



Pria che'l ciel fosse

Fuga di un tempo, un quarta piu basso.

G.A. del'Anguillara (Ovidio, Metamorfofi)

Superius

Giovanni Matteo Asola (1532 – 1609)

① 2

Pria che'l ciel fos - se, il mar, la ter-ra, e'l
8 fo - co; E - ra il fo - co, la ter-ra il ciel e'l ma - re Ma'l mar ren -
17 de - va il ciel, la ter-ra e'l fo - co, De - for - me il fo - co il ciel, la ter - ra e'l ma -
24 re. Ch' i - vi e - ra ter - ra e cie - lo, e ma - re e foc - o; Do - ve e - ra cie - lo
33 e ter - ra e fo - co e ma - re: La ter - ra il fo - co e'l ma - re e - ra nel cie - lo; Nel
41 mar, nel fo - co e ne la ter - ra il cie - lo, e ne la ter - ra il cie - lo, Nel
49 mar, nel fo - co e ne la ter - ra il cie - lo, e ne la ter - ra il cie - lo.

My Italian isn't good enough to translate this, but I thought that wouldn't matter, since lots of people have translated Ovid. They have, but your guess about how anyone's translation fits with anyone else's is at least as good as mine. So here are Anguillara's Italian, Ovid's original Latin, and two different English translations. It starts at line 5 of Book One of the *Metamorphoses*

Anguillara

Pria che 'l ciel fosse, il mar, la terra, e 'l foco;
Era il foco, la terra, il cielo, e 'l mare:
Ma 'l mar rendeva il ciel, la terra, e 'l foco,
Deforme il foco, il ciel, la terra, e 'l mare.
Che ivi era e terra, e cielo, e mare, e foco;
Dove era e cielo, e terra, e foco, e mare:
La terra, il foco, e 'l mare era nel cielo;
Nel mar, nel foco, e ne la terra il cielo,

Ovid

Ante mare et terras et quod tegit omnia caelum
unus erat toto naturae vultus in orbe,
quem dixere chaos: rudis indigestaque moles
nec quicquam nisi pondus iners congestaque eodem
non bene iunctarum discordia semina rerum.
nullus adhuc mundo praebebat lumina Titan,
nec nova crescendo reparabat cornua Phoebe,
nec circumfuso pendebat in aere tellus
ponderibus librata suis, nec brachia longo
margine terrarum porrexerat Amphitrite;
utque erat et tellus illic et pontus et aer,
sic erat instabilis tellus, innabilis unda,
lucis egens aer; nulli sua forma manebat,
obstabatque aliis aliud, quia corpore in uno
frigida pugnabant calidis, umentia siccis,
mollia cum duris, sine pondere, habentia pondus.

Klein

Before there was earth or sea or the sky that covers everything, Nature appeared the same throughout the whole world: what we call chaos: a raw confused mass, nothing but inert matter, badly combined discordant atoms of things, confused in the one place. There was no Titan yet, shining his light on the world, or waxing Phoebe renewing her white horns, or the earth hovering in surrounding air balanced by her own weight, or watery Amphitrite stretching out her arms along the vast shores of the world. Though there was land and sea and air, it was unstable land, unswimmable water, air needing light.

Garth, Dryden, et. al.

Before the seas, and this terrestrial ball,
And Heav'n's high canopy, that covers all,
One was the face of Nature; if a face:
Rather a rude and indigested mass:
A lifeless lump, unfashion'd, and unfram'd,
Of jarring seeds; and justly Chaos nam'd.
No sun was lighted up, the world to view;
No moon did yet her blunted horns renew:
Nor yet was Earth suspended in the sky,
Nor pois'd, did on her own foundations lye:
Nor seas about the shores their arms had thrown;
But earth, and air, and water, were in one.
Thus air was void of light, and earth unstable,
And water's dark abyss unnavigable.
No certain form on any was imprest;
All were confus'd, and each disturb'd the rest.

