

when the boy's sleep was disturbed, and his opening eyes
 felt daylight pouring in. He was stunned by what he saw. 280
 What place is this, what waves, where is Pelion?
 Everything he sees is changed and unfamiliar,
 and he isn't sure he recognizes his mother, who hugs
 the frightened child and soothes him with these words:

“Dear boy, if Fate had actually given me the marriage
 it was going to, I would be holding you in my embrace
 as a magnificent star in the heavens above.
 I would have borne you to a sky-god and not be dreading
 a lowly destiny and a terrestrial doom.
 As it is, my son, your birth is imbalanced, 290
 the road to death blocked only on your mother's side.
 And now the crisis is near, and the peril has turned
 onto the very last lap. Let us give way, withdraw.
 You need to be a little less manly now and think it
 not unworthy of you to wear clothes like mine.
 If Hercules carded Lydian wool with his hard hands
 and carried dainty implements, if Bacchus
 swept his insteps with a gold-embroidered robe,
 if Jupiter assumed a virgin's limbs and torso,
 and dual sexuality did not shatter great Caeneus, 300
 let's dodge this threatening cloud in just the same way.
 I will soon return you to your fields, your Centaur's
 romping grounds. By your present grace and charm,
 and the joys of youth still to come, I beg you:
 if for your sake I experienced life on dry land
 and a lowly husband, if I armored you at birth
 with the water of Styx (and would it had been all of you!),
 wear for a little while clothes that will keep you safe
 and not harm your spirit. Why are you looking away?
 What are you thinking? Are you ashamed to be soft 310
 in this dress? I swear, dear child, by the sea I was born in,
 Chiron will never know.”

With words such as these
 she coaxed his bristling heart. Working against her
 were his father, his great tutor, and the raw ingredients
 of a noble nature.

Statius

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