



INVOCATION TO VENUS

Love in the person of Eunice, a slave girl of his household, came into the life of Petronius too late. It was already the eve of the burning of Rome. Eunice, perhaps, had some presentiment that their happiness would be short lived, for when she sang to him it was to lament that those who have known infinite love must be separated by death.

After his fall from favor, Petronius knows that the revenge of Nero will soon be upon him. He determines to anticipate that day.

Summoning his closest friends to a farewell feast he publicly frees the slave girl Eunice, wills her all his possessions and opens his veins. Then as he dies he dictates a withering letter to Nero. Eunice, unable to bear the thought of separation, opens her veins. Over the dead lovers the musicians at the feast softly repeat the love song of Eunice, a melody based on the music to an Ode of Pindar discovered in Sicily in the 17th century.





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Words by
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Music adapted by
MIKLOS ROZSA
from "The First Pythic Ode of Pindar"

Lento doloroso

Voice *p* Fear - ful is my soul here as I

Lyre or Harp *p*

lie in the arms of my love. Heart beating on

heart through the night, Why is it that we know-ing in-fi-nite

love must die? Ah, if

mf

love could be the fount of life! Stir not from my side till our

last white dawn shall break. Why is it that

in - fi - nite love has to die? Oh im - mor - tal

rit. - - - - *a tempo*

rit. - - - - *p a tempo*

Ve - nus, queen of love, say why!