



Ovid
Metamorphoses





Achilles Paris Callisto Phoebus
Iphis Saturn Midas Adonis
Sibyl Hermaphroditus Icarus To
Amor Mars Tanthe Andromeda
Hercules Ulysses Orpheus Romulus
Pyramus Thetis Philomela Apollo
Perseus Niobe Tisiphone Medea
Iris Medusa Venus Juno Arachne
Argus Bacchus Caeneus Echo Scylla
Hesperia Calliope Vesta Pythagoras
Thisbe Cornix Cassandra Mercury
Cygnus Daedalus Minerva Daphne
Diana Morpheus Jupiter Hyacinthus
Diomedes Neptune Europa Phaethon
Corydice Pygmalion Galatea Lycaon
Ganymede Hecuba Pluto Theseus
Narcissus Pan Urania Vulcan Priam





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The full verse in both Latin and English
Translated by David Raeburn.





In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas 1
corpora; di, coeptis (nam vos mutastis et illas)
adspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi
ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen!

Ante mare et terras et quod tegit omnia caelum 5
unus erat toto naturae vultus in orbe,
quem dixere chaos: rudis indigestaque moles
nec quicquam nisi pondus iners congestaque eodem
non bene iunctarum discordia semina rerum.
nullus adhuc mundo praebebat lumina Titan, 10
nec nova crescendo reparabat cornua Phoebe,
nec circumfuso pendebat in aere tellus
ponderibus librata suis, nec brachia longo
margine terrarum porreixerat Amphitrite;
utque erat et tellus illic et pontus et aer, 15
sic erat instabilis tellus, innabilis unda,
lucis egens aer; nulli sua forma manebat,
obstabatque aliis aliud, quia corpore in uno
frigida pugnabant calidis, umentia siccis,
mollia cum duris, sine pondere, habentia pondus. 20
Hanc deus et melior litem natura diremit.
nam caelo terras et terris abscidit undas
et liquidum spisso secrevit ab aere caelum.
quae postquam evoluit caecoque exemit acervo,
dissociata locis concordia pace ligavit: 25
igneae convexi vis et sine pondere caeli
emicuit summaque locum sibi fecit in arce;
proximus est aer illi levitate locoque;
densior his tellus elementaque grandia traxit
et pressa est gravitate sua; circumfluitumor 30
ultima possedit solidumque coercuit orbem.

Sic ubi dispositam quisquis fuit ille deorum
congeriem secuit sectamque in membra coegit,
principio terram, ne non aequalis ab omni
parte foret, magni speciem glomeravit in orbis. 35





METAMORPHOSES

3

Changes of shape, new forms, are the theme which my spirit impels me, 1
 now to recite. Inspire me, O gods (it is you who have even transformed my art),
 and spin me a thread from the world's beginning
 down to my own lifetime, in one continuous poem.

Before the earth and the sea and the all-encompassing heaven 5
 came into being, the whole of nature displayed but a single
 face, which men have called Chaos: a crude, unstructured mass,
 nothing but weight without motion, a general conglomeration
 of matter composed of disparate, incompatible elements.

No Titan the sun god was present to cast his rays on the universe, 10
 nor Phoebe the moon to replenish her horns and grown to her fullness;
 no earth suspended in equilibrium, wrapped in its folding
 mantle of air; nor Amphitrite, the goddess of ocean,
 to stretch her sinuous arms all round the earth's long coastline.

Although the land and the sea and the sky were involved in the great mass, 15
 no one could stand on the land or swim in the waves of the sea,
 and the sky had no light. None of the elements kept its shape,
 and all were in conflict inside one body: the cold with the hot,
 the wet with the dry, the soft with the hard, and weight with the weightless. 20

The god who is nature was kinder and brought this dispute to a settlement.
 He severed the earth from the sky and he parted the sea from the land;
 he separated translucent space from the cloudier atmosphere.

He disentangled the elements, so as to set them free
 from the heap of darkness, then gave them their separate places and tied them 25
 down in a peaceful concordat: fire flashed out as a weightless
 force in the vaulted heaven and found its rightful place
 at the height of the firmament; air came next in position and lightness;
 earth was denser than these, attracted the larger particles
 and sank through the downward thrust of its weight; in the nether region 30
 came water, confining the solid disk in its liquid embrace.

When the god, whichever one of the gods, had divided the substance
 of Chaos and ordered it thus in its different constituent members,
 first, in order that earth should hang suspended in perfect
 symmetrical balance, he moulded it into the shape of a great sphere. 35







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