

# Pīsō Ille Poētulus



**A Latin Novella  
by Lance Piantaggini**

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## I - Pīsō sum

salvē! nōmen mihi est Pīsō. in urbe, Rōmā, habitō. puer Rōmānus sum. annōs octō(8) nātus sum. puer parvus sum, sed poēta magnus esse volō. māter iam mē audit...

*māter:* “Quōcum loqueris, Pīsō? Quid est dē poētīs? puer bonus Rōmānus dēbet esse mīles<sup>1</sup> nōn poēta! nōnne vīs esse mīles sīcut pater? Quid agunt<sup>2</sup> poētae?”

*Pīsō nōn loquitur. ad mēnsam it.*

Quid agunt poētae? QUID AGUNT POĒTAE?! poētae versūs pulchrōs scrībunt, et carmina pulchra canunt.<sup>3</sup> ecce, versus:

**“arma virumque canō,**  
**Trōiae quī prīmus ab ūrīs”<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> **mīles** soldier

<sup>2</sup> **Quid agunt?** What do they do?

<sup>3</sup> **carmina canunt** recite poems

<sup>4</sup> “I sing of war and a man, who, first from the shores of Troy...”

versus pulcher est, sed nōn est versus meus. versum nōn scripsī. Vergilius versum scripsit. frāter, Rūfus, iam mē audit...

Rūfus: "Quis est Vergilius? estne mīles? habetne arma?<sup>5</sup> estne gladiātor? pugnatne in amphitheātrō?<sup>6</sup>

Pīsō: "Vergilius neque mīles neque gladiātor est! poēta ERAT. poēta magnus erat, Rūfe...Fūfe!"

Rūfus: "nōmen mihi RŪŪŪŪŪFUS est, nōn RŪFUS FŪFUS! versus tuus mihi nōn placet! poētae mihi nōn placent!"

*nōmen frātri "Rūfus" est, sed Pīsō eum "Rūfum Fūfum" vocat. "Fūfus" pulchrum verbum nōn est. ergō, Rūfus nōn laetus est. ā mēnsā it. Pīsō eum iam nōn videt.*

versus Rūfō nōn placet, sed MEUS NŌN EST! est versus Vergiliī dē carmine, Aenēide. ecce, versus prīmus(*1<sup>st</sup>*) meus:

**"nōn nātus sum trēs annōs,  
sed sum octō ego Pīsō"**

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<sup>5</sup> **arma** weapons

<sup>6</sup> **pugnatne in amphitheātrō?** Does he fight in the amphitheater?

placetne tibi versus meus? versus Rūfō nōn placet.  
is<sup>7</sup> annōs trēs(3) nātus est, et vult esse mīles. mātrī  
nōn placet quia māter vult mē esse mīlitem sīcut  
pater. versus neque mātrī neque Rūfō placet! ergō,  
meōs versūs ego sōlus scrībō, sed laetus sum.

*Pīsō rīdet.*

audīvistīne? littera “s” mihi placet (*ergō, meōs  
versūs ego sōlus scrībō, sed laetus sum*). litterae  
mihi placent. syllabae mihi placent. verba mihi  
placent. scribere sōlum mihi placet. Cūr? poēta  
parvus sum. poētulus sum. ego sum Pīsō Ille  
Poētulus!

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<sup>7</sup> **is** he

## II - Vergilius poēta

Vergilius poēta magnus erat. versūs pulchrōs, sed nōn multōs cotīdiē scrībēbat. putō eum scripsisse<sup>8</sup> trēs versūs cotīdiē. tantum trēs! Martiālis quoque poēta erat, sed versūs Vergiliī pulchriōrēs sunt quam versūs Martiālis. ecce, versus meus dē Vergiliō:

**“Vergilius scripsit,  
versūsque cotīdiē erant trēs”**

*Pīsō frātrem, Rūfum, videt.*

*Rūfus:* “Quōcum loqueris, Pīsō? Cūr dē magnō poētā canēbās? Vergilius nōn magnus erat. tantum trēs versūs cotīdiē scrībēbat! gladiātōrēs et mīlitēs agunt magis quam Vergilius! semper pugnant!

*Pīsō cum Rūfō nōn loquitur. ā mēnsā, et ā Rūfō it.*

Vergilius semper canēbat. ergō, semper canō. multa dē vītā meā canō. ecce, versus meus:

**“semper multa canō,  
dē vītā multa canō iam”**

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<sup>8</sup> putō eum scripsisse... I think that he wrote...

placetne tibi? nōn mihi placet. Cūr? quia verba “multa canō” nōn semel(1x), sed bis(2x) scrībuntur.

*Rūfus audīvit Pīsōnem.*

*Rūfus:* “neque versus mihi placet!”

*Pīsō:* “sānē,<sup>9</sup> nōndum sum poēta magnus sīcut Vergilius, Rūfe Fūfe!

*Rūfus nōn laetus est. ad mātrem it quia annōs trēs nātus est. Pīsō eum iam nōn videt.*

cotīdiē multōs versūs scrībō—nōn tantum trēs sīcut Vergilius! versūs iterum iterumque scrībō, et iterum iterumque illōs canō. Vergilius tantum versūs bonōs scrīpsit. ego versūs et bonōs et malōs scrībō. nōndum poēta magnus sum, sed erō.

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<sup>9</sup> **sānē** clearly

### III - pater miles

in familiā meā sunt māter et pater et frāter, Rūfus,  
sed eum "Rūfus Fūfus" vocō. Rūfus semper est domī  
cum mātre. pater semper abest.

pater est mīles in exercitū<sup>10</sup> Rōmānō. exercitus  
Rōmānus magnus est. iam, pater cum exercitū  
abest. exercitus Rōmānus in Britanniam iam pugnat.

pater gladium habet quia mīles est. pater quoque  
scūtum habet. arma sunt. arma nōn mihi placent.  
verba mihi magis placent! Vergilius ipse<sup>11</sup> versūs dē  
Aenēā et armīs scripsit. ergō, versūs dē armīs  
scribere dēbeō. māter iam mē audit...

*māter:* "Quōcum loqueris, Pīsō? es sōlus! vidēsne  
arma patris? Rūfus vult vidēre arma. nōnne tibi  
placent arma beāta<sup>12</sup> patris?"

*Pīsō:* "nōn. nōn mihi placent. versūs mihi magis  
placent, māter!"

*Pīsō ad mēnsam it.*

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<sup>10</sup> **exercitū** army

<sup>11</sup> **Vergilius ipse** Virgil, himself

<sup>12</sup> **arma beāta** magnificent weapons

ecce gladius et scūtum! arma patris sub mēnsā sunt.  
arma beāta nōn amō, sed verba pulchra amō. ergō,  
dē armīs canam:

**“arma patris videō,  
sub mēnsā mīlitis arma”**

**“ecce habet arma pater,  
gladium scūtumque beātum”**

*māter Pīsōnem audit. familia vult Pīsōnem esse  
mīlitem. familia nōn vult eum esse poētam. māter ad  
Pīsōnem it...*

## IV - frātrem nōn amo

*Pīsō dē armīs canit. māter subrīdet. ad Pīsōnem it.*

*māter:* “Pīsō, versūs tuī dē armīs sunt! mīles esse dēbēs! nōnne vīs esse mīles sīcut pater?”

*Pīsō mātrem audit, sed nōn loquitur. Rūfus mātrem audit. ad mātrem it.*

*Rūfus:* “māter, mīles esse volō! mīles esse volō! mīles esssse volōōōō!

*māter:* “Rūfe, puer bonus es! vīs esse mīles—ego et pater laetī sumus!”

*māter subrīdet. māter Pīsōnem videt. iam māter nōn subrīdet. Rūfus est laetus, sed Pīsō laetus nōn est. Pīsō ā familiā et domō it.<sup>13</sup> Pīsō iam ex domō stat.*

sumne puer malus? māter vult mē esse mīlitem sīcut pater. nōn volō esse mīles! familia mē amat, sed Rūfum magis amat.

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<sup>13</sup> **domō** it goes out of the house

*Pīsō versūs trēs scribit et canit:*

**“semper abest pater et,  
Rūfus cum mātre domī est hīc”**

**“māter amātur sānē ā mē,  
pater et quoque amātur”**

**“Rūfum nōn ego amō,  
sed eum pater ipse amat ēheu!”**

Rūfum nōn amō. Rūfus annōs trēs nātus est. cotīdiē mēcum loquitur. eum audiō, sed is Latīnē nōn bene loquitur. ergō, nōn erit poēta quia Latīnē nōn bene loquitur. litterae eī nōn placent. syllabae eī nōn placent. verba eī nōn placent, sed arma eī placent. Rūfus mīles bonus laetus erit.

pater cum Rūfō dē armīs cotīdiē loquitur, sed mēcum dē litterīs et syllabīs et verbīs et versibus nōn loquitur. pater Rūfum magis amat. ēheu! volō patrem loquī mēcum! Quid agam?<sup>14</sup>

*Pīsō patrem in animō volvit.<sup>15</sup> fessus est.*

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<sup>14</sup> **Quid agam?** *What should I do?*

<sup>15</sup> **in animō volvit** *thinks about*

## V - **vir magnus**

*Pīsō virum magnum videt. vidētur esse mīles. vir magnus gladium Pīsōnī dat.*

*mīles:* “ecce, puer, gladius tuus.”

*Pīsō:* “Quid?! gladius meus? gladium nōn habeō!”

*mīles:* “est gladius tuus! exercitus ad Britanniam it. cum exercitū īre dēbēs.”

*Pīsō:* “Cūr ad Britanniam cum exercitū īre dēbeō? tantum octō annōs nātus sum!”

*mīles:* “Cūr?! quia puer bonus Rōmānus es. in exercitū Rōmānō es. mīles es!”

*Pīsō:* “*mīles sum?!* ēheu!”

*subitō, Pīsō surgit. dormiēbat! laetus est quia tantum dormiēbat.*

*Pīsō:* “*mīles nōn sum—sed, dē patre—Quid agam?*”

## VI - columnae trēs

in urbe habitāmus. urbs est Rōma. annōs trēs hīc Rōmae habitāmus, sed dē Hispāniā sumus. Hispānia pulchra erat, sed Rōma pulchrior est. habitāre hīc amō. pater habitāre hīc quoque amat.

*Pīsō patrem et Rōmam in animō volvit. subitō, laetus est!*

Rōmam amō, et pater Rōmam quoque amat! carmen bonum dē Rōmā canam, et pater laetus erit! laetus, pater mēcum loquētur!

*ergō, Pīsō per Rōmam it ad carmen scribendum.<sup>16</sup> Pīsō multa Rōmae videt. subitō, columnās trēs videt. columnae eī placent. ad columnās Pīsō it.*

ecce columnae trēs! sunt multae columnae hīc Rōmae. columna prīma est Dōrica. columnae Dōricae mihi placent. columnae Dōricae inornātae<sup>17</sup> sunt. inornāta mihi placent. inornāta sunt pulchra et beāta. inornāta patrī quoque placent quia mīles est—mīles nōn habent multa.

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<sup>16</sup> **ad carmen scribendum** *in order to write a poem*

<sup>17</sup> **inornātae** *plain, simple*

*vir videt et audit Pīsōnem. ad Pīsōnem it.*

vir: “salvē, puer! Quōcum loqueris? nōnne dēbēs esse domī cum matre?”

*vir vidētur esse mīles. mīles versūs nōn probet.<sup>18</sup> ergō, Pīsō nōn loquitur. vir rīdet et ab Pīsōne it.*

ecce columnna tertia Corinthia! columnae Corinthiae inornātae nōn sunt! nōn tam mihi placent quam Dōricae. columnna secunda, Iōnica, est inornātior quam Corinthia, sed nōn tam inornāta quam Dōrica est. Dōrica mihi magis placet.

*Pīsō dē columnā Dōricā canit:*

**“ecce columna hīc est,  
quae pulchra est Dōrica nōnne?”**

placetne tibi, columnna, versus meus? versus placēbit quia inornāta amat.

*Pīsō rīdet quia cum columnā loquitur. loquī cum columnā nōn bonum est, sānē!*

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<sup>18</sup> **versūs nōn probet** would not approve of lines of poetry

*columna: “versus tuus mihi placet!”*

*Pīsō columnam audīvit. iam nōn rīdet. ā columnā lentē it. Pīsō columnam videt, sed columna neque movet neque loquitur. Pīsō ipse neque movet neque laetus est.*

*Pīsō: “salvē!? Quis es? esne hīc, frāter? Rūfe, cum mātre domī esse dēbēs!”*

*estne hīc Rūfus? Pīsō tantum columnam videt. audīvitne Pīsō columnam? Pīsō putat sē esse īnsānum!<sup>19</sup> ad columnam Pīsō lentē it, et prope columnam stat.*

*Rūfus abest. Pīsō sōlus est. estne locūta columna?<sup>20</sup>*

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<sup>19</sup> **putat sē esse īnsānum!** thinks he is insane!

<sup>20</sup> **estne locūta columna?** Did the column speak?

# Dē Versibus

The trick to reciting Latin poetry is actually to pronounce Latin **exactly as you normally would** (e.g. accent/syllable length) just without stopping after each word. The challenge is being aware of when vowels drop between words. I highly recommend using the accompanying audio, available for purchase separately, to hear Piso's poetry while following along with the recitation notes below. Visit [magisterp.com](http://magisterp.com) under Rhythmic Fluency for additional metrical resources and an explanation of the alternative scansion practice (vs. traditional scansion practice). Briefly, though, anything not underlined or without a macron is short. Long vowels and syllables are pronounced about twice as long as short ones. The following key applies throughout:

ā, ē, ī, ō, ū = long vowels

Underlined = long syllable

**Bold** = accented syllable

' = vowels drop between syllables

I - Pīsō sum

arma virumque canō,  
Trōiae quī prīmus ab ūrīs

nōn nātus sum trēs an nōs,  
sed s'oct'ego Pīsō

## II - Vergilius poēta

Vergilius scrip sit,  
versūs que cotidi'erant trēs

sem per multa canō,  
dē vitā multa canō iam

## III - pater miles

arma patris videō,  
sub mēnsā militis arma

ecc'habet arma pater,  
gladium scūtumque beātum

## IV - frātrem nōn amo

semper abest pater et,  
Rūfus cum mātre dom'est hīc

**māter amātur sānā mē,  
pater et quoqu'amātur**

**Rūfum nōn eg'amō,  
sed eum pater ips'amat ēheu**

## VI - columnae trēs

**ecce colun'hīc est,  
quae pulchra'st Dōrica nōnne?**

# Indiculus Verbōrum

A mini-glossary containing meanings found in the preview, ONLY.  
The novella has example phrases.

## A, B, C

**ā/ab** by, from, away from

**abest (ab + est)** is away

**ad** to (toward), in order to

**Aenēā** Aeneas, Trojan hero and ancestor of the Romans

**Aenēide** The Aeneid, Virgil's epic poem

**agam** I might do

**agunt** they do

**amat** loves

**amātur** is loved

**amō** I love

**amphitheātrō** amphitheater, a round or oval stadium

**animō** in the mind

**annōs** years

**arma** weapons, armor

**armīs** weapons

**audit** hears

**audīstīne?** Did you hear?

**audīvit** heard

**audīvitne?** Did he hear?

**beāta** magnificent (more than one)

**beātum** magnificent

**bene** well

**bis** twice

**bonōs** good (more than one)

**bonum** good

**bonus** good

**Britanniam** Britain

**canam** I will sing (recite poetry)

**canēbās** you were singing (reciting poetry)

**canēbat** was singing (reciting poetry)

**canit** sings (recites poetry)

**canō** I sing (recite poetry)

**canunt** they sing (recite poetry)

**carmen** song (poem)

**carmina** songs (poetry)

**carmine** from the song (poem)

**columna** column

**columnā** column

**columnae** columns

**columnam** column

**columnās** columns

**Corinthia** Corinthian, an architectural style

**Corinthiae** Corinthian (more than one)

**cotidiē** every day

**cum** with, when, whenever

**Cūr?** Why?

## D, E

**dat** gives

**dē** from, about

**dēbeō** I should

**dēbēs** you should

**dēbet** should

**domī** at home

**domō** out of the house, outside of the house

**dormiēbat** was sleeping

**Dōrica** Doric (architectural style)

**Dōricā** Doric

**Dōricae** Doric (more than one)

**ē/ex** of, out of, outside of

**ecce** look!

**ego** I

**ēheu** Oh no!

**ēi** to her/him

**erant** (more than one) were

**erat** was

**erit** will be

**erō** I will be

**ergō** therefore, so

**esne?** are you?

**esse** *to be*

**est** *is*

**estne?** *is?, did?*

**et** *and*

**eum** *him*

**exercitū** *army*

**exercitus** *army*

## F, G, H, I

**familia** *family*

**familiā** *family*

**fessus** *tired*

**frāter** *brother*

**frātrem** *brother*

**frātri** *brother*

**Fūfus** *Piso's name for his brother, Rufus, from fūfae! (= gross!)*

**Fūfe** *Rufus*

**gladiātor** *gladiator*

**gladiātōrēs** *gladiators*

**gladium** *sword*

**gladius** *sword*

**habent** *(more than one) have*

**habeō** *I have*

**habet** *has*

**habetne?** *has?*

**habitāmus** *we live*

**habitāre** *to live*

**habitō** *I live*

**hic** *here*

**iam** *now*

**ille** *that, the*

**illōs** *those*

**in** *in, into, on*

**inornāta** *undecorated, simple (more than one)*

**inornātae** *simple (more than one)*

**inornātior** *simpler*

**insānum** *insane*

**īnsānus** *insane*

**Iōnica** *Ionic (architectural style)*

**ipse** *himself*

**ire** *to go*

**is** *he*

**it** *goes*

**iterum** *again*

## L, M

**laetī** *happy (more than one)*

**laetus** *happy*

**Latīnē** *in Latin*

**lentē** *slowly*

**littera** *letter*

**litterae** *letters*

**litterīs** *letters*

**locūta est** *speak*

**loqueris** *you speak*

**loquētur** *will speak*

**loquī** *to speak*

**loquitur** *speaks*

**loquuntur** *(more than one) speak*

**magis** *more*

**magnō** *big, great*

**magnum** *big*

**magnus** *big, great*

**malōs** *bad (more than one)*

**malus** *bad, pathetic*

**Martiālis** *Martial, a Roman poet*

**māter** *mother*

**mātre** *mother*

**mātrem** *mother*

**mātri** *mother*

**mē** *me*

**mēcum** *(cum + mē) with me*

**meā** *my*

**meus** *my*

**mēnsā** *table*

**mēnsam** *table*

**mihi** *to/for me, my*

**mīlitem** *soldier*

**mīles** *soldier*

**mīlitis** *of a soldier*

**mīlitēs** *soldiers*

**movet** *moves*

**multa** *many*

**multae** *many*

**multōs** *many*

versūs multōs *many lines of poetry*

mīlitēs multōs *many soldiers*

## N, O, P

**nātus** *born*

**neque** *and not, neither/nor*

**nōmen** *name*

**nōn** *not, does not*

**nōnne?** *Don't you?, Shouldn't you?, Isn't?*

**nōndum** *not yet*

**octō** *eight*

**parvus** *young, insignificant*

**pater** *father*

**patrem** *father*

**patrī** *father*

**patris** *father's*

**Pīsō** *Piso, our little poet*

**Pīsōne** *Piso*

**Pīsōnem** *Piso*

**Pīsōnī** *to Piso*

**Pīsōnis** *of Piso*

**placēbit** *will like*

**placent** *like (more than one thing)*

**placet** *like*

**placetne?** *likes?*

**poēta** *poet*

**poētā** poet

**poētae** poets

**poētam** poet

**poētīs** poets

**poētulus** little poet

**prīma** first

**prīmus** first

**probet** would approve

**prope** near

**puer** boy

**pugnant** (more than one) fight

**pugnatne?** fights?

**pulcher** beautiful

**pulchra** beautiful

**pulchrior** more beautiful

**pulchriōrēs** more beautiful (more than one)

**pulchrōs** beautiful (more than one)

**pulchrum** beautiful

**putat** thinks

**putō** I think

## Q, R

**quae** which

**quam** than

**quia** because

**Quid?** What?

**Quis?** Who?

**Quōcum?** With whom?

**quoque** also

**rīdet** laughs

**Rōma** Rome

**Rōmā** Rome

**Rōmae** in Rome

**Rōmam** Rome

**Rōmānō** Roman

**Rōmānus** Roman

**Rūfe** Rufus, Piso's brother

**Rūfō** *Rufus*

**Rūfum** *Rufus*

**Rūfus** *Rufus*

## S

**salvē** *hello*

**sānē** *clearly*

**scrībendum** *in order to write*

**scrībere** *to write*

**scrībit** *writes*

**scrībō** *I write*

**scrībunt** *they write*

**scrībuntur** *are written*

**scrīpsī** *I wrote*

**scrīpsisse** *to have written*

**scrīpsit** *wrote*

**scūtum** *shield*

**scūtumque** *and shield*

**sē** *himself*

**secunda** *second*

**sed** *but*

**semel** *once*

**semper** *always*

**sicut** *just like*

**sōlum** *alone*

**sōlus** *alone*

**stat** *stands*

**sub** *under*

**subitō** *suddenly*

**subridet** *smiles*

**sum** *I am*

**sumne?** *Am I?*

**sumus** *we are*

**sunt** *are, there are*

**surgit** *stands up*

**syllabae** *syllables*

**syllabīs** *syllables*

## T, U, V

**tam** as much

**tantum** only

**tertia** third

**tibi** to/for you, you

**tres** three

**tui** your (more than one)

**tuus** your

**urbe** city

**urbs** city

**verba** words

**verbis** words

**Vergiliī** of Virgil, the great poet who wrote *The Aeneid*

**Vergiliō** Virgil

**Vergilius** Virgil

**versibus** poetry

**versum** line of poetry, poetry

**versus** line of poetry, poetry

**versūs** lines of poetry, poetry

**versūsque** and lines of poetry

**videō** I see

**vidēre** to see

**vidēsne** you see?

**videt** sees

**vir** man

**virī** men

**virumque** and a man

**virum** man

**vis** you want

**vitā** life

**vocat** calls

**vocō** I call

**volō** I want

**volvit** revolves

**vult** wants