

The New Criterion

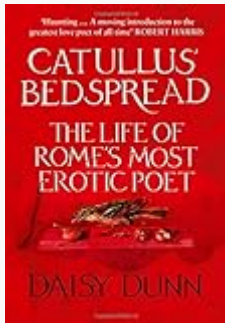
Books February 2017

Latin lover

by Andrew Stuttaford

A review of *Catullus' Bedspread: The Life of Rome's Most Erotic Poet* by Daisy Dunn

BOOKS IN THIS ARTICLE



Daisy Dunn

Catullus' Bedspread: The Life of Rome's Most Erotic Poet

HARPER COLLINS, 0 pages,

It was, subversively enough, a Latin teacher who was the first to hint to us that the Romans were not quite the Englishmen-in-training that we had been led to believe. Eleven or twelve years old and enrolled in a Wiltshire boarding school that the 1960s were, most disappointingly, passing by, we'd been brought up on tales of heroic Horatius at the bridge, of steadfast Scaevola at the fire, of legions on the march, of a great empire, if not quite so great as the one on which the sun, until very recently, had never set. In a break from the usual fare—a maneuver by Caesar, more boredom from Livy—Mr. Chips (not his real name, and not his style either: he drove a Rover 2000, a surprisingly chic car for that time and place and, more thrillingly still, was rumored to be a member of London's Playboy Club) introduced us to something, he said, that was a little different, a poem by one Gaius Valerius...

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Andrew Stuttaford is the editor of *National Review's* Capital Matters.

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