Martial, Part 2: Issa (I.109)

In a poem written more than one hundred years after Catullus wrote his eulogy for Lesbia’s pet sparrow, Martial dries the tears of those who mourn a deceased pet in any century. Issa, the lap-dog of his friend Publius, however, is still very much alive. Although often sharply satirical, Martial’s description of this pampered pooch and the adoration of her owner, appears affectionate and sincere. Or is it?

Text and Translation

Issa est passere nequior Catulli,
Issa is naughtier than the sparrow of Catullus,

Issa est purior osculo columbae,
Issa is purer than the kiss of a dove,

Issa est blandior omnibus puellis,
Issa is more seductive than all the girls,

Issa est carior Indicis lapillis,
Issa is more precious than Indian diamonds,

Issa est deliciae catella Publi,
Issa is the darling of Publius, his tiny puppy.

Hanc tu, si queritur, loqui putabis.
If she whines, you will think (that) this girl is speaking.

Sentit tristitiamque gaudiumque. . .
She feels sadness and joy.

et desiderio coacta ventris
and (when) compelled by the impulse of her bladder

gutta pallia non fefellit ulla,
not a single drop has befouled the covers,
sed blando pede suscitat toroque
but with her sweet paw she nudges (you) and from the couch

deponi monet et rogat levari.
forewarns (you) that she needs to be put down and asks to be lifted up.

Castae tantus inest pudor catellae,
There is a very great sense of modesty in this virtuous little puppy,

ignorat Venerem; nec invenimus
she does not know Love; nor do we find

dignum tam tener ~ virum puell ~
a mate worthy of a girl so delicate.

Hanc ne lux rapiat suprema totam,
In order that (her) last day not snatch her altogether,

pict ~ Publius exprimit tabell ~
Publius portrays (her) in a painted picture,

in qu ~ tam similem videbis Issam,
in which you will see an Issa so similar

ut sit tam similis sibi nec ipsa.
that she herself is not so similar to herself.

Issam denique pone cum tabell ~
In short, place Issa alongside (her) picture:

aut utramque putabis esse veram,
either you will think that one is real,

aut utramque putabis esse pictam.
Or you will think that the other is painted.
Worksheet - Martial, Part 2: Issa

a. The questions below pertain to the forms underlined in the passage

b. When you’re asked to change a word from one form to another, change only that form of the word. For instance, if you’re asked to change habet to the passive voice, make habet passive but leave it in the 3rd person singular, present indicative

1. What case is **passere** and why? ________________________________________________
2. What case is **purior** and why? _________________________________________________
3. Make **blandior** neuter plural. __________________________________________________
4. Change **carior** to the superlative degree. __________________________________________
5. What case is **hanc** and why? __________________________________________________
6. Make **putabis** passive. _______________________________________________________
7. Make **sentit** subjunctive. ______________________________________________________
8. What case is **desiderio** and why? ______________________________________________
9. Change **coacta** to a present passive infinitive. _____________________________________
10. Make **ventris** plural. _________________________________________________________
11. Change **fefellit** to present passive subjunctive. ________________________________
12. Make **suscitat** subjunctive plural. ______________________________________________
13. What mood is **deponi** and why? _______________________________________________
14. Change **levari** to a present active participle (abl. pl.). _____________________________
15. Change **ignorat** to a perfect passive infinitive (acc. pl. neut.). ______________________
16. Make **invenimus** a future active infinitive (acc. sing. masc.). ______________________
17. What mood is **rapiat** and why? ____________________________________________________________

18. What case is **qu~** and why? ________________________________________________________________

19. Make **similem** superlative. _________________________________________________________________

20. What mood is **sit** and why? _________________________________________________________________

21. Make **ipsa** genitive. __________________________________________________________________________

22. Make **pone** plural. __________________________________________________________________________

23. Change **putabis** to a perfect active infinitive. __________________________________________________

24. What case is **veram** and why? _________________________________________________________________

25. Change **esse** to imperfect subjunctive (third plural). ______________________________________________
Notes and Vocabulary - Martial, Part 2: Issa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Note/ Vocabulary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>Issa, -ae</strong>, f.: island in the Adriatic Sea; here, the name of the pet bird&lt;br&gt;<strong>passere:</strong> passer, -eris, m.: sparrow&lt;br&gt;<strong>nequior:</strong> nequam (comparative of indeclinable adjective): naughty&lt;br&gt;<strong>Catulli:</strong> Catullus, -i, m.: Roman poet; see Worksheet for Chapter 25</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td><strong>purior:</strong> purus, -a,-um: pure&lt;br&gt;<strong>osculo:</strong> osculum, -i, n.: kiss (diminutive of os, “mouth”)&lt;br&gt;<strong>columbae:</strong> columba, -ae, f.: dove</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td><strong>blandior:</strong> blandus, -a, -um: flattering; here, seductive</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td><strong>carior:</strong> carus, -a, -um: dear; here, precious&lt;br&gt;<strong>Indicis:</strong> Indicus, -a, -um: Indian&lt;br&gt;<strong>lapillis:</strong> lapillus, -i, m.: little gem (diminutive of lapis, “stone”); here, diamond</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td><strong>deliciae:</strong> deliciae, -arum, f. (Latin plural for English singular): darling&lt;br&gt;<strong>catella:</strong> catella, -ae, f.: little dog (feminine diminutive of catulus, “young animal”)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Publi:</strong> Publius, -i, m.: Roman name</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td><strong>queritur:</strong> queror, queri, questus sum (deponent verb): whine&lt;br&gt;<strong>loqui:</strong> loquor, loqui, locutus sum (deponent verb): speak</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td><strong>tristitiam:</strong> tristitia, -ae, f.: sadness&lt;br&gt;<strong>gaudium:</strong> gaudium, -i, n.: joy</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td><strong>desiderio:</strong> desiderium, -i, n.: impulse&lt;br&gt;<strong>coacta:</strong> cogo, -ere, coagi, coactum: compel&lt;br&gt;<strong>ventris:</strong> venter, ventris, n.: stomach; here, bladder</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td><strong>gutta:</strong> gutta, -ae, f.: drop&lt;br&gt;<strong>pallia:</strong> pallium, -i, n.: coverlet&lt;br&gt;<strong>fefellit:</strong> fallo, -ere, fefelli, falsum: deceive; here, befoul&lt;br&gt;<strong>ulla:</strong> ullus, -a, -um: any; here, a single</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td><strong>blando:</strong> see above, note #3; here, sweet&lt;br&gt;<strong>pede:</strong> pes, pedis, m.: foot; here, paw&lt;br&gt;<strong>suscitat:</strong> suscito (1): arouse from sleep; here, nudge&lt;br&gt;<strong>toro:</strong> torus, -i, m.: couch</td>
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13. **deponi**: *depo-no, -ere, -posui, -positum*: put down  
**levari**: *levo* (1): lift up

14. **castae**: *castus, -a, -um*: morally pure; here, virtuous  
**inest**: *insum, inesse, infui* (+ dative): be in  
**pudor**: *pudor, -oris, m.*: sense of modesty  
**catellae**: see above, note #5; dative with *inest*

15. **ignorat**: *ignoro* (1): not to know  
**Venerem**: *Venus, -eris, f.*: goddess of love; here, (sexual) love  
**nec**: (negative particle) not; here, nor

16. **dignum**: *dignus, -a, -um*: worthy  
**tam**: (adverb) so  
**tener~**: *tener,-era, -erum*: delicate

17. **lux ... suprema**: literally, “last light”; euphemism for death  
**totam**: here, altogether

18. **pict~**: *pingo, -ere, pinxii, pictum*: paint  
**exprimit**: *exprimo, -ere, -pressi, -pressum*: portray  
**tabell~**: *tabella, -ae, f.*: small painting (diminutive of *tabula*, “tablet”)

21. **denique**: (adverb) in short  
**pone**: *pono, -ere, posui, positum*: place

22-23. **aut ... aut**: (conjunction) either ... or  
**utramque**: *uterque, utraque, utrumque*: one, the other