

VIVIA PERPETUA

Parted as in a lingering ecstasy,
Could not believe the end had come, but asked
When they were to be given to the beasts.
The keepers gathered round her—even they—
In wondering pity—while with fearless hand,
Bidding us all be faithful and stand firm,
She bared her breast, and guided to its goal
The gladiator's sword that pierced her heart.

The night is passing. In a few short hours
I too shall suffer for the name of Christ.
A boundless exaltation lifts my soul!
I know that they who left us, Satorus,
Perpetua, and the other blessed ones,
Await me at the opening gates of heaven.