

Carmina Burana

"O Fortuna (Chorus)"

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1. Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi (Fortune, Empress of the World)

O Fortuna (Chorus) O Fortune

O Fortuna O Fortune,
velut luna like the moon
statu variabilis, you are changeable,
semper crescis ever waxing
aut decrescis; and waning;
vita detestabilis hateful life
nunc obdurat first oppresses
et tunc curat and then soothes
ludo mentis aciem, as fancy takes it;
egestatem, poverty
potestatem and power
dissolvit ut glaciem. it melts them like ice.

Sors immanis Fate - monstrous
et inanis, and empty,
rota tu volubilis, you whirling wheel,
status malus, you are malevolent,
vana salus well-being is vain
semper dissolubilis, and always fades to nothing,
obumbrata shadowed
et velata and veiled
michi quoque niteris; you plague me too;
nunc per ludum now through the game
dorsum nudum I bring my bare back
fero tui sceleris. to your villainy.

Sors salutis Fate is against me
et virtutis in health
michi nunc contraria, and virtue,
est affectus driven on
et defectus and weighted down,
semper in angaria. always enslaved.
Hac in hora So at this hour
sine mora without delay

corde pulsum tangite; pluck the vibrating strings;
quod per sortem since Fate
sternit fortem, strikes down the string man,

mecum omnes plangite! everyone weep with me!

2. Fortune plango vulnera (I bemoan the wounds of Fortune)

Fortune plango vulnera I bemoan the wounds of
Fortune
stillantibus ocellis with weeping eyes,
quod sua michi munera for the gifts she made me
subtrahit rebellis. she perversely takes away.
Verum est, quod legitur, It is written in truth,
fronte capillata, that she has a fine head of hair,
sed plerumque sequitur but, when it comes to seizing
an opportunity
Occasio calvata. she is bald.

In Fortune solio On Fortune's throne
sederam elatus, I used to sit raised up,
prosperitatis vario crowned with
flore coronatus; the many-coloured flowers of
prosperity;
quicquid enim florui though I may have flourished
felix et beatus, happy and blessed,
nunc a summo corruui now I fall from the peak
gloria privatus. deprived of glory.

Fortune rota volvitur: The wheel of Fortune turns;
descendo minoratus; I go down, demeaned;
alter in altum tollitur; another is raised up;
nimis exaltatus far too high up
rex sedet in vertice sits the king at the summit -
caveat ruinam! let him fear ruin!
nam sub axe legimus for under the axis is written
Hecubam reginam. Queen Hecuba.

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