If long ago a man with his unrighteous hand
    Had choked his parent’s withered throat,
He would have eaten garlic; hemlock’s not as bad.
    How tough the guts of farming folk!
What sort of poison burns inside my abdomen?
    Did boiled viper’s blood within
These herbs trick me? Or was my wicked food prepared
    By sorcerous Canidia?
As when Medea wondered at the best among
    The Argonauts, their general,
And thus anointed Jason, who would bind the bulls
    With yoke untouched by bulls, with this;
With this she smeared the bridal gifts, and, on the girl
    Avenged, by wingéd snake she fled.
The star’s hot vapor’s never been so troublesome
    To parched and dry Apulia,
Nor did the gift of efficacious Hercules
    his shoulders burn with greater heat.
If you will ever long for food like this again,
    Maecenas fond of jokes, I pray,
Your girl shall put a hand against your kiss and lie
    Quite far away from you in bed.