PART I

Unveiling the
Body of Elegiac Narrative

Two Narratological Approaches to
Ovid’s Amores 1.5
Aestus erat, mediamque dies exegerat horam; 
adposui medio membra levanda toro. 
pars adaperta fuit, pars altera clausa fenestrae; 
quia fere silvae lumen habere solent, 
qualia sublucent fugiente crepuscula Phoebο, 
aut ubi nox abiit, nec tamen orta dies. 
illa verecundis lux est praebenda puellis, 
quia timidus latebras speret habere pudor. 
ecce, Corinna venit, tunica velata recincta, 
candida dividua colla tegente coma— 
qualiter in thalamos famosa Semiramis isse 
dicitur, et multis Lais amata viris. 
Deripui tunicam—nec multum rara nocebat; 
pugnabat tunica sed tamen illa tegi. 
quae cum ita pugnaret, tamquam quae vincere nollet, 
victa est non aegre prodizione sua. 
ut stetit ante oculos posito velamine nostros, 
in toto nusquam corpore menda fuit. 
quos umeros, quales vidi tetiγique lacertos! 
forma papillarum quam fuit apta premi! 
quam castigato planus sub pectore venter! 
quantum et quale latus! quam iuvenale femur! 
Singula quid referam? nil non laudabile vidi 
et nudam pressi corpus ad usque meum. 
Cetera quis nescit? lassi requievimus ambo. 
provenient medii sic mihi saepe dies!
It was hot, and the day had passed its middle hour.
   I lay my body in the middle of the bed to rest.
One shutter was open, the other was closed, giving
   The kind of light that woods have;
The kind of twilight that glows when the sun sets,
   Or when the night has passed but the day has not yet begun.
That is the kind of light to offer to shy girls,
   In which their timid modesty can hope to find a hiding place.
Look! Corinna comes, wearing an unbelted tunic,
   Her parted hair touching her pale neck,
Just as they say lovely Semiramis looked going into her bedroom,
   Or Thais loved by so many men.
I tore off her dress. It was thin so wasn’t much ripped.
   Still, she fought to cover herself with it.
But because she fought like someone who doesn’t really want to win,
   She was easily beaten in her own surrender.
As she stood undressed before my eyes,
   I saw there was no mark on her whole body.
Such shoulders, such arms I saw and I felt.
   Her breasts just asking to be touched.
So smooth the belly beneath that perfect bosom.
   So long and lovely her sides. So youthful her thigh.
Why should I list everything? I saw nothing to complain about,
   And I pressed her naked body to mine.
Who doesn’t know the rest? Worn out, we both slept.
   My middays–let them often turn out this way.

(Translation, G. Liveley)