1.38

Persicos odi, puer, apparatus,
displicent nexae philyra coronae;
mitte sectari rosa quo locorum
sera moretur.

simplici myrto nihil adlabores
sedulus curo: neque te ministrum
dedecet myrtus neque me sub arta
vite bibentem.

[Loeb, ed. C.E. Bennett, 1914]

ODE XXXVIII  Away with Oriental Luxury!

PERSIAN elegance, my lad, I hate, and take no pleasure in garlands woven on linden bast. A truce to searching out the haunts where lingers late the rose! Strive not to add aught else to the plain myrtle! The myrtle befits both thee, the servant, and me, the master, as I drink beneath the thick-leaved vine.

[Edward Marsh, 1941]

XXXVIII

Away with Persian pomps and fineries,
And wreaths on linden withies nicely wound;
Search not the fading garden
For one forgotten rose.

Plain myrtle, boy, a spray for each, will deck
Beseeming both you who fill the cup
And me who drain it, lying
Under the woven vine.

[Joseph P. Clancy, 1960]
1.38

I'm bothered, boy, by Persian elegance,
expensive garlands are not to my taste;
stop searching through hidden spots where late roses linger.

I want no fuss, nothing added to plain
myrtle garlands: myrtle suits us both,
you as you serve, me as I drink, beneath
the close-leaved vine.

[David Mulroy, 1994]

38. Horace wants only a simple garland.

Persian pomposity irks me, boy;
linden wreaths are not my style.
Abandon your search of the countryside
for a lingering rose.

Spare yourself the task of improving
the simple myrtle, no disgrace
to your service or me imbibing within
my private bower.

[Ezra Pound, 1931]

Highbrow's Translation from Horace

The Persian buggahs, Joe,
Strike me as = a = rotten show,
Stinking of nard and = musk
Over the whole of their rind and husk;
Wearing their soft = shell clothes
Whichever way the wind blows,
The Persian buggahs, Joe,
Strike me as = a = rotten show.

[Richard Sieburth's note: The translation first appeared in Readies for Bob Brown's Machine (1931). Brown's "machine" was a wooden box loaded with a strip of paper that was viewed through a special binocular lens. Hilaire Hiler's "Preface" to the collection explains: "The text in this book, contributed by experimental modern writers, has been expressly written to be read on the reading machine. The use of hyphens, arrows, and other connectives and punctuation is solely to suggest that the reading matter is to pass in a pleasant reading size at a pleasing speed before the reader's eye on a tape unrolled by a motor." ]
Odes I, 38

Boy, I hate their empty shows,
   Persian garlands I detest,
Bring me not the late-blown rose
   Lingering after all the rest:
Plainer myrtle pleases me
   Thus outstretched beneath my vine:
Myrtle more becoming thee,
   Waiting with thy master's wine.

[William Cowper, wr. before 1799; pr. post. 1815]

Ad Ministrum

Dear Lucy, you know what my wish is,—
   I hate all your Frenchified fuss:
Your silly entrées and made dishes
   Were never intended for us.
No footman in lace and in ruffles
   Need dangle behind my arm-chair;
And never mind seeking for truffles,
   Although they be ever so rare.

But a plain leg of mutton, my Lucy,
   I pr'ythee get ready at three:
Have it smoking, and tender, and juicy,
   And what better meat can there be?
And when it has feasted the master,
   'Twill amply suffice for the maid;
Meanwhile I will smoke my canaster,
   And tipple my ale in the shade.

[M.A. Titchmarsh (= W.M. Thackeray), 1841]

Persicos Odi: Pocket Version

Davus, I detest
Persian decoration;
Roses and the rest,
Davus, I detest.

Simple myrtle best
Suits our modest station;—
Davus, I detest
Persian decoration.

[Austin Dobson (1840-1921)]
I, 38

I condemn all luxury Oriental:
bring me no fat leis of frangipani,
boy, and don't search every forgotten nook where
lingers a late rose.
Nothing but one plain little crown of myrtle
need you weave me. Myrtle is no disgrace to
you as page-boy, nor to your master, drinking,
shaded by vine-leaves.

[Gilbert Highet, 1949]

XXXVIII

Boy, I detest the Persian style
Of elaboration. Garlands bore me
Laced up with lime bark. Don't run a mile
To find the last rose of the summer for me,

None of your fussy attempts to refine
On simple myrtle. Myrtle suits both
You pouring, me drinking, wine
Under the trellised vine's thick growth.

[James Michie, 1963]

1.38

Persian frills I hate, boy; those showy chaplets
Twined with linden strip-bark I find distasteful;
Hunt no more for nooks where the roses linger
Last in the season.

Do not try improving on simple myrtle,
Over-conscientious! For you, the server,
Myrtle answers well!—and for me, in checkered
Arbor shade drinking.

[Charles E. Passage, 1983]
XXXVIII

I hate Persian luxuries, my boy.
Garlands woven with lime tree bark give me no pleasure.
There's no need for you to see out
the last rose where it lingers.

I'm anxious you shouldn't labour
over the simple myrtle. Myrtle suits you
as my cupbearer, and me as I drink
in the dense shade of the vine.

1.38 / To His Slave

I dislike elaborate show, as, for example,
"Persian" garlands too intricately woven,
So don't go looking everywhere for somewhere
Where the last rose blooming anywhere might be.

Don't bother to look for anything less simple
Than simple myrtle, suitable to the scene:
The garlanded cupbearer waiting, and garlanded I,
Here in the shade of the arbor, drinking my wine.

Ode XXXVIII
TO HIS CUPBEARER

Boy, I detest Persian fuss and preparations.
Garlands entwined of linden
are not to my taste. Quit searching for the spot
where lingers late

the rose beyond its season. Simple myrtle
is sufficient. I care not that you anxiously
add more. Myrtle does not disgrace you, my boy,
nor me, your master,

drinking beneath the dense vine.
1.38

I hate all Persian filigree, my boy,
And garlands woven out of lime tree bark.
On no account are you to hunt up, for my sake,
The late-blooming rose.

Plain myrtle will do nicely for a crown.
It's not unbecoming on you as you pour,
Or on me as I sip a glass of cool wine
In the arbor's shade.

[Robert Hass, 2002]