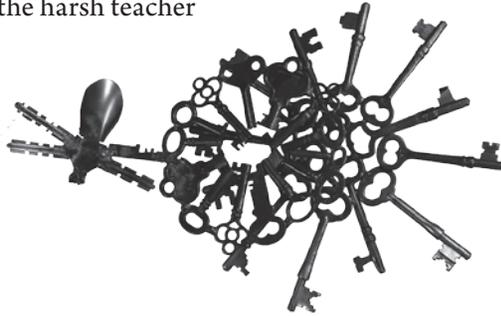


## 9

Blaze of logs in the cave mouth a first focus  
 rose light on gathered faces  
 darkness beyond  
 a voice tells a leisurely story  
 in rhyming song  
 attentive ears the necessary spark

*So Horace in his retreat  
 brought a new face to the circle  
 as bees taste every blossom in the meadow  
 out of war and ignorance, e tenebris tantis  
 building his strange experiment  
 with history the harsh teacher*



'as bees taste every blossom in the meadow'

In publishing this Essay of my Poeme  
 there is this great disadvantage against me  
 that it commeth out at this time  
 when Verses are wholly deduc't to Chambers  
 and nothing esteem'd in this lunatique Age  
 but what is kept in Cabinets  
 and must only passe by Transcription

On literary friendships. Horace recommends Septimius as an addition to the circle round Maecenas. None of his poetry survives. This Septimius could be a descendant of the friend immortalized by Catullus in poem 45. Horace was familiar with the two most active literary circles in imperial Rome. Under Maecenas he associated with Vergil, Gallus, Varius, and Propertius.

Messalla, who was patron to Tibullus, Sulpicia, and the young Ovid, had been Horace's friend as a student in Athens, and like Horace (and Septimius) fought on the losing side with Brutus at Philippi. Tibullus, addressed in the fourth epistle, was clearly a close friend. The circles were surely not exclusive.

'E tenebris tantis' are the opening words of Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* 3, praising the Epicurean light banishing the darkness of ignorance. The bees appear a few lines later in the same book, in praise of diligent clear observation.

Michael Drayton, a Warwickshire friend of Shakespeare and a patient of Shakespeare's son-in-law John Hall, wrote sonnets and odes in his youth as a member of Lucy, Countess of Bedford's circle that included Jonson, Daniel, Chapman, and Donne, and also Cicely Bulstrode, John Dowland and John Florio. By 1612 Drayton was out of favour with the Countess, and had turned to a new genre, the chorographical epic *Polyolbion*, that (as he complains here in the preface) failed to find an audience. In 1616, if the later story has validity, Drayton and Jonson 'had a merry meeting, and itt seems drank too hard, for Shakespear died of a feavour there contracted'. However merry the meeting, here at least Drayton was with powerful minds as historically inclined as himself.