



Footnotes

C. Perricone

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Ah, footnotes. Nothing endearing or sexy about them—unless you're such a geek of letters, language, history, and research that you've developed a fetish for their unique supporting role. But the humble footnote also knows how to strike out dynamically when the moment is right, and that's what makes this project a stupendous romp. The author of *A Summer of Monkey Poems* more than twenty years ago, C. Perricone lives in New Jersey.

Seneca's Letter 114 to Lucilius
Is all about style,
About the questions of words
And about the questions of shirts,
The colors and the jewelry you choose,
A wife, a friend,
The slaves in your care,
How the sun passes through
The eye of the home.
Maecenas was no good,
Even though he was a friend
To Virgil and executive producer
Of the Age of Gold.
Just look at the way he walked,
How he desired to seem,
How he did not want his very own vitia,
I.e. his "blemishes," "imperfections,"
His "vices" to remain unexposed.
In the "Explanatory Notes"
Of the Select Letters,
Walter C. Summers comments
On 4, line 20 that
Seneca is the "chief authority
For the effeminacy of Maecenas' character ..."
Summers furthermore mentions that
Seneca preserved (101.11)
"The ignoble poem in which M.
Prays for long life,
No matter how his body fares."
Look, even if my hand is "debilem,"
"Lame," "weak," "feeble," "frail,"
And my feet, too ...

*Tumors, "tumesc-ing" and so forth and so on,
"Vita dum superest, bene est ..."
"As long as life remains, I'm glad ...
And, that is, even if nailed to the cross."
Seneca says that Maecenas
Might have been a great man,
Had not his speech been
Wandering and licentious ...
Had he sought to be felt not heard ...
Had he not been both
So easily frightened and so easily pleased.*

MATT SUTHERLAND (November/December 2018)

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