

#wearedaphne

by Abigail Ardelle Zammit

Erasures of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

(prose translations by Mary M. Innes, Penguin Random House, UK: 1955)

‘Where there is despair, let me profit from it;
where there is darkness, let me give it a banking licence.’

Running Commentary, Daphne Caruana Galizia's Notebook, May 12th 2017, 3:45am.

‘All that these transformations have in common is that they begin in the imagination, in hope.’
Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark*.

**Running Commentary, Daphne Caruana Galizia's Notebook
from *Metamorphoses*, Book III, Echo and Narcissus**

that talkative nymph who cannot stay silent

she

always answers back.

still a body then, not just a voice: she was always
chattering, her power of speech

to repeat

the many phrases

she heard.

knowing well what she did,

endless

the powers of that tongue

she

followed secretly
the fire which scorched her:
kindled when a flame is brought

The more closely she followed, the nearer
sulphur, smeared round the tops of torches, is quickly

'Here!

'Come!'

words echoed back

anxious

thoughts kept her awake,

till

finally her voice alone remained;

her bones, they say, were turned to stone.

heard by all: her

voice still lives.

‘17 Black – Dubai’, *Running Commentary*, February 22nd 2017, 6:43 pm.
from *Metamorphoses*, Book IV, Salmacis and Hermaphroditus

thinking himself unobserved alone

he

could scarcely bear to wait

she held him

in spite of all his efforts to slip from her grasp, she twined around him, like a
serpent as it hangs from the
eagle’s beak

like the ivy encircling tall tree trunks,

but you will not escape.

“You may fight, you rogue,

what had been threads became vine tendrils

the day was ended, the hour was approaching neither daylight
nor darkness, the night almost come.

16th October 2017, 2:45 pm

from *Metamorphoses*, Book 1, The Transformation of Daphne

some crime

a field set alight a fire
too close smouldering at day-break all on
fire

eyes

lips

fingers, her hands and arms

But Daphne ran off, swifter than the wind's breath, and did not stop to hear

enemy

foes

pursue

in these regions

you do not know

indeed, you do not,

the past, the present,

the future

revealed;

All hers

words unfinished;

blowing them out behind her

fasten on his quarry, hopes

he has her,

the dog, seeming just about to graze her hind quarters

but the hare snatches herself out of his jaws

follow close

some transformation,

still beating under the new bark.

her heart

long processions,

voices raise the song

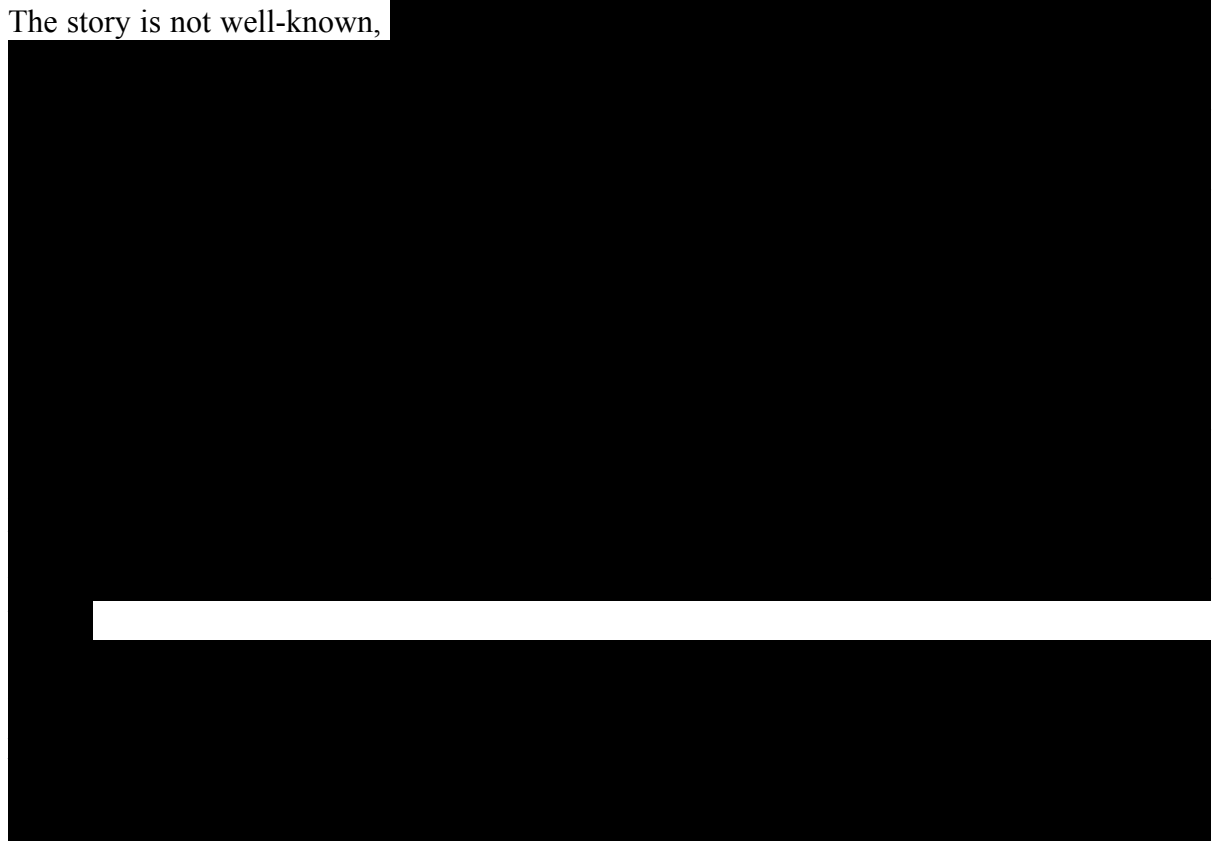
Augustus' gateposts

the wreath of oak leaves that will hang there at all times



**'When hell broke loose', *Malta Today*, 18th October 2017.
from *Metamorphosis*, Book VI, The Lycian Peasants**

The story is not well-known,



insults threatening they stirred up pure malice heaping

their foul tongues still kept up their bickering, Their voices became harsher, their ill-natured croakings stretched their gaping mouths wider.

‘There are crooks everywhere you look’, *Running Commentary*, 16th October 2017, 14:35
from *Metamorphoses*, Book VI, Procne, Tereus and Philomela

excited by his own passionate nature, for the people of his country are an emotional race he burned His impulse was to bribe to undermine to tempt

He was impatient of delay enforced his arguments

The very acts which furthered his scheme made people believe he was devoted he was praised for his criminal behaviour.

the sun had but little way to go

Once

on board the

ship,

the sea was churned up

prisoner,

there is no escape.

[redacted] scoundrel! Are you quite unmoved [redacted]
[redacted] ? Do you care
nothing

one day no matter when, you will pay the penalty
proclaim your deeds

[redacted] to the dark
earth.

Even after this atrocity,
[redacted] the body
mutilated [redacted]
he had the audacity to go back
told [redacted] a tale of his own invention

[redacted] a full year had
passed.

[redacted]
‘Malta Criminal Investigation Closes In on ‘Mafia State’, *The New York Times*, 19th
December, 2019 [redacted]
from *Metamorphoses*, Book VIII, Scylla and Minos

[redacted]

But surely every man is his own god:

Where are you going?

Where are you off to, hard-hearted

My own country
betrayed

‘U l-kotra qamet f’daqqa’, November 2019.
from *Metamorphoses*, Book III, Pentheus Scorns the Prophet

wild shrieks
The whole populace streamed out men and women, old and young
objected:
cymbals clashing,
trumpets,
wailing women and tinkling tambourines,
show spirit
bring down
walls
we should be free
no need for concealment
drag that leader here in
chains. Waste no time
a mountain stream
foamed and boiled, made fiercer by obstacles.
Speak then

Melita, November 2019

from *Metamorphoses*, Book I, The Crimes of Men and Giants

criminal greed

The land

dug out

wealth

bloodstained hands.

[REDACTED]

cancer incurable, the healthy part
infected.

**‘No stone unturned’, Public Inquiry Ongoing, December 2020
from *Metamorphoses*, Book VIII, The Cretan Labyrinth**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

paths winding
this way and that,

devious

[REDACTED]

countless wandering paths

but the sky, surely, is open

**'Nobody deserves to die', *Malta Today*, 18th October 2017.
from *Metamorphoses*, Book XI, Ceyx and Alcyone**

she was not there.

The mast

shattered

torn

by

the force of the blow

broken fragments

a piece of wreckage

in death

still he murmured her name.

Sleep, where the sun's rays can never reach,

No crested cock summons the dawn no anxious
dogs break the silence, no sound of branches swaying in the wind, or harsh quarrelling of human
tongues. Voiceless quiet

over the dark earth.

Invicta

from *Metamorphosis*, Book XV, The Philosophy of Pythagoras

why are you terrified by
shadows and empty names
?

All things change, but nothing dies

Therefore, in case family feeling prove less strong than
greedy appetite,
do not nourish blood with blood.

Everything in a state of flux

As wave

pursued, pursues the one before,

of morning succeed the darkness of the nights

the shining rays

don't you see the year passing

we shall not be to-morrow.

what we have been,

one shape from another

begin

to be something different

nature sends out new springs,

blocks existing ones

return

as a mighty river |

pour forth water

**'Your pen has been silenced but your voice will live on', *The Malta Independent*,
19th October 2017.**

from *Metamorphoses*, Book IX, Byblis and Caunus

resolve, prevail over doubts

write down,

compose

set a word and then erase it,

blame or praise

tell the same tale

inquire

what may be done and what may not,

know the laws,

follow the example

no regard for reputation or fear of scandal

speaking

fill the tablets

add the last line in the margin.

seal the story