

Excerpts from the diary of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, Serpent of Old Nile, Most Awesome Lay in the Known Universe and The Best Thing That Ever Rolled out of a Carpet.

Dear diary, hark, it must be said
My life is in complete turmoil
I've glimpsed a wrinkle on my head
And on my flawless nose – a boil!

Egypt is skint, we have no coin
For lamb and veal to pay the price.
And Cairo's only tenderloin?
Mine alabaster inner thighs.

So we resort to stranger beasts;
Crocodiles' eyes and ostrich spleen
Custom dictates I hold these feasts
The Romans think it's haute cuisine

I've grown sick of my flotilla
(My navy really, three sad boats)
Though Egypt has no ride iller
Save for my chariot of goats

My Tony's quite the bore these days
He often goes on long goat rides
Claims I don't give him enough space
Does he have someone on the side?

I wonder if he's tired of me
What's on his mind? He never says.
If our love's for eternity,
Why, Ra, does Marcus count the days?

His frequent avowals of love
Of late have become rather trite
And did I tell you, diary, how
He called me plump the other night?

My shrink today suggested that
I had a God *Complex*. Bad move.
I had him boiled in a vat
Therapists make great stew. Who knew?

The Nile's flooding again – it's said
And Aunt Flo came to town today.
Priests held the two were related
Dinner is priests with Chardonnay

These spasms are a fuckin pain
I should be painting *Cairo* red
Fertility's a cuntin' strain
Do you think Bast and Isis bled?

It isn't fair that, though divine,
I haemorrhage and poop and pee.
My sheets are now incarnadine
Fuck my life. Oops! Blasphemy!

Caesarion, though barely ten
Has tried to screw my chambermaid
He thinks he's quite the ladies man
The runt! I ought to have him spayed

A page arrived with bad tidings
From Rome. I had his tongue cut out
For dinner. Tongues go well with wings
Of Seagulls. That'll teach him to shout.

Octavian wants to go to war
He's spoiling for a fight with me
Just hearing 'war', my paramour
Goes into throes of ecstasy.

These Roman men are batshit nuts
And in the name of honour will
Stick swords in heads, twist knives in guts.
Civilised? Tosh! They love to kill.

My maid thinks that I drink too much.
The gall of these petit bourgeois!
These libations give courage Dutch
Now pour me some mandragora.

Last night such strange dreams pierced my rest
I woke trembling and screamed and gasped:
Tony was dead and to my breast
I clasped a snake, perchance an asp

My maid called me a drama queen
Methinks she's not got long to live
It's true I sometimes make a scene
But that's a god's prerogative

My life is the absolute pits
Dear diary, and I cry a lot.
Something I ate gave me the shits
And Marcus can't find my G-spot.

Translated from the hieroglyphics by T.P.Kurian