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, 5
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 10
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 nudes (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 tenerā virum puellā.
a mate worthy of a girl so delicate.

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

pictā Publius exprimit tabellā,
Publius portrays (her) in a painted picture,

in quā 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 tabellā:
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. Make nequior superlative. ____________________________________________________

2. Make purior positive. _______________________________________________________

3. What case is puellis and why? ______________________________________________

4. What case is carior and why? ______________________________________________

5. Make est imperfect subjunctive first person plural. ______________________________

6. What mood is loqui and why? ______________________________________________

7. Change Sentit to pluperfect subjunctive second person. _________________________

8. Change coacta to present active. _____________________________________________

9. Make pallia genitive. _________________________________________________________

10. Change fefellit to a future active participle modifying gutta. ___________________

11. What case is pede and why? _______________________________________________

12. Change monet to imperfect subjunctive. _______________________________________

13. What mood is levari and why? ______________________________________________

14. Change tantus…pudor to ablative plural. ______________________________________

15. Change invenimus to a future passive participle (acc. pl. neut.) ___________________

16. What mood is rapiat and why? ______________________________________________
17. Make quā modify Publius. ________________________________

18. Change videbis to a present passive infinitive. ________________________________

19. What mood is sit and why? ________________________________

20. Make ipsa dative. ________________________________

21. What mood is pone and why? ________________________________

22. What case is tabellā and why? ________________________________

23. What case is utramque and why? ________________________________

24. Change putabis to future perfect passive (nom. sing. fem.) ________________________________

25. What case is pictam and why? ________________________________
## Notes and Vocabulary - Martial, Part 2: Issa

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Note/ Vocabulary</th>
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<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>Indicus:</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>10.</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>11.</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>12.</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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<td>13.</td>
<td><strong>deponi:</strong> depono, -ere, -posui, -positum: put down</td>
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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, pinxi, 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