

Juvenal Encyclopedia Article

Juvenal by Juvenal

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Juvenal

c. 55-c. 127

Roman satirist whose *On the City of Rome* provides a richly detailed and highly revealing portrait of daily life in Rome. Seen through the eyes of a friend leaving the city for the simpler life of the country, the city is a bustling, lively—and dangerous—place. Among other things, the poem describes "carts clattering through the winding streets;" giant trees and blocks of marble going by in unsteady wagons; loose roof tiles and leaky jars that can fall from windows. The narrator watches a "long procession of servants and burning lamps" while he makes his way home lit by a candle (a sign of wealth). Later he comments disparagingly that "Iron is mainly used to fashion fetters, / So much so we risk a shortage of ploughshares...."