

## horace

### *'Aequam memento rebus in arduis'*

*Second Book of Odes, 3*

A balanced outlook's best on rocky slopes:  
on level ground, likewise, go carefully,  
Gerry, seeing you're doomed in either case —  
whether you sit it out sadly or lie back  
head among clover, wine glass in hand.

Why do poplar and pine interlace  
to shade our faces — or cold currents  
in the rocky burn strive to press on?  
Taste, savour  
fruit, wine, while sense of taste  
and suppleness endure.

You'll have to leave the things you've paid for,  
that 'blue sky penthouse' flat  
to some new tenant. Landlord's son  
or crofter — or born in a field,  
no matter — one fold: to be bumped  
in a box and tumbled — all of us —  
into the dark.

**This Version** by james mcgonigal

james mcgonigal

*Raise Your Hats, Gentlemen*

Well settled here on the brow  
of the hill, do you not find the sky  
fits us like a bunnet

or more like whole hat-racks of them  
— ten styles at least for each season  
and maybe six for the time of day:

the cloud-flecked grey tweed, dampish to touch,  
the blue with white tassel, that is worn at a rake,  
the orange and violet weave of sunset tartan

or a brown with funereal trim  
for late afternoons in November. High winds  
blow them away, but always

throw us another, as easy a fit —  
even the black and white checked cap of winter,  
moth-eaten and draughty.

On this northeast slope, our head of leaf  
thins and falls early. But each daybreak I raise  
my hat to the bunnet maker

and admire in the glass his choice for the day.