

## Lucretia's elegy

'I wear black for the mourning of my loss;  
My own chastity, a victim of pilfer,  
Stolen as if it were some kind of loot  
To be taken and was meaningless- my reputation's fur  
coating, reduced to a crumble of damaged repute.  
I sacrifice myself, relieving the marred heart this dagger shall cross.'

The swan had sung her final calling;  
Tuneful notes of valediction and an underlying self-reproach,  
though scattered on her spirit, not her facet:  
'My body is ruined- all virtue astray, I am but a debauched brooch  
And Sextus proudly wears it.  
No longer of my own, my piety is poached by the king.

We cannot just wait for the fates to untie the seams  
which bind our country's despotism;  
Only the scathed souls with ticker determined  
can abolish Tarquinius' tyranny permeating our forefather's liberties, driven  
by an inspiration to reform and rescind.  
Stick filled with gold, Brutus offers his oblation and his dreams.

My memory serves to celebrate the removal of your diadems,  
The house of Tarquin, through which your act of larceny  
Forced me to surrender but salvaged the welfare of Rome.  
In Collatia, I am held your trophy-  
Paraded as though an accomplishment to your throne.

The men of your race, stirred in wrath, to you they now condemn.

You damaged my pudic-  
itia, and my ruins which are your spoils  
expedite Rome's salvation  
Where a man is ameliorating through his toil  
And the man to fulfil my blood libations  
Is the man who will forge the new Republic.'

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### Analysis

Throughout the elegy, I made an effort to entrench the notion of derelict chastity and damaged piety, set against the background of Lucretia- portrayed as a paradigm of virtue. To mimic her oppression as Tarquin's victim, I used the rhyme scheme ABCBCA, where the rhyming A's at the beginning and end of each stanza replicate the blockades or walls that mirror the beleaguerment of Lucretia's lack of options and escape during the situation, where she is either accused of having adulterous intercourse with a slave or forced into private coitus with Tarquinius.

In line one of the first stanza, I used the noun choice of 'pilfer' - specifically meaning something of little value stolen. Within this choice, the noun disparages her own worth and innocence- intentionally reinforcing Tarquinius' machismo and nourishing his masculinity, which is reflective of his perception of the situation, as well as strengthening the hierarchy of his position as almighty king and her position as an innocent weak woman. This then contrasts with the depiction of her 'fur coating' which is damaged to exist as now little. The idea that it is her own 'fur coating' taken away from her again suggests the idea that she is a beautiful creature to be hunted and supposedly Tarquinius' perception of honouring her is through ruining her merit (in the same way that skinning a bear for its fur would be, serving as symbol of the poacher's accomplishment). I also used the concept of Lucretia adopting some form of 'fur coating' as a metaphorical term for her thick skin because of the connotations it grapples of both the strength of a bear-like creature and physical softness. This highlights her strength as a Roman archetype possessing those particularly ideal qualities of innocence that reflect the softness of the bear whilst also suggesting her thick skin where she remains 'Roman' even during her own sacrifice. Furthermore, I purposely placed her 'fur coating' with 'damaged repute' to illustrate her prestige that her husband, Collatinus, viewed her in, is damaged due to her diminished reputation caused by the rape. In the final line of the stanza, 'I sacrifice myself, relieving the marred heart this dagger shall cross', I chose the word 'relieving' to describe her emotions of suicide, which although considered a gesture of weakness, it was completed out of gladness and as an action of solace. To Lucretia, ending her own life is more important than living with the knowledge of her involuntary deeds, and I thought that this was important to come across in this specific way- that Lucretia killed

herself in order to console her wounded Roman heart- fortifying her pious values and vilifying Tarquinius.

Progressing into the second stanza, I used the metaphor of a swan's final call to symbolise her death, where her direct speech in the poem acts as her final words. Her emotions include 'an underlying self-reproach'; to an extent, Lucretia feels guilty for the reasons to why she was ravished and blames herself for not having enough control over the absolutism of Sextus, as well as feeling at fault for her coerced licentiousness. This is partially why Lucretia commits suicide as she is too ashamed to ripple movement in Rome herself as her value has decreased, without her innocence and piety, and therefore must rely on Brutus to create change for the beginnings of the Roman Republic. Her guilt is 'scattered on her spirit, not her facet' which draws a focus onto the idea that her guilt was held on her existence and, contrasting her aversion towards her guilt being physically visible- creates an inability for her to continue living with that culpability of ruined maidenhood, and being considered as promiscuous. I also described Lucretia as a 'debauched brooch' to be worn by Sextus, as a worn brooch is symbolic of hidden desires, emphasising Tarquinius' evil nature and possible schemes during his future reign characterized by his wicked tendencies. The fact that Tarquinius 'proudly wears it' also suggests his pleasure from ruining Lucretia, and how the action was dutiful rather than destructive. To reinforce the notion that Tarquinius' actions are negatively projected onto the future of Rome, I also chose the word 'poached' to emphasize how Lucretia's virginity is being hunted by Tarquinius due to his desires to ruin all perfect things in Rome, opposing Roman values- and making his actions somewhat illegal or illicit in nature. The alliteration of 'my piety is poached' accentuates her innocence as well as Sextus' predator-like persona.

In the third stanza, I decided to place a focus onto the need for regime change in Rome and emphatically creating a build up for the great heart and deeds of Brutus. The juxtaposition of 'fates' and 'souls with ticker determined' stresses the fact that the Romans cannot just listen to the gods, who bless and choose the kings of Rome, as the future of the Tarquin rule is portrayed negatively through a Roman lens. There is an obligation of Brave citizens to take control of their country's whereabouts to remould Rome's future which includes equality and strengthened piety without the ruling of a single tyrant; Brutus is a paragon of this model. I also made a comparison between Tarquinius constricting rule penetrating his society, and Rome's 'forefather's liberties' which characterised the governing of his predecessors. I chose this composition of words in this line to accentuate Sextus' destructive complexion and how he is a failed descendant of some of Rome's greatest rulers. To oppose Tarquinius' antagonism, I introduced Brutus through the zeugma 'Brutus offers his oblation and his dreams', advocating the concept that Brutus offers his 'dreams' to the Romans in Collatia where he displays Lucretia as an allegory of Tarquinius' rule, foreshadowing his dreams to decompose monarchy. The 'oblation' here is his physical offering of gold to the Oracle at Delphi, acting as a parable to his internal morality and heart of goodness whilst externally appearing as a prosaic entity.

Throughout the fourth and fifth stanza, I used the metaphor of Lucretia as Tarquinius' 'trophy', where debauching her was a prize and an 'accomplishment to [his] throne'. This contrasts the anger of the Romans ('the men of your race') once being riled up through the means of Brutus bringing out dead Lucretia into the centre of Collatia, where the other citizens further censure the king. The final paragraph is a penultimate reflection of the consequences his deeds had, and how they had 'damaged [her] pudicitia' (ruined her loyalty and sexual modesty, considered vital in Rome). The comparison between 'my ruins' and 'your spoils', highlights the complete difference in conscience, as well as the Roman values of Lucretia versus the barbaric principles of Tarquinius; supposedly what acts as the booty of Sextus, is the vandalism of Lucretia. Furthermore, the fact that the events 'expedited Rome's

salvation' also suggests that the assault was what was required as a kickstart to saving Rome from further tyranny.

Towards the final few lines, I highlight the doings of Brutus and how he is destined to liberate Rome. He is bettering Rome through his work and advocacy of Tarquinius' actions ('ameliorating through his toil'), and carries out the intended purpose of Lucretia's suicide ('fulfil my blood libations'). 'Blood libations' refers to Lucretia spilling her own blood through her sacrifice, and will inspire the one destined person who will create the new Roman Republic, which is evident through the repetition of man.