

### Epode 3

by Horace

Trans. Michael Chernicoff

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.