), but each frantically gasps in the other's breath through the tiny crack.

anhēlitus, -ūs, m., *gasping, panting; breath, breathing*.

invidus, -a, -um, *malevolent, hateful; envious, jealous* (the door itself has become an enemy!).

quid, here an adv., *why?*

***obstō, obstāre, obstiti, obstāturus** + dat., *to face; to stand in the way (of), obstruct*.

Quantum erat: **eset**, a potential subjunctive, might be expected; the construction takes a result clause, *How great a matter would it be to . . . ?* Diaeresis punctuates the query.

tōtō nōs corpore iungī: the lovers' desire is made explicit, and the **ō/ō/ō** assonance perhaps onomatopoeically mimics their cries of longing.

vel: here, *at least*.

ad ōscula danda: a gerundive phrase expressing purpose; freely, *for us to kiss*.

ingrātus, -a, -um, *ungrateful, thankless, unappreciative*.

***fateor, fatēri, fassus sum**, *to acknowledge, admit, confess*.

quod: here, *the fact that*; the entire **quod** clause is object of **dēbere** (76).

***amicus**, -a, -um, *friendly, loving; of a friend or lover*.

trānsitus, -ūs, m., *passage, path*.

The noun here looks back to **trānsire** (70) and continues the personification of 69–70; the line's repeated sibilants (s six times) suggest the sounds of the lovers' whispering.

***auris, auris**, f., *the ear*.

Tālia: object of **locūtī**

quid nōn sentit amor?—prīmī vīdistis amantēs,
et vōcis fēcistis iter; tūtaeque per illud
70 murmure blanditiae minimō trānsire solēbant.
Saepe, ubi cōstiterant hinc Thisbē, Pȳramus illinc,
inque vicēs fuerat captātus anhēlitus ōris,
'Invide,' dīcēbant, 'pariēs, quid amantibus obstās?
Quantum erat, ut sinerēs tōtō nōs corpore iungī
75 aut, hoc sī nimium est, vel ad ōscula danda patērēs?
Nec sumus ingrātī: tibi nōs dēbere fatēmur,
quod datus est verbīs ad amīcās trānsitus aurēs.'
Tālia dīversā nēquīquam sēde locūtī,
sub noctem dīxēre, 'Valē,' partīque dedēre

Discussion Questions

1. Why does the narrator suddenly shift to the use of second person verbs in 68–69? What is the effect?
2. Why is the personification in 69–70 especially appropriate in this context?
3. What is the effect of the m/n alliteration in 70?
4. How does the imaginative view of the inanimate world expressed by the two lovers in 73–77 coincide with the poet's own fantasizing images? In light of the overarching imagery of the *Metamorphoses* (think, for example, of Daphne's transformation into a tree that can hear and communicate), how is it perfectly "logical" that Pyramus and Thisbe should "often" (**saepe** 71) address the wall shared by their two houses? Once you understand how Ovid "animates" the inanimate world, what seems to be the best translation of **amīcās . . . aurēs** (77)?
5. How again in verse 78 is the word order a perfect construct for the situation described?

***sēdēs, sēdis**, f., *seat; home; place, position* (here, sc. ē).

79 **sub:** here, *just before*.

dīxēre . . . dedēre: = **dīxērunt . . . dedērunt**; the subject **quisque** (80) often takes a pl. verb, *they each*.

partī . . . suae (80): *their own side (of the wall)*; the interlocked order (**partī**

- 80 **nōn pervenientia**: English would use a relative clause, *that did not come through*.
contrā: here adv., *on the opposite side*.
 81 **Postera . . . ignēs**: interlocked order.
nocturnōs . . . ignēs: a metaphor for the stars.
Aurōra, -ae, f., *the dawn, daybreak*; here personified, *Aurora* (goddess of the dawn).
 82 ***sōl, sōlis, m.**, *the sun*, or here (as in the tale of the Sun's loves that follows this story in the *Metamorphoses*) *Sol* (god of the sun).
pruīnōsus, -a, -um, frosty.
pruīnōsās . . . siccāverat herbās: the word order replicates, and to an extent rhymes with, **nocturnōs . . . remōverat ignēs** (81), a typically Ovidian device.
 ***radius, -ī, m.**, *a ray of light*.
siccō, -āre, -āvī, -ātus, to dry.
 83 **solitus, -a, -um, usual, accustomed**.
 Note the assonance of **-tum/-cum/Tum/murmure** and cf. line 70.
parvō: here, *gentle, quiet*.
 84 **multa . . . silentī**: note the s/t alliteration and the internal rhyme, which is accentuated by the pauses after **questī** and **silentī**.
 ***queror, querī, questus sum, to complain (about), protest**.
statuō, statuere, statuī, statūtus, to set upright, stand; with **ut** + subj., *to decide (that)*.
ut . . . temptent (85) . . . **relinquant** (86) . . . **convenient . . . lateant** (88): jussive noun clauses (indirect commands) after **statuunt**.
silēns, silentis, quiet, silent.
 85 **fallere custōdēs foribusque excēdere**: chiasmus, and a neat f/c/d/f/c/d alliteration; the infinitives are complementary to **temptent**.
foribus: sc. **ex** (prepositions expected in prose are frequently omitted in verse).
 86 **tēctum, -ī, n.**, *roof, ceiling; house, building* (a common synecdoche).
 87 **nēve, conj.**, *and so that . . . not* (introducing a negative purpose clause).
sit errandum: passive periphrastic, following **nēve** and with **spatiantibus** as dat. of agent, *so that they would not go astray* (lit., *so that it would not be gone astray by them*), *as they wander about in the vast countryside*.
lātus, -a, -um, broad, wide; extensive, vast.
spatior, -ārī, -ātus sum, to walk or wander about.
 88 ***conveniō, convenīre, convēnī, conventūrus, to assemble, meet**; + dat., *to be suited (to), befit, harmonize (with)*.
bustum, -ī, n., *funeral pyre; grave-mound, tomb* (here, poetic pl. for sing.).
Ninus, -ī, m., *Ninus* (king of Assyria, founder of Nineveh, and husband of Semiramis—see on 58 above).
 89 **arboris**: the diaeresis, the word's enjambement, and its repetition as first word of the following parenthesis purposefully focus our attention on the tree which will be central to the story.

- 80 **ōscula quisque suae nōn pervenientia contrā**.
 “**Postera nocturnōs Aurōra remōverat ignēs,**
Sōlque pruīnōsās radiīs siccāverat herbās;
ad solitum coiēre locum. Tum, murmure parvō
multa prius questī, statuunt ut nocte silentī
 85 **fallere custōdēs foribusque excēdere temptent,**
cumque domō exierint, urbis quoque tēcta relinquant,
nēve sit errandum lātō spatiantibus arvō,
convenient ad busta Ninī, lateantque sub umbrā
arboris (arbor ibī niveīs ūberrima pōmīs,
 90 **ardua mōrus, erat, gelidō contermina fontī).**
Pacta placent; et lūx, tardē discēdere vīsa,

Discussion Question

Comment on the onomatopoeia in 83. How may the alliteration in the following verse also be onomatopoetic?

- ***niveus, -a, -um, (consisting) of snow; snow-white, snowy.**
ūber, ūberis, copious, abundant; + abl., rich (in).
 ***pōmum, -ī, n., fruit-tree; fruit.**
 90 ***arduus, -a, -um, tall, towering; steep, precipitous.**
mōrus, -ī, f., mulberry tree.
 ***gelidus, -a, -um, cold, cool, chilly.**
conterminus, -a, -um + dat., bordering (upon), close (to).
 ***fōns, fontis, m., a spring, spring-water.**
 91 **pactum, -ī, n., agreement, plan.**
Pacta placent: sc. **eīs**, i.e., the lovers, although from the next verse and a half it appears that even nature is in accord with the plan; the short, alliterative sentence effectively punctuates the detailed plan preceding and introduces the scene shift following.
et lūx . . . ab isdem (92): a brilliantly economical description of sunset, with the sluggish spondees of 91 aptly giving way to the plummeting dactyls in 92, the **lūx/nox/exī** soundplay, and the highly visual (and sonorous) chiasmus of **praecipitātur aquis et aquis . . . exit**.
vīsa: *having seemed (at first)*, i.e., to the lovers, who were . . .

- 92 **praecipitō**, -āre, -āvī, -ātus, *to plunge or hurl downward* (in contrast to **tardē discēdere**).
praecipitātur aquīs: sc. in.
aquīs et aquīs: placement of -quīs under the ictus accentuates the rhyme.
nox: the abrupt monosyllable (which echoes **lūx** in 91), and the diaeresis following, deliberately disturb the rhythm before bringing the scene to closure.
īsdem: = **eīsdem**; *the same*, since in the mythic world ocean surrounded the lands in a continuous stream, out of which rose and set both daylight and darkness.
- 93 ***callidus**, -a, -um, *expert, wise; clever, crafty* (here perhaps with adverbial force, *cunningly*).
tenebrae, -ārum, f. pl., *darkness*.
 ***versō**, -āre, -āvī, -ātus, *to turn, spin; to turn back and forth, twist*.
versātō cardine: *turning the door on its hinges* (lit., *with the door-hinge turned*).
cardō, **cardinis**, m., *pivot, axis; door-hinge*.
suōs: i.e., her family (cf. **fallere custōdēs** 85).
adopertus, -a, -um, *covered, veiled*.
adoperta: with **vultum**, acc. of respect, and modifying **Thisbē**, *with her face concealed* (with a shawl, see 101).
- 94 **pervenit . . . sēdit**: chiasmus.
- 95 ***tumulus**, -ī, m., *burial mound, tomb*.
dictā . . . arbore: *the tree which they had spoken of*.
- 96 **audācem faciēbat amor**: sc. **eam**; this clause, one of Ovid's many epigrammatic **sententiae**, anticipates the boldness **Thisbe** will need for the action that follows.
ecce, recentī / caede (97): the harsh alliteration helps compel our attention to the scene Ovid means us to visualize.
 ***recēns, recentis**, *recent, newly arrived; newly shed; recently caught*.
 ***caedēs, caedis**, f., *killing, slaughter; blood, gore*.
leaena, -ae, f., *lioness*.
boum: gen. pl. of **bōs**, objective gen. with **caede**.
spūmō, -āre, -āvī, -ātūrus, *to foam, be covered with foam*.
spūmantēs . . . rictūs: acc. of respect with **oblita**, *her foaming jowls smeared*.
oblinō, oblinere, oblēvī, oblitus, *to smear, cover*.
rictus, -ūs, m., *the open mouth, jaws*.
- 98 **dēpositūra**: fut. act. participle, here with the force of purpose, *to slake, satisfy*.
- 99 ***sitis, sitis**, acc. **sitim**, f., *thirst*.
Quam: = **Eam**, the lioness.
ad: here, *by the light of*.
lūna, -ae, f., *the moon*.
Babylōnius, -a, -um, *Babylonian*.

praecipitātur aquīs, et aquīs nox exit ab īsdem.

- “**Callida per tenebrās, versātō cardine, Thisbē**
ēgreditur, fallitque suōs, adopertaque vultum
 95 **pervenit ad tumulum, dictāque sub arbore sēdit—**
audācem faciēbat amor. Venit, ecce, recentī
caede leaena boum spūmantēs oblita rictūs,
dēpositūra sitim vīcīnī fontis in undā.
Quam procul ad lūnae radiōs Babylōnia Thisbē
 100 **vīdit et obscūrum timidō pede fūgit in antrum,**

Discussion Questions

1. How much time elapses between verses 81 and 92?
 2. Comment further on the several ways in which Ovid uses meter and word order to enhance the imagery in 91–92; what movements of light and darkness do we actually see and hear in these two lines?
 3. How does Ovid's description of the time and place of the lovers' rendezvous in 88–95 help to establish a mood of foreboding? How does the poet use images of light and dark in these lines; what, specifically, may be the symbolism of the **lūx/nox** antithesis in 91–92?
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- 100 ***obscūrus**, -a, -um, *dark, obscure; shadowy; hidden from sight*.
obscūrum . . . antrum: in a neat word-picture, the rest of the clause is actually “enclosed,” like **Thisbe** herself, within *the shadowy cave*; again word order enhances imagery (cf. I.468 above). Note too the chiaroscuro effect, as **Thisbe** flees out of the shadows of the moonlit night into the cave's profounder darkness—an unpropitious omen of things to come.
timidō pede fūgit: for the transferred epithet cf. **timidō Pēnēia cursū / fūgit** (I.525–26 above).
antrum, -ī, n., *cave, cavern, grotto*.

dumque fugit . . . reliquit: the tense shift is usual with **dum**.
tergō . . . lapsa: sc. **dē**; again English would use a clause (*which had slipped from her back*) rather than the more literal participial phrase (*having slipped from her back*).
vēlāmina: here (as often) pl. for sing. (cf. **tenuēs . . . amictūs** 104).
lea, -ae, f., lioness.
lea saeva . . . multā . . . undā: chiasmus.
compēscō, compēscere, compēscuī, *to confine, restrain; to subdue, quench.*
inventōs . . . amictūs (104): notice how the noun and its modifier frame the lengthy clause (cf. **lētī . . . tuī** 151–52); for translation of the participle, see on **tergō . . . lapsa** (101).
ipsā: i.e., *Thisbe*.
cruentō, -āre, -āvī, -ātus, *to stain with blood.*
***laniō, -āre, -āvī, -ātus,** *to wound savagely; to tear, shred, mutilate.*
***amictus, -ūs, m., mantle, cloak.**
ēgressus: with **P̄yramus** (107).
pulvis, pulveris, m., dust.
certa ferae: with **vestīgia**, delayed for suspense.
tōtō . . . ōre: sc. **in**, but English would make *face* the subject (*his whole face grew pale*).
***tingō, tingere, tīnxī, tīnctus,** *to wet, soak, moisten; to dye, stain, color.*
***reperiō, reperire, repperī, repertus,** *to find, discover; to find (someone, something) to be.*
ē quibus: partitive abl., *of whom*.
illa: *Thisbe*.
dignus, -a, -um, *suitable, appropriate; + abl., worthy (of).*
nostra = mea (cf. **nostrum** 112, **nostrī** 118).
nocēns: here, *guilty*, predicate adj.; and note the assonance with **nostra**.
***anima, -ae, f., air, breath; soul, life; spirit, ghost.**
Ego tē: looking back to **illa** (109) and **nostra** (110), the pronouns are emphatically juxtaposed.
miserandus, -a, -um, *pitiable.*
perimō, perimere, perēmī, perēptus, *to destroy, kill.*
in loca plēna metūs: with **venīrēs**; cf. **per . . . loca plēna timōris** (X.29 below).
quī: **ego** (110) is the antecedent.
venīrēs: sc. **ut**, a subjunctive jussive noun clause instead of the infinitive usual with **iubeō**.
dīvellō, dīvellere, dīvellī, dīvulsus, *to tear apart, tear to pieces.*
scelerātus, -a, -um, *accursed; criminal, sinful.*
scelerāta . . . morsū: the interlocking order, with the powerful imperative at center, produces a symmetrical golden line—and the **scelerāta . . . viscera** are separated quite aptly, in view of the violence imagined in the equally powerful (and symmetrical) **Nostrum dīvellite corpus** (112).

dumque fugit, tergō vēlāmina lapsa reliquit.
 Ut lea saeva sitim multā compēscuit undā,
 dum redit in silvās, inventōs forte sine ipsā
 ōre cruentātō tenuēs laniāvit amictūs.

105 “Sērius ēgressus, vestīgia vīdit in altō
 pulvere certa ferae, tōtōque expalluit ōre
 P̄yramus; ut vērō vestem quoque sanguine tīnctam
 repperit, ‘Ūna duōs,’ inquit, ‘nox perdet amantēs,
 ē quibus illa fuit longā dignissima vītā;
 110 nostra nocēns anima est. Ego tē, miseranda, perēmī,
 in loca plēna metūs quī iussī nocte venīrēs
 nec prior hūc vēnī. Nostrum dīvellite corpus,
 et scelerāta ferō cōnsūmite viscera morsū,
 ō quīcumque sub hāc habitātis rūpe leōnēs!

Discussion Questions

1. How does Ovid make the scene in 96–101 more vivid and even visual? Consider especially his choice and manipulation of the verbs in the passage.
2. What is especially effective about the poet’s handling of Pyramus’ name in the scene change at 105–07?
3. What is the effect of the word order in 108 (**Ūna . . . amantēs**), and how does **nox perdet amantēs** continue the light/dark symbolism of 88–93? If you have read Catullus 5, what connections of theme and imagery do you see between that poem and these verses, especially 108?

***ferus, -a, -um,** *wild; ferocious, savage.*
cōnsūmō, cōnsūmere, cōnsūmpsi, cōnsūptus, *to destroy; to devour.*
viscus, visceris, n., usually pl., *flesh, entrails.*
 114 **ō,** interj. used in direct address or exclamations, *oh* (here introducing a dramatic apostrophe).
***quīcumque, quaecumque, quodcumque,** indefinite adj. or pron., *whoever, whatever* (here with **leōnēs**).
rūpēs, rūpis, f., *a rocky cliff, crag.*

- 15 **timidī est**: gen. of characteristic, *it is (the mark) of a cowardly (man)*.
 ***nex, necis**, f., *death, murder*.
- 16 **pactus, -a, -um**, *agreed upon, settled upon (with arboris)*.
umbram: again the poet focuses on the dark shadow cast beneath the tree, to intensify the atmosphere of foreboding (cf. 88–89 above).
- 17 **nōtae . . . vestī**: indirect object with the repeated verb and both direct objects; for the anaphora (here with a pathetic effect) and the word order, cf. I.458 above.
- 18 **haustus, -ūs**, m., *drink, draft*.
- 19 **Quōque**: = rel. pron. **quō** (with **ferrum** as antecedent) + **que**.
accingō, accingere, accīnxi, accīnctus, *to gird, equip*.
dēmīsit: here, *plunged*.
īlia, īlium, n. pl., *groin, genitals; entrails*.
- ***ferrum, -ī**, n., *iron*; by synecdoche, *weapon, sword* (with both **dēmīsit** and **trāxit** 120).
- 20 ***mora, -ae**, f., *delay*; **nec mora**, idiom, *and without delay* (cf. *Am.* I.11.19 below—and note the assonance here with **moriēns**).
fervēns, ferventis, *boiling; warm* (here, with freshly shed blood).
resupīnus, -a, -um, *lying flat on one's back*.
humus, -ī, f., *the earth, ground* (with the abl. here sc. **in**—prose would normally have the locative **humī** instead).
- ***cruor, cruōris**, m., *blood (from a wound); slaughter*.
ēmīcō, -āre, -āvī, -ātūrus, *to move suddenly outward or upward; to spurt out or upward*.
- 2 ***aliter, adv.**, *otherwise, differently*; **nōn aliter quam cum**, *no differently than when (= just as when)*, a conventional formula for introducing a simile (cf. *Met.* X.64–65 below).
vitiātus, -a, -um, *faulty, defective* (like the wall that separated the lovers' houses—cf. *vitiūm* 67).
fistula, -ae, f., *tube, pipe* (especially, as here, *a water-pipe*).
- 3 **scinditur . . . / ēiaculātur . . . rumpit** (124): the strong verbs are emphatically positioned, the last two in a chiasmic arrangement with their objects.
strīdō, strīdere, strīdī, *to hiss*.
forāmen, forāminis, n., *a hole, perforation*.
longās / . . . aquās (124): *long streams of water*.
- 4 **ēiaculor, ēiaculārī, ēiaculātus sum**, *to shoot out, discharge*.
ictus, -ūs, m., *a stroke, blow*; here, *spurt, pulsing*.
- 5 **arboreus, -a, -um**, *of a tree*.
- ***fētus, -ūs**, m., *giving birth; fruit; offspring* (*fruit* here, but in view of the overt sexual imagery of the preceding lines, there is clearly a double entendre suggesting the children the two lovers will never have).
adspergō, adsperginis, f., *sprinkling, spattering*.
- ***āter, ātra, ātrum**, *black, dark*.
- ***vertō, vertere, vertī, versus**, *to (cause to) turn, spin; to reverse, change*.
- ***faciēs, -ēī**, f., *outward appearance; face; shape, form*.
madefactus, -a, -um, *drenched, soaked*.

- 115 Sed timidī est optāre necem.' Vēlāmina Thisbēs
 tollit, et ad pactae sēcum fert arboris umbram,
 utque dedit nōtae lacrimās, dedit ōscula vestī,
 'Accipe nunc,' inquit, 'nostrī quoque sanguinis haustūs!'
 Quōque erat accīnctus, dēmīsit in īlia ferrum,
 120 nec mora, ferventī moriēns ē vulnere trāxit,
 et iacuit resupīnus humō. Cruor ēmicat altē,
 nōn aliter quam cum vitiātō fistula plumbō
 scinditur, et tenuī strīdente forāmine longās
 ēiaculātur aquās, atque ictibus āera rumpit.
 125 Arboreī fētūs adspergine caedis in ātram
 vertuntur faciem, madefactaque sanguine rādīx

Discussion Questions

1. What is Pyramus addressing in 118? What is the point of **quoque**? What is the emotional effect of this and the preceding line?
2. Comment on the effect of the *c/q* alliteration in 118–19.
3. What is striking in the meter of 121 and how is it appropriate to the action described?
4. One commentary (DeVeau and Getty) calls the comparison in 122–24 “certainly one of Ovid’s least attractive similes.” Is the simile effective or not?
5. Comment on the alliteration and assonance in 123; is an onomatopoeic effect intended? And what of the sound effects in 124?

Pyramus:
 Now am I dead,
 Now am I fled;
 My soul is in the sky:
 Tongue, lose thy light;
 Moon, take thy flight:
 Now, die, die, die, die, die.

William Shakespeare
A Midsummer Night's Dream
 Act V, Sc. 1

7 **purpureus, -a, -um, purple.**

purpureō . . . colōre: the adjective/noun pair frame the line, emphasizing the dark transformation of the fruit and vividly bringing the scene to closure; the assonance of *ō/ō/ō* (under the ictus in each instance) adds a suitably doleful tone.

mōrum, -ī, n., a mulberry.

***color, colōris, m., color.**

8 **positō: = dēpositō.**

nē fallat: the purpose clause is dependent on **redit** (129).

9 **animō:** here, *heart*.

requirō, requirere, requisivī, requisitus, *to try to find, search for; to need, miss, long for* (here, through zeugma, the first sense is required with **oculīs** and the second with **animō**).

10 **vītārit: = vītāverit,** perf. subj. in the indirect question (for the syncopated form, cf. **agitāsse** I.567 above).

gestiō, gestiire, gestivī, *to desire eagerly, long.*

11 **Utque . . . / sic** (132): here, as often, with an implied contrast, *and although . . . at the same time.*

vīsā: with **arbore**; English would use a clause, *once she has seen it.*

in arbore fōrmam: = fōrmam arboris.

facit: sc. *eam*.

***incertus, -a, -um, not fixed; uncertain, doubtful; disarranged.**

color: suspensefully held to the end of the clause and followed by a strong diaeresis.

haeret: here, *she is uncertain* (cf. the similar English idiom, *to be stuck*, i.e., *puzzled*, over some problem).

haeret an haec sit: sc. *arbor*; the harsh sounds (like the *c*'s in the first part of the line) and the uneven rhythm caused by the closing series of monosyllables help suggest Thisbe's hesitance to approach the tree.

***dubitō, -āre, -āvī, -ātus,** *to be in doubt or uncertain* (with **an** + indirect question); *to waver, hesitate.*

tremebundus, -a, -um, quivering, trembling.

tremebunda . . . cruentum / membra solum (134): interlocked order, with the epithets first, to focus on the grisly aspects of the scene.

While **tremebunda** could refer to Thisbe as subject of **dubitat** and **videt** (cf. **tremet** 136), the connection with **pulsāre** makes its application to **membra** more likely—or, through a common poetic device, Ovid might well intend us to take the word in both ways.

***pulsō, -āre, -āvī, -ātus,** *to strike, beat (against).*

cruentus, -a, -um, bloody.

membra: at first Thisbe notices merely the body itself, only later (137) recognizing it as that of her lover.

solum, -ī, n., base, foundation; ground, earth.

retrōque pedem tulit: i.e., *she stepped back.*

ōraque . . . gerēns (135): *and with her face* (lit., *wearing a facial expression*).

purpureō tingit pendentia mōra colōre.

130 “Ecce, metū nōndum positō, nē fallat amantem,
illa redit, iuvenemque oculīs animōque requirit,
quantaque vītārit narrāre perīcula gestit.

135 Utque locum et vīsā cognōscit in arbore fōrmam,
sic facit incertam pōmī color; haeret an haec sit.
Dum dubitat, tremebunda videt pulsāre cruentum
membra solum, retrōque pedem tulit, ōraque buxō
pallidiōra gerēns exhorruit aequoris īnstar,
quod tremet, exiguā cum summum stringitur aurā.

Discussion Questions

1. Ancient epic often contained seemingly gratuitous descriptions of physical violence; how is Ovid's graphic depiction of Pyramus' suicide (in 118–27), on the other hand, quite essential to the story-line?
2. The tree's berries turn dark from two different causes in 125–27; comment on the two images and their “believability.”
3. How does Ovid introduce an element of bittersweet irony in the scene-change at 128–30?
4. In what way is the meter in the first half of 133 appropriate to the actions described? Comment on the line's other sound effects.
5. How is Ovid's description of Thisbe's face in 134–35 especially apt in this context?
6. Comment on the simile in 135–36.

buxus, -ī, f., the box-tree; boxwood (noted for its pale color).

135 **pallidus, -a, -um, pale, colorless.**

exhorrēscō, exhorrēscere, exhorruī, *to shudder, shiver* (with fear).

aequor, aequoris, n., a smooth, level surface; the surface of the sea (especially when calm).

īnstar, indecl. n. noun, *the equivalent (of)*; here, with **aequoris**, *just like the sea.*

136 **exiguus, -a, -um, small, slight.**

cum: in prose this conjunction (*when*) would introduce the clause.

summum: here substantive, *its surface.*

37 remoror, remorārī, remorātus sum, to delay, pause.
 38 clārus, -a, -um, loud, sonorous; clear.
 plangor, plangōris, m., beating of the breast (as a sign of grief);
 lamentation, wailing.
 39 comās: acc. of respect with laniāta.
 40 vulnera . . . lacrimīs, flētum . . . cruorī: chiasmus.
 suppleō, supplēre, supplēvī, supplētus, to fill up (with a liquid).
 flētus, -ūs, m., weeping, lamentation; tears.
 cruorī: prose would have the abl. case.
 12 P̄yrame . . . tē . . . / P̄yrame . . . tē (143): the repetitions, identically
 placed in the two verses, intensify the pathos, and the names in particular
 help create an incantatory effect as well.
 quis: with cāsus, instead of the interrogative adj. quī.
 mihi: dat. of reference, with the sense of separation.
 *cāsus, -ūs, m., a fall; mishap, misfortune, accident.
 adimō, adimere, adēmī, adēptus, to remove, take away.
 13 respondē . . . iacentēs (144): the -dē/tē/-bē assonance, the strong d/t
 alliteration in both verses, and the series of spondees following nōminat,
 all lend a forceful sound effect to Thisbe's imperatives.
 4 exaudiō, -īre, -īvī, -ītus, to hear; to listen to, heed.
 *attollō, attollere, to raise, lift up.
 iacentēs: lit., lying (still); here, motionless, lifeless.
 5 Ad nōmen Thisbēs: Thisbe had repeatedly called her lover's name to arouse
 him (note the careful positioning of P̄yrame . . . / P̄yrame . . . / nōminat
 142-44), but it was the sound of her own name (also deliberately set at
 line's end in 143) that momentarily revived him.
 nōmen . . . oculōs . . . gravātōs: again the ō/ō/ō assonance adds a mournful
 sound effect (cf. on 127).
 oculōs . . . gravātōs: object of both ērēxit and recondidit (146).
 morte: in order to appreciate fully what is happening in this scene, it is
 important to note that Pyramus is now dead (cf. gelidīs in vultibus 141) or
 at least hovering very near the brink of death.
 gravō, -āre, -āvī, -ātus, to make heavy, weigh down; to oppress, overwhelm.
 P̄yramus: again the name is emphatically positioned (cf. 142-43).
 ērigō, ērigere, ērēxī, ērēctus, to raise, lift up.
 vīsā . . . illā: abl. absolute.
 recondō, recondere, recondidī, reconditus, to put away, store; to put back,
 close again.
 Quae: = illa (cf. illā preceding), subject of inquit (148).
 postquam vestemque suam: placement of -am/-em/-am under the ictus
 accentuates the assonance.
 postquam . . . suam cognōvit: an echo of 137, where the words appear in
 the same metrical position.
 vestem . . . cognōvit . . . / vīdit ebur (148): chiasmus.
 -que . . . et: = -que . . . -que, both . . . and.
 ēnsis, ēnsis, m., sword.

Sed postquam, remorāta, suōs cognōvit amōrēs,
 percutit indignōs clārō plangōre lacertōs
 et, laniāta comās amplexaque corpus amātum,
 140 vulnera supplēvit lacrimīs, flētumque cruorī
 miscuit, et gelidīs in vultibus ōscula figēns
 'P̄yrame,' clāmāvit, 'quis tē mihi cāsus adēmī?
 P̄yrame, respondē! Tua tē, cārissime, Thisbē
 nōminat; exaudī vultūsque attolle iacentēs!'
 145 Ad nōmen Thisbēs oculōs iam morte gravātōs
 P̄yramus ērēxit, vīsāque recondidit illā.
 "Quae, postquam vestemque suam cognōvit et ēnse
 vīdit ebur vacuum, 'Tua tē manus,' inquit, 'amorque

Discussion Questions

1. What sound is most strikingly repeated in 137-38 and how is the effect onomatopoeitic? How does Ovid's manipulation of ictus enhance this effect?
2. How is the chiasmatic arrangement in 140 suited to the image being described?
3. In Roman magic (officially discouraged, but in fact practiced from the earliest times and throughout the imperial period), personal names were felt to have a special power and so they were often repeated in curses and other incantations; control of the name suggested potential control of the person. With this in mind, consider carefully the scene in 142-46 and discuss how it may be construed, at least on one level, as a kind of magical rite.

ēnse / . . . vacuum (148): abl. of separation, empty of its sword.
 148 vīdit . . . amorque: the quick dactyls are appropriate to Thisbe's agitated state.
 *ebur, eboris, n., ivory; by synecdoche, an object made of ivory (here, an ivory scabbard).
 Tua tē: an echo of the identically positioned Tua tē in 143.
 manus . . . amorque: the two instruments of Pyramus' death are one concrete and the other abstract.

perdidit: sing. to agree with only the nearer of the two subjects.

***infelix, infelicis, unfertile, unproductive; disastrous, ill-fated, unfortunate** (most editors set the adjective off with a comma here, regarding it as vocative, but **amor . . . infelix** is more effective and likelier what Ovid intended).

Est . . . manus (150): freely, *My hand too has the courage for this one act*.
et: = **etiam** (likewise in the next verse).

in unum / hoc (150): i.e., for suicide.

est et amor: the phrase, like **Est et . . . manus**, is to be taken with **mihi fortis in unum / hoc**, a dat. of possession construction; the anaphora focuses our attention back on **manus . . . amorque** (148).

dabit . . . vīrēs: thus Thisbe's love (**hic**) is likewise **infelix**, i.e., it will beget death and not new life—except, of course, in the **fētūs** (161) of the mulberry tree.

hic: though the vowel is short, the syllable was often treated in verse as long (owing to an earlier form **hicc**); cf. **hoc** in *Am.* I.1.5 below.

in vulnera: i.e., like **in unum / hoc**, for death.

persequor, persequi, persecutus sum, to follow to the end; to pursue.

extinctum: here, *dead or in death*; sc. **tē** (i.e., Pyramus).

***lētum, -ī, n.**, death, destruction.

lētī . . . tuī (152): noun and adj. frame the clause (cf. **inventōs . . . amictūs** 103–04).

quique: sc. **tū** as antecedent.

revellō, revellere, revelli, revulsus, to tear away, remove forcibly.

sōlā: with **morte** not **mē** (152).

nec: here, *not even*.

Hoc . . . estōte rogātī, / . . . / ut (156): the pronoun is object of this rare future imperative construction, which has a solemn, almost ritualistic tone, *You shall be asked this one request . . . that*.

ambōrum: i.e., of both Pyramus and Thisbe.

multum: adv. with **miserī**.

meus: masculine sing. because she thinks only of her father's prohibition (cf. **vetuere patrēs** 61); alliteration of **m** in the first half of the line adds a somber tone to the pitiful apostrophe.

ut . . . eōdem (157): the entire clause is in apposition to **hoc** (see on 154), elaborating Thisbe's entreaty; note the heavy assonance of **ō** in these two verses.

quōs: sc. **nōs** (the two lovers) as both antecedent of this relative pronoun (which is repeated for pathetic effect) and subject of the infin. **compōnī** (157); the request is essentially **ut nōs, quōs amor iūnxit, in eōdem tumulō compōnī nōn invidēātis**.

certus amor . . . hōra novissima: chiasmus underscores the ironic contrast between the steadfastness of the lovers' affection and their sudden reversal of fortune.

novissima: here, *most recent, last*.

compōnī: here, with **nōs** understood, *us to be placed together*, i.e., *buried*.

perdidit infelix! Est et mihi fortis in unum
 150 hoc manus, est et amor; dabit hic in vulnera vīrēs.
 Persequar extinctum, lētique miserrima dicar
 causa comesque tuī; quique ā mē morte revelli
 heu sōlā poterās, poteris nec morte revelli.
 Hoc tamen ambōrum verbis estōte rogātī,
 155 ō multum miserī meus illiusque parentēs,
 ut quōs certus amor, quōs hōra novissima iūnxit,
 compōnī tumulō nōn invidēātis eōdem.
 At tū, quae rāmīs arbor miserābile corpus
 nunc tegis unīus, mox es tēctūra duōrum,

Discussion Questions

1. What is the intended effect of the anaphora **Est et . . . manus, est et amor** (149–50)?
2. What is most striking in the language of 152–53 and what is the poet's purpose?
3. What is unusual in the meter of 158 and how is the rhythm suited to the action at this point in the narrative?

invidēō, invidēre, invīdī, invīsus, to envy; to be unwilling to allow, refuse, begrudge.

nōn invidēātis: with **ut**, a jussive noun clause (where **nē** would be the usual negative), *that you not be unwilling to allow*.

158 **At tū, quae rāmīs arbor**: having addressed first Pyramus, then (by apostrophe) their parents, Thisbe now suddenly turns to the tree itself, which had become their rendezvous for death, and speaks to it as though it were a sentient being; the direct address and the feminine modifiers (**quae** 158, **tēctūra** 159) create an impression of the tree as a woman. In prose (and in English translation) **arbor** would ordinarily precede **quae**, but here the antecedent is attracted into the relative clause.

miserābile corpus: object both of **tegis** and (with the pl. **corpora** understood) of **es tēctūra** (159).

159 **es tēctūra**: fut. act. periphrastic, essentially = **tegēs**.

signa tenē . . . habē fētūs (161): chiasmus.

pullus, -a, -um: dark, dreary-colored (used especially of the clothing worn by mourners).

lūctus, -ūs, m., (the expression of) grief, mourning, lamentation.

*aptus, -a, -um, tied, bound; + dat., suitable (for).

fētūs: the object is held suspensefully to the end and has an array of connotations; the tree's fruits are "her" offspring (see on fētūs 125 and infēlix 149) and, with pullōs . . . et lūctibus aptōs (160), they are also her dark cloak of mourning.

*geminus, -a, -um, twin-born, twin; twofold, double.

monimentum, -ī, n., monument; token, reminder.

aptātō . . . īmum: interlocked order.

mūcrō, mūcrōnis, m., the sharp end of a sword, point.

*īmus, -a, -um, lowest, bottommost; the bottom of, base of; n. pl. substantive, the Underworld.

*incumbō, incumbere, incubū + dat., to bend over; to throw oneself (on), fall (on), lie down (on).

incubuit . . . tepēbat: strong verbs frame the line, and the harsh c/d/t alliteration suggests the violence of the act.

*tepeō, -ēre, to be warm; to have the warmth of a human body.

deōs . . . parentēs: in an elaborate chiasmus, line 165 presents the gods' response, and line 166 the parents', to Thisbe's two entreaties, the first in 156-57 directed to the lovers' parents, and the second in 158-61 directed to the tree itself but answerable only through divine agency.

permātūrēscō, permātūrēscere, permātūruī, to become fully ripe.

permātūruit, āter: the -ātūr-/āter soundplay is deliberate and typically Ovidian.

quod: sc. id (i.e., the lovers' cremated remains) as both antecedent of quod and subject of requiēscit.

rogus, -ī, m., funeral pyre (here sc. ex).

rogis . . . urnā: alliteration of r and the assonance of ūnā/urnā lend a composed sound effect to the tale's closing verse.

supersum, superesse, superfuī, irreg., to be above; to remain, be left over.

superest: the word's final syllable, coming before the principal caesura and under the ictus, produces a deliberate internal rhyme with the identically positioned est in the preceding verse.

*requiēscō, requiēscere, requiēvī, requiētūrus, to rest, lie at rest.

*urna, -ae, f., a pitcher, urn (here, a cinerary urn).

160 signa tenē caedis pullōsque et lūctibus aptōs
semper habē fētūs, geminī monimenta cruōris.'

"Dīxit et, aptātō pectus mūcrōne sub īmum,
incubuit ferrō, quod adhūc ā caede tepēbat.

Vōta tamen tetigēre deōs, tetigēre parentēs:

165 nam color in pōmō est, ubi permātūruit, āter,
quodque rogīs superest, ūnā requiēscit in urnā."

Discussion Questions

1. Comment on the structure, metrics, and other special effects in 164.
2. In what ways do the story's closing lines (165-66) aptly conclude the darkness/death imagery which Ovid has developed throughout the narrative?
3. What similarities do you see between the ending of this tale and that of Daphne and Apollo? And what are some of the most significant differences?
4. In what respects is this story more believable than the Daphne tale? How does it reveal Ovid's interest in "private versus public"?



"Pyramus and Thisbe"
Lucas Cranach the Elder, 1520-25
Staatsgalerie, Bamberg, Germany

Two, by themselves, each other, love and feare
Slaine, cruell friends, by parting have joynd here.

John Donne