

Michael Small

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO HOMER'S CHAPMAN

Much have I journeyed through jails of infamy,
Rubbed shoulders with slags, dossed with scrotes,
Where even the screws inhale leaves of the lotus.
Worst was Arnaeus, a pusher gone to beggary.
Ithaca's streets he shamed with such gross ability
To gorge all day long the paunch of goats,
Blood dripping from lips, wine-dark eyes agloat.
Insatiable in appetite and bold in bigamy,
This bloat had form as long as law's arm:
Robbery, jobbery, grassing, causing grievous,
Vowing to cut privy parts for offal and harm
All who mocked his libations. He'd got previous
For exposure, ungirdling his rags and alarm
ing travellers innocent, mischievous and devious.

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