

TRANSLATED BY

DAVID FERRY

THE  
AENEID

VIRGIL



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ÆNEID**  
VIRGIL

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TO MY FAMILY  
FOR ALL YOUR HELP



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## PREFACE

Aurora rose, spreading her pitying light,  
And with it bringing back to sight the labors  
Of sad mortality, what men have done,  
And what has been done to them; and what they must do  
To mourn. King Tarchon and Father Aeneas, together  
Upon the curving shore, caused there to be  
Wooden funeral pyres constructed, and to which  
The bodies of their dead were brought and placed there,  
In accordance with the customs of their countries.  
The black pitch smoke of the burning of the bodies  
Arose up high and darkened the sky above.  
Three times in shining armor the grieving warriors  
Circled the burning pyres, three times on horseback,  
Ululating, weeping, as they rode.  
You could see how teardrops glistened on their armor.  
The clamor of their sorrowing voices and  
The dolorous clang of trumpets rose together  
As they threw into the melancholy fires  
Spoils that had been stripped from the Latins, helmets,  
And decorated swords, bridles of horses,  
And glowing chariot wheels, and with them, also,  
Shields and weapons of their own familiar  
Comrades, which had failed to keep them alive.  
Bodies of beasts were thrown into the fire,  
Cattle, and bristle-backed swine, brought from surrounding  
Fields to be sacrificed to the god of death.

And all along the shore the soldiers watched  
The burning of the bodies of their friends,  
And could not be turned away until the dewy  
Night changed all the sky and the stars came out.

Over there, where the Latins were, things were  
As miserable as this. Innumerable  
Scattered funeral pyres; many bodies  
Hastily buried in hastily dug-up earth,  
And many others, picked up from where they fell  
When they were slain, and carried back to the fields  
Which they had plowed and tilled before the fighting,  
Or back into the city where they came from;  
Others were indiscriminately burned,  
Unnamed, and so without ceremony or honor.  
The light of the burning fires was everywhere.  
On the third day when the light of day came back  
To show the hapless scene, they leveled out  
What was left of the pyres and separated what  
Was left of the bones, now cold and among cold ashes,  
And covered over the ashes and the bones.

› › ›

*Aurora interea miseris mortalibus almam  
extulerat lucem referens opera atque labores.*

This beautiful two-line sentence with which Virgil's Latin introduces this passage from book 11 is definitive. It defines for us how we are to experience the telling of this heartbreaking scene; it is also, I believe, the definitive declaration of how to read the whole continuing enterprise of the poem, the accounting of what men have done and what has been done to them and what they must do to mourn, here and in every episode of the work.

I love the way that opening line in the Latin ends with "almam," which I translate as "pitying," and the line therefore seems almost to

embrace with its pity those sad, those suffering, those miserable mortals; and then after that embracing line, “extulerat” follows; the light is spreading, bringing forth still more about the wretchedness of the scene, bringing back to sight what the scene looks like, exposing it to our eyes in the pitying morning light, into which and against which the black pitch smoke rises and darkens the sky; and it’s by the light of the fires burning the bodies that we see, demanding a pity beyond pity, the tears on their armor, and hear their ululating cries of mourning.

And over where the Latins are, the fire of the burning of the bodies is everywhere. The Trojans and the Latins are paired in their distress, though to be sure there are differences between the two scenes. Doleful, heart-struck as it is, the burning of the bodies of the Trojans and their Arcadian allies is also mournfully glorious, a desolate celebration of Pallas’s deeds. Here young Pallas is sent down to the Underworld with all the spoils his skills and his filial piety, piety owed to his father and to Aeneas as well, have earned. The trumpets’ music and the music of the soldiers’ ululation are sounding their praises; you can see the tears on their armor but the armor is shining; there is ceremony. Over there with the Latins there is almost none, and the pity that’s invoked is even more thoroughgoing in its implacable account of their haplessness. Mortals, alike and different, in the condition of their mortality.

The terms, the vocabularies, in these great two lines—“miseris mortalibus,” “referens,” “opera atque labores”—in the grammar of the great sentence, tell us that what this wretched scene, so marvelously particularized, what the light of the morning and the light of the fires, showed on the particular moment is not just what’s true of these soldiers and these dead bodies, but also instances of what’s true of them, and of mortals, all of us, always. And so I believe these lines, this sentence, constitute a definition of Virgil’s poem and a demonstration of how it goes about its work.

### *Miseris mortalibus*

“Mortals,” meaning “subject to death,” therefore means “creatures,” and therefore as created beings subject to chance, to the fates, to the

favor and disfavor of the gods, and to the condition of not knowing for sure when they are favored by the gods and by which gods and when they are not; subject to winds, to floods, to plagues; and subject also to the rights and wrongs of their own natures, their loves, their kindness, their faithfulness to their fathers, their confusions and forgetfulness, and their own sometimes savage rage and their bloodlust. And so I translated “*miseris mortalibus*” as (taking the phrase from Shakespeare’s *Sonnet 65*) “sad mortality,” the name of the condition itself, of being subject to death, to the partialities and contingencies and constraints of being human.

### *Opera atque labores*

It is no accident that this phrase deliberately recalls the Latin title of Hesiod’s *Works and Days* (*Opera et dies*), or that Virgil says in his *Georgics* that he’s singing the songs of Hesiod in Roman towns, and is doing so again in the *Aeneid*, or that both poems narrate the dogged pursuit of their mortal aims within the contingent partializing powers and limitations of being mortal. Jupiter saw to it that the way should not be easy, and he did so, so that mortal men would develop arts to make their way with *Labor omnia vincit*: “And everything was toil, relentless toil, urged on by need.” David West excellently translates “*opera atque labores*” as “their toils and sufferings,” and I’ve translated it as “what men have done, and what has been done to them.” The relentless toil and sufferings are definitive of the condition of being mortal, in the *Georgics* as in the *Aeneid*.

### *Referens*

The light is at sunrise, bringing back not only this terrible scene but also, not “*ferens*” but “*referens*,” bringing *back* to mind the stories that have been told before: for example, that other, so like this one, in book 23 of the *Iliad*, the burning of the body of Achilles’s Patroclus, with the bodies of the twelve captive Trojan young men, and the beasts offered up to the god of death. The consequences of the deaths of Patroclus and of Pallas are referentially there to the end of both

poems and play their part in the imponderables of the conclusion. Of course, Virgil's lines and the lines brought back from Patroclus's funeral bring back many other things in both poems, but here they also bring back the crucial lines at the end of book 6 of the *Aeneid*, the lines about young Marcellus, the hope of Rome, in Anchises's prophetic account of Augustus's triumph and its promise of a stable, persisting city; and Marcellus dies a natural death, as if by chance or fate, unchallengingly, unexplainingly showing that he is mortal, that hope is mortal—"Could it have been that you could have broken through / The confines of your unrelenting fate?" So Rome itself is a mortal thing, as was Troy.

And the pitying light brings the mortal scene back to sight, and doing so it brings back to sight all those other scenes in the *Aeneid*, and, referentially, all those in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which constitute the telling of the works and days of mortal men in the condition of their mortality. And I believe we are also meant to hear in "referens" the poem's awareness that the scene is being brought back to the sight of the *reader*, who is in the condition of mortality and knows it, but knows it more vividly in the terms of the great sentence.



## ON METER

As in my other translations from the Latin, I have not sought to use a dactylic hexameter instrument. In my view, the forward-propulsive character of English speech favors iambic pentameter, in which iambic events naturally dominate, with anapestic events as naturally occurring. One reason for this is that in English there are often so many articles and frequent prepositional structures; and also because, in English speech and grammar, adjectives normally occur before the noun they modify, and so their relationship is normally iambic or anapestic, even in prose. Iambic pentameter has relatively few trochaic events; dactylic events, almost never.

Iambic pentameter arises most naturally from the characteristics of English grammar and syntax, and so I am using it here. Virgil's dactylic hexameter and iambic pentameter have in common that they have (not by accident) histories of being instruments of heroic writing, and that the internal structure of their metrical lines is capacious and welcoming—though responsive to different rules—to all sorts of expressive individuation. There is room for syntactical manipulation, room for—and a susceptibility to—tonal variation, variations in the degrees of pressure or emphasis on the “weak” syllables in the iambic feet and on the “strong” syllables as well, often subtle, sometimes introspective, while continuing to be regular iambic pentameter events. And at the same time, the amplitude and continuous regularity of the line is suitable to the grandeur of the sovereign rhythm of the whole, the lines in their regularity triumphantly reiterated across the twelve books, as its essential rhythm; and each new individual line is a new metrical event in the exploration of how the



poem is to be heard. What is told in the poem is deeply moving and important, and it is a creation of the way it is told, in the metrical play of its meanings. That's what's true of Virgil's metrical lines; the translator can only hope it can be true of his own.

John Dryden, in his translation of the *Aeneid*, used rhyming couplets, the so-called "heroic couplets." He did so for the music of the rhyming, but he also provided markers at the ends of the lines to make it clear that a new line was a new metrical event, as the line before it had been, and as the line after it was going to be, each line having its own way of having its own music, its own play of meanings, like and also different from the lines around it, though all of them were regular iambic pentameter. William Wordsworth said that there's always something like a pause after each line in unrhymed verse, marking the fact that a new metrical event is conceding, and another new metrical event is beginning to happen. Readers should hear it this way. As they read the lines, their imagination should hear that this succession of events is going on. Maybe not exactly a pause, but an alerted active awareness that this is happening, as in listening to measured music, all in the play of meanings. As Samuel Johnson says, "All the syllables of each line co-operate together . . . every verse unmingled with another as a distinct system of sounds."

The black pitch smoke of the burning of the bodies  
Arose up high and darkened the sky above.

One sentence, two lines, both iambic pentameter, telling a continuous story; in the first syllable the character (and the content) of the smoke, and the second, third, and fourth syllables are very strongly stressed, with an effect of concentration, perhaps horrified, and certainly pitying, concentration; "black pitch smoke," "black" and "smoke" off-rhyming, and "pitch" contained within them in their rising column, a dark viscous substance, here perhaps ingredient of the bodies themselves. "The *black pitch smoke*," strongly concentrated, but in that second foot, "pitch smoke," it's still iambic, "pitch" being the adjective, "smoke" being its noun. And the last three feet, "of the burning of the bodies," want us to hear with a kind of insistence

that, yes, this is the case, the smoke is of the burning of the bodies; and “burning” and “bodies” alliterate intensifyingly with the “b” of “black.”

The verb “arose” is the beginning of the second line, and it weirdly reminds us of the first line of the passage: “Aurora rose, spreading her pitying light”; this new line says, by its sense and by its structural similarity, that this is opposite, authoritatively bringing on the darkness, so that the pitiful story is now told by the light of the burning of the bodies. And the vocabulary of the line—“arose” and “up” and “high”; and “high” rhyming with “sky,” sky high, a distinct system of sounds—is continuous of the line before it, but with a variant music. Two iambic pentameter lines tell, in their continuances, the same story, the rising of the smoke, but each of them with a distinctive individuated truth-telling music.



## ON THE TRANSLATION

Let me echo a statement I have made in connection with my earlier translations from Virgil's Latin. I have tried to be as faithful as possible. English is, of course, not Latin, and I am most certainly not Virgil. Every act of translation is an act of interpretation, and every choice of English word or phrase, every placement of those words or phrases in sentences (made in obedience to the laws and habits of English, not Latin, grammar, syntax, and idioms), and every metrical decision (made in obedience to English, not Latin, metrical laws and habits), reinforces the differences between the interpretation and the original. This is true, however earnestly the interpretation aims to represent the sense of Virgil's lines and, as best it can, some of the effects and implications of his figures of speech, the controlled variety and passions of his tones of voice. It is my hope that this translation, granting such differences between English and Latin, is reasonably close.

Reasonably close, of course, is still far away, but the effort is to achieve a representation, in the lines as they move forward, line by line, telling the tale, some kind of kinship not only to the sense of the Latin but also to the expressive complexities of implicated discernment and emotion in the lines. As I've said in the "Note on Meter" above, Virgil's explorative dactylic hexameter meters cannot be imitated, one-on-one, in English—at least not by me. The laws of his Latin syntax and grammar are too different from the laws of English grammar and syntax in my iambic pentameter meter, though it too is explorative by nature and capable of many subtleties and variations of discernment. Dryden himself said of his translation of the *Aeneid*

that he had done great harm to Virgil. Every translator does, and should say so.

But I think it is not out of order for me to say that “completing” this translation of the work of such a great poet means a great deal to me personally, since I have previously translated his *Eclogues* and his *Georgics*, and I am in love with his voice as I hear it in all these poems, telling how it is with all created beings, the very leaves on the trees, the very rooted plants, the beasts in the fields, the shepherds trying to keep their world together with song replying to song replying to song, the bees in their vulnerable hives, doing their work, the soldiers doing their work of killing and dying, the falling cities, and the kings and fathers, and their sons, and Dido, and Palinurus, and Deiphobus, and Mezentius the disrespecter of gods, and the mortal son of Venus, the creature Aeneas, carrying his household gods to build a city, heroic and vulnerable, himself subject to monstrous rage, himself not always unconfused. All of them, all of us, creatures, created beings, heroic and vulnerable, and Virgil’s voice telling it as it is, in his truth-telling pitying voice.

# The Aeneid



*The black  
Breath of the war has breathed on them;  
Shields gleam, and helmets, in the memory.*

# Book One

I sing of arms and the man whom fate had sent  
To exile from the shores of Troy to be  
The first to come to Lavinium and the coasts  
Of Italy, and who, because of Juno's  
Savage implacable rage, was battered by storms  
At sea, and from the heavens above, and also  
By tempests of war, until at last he might  
Bring his household gods to Latium, and build his town,  
From which would come the Alban Fathers and  
The lofty walls of Rome. Muse, tell me  
The cause why Juno the queen of heaven was so  
Aggrieved by what offense against her power,  
To send this virtuous faithful hero out  
To perform so many labors, confront such dangers?

10

Can anger like this be, in immortal hearts?

, , ,

There was an ancient city known as Carthage  
(Settled by men from Tyre), across the sea  
And opposite to Italy and the mouth  
Of the Tiber river; very rich, and fierce,  
Experienced in warfare. Juno, they say,  
Loved Carthage more than any other place  
In the whole wide world, more even than her Samos.

20



Here's where she kept her chariot and her armor.  
It was her fierce desire, if fate permitted,  
That Carthage should be chief city of the world.  
But she had heard that there would come a people,  
Engendered of Trojan blood, who would someday  
Throw down the Tyrian citadel, a people  
Proud in warfare, rulers of many realms,  
Destined to bring down Libya. Thus it was  
That the Parcae's turning wheel foretold the story.

30

Fearful of this and remembering the old  
War she had waged at Troy for her dear Greeks,  
And remembering too her sorrow and her rage  
Because of Paris's insult to her beauty,  
Remembering her hatred of his people,  
And the honors paid to ravished Ganymede—  
For all these causes her purpose was to keep  
The Trojan remnant, who'd survived the Greeks  
And pitiless Achilles, far from Latium,  
On turbulent waters wandering, year after year  
Driven by fates across the many seas.

40

So formidable the task of founding Rome.

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Sicily was still in sight behind them  
As, with joyous sails spread out, their brazen prows  
Sped through the foaming waters, and Juno said,  
Obsessing in herself over her grievance,  
“Am I, then, I, defeated, to be prevented  
From keeping the Teucric king from Italy?  
Is it because of the Fates? Pallas was able  
To burn the Argive ships and drown its sailors  
To punish the offense of one man only,  
Ajax Oileus' son; Pallas herself

50

Was able forthwith to hurl the fire of Jove  
Down from the clouds above, and from below  
Raise up the ocean in tempestuous surge  
And carry Ajax in a whirlwind off,  
His breast aflame, on fire from the lightning bolt,  
And fasten him impaled to a craggy rock.  
But I who walk as queen of all the gods,  
I, the sister and wife of Jove, must wage  
Year after year my war against one people.  
In time to come will there be any to pay  
Due reverence to me, and at my altars  
Worship with sacrifice and supplication?"

60

Thus, burning with resentment, in her mind  
Turning these matters over and over, the goddess  
Made her way to the spawning place of storms,  
Aeolia, the cyclones' Berecynthian country.  
There Aeolus the king in his huge cavern  
Uses his power with fetters and chains to hold  
The struggling winds and howling tempests in.  
The mountain moaned with the noise of their prisoned outrage.  
They blustered against the bonds he bound them with.  
There Aeolus sat, scepter in hand, in his  
High stronghold, he, to mollify their fury  
And quiet them down; if he did not do so  
Then they without a doubt would carry away  
All seas and lands and the starry heavens themselves,  
Sweeping them all to the nothingness beyond.  
Therefore it was that all-knowing all-powerful Jove,  
Fearing that this might happen, hid them away  
In the darkest night of caverns and piled up huge  
Mountains above them and gave to them a king  
Whose charge it was to use his regal skill  
To loosen or tighten the reins when so commanded.

70

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So Juno said to Aeolus, entreating,  
“Jove, the Father of Gods and King of Men,  
Has, Aeolus, given you the power either  
To calm the ocean waters into peace 90  
Or cause the winds to make them rise and surge.  
Right now there is a race of men I hate,  
Sailing upon the Tyrrhenian Sea to bring  
The defeated household gods of Troy to Latium.  
Shake their fleet with the raging of your winds,  
Sink them, overwhelm them, scatter their broken  
Bodies everywhere upon the waters.  
There are fourteen beautiful nymphs in my retinue;  
The most beautiful of them all is Deiopea;  
I’ll give you Deiopea as your reward, 100  
To be your wife and be your own forever,  
And be the mother of your beautiful children.”  
Aeolus answered: “O queen, it is for you  
To discover what it is that you desire;  
It is for me to do what you command.  
I owe my kingdom and my scepter to  
Your favor and the favor of Jupiter.  
Because of this I have my rightful place  
At the banquet of the gods; because of this  
I am the potentate of clouds and storms.” 110

› › ›

Having said this, Aeolus takes his spear  
And with its blunt end bashes open a hole  
In the hollow mountain’s side, and then, at once,  
The doors give way and like an army the winds,  
The mob of pent-up winds, rush out and whirl  
Down on the ocean and with seismic force  
Heave up the waters from the lowest bottom—  
All winds together, Notus and Eurus and Africus, and  
Southwest, East, and South, teeming with tempests,

And vast tsunami roll toward helpless shores. 120  
And then were heard the cries of terrified men,  
And the shriek of the vessels' cables; all light of day  
Was suddenly ripped away from the Trojans' eyes;  
Black night upon the ocean waters, thunder  
From pole to pole and sheets of shaking lightning  
Tell of the mariners' deaths now there at hand.  
Aeneas's limbs gone weak and chill to the bone,  
Groaning raised up his arms to heaven and cried,  
"O those others are three times, four times, blessed,  
Whose privilege it was to meet their fate, 130  
Watched by their fathers as they died beneath  
The high walls of their native city, Troy!  
Alas, Tydides, bravest of the Danaans,  
That by thy hand I could not fall and pour  
My life out on the fields of Ilium, where  
Fierce Hector, helpless, fallen, lies, brought down  
By the spear of Aeacides and where the great  
Sarpedon lies, and where the river Samois  
Carries away the bodies of so many  
Heroes and their tumbling shields and helmets, 140  
Turning over and over in its waters."

As Aeneas cries out thus, a sudden violent  
Burst of wind comes crashing against the sails,  
The prow of the ship turns round, the oars are broken,  
The ship is broadside to the waves and then  
A mountain of water descends upon them all;  
Some of the men hang clinging high upon  
The high-most of the wave and others see  
The very ground beneath the sea revealed  
As hissing with sand the giant wave recoils; 150  
Three of the ships are spun by the South Wind onto  
A huge rock ridge that hulks up out of the sea  
(The name the Italians call it is The Altars);  
Three other ships the East Wind runs aground

And carries them into shallows, a wretched sight,  
The sand heaped up around them. Aeneas himself  
Saw how a monstrous devouring wave rose up  
And struck the stern of the ship the Lycians and  
Faithful Orontes rode in, and the ship  
Turned round and round in the whirlpool whirling waters. 160  
He saw the helmsman head-first over the side;  
He saw the scattered cast-out soldiers swimming  
Hapless in the vast abysmal flood;  
He saw the detritus floating on the water,  
Troy treasure, weapons, pieces of wood; he saw  
The ship of Ilioneus and the ship  
Of brave Achates, Abas's ship, and the ship  
Of old Aletes, all of them overwhelmed,  
Their seams split open, letting in the sea.

› › ›

Then Neptune, god of the sea, became aware 170  
Of the loud commotion of the waves upsurging  
From the still foundations down below; and deeply  
Troubled within raised up his placid face  
Above the roiling waters and looked across  
And saw Aeneas's scattered ships and saw  
The Trojans overpowered by the waves,  
And by the heavens collapsing down upon them.  
The brother of Juno knew whose work this was,  
The work of his sister Juno and her wrath.  
He summoned the East and West Winds and he said: 180  
"Are you so confident of who you are  
That you have dared, without command of mine,  
To collide the heavens and seas and cause such trouble?  
But first it is my task to quiet the waves.  
Your punishment comes later. Now, East Wind,  
Speedily fly to tell your king: 'The power  
To wield the trident and to rule the seas

Was given to me by lot and not to him.  
Aeolus is the warden of the rocks;  
Of that vast prison let him be the king, 190  
And hold the winds in chains within that cavern.”  
He speaks, and as soon as he speaks, the waves are calmed,  
The gathered clouds disperse, the sun comes out;  
Triton and Cymothoë together push  
The ships away from the rocks they are stranded on,  
As Neptune uses his trident to lever them free,  
And opens for them the Syrtes quicksands too,  
His chariot gliding upon the quieting waters.  
It is as when of a sudden, in some city,  
Violence erupts, the rabble enraged, 200  
Stones and firebrands thrown, but then, if the mob  
Should see a man whose piety and strength  
Are known to them, silent they stand and listen,  
As with measured speech he calms their rage; just so,  
When their creator appears to them, the rage  
Of the raging waters is appeased, as he  
Goes on his way, under a now clear sky.

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Exhausted by the terrible storm at sea,  
Aeneas's followers seek whatever land  
Lies nearest, and so they turn toward Libya's coast. 210

There is a long deep inlet there that is  
A port and shelter in whose mouth an island  
Breakwater pacifies incoming waves,  
So that their force disperses into ripples;  
Around the sides great cliffs and peaks rise up,  
And tower over the waters of the bay,  
And high upon these cliffs dark overhanging  
Foliage, and, above and behind, the leaves  
Of trees in a black grove glimmer as they move

And stir a little in the breezes' changings.  
Under the jutting ledge of the cliff that faces  
Out as the innermost wall of the cove, there's a cave,  
With seats that look as if carven out of stone,  
Fresh water in basins, a domicile for the nymphs.  
This port is a place where ships can rest; there is  
No need for anchors, so peaceable are the waters.  
Here is the sheltering place Aeneas has come to,  
With seven ships, all that is left of his fleet.

220

His followers get themselves onto the welcome beach,  
To lie there, stretching out their sea-soaked limbs  
On dry land they so long have longed to be on.  
Achates sets about making a fire by striking  
Flints together to get a spark, then using  
The spark to make a flame of leaves and wave them  
Over the wood-chip tinder so that it catches,  
And lights the dry driftwood he had found on the beach;  
Weary, despondent, because of what had happened,  
The Trojans take out the water-spoiled grains of Ceres,  
In order to parch them in the crackling fire,  
And, using stones, to crush them into meal.

230

240

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Meanwhile Aeneas climbs to a high cliff, so  
He can look far out, over the open ocean,  
To see if there is any sign at all  
Of Antheus's storm-tossed Phrygian biremes,  
Or of Capys, or the heraldry of Caicus.  
There is no ship in sight. But he sees three stags  
That wander along the shore, and there's a herd  
That follows behind, and farther still, he sees  
A troop of others grazing in a valley.  
So Aeneas takes the bow and arrows that faithful  
Achates carries for him in battle, and first

250

Brings down those leaders, with their high branched antlers,  
And then with his arrows he drives the common rout  
In their confusion into the leafy woods,  
And he doesn't stop till there are seven great  
Conquered bodies lying on the ground,  
One for each of his seven ships. Then he  
Returns to the port, and divides the seven deer  
Among his comrades, and shares with them the wine  
From the jars magnanimous Acestes gave 260  
The Trojans on the day they took their leave  
From the Trinacrian shore. And then Aeneas  
Speaks to his people, in order to ease their sorrow:

“O my companions, O you who have undergone,  
Together with me, worse things than this before,  
The gods will bring this also to an end.  
You who were there so close to Scylla's frenzy,  
Right in under her howling wailing cliffs,  
And experienced the Cyclops throwing rocks,  
Remember how brave you were. Be of good cheer, 270  
Send fear away. Perhaps there will come a time  
When you will remember these troubles with a smile.  
Through many perils, through whatever mischance  
We may encounter, our journey is toward Latium,  
Where Fortune offers us a peaceful home.  
There Troy will rise again. It is ordained.  
Therefore endure, and expect a happier time.”  
These were the words he used, though sick at heart;  
His face simulates hopefulness and he  
Endeavors to suppress his deep distress. 280

The others ready the prizes for the feast to come:  
They strip the hides from the flanks and lay bare the meat;  
Some cut the meat into pieces and pierce them with spits;  
Others set out the cooking pots on the beach,  
And start the fires. Thus they restore their strength,



Lying along the grass and feasting on  
Rich venison and Acestes' given wine.  
And when they had satisfied their hunger, and  
The remains of the supper were cleared away, the Trojans  
Talked together about their missing fellows, 290  
Not knowing whether to hope they were still alive,  
Or fear they had suffered the final separation,  
No longer able to answer when they are called.  
More even than all the others, pious Aeneas  
Grieved in his inmost heart over the loss  
Of Amicus and of valorous Orontes,  
And over the cruel fate that came upon  
Lycus and valiant Gyas and brave Cloanthus.

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And now the day was coming to its end.  
Jupiter from his place on high looked out, 300  
And over across the sea, with its many ships  
And far-spread lands, its shores and peoples, and as  
The god looked down upon the Libyan realms,  
He thought about the troubles that he saw,  
And, as he did so, Venus spoke to him  
In sadness, her bright eyes shining with tears, and said,  
“O you who for eternity govern, with power  
And with your lightning bolt, both men and gods,  
What crime could my Aeneas have committed,  
How have the Trojans so offended you, 310  
That after so much suffering they are kept  
From every land and kept from Italy, where,  
According to your promise, from their line,  
The line of Teucric kings, there would come Roman  
Leaders to govern all nations and all the seas?  
Why is it, Father, that your purpose has changed?  
Indeed it was your promise that consoled me  
For the terrible ruin of my Troy, your promise

Of a glorious fate in spite of those fatal events.  
But after so many calamities, now the same 320  
Bad fortune follows these people everywhere.  
Great king, when will you grant my Trojans relief?  
Antenor, having gotten safely away  
From the very midst of the Achaean foe,  
Surrounding him in the battle, could journey unscathed  
Past Illyrian gulfs and through the innermost far  
Country of the Liburnians and beyond  
The springs of Timavus, from which the river bursts  
From all nine mouths of the roaring mountain and buries  
The fields below, under the tumult of waters. 330  
It was here he founded Padua, raising on high  
The arms of Troy, establishing a home  
And a name for his Teucrian race, and now he's tranquil,  
And rests. But we, your children, to whom you've given  
The privileges of heaven, have lost our ships  
(Oh shameful!) and are kept from Italy,  
All for the sake of placating the anger of one.  
Is this how faith is honored? And is this how  
Our scepters are to be given back to us?"

The father smiled upon her with the look 340  
That clears the sky of storms and brings fair weather.  
He kissed his daughter, and this is what he said:  
"Be not afraid, my lady of Cythera.  
The promise I made to your children of what their fates  
Would be is what it was. You are to see  
The fortress walls of Lavinia's city, and you  
Will bring great-hearted Aeneas to his high  
Destined rightful place in the starry heavens.  
I have not changed my mind. Because your worry  
About your dear son gnaws at you, I will 350  
Unroll the scroll of Fates and tell the meaning  
Of the secrets written there. Your son shall wage  
Great wars in Italy against fierce tribes,

And crush them utterly, and raise up cities,  
And give his people laws to govern them.  
The Rutulians having been conquered, after three winters  
And summers spent in the field, he'll rule in Latium;  
The boy Ascanius, now called Iulus—he  
Whose name was Ilus before the Ilian fall—  
Shall govern in Lavinium for thirty  
Cycles of rolling months, and after that  
Shall build his founding city, Alba Longa;  
There for three hundred years the line of Hector  
Will reign until the royal priestess Ilia  
Shall bear twin sons of Mars. Then Romulus, wearing  
A she-wolf's tawny hide, and proud to wear it,  
In honor of that wolf who was his nurse,  
Will build the city of Mars and call his people  
Romans, after Romulus, his name.  
For them I ordain no limits of time or space;  
I grant dominion to them, without end.  
Juno, who in her bitterness and dread  
Has wearied earth and sea and sky, will change,  
And listen to wiser counsel, and we, together,  
Will lovingly foster the Roman people, they  
Who wear the toga, the lords of all the nations.  
It is commanded thus. The day will come,  
As the appointed season comes to pass,  
When Phthia and famed Mycenae will submit  
To Assaracus's house, and Argos too.  
And to this noble lineage will be born  
Our Trojan Caesar, glorious as far  
As to the ocean, and high as to the stars,  
Julius, from Iulus taking his name,  
And you, your cares dispelled, will welcome him  
When he ascends triumphantly to the skies,  
Bringing the spoils of the conquered Orient,  
And offerings will be made to him as a god.  
Then wars will come to an end and savage ways

360

370

380

Be pacified and civilized under the law,  
By venerable Faith and the goddess Vesta,  
By Remus and by his twin, Quirinus, and  
The iron gates of Janus will close at last,  
And in a cage impious Fury will sit  
On a pile of broken useless weapons, hands bound  
Behind his back by a hundred knots of brass,  
And roaring hoarsely from his bloody mouth.”

390

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It is thus he speaks, and sends the son of Maia  
Down from the place of the gods to make it so  
That Carthage, with its streets and towers, should open  
To let the Teucrians in, and so that Dido  
Would grant them gracious welcome to her lands,  
Not knowing what her fate was going to be.  
Sculling upon his wings across the sky  
He quickly settles on the Libyan coasts,  
And there he straightaway does as Jove commanded,  
And the ferocious Phoenician hearts are, by  
The will of the god, at once made gentle, and  
The heart of the queen of Carthage, beyond them all,  
Is made most kind and open to the Trojans.

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But pious Aeneas, who has not slept all night,  
His mind so full of so many cares, sets out  
To explore, as soon as the morning light was given,  
This strange country the wind has brought him to,  
To find out who the inhabitants might be,  
Whether men or animals—all he could see  
Was wilderness—and to return to tell  
His fellows whatever it was he might have found.  
He has hidden his fleet in the quivering shadows of

Encircling hiding trees within the vault 420  
At the base of a concave cliff. Alone, attended  
Only by Achates his companion,  
Aeneas steps forth, carrying in his hand  
Two steel-tipped javelins, when suddenly,  
Directly in front of him, there is his mother,  
Looking as if she were a young Spartan huntress,  
And with the weapons that such a maiden might carry,  
Or else she looks like Harpalyce of Thrace,  
Who races alongside horses and tires them out,  
And runs with the winged East Wind, ahead of it. 430  
Like a huntress, her shoulder carries a tight-strung bow,  
Her hair is free to the wind, her knees are bare,  
Her flowing dress is gathered up by a knot.  
Before Aeneas has a chance to speak,  
She cries, “You there, young men, have you seen my sister  
Wandering anywhere near here, or shouting intent  
In the chase of a foaming wild boar she’s sighted? She’s clad  
In the hide of a dappled lynx, and wearing a quiver.”

Thus Venus spoke; then Venus’s son spoke thus:  
“I have not seen your sister nor have heard 440  
Any voices. O—but, maiden, what is your name?  
Neither the face I see is that of a mortal  
Nor is the voice I hear—O goddess, surely  
Phoebus Apollo’s sister? Or one of those  
Who are called the nymphs? Whoever it is you are,  
Have pity on us, tell us, what is the sky  
We wander under, what are the shores of the world  
The winds and giant seas have driven us to,  
Not knowing what country it is we wander in,  
Or among what people? Tell us, we will make 450  
Glad sacrificial offerings at your altars.”

Then Venus: “I am not worthy of that honor.  
It is the custom of Tyrian maidens to wear

Such hunting boots and carry a quiver and bow.  
This is Phoenician country, of people from Tyre,  
Descendants of Agenor, who have settled here  
In Libya, a race unconquerable in war.  
Dido rules here as queen, who fled from Tyre,  
A fugitive from her brother. The story of this  
Is long and intricate, a story of wrongs, 460  
But I will tell it briefly: Dido's husband,  
Whom she loved with all her heart, was named Sychaeus,  
The richest of all Phoenicians; Dido's father  
Had given him his daughter with all the high  
Felicitous solemn auguries of wedlock.  
But Dido's brother Pygmalion came to power,  
And ruled over Tyre; he was beyond all others  
In brutal savage criminality.  
Then there was frenzy and the treacherous king,  
Blinded by love of gold, killed the unwary 470  
Sychaeus before the altars, and then concealed  
His crime from Dido as long as possible,  
Tormenting his stricken sister with specious hopes,  
Until one night, as she was sleeping, in  
Her dream her unburied husband's ghost appeared.  
Its face was ghastly pale beyond all wonder;  
The vision showed the dagger in his breast,  
And the altars that he met his death in front of;  
The unspeakable crime in the house was thus revealed.  
The ghost advised her to flee and leave the country, 480  
And told her where there was a hidden treasure,  
A hoard of unknown gold and silver to help her.  
She was persuaded, and she and her companions  
Got themselves ready; all those who hated the tyrant  
Because of his tyranny, or feared him for it,  
Led by a woman came together to act  
In this enterprise. Ships in the harbor that were  
Already rigged for sailing were seized and loaded  
With treasure, Pygmalion's wealth. They sailed away

And came to the place where now you can see the great  
Walls and the towering fort of Carthage the New.  
They bought the land and called it Byrsa because  
They bought as much as could be measured by  
The hide of a bull. And now they are choosing judges,  
Establishing laws, and putting together a senate.  
But who are you? What are the coasts you have come from?  
What is the journey you are going on?”  
After she asked him these questions Aeneas replied,  
Drawing his words from deep within his breast:  
“O goddess, if I were able to tell the whole  
Story of our afflictions from their beginning,  
And if you had the time to hear it all,  
I could not finish before it was the time  
For heaven to close its doors and for Vesper to  
Compose the day for rest. We come from Troy,  
If you by chance have heard of ancient Troy.  
The storm, as we were sailing across far seas,  
Drove us ashore onto the Libyan coast.  
I am the pious Aeneas. In my fleet  
I bear with me my household gods I seized  
And rescued from the hands of the enemy.  
The heavens above know who it is I am.  
It is Italy, for fatherland, I seek.  
I am descended from the race of Jove.  
My goddess mother showing the way, pursuant  
To what the Fates had said, I set forth on  
The Phrygian sea with twenty ships in my fleet.  
Now, overwhelmed by violent winds and waves,  
There are scarcely seven left, and I myself  
Unknown, in need, wander the Libyan wasteland,  
Driven away from Europe and from Asia—”

But here the goddess Venus broke in to say,  
Preventing him from telling his story further,

“Whoever you are, I think you are favored by  
The heavens, since here you are, at the Tyrian city,  
Alive and breathing. And I can tell you that,  
Unless the divination my parents taught  
Is false, and unless the auguries mislead me,  
Your fellows and their ships are found and well,  
By changing winds driven to safety intact. 530  
For, look!—that joyful line of twice six swans  
That the bird of Jove was swooping down upon  
And harrying—they now in order either  
Settle already or else look down at those  
Already settled where they will settle too.  
And just as they, returning, joyfully play,  
Ruffling their wings, and singing their joyful songs,  
As they have circled down from the sky in safety,  
So will, already, some of your ships and comrades  
Have safely reached the harbor, and others now 540  
Under full sail are coming to safety too.  
Now go, and follow that path where it will lead you.”

She spoke, and turned away, and as she turned  
Her graceful neck shone roseate; from her hair  
Divine ambrosia breathed; her gown ungathered  
Flowed full length to the ground; and, as she stepped,  
Her step revealed that this was truly the goddess.  
He knew that she was his mother, and his words  
Followed her as she fled: “Why is it that you,  
As all the others do, so cruelly mock 550  
Your son with images, false images?  
Why cannot I hold hands with you, my mother,  
And hear true words and speak true words to you?”

Thus he complains, and walks on toward the city,  
But she surrounds him, he and his companion,  
In darkling air and covers them with a cloud,



And thus the goddess protects them so that none  
Might see or touch or hinder them on their way,  
Or question them to ask about their coming.  
And she herself departs across the sky,  
And joyfully returns to Paphos where  
The place of her temple is, and its hundred altars,  
On each of which the Sabaeon incense fumes,  
And there are always fragrant garlands there.

560

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Meanwhile they hastened along the path she showed,  
Until they climbed a hill that rises high  
Above the city, and from that height looked over,  
And saw the fortress towers. Aeneas marvels  
At the great buildings where once there were only huts,  
The pavings of the streets, the city gates,  
The sight of the Tyrians busy at their work,  
Some building walls, rolling up stones in wagons,  
Some marking out with furrows dwelling plots,  
Some dredging the harbor to make it deeper for ships,  
Some putting down the great foundations on which  
The theater would be built, and others cutting  
Into the hills to get huge columns from them,  
To ornament the future theater stage.  
It's just as when the bees in the flowering fields,  
When summer is new, are going about their work,  
Under the sun, or filling the cells of their hives  
With liquid honey until they distend and almost  
Burst with the loaded nectar; or when they welcome  
Into the hive the bees returning home,  
Carrying what they're bringing from the fields;  
Or when, as an armed patrol, they drive away  
The lazy crowd of drones from the busy stalls.

570

580

The community is glowing as it works;  
The honey is fragrant with the scent of thyme.

“O fortunate they, whose city is already rising!”  
Aeneas says, looking up at the roofs of the city.  
He enters, wonders to say it, hid in a cloud,  
And mingles with the people, unseen by all.

590

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In the center of the city there is a grove,  
Solemn and deeply shady, where the Phoenicians,  
Who had come there, beset by waves and winds,  
Dug up from the earth (at the place where Juno showed them),  
The head of a spirited horse, a symbol, an icon,  
A sign that theirs would be for centuries  
A people famous for their warfare prowess  
And for the richness of their way of life.  
Sidonian Dido was building a temple here,  
Opulent in its votive offerings and  
In the numinous presence of the goddess Juno.  
The threshold at the top of the great staircase  
Was bronze, the lintels of the roof were bronze,  
The hinges of the resonant doors were bronze.  
This is the place where Aeneas first began  
To dare to hope there would be safety here,  
And a turn for the better in his afflicted state,  
For, waiting in the great temple for the queen,  
And looking at all the beautiful objects in it,  
Wondering at the good fortune of the city,  
And admiring all the things the makers had done,  
The workmanship of what was told on the walls,  
Suddenly he saw depicted there,  
One after another, the scenes of the Trojan War,

600

610

Famous through all the world, the sons of Priam,  
The sons of Atreus, and savage Achilles  
Raging against both houses, as he did. 620  
Aeneas stopped, and weeping at what he saw,  
Said, "Is there, Achates, anywhere on earth  
That does not know the story of our trouble?  
Look, there, there's Priam pictured on the wall!  
Even here they praise his worth and tell our story.  
These are the tears of things for what they were,  
And what has become of them; the story of  
The mortality of men strikes to the heart.  
Nevertheless, Achates, do not fear.  
In the fame recorded here there is some safety." 630

So saying, his hungry spirit feasts on the pictured  
Unsubstantial scenes, as, weeping and sighing,  
He gazes, his visage flooded with tears, for there  
He sees the citadel of Pergamum,  
And the Greeks in headlong flight from the Trojan youths  
Pursuing them, hot on their heels; he sees  
The panicked Phrygians fleeing from plumed Achilles'  
Chariot pressing close upon them; he sees  
The snow-white tents of Rhesus, and he weeps  
As he sees how bloody Tydides broke in on them, 640  
And slaughtered them wholesale, where he caught them sleeping,  
And how he stole the fiery horses of Rhesus,  
And took them back to his camp before they had  
The time to forage on Trojan fodder, or drink  
From the waters of Xanthus. Aeneas sees  
How Troilus, unlucky boy, having lost his weapons,  
So much outmatched by Achilles, has fallen out,  
Down flat on his back and dragged along by his horses  
And empty chariot, still holding the reins,  
And bumping along the ground by the neck and hair, 650  
And his spear, reversed, trailing, trundling along,

Inscribing in the dirt his wretched story.  
Aeneas sees there too the Trojan women,  
Their hair unbound and streaming, beating their breasts  
And with gestures of supplication bearing the robe  
In the temple of the goddess Athena, who  
Averted her eyes and would not look at them.  
He sees Achilles there, after he thrice  
Dragged Hector around the walls of Troy and now  
Was putting his lifeless body up for sale. 660  
Aeneas groans from the depth of his being when  
He sees the spoils, the armor and weapons, and  
The chariot, and the corpse itself of his friend,  
And Priam stretching out his weaponless hands.  
And Aeneas sees his own self pictured there,  
In combat with Achaean princes and  
The chiefs of the Eastern tribes, and Memnon, swarthy  
Leader of the Ethiopian cohort,  
And there was Penthesilea, bellatrix,  
Breast bared above the golden cincture she wore, 670  
Furious in the battle, leading her thousand  
Amazons with their crescent shields to war,  
A warrior maiden in combat among the men.

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As Aeneas gazes in rapturous wonder, transfixed  
By the images he sees upon the walls,  
Dido the queen, marvelous in her beauty,  
Surrounded by a company of youths,  
Ascends the temple stairs to enter in.  
It is as when on Eurotas's banks or on  
The highest ridge of Cynthus Mountain, the goddess 680  
Diana leads her throng of lovely nymphs,  
A thousand Oreades in dancing lines  
Moving to right and left as the music asks;

Diana is tallest of all the goddesses,  
And wears the huntress's quiver over her shoulder;  
Latona, her mother, watching, is filled with pride—  
This is what Dido was like, as in their midst,  
She joyfully went about her queenly work.  
At the door of the shrine of the goddess, beneath the dome,  
She took her regal place high on a throne, 690  
From which she promulgated laws, defined  
The rules of civic order, and assigned,  
By lot or by division to each his share  
Of the proud labor of building their city of Carthage.  
Aeneas is watching this, when suddenly  
He sees, making their way through the crowd, Sergestus,  
And with him Antheus, and brave Cloanthus  
And the other Trojans from those other ships  
The black storm wind had dispersed and scattered and driven  
To somewhere else, maybe to other coasts. 700  
Aeneas was astonished, and so was Achates;  
Both were joyful, and strangely fearful too.  
They were ardent to seize the hands of their comrades whom  
They thought had been lost to them, but, also, their hearts  
Were bewildered by the strange unknownness of  
These things they were seeing, and so they kept themselves  
Hidden unseen inside in the cloud, and listened  
To hear what had been the fortune of their friends,  
What shore their ships had come to, after the storm,  
And what was their mission, what were they seeking, in Carthage, 710  
For now from their ships their delegated men  
Were coming to the temple, amid the clamor  
Of their petitioning cries and their beseeching.

When they had entered the temple and been granted  
Permission to speak, Ilioneus, the eldest,  
Calmly and gravely said: "O queen, to whom  
Jove has given the right to build a new city,  
And to establish rules of laws so as

To restrain the arrogance of unruly tribes,  
We Trojans, wretched, driven from sea to sea 720  
By tempestuous winds, we pray to you that you  
Will keep the unhallowed fire away from our ships.  
We are a god-fearing people; we pray that you  
Will look on us and our fortunes with gracious favor.  
We have not come with swords to raid your houses.  
There is an ancient land, called by the Greeks  
Hesperia; it is powerful both in arms  
And in the abundance that its soil brings forth.  
The Oenotrians were its first inhabitants,  
And then, so we are told, there came a people 730  
Who called it Italy, after their leader's name.  
It is the land toward which we had steered our course  
When suddenly stormy Orion and all his bursting  
Storm winds scattered our ships among unseen shoals,  
Uncharted rocks, and giant crashing waves,  
Till we were carried, broken, onto these shores,  
We few. What kind of people *are* they, here,  
So barbarous that they behave like this,  
Denying us the welcome of the beach,  
Attacking us, keeping us off their land? 740  
But if you have no fear of mortal arms,  
And no regard for the claims of humankind  
On one another, remember that the gods  
Will remember what was right and what was wrong.  
Aeneas was our leader, no one more just,  
No one more righteous, and none more glorious  
For valor and for skill on the field of battle.  
If the Fates have kept him alive, if he still breathes  
The air of the upper world and not yet lies  
In the cruel darkness, then we have nothing to fear. 750  
There would be no reason for you to be sorry to vie  
With him in the rivalry of courtesy.  
In Sicily there are cities, and lands to be plowed,  
And their leader is famous Acestes, of Trojan blood.

Permit us to bring our storm-beaten ships to the beach,  
Where we can fashion planks and oars from the forest,  
So that, if it be granted that our king  
And our companions have been saved, then we  
Can sail, together with them, to Italy.  
But if it's not so, if you, Aeneas, the best  
Of Trojans, are gone beneath the Libyan sea,  
And Iulus lost, the hope of our nation lost,  
Then we, at all events, will seek the straits  
Of Sicily, from which we came, and where  
There are places for us to live, and where there is  
Acestes to be our king." And thus it was  
That Ilioneus spoke, and all the sons  
Of Dardanus shouted together their loud assent.

760

Then Dido, bowing her head, spoke thus to them:  
"Banish your cares; free yourselves from your fears.  
My kingdom being new, and vulnerable,  
Harsh measures have been needed to be used  
To guard my borders all around from strangers.  
Who is it, though, who has not heard of Aeneas,  
His warriors and their deeds, and of Troy's burning?  
Our Tyrian hearts are not so obtuse, nor does  
The sun harness his steeds so far from our city.  
Whether it's great Hesperia and the fields  
Of Saturn that you go to, or the lands  
Of Eryx that you seek, and Acestes as king,  
I'll send you forth in safety, and treasure with you.  
Or do you wish to make this kingdom your home?  
This city I am building will be yours,  
On equal terms. Bring in your ships to shore.  
There will be no discrimination made  
Between the Tyrians and the Teucrians here.

770

780

Would that Aeneas were here. Perhaps the storm  
Has also driven him, like you, to these shores,

I will send scouts along the coasts and to  
The farthest extremes of Libya's land to see  
If he is wandering anywhere there,  
In forests or in towns, shipwrecked and lost."

790

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Excited, as they listened, by these words,  
Pious Aeneas and brave Achates burned  
To be free of the cloud that they were hidden in.  
Achates, first, urgently says to Aeneas:  
"Goddess-born, what thought is in your mind?  
You see that all is safe, our ships all safe,  
Our comrades safe, except for the one we saw  
With our own eyes, drowning in the waters.  
Other than this, all is as your mother foretold."  
No sooner has he spoken than the cloud  
Around them that had hidden them is parted  
And vanishes as it clears away on high,  
And shining Aeneas in the clear air stands there,  
In shoulders and in countenance like a god,  
For his mother had endowed him by his birth  
With that grace of youthful beauty, that's like the beauty  
Ivory has to the hand that has fashioned it,  
Or the grace of silver or Parian marble set  
In yellow gold. Aeneas, revealed to all  
So suddenly, addressed the queen, and said,  
"It is I whom you seek, I am here, Aeneas of Troy,  
Having survived the storm and the Libyan waves.  
O you who have been the only one to pity  
The Trojans for the unspeakable misfortunes  
That they have suffered from, exhausted by  
Catastrophes on land and on the sea,  
Destitute, remnant of what the Greeks had done,  
That you have offered to share your city with us,  
To be our home, there is no way that we,

800

810

820



Nor any Trojans, anywhere in the world,  
Scattered wherever it is they are, have power  
Commensurate to your kindness, to give you thanks.  
I pray to the gods, if there be those who value  
Goodness, and if there's justice anywhere,  
May they reward you fully as you deserve.  
What happy people is it that you come from?  
Who are the parents so wonderful as to be  
The parents of such a child? As long as rivers  
Flow down to the welcoming sea, as long as over  
The slopes of mountains the shadows move along,  
As long as the stars pasture on heaven's fields,  
So long will your name be ever honored and praised,  
Whatever will be the country I am called to."

830

So saying, he turns, and with his right hand grasps  
The hand of Ilioneus, his dear friend,  
And with his left the hand of Sergestus, then turns  
To embrace the others, brave Gyas, and brave Cloanthus.

Sidonian Dido was astonished by  
The sudden appearance of this man before her,  
And awestruck by the story he had to tell,  
Of such distress, and so she said: "How is it,  
Goddess-born, that you have suffered such  
Misfortunes? What is it that pursues you so?  
What power has driven you to these barbarous shores?  
Are you Aeneas, he who was born beside  
The Phrygian river Simois to Dardan Anchises,  
By gracious Venus? I remember the time when Teucer  
Came to Sidon, exiled from his own country,  
Seeking help from my father, Belus, in  
His effort to find a new kingdom for himself.  
It was just when Belus was laying waste to Cyprus,  
And in triumph holding it, victorious.  
It was then I learned from Teucer the story of

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The fall of Troy, and knew of you, and of  
The Pelasgian line of kings. Though he was one  
Of the enemies of the Trojans, he praised them highly,  
And he was proud to claim that he himself  
Was of Teucrian descent, from ancient days.  
Therefore, O youths, come in, under our roofs.  
I have been driven through many such misfortunes,  
And Fortune has willed that I should settle here.  
I have learned to come to the aid of the distressed  
Because I am one who has also known distress.”

860

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Thus Dido spoke, and then forthwith she led  
Aeneas into her royal house, commanding  
That there should be at once, to honor him,  
A sacrifice at the altars of the gods;  
And, not forgetting them, she sent the Trojans  
Still waiting back at the shore some twenty bulls,  
A hundred great bristle-backed hogs, and with them a hundred  
Fatted lambs along with their mother ewes.  
The interior of the royal palace was  
Opulently adorned with regal splendor,  
And in its halls a banquet was being readied,  
With royal purple coverlets laid out,  
Elaborately embroidered, and massive silver  
Plates engraved in gold with images  
That told ancestral stories of the deeds  
Of brave heroes back to dark antiquity.

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His fatherly heart unable to rest for a moment,  
Aeneas tells Achates to go at once  
And find Ascanius, his son, and bring him,  
As quickly as he can, to the royal palace.  
All his parental care is for his child.  
And also it is his will that Ascanius

Should bear them gifts saved from Ilium's ruin:  
A mantle stiff with golden enwoven figures;  
A beautiful veil with a yellow-acanthus fringe,  
A gift her mother Leda had given to Helen,  
Who brought it from Mycenae and later wore it  
When leaving for Troy and her illicit nuptials;  
A scepter that Ilione, Priam's eldest  
Daughter had carried; a necklace of pearls; a crown  
Encircled with double rows of gems and gold.  
Achates obeyed and swiftly went to the ships.

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But the Cytherean, over and over again  
Was thinking what schemes and stratagems might be  
Devised for Cupid, disguised, to substitute  
Himself for sweet Ascanius, and use  
His talents to enflame Queen Dido with love,  
And implicate its fire in her very marrow.  
She fears the treacherous double-tongued Tyrian house,  
And every night she is scalded by the thought  
Of Juno's rage and what it could cause to happen,  
So this is what she says to wingèd Love:  
"My son, my soldier, my only one, my power—  
O son, you are the only one to scorn  
The Typhoean arrows of the mighty Father.  
I flee to you and supplicate your godhead.  
You know how your brother Aeneas was tossed from shore  
To shore by the anger of vengeful Juno, and  
You have joined us in deploring it. Now Dido  
The Phoenician holds him with her blandishing words.  
And who knows what is going to follow from Juno's  
Hospitality? At such a moment,  
Juno is not likely to do nothing.  
Because of these considerations I

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Have thought about a way to go about it.  
I will enthrall the queen with tricks, and circle  
The flames of passion around her, so no power  
Will have the power to change her, and she'll be held,  
My captive in her love for my Aeneas.

920

Now listen to my thought about what it is  
That you can do: the young prince, my dearest care,  
Summoned there by his father, is going to  
The Sidonian city carrying precious gifts  
That were salvaged from the sea and from Troy's fire.  
So I will cause the child to fall asleep,  
And then I'll carry him off and hide him away,  
In my sacred shrine at Idalia or else high  
In the hills of my isle of Cythera, where he'll slumber  
Knowing nothing at all about my tricks.  
You are a boy and, being a boy, you will,  
For one night only pretend to be this boy,  
So that when Dido, amid the royal feast  
And the flow of Bacchic wine, and full of joy,  
Takes you up, and folds you in her embrace,  
And kisses you and kisses you, you'll breathe  
The secret fire of love into the queen,  
And bewitch her with its poison."

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Then Cupid divests  
Himself of his wings, obedient to his dear  
Mother's instruction, and joyously walks with the very  
Gait and manner of Ascanius.  
But Venus pours gentle sleep over the real  
Ascanius and nestles him in her arms,  
And carries him off and up to the high groves  
Of Idalia where he slumbers fast asleep  
In the sweet embrace of marjoram flowers and in  
Their softly breathing fragrant shade. So Cupid

950

Obeys his mother, and, happy to follow Achates,  
Goes forth to the city, bearing the royal gifts.

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When Cupid enters, the queen is already there,  
Reclining upon a golden divan amid  
Magnificent drapery. And now Aeneas  
And all the Trojan youth come into the hall  
And take their places on couches covered in purple.  
Cool water is brought for them to lave their hands, 960  
And smooth-shorn napkins are brought, and baskets of bread;  
Fifty maidservants are busy preparing the feast,  
And maintaining the hearth fires, a hundred more  
Maidservants and an equal number of pages  
Are setting out the dishes and drinking cups.  
The Tyrians are thronging into the hall,  
And taking their places on the festive couches.  
They are full of wonder when they see the gifts  
Aeneas had commanded to be brought,  
Full of wonder at Iulus, the little child, 970  
His glowing beauty, his charming feigning words,  
The words of the little god pretending he's him.  
They marvel at the mantle and the veil  
With its yellow-acanthus fringe.

But more than all,  
The doomed Phoenician's soul cannot be sated  
With gazing upon the gifts and upon the boy,  
Taking fire more the more she gazes, thrilled.  
And he, the boy, having lovingly clung to Aeneas,  
Embracing him and hanging upon his neck, 980  
And, having satisfied the father's love,  
Seeks out the queen. The queen, her eyes and heart  
Enamored by the boy, embraces him  
And takes him upon her lap, and fondles him,

And folds him in her arms protectively,  
Poor Dido, who does not know how great a god  
Is settled in her lap to bring her grief.

And Cupid, to please his Acidalian mother,  
Begins, little by little, to erase  
From Dido's mind the image of Sychaeus,  
And to substitute a living passion in  
A heart and soul long unaccustomed to love.

990

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Then when the feasting is over and the dishes  
Are cleared away, the servants bring great bowls  
Of wine, festooned with garlands, and the noise  
Of festive voices rolls through the ample halls;  
There are lights suspended from golden ceiling panels,  
And flaming torches holding back the night.  
The queen calls for the jeweled and golden cup  
That Belus used and all of Belus's line,  
And all the company in the hall are silent:

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“Jupiter, it is said you give the laws  
Of hospitality, so may you grant  
Happiness today to Tyrians and  
To the voyagers from Troy, and may our children  
Remember this day that is a day of joy.  
May Bacchus, giver of happiness, be here,  
And generous Juno, and, you Tyrians,  
Favor this company with your joyful welcome.”

It was thus she spoke, and after that she poured  
A libation on the board, and after that  
She was the first to taste the wine, and then  
Passed it to Bitias challengingly, and he  
At once accepted the challenge, drinking deep

1010

From the foaming golden cup, and after that  
The other lords in order drank. Long-haired  
Iopas, taught how to do so by great Atlas,  
Sang, and the sound of his golden lyre resounded  
Throughout the hall, and what he sang was of  
The wandering moon and the labors of the sun, 1020  
And where the first men and the first beasts came from,  
And the origins of rain, and fire, and of  
Arcturus and the rainy Hyades,  
And of the Great Bear and the Little Bear,  
And why it is that the sun in winter hurries  
To plunge itself into the sea, and why  
The winter night is so slow to come to an end.  
With shouts redoubled and redoubled both  
The Tyrians and the Teucrians applaud,  
And unfortunate Dido, drinking deep of love, 1030  
With dazzled questioning prolonged the night,  
Inquiring what the Trojan could tell her of Priam,  
Of Hector, and of the armor worn by Memnon,  
The son of the Dawn, and of the wonderful horses  
Of Diomedes, and of Achilles' greatness.

“And more than this,” she says, “tell us, my guest,  
From the beginning, about the treachery of  
The Greeks, and about your people's calamities,  
And the wanderings that you have undergone,  
Over lands and over the seas, for seven years.” 1040

# Book Two

The hall was quiet, and everyone who was there  
Was rapt in the silence in which they gazed at him,  
Who from his place of honor thus replied:

“Unspeakable is the story of woe I must,  
By your command, bring back by telling it,  
The story, O Queen, of how the Greeks destroyed  
The wretched Trojan kingdom and all its wealth.  
I am the man who saw what happened there,  
And played my fated part in what took place.  
Where is the Myrmidon or Dolopian or  
Hard-hearted Ulysses’ soldier who could keep  
Himself from weeping, telling such a story?  
Now dewy night is departing from the sky;  
The stars as they set are telling us it’s time  
To go to sleep; but if you desire to know  
What our calamities were, and the circumstance  
Of the final agony of Troy, then though  
My mind is shuddering at the memory,  
And shrinks away from the story in its grief,  
I will begin:

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Broken by savage war,  
Disdained by the Fates, after so many years,  
The Danaan leaders by the art of Pallas  
Build a gigantic Horse, as big as a hill,  
Its ribs constructed out of fir-tree limbs.  
The chiefs pretend it is intended for  
A votive offering to the gods, to ensure  
The safe return of the Greeks to where they came from.  
This is the tale they cause to be spread abroad.  
Then secretly they hide, within the huge  
Cavernous belly of the Horse, a host  
Of armed warriors waiting in the dark.

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Not far from the mainland there's a well-known island,  
Called Tenedos, that once was prosperous  
When Troy was prosperous, but now is only  
A desolate unsafe mooring place for ships.  
The Danaans sail to those deserted shores  
And hide themselves from us, so that we think  
That they are gone for good and that the wind  
Has carried them away to their Mycenae,  
So Troy at last is free from its long trouble.  
All the gates of the city are opened wide.  
What joy to go and see the empty camps,  
And the deserted port where the ships had been.  
'Here's where the Dorican soldiers had their camp,  
And here's where the Myrmidons were; here's where  
Cruel Achilles was; here's where the fleet;  
Here are the fields on which we fought with them.'  
Some of the people are stupefied by the virgin  
Minerva's fatal gift, they are lost in wonder  
At the gigantic Horse. Thymoetes is  
The first of us to urge that the Horse be brought  
Inside the walls to be a monument  
In the citadel itself. This either is

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His treachery, or else the doom of Troy  
Is of its own accord at work in his language.  
But Capys and other wiser counselors  
Urge us either to hurl this dubious gift,  
This Grecian trickery, off the cliffs headlong  
Into the sea below, or build a fire  
Beneath its belly and thus destroy it, or  
Use spears to pierce its hollow sides and probe  
To find what might be lurking there inside it.  
The confused uncertain crowd is split into factions  
Of people not knowing which way to think about it.

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Then Laocoön comes running, followed by  
A throng of others, and as he runs cries out  
In an anguished voice, 'O my poor fellow Trojans,  
What is this madness? Do you really think  
The enemy has gone? Do you really think  
The Greeks give guileless gifts? Do you really think  
Ulysses is such a man? Either Achaeans  
Are hiding inside this Thing or else this is  
Some kind of war machine against our walls,  
Or it's designed to look down over them  
And see into our houses, or else it's made  
So they can descend upon us from above,  
Or there's some other trickery inside.  
Trojans, don't trust this Horse. I'm afraid of Greeks.  
Beware of gifts from Greeks.' This said, he turns  
And with great force he hurls his mighty spear.  
It strikes the beast in the belly and shaking stays,  
And when it stays, there is, from deep within,  
A reverberating hollow moaning sound.  
And had the Fates permitted us to do so,  
And had our minds not been so self-deluded,

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We would have used our steel to open it up,  
And see into the Argive hiding place,  
And Priam's citadel, Troy, would still be standing.

But at that moment a loudly shouting crowd 90  
Of shepherds from the countryside appears,  
Bringing into the presence of the king  
A youth whose hands they'd tied behind his back.  
This stranger, who is resolute in his purpose  
Either to die or else to bring about  
The opening up of Troy to the Achaeans,  
Had so contrived to situate himself  
That the guileless shepherds, encountering him, would seize him.  
From all around a mob of Trojan youths  
Come running here to see this captured Greek, 100  
Reviling him, pressed close around him, taunting.  
Now listen and hear what treachery the Greeks  
Are capable of, by hearing what this Greek  
Was capable of, for, as, unarmed, he stood there,  
Looking helpless, looking desperate, looking around  
At the Phrygian crowd that was gathered looking at him,  
He cries: 'Alas, alas, what land is there  
Where I can go where they will take me in?  
What will become of me? I have no place  
Among the Greeks; and the Dardanidae 110  
Cry out on me for vengeance, seeking my blood!'  
Hearing him wail like this, our impetus  
For violence against him is quieted down.  
We urge him to tell us who he is and what  
Information he has, to give to us:  
'You are our prisoner now, what is your story?'  
After awhile, seeming less fearful, he speaks:

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'O king, whatever it is that happens to me,  
I'll tell the truth, nor will I deny that I  
Am Greek by birth; I tell you this at once. 120  
Though Fortune has fashioned Sinon for misery,  
She cannot make Sinon a liar. The fame  
Of Palamedes, son of Belus, may  
Have reached your ears. Because of his refusal  
To participate in the Ilian adventure,  
He was, though innocent, by false report  
Brought down to death by the Pelasgians—  
Who mourn him now that he is lost to the light.  
My father was his kinsmen, who, though poor,  
Sent me when I was young to serve with him. 130  
While he was powerful still, a prince whose voice  
Was respected in the councils of the king,  
Our family's standing and repute were strong;  
But when, because of Ulysses' subtle contriving  
(As is well known), he left the upper air,  
Then I was left alone to labor through  
My shattered life in the darkness of my grief  
And anger over the things that had been done  
To my innocent friend and patron. I did not keep  
My anger to myself, or my vows that if 140  
I ever returned in triumph to my Argos,  
I would exact revenge. My words were heard,  
And I was feared and distrusted by many who heard them.  
This is how it began, and it is how Ulysses  
Contrived against me by spreading dark rumors about me,  
And seeking confederates in his conspiracy  
To bring me down. He didn't rest until  
He enlisted Calchas as his instrument.  
But why am I telling this story to ears to which  
It is unwelcome? What are you waiting for? 150  
If you regard all Greeks as all the same,

And if it's enough for you to know I'm Greek,  
Then take your revenge on me, have done with it,  
For this is what the Ithacan would desire,  
And what the sons of Atreus would prize.'

Then we are ardent to hear his story and  
To understand it, ignorant as we were  
Of such Pelasgian wickedness and deceit.  
And so the dissembler continues the story, trembling,  
And speaking with dissembling deep emotion:

160

'The Greeks were weary of protracted war,  
And anxious to weigh anchor and depart,  
Longing to find their homes. Would they had done so.  
But too many times there were great storms at sea  
That kept them back from going. And, just at the moment  
This horse you see, built out of wooden planks,  
Was finally completed. From great clouds loud  
Thunder sounded all across the sky.  
What could this be? They sent Eurypylus  
To consult the oracle of Phoebus, and  
When he returned from the shrine he brought these words:  
"Danae, when you set sail for Ilium,  
You pacified the winds with the blood of a virgin,  
Slain as a sacrifice. When you aspire  
To return from there, you must pacify the winds,  
With the blood of an Achaean sacrifice."

170

A cold shudder ran through the hearts of all  
In the listening crowd when they heard the oracle.  
"Who is it for whom the Fates are readying death?  
Who is it Apollo calls for?" And then there's tumult,  
When Calchas the seer is dragged into their midst  
By the Ithacan demanding that he tell  
What the gods desire. In the crowd there were many who said  
That it was I whose death had been foretold,

180

And silently they waited for what they knew  
Was going to come to pass when the seer spoke.  
Five days the seer is silent in his tent,  
And five more days; and would not say the words  
That would send someone to death; and then, at last,  
Yielding to the Ithacan's loud insistence, 190  
He ended his silence with words that spelled my doom.  
It was I who was to be sacrificed at the altar.  
The crowd received his utterance with approval,  
Each one of them accepting the exchange  
Of another's death for his own relief from fear.

And now the day too horrible to imagine  
Had come upon me. They were preparing the rites,  
The salted meal to sprinkle on my head,  
The fillets to bind my brow, making me ready.  
But there was a moment when, being left alone, 200  
Somehow I broke my bonds, and got away,  
Escaping from my death. I hid myself  
In the sedgy mire at the edge of a muddy lake,  
Hoping to be unseen till they sailed away,  
If that was going to happen. I knew I had  
No hope of ever seeing my country again,  
Or seeing my father again, or my sweet children  
I so desired to see once more. I knew  
That it might come to be that the Greeks would exact  
Retribution, by their deaths, oh wretched ones, 210  
For the crime I had committed by my flight.  
But I beg, in the name of all the gods on high,  
The powers who know the truth and will sustain it,  
If anywhere in the world among mortal men  
There's an unstained purity of faith, have pity,  
Have pity on one whose sorrow is undeserved.'

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In response to his tears we spare him, and, more than that,  
We pity him. It is Priam, the king, himself,  
Who commands that he be freed from his constraints,  
And speaks to him with welcome and with kindness: 220  
'Whoever you are, now you are one of us;  
Forget the Greeks; now they are lost to you.  
But you must answer to the questions I ask:  
What is the reason they raised this giant Horse?  
Who is it who made it? Why was it made? Is it  
An offering to supplicate a god?  
Is it a war machine?' And when he ceased,  
The other, who had been so well instructed  
In Pelasgian deceit, raised up to the heavens  
His hands now free from their bindings and cried out, 230

'Witness, eternal inviolable fires above,  
You stars, you altars, and you evil swords,  
You fillets of the gods I wore when they  
Prepared me for the sacrificial altar,  
Grant me the right to be released from all  
My sacred vows of allegiance to the Greeks,  
Grant me the right to hate them, the right to bring  
All secret things that are hidden in the dark,  
Out into the light. I am no longer bound  
By any laws of the country that I came from. 240  
If what I have to tell you keeps you safe,  
Then keep me safe as you have promised me,  
In equal exchange for what I bring to you.

The hope and confidence of the Danaans  
Depended on Pallas's help. However, impious  
Tydides and Ulysses the contriver  
Together ravished the sacred shrine of Pallas,  
And slew the guardians of the citadel,  
And with their bloody hands seized her holy image,  
Touching the fillets of the virgin goddess. 250

It was from that time and act that the strength of the Greeks  
Was broken down, their hopes collapsed, and they  
Were angrily dispelled from the heart of the outraged  
Goddess. Hardly had the sacred image  
Been placed in the camp it was brought to, over the seas,  
Than Tritonia showed the signs that this was so.  
Fire blazed out from the effigy's upraised eyes,  
Sweat poured over its limbs, and, *mirabile dictu*,  
In lightning flashes the goddess herself three times  
Was seen with spear and shield, and vanished again! 260  
The prophecy of Calchas from his shrine  
Was that these signs are signs that they must take  
To the sea and go, that Pergamum can't be conquered  
By Argive weapons unless they return to Argos  
To find new omens, carrying back with them  
In their curved ships the effigy they had stolen  
And brought with them from there. And now as they  
Are gone before the wind to their Mycenae,  
They go to recover their forces and their gods,  
And after they have done so, then, unexpected, 270  
They will return. Thus Calchas reads the omens.  
Because of Calchas's admonition the Greeks  
Have made this giant effigy to atone  
For the insult to the gods and in penance for  
Their disastrous unholy sacrilegious act,  
The violation of the Palladium.  
Calchas told them to make the effigy  
Enormous, to raise it up to the skies so high  
That it couldn't be gotten through the gates and drawn  
Within the citadel walls where it would be, 280  
According to their ancient sheltering faith,  
Guardian of the safety of the people.  
If by your hands there should be any harm  
To this offering of Minerva, utter ruin  
(O may this omen turn back upon the seer!)  
Would then come down on Priam and the Phrygians;



But if by your hands the effigy could ascend  
Into the citadel, then Asia would  
Be able to take the war to the walls of Pelops,  
And doom would then descend upon Greek children!'

290

Thus, by the guile and art of perjured Sinon,  
We believed him, and therefore we became his captives,  
Under compulsion of his tricks and tears,  
We whom neither Tydides nor Larissean  
Achilles, nor ten years, nor a thousand ships,  
Could ever bring to our knees.

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But then there is  
An event more frightful still, that comes upon us  
Unprovided unforeseeing souls.  
Laocoön, chosen by lot to be  
The priest of Neptune, was in the act of performing  
The sacrifice of a great bull at the altar  
When, lo, I shudder to speak it, over the tranquil  
Quiet sea that lies between the island  
Of Tenedos and the mainland, there comes a pair  
Of giant serpents swimming toward us, their  
Immense coils writhing as side by side they make  
Their steady way through the waters and head for shore,  
Their breasts held high, impelling the waves before them,  
Their blood-red crests held high, the rest of their bodies  
Following along on the surface of the water,  
Their great sinuous backs coiling behind them;  
We can hear, as they come, the sound of the foaming water  
Their bodies displace; we see how with bloodshot fiery  
Eyes, they gaze at the shore as they approach,  
Licking their hissing mouths with their quivering tongues.  
The blood drains from our faces at the sight,

300

310

As we shrink back. They reach the shore and dreadful they  
Move without swerving toward Laocoön.

Then first each one of the two enwraps the little 320  
Body of one of his two sons in its

Enfolding embrace, and pastures upon its limbs.

And then, as Laocoön is rushing, armed

To try to come to the aid of his dying children,

They seize him and bind him in their giant coils,

Twice coiling around his waist, then twice again,

Their scaly coils coiling around his throat,

Their heads and necks held high, victorious;

He struggles with his hands to get himself free

From the knots they wind around him; his priestly fillets 330

Are drenched in his bloody gore and the serpents' black venom.

The clamor of his horrifying cries

Rises to the stars like the loud bellowing

Of a bull, half-killed, who has broken away from the altar

And from the misjudged blow of the ritual axe

Aimed at its neck. And then the pair of dragons

Slither away and seek the shrine of fierce

Tritonia, and shelter there beneath

The feet of the goddess and her circle shield.

Then, when the people see this, there is a strange 340

Terror that shudders through all their hearts and they

Turn to each other and say that Laocoön

Deserved what the serpents had done to him, because

Of what he had done when he hurled his infamous spear

Into the body of the sacred oak,

And so profaned it. This is the general cry:

'We must take the effigy to the goddess's shrine

And supplicate her divinity for forgiveness.'

And so we open up the city walls

And expose the battlements, all working together 350

To make this happen, fastening gliding wheels  
To its giant feet, and ropes around its neck,  
As halters with which to draw it to the shrine.  
The fatal machine, pregnant with arms, begins  
To climb our walls. Around it there are boys  
And unwedded girls, joyfully singing hymns  
And joyfully touching the ropes by means of which  
The Horse begins to move. It climbs up through  
The opening walls, and, this once done, it rolls  
Menacing into the central city—O  
My country, O my Ilium, home of the gods,  
O all-protecting glorious battlements  
Of Troy! Four times as it is moved, it halts  
At the city gates, and four times then there is  
Within the Horse the sound of armor clashing,  
Yet blind with fury and not knowing what  
It is that we are doing we keep going  
Until we have enshrined the monstrous Thing  
In the citadel itself. Cassandra is there,  
And even then cries out in prophecy  
Of the doom that was right now coming on upon us,  
But by a god's command her voice was never  
To be believed by Trojan ears. And we,  
Unhappy people, on this our final day,  
Festoon the town with celebratory garlands.

360

370

› › ›

And now the heavens move and night comes in,  
And covers with its darkness earth and sky,  
And the tricks of the Myrmidons. Throughout the city  
The Trojans, wearied by joy, lie fast asleep.

And now the Greeks set out from Tenedos,  
Their ships in ordered formation, under the silent

380

Stillness of the moon, making their way  
Quietly toward the shore they know so well;  
And when the lead ship's beacon light is shown,  
Sinon, protected by the complicit fates,  
Furtively opens up its wooden side,  
And frees the Achaeans from the Horse's womb.  
The Horse releases them to the open air  
And joyfully they come out. First come the captains,  
Thessandrus, and Sthenelus, and dire Ulysses,  
Lowering themselves to the ground by means of a rope,  
And Acamas, Thoas, and Neoptolemus of  
The house of Peleus, and Machaon the prince,  
And Menelaus, and Epeus, he it was  
Who built the Wooden Horse. They enter the city,  
That slumbers submerged in wine and sleep; they surprise,  
And quietly kill, the watchmen, and open the gates  
To welcome in their comrades from the fleet,  
Letting them in for what they are going to do.

390

, , ,

It is the hour when sleep by the grace of the gods  
Steals upon mortals, and, gratified, they sleep.  
I fall asleep, and sleep, and suddenly, lo,  
Hector is standing there before my eyes,  
Grief-stricken, weeping floods of tears, his body  
All torn, as it had been, by being dragged  
Behind that chariot, and black with the bloody  
Muck it left behind, his swollen feet still pierced  
By the thongs his legs were dragged along the dirt by.  
What sight is this that I was seeing? Oh,  
How changed is this from how he looked, our Hector,  
That day when he returned from the field of battle  
Wearing Achilles' armor, or how he looked,  
Hurling the firebrands at the burning ships,

400

410

His scragged beard and hair all crusted now  
With blood, his body showing all the bloody  
Wounds he got in the fighting around the walls  
Of the city of his fathers. In my dream  
I see myself and hear myself as, weeping,  
I cry out to him in a doleful grieving voice:

‘O light of Dardanians, hope of Troy,  
What is it that has kept you from us so long?  
Why have you been so long? What shores are those  
You come from? At last we see you, Hector, after  
So many deaths of those who belong to you,  
After so much your city and people have suffered.  
We have waited for you so long. What is it that  
So shamefully has disfigured that radiant face?  
Why do I have to see these terrible wounds?’

420

There were from him no answers to these questions,  
But, drawing groaning sighs from deep in his being,  
He speaks:

430

‘Ah, flee from this place, O goddess-born,  
You must escape these flames. Troy from on high  
Is brought down low. The enemy has her now,  
And all her walls. There’s nothing any longer  
Owed to king or country. If Troy could have  
Been saved by the power of any hand, it would  
Have been by mine. These are the holy things  
And the household gods, committed to you by Troy.  
They must go with you to share what happens to you.  
Carry them to the place where you will build,  
After your journeys over many seas,  
The city it is your destiny to build.’

440

Thus Hector says, and brings forth potent Vesta,  
The holy wreaths, and the ever-burning fire.

Meanwhile the city's turmoil is everywhere.  
 Although my father's house is deep secreted  
 Within the protection of surrounding trees,  
 The shuddering horror of the noise of arms  
 Grows greater, nearer, clearer every moment.

I shake myself free of sleep and climb to the roof  
 Of my father's house and strain to listen. It is  
 As when the furious South Wind brings down fire  
 Upon a grain field, or a mountain torrent  
 Rushes down on the crops and lays them low,  
 And ruins all the oxen's labor, and fells  
 The forest trees, and high on a hill the shepherd,  
 Stupefied stands there hearing the roar, and I  
 Know at this moment that this is what it is:

Thus is the treacherous ambush of the Greeks  
 Revealed. All is made clear. The Fire God towers  
 High up above the fallen-in great house  
 Of Deiphobus, and now Ucalegon  
 His neighbor's house is burning and the light  
 Reflected off the burning houses shines  
 On broad Sigeum's surface. The shouts of men  
 And the blaring noise of clarions grows louder.  
 Frantic, I seize my arms, though in my mind  
 I think, what could these weapons possibly do?  
 Frenzied with the desire to find my comrades,  
 And get to the citadel, my heart's on fire  
 With fury and the wanting to die with glory.

450

460

470

Then suddenly, at the door of my house, is Panthus,  
 The son of Othrys, who was the priest at the shrine  
 Of Apollo on the citadel. He carries  
 The sacred things and images from the shrine,  
 And holds his little grandchild by the hand.  
 'Panthus, tell me, tell me, where should we go,

Where should we go to fight?' I could scarcely get  
These words out, when, groaning, he answered me thus:

480

'Troy's last day has come; this is the end  
Of everything for us; the Trojans are finished;  
Our Ilium is utterly undone;  
The glory of the Teucrians is gone;  
Jupiter, enraged, has taken all,  
Everything we had, away to Argos;  
The Greeks are now the lords and masters of  
The city they are burning; the Horse stands high  
In the midst of things, within the city walls;  
Armed men are pouring out from within its insides;  
Sinon, insulting victor, scatters fire;  
The gates are open wide and through them come  
Thousands of enemy, as many as ever  
There were when first they came here from Mycenae;  
In serried ranks they block the narrow street,  
The glittering points of their weapons eager, avid,  
Hungry to kill; our guards at the gates resisted  
In blinded futility and were overwhelmed.'

490

Impelled by the will of the gods and by the words  
Of Panthus Othryadas I hasten to be  
Among the flames and the clashing weapons and where  
The black fury and shouting and roar of battle call;  
And there, under the light of the moon, I find,  
Gathered together, Rhipeus and mighty Epytus,  
Hypanis, Dymas, and Mygdon's son, the youth  
Coroebus, who had come to Troy because  
He was mad with love for Cassandra and had come  
To help her father Priam's nation survive,  
Unlucky youth whose love for the prophetess  
Had made him deaf to what she prophesied.  
When I see them standing close-ranked there together,

500

510

The cohort battle-ready and ready to hear me,  
I say these words:

‘Brave hearts, though brave in vain,  
If what you want is to follow me to the end,  
You know what is our fate. All of the gods  
By whom our kingdom was upheld have left  
Their shrines and altars, and all of them are gone;  
The city you wish to save is all in flames.  
Therefore let us die together and rush  
Desperate together into the enemy midst,  
Clarified by despair.’

520

Their young hearts roused  
To fury by these words of mine they’re like  
Ravaging wolves whose ravenous bellies’ needs  
Have driven them forth in rage in the misty darkness,  
Their children waiting with famished jaws for what  
They can bring home to them. We make our way  
Through arrows and swords and enemies toward death.  
Black night is a cavern of darkness all around us,  
And we get ourselves to the center of the town.

530

Who is it who could tell about such carnage?  
Whose tears could be equal to what has happened here?  
The ancient city, so long the queen, has fallen.  
Dead bodies lying everywhere on the streets,  
Among the houses, on the doorsteps, on  
The holy portals of the gods. It isn’t only  
Trojans who have paid the price with blood.  
Sometimes some of them, when they could, fought back,  
And there are many conqueror Greeks who fell.  
Dire woe is everywhere, everywhere terror,  
Everywhere there are images of death.

540



Then there's Androgeos before us, with  
 A company of other Greeks, and he,  
 Thinking us in the darkness also Greeks, cries out  
 To us as to fellow soldiers he thought we were,  
 'Hurry, comrades, why have you been so long?  
 All of the others are busy at the work  
 Of pillaging and plundering Pergamum.  
 Where have you been? Are you just off the ships?' 550  
 And as he says this, his voice dies back, because  
 He hears no familiar answer, and suddenly  
 He knows he is among the enemy,  
 Steps back, confused and scared, like one who has  
 Put down his confident foot on a brambled path  
 And there's a snake unseen in the rough ground cover  
 That rises up and swells its purple neck,  
 Enraged, and strikes at him. And so we strike,  
 Surrounding them in the darkness with our weapons,  
 And they, unsure in this unfamiliar ground, 560  
 And shocked and frightened by our sudden ambush,  
 Are slaughtered. Thus Fortune favors us this time.  
 Coroebus, exalted, excited by success,  
 Cries out, 'Oh comrades, Fortune shows us the way!  
 Let's follow her. Let's put on the armor of these  
 Dead Greeks, and let us change our shields for theirs.  
 Honorable or trickery, what matter?  
 In warfare, what does it matter? Our enemies  
 Have given these gifts to us.' So then Coroebus  
 Puts on Androgeos' plumed helmet and takes up 570  
 His shield with its beautiful emblem and takes hold  
 Of Androgeos' Argive sword. Rhipheus does  
 The same, and Dymas too, and all the other  
 Young warriors, delighted, each of them clad  
 In the spoils of the Grecian warriors they have killed.

And so we go on, through the unseeing night, among  
The enemy and under the cover of  
Alien gods, and engaging in many fights  
And sending many Greeks down there to Orcus.  
Some flee to the ships to get away to safety,  
And some of them in terror climb back up  
On the giant Horse, and hide themselves away  
In the familiar darkness of its womb.

580

It's folly to think the gods are dependable,  
When they are not. For suddenly there's the sight  
Of Priam's daughter, the virgin Cassandra, being  
Dragged away by soldiers from the shrine  
Of her Minerva, dragged away with her hair  
Disheveled, streaming, and her burning eyes  
Looking up vainly at the heavens above,  
Her eyes, because her tender hands are bound  
Behind her back, and Coroebus, who is driven  
Mad with fury at the sight of this,  
Throws himself to his fate against her captors,  
And all of us all together follow him.

590

Then, from the roof of the high temple above us,  
There is a rain of stones thrown down upon us,  
By our friends up there in their confusion because  
Of our Argive weapons and helmets, and the Danaans  
Down in the streets are raging because we're trying  
To rescue the maiden Cassandra, and more and more  
Of the Greeks then come together against us and charge us,  
Ajax the fierce, and the two Atrides, and  
The whole Dolopian force. It is as when  
A great storm bursts, and the violent winds contend  
With one another, the West Wind and the South Wind  
And the East Wind and his oriental steeds.  
The woods are moaning and Nereus rises up foaming,

600

Bringing the sea up from the lowest deep.  
Then there comes in the remnant of the Greeks  
We had first encountered and fooled in the dark of the night  
And scattered before us along the streets of the town.  
They recognize the armor that we're wearing,  
And the emblemed shields we carry, and they know,  
By our voices, that we are foreigners to them.  
So we're outnumbered, and Coroebus is slain  
By Penel us in front of the altar of  
Minerva, goddess of war, and Rhipheus who  
Was the most righteous, most reasonable and just,  
Of all the Trojans (but heaven rules against him);  
Hypanis, too, and Dymas, in the confusion,  
Are killed by what their own countrymen hurl down;  
And neither his piety nor the fillet wreaths  
Of the priesthood of Apollo can save Panthus.

610

620

› › ›

O ashes of Troy! O flames of the doom of my people!  
Witness that had I died by the will of the Fates  
At the hands of the Greeks I would have earned that death.  
There was no hazard that I did not face.

› › ›

Now we are forced from that place by the tide of the battle,  
I, and together with me, old Iphitus, and  
Pelias, whom Ulysses had lamed in the fighting.  
The clamor from Priam's house summons us there.  
And when we go there it is as if it is  
The place and nowhere else where the God of War's  
Let loose, there is such havoc, there is such death.  
Some of the Greeks are protected as they fight,  
Holding over their heads their shields, to make

630

A giant moving tortoise-shell cover protecting;  
Others are swarming up on ladders to  
The palace's roof, their left hands holding up 640  
Their shields against the debris that's raining down,  
Their right hands clutching the ladder rungs. The Trojans  
Up on the roof are tearing down the towers  
And gables of their palace to use as missiles—  
They see the end has come and yet defend  
Themselves against the death they know is here.  
Over the edge they pour down on the Greeks  
The gilded splendors that their fathers built  
To ornament their pride. And other Trojans,  
Down below, are closely joined with ready 650  
Desperate swords to guard the palace doors.  
Seeing all this our hearts are roused to bring  
What help we can to the palace of our king  
And augment the last-ditch ranks of those defending.

There is a secret entrance to the palace,  
That opens into a private corridor,  
By which, while still the Trojan kingdom stood,  
Andromache would go, alone, without  
Her retinue, to visit her husband's parents,  
And take Astyanax to see his grandsire. 660  
I enter in this way, and get myself up  
To the top, the highest point of the roof, from which  
The Trojans are throwing down on the Greeks below  
Their ineffectual missiles. There was a tower,  
On the edge of this roof, rising up toward the stars.  
You could see all Troy from there, and the ships of the Greeks  
And the Achaean camps. We use our weapons  
To batter it and shake it where it is weakest,  
Where its supporting columns meet its floors,  
And we break it down and push it over the edge, 670  
The wreckage of it; thundering it falls,

With a crash heard far and wide, upon the Greeks.  
Yet more Greeks still come up and still we throw  
Debris of the palace down on the enemy heads.

› › ›

There in the vestibule of the royal palace,  
And at the very doors, there's exultant Pyrrhus,  
Shining in the glitter of his armor;  
It's as when winter's cold is over and  
A serpent having nourished his poisons on  
The underground herbs he ate while he lay waiting 680  
All winter long for spring to make its return,  
Comes forth and sheds his skin, and he's youthful again,  
Youthful and shining, his old skin sloughed away,  
His crest erect, his menacing breast held high,  
His fluent body wreathing and coiling, ready.  
Gigantic Periphas is there beside him,  
Automedon too, his armor-bearer and  
The charioteer of the horses of Achilles,  
And behind them their troop of young Scyrian warriors,  
Close in to the building and hurling their firebrands up 690  
To the roof above. Pyrrhus himself, the leader,  
Seizes a battle-axe and tears away  
The hinges from the brass-bound portal doors  
And bashes a huge hole in the solid oak  
And opens up to sight the inner chambers  
Of the house of Priam the king and of the ancient  
Kings who had lived in the house before him, and thus  
The enemy has come to the very threshold.

Inside the palace there is the noise of chaos,  
Screaming, shrieking, ululating sounds 700  
Of the grief and terror of the Trojan women.  
The woeful clamor rises to the stars;

From vaulted room to room of the vast palace  
The women wander not knowing where they are going,  
Some in their distraction clinging to walls,  
Kissing the very doors. And on comes Pyrrhus,  
In all his father's power, coming in;  
No thing nor person can hold out against  
His coming. The great front gate of the palace falls in  
Under the battering of the battering ram;  
Force makes its way, unstoppable; the Greeks  
Pour slaughtering in, so many of them, filling  
The palace halls with the conquering entering foe.  
The force of it and the fury is greater even  
Than a foaming flooding river bursting through  
All that would hold against its whirling waters  
Insanely overflowing and carrying off  
Whole herds and their stables with them across the plains.

710

I witnessed Pyrrhus there, insatiably killing;  
I saw the two Atridae there; I saw  
Hecuba, the queen, and her hundred daughters,  
And Priam there between the altars, his blood  
Polluting what he himself had sacralized;  
The fifty bridal chambers and the great  
Hope of progeny, the beautiful doors  
Adorned with the pride of conquered barbarian gold,  
All brought down low, all fallen, all of it, all.  
Where the fire had not yet burned, the Greeks were there.

720

And if you wish to hear what was the fate  
Of Priam, I must tell you. When he sees  
How the city has fallen and how the doors of his palace  
Are smashed and broken into, and how the Greeks  
Are in the innermost chambers of his home,  
The aged king takes up the royal armor  
So long unused by him, and puts it on

730

His trembling old man shoulders, and girds himself  
With his useless sword, to send himself to death,  
Helpless old man, against the crowding foe.  
In the atrium in the middle of his palace,  
That was open to the vault of the heavens above,  
There was a great altar, and over it, leaning,  
An ancient laurel tree that with its shade  
Embraced protectively the household gods.

740

Here's Hecuba and with her are her daughters,  
Huddled together like doves sheltering in vain  
From the black winds of the storm that drove them there,  
And clutching in their hands the sacred icons.  
But when she sees her husband Priam wearing  
The armor he had worn when he was young,  
Hecuba cries out to him, 'My husband,  
My poor husband, what are you thinking of,  
That you have put on this armor and carry these weapons?  
Even if Hector were here, this is no longer  
A time for such as these. Come here, with me,  
Take shelter at this altar. It will protect us.  
If not, this is the place where we will all,  
All of us together, die together.'

750

These were her words as she drew him close to her,  
And helped him to a seat before the shrine.  
But suddenly there's one of Priam's sons,  
Polites, fleeing through a hail of arrows  
From Pyrrhus's slaughter, and running through the halls  
And empty courtyards of the palace to  
The atrium where Priam was, and Pyrrhus  
Hot on his heels, and hot to butcher him,  
And going to do so now; and Polites falls  
And his life pours out of him in streams of blood  
Before the eyes of his father and his mother.

760

And though already in the hands of death  
Priam cries out in rage in his old man voice:

770

‘If anywhere there’s righteousness in heaven,  
May the deities pay you back for what you do,  
Your obscene crime, polluting a father’s face  
With what it has to see, his own son’s slaughter.  
Achilles, whose son you pretend to be, did not  
Behave like this. He paid the due respect  
To a father’s supplication and sent back home  
The body of Hector to its tomb, and sent  
Me home unharmed.’

And, saying this, with all  
His strength he hurled his spear at Pyrrhus, and  
It made its harmless way toward Pyrrhus’s shield  
And struck with a tinkling sound, and bobbing hung  
Purposelessly from the boss of the shield; and Pyrrhus  
Says to him,

780

‘Then go down there below,  
And take this news about me to my father,  
And be sure to tell him all about his son,  
Degenerate Pyrrhus, and his despicable deeds.’

And as he says these words he drags old Priam,  
Trembling and shaking and slipping in the blood  
That was pouring out of the body of his son,  
To the high altar; and there he clutches him by  
The hair with his left hand and with his right hand  
Raises his glittering sword, and plunges it in,  
Up to the hilt, into his side.

790

This is  
The way the fortunes of Priam came to the end



That was fated for him—fated to see the fires  
Consuming his Troy, and the Pergamum fall down,  
He who had been the monarch of Asia, the ruler  
Of so many lands and tribes, a huge, headless,  
Body upon the shore, a nameless trunk.

800

› › ›

Everywhere there's horror everywhere.  
I saw the old king gasping his life away,  
And the image of my beloved father, old  
As the king was old, appears before my eyes,  
And the image of my Creusa, left alone,  
And my ruined house, and Iulus, my little child—  
What was his fate? I turn and look for those  
Who had followed me, and all of them are gone,  
In their weariness and despair deserting me,  
Leaping to death from the burning palace roof  
Or giving their bodies to death in the flames up there.  
The fires of the burning palace gave me the light  
To see, as I looked around, the empty scene.  
I was alone.

810

Then, suddenly, there, I saw  
Helen, Tyndaris, who was concealing herself  
In the deserted shrine of the goddess Vesta,  
Where, terrified of the Trojans' rage against her,  
For having caused the fall of the Pergamum,  
And the Grecians' wrath against her for causing the war,  
And her husband's wrath because she abandoned him,  
She hid herself away beneath the altar,  
And huddled there.

820

Fire blazed up in my heart,  
The desire to make her pay for what she'd done,  
And avenge my fallen country. 'Is it that she—

Will she go back a queen, a queen in a triumph, 830  
Unpunished, and see her Sparta once again,  
And Mycenae her native country? Is it that she  
Will go back to join her husband, her parents, her children,  
With a train of Phrygian captives and Ilian matrons  
Waiting upon her? Is this what Priam died for?  
Is this what Troy was burned for? Was it for this  
That the Dardan shore so many times was soaked  
With blood? It shall not be! There is no glory  
From vengeance on a woman, and no honor  
As if it were in battle. But to extinguish 840  
Vileness and make it pay for what it did  
Will merit praise, and I'll rejoice to fill  
My heart with the fire of exacting justice and  
Satisfy the ashes of my people.'

These were the words I said as my enraged  
Intent for vengeance was rushing me on. But there,  
There was my beautiful mother, Venus, she,  
Like light in the night sky shining, she, herself,  
As the gods in heaven are, when they're in heaven.  
She took me by the hand, restraining me, 850  
And from her roseate lips she spoke these words:

'What is this unleashed fury for, my son?  
Where is your care for me? Before all else,  
Must you not find your father, aged Anchises?  
Must you not find out whether Creusa your wife,  
Or Ascanius, your little boy, are alive?  
If by my love they had not been protected,  
The river of flames would have carried them away,  
Or the thirsty sword would have drunk their blood.  
The Greeks are all around them. Understand this: it is not 860  
The fault of her whose face you hate, the woman,  
Tyndaris of Laconia; it's not  
The fault of Paris. It is the gods who bring

This wealth and power down and burn the topless  
Towers of Ilium. Follow your mother's guidance;  
Obey your mother's injunctions. I'll clear away  
The clouds and mists by which you are surrounded.

Behold! Here, where nothing is to be seen  
But the smoke and dust that rises from the rubble  
Of rocks piled upon rocks, there's Neptune, who  
With his mighty trident brings down the walls and rears  
The foundations up and with great surges heaves,  
And upsets, and overturns, the entire city.  
There's Juno, who's the cruelest of them all,  
Commanding the invasions, holding open  
The Scaean Gates and in her armor of steel,  
Furiously summoning soldiers from the ships.  
And now, look up at the highest towers and see  
Tritonian Pallas holding out her shield,  
Her threatening Gorgon aegis, and, behind her,  
The lurid clouds of tempests still to come.  
My father himself is giving strength to the Greeks,  
And giving them courage, arousing the gods against  
The Dardanian arms. Flee from this struggle, my son.  
I will not abandon you, and I will take you  
To the threshold of your father's house.'

870

880

She spoke,  
And disappeared within the shades of night.

› › ›

There were demonic shapes around me, beings,  
Numinous haters of Troy, moving about . . .

890

Then truly I saw that Ilium was sinking  
Down into the flames and Neptune's Troy capsized.

It's as when a gang of woodsmen, high on a mountain,  
Are trying to bring a giant ash tree down,  
Hacking at it again and again with axes,  
And it stands there still, on the verge of falling down,  
Its leaves shaking and its great head rocking  
Back and forth from side to side, and then,  
At last, with a loud sound of its grief, the great  
Tree falls, its great base pulled up out of the earth.

900

› › ›

I leave the ruined palace and find my way,  
With the help of my weapons and guided by the goddess,  
And get past enemies and fires around me  
And reach my father's house. And when I get there,  
The home I was brought up in, my first desire  
Was to carry my father to safety in the hills,  
But he, since Troy had fallen, would not agree  
To exile or to live out his days any longer.  
He said, 'Since you are young and strong, you must  
Take flight. If the gods above so willed for me,  
They would have spared my house. It is enough  
That I have already seen one fall of Troy,  
And I survived it. But you must leave me now,  
And say farewell to me as if my body  
Lay here prepared and ready to be buried.  
When the enemy comes I will find a warrior's death,  
When they in pity treat me as a warrior  
And seek my spoils as if on the field of battle.  
The loss of the burial rite means nothing now.  
I, hated by the gods, have for so long  
Lived out my life in uselessness, since Jove,  
The Father of the Gods and the King of Men,  
Sent down his thunderbolt of fire upon me,  
For what I boasted of.' And so he spoke,

910

920

And would not change his mind, and we, my wife,  
Creusa, and Ascanius, my son,  
Hearing him, wept, and pleaded with my father  
Not thus to make our fate still worse for us  
Than it is going to be. But he persisted,  
Saying he would not alter what he'd said,  
Nor leave his home.

930

In misery I make ready,  
Longing for death, to fight again—for what  
Was else to do, what other chance was left?

'My father, did you think that I could ever  
Leave you behind? How could a father ever  
Utter such a thought as this? If it  
Is what the gods desire, that nothing survive  
Of what was Troy, and if it is your will  
To add yourself and yours to the sum of ruin,  
The gate is open through which the ruin comes.  
Pyrrhus will soon be here, with Priam's blood  
Still dripping from his sword, Pyrrhus who butchered  
The son whose father had to watch it done,  
And then he butchered the father at the altar.  
O gracious mother, was it for this you saved me,  
Among the swords, among the fires, to see  
The enemy come into my house, and see  
Ascanius, and my father, and my wife,  
Slaughtered here, each in each other's blood?  
No! The last light remaining to me is a summons.  
Though we shall die we shall not die unavenged.'

940

950

I took up my sword once more in my right hand,  
Once more took up my shield on my left arm,  
And was leaving my house on my way to die in battle,

But there on the threshold my wife was kneeling before me,  
And holding up little Iulus to show him to me.

‘If you are going forth to die,’ she cried,  
‘Then take us with you to share what fate might be,  
But if you have some hope in what your weapons  
Can do, because of what they have done before, 960  
Then wear your armor to guard this house, your home.  
For whom are you abandoning your child,  
And your father, and her whom once you called your wife?’

Her moaning cries filled up the house with their sound,  
When suddenly there was an astonishing sign.  
Iulus was there between his unhappy parents,  
Who tenderly were hovering around him, when,  
Between their hands and faces, as close as that,  
We saw a little visionary flame 970  
Playing about the head of the little child,  
And gently licking his curls and harmlessly  
Pasturing on his forehead as it played.  
We were alarmed, trembling with awe and fear,  
And, as fast as we could, extinguished the sacred fire  
With water and by brushing away the flames.  
But my father Anchises looks up to the stars on high,  
And joyfully raises up his palms and cries,

‘All-Powerful Jupiter, hear me, hear my voice!  
Look down upon us and if we merit it, 980  
Give us your help and validate this sign!’

No sooner had he spoken than there was,  
Suddenly, on the left, a peal of thunder,  
And overhead a star came down from heaven,  
And with tremendous speed went sliding across

The brilliantly suddenly lighted up nighttime sky.  
We saw its tail of fire as it passed above  
The palace roof and buried itself in the forest  
Of Ida, leaving behind a trail of light,  
And the odor of sulfur was everywhere around.

990

My father, overcome, exalted, rose,  
And raised his worshipful eyes to the holy star,  
And to the gods in the heavens, and urgently spoke:

‘Aeneas, we must leave now, we must leave now;  
Wherever it is you go, I’ll follow you;  
Wherever it is you are, there I will be.  
You gods of my fathers, save my house and save  
My grandson! Oh, you have sent us the omen that  
Now Troy is saved and protected by the gods.  
My son, I yield, and I will go with you.’

1000

As he spoke we could hear, ever more loudly, the noise  
Of the burning fires. The flood of flames was coming  
Nearer and nearer.

‘My father, let me take you  
Upon my shoulders and carry you with me.  
The burden will be easy. Whatever happens,  
You and I will experience it together,  
Peril or safety, whichever it will be.  
Little Iulus will come along beside me.  
My wife will follow behind us. And you, my servants,  
Listen to what I say: Just as you leave  
The limits of the city there is a mound,  
And the vestiges of a deserted temple of Ceres,  
And a cypress tree that has been preserved alive  
For many years by the piety of our fathers.  
We will all meet there, though perhaps by different ways,

1010

And, father, you must carry in your arms  
The holy images of our household gods.  
I, coming so late from the fighting and the carnage  
Cannot presume to touch them until I have washed  
Myself in running water.' Thus I spoke. 1020

I took up the tawny pelt of a lion and  
Covered my neck and my broad shoulders with it,  
And bowing down, I accepted the weight of my father;  
Iulus puts his hand in mine and goes  
Along beside me, trying to match my steps  
As best he can, trying his best to keep up;  
My wife follows behind us, at a distance.  
So we all set out together, making our way  
Among the shadows, and I, who only just 1030  
A little while ago had faced, undaunted,  
Showers of arrows and swarms of enemy Greeks,  
Am frightened by every slightest change in the air  
And startled by every slightest sound I hear,  
Fearful for whom I walk with and whom I carry.  
And just as I had almost come to the gates  
And thought that I had almost gotten us free,  
I thought I heard the sound of many feet,  
And my father, peering intently into the shadows,  
Cries out to me, 'Get away, get away, my son, 1040  
My son, they are coming! I see their shining shields,  
I see the glow of their weapons in the dark!'  
I am alarmed, and I don't know what happened  
But some power hostile to me distracts my wits,  
And I am confused, and I lead us away by ways  
That I don't know, and off the familiar streets  
That together we are following, and so,  
O God! some fate has taken away my wife,  
Creusa, my wife, away from me. What happened?  
Did she wander from the way that we were going? 1050



Did she fall back, having to rest some place  
Back there, and so we left her? I did not know.  
I never saw her again, and as we went,  
I never turned to look behind, and never  
Thought of her until we reached the mound  
And Ceres' ancient place. When all of us,  
At last, had gotten there, we all were there,  
But she had vanished and she wasn't there.  
Gone from her people, gone from her child, and her husband.

› › ›

What men or gods in my frenzy did I not  
Cry out against? What worse sight had I seen? 1060  
I left Ascanius and Anchises and  
The household gods in the care of my companions,  
And I found a secluded place deep in a valley  
For them to hide, and I myself took up  
My shining weapons and sought the city again,  
Determined, no matter what, to look for my  
Creusa everywhere in Troy. I find  
My way along the walls and to, and through,  
The shadowed gate I'd left the city by; 1070  
Carefully, step by unseen step, in the dark,  
Backward the way I came I make my way;  
Everywhere as I go fills me with terror;  
The very silence around me fills me with terror.  
I make my way to my home, in case, in case,  
She's gone back there. The Greeks had invaded the house  
And set it on fire, and through the house the fire  
Rolled up on the surge of the wind to the very roof,  
And the flames tower high above the burning house,  
And the heat of the burning pours up into the sky. 1080  
And so I go on, and once again I see  
The palace of Priam, and the citadel,

And in the empty courtyard of Juno's shrine  
There's Phoenix and dire Ulysses, guarding the treasures  
Taken from everywhere from the shrines that the Greeks  
Had set fire to; the golden bowls, the holy  
Altar tables, the stolen holy vestments;  
Boys and trembling matrons stand around.

I wander in the streets, in my desperation  
Calling her name, Creusa, Creusa, calling 1090  
Creusa, Creusa, over and over again.  
And as I went among the ruined buildings  
And through the streets of the ruined city, lo,  
Suddenly there rose before my eyes  
The strange, magnified, image of my wife.  
I was stupefied; my hair stood on end; my voice  
Caught in my throat. Then she spoke to me and said  
Words that altered everything for me:

'Beloved husband, what use is it for you  
To persist in this insanity of grief. 1100  
What has happened here has happened not without  
The will of the gods. The high lord of Olympus  
Does not permit Creusa to go with you  
To be with you on your journey where you are going.  
Long exile will be yours, plowing across  
Vast seas until you come to Hesperia,  
Where Lydian Tiber gently flows between  
Rich husbanded fields and where you will be happy,  
A king, and wedded to a royal wife.  
Give up your weeping now for your Creusa; 1110  
I, a Dardanian woman and the spouse  
Of divine Venus's son, will never have  
To see the scornful homes of the Myrmidons  
Or of the Dolopians, and never have  
To be the scullion slave of some Greek matron.

The Mighty Mother keeps me on these shores.  
Farewell and may your care protect and love  
Your child and mine.'

And having spoken thus,  
The image of her receded into air,  
Leaving me weeping, with so much still to say.  
Three times I tried to embrace her and to hold her;  
Three times the image, clasped in vain, escaped  
As if it were a breeze or on the wings  
Of a vanishing dream.

1120

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And so, the night being over,  
I returned to my companions where they were.  
When I got there I was amazed to see  
How many others, women and men, had come,  
Wretched survivors of the fall of the city,  
To join us in the exile and the journey,  
A heartbreaking company come from everywhere,  
Ready in their hearts and with their fortunes,  
To follow me wherever I was going.  
And now the morning star was rising over  
The highest ridges of Ida, bringing in  
The day that was beginning; the Danaans held  
The city behind the gates that they had locked.  
There was no hope of further help. And so  
I acknowledged this, and taking up the burden  
Of my father once again, I sought the hills."

1130

1140

# Book Three

“The wealth of Asia and Priam’s guiltless race  
Having been overturned by the will of the gods,  
After proud Ilium fell and the smoke from the rubble  
Of Neptune’s Troy rose up from the desolate ground,  
We are, in accordance with the auguries  
Of what the gods ordained, sent forth to seek  
What places we could find in deserted lands  
In which to spend our exile. At the foot  
Of the mountain range of Ida, and near the town  
Antandros, we constructed a fleet and gathered  
Our people together, not knowing where the Fates  
Were going to take us to, to be our home.

10

It was the very beginning of summer when  
My father Anchises bid us set sail to go  
To wherever it was to which we were fated to go,  
And so I departed, weeping, leaving my own  
Familiar havens and shores, and the plain where Troy  
Had been, and was now no more, and I set forth  
From there upon the seas, an exile, with  
My cohort, and my son, and carrying with me  
The Penates of my country and my household.

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Far off there is Mavortia, the land  
Of Mars the god of war, whose great wide plains  
The Thracians plowed. Warlike Lycurgus was,  
In better days, its king and a friend to Troy;  
The gods he worshiped were the same as ours.  
I sailed there with my fleet and there I built  
The first town that I built, to which the Fates  
Were hostile, and I gave its people my name,  
Aeneadae. Seeking the favor of  
My mother, Dione's daughter, and the other  
Gods, for the labor I was undertaking,  
I was in the act of offering a shining  
White bull as sacrifice to the god who is  
The king of all the gods there are in the heavens;  
It happens that, nearby, there was a mound,  
And on it, growing, javelin shafts of cornel,  
And myrtle branches bristling as with spears.  
I went over to this mound, endeavoring  
To tear up out of the soil some of the plants,  
To obtain green foliage with which to dress  
And decorate the sacred altar, and,  
As I began to do so, suddenly,  
There was a wonder! A terrifying portent!  
For when I pulled up out of the ground the first  
One of these shrubs, drops of black viscous blood  
Were leaking from the roots, staining the earth  
I pulled it up from. Cold terror shuddered through me.  
In fear I pulled up a second plant, in order  
To find out why it was that this had happened,  
And a second time black blood leaked out from it.  
From my troubled heart I prayed to the nymphs of the woods  
And to Gradivus, the Getae's *genius loci*,  
To bless the omen and to make it good.  
But when, on my knees, I strained to pull up a third  
Out of the sands that resist me—can I tell

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Of this or not?—I heard from within the mound  
A wretched groaning voice speaking to me:  
'Oh, misery, Aeneas, why rend me so?  
Leave me untouched, unhandled, where I'm buried. 60  
Spare your pure hands from being defiled. I am  
One whom you know of, of Trojan blood, nor are  
They lifeless, these sticks from which this blood leaks out.  
Flee from this place of cruelty and greed.  
My name is Polydorus. A crop of spears  
And iron javelins burgeons and covers over  
My torn body here.' My hair stood on end, dread filled  
My mind. What was to be? My voice lodged in my throat.

At the time when Troy was under siege from the Greeks  
And Priam was losing faith in Dardanian arms, 70  
He sent young Polydorus to be raised  
By the king of Thrace, and sent much treasure with him.  
When Fortune turned against her, and Troy had fallen,  
The Thracian king broke every vow he had made,  
And allied himself with the victorious arms  
Of Agamemnon, and so killed Polydorus,  
And seized for himself the gold he had brought from Troy.  
Insatiable avarice, there's no crime, is there,  
That you won't drive men to, in your lust for gold?

When I had somewhat recovered from the shock, 80  
And my terror at the sight that I had seen,  
I returned and told my father about the portent,  
And after him told the leaders of my people,  
And asked them for their judgment. All agreed  
That we should leave this wicked place where the laws  
Of welcome were so transgressed, and trust our ships  
To the winds. For Polydorus we performed  
A solemn funeral rite. The mound was piled  
High with earth we'd freshly dug to form it;

Two altars to the dead were adorned with black  
Ribbons and cypress leaves; and Ilian women,  
Their hair let down and streaming, stood beside,  
Mourning in the customary way;  
Bowls of foaming tepid milk were offered,  
And cups of the blood of sacrificial victims;  
And together with loud voices we cried the farewell.

90

Then, when we saw that the sea was to be trusted,  
And the winds were peaceable, the South Wind gently  
Whispering its summons to the deep,  
My company came down to the shore together,  
To launch the ships. So once again our fleet  
Put out to sea, the land and the towns upon it  
Receding behind us and slowly disappearing.

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Out there in the ocean a blessed island is,  
Much favored by the Nereids' mother and  
Aegean Neptune. Once upon a time,  
It wandered past other shores and coasts until  
The archer god in gratitude for his birth  
Tied it to lofty Myconos and to Gyaros,  
So that, despite the winds, it lies unmoving.  
I sail to this island, where there is peaceful welcome  
To all our weary people. We disembark,  
And perform the ritual veneration to  
Apollo's town, the town where he was born.  
Anius, who's the ruler of its people,  
And also Phoebus's priest, comes forth to greet us,  
Wearing on his brow a wreath of laurel,  
And he recognizes Anchises, his old friend;  
And so we clasp each other's hands and enter  
Under the kindly roof of Anius' house.

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I worship at the temple of the god there,  
At the altar made of stones as old as time,

‘Give us a home of our own, O god of Thymbra,  
A place for this my weary company  
To rest in and at last to be a people,  
Within our own enduring city walls,  
A second Trojan Pergamum for us,  
The remnant who alone survived what they,  
The Greeks and pitiless Achilles, did.  
Where is it we should go? Whom should we follow? 130  
Where is it we should make our home? O Father  
Give us a sign to give us hope and courage.’  
No sooner had I spoken than everything  
Suddenly began to shake around us,  
The doors and their lintels, the laurels of the god,  
The whole hill on which the temple was, was shaking;  
From the holy tripod there was moaning as  
The door to the shrine shook itself open wide.  
We fell to the ground, prostrate, and heard a voice:  
‘You sons of Dardanus, who have suffered so much, 140  
And for so long, the land from whose first growth  
Your parents came will welcome your return  
To her fruitful bosom. Return to your ancient mother.  
Aeneas’s house will have dominion over  
All other lands, and it will be thus for the house  
Of his children’s children and all who are born from them.’

Thus Phoebus spoke and there was a shout of joy,  
And great excitement in the crowd, and many  
Voices asking one another, ‘Where  
Can it be, what are the walls, where are they, that 150  
The voice is telling us we must return to?’  
And then my father, rehearsing in his mind  
All he could think of that he knew about



The ancient days of the people of our race,  
Spoke thus:

‘You princes, listen to what I say,  
And discover where your hopes are. There’s an island,  
Jupiter’s isle, in the middle of the ocean,  
The island of Mount Ida, and our birthplace,  
A fertile place, with a hundred teeming cities. 160  
Teucus, our first forebear, came from there,  
So goes the story, and founded on our shores  
Rhoeteum his kingdom. This was before  
Ilium and the Pergamum’s towers were built;  
Men lived in the lower river valleys there.  
From Crete there came Cybele and her secret  
Mysteries, and the Corybantic cymbals,  
And Ida’s grove, and the lions yoked to her car.  
So let us go where the god has told us to go. 170  
Let us solicit the winds and sail for Cnossus.  
If Jupiter favors us the way is short;  
Our fleet should reach the Cretan shores upon  
The dawning of the third day of our voyage.’

It was thus he spoke, and then performed the rites,  
And upon the altars slew a bull to Neptune,  
And another bull to beautiful Apollo,  
And a black sheep, to the god of storms, and a white,  
To seek the kindness of the favoring winds.

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We had heard that King Idomeneus had left  
The country of his fathers, forced into exile, 180  
And that the shores of Crete were now deserted,  
The houses empty of any who would have been  
Our enemies. We leave the port of Ortygia  
And fly on the wings of our sails across the seas,

Past Naxos and its Bacchantes roaming the hills,  
Past green Donysa, Olearos, and Paros  
White as snow, and the scattered Cyclades,  
And making our way through clusters of crowding islets.  
The sailors compete with one another in shouting;  
The cheering cries are heard from ship to ship, 190  
‘To Crete that is the country of our fathers!’  
A strong tail wind propels us as we go,  
And at last our fleet comes in to the ancient shores  
Of the Curetians, where I labor to build the walls  
Of the town I meant to establish for us there.  
I call the town I was building, Pergamum,  
A name which fills my company’s hearts with pride,  
And I encourage them to love their hearths  
In this new dwelling place to which they’ve come,  
And I tell them to raise a lofty citadel there. 200  
And so our ships being now upon the shore,  
Our keels aligned upon the sands, and safe,  
Young people were getting married; there was a beginning  
Of tilling of the land, and I was busy  
Promulgating laws and assigning homes  
For my people to live in.

But suddenly there came,  
From some infected region of the sky,  
A pestilence bringing death and misery  
To the trees and the crops and to the human beings. 210  
Some of us gave their sweet lives up to death;  
Others were left to totter about, upholding  
Their wasted feeble bodies as best they could.  
And the scorching heat of Sirius the Dog Star  
Dried up and withered the grain we were trying to grow.  
There was almost nothing left for us to eat.  
It was my father’s urging that we go back  
To Ortygia and the oracle and ask  
Apollo to tell us what will become of us,

As weary as we are in our distress.

220

What should we do to help ourselves survive?

Where is it in the world that we should go?

Night came and every living thing in the world

Lay fast asleep, and I too in my bed

Lay fast asleep. The Phrygian Penates,

The images of the gods I'd carried with me,

Away from the burning fires of fallen Troy,

Were there before my eyes, clear in the light

Of the bright moonlight that streamed in through the windows.

Their voices spoke to me with words that brought

230

Relief from what was troubling me. They said:

'Apollo utters here, and sends us here to tell you

The things he would have uttered at Ortygia

If you had come to speak to the oracle there.

When Dardania was burned we came with you

And journeyed with you across the surging waters;

We shall exalt your children yet to be born

And grant imperial power to their city.

You must accept the long labor of exile

And prepare for them the mighty walls of their future.

240

And you must leave this place. These shores are not

The shores that Apollo of Delos sent us to;

This island, Crete, is not the place the god

Ordained for you to find, to be your home.

There is an ancient land, called by the Greeks

Hesperia, famous and powerful both in arms

And in the abundance that its soil brings forth.

The Oenotrians were its first inhabitants,

And then, so we are told, there came a people

Who called it, after their leader, Italia.

250

There is our proper home; it was the land

Of Dardanus and father Iasius, the first

Begetters of the race that we belong to.

Arise and go to your aged parent and tell him  
The joyful news that without doubt your home  
Is Corythus and the Ausonian lands,  
For Jove denies the Dictaeon fields to you.'

I was overwhelmed by the sight of the gods and by  
Hearing their voices as they spoke to me.  
This wasn't a dream—I was seeing them face to face, 260  
Their filleted hair, their living presence there,  
Before my eyes. I rose from my bed in haste,  
In a cold sweat of awe, and raised my voice,  
And turned up my hands in reverence, and offered  
Gifts to the gods on the hearth, of the purest wine.  
And after I performed this ritual,  
I went to my father joyfully and told him  
Everything that had happened. He recognized  
The ambiguities of our dual descent,  
And his consequent error concerning where it was 270  
That was our primal home, and thus he spoke:

'My son, I now remember that Cassandra,  
Distressed by Ilium's fate, foretold all this,  
Speaking the words "Italia," "Hesperia."  
But who would have thought it was Hesperia  
To whom the Teucrians should return? And who  
Would then have believed the prophecies of Cassandra?  
Let us yield to Phoebus and go the better way,  
Warned by the god to do so.'

Thus he spoke 280  
And we obeyed, and did so joyfully.  
And so it was that, leaving some few behind us,  
We departed from this home, and with sails outspread,  
Our ships set forth over the empty sea.

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After all sight of land had dropped away,  
Around us nothing but sky, nothing but sea,  
A great dark rainstorm cloud rose up above us,  
Impending over us with night and tempest,  
And the sea began to agitate with darkness, 290  
And soon the winds impel the waters before them,  
And they rise and roll and surge, and we are thrown  
This way and that before them in their whirling.  
Storm clouds have wrapped themselves around the day;  
The rain at night has taken away the sky.  
Violently we're blown off course and wander  
Blindly through boiling waves. Palinurus, even,  
Cannot tell night from day nor knows which way  
Is the way we go upon the shuddering waters.  
Three days, three nights, we wander without stars 300  
In the misty dark that shrouds itself around us.  
But on the fourth, at last, there's the sight of land;  
There are mountains to be seen from far away,  
And curling smoke. We lower our sails; the sailors  
Take to the oars, and we sweep along toward shore.

• • •

Having survived the storm, I landed safe  
Upon the shores of one of those islands in  
The Ionian Sea—the Greeks call them the Strophades—  
Which are the place where dire Celaeno and  
The other Harpies settled, after they 310  
Were frightened away from Phineus' tables and  
His house was closed to them. There are no monsters  
Fouler than they; there is no filthier plague  
Or infestation sent by the rage of the gods  
That ever came up and ever issued from  
The waters of the river Styx than they.  
They have the faces of maidens; disgusting filth

Falls from them as they fly; their pretty faces  
Look pale and famished; the hands they have are claws.

As we came into the harbor of the island, 320  
Behold, we saw a joyous scene of herds  
Of cattle browsing, and goats untended cropping  
The lovely grass. We rushed in with our swords,  
Calling the gods, even Jove himself, to join us,  
And on the winding shore we set out couches  
And spread the meal, and were banqueting on the feast,  
When suddenly with loudly clanking wings  
The Harpies came flying down from the hills and swooped,  
Leaving their loathsome excrement everywhere,  
Screaming and stinking. We moved ourselves away, 330  
To a secluded place, deep hidden behind  
A protecting rock, in the shade of sheltering trees  
And their whispering leaves, and then again, this time,  
From another place in which their nests were hidden,  
They came again. They hovered over the tables,  
Their claws hung down and with their filthy lips  
They defiled the food again. I told my soldiers  
To hide away their swords and shields in the grass,  
And when the birds came swooping and screaming down,  
The brass horn of Misenus sounded alarm 340  
And my soldiers attacked, and there took place a strange  
Battle in which the birds sustained no wounds,  
Nor felt them, but they soared away from the scene,  
Leaving their filth, and half-eaten food, behind.

One of the birds, Celaeno, malevolent  
Prophetess, flew down from the sky again,  
And alighted on a high rock out in the water,  
And cried out shrilly,

‘Would you make war on us,  
Having invaded our fields and slain our cows 350

And bullocks, you sons of Laomedon, and are you  
Trying to drive us guiltless Harpies away  
From our fathers' kingdom? Listen to what I say,  
And listen well. Here's what the Father God  
Omnipotent told to Phoebus Apollo, and what  
He told to me, the eldest of the Furies,  
And what I tell to you: you'll sail the seas  
And invoke the winds and get to Italy  
And enter the harbors there. But you will not  
Be able to build the walls of your city there  
Until what you did to us, and your terrible hunger,  
Will make you frantically gnaw with your ravenous teeth  
On the very tables you eat on.'

360

She spread her wings,  
And was carried aloft, and fled away to the forest.  
The blood of my fellows went cold with sudden terror;  
Crestfallen they begged me to give up fighting and begged me  
To plead for peace, with prayers and vows to them,  
The Harpies, whatever they were, if goddesses  
They were, or foul obscene dire birds of omen.  
Anchises, my father, stood upon the beach  
And raised his hands and called the mighty gods  
And spoke the ritual sacrificial words:  
'O gods, prohibit the things they threaten us with  
From harming us. Protect your guiltless people!'  
Then he commanded that our people untie  
The hawsers from the moorings, and loosen the sheets  
So the sails are filled with air, and the South Wind blows,  
And the sails open wide and over the foaming water  
We fly, directed by the helmsman and the wind.

370

380

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Now, out at sea, first, forested Zacynthus,  
Dulichium, and Same, and the cliffs

Of Neritos; and then the rocks of Laertes'  
Kingdom, Ithaca, and as we pass  
We curse the place where dire Ulysses was born;  
And soon, beyond, we see the storm-cloud-shrouded  
Peaks of Mount Leucatas, and then, on high,  
Phoebus Apollo's shrine that mariners fear.  
We make our way to shore near the little town  
And its beach, and secure our ships, anchors cast down 390  
Into the waters from the rows of prows,  
The rows of sterns aligned upon the sand.  
Unknowingly we had reached a place of safety,  
And our company came to shore to celebrate,  
Lighting the fires at altars, to offer up  
Our vows to Jove, to purify ourselves.  
Our young men stripped, and oiled their naked bodies  
For the wrestling matches of our Ilian games,  
Here played upon the foreign Actian shore,  
Thankful that we in flight had made our way 400  
Unharm'd past many foes and Argive towns.

Meanwhile, the sun is carried round upon  
The great wheel of the year, and icy winter  
Agitates the waters with its gales.  
And I affix a shield of hollow brass  
Great Abas carried long ago in battle  
To the columns at the entrance to the town,  
Placing this verse upon it, that we were there:

THESE ARMS AENEAS TOOK FROM THE  
CONQUERING GREEKS 410

After then I told my people to leave this port  
And take up the oars and compete with one another  
To sweep across the waters and away.

› › ›



Soon we could not any longer see  
The lofty Phaeacian mountains, and we passed  
Along the shores of Epirus and entered into  
The harbor of Chaonius, and made  
Our port close under the high town of Buthrotum.  
And it was in this harbor that we heard  
A story that was incredible to our ears:  
That Helenus, who is a son of Priam,  
Is now the ruler of these Grecian cities  
Of Epirus, because when Pyrrhus, who was the son  
Of Achilles, was killed, he'd come into the possession  
Of Pyrrhus's kingdom, and of his wife, and so  
Andromache is once again the wife  
Of a Trojan husband. I was astonished. My heart  
Was inflamed with desire to speak to him and hear  
How these things happened.

420

˘ ˘ ˘

I was coming up from the port,  
Leaving behind the ships at their landing place,  
When suddenly, by chance, I saw, in a grove  
Before the town, by a river that looked like the river  
Simois but was not, that it was she,  
Andromache! Herself! She was setting out  
Her annual offerings and mourning gifts  
To the dead, in ritual seeking to call up the ghost  
Of her lost Hector from his empty tomb,  
The mound on whose green turf she had raised two altars,  
Thus making sacred a place to weep for him.  
She saw me coming, and she saw that I  
Wore Trojan armor and carried Trojan arms,  
And she was amazed, undone, by the sudden sight  
Of what she saw. She tottered where she stood,  
And almost fell; her blood turned cold, and it

430

440

Was long before she could bring herself to speak,  
And when she did, she said. 'Is it? Are you?  
Can you be real? O goddess-born, are you?  
A messenger sent to me? Are you? Alive?  
Or if the light of being alive is gone, 450  
Where is my Hector? Where is it that he is?'  
She wept a flood of tears and the sound of her weeping  
Was everywhere about us. I could scarcely  
Bring the words out in answer to her frenzy,  
And deeply disturbed I opened my mouth to speak  
And only could speak in broken gasping phrases:  
'I live, and I make my way, through life, through all  
Extremities . . . but do not doubt it, what  
You see is what you really see . . . oh! . . . What  
Has become of you since such a husband was lost? 460  
What fortune has been restored to you that's worthy  
Of Hector's Andromache? Or must you still  
Submit to servitude as Pyrrhus's wife?'  
Softly, then, and with lowered eyes, she said,  
'Oh she, the virgin daughter of Priam, was  
The lucky one, beyond us all, who was  
Commanded to die, under the walls of Troy,  
At the enemy's tomb, she who was not forced  
To undergo the casting of the lots  
And be chosen for a conquering foreigner's bed. 470  
I was carried away, a slave, far over the seas,  
To be submitted to the arrogance  
Of Achilles' son in all his youthful pride;  
And after that, because of his desire  
For a Lacedemonian marriage with Leda's daughter  
Hermione, he transmitted me, a slave  
To a slave, to Helenus; and Orestes, inflamed  
With passion for the bride whom Pyrrhus was taking  
Away from him, caught Pyrrhus unwary at  
His father's altar, and beheaded him, 480

And Helenus by Pyrrhus's death received  
His part of Pyrrhus's legacy that was owed  
To him as bondsman, and so it came to pass  
That a son of Troy called all this land, now his,  
Chaonia, and on the height he built  
An Ilian citadel, a Pergamum.

But what can the fortune be, what winds are they,  
That have carried you this way, what god is it  
Who has driven you, who were ignorant that we  
Were living here, to land upon our shores? 490  
What of the boy, Ascanius? Did he  
Survive, and does he feed on the living air.  
He who was there, oh, was there when Troy . . . ? Oh, has he  
Nevertheless retained some care for her,  
The mother he has lost? And have Aeneas,  
His father, and Hector, his uncle, excited  
In him their examples of manhood's ancestral virtue?  
Thus Andromache spoke, lamenting, weeping  
A flood of tears.

But then from the walls of the city 500  
The son of Priam, Helenus, appeared,  
And with him a company. He recognized  
At once that we were of his kinship and  
Joyfully he welcomed us to come  
In through the gates of the city, and he wept  
Freely, hearing everything we told him  
Of our story. We go into the city and  
We see that they have built a diminutive Troy,  
With a simulated citadel, and a dry  
Little stream that they call by the name of Xanthus, 510  
And gates that resemble the Scaean Gates of Troy.  
The hospitable welcoming king received us in  
His colonnaded palace, where we were offered



Who turns the wheel of changing Fates; such is  
The turning cycle. In order that you may  
More safely cross the seas I will be able  
To tell you only a few of the many things  
That could be foretold for you; the Fates prohibit  
Helenus to know more, and Saturnian Juno 550  
Has not yet chosen to speak. First, I must tell you,  
That Italy, which seems to you near at hand,  
And whose ports you are prepared to enter soon,  
Is kept apart from where we are by a long  
Long path that is not a path, far over the seas.  
First your oars must strain themselves against  
The heavy surging waters of Sicily,  
And then you must get your ships across the vast  
Expanse of the salt Ausonian sea, and past  
The infernal lakes and Circe's island Aeaëa, 560  
Before you find the place where it is safe  
To build your city. But I will tell you of signs:  
When you have come ashore, anxious, dismayed,  
And find, lying beside a sequestered brook,  
A white sow who had just then given birth  
To a litter of her babies, white as she,  
And busy at her teats, there is the place  
Of respite from your troubles, the place for your town.  
And do not fear the gnawing of the tables.  
Apollo will hear you when you call for him, 570  
And the Fates will find a way. However, you  
Must avoid these lands around us, and keep away  
From the hither coast of Italy that our own  
Sea ebbs and flows upon, for malignant Greeks  
Inhabit all those towns. The Locri of  
Narycia built a town there; the soldiers of  
Lycian Idomeneus are encamped  
On the plains of Sallentinus; Philoctetes,  
The leader of the Meliboei, has built

His little fortified mountain town Petelia.  
And, when you in your ships have crossed the sea  
And anchored on the shore, and when you then  
Set up your altars to make your vows to the gods,  
Cover your heads with a purple mantle, so that  
No hostile face will be seen among the sacred  
Lights of the altar fires, disturbing the omens.  
This is the manner in which your people and you  
Must always perform the rites; you must hold to this,  
And your children and their children must hold to this,  
In the discipline of this manner of behaving.

580

590

But when you depart from there and when the wind  
Has carried you toward the shores of Sicily,  
And as you approach, and as the channel opens,  
Keep to the land and sea on the left, no matter  
How long it takes to go that way, and avoid  
The land and sea on the right. There was a time,  
A long time ago, it is said, when these were joined,  
One thing together, and suddenly, by some great  
Convulsive power they were broken apart—  
Such things can happen as the ages pass—  
And the sea came in between them, keeping apart  
Hesperia and Sicily with the waters  
Flowing between the cities and the fields  
On either side. On the right is where Scylla is,  
And on the left is where Charybdis is,  
Who swallows down huge waves one after the other,  
Three waves at a time, sucking them all the way down  
To the bottom of the abyss of what she is,  
And then regurgitates them, throwing them up  
To splatter upon the very stars on high.  
But in the dark recesses of a cave,  
Scylla extends her mouths from her hiding place,  
And pulls ships in, to perish on her rocks.

600

610

She's human down to her waist, and under that  
A monster sea thing, bellied like a wolf,  
And with a dolphin tail. It's better to take  
The longer way, around the Pachynian headland  
And doubling back on Sicily's other side,  
Than ever to see the hideous sight of monstrous  
Scylla in her underwater cavern 620  
Or the rocks that echo echo with the barking  
Of her sea-green hounds. And moreover, goddess-born,  
If my prophetic seeing can be believed,  
And if Apollo fills my heart with truth,  
There is one thing among all other things  
That I have told you that I must tell you again,  
And again, and again: adore the mighty goddess  
Juno first of all. Adore her with your praise  
And with your prayers; in chorus joyfully chant  
Your vows to her, and supplicate her favor 630  
With many gifts. This being done, at last  
You will leave Sicily behind you and  
Then enter into Italy in triumph.

After you have been brought there you will come  
To Cumae with its specter-haunted lakes  
And Avernus with its murmuring woods, and there  
You'll see the manic maiden Sybil, who sits  
In a deep cavern of rock and sings of the Fates,  
Writing on leaves in symbols what she sings.  
She sorts out what she has written and puts the leaves 640  
In order and finds a place for them to lie there  
Motionless, and they lie there undisturbed,  
Until, one day, if a hinge in the door is turned  
And the door is opened and a breeze comes in,  
And the leaves are scattered fluttering everywhere  
In the rocky cave, the maiden does not care,  
And she makes no effort to put them right again,  
So the verses could not make sense; and those who came

Inquiring leave unsatisfied, unanswered,  
Loathing the cave to which they came inquiring. 650  
No matter how your companions urge and scold,  
No matter how the wind blows tempting fair  
And urges you to let your sails be filled  
To set forth on your voyage, do not let  
Any thought of delay keep you from staying,  
Persisting in your visits to the seer  
And in your prayers that she herself should sing  
The oracles and willingly unlock  
Her lips to prophesy. If you attend  
Upon her with such reverence, then she 660  
Will tell you of the tribes of Italy,  
And what the wars will be, and how you must  
Confront each test of you or find the means  
To make your way around it, safe and sound.

The goddess being thus propitiated,  
You will succeed. These are the things my voice  
Is allowed to tell. You must go now and bring  
Troy once again to greatness by your deeds  
In the clear light of heaven.'

’ ’ ’

And, having spoken 670  
These gracious words he ordered that the ships  
Should be stored with gifts of weighty gold and ivory,  
Silver, and heavy cauldrons from Dodona,  
A triple-woven breastplate with golden hooks,  
And a beautiful plumed helmet, Pyrrhus's arms.  
Gifts also for my father, horses, and armor,  
Arms for our soldiers, and men to augment our crews.

Meanwhile my father Anchises commanded us  
To raise our sails to take advantage of



The favoring winds. And the interpreter  
Of Apollo spoke to him respectfully:  
'Anchises, whom the gods have cared for, you,  
Judged worthy to embrace in wedlock Venus,  
You, twice survivor of the fall of Troy,  
Look, over there that I point to is the hither  
Italian shore. Set sail and take for yourselves  
The lands that will be rightfully your lands;  
But when you leave here do not land upon  
The hither shore. Go to the farther side,  
Far, far beyond are those Ausonian lands  
That Phoebus Apollo reveals will be your lands.  
Go, father, blest in the piety of your son,  
Go forth. But why should I with longer speech  
Delay your setting forth as the winds arise?'

680

690

Andromache, too, came forward then, in sadness  
Because she knew this was the final parting.  
And she, with ceremony due, brought gifts  
Of gold-inwoven robes and other things  
The loom has richly made, and a Phrygian scarf  
For the boy Ascanius, to whom she says,  
'O you who are the image that survives,  
The only one, of my Astyanax,  
Accept these gifts from me, into your hands,  
In testimony of Andromache's love,  
Of Hector's wife, the mother of his son.  
Such were the eyes of my Astyanax,  
And such his hands, his face, the face of my child,  
Just such he would have been had he been able  
To grow into his years as you have done.'  
I wept as I heard these words, and I said to them,  
In parting: 'May you be as happy as those  
Whose fortune has been brought to its completion.  
We are called to seek our fate by different ways,  
One way, and then another way, and another.'

700

710

But you have achieved your resting place; you have  
No need to wander on the sea, no need  
To look for lands receding before your eyes.  
Here, with your own hands, you have made for yourselves  
Another Xanthus and another Troy,  
More fortunate and safer from the Greeks. 720  
If I should reach the Tiber and the Tybrian  
Fields through which the river flows, and if  
It comes to pass that I should look upon  
The walls of the city promised to my people,  
Then our two cities, Hesperia and Epirus,  
Will be one Troy together, we who are  
One people, Dardanians by descent, and we  
Who share the story of Troy, and of its fall.  
So may that oneness be the trust entrusted  
To our children and their children after them.' 730

We hastened along the waters, close by the hither  
Ceraunian cliffs, the shortest distance from where  
We were to Italy. Evening meanwhile  
Was coming on, the sun was setting, and  
The hills were shrouding in darkness. We came ashore  
And after the allotment of the oars  
Of the rowers for the next day's voyage, we,  
Scattered here and there along the beach,  
Laid our bodies down so dewy sleep  
On the lap of the welcoming land could bring us rest 740  
And refreshment to our weary limbs. Not yet  
Had Night the Hours were driving on her journey  
Gone halfway toward the Dawn, when Palinurus  
Awaking rose from where he was lying down,  
To ascertain how was it with the winds  
And with the stars, inquiring into every  
Slightest stirring breeze and studying every  
Constellation across the silent sky  
As it moved and toward tomorrow made its way,

Arcturus, rainy Hyades, the Bears,  
The Twins, and Orion in his golden armor clad.  
Seeing that all was well and the sky serene,  
He called out loudly from his helmsman's seat,  
And so we woke, broke camp, and went aboard,  
And spread our sails and set forth on our way.

750

• • •

Aurora the dawn was just beginning to blush,  
The stars were fleeing away, and then, far off,  
Though only dimly to be seen, there were,  
Along the horizon lying low, the hills  
Of Italy. Achates saw them first  
And cried out joyfully, 'It's Italy!'  
'It's Italy!' his fellows cried out joyfully,  
And father Anchises, standing high upon  
The stern of our ship, the lead ship of our fleet,  
Held up a wreathed bowl, brimming with wine,  
And uttered this prayer to the gods: 'You gods of the sea,  
And of the earth, and storms, now favor us  
With gentle winds and with an easy voyage.'  
And then the wind stands fair, the wind we'd hoped for,  
And it was not long until we saw the entrance  
To a harbor opening up before us, and,  
High up above, the temple of Minerva.  
Our sails are lowered, our prows turn toward the shore.  
The harbor bends to the East protected by  
Projecting reefs on which the salt spray scatters;  
Twin walls of rock descend from towering cliffs  
And hold the port in their embracing arms;  
The temple stands behind, away from the shore.

760

770

It was here I saw an omen, the first I saw:  
Four snow-white horses pasturing on the grass.

780

Then father Anchises said: 'O land that receives us,  
There's import of war in this, these chariot horses  
Are geared for battle; and yet sometimes such horses  
Are harnessed to chariots thus in times of peace,  
So peace here might be hoped for.' And so we offer  
Our prayers to the sacred power of Pallas, she  
Whose armor rings with the clashing sounds of strife  
And was the first to welcome our votive chants.  
We cover our heads with Phrygian mantles and bow  
Before the altars, and perform the ritual  
Sacrifice and vows to Argive Juno,  
As Helenus had commanded us to do.

790

Then, having performed the rituals of our vows,  
We turn the yardarms of our sails away,  
And toward the open sea, leaving behind us  
The untrusted fields and the nearby places where  
They live who are of the Grecians by their birth.  
The next sight that we see is Hercules' town,  
If so they say is true, Tarentum, and  
Its bay. Opposite, on the Lacinian cliff,  
There rises upon our sight the temple of Juno,  
The citadel of Caulon and Scylaceum  
The breaker-up of ships. And then, afar,  
Coming up out of the seas, Trinacrian Aetna  
Is to be seen, and from a great way off  
The giant ocean moaning is to be heard,  
The enormous broken pulsing of the waves  
Against the rocks and shattering on the shallows  
And mingling with the sands. Then father Anchises  
Cries out: 'This must be Charybdis, these must  
Be the cliffs, these must be the terrible threatening rocks  
That Helenus warned of! My comrades, get away!  
And side by side rise up upon the oars!'  
At once they did what he commanded as

800

810

Palinurus turned the roaring straining prow  
To the left, into and upon the waves; and all  
Our fleet turned left as he did and with all  
Our might our oars contested with the wind;  
The waves high rising carried us up to the heavens  
And when they fell they carried us plummeting down  
To the place where the Manes are. Three times we heard  
The crying aloud of the caverns down below,  
Thrice saw the sea-spray dripping from the stars,  
And then at last when the sun went down the wind  
Also went down and failed us, and we drifted  
Wearily toward the Cyclopean shores,  
Not knowing where we were.

820

› › ›

We came upon

A harbor large enough for our ships to enter,  
Protected from the wind; but close to us  
Was dreadful thundering Aetna, a cloud of smoke  
And fiery ashes boiling up to the heavens,  
Carrying up great globes of flaming stuff,  
High as to lick at the stars; and from the lowest  
Deep inside of the mountain its viscera,  
Roaring and belching, vomit up rocks and molten  
Slag as high as high can ever be. They say  
The giant Encéladus was struck down by  
A bolt of lightning and the whole enormous weight  
Of Aetna lies upon him, and fire breathes forth  
From all her broken chimneys, and every time,  
In anguish he turns from one side to the other,  
All Sicily shakes, and the sky is covered with smoke.  
All the night long we hid ourselves in the woods  
And endured our awareness of monstrous things abroad,  
Not knowing what the sounds were coming from.

830

840

There were no stars to be seen, no light from them,  
Nor any from the moon; mists covered the skies;  
In the dead of the night the moon was held in a cloud.

› › ›

And now the very first star of the morning was 850  
Visible as Aurora began to disperse  
The dewy shadows of the night before,  
When suddenly, coming from the woods, there is  
A stranger, miserable-looking, filthy, wildly  
Bearded, emaciated, wearing only  
A rag of a garment held together with thorns,  
And he held out his hands to us imploringly.  
We stare at him in wonder at what we see.  
It is a Greek who had fought at Troy. When he  
Sees who we are by our dress and our Trojan arms, 860  
Afraid, he stops, then, hesitantly, comes  
Toward where we are, then suddenly rushes headlong  
To the shore, weeping and beseeching, crying out,  
'By the stars, by the gods who live up there, by the light  
Of day and the air you can breathe, you Trojans, help me,  
Take me away to anywhere but here!  
It's true that I am a Greek from the Grecian fleet  
And that I fought against the Trojan gods.  
For all the wrongs I may have done to you,  
Scatter the parts of my body on the waves, 870  
Throw me into the sea. If I die this way,  
At least I will have died by human hands.'

He falls down to the ground and grovels there,  
In desperation clinging to our knees.  
We ask him who he is and where he comes from,  
What is his tribe, and what has happened to him,  
And my father Anchises unhesitatingly

Shakes hands with him and pledges his safety, thus  
Assuaging his fear so he can tell us his story:

‘Achaemenides is my name. Ithaca is 880  
The island where I was born. My father is poor,  
So I joined Ulysses’ army and went to Troy  
—Would I had stayed home safe and sound from this.  
My fellow soldiers heedlessly left me here  
In the vast cave of the Cyclops when, in terror,  
They got themselves through his doorway and ran away.  
His enormous cave is dark, slimy with gore,  
And with the leavings of bloody gorging, and he  
Is immense, towering high as high as the stars—  
Oh, gods, take this monster away from this earth we’re on— 890  
The sound of his voice unbearable to hear,  
The sight of his body unbearable to look at.  
He makes his meal of the flesh of miserable men,  
And of their black flowing blood. With my own eyes  
I saw it happen, when lying there taking his ease  
At dinner time, in his enormous hand  
He picked up two of our soldiers and broke them open  
By smashing them on a rock, and the gore was spattered  
Everywhere around. I saw him crunching 900  
Their bloody dripping quivering arms and legs  
Between his jaws and teeth as he ate his dinner.  
This did not go unpunished. At such a moment  
Ulysses knew that he was still Ulysses,  
For when the monster had his monstrous fill,  
And having drunk himself into oblivion,  
Lay with his monstrous length stretched out throughout  
The giant cave, and throwing up in his sleep  
Vomit of gore and gobbets of human meat  
All mixed with blood and wine, we said our prayers  
To the gods and chose our parts, and gathered around 910  
On every side of him, and with the point  
Of a weapon drilled a hole in the giant single

Eye that was there like an Argive shield or the lamp  
Of Phoebus underneath his monstrous brow.  
And so we had the joy of taking revenge  
For our fellows he had eaten.

But you must flee,

Unfortunates, untie your mooring ropes,  
And get away. For it isn't only huge  
Polyphémus, keeping his woolly flock 920  
In his cave, pressing their udders to milk them. There are  
A hundred other huge monster Cyclopes, living  
Along this winding shore and wandering,  
Monsters together, along these mountain ridges.  
The horns of the moon have filled with light three times  
Since I have been here alone in the frightening woods,  
Day after day, dragging my life out, living  
On nuts and berries I scabble from trees and bushes,  
And green weeds that I pull up out of the ground,  
In woods where wild beasts have their nests and lairs, 930  
And sometimes in a hiding place on a cliff  
Seeing huge Cyclopes there and hearing the sound  
Of their heavy feet and hearing their voices bawling.  
One day when from my hiding I was looking  
Everywhere to see what I might see,  
I saw the fleet of ships come in to the beach,  
And so I sent myself, no matter what,  
To give myself up to you. No matter what,  
To have gotten myself away from the monster crowd.  
Better that you should take my life away 940  
Than what the monsters would have done to me.'

He had hardly finished speaking when, there, we saw,  
All of us saw, high up on a mountaintop  
The monster shepherd Polyphémus, huge,  
Blind, enormous horrifying body  
Moving slowly among his flock of sheep,



And slowly making his way toward the shore with which  
His eyesight formerly had been familiar.  
He had a torn-up pine tree in his hand  
To guide him and to steady him as he went, 950  
His fleecy flock beside him and around him,  
The only pleasure he had, his only comfort  
In his misfortune. As soon as he got himself down  
To the water's edge and felt the touch of the breaking  
Waves of the sea, he washed the leaking blood  
From the socket of his blind eye into the brine,  
Gnashing his teeth and groaning all the while;  
And then with giant steps he walks out into  
The deeper water; so tall he is, that most  
Of his towering body is dry because unreached 960  
Above the highest waves. We're terrified.  
We take on board with us the suppliant so  
Deserving of our rescue and we loose  
Our mooring lines as quietly as we can,  
And bending to our desperate oars, we sweep  
Across the waters eager to escape.  
The monster heard, and turned himself to the sound  
Of our splashing oars, but when he knew he had  
No power to lay his hands on us, no longer  
Follow us farther among the Ionian waves 970  
That were coming in against him, he let out a roar.  
The ocean and all its billows shuddered and shook,  
And Italy, hearing it, was terrified  
To its most inland self, and Aetna bellowed  
Through all its winding caverns underground.  
And the Cyclopean race, aroused by their brother's roar,  
Came rushing out of the woods and from the high mountains  
Down to the shore of the port, and stood there, glaring,  
Dread gang of helpless one-eyed Aetnean brothers,  
Heads high as tall as the sky, like a congress of 980  
Great oak trees standing upon a mountaintop,

Or a congregation of coniferous cypress,  
Or like a grove of Diana or forest of Jove.

’ ’ ’

Fear made us open our sails as fast as we could,  
Striving to catch whatever wind we could,  
And in whatever direction there was that we could.  
I remember Helenus' warning to keep away  
From the narrow passage between Charybdis and Scylla,  
On either side of which there's death. And so  
We go back, avoiding the way where the North Wind blows 990  
Through that narrow Pelorian channel, and sailing past  
The living rocks at the mouth of the river Pantagias,  
The bay of Megaera and low-lying Thapsus. These  
Were the shores that luckless Ulysses' soldier,  
Achaemenides, had come along before.  
There is, against the wave-washed headland of  
Plemyrium, in Sicily, an island  
Called from ages long ago Ortygia.  
They say that Alpheus the river god,  
In love, had made his secret fluent way 1000  
Beneath the ground and under the sea from where  
He was in Peloponnesian Ilia  
To where your fountain, Arethusa, is,  
And mingled there himself with Sicilian waters.

As we were told to do, we venerate  
The deities of the place, and then sail on,  
Past Helorus with its rich marsh soil, and past  
Pachynus's rocks and cliffs, and Camerina,  
Whom the Fates ordained should never be disturbed;  
And, stretching far, the Gelo plains, and Gela, 1010  
Named for its tumultuous river; then  
The great high walls of Acragas, where once

They bred those famous marvelous horses; and,  
With favored winds the gods had granted me,  
I leave Selinus's palms behind, and pass  
Lybeis's shoals and treacherous hidden rocks.  
And then I reach Drepanum's mournful shore,  
And here it was that I, whom so many storms  
Have beaten upon, alas, I lost my father,  
The solace of all my troubles and my cares.

1020

'O best of fathers, you have left me here,  
Abandoned, weary, rescued from so many  
Perils undergone, now all for nothing.  
Helenus the seer, who foretold,  
In prophecy, so many horrors to be,  
Did not foretell this sorrow, and dire Celaeno  
Told nothing of this grief that was to come.  
This was the final trial, since I began,  
And now the god has driven me to this place.'"

, , ,

Thus father Aeneas, alone before them all,  
Who were intently listening, told the story  
Of his long wanderings, what it was  
The Fates had ordained for him. And so the story  
Came at last to a close, and he was quiet.

1030

# Book Four

But the queen has been wounded by love; hour by hour  
The life-blood in her veins keeps nourishing  
The hidden fire within her; thinking of  
The glory of the hero race he comes from,  
And how he speaks, and the things he has spoken of—  
At night her body's longing cannot rest.

· · ·

In the morning when Aurora has scattered the dewy  
Shades of the night before, and Phoebus's light  
Has begun to traverse the sky, she speaks to her  
Who was one with her in her heart, "Anna, my sister, 10  
The dreams I have been dreaming all night long  
Fill my mind with strange feelings that disturb me.  
Who is this man who has entered into our house?  
How noble he is in the way he looks, in bearing,  
So brave, so strong. I know without any doubt  
That he must be a descendant of the gods.  
I know it without any doubt. Those who are fearful  
Prove by their fears that they are ignobly born.  
What troubles there are that the Fates have confronted him with!  
How terrible the long continued struggles 20  
Of the wars his story has sung to us about!  
If it were not that I have been determined,  
Unchangeably so, since my first love betrayed me

By dying, not to commit myself again  
To the bonds of love and marriage, and if it were not  
That I am so weary of thoughts of the marriage bed,  
I might have yielded to these thoughts I have,  
For, Anna, I confess that since the death  
Of my poor husband, murdered by my brother,  
Destroying our household, only this person has  
Disturbed my sense of who I am, and made  
My purpose totter in uncertainty.

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I have to tell you, I feel the amorous fire  
Stirring, that I thought had been put out.  
Rather than yield to that, I pray that the earth  
Would open its jaws and swallow me, or may  
The Father use his thunderbolt to throw me  
Down among pale shades and in the profound  
Dark night down there of Erebus, before,  
O Chastity, I violate your laws.

40

He, who joined my heart to his and took it  
Away with him to the grave, I pray that he  
Will keep it where he is and guard it there.”

And saying these things, she was overcome with tears.  
Then Anna says, “My sister, I love you more  
Than I love the light itself—why, so alone,  
Do you spend your youth in mourning, and without  
The rewards of love, and the knowledge of what it is  
To have sweet children? Do you think the dust gives any  
Thought at all to any of these things?  
The Manes, wherever they are, what do they care?  
I know you’ve turned away all suitors, here  
In Libya, and, before we were here, in Tyre,  
None of them able to sway you from your mourning.  
Iarbas you turned away, and others, also  
Famed in war and power, in Africa.  
But now, why struggle against what pleases you?  
Have you thought about your situation here?”

50

Among what lands you are? The Gaetulians,  
Invincible in war, the Numidians 60  
And their bareback cavalry, the hostile Syrtes,  
On the one side pressing themselves against your borders;  
On the other side the barren waterless desert  
In which the wild Barcaeans roam and rage;  
And what about the threats of war from Tyre,  
The menacing signs of what your brother intends?  
It is my belief that it was by the gods' approval  
And by the agency of Juno that  
The Ilian ships were blown here by the winds.  
Imagine, my sister, the city that will arise 70  
Because of such a union, you and he;  
Imagine what the Punic glory will be,  
Abetted by the arms of the Teucrians.  
You must seek the favor of the gods and make  
Due sacrifices to secure the omens;  
Be yet more welcoming to the Trojans; weave  
Arguments, with your welcome, to keep them here,  
While Orion's drenching rains pour down and under  
Intractable skies the winter winds are raging,  
And the broken ships still lie here unrepaired." 80

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Thus with what Anna said, she inflamed the fire  
Already smoldering in the breast of Dido,  
And strengthened hope to her uncertain mind,  
And loosened the constraints of chastity.  
The two of them began to visit the shrines,  
Praying for the blessings of the gods.  
Offering yearling sheep to Ceres, she  
Who gives the laws, to Phoebus Apollo and  
To Father Lyaeus, and most of all, to the goddess  
Juno, guardian of the marriage bonds. 90  
And every day most beautiful shining Dido

Moves with ritual slowness, bearing the cup  
Among the laden altars of the gods,  
And pouring for them the ritual libations  
Between the white horns of a chosen heifer.  
Daily she renews her sacrificial  
Offerings to the deities, and gazes  
Intently into the victims' opened breasts,  
Endeavoring to see in there whatever  
The throbbing viscera will have to tell her. 100  
Alas, how blind are seers! Vows and shrines,  
What do these innards say to those maddened with love?  
Meanwhile the wound lives silently within her,  
And passion eats the soft marrow of her bones.  
Hapless Dido burns and wanders through  
The streets of her own city—she's like a doe  
In the Cretan woods who has been mortally  
Wounded by an arrow by a hunter  
Unknowing of what he did; and she, in flight  
Bewildered, stricken, wanders through the trees, 110  
This way and that, taking Aeneas with her,  
Showing him her Sidonian fortress walls  
And the city she is building, and as they go  
Sometimes she is about to speak, and doesn't.  
And as the day becomes the evening she  
Longs in her delirium to be  
At that same banquet where she heard the tale  
Of Ilium's trouble, longing to hear it as  
It came from the lips of him who was the teller.  
And later still, when she finds herself alone, 120  
And the light of the moon has gone, and the setting stars  
Acknowledge that it is the time for sleep,  
All by herself in the empty hall she mourns,  
And lies upon the couch that he has left,  
Hearing him and seeing him, although  
He is not there; sometimes she holds the boy  
Ascanius on her lap, embraces him,

Entranced with the likeness of him to his father,  
Mimicking the love she cannot speak of.  
The towers of the city are left unfinished;  
Young men no longer practice their martial arms,  
Nor work to reinforce the gates and ramparts;  
All the works of building are at a standstill;  
A crane machine stands high, against the sky  
It almost reaches up to, looking over  
The massive, boding, uncompleted walls.

130

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As soon as Jove's beloved Juno knew  
That Dido was possessed by such a passion,  
And reputation could not protect her from it,  
Saturn's daughter spoke these words to Venus:  
"Your victory is splendid, rich the prize  
You two have won, yourself and that boy of yours—  
Great, indeed, and worthy to be remembered,  
An instance of the power of the gods,  
Two gods who by their tricks defeat one woman.  
I am aware of your suspicion of  
Carthage and its high houses, and your fear  
Of its success. But what will all this come to?  
What is the point of all this contention between us?  
Why should we not together bring about  
An agreed-upon marriage and a lasting peace?  
You have won all you wanted in this matter:  
Dido burns with love and the madness of it  
Has made its way into her very marrow.  
Let's be in common the rulers of these people,  
She serving the Phrygian husband she desires  
And bringing you her Tyrians as her dowry."

140

150

Venus (who understands what Juno's purpose  
Was in what she pretended it was—to keep



The empire away from Italy and keep it  
In Libya), replied to her: "Providing  
That Fortune really favors what you propose,  
It would be madness to refuse an offer  
Such as this, to wish to contend with you  
In hostilities. But the Fates make me uncertain  
About what it is that Jupiter really desires,  
Whether the Tyrian city and the Trojan  
Wanderers should become one city together,  
To be one people bound in trust and union.  
You are his wife: it is for you to persuade him.  
Proceed in this and I will follow you."  
Saturnian Juno replied to what Venus said:  
"I'll undertake the task. Now, listen to me.  
I'll tell you briefly what I plan to do.  
Aeneas and Dido are hunting tomorrow morning;  
They will go to the forest as soon as the sun comes up,  
And the morning light begins to undo the darkness.  
The hunters will be busily running about,  
Draping the glades with nets, and I will bring  
A black torrential rainstorm down from the heavens,  
Mingled with hail, with thunder, and with lightning;  
All the people will scatter under the storm,  
And they will all be covered in opaque darkness.  
Dido and the Trojan chief will come  
Into the same cavern, seeking shelter there.  
There I will be, and, with your blessing, I  
Will bring them together in the bonds of wedlock,  
Thus making her his own, this wedding day."  
The Cytherean, consenting to her plan,  
Smiled at the trickery she had thus learned about.

› › ›

Aurora rose, leaving the ocean behind her,  
And with the coming forth of the new day's light,

A band of young men carry hunting nets  
And webs and broad-tipped spears, the hunting gear;  
A mounted troop appears, Massylians and  
Their horses and their strong-nosed hunting dogs,  
All ready for the day. The Punic nobles  
Wait for the queen at the doorway to the palace,  
And, harnessed with silver and gold, her horse waits too,  
Stamping his feet upon the ringing pavement, 200  
Tossing his head, and champing eagerly  
At the foaming bit. And then at last it is  
That Dido the queen appears, with a great crowd  
Of her retainers; she wears a Sidonian cloak,  
Bordered with embroidery vividly colored;  
Gold is the quiver of arrows that she wears,  
And gold the fillet with which her hair is caught;  
The buckle of her purple cloak is gold.  
There is a Phrygian company in her train,  
And Iulus with them, happy at the day. 210  
Aeneas then steps forth, more beautiful  
Than all, to join his company with hers.  
It's as when winter is over and Apollo  
Leaves Lycia and the stream of Xanthus to visit  
Delos and his mother, and there renews  
The annual festive dance, while all together,  
Around his altars the Dryopes and Cretans  
And the painted Agathyrsians dance and shout  
Their frenzied anthems to him while he upon  
His birthplace hill of Cynthus walks in beauty, 220  
His flowing hair adorned with springtime leaves,  
And twined with threads of implicated gold,  
The quivered arrows rattling on his shoulders.  
As beautiful as Apollo is he is,  
Aeneas, shining, radiant as the sun.

When the hunting party came up into the high  
Places of the mountain where the untracked

Haunts of their prey might be, startled wild goats  
Run down along the ridges of the cliffs,  
And deer in crowds in clouds of dust race down  
And across the open fields to get away  
From the hills and get away; and in the valley  
The boy Ascanius, on his excited pony,  
Gallops past this one, past the next one, hoping  
That in among the herd maybe there'll be  
A foaming wild boar he's been looking for,  
Or a tawny lion come down from the mountain.

230

And then, in the sky, all of a sudden, there's  
A great intermingling noise of roar and murmur,  
And following there is rain and there is hail.  
The Tyrians and the Trojan youth and Venus's  
Dardanian grandson scatter, flee, and seek shelter  
Wherever it may be where they can find it.  
The storm pours down upon them from the sky.  
Dido and the Trojan chief find shelter  
In the same cavern, alone together, and  
Apart from all the others. But primal Earth  
And matron of honor Juno are there, and they give  
The sign; flashes of lightning in the sky  
Were witnesses, and on the mountaintop  
There was the ululating of the nymphs.  
That day was the cause of the death to come, the cause  
Of calamity, for Dido was no longer  
Inhibited by the restraints of keeping her love  
A secret from others; she covered over her shame  
By calling the deed they did together a marriage.

240

250

› › ›

And Rumor, the swiftest of all evil plagues,  
Spread through all the cities of Libya, gathering  
Strength and speed by her gathering strength and speed,

Timorous, small, at first, and very soon 260  
As high as the sky, her feet on the ground, her head  
Hid in the clouds as she goes, who was the daughter  
Of Mother Earth, who got her, they say, in wrath  
Against the gods, the youngest sister of  
Coëus and Enceladus, she, enormous  
Monster fleet of foot and fleet of wing,  
Feathered all over and under every feather  
An eye, unwinking, ever vigilant, and,  
A tongue in a mouth, mouthing, whispering, and,  
A pair of pricked up, ever-listening ears. 270  
At night you can hear her screeching as she flies  
Through the darkness, gliding exactly midway between  
The heaven above and the earth beneath, and sits,  
Nightwatcher, on the ledges of roofs, or on  
The towers of cities, and calls down on the ones  
Below, her frightening mingle of truth and lies,  
Rhapsodically singing about them in the darkness,  
And all the people hear what she is singing,  
How there's a man of Trojan blood, Aeneas,  
Whom beautiful Dido has thought fit to join with, 280  
In wedlock while all winter long they spend in  
Disgracefully pleasing each other with their bodies,  
Forgetting every thing about their duties  
To the people that their governance is owed to.  
These are the stories this filthy goddess spreads  
Upon the lips and talking tongues of men,  
And then she takes her crooked flight aslant  
Across to where Iarbas is and with  
The tales she tells him fills his mind with rage.

Iarbas, the son of a Garamantian nymph 290  
Who had been ravished by his father Ammon,  
Established in his realm a hundred great  
Temples to Jupiter, a hundred altars,  
And burning before them ever-burning fires

Witnessing his homage, the ground around them  
Rich with animal blood; the portals were hung  
With garlands of many flowers. They say that Iarbas,  
Disturbed and angered by the stories he heard,  
Came to the holy altars and raised his hands  
To Jupiter in fervent supplication, 300  
Saying these words: "Almighty Jove, O Thou,  
To whom, upon our painted divans we  
Have at the feast raised high our Bacchic cups,  
Have you beheld what has been happening?  
Is it for nothing we tremble when you hurl  
Your bolts of lightning crashing down upon us,  
And your terrifying fire shakes in the clouds?  
That woman came to us and sought to buy  
Permission to build her little city here,  
And we granted this and granted her long-term rights 310  
To lands along the coast of Libya,  
To use as plowlands. I offered that woman marriage:  
She spurned me, and took Aeneas as her lord.  
This Paris with his perfumed hair and his Phrygian  
Bonnet tied with a ribbon under his chin,  
And his sissy band of eunuchs, took it all.  
Meanwhile we worship you at all our altars,  
And are left bereft to tell you our empty story."

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This was what the pleader pled to Jove,  
Anxiously holding fast to the altars, and when 320  
The Omnipotent heard him and looked down upon  
The royal city, where the two lovers, forgetting  
Everything else, were held transfixed in love,  
He turned to Mercury and said, "My son,  
Glide down upon the zephyrs on your wings  
To where the Dardanian chieftain is, who's now

In dalliance at Tyrian Carthage and  
Forgetting what cities the Fates had promised him.  
Glide down upon the winds and tell him this:  
What he is doing is not what his beautiful mother 330  
Promised that he would do, nor is this why  
She saved him twice from death at the hands of the Greeks.  
It is he who was to conquer Italy,  
Land full of warfare and contending powers,  
And to establish there a dynasty  
Of royal Trojan stock, and bring the whole  
World under the rule of law. If he does not  
Aspire to such a glory for himself,  
And if he is unwilling to undertake  
The labor of such a task, is he, the father, 340  
Willing to deny the towers of Rome  
To Ascanius, the son? What is it that  
He plans to do? What is it he's hoping for,  
Lingering here in the midst of an alien people,  
Forgetting Ausonia and the Lavinian fields?  
Tell him, set sail. This is my message to him."

He spoke and Mercury at once prepared  
To do what his father commanded him to do.  
He puts on the golden wingèd shoes that carry  
Him with the speed of storm winds high above 350  
All lands and oceans. He takes up the wand with which  
He summons pale ghosts to come up from Orcus and  
With it sends others down to the lowest deeps  
Of darkest Tartarus; and as he flies  
He sees the peak and perpendicular sides  
Of Atlas, who with his laboring strength holds up  
The sky above himself, his great head wreathed  
In darkest clouds and forests of mountain pine,  
And buffeted by rain and wind, his mighty  
Shoulders covered with snow, and rivers pouring 360

Down in torrents from his ancient chin,  
And his hoary beard, stiff with encrusting ice.  
Here Mercury glided down on his even wings,  
And paused, and then he dove straight down to the waves  
Of the sea below, and then he was like a sea-bird  
Skimming just above the waves over near  
The sea cliffs where the waters teem with fish.  
Thus, cutting across the winds, Cyllene's child,  
He flew to Libya's sandy shores to do  
The errand he had promised to perform.

370

As soon as the soles of his wingèd feet touched ground,  
He saw, beyond the huts, where Aeneas was  
Building towers and houses; he carried a sword  
Embellished with fiery stars of golden jasper  
And from his shoulders there hung a glowing Tyrian  
Purple cloak inwoven with threads of gold,  
A gift to him from Dido's treasure of riches.  
"So is it that you are, for the sake of this woman,  
Building a beautiful Carthage, forgetting about  
The city that is your destiny? The god  
Whose power is over the gods and earth and heaven  
Has sent me down to you from shining Olympus.  
What are you doing? What are you hoping for,  
To waste your time like this in these Libyan lands?  
If the glory of your fortune does not inspire you,  
And if you do not wish to undertake  
This labor for the sake of your own fame,  
Think of Ascanius, your growing son,  
And of the promise made to him, your heir,  
To rule Italia and the Roman world."  
These are the words Cyllenius said to him,  
And in the saying he faded from his sight  
And vanished far away into thin air.

380

390

Aeneas was struck wordless, in terror, his hair  
 Stood on end, his voice got caught in his throat.  
 Dumbfounded by the gods' rebuke he burned  
 With the desire to get himself away  
 And leave this dulcet country as the gods  
 Commanded him to do. Ah, how to do it?  
 What will he say to her, to assuage her fury? 400  
 What will his first words be? How to begin?  
 And as, in a panic, he tried, in a panic, to think  
 Which way to choose and what to do, and how,  
 It came to him, as he turned this way and that,  
 That what he must do is this: he summons to him  
 Mnestheus and Sergestus, commanding them  
 To make the fleet ready, and do so quietly,  
 And arm the ships and bring the crews to the shore,  
 And to dissimulate the reason for this new plan.  
 Meanwhile, since Dido will be ignorant 410  
 About what's going on, and since she will  
 Be unsuspecting that a love as strong  
 As theirs might ever be broken, he will have time  
 To find the soothing words, and the moment to speak them.  
 His people joyfully listened to what he told them,  
 And hastened to carry out what he commanded.

But the queen (for how can one who is in love  
 Be kept deceived?), having already been  
 Fearful when there was nothing to be feared,  
 Divined his secret plan, becoming aware 420  
 Of this activity that was underway;  
 And heartless Rumor whispered to her the news  
 That the fleet was being armed and prepared for sailing.  
 The news was maddening; Dido was like



A Thyiad undone, aroused, on fire,  
In frenzy, by the sound of the emblems shaking  
In rage in the dance around the city, burning,  
Inflamed by the noise of the Bacchic orgy and  
The clamoring on Mount Cithaeron in the dark  
Of the night. These are the words she spoke to him, 430  
Accusingly: "O faithless! Did you think that you  
Could hide this deed from me, and steal away?  
Cannot our love keep you from doing this?  
Cannot your plighted word keep you from this?  
Cannot the thought of the death you would leave me to,  
Keep you from this? Now you are making ready  
Your fleet to go out on the winter seas in the teeth  
Of the Aquilonean storms. O cruel! If Troy  
Were still unfallen, and you, if you were not  
Seeking for alien fields and unknown places 440  
To make your dwelling in, you would not, would you,  
Set sail from Troy with your Trojan fleet in such  
Tempestuous seas?—But is it I that you  
Are fleeing from? I, by my weeping, and by  
The promise made by your right hand and by  
Our marriage and our vows, and if there was ever  
Anything that I deserved from you  
By any sweetness that I brought to you,  
And if there is any room for prayer, I pray,  
Abandon this that you are about to do. 450  
It is because of you that now I'm hated  
By the Libyan and the Numidian lords, and by  
The Tyrians turned against me. I have been shamed,  
And I have lost my honor, the fame that was  
To be carried up to the stars. To what am I  
Abandoned, dying, by this alien guest?  
For guest is the name that is all that's left of husband.  
Why am I staying here? Until my brother  
Pygmalion takes my city? Until Gaetolian

Iarbas takes me captive? If at least before  
You left you had left a child with me—if only  
An infant Aeneas, whose face would remind me of yours,  
I would not feel so deserted and overthrown.”

460

She was silent. As Jove commanded him he did  
Not look at her in response; he looked at the future  
He was required to look at, and resolutely  
Suppressed the anguishing sorrow in his breast.  
After a time, he briefly replied, and said:

“As long as I have to live and to know myself,  
As long as there is breath in this my body,  
I will never forget and never regret Elissa;  
All you have said you have deserved of me.  
About the way I have behaved I have  
But this to say: it was never my intention  
To abscond from here in secret, do not think that;  
I never held out the bridegroom torch to you,  
Nor did I plight the wedding troth. If fate had left me  
With power to follow my own free will and put  
My cares in order, the first would be my Troy  
And its dear surviving remnant. Troy would still stand,  
Would still be there; and I would raise up again  
A new Pergamus to protect my vanquished people.  
But Grynean Apollo has ordered me  
To go to Italy, the Italy of  
His Lycian oracles, and take possession.  
That destiny, that country, is my love.  
If you, a Tyrian, are inspired by  
The sight of Carthaginian towers here  
In Libya, which you came as aliens to,  
Why should not we seek out a dwelling place  
In foreign lands? Each night when the dewy shadows  
Have covered over the earth, and the stars on fire  
Have risen up in the sky, my father’s ghost

470

480

490

With agitated terrifying gestures  
Appears before my eyes, admonishing.  
And I think of my dear child Ascanius,  
Whom I defraud of his Hesperian kingdom  
And the promised fields that were foretold for him.  
And now the messenger of the gods, whom Jove  
Himself has sent to me, has come down here  
Upon the blowing winds—I swear, it happened—  
It was full daylight when I saw him coming  
Toward me, coming through the walls, and with  
My very own ears I drank in what it was  
That the messenger of Jove was sent to tell me.  
So you must cease your protestations now.  
I go not to Italy of my own free will.”

500

She stares at him, and looks him over and over,  
The man who was before her, all of him,  
Silently while she gazed and gazed at him:  
“It was no goddess who gave birth to you.  
And, faithless, you are not of Dardanus’ line.  
In Caucasus’s cold stony cliffs there was  
That cave that gave you birth. You suckled at  
The udders of Hyrcanian tigresses.  
What words are they I should not use, to save them  
For things to come to me for me to say?  
He did not look at me, he did not sigh, when I  
Was weeping, and he did not weep himself,  
In pity for me and for my love of him.  
What shall I say? What *is* there for me to say?  
Great Juno’s eyes do not look at this with justice.  
The eyes of Saturnian Jupiter do not.  
There is nowhere where faith is kept; not anywhere.  
He was stranded on the beach, a castaway,  
With nothing. I made him welcome. Insanely, I,  
Gave him a place beside me on my throne.  
I made his companions safe and saved his fleet—

510

520

The fire, oh, the fire rages around me!  
First augur Apollo and then the Lycian oracles, 530  
Then Jove himself has sent his messenger down,  
To bring this dreadful message through the air.  
Is this then what the gods do when their quiet  
Has been disturbed? I'll hold you here no longer.  
I do not dispute what you have said to me. Go.  
Let the winds take you across to Italy.  
Seek out your kingdom there across the seas.  
But if the gods have justice, you will drink  
The cup of vengeance halfway there and call out,  
Dido, Dido, over and over again, 540  
And when cold death has separated soul  
From body my shade will come to you from far,  
With sooty brands, and haunt you, wicked one.  
You will be punished. The story of it will come  
To me in the Underworld and I will hear it!"  
She breaks off what she was saying, in the midst  
Of what she was saying, and turns away, distraught,  
And flees away from the light and from his sight,  
And he was left in hesitancy and fear,  
With so much still to say. And in the arms 550  
Of servants she is carried fainting to  
Her marble chamber, and laid upon her bed.

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But pious Aeneas, groaning and sighing, and shaken  
In his very self in his great love for her,  
And longing to find the words that might assuage  
Her grief over what is being done to her,  
Nevertheless obeyed the divine command  
And went back to his fleet. There, all the Trojans,  
All together all along the shore  
Set busily to work to launch their ships 560  
Into the water, the fresh-pitched keels afloat;

Avid to get the voyage underway,  
Sailors were bringing from the woods new leafy  
Branches of trees to be fashioned into oars.  
Everywhere you could see them hastening  
Away from the town and down to the port and the ships.  
It's as when ants, knowing that winter's coming,  
Carry back into their house huge piles of corn,  
To store it for their use, the long black file  
Of workers moving steadily through the grass,  
Bearing the plundered forage as they go,  
Some straining under the weight of the big grains  
Upon their tiny shoulders, and others sternly  
Marshaling them as they go along the way.

570

What was it you were feeling, Dido, when  
You looked down from the fortress heights and saw  
How the labor of their readying the fleet  
Seethed with their eager fervor to be gone?  
O implacable Love, what is there that  
You will not drive men to? Once more she must  
Submit herself to her weeping and her pleading;  
Once more she must bend her pride to submit to love;  
To leave nothing at all untried before her death.  
“Anna, you see what's happening down in the port;  
The Trojans have come together from all around;  
The unfurled sails are calling for the breeze,  
And, look, the exulting sailors have garlanded  
The sterns of the ships in which they will all depart.  
If I could foresee such heartbreak, sister, I  
Will be able to survive it, now it has happened.  
Anna—our enemy was your friend and he  
Confided his inmost thoughts to you—so you  
Will know how best you can approach him—go,  
Speak to him humbly for me, and tell him that  
I never joined at Aulis with the Danaans  
To obliterate the Trojans; I never sent

580

590

A fleet against the Pergamus; I never  
Violated his father Anchises' ashes  
To make offense against his father's Manes.  
Why has he shut his pitiless ears to what 600  
I want to say to him? Where is he going,  
That he leaves for in such haste? Ask him to give  
One final gift to her who suffers so,  
Because of her love for him? Plead with him to  
Delay his parting till the winds will be  
More favorable and the parting easier.  
No longer do I hold him to be faithful  
To the ancient marriage bond he has annulled.  
Nor do I ask him to relinquish his  
Desires for his fair Latium and his kingdom. 610  
I only petition for a little time,  
Repose for my frenzied spirit, overcome,  
Till I have learned from fortune how to grieve.  
This last being granted—pity your sister—I  
Will pay for it in full to my death moment.”

This was her prayer, and her unhappy sister  
Carried the message of these tears to him,  
But he could not be moved by them, for he could hear,  
But he could not hear, the words she brought.  
Fate stands in the way and heaven stops up his ears. 620  
It's as when high in the Alpine mountains the boreal  
Winds assault an ancient strong oak tree,  
Contending how, this way, now that, to fell it.  
There is a groaning, the great trunk shakes and rocks,  
Its wind-shattered foliage scattered on the ground,  
But it holds to where it is upon the mountain;  
As far as its crown extends to the high heavens,  
Its roots reach down as far, to Tartarus;  
So he, though shaken in his grieving heart,  
Buffeted this way and that by what he heard, 630  
Still stood unmoved; the tears that fell are nulled.

Then, truly, wretched Dido, overwhelmed  
 By knowledge of the fate that has come upon her,  
 Prays for death; she is weary of looking at  
 The overarching sky. And to make sure  
 That what has been begun will be completed  
 And that she will depart from the light, she saw  
 As she set out her ritual offerings  
 Upon the incense-burning altars, how—  
 The horror!—the holy water darkened and 640  
 The wine was changed to an excremental slime.  
 She said nothing about this, no, not even to  
 Her sister. Furthermore, within her palace  
 There was a marble chapel devoted to  
 Her husband who had died and which she had  
 Wonderfully and faithfully maintained,  
 Adorning it with leaves and snow-white garlands.  
 At night, when night possessed the world, she heard,  
 When she was there, noises that sounded like  
 Her husband's voice, words calling to her, and too, 650  
 She heard the gloomy sound of the owl alone  
 Upon the city roofs, in long-continued  
 Wailing lamentation; sometimes she heard  
 The voices of old sayings of the prophets,  
 Speaking to her in her head their terrible warnings.  
 And in her sleep savage Aeneas himself  
 Drives her before him in her madness, or  
 Always alone along some vacant street  
 Unendingly unaccompanied she seeks  
 To find her Tyrians in an empty land— 660  
 It's as when Pentheus, demented, sees  
 The Furies and, seeing double, sees two suns,  
 And sees two Thebes, two cities, or as when  
 Agamemnon's son Orestes flees from his mother,

Who is brandishing fire and writhing snakes, and there  
In the doorway the Dirae crouch, and patiently wait.

› › ›

Therefore, when, utterly subjected to  
Her misery, she has received her madness  
Into herself, and has decided to die,  
And to choose the time and manner of the doing, 670  
Concealing from her the plan that she has made,  
She speaks to her sister, her countenance serene,  
As if her unhappy heart were filled with hope.  
“Sister,” she says, “I have discovered a way  
(Be happy for me, sister) to bring him back,  
Or else to free me of my love for him.  
Near where the sun goes down and Ocean ends,  
There’s Ethiopia, most distant place,  
Where the heavens and their adorning stars are turned  
On Atlas’ mighty shoulders. There is a priestess, 680  
Of the Massylian people, brought to me,  
Who superintends the temple in the Garden  
Of the Hesperides, and feeds the dragon  
Delicacies there, and tends the sacred  
Boughs of the trees that grow there, sprinkling their leaves  
With honeydew and sleep-inducing poppy.  
She promises that with her incantations  
She can, if she wills, unbind the hearts of those  
Long pent in their obsessions, and imprison  
Others in their own cruel, blinding, cares; 690  
She can arrest a river in its flowing,  
And turn the stars back in their heavenly courses, and she  
Can bring the nighttime Spirits from below;  
Can make you feel the shaking of the earth,  
And hear its rumbling underneath your feet;  
And she can summon ash trees down the mountain.



It is against my will, I swear to the gods,  
And too, dear heart, my sister, you, that I  
Am arming myself with instruments of magic.

In the atrium of the palace, under the skies, 700  
You must build a pyre, my sister, and bring the arms  
And all the clothes that he, the faithless, left,  
And bring the marriage bed that was my ruin,  
And pile them up upon it. I want to destroy  
All that reminds me of that impious person—  
And this is what the priestess tells me to do.”

Having said these things she is silent, and she stands there;  
Her face is stricken pale. But Anna has  
No thought that her sister conceals her death behind 710  
These occult rituals, has not conceived  
That this is madness, nor is she brought to fear  
That any of this is worse than when her husband  
Sychaeus died. So she performs the tasks  
As Dido has directed her to perform them.

After the pyre she called for had been made  
From ilex boughs and pine boughs piled up high,  
In the palace's inner courtyard, under the sky,  
The queen hung garlands and black funeral fronds  
Around the place, and, on the bed they'd been in,  
Laid out his sword, his picture, and the clothes 720  
He left behind as if he were coming back.

Around this courtyard there were altars placed,  
And the African priestess stood there, calling out  
In a thundering voice invoking Erebus,  
And his father Chaos, and threefold Hecate,  
And triple-headed triple-faced Diana.  
She sprinkled water that seemed to be the water  
Brought from the Underworld from Avernus' springs,  
And herbs were brought to what she was doing there,  
Full of the black milky sap of venom, mown 730  
By brazen sickles under the light of the moon,

And the birth-growth love-charm from a newborn foal's  
Forehead was brought before its dam could eat it.  
Dido herself was there, her robe ungirdled,  
One foot unshod, assisting at the altars,  
Holding out the ritual offerings of salted  
Meal, and calling to the gods and to  
The stars, to bear their witness to the death  
That is before her, and praying to whatever  
God there may be who is kind to unfortunate lovers.

740

Now it was night and all across the earth  
All living beings were harvesting their sleep;  
The wind in the trees and the waves that had been wild  
Had quieted down—it was the time when the stars  
Were halfway through their journey through the night,  
When everything was still, where far and wide  
All beasts and painted birds, around the lucid  
Waters of the lakes, or hidden in thickets, were  
Asleep beneath the silent sky of night.  
But she, in her distress, the Phoenician queen,  
Cannot receive the darkness of the night  
Into her eyes or heart. She cannot sleep.  
Love rises up once more in her in a surging  
Raging wave of fire. In this state, in herself,  
Floundering, talking to herself, she says:  
“What am I going to do? Must I resort  
To the mockery of those Numidian suitors  
I scorned to marry? Follow the Ilian ships  
And be a Trojan slave? And would they take me,  
Hating me as they do, or if they did so,  
Would it be only for the kindnesses I did  
To them in the past, or would they, in their pride,  
Remember these? Oh, I am lost! Oh, lost!  
Do you not understand yet, do you not know,  
How treacherous they are, these people of  
The tribe of Laomedon? What should I do?

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Go all by myself to follow those sailors as  
They joyfully depart? Shall I take all  
My Tyrian people with me after them,  
Protecting me from them? How could I ask 770  
My people to open their sails to the winds of the sea,  
When I could hardly get them to leave their Sidon  
To go with me? The only thing left is to die,  
And put an end with the knife to all this pain.  
My sister, my tears persuaded you to be  
The first to load me down with all these evils.  
You were the first to throw me into the hands  
Of the enemy. If only I could have been  
A creature like some creature in the wild,  
Unwedded, innocent, unknowing. I 780  
Have not kept faith with the ashes of Sychaeus.”

Such were the cries of the anguish of her heart.

› › ›

High on the stern of his ship Aeneas, having  
Prepared for his departure from the city,  
Was seizing the opportunity to sleep,  
And suddenly a shape appeared before him,  
Form of the god who had come to him before,  
Radiant young golden-haired Mercury, saying  
To him as he lay there sleeping, “Goddess-born,  
How can you lie there sleeping when all these dangers 790  
Are all around you? Are you out of your mind?  
Do not you hear that there’s a fair wind stirring?  
She wants to die and her mind is billowing with  
All sorts of wickedness and tricks because  
Of her waves of madness frenzy. Leave this place  
And go, as fast as you can, while you still can.  
If you linger here till morning, the sea will be  
Teeming with ships, blazing with threatening torches,

Your whole fleet burning on the shore. Go now.  
Woman is changeable and unknowable.” 800  
As he spoke he was vanishing into the blackness of night.  
Aeneas suddenly woke, and terrified, roused up  
His sleeping Trojans from their sleep, “Wake up!  
Get to your oars! Open the sails! Get going!  
It was a god who spoke to me in my sleep!  
It was a god came into my sleep from on high,  
Telling us to cut the ropes and go!  
We will follow you, O god, whoever you are,  
And joyfully once again obey. Be with us;  
Set favoring stars before us as we go.” 810  
As he spoke he snatched his sword from its scabbard and  
It flashed like lightning as he cut the mooring  
Ropes that held his ship to the shore, and by  
The ardor of all his men aroused to ardor  
Like his, the shore was emptied, and the water  
Was almost not to be seen under so many  
Foaming oars as the fleet set forth to sea.

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And now, as early Dawn began to arise,  
Departing from Tithonus’ saffron couch,  
And scattering pale light upon the earth, 820  
Dido, looking down from her high tower,  
Saw, as the morning light began to brighten,  
That the fleet was moving steadily away,  
Under open placid sails, and that the oars  
Had rowed away and gone, and the harbor was empty;  
She tore at her golden hair and three times, four times,  
Struck her beautiful breast, and cried, “O god!  
Is he really going away? Can it be true  
That this alien is making fools of us?  
Can’t our people arm themselves and from 830  
Everywhere in the city swarm to chase them?”

Can't they tear loose our ships from the docks and chase them,  
And keep them from getting away from us? Bring fire!  
Bring weapons! Man the oars! Go after them!—  
Where am I? What am I saying? What is it,  
That's happening in my head? Wretched Dido,  
See what your wickedness has done to you—  
It was that moment when you offered the crown  
To him, who pledged himself and gave his word,  
And carried his household gods into our country, 840  
And bore his aged father on his back.  
Could I not then have torn his body into  
Pieces and scattered the pieces on the waves?  
I could have put them all, all of them, all,  
To the sword, and yes, little Ascanius too.  
And served him to his father for his dinner.  
But who knows who would win the fight with them?  
And yet, what matter, what *of* it, what would I have  
To be frightened of, already going to die?  
I should have torched his camp, I should have filled 850  
The decks of his fleeing ships with fire, I should  
Have exterminated father and son and all  
The whole race of them, I should have thrown myself  
On top of them. You Sun, whose fiery brightness  
Shines upon all that happens here on earth,  
And Juno, mediatrix, you, who witness  
All of my trouble, and Hecate, you, whose name  
They ululate at the crossroads in the night,  
And you, avenging Dirae, and the gods  
Of dying Elissa, I pray that all your powers 860  
Will listen to hear my prayers, and heed them as  
The evils that have happened to me deserve.  
If it is fated that that monstrous person  
Will get to where he is going and be able  
To swim his way to shore—if this is what  
Jove has decided and the goal is reached—

Let him be harried in battle by the weapons  
Of audacious enemies and driven from  
The place where he has settled, let him be wrenched  
From Iulus's embrace, call pleadingly for help, 870  
And have to watch his guiltless people die.  
And when the need for peace has brought him to  
Ignominious terms of truce, may he  
Not live in the light to take pleasure in his kingdom,  
But let him die before his time, and lie  
Somewhere unburied on a lonely beach.  
This is my prayer. I pour it out with my blood.  
O Tyrians therefore with my ashes make  
Offerings of your hatred for his people,  
Now and forever after. Never must 880  
There be love or treaty between our nations, so,  
Arise from my bones, whoever it is you are,  
To pursue the Dardanians with sword and brand,  
When you have gathered strength to do it, now  
Or later, whenever it will come to pass—  
Shore against shore, sea against sea, arms  
Against arms! War on them and their children's children!"

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This is how she spoke. Her mind was whirling,  
Seeking how and how quickly to end the life  
That was her enemy. She said to Barce, 890  
The childhood nurse of her dead husband Sychaeus  
(The nurse who was her own nurse in her childhood  
Was ashes now in the country she had left),  
“Dear nurse, bring Anna my sister here, and tell her  
To sprinkle purifying river water  
Upon herself and bring the ritual  
Offerings of atonement, and the victims.  
Let her come here thus ready, and you yourself

Must bind your forehead with a pious headband.  
I have begun the rites of Stygian Jove 900  
And now it is my intention to complete them,  
To put an end to my cares and give to the flames  
This pyre of what there was of that Dardan creature.”  
She spoke. The nanny hastened away in her  
Old woman way to do the errand. But Dido,  
Trembling, her wandering eyes bloodshot and rolling,  
Her cheeks blotched red with burning blood, and pale  
With the pallor of the death she was going to,  
In the throes of what was happening, and resolved,  
Impelled herself into the inner courtyard 910  
And out of her wits climbed high upon the pyre  
And drew from its sheath the Dardanian sword that had  
Been given to her, but not for this. And when  
She saw the bed she knew so well, and saw  
The Trojan clothes, weeping she looked at these things  
And threw herself down on the bed and said her last words:  
“O relics that I loved while fate and the gods  
Permitted that to be, O take my soul  
Along with you and let me be released now  
From my sorrows. I have lived my life. I have 920  
Completed the journey that fortune has put me upon,  
And now my image will go with dignity  
Beneath the earth. I was the builder of  
A famous city. My eyes have seen its walls.  
I have avenged my husband and I have  
Punished my brother for his enmity.  
Happy, too greatly happy, if the Dardan  
Keels had never touched upon our beaches.”  
She spoke, and bent to the couch, and kissed it, saying,  
“I will die unavenged, but let me die, 930  
Thus—thus—it is right that I go into the dark.  
And may the eyes of the cruel Dardanian drink  
These flames that they will see upon the deep

And may he carry with him ever after  
These omens of the death I go to now.”

She spoke her last words thus, and as she did,  
Her women see her fall upon her sword,  
They see the blade of it foaming red with blood.  
They see the blood running down upon her hands.  
Their screaming rises high in the palace walls, 940  
And Rumor rages through the shock-struck city.  
The palace shudders with the lamentation,  
And the wailing echoes back from the wailing skies  
That ululate above, as when the foe  
Comes in on falling Tyre or Carthage and  
The flames flood over the roofs of men and gods.

Her sister rushes through the shrieking crowd,  
Wild with terror and distraction, tearing  
Her own face with her frenzied fingernails,  
Beating her breast with her fists, and crying out 950  
To the dying one, “Was this what you were doing,  
Sister? Were you deceiving me? Was this  
The reason why you made me build the pyre,  
Set up the altars, and prepare the fire?  
Lost as I am, what should I first bewail?  
Why is it that you scorned to have your sister  
Go with you to death? The sword, it should  
Have taken us both, the two of us together.  
Did my own hand construct this pyre and call  
Upon our gods—oh cruel!—so I should be 960  
Away from here, while you lie here like this?  
You have destroyed us, you and me, and all  
The people, and the senate, and the city.  
Oh let me wash the wounds she has with water,  
Oh let me with my lips catch what of breath  
There still may be from hers!” Crying out thus,



She climbed the high steps to the top of the pyre  
And weeping cradled her sister's dying body,  
And tried to staunch the dark blood with her robe.  
And Dido, trying to keep her heavy eyes open,  
Failed to, again, and the infixed wound in her breast  
Made its horrible noise; three times she tried  
To raise herself on her elbow and thrice fell back  
On the bed; her wandering eyes looked up to find  
The light of day, and found it, and she groaned.

970

All-powerful Juno then, in pity for  
Her protracted difficult suffering, sent Iris  
Down from Olympus to free her struggling soul  
From the body that was keeping her from going  
Away from her life. Because she had not perished  
From happenstance, or fate, nor earned her death  
By heroic deeds, but in her misery  
And madness died before it was her time,  
Persephone had not yet taken the lock  
Of golden hair consigning her to Stygian  
Orcus, Iris, her saffron dewy wings,  
With a thousand shimmering variegated colors  
Glimmering as the sun shone brightly through them,  
Flew down from heaven, and, hovering over her, said,  
"I take this offering, sacred to Dis, as I  
Have been commanded, and free you from your body."  
She cut the lock of hair, and all the warmth  
Of her body glided away and Dido's life  
Vanished into the winds. . . .

980

990

# Book Five

Aeneas and his fleet, far out at sea,  
Were steady on their way, and the North Wind  
Was darkening the waves beneath their going;  
And looking back they saw the funeral fires  
On Elissa's walls. They could not know  
The meaning of the flames, yet in their hearts  
There were distressing auguries caused by the thought  
Of what a woman is capable of when so  
Maddened by her passion's desecration.

As the ships sailed farther on, and there was no longer  
Any land to be seen, around them only  
Sea and only sky, a great black cloud  
Gathered above them, and the waves arose,  
Blackening more and shuddering beneath them  
As they went before the storm. From high on the stern  
The pilot Palinurus called out down:

"Why are these storm clouds around us everywhere?  
Father Neptune, what are you preparing?"

He tells the crew to tighten the lines and bend  
Their bodies over the oars, and fix the sails  
Athwart the blowing winds, and says to him,  
"Great-souled Aeneas, not even if we went  
Under the guarantee of Jupiter,  
I could not hope to get to Italy  
In such a storm as this that's gathering now.  
The winds have turned and are coming from the West,

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And are roaring across our way. The air is all  
One black storm cloud; there's nothing we can do  
Against the force of this, and so, since Fortune  
Prevails this way upon us, we must submit, 30  
And go where she is telling us to go.

If I remember rightly how I read  
The stars that led us here before, I think  
I can find our way to Sicily and safety,  
On the friendly shore where your brother Eryx dwells.  
It is not far." Pious Aeneas replied,  
"I too have seen what the winds require of us,  
And how they frustrate all your skill. Change course.  
Could there be any other land I would 40  
Prefer to bring my weary ships for shelter  
Than this which is the dwelling place of my  
Dardanian friend Acestes and which holds  
In her embrace the ashes and the bones  
Of my father Anchises?" Having said these things,  
They turn and seek the port that they desire.  
The zephyrs favor them, and they are borne  
Swiftly over the waters and, after a time,  
They have joyfully returned to the well-known shore.

From a high hilltop Acestes, wondering, sees  
The coming into port of these friendly ships, 50  
And he hastens down from there, wearing the furs  
Of a Libyan she-bear's pelt, and bristling with  
The hunting javelins he carries—Acestes,  
Son of the river god Crinismus and  
A Trojan mother. Mindful of who he is,  
He rejoices with his kin on their return,  
And, welcoming them, consoles their weariness  
With gifts his farms and orchards could supply.

When, early in the morning, day's bright light  
Had put the stars to flight, Aeneas gathered 60

All his fellows from all along the shore,  
And from the mound of a hill he spoke to them thus:  
“Great scions of the race descended from gods,  
The months as those go by have reached the number  
Completing the year since we put down the ashes,  
Here, into the earth, of my father, divine Anchises,  
And consecrated here these altars of sorrow.  
We are upon the day, if I am not  
Mistaken, which, according to your will,  
O gods, I’ll keep forever as the day 70  
Of honor and the rituals of grieving.  
Wherever I was, whether it was among  
Syrtian sandshoals in Gaetulia or  
Adrift in Argive seas, or captive in  
Mycenae’s town, I would fulfill my vows  
Annually in solemn memorial,  
And place due offerings on the holy altars.  
Now, carried here into this welcoming port,  
We stand in the very place where my father Anchises’  
Ashes and his bones lie in their tomb 80  
—And this, I think, is not without the gods’  
Intention and design. So let us all  
Together celebrate the joyful rites,  
And pray for favoring winds, and pray that he  
Vouchsafe that when my city has been founded,  
We’ll celebrate the sacrifice each year  
In temples we will dedicate to his name.  
Acestes, who is of our Trojan blood,  
For every ship will give a pair of oxen,  
And you must bring to the feast your own Penates 90  
And those our host Acestes venerates.  
After nine days have passed, if Aurora’s light  
Spreads for mortals across the waking world,  
I will command that there be festive contests,  
Trojans competing with Trojans: first, the swift ships,  
Footraces then for those who are best at running,

Then he who glories in his strength to show  
His skill in the flight of javelin and arrow,  
And he who dares to challenge in the fight,  
With lead-wrapped rawhide gloves—let those 100  
Who seek to win the victor's prize step forth.  
Be silent now, and wreath your brows with leaves.”  
Having said this he placed upon his head  
A wreath of myrtle sacred to his mother.  
So Helymus did also, and after him  
Mature Acastes, and then Ascanius,  
The boy, and after him, the other youths,  
Following suit. And then Aeneas went,  
Accompanied by many thousand people,  
An enormous crowd of which he was the center, 110  
From the place where they had gathered, to the tomb,  
And there, according to the ritual, he poured  
Two cups of unadulterated wine,  
Two cups of milk, freshly obtained, two cups  
Of the blood of victims sacrificed at the altars;  
And he scattered flowers upon the ground, and said,

“Hail once again, my sacred father, hail,  
You ashes and you spirit and you shade  
Of my father who was carried here in vain!  
It could not be that I could go with thee 120  
To the foretold fields of Italy or,  
Whatever they are, Ausonia and the Tiber.”

These words he spoke, and as he finished speaking,  
From under the shrine a serpent slithered out,  
His long body coiling sevenfold behind him,  
Coil after coil as placidly he flowed  
Among the altars and circled about the mound,  
His beautiful back spotted with blue, and his scales  
On fire with blazing gold, their rainbow colors  
Shimmering in the sunlight's implications. 130

Aeneas was astonished by what he saw.  
The serpent, then, flowed on among the cups  
And the bowls, and tasted a little from all that was offered,  
And after that, it glided, harmlessly,  
Back down below the shrine, from where it had come.  
Aeneas, not knowing whether this had been  
The genius of the place or if it was  
His father's attendant spirit, begins again  
The filial ritual of commemoration.  
As was appropriate, he slays two sheep, 140  
And after that two swine, and after that,  
Two black-backed heifers; he pours out wine  
And calls upon the shade of great Anchises,  
Set free from Acheron. His fellows, then,  
Bring gifts to offer from what they have to give,  
And place them on the altars, and slay the steers;  
Others bring out the cooking pots on the beach,  
And light the fires with coals, and roast the meat.

The ninth, the long-awaited day, had come,  
And Phaëthon's horses carried Aurora up 150  
Into the cloudless light of the morning sky.  
The name and illustrious fame of Acestes excite  
The people who gather in crowds along the beaches;  
Some of them were there only to see  
The Aeneadae, and some were there to contend,  
Themselves, in the games. The prizes that are to be won  
Are spread out to be seen upon the field:  
Sacred tripods, green wreaths, and branches of palm,  
Purple regalia, arms, gold and silver talents.  
From a central mound the trumpet loudly sounding 160  
Signals that the games are about to begin.  
Four ships, four equals chosen best of their class,  
Four heavyweights in oarage and in bulk:  
Fast Pristis, Sea Dragon, Mnestheus in command,  
Who would become Italian Mnestheus,

Patriarch of the people called the Memmians;  
Then the enormous trireme, the Chimaera,  
As big as a city, three tiers of rowers, three  
Ranks of young Dardanians with their oars  
Impelling her through the water, Gyas the captain; 170  
Next came the giant Centaur of Sergestus,  
He from whom the Sergestia take their name;  
And finally in his sky-blue Scylla came  
Cloanthus, from whom the Roman Cluenti descend.

There is a rock, far out in the waters, but still  
In sight of the foaming beaches, that when the Northwest  
Winds are hiding the stars, the surging waves,  
Upswelling, break themselves over, and it's submerged;  
But it rises up when the sea is calm and silent,  
And its surface is a welcome level place 180  
For gulls, who love the sun, to be upon.  
Upon this rock Aeneas with ilex branches  
Has marked out a goal, where the ships must make their turn,  
And then come back on the other side of the course.  
They choose by lot the placement at the starting,  
And the captains, clad in shining purple and gold,  
Mount high upon the stern decks of their ships;  
The heads of the youths at the oars are garlanded  
With wreaths of poplar; their naked shoulders shine  
With glistening oil. Side by side at the thwarts, 190  
Arms stretched out at the oars, ready and waiting,  
Listening for the signal, their hearts are pounding,  
Thrilled and fearful in their desire for glory.  
Then when the loud sound of the trumpet came,  
Off they went from the starting; the shouting of  
The sailors rose to the skies; as the rowers' arms  
Move forward and then back, forward and back,  
The waters foam, the ships abreast break through  
And across the furrows of the waves before them,  
And the waters open wide in convulsion caused 200

By the oars and by the plunging beaks of the ships.  
The rush of the two-horse chariots as they burst  
Out of their stalls and race across the fields  
Is nothing to this, the sight of the charioteer  
Wildly shaking the reins and bending to lash  
The horses' backs is nothing so wild as this.  
The forest rings with the sound of applause and the cries  
Of the crowd as they urge their favorites on, and the beaches  
Around resound and the cliffs shout back the noise.

In all the din and uproar Gyas goes 210  
Gliding ahead of all the others, and  
After him in hot pursuit Cloanthus,  
Whose big ship has more rowers, and so, more power,  
But his bulky bigness also inhibits his speed.  
Following after these two, Dragon and Centaur,  
Equidistant behind, competing for  
The lead, one over the other one, so first  
The Dragon has it, then the huge Centaur has it,  
And then the two go racing along together, 220  
Side by side and neck and neck their prows,  
Plowing like twins the salt flood with their keels.  
And now they all were getting near the rock  
Where the turning is, when Gyas, who still was first  
At the halfway point, shouted out to his helmsman,  
“Menoetes, why are we so far to the right?  
Change course, this way, this way, get closer to  
The rocks, and let our oar blades touch them as  
We get ourselves just by them on the left.  
Let the others play it safe!” But Menoetes feared  
The hidden rocks, and so he turned the prow 230  
Still farther rightward toward the deeper water,  
So Gyas shouted again, “Why so far off?  
Menoetes, head for the rocks!” and, saying that,  
He saw Cloanthus close to him and heading  
Closer in to the rocks than where he was.



Cloanthus steers between Gyas's ship and them,  
And just scrapes past, and passes the leader, leaving  
The rocks behind him as he gets away,  
Safe and sound and free and ahead of them all.  
Then Gyas's shame and fury burns through to his bones; 240  
Tears well up in his eyes, and forgetting all  
About the decorum of ships and the rules of safety,  
He pitches his sluggish pilot Menoetes right off  
The high stern deck of his ship, down into the sea,  
And takes the helm, both pilot and captain, he,  
And exhorts his crew, and turns the tiller toward home.  
But then when old Menoetes rises up  
From the bottom of the sea and slowly gets  
His heavy soaking weight up onto the rock,  
Dripping wet in body and in clothes, 250  
And sits him down where the rock is flat and dry,  
The Trojans all laugh at the sight of him falling in,  
And frantically splashing out, and climbing up,  
And sitting there, regurgitating salt water.

The hope of being able to get past Gyas,  
Slowed down as now he was, rose up in the hearts  
Of Mnestheus and Sergestus, the two behind.  
Sergestus seizes the lead and heads toward the rocks,  
Ahead, but not by a whole boat's length ahead;  
The prow of the Dragon is there along his side, 260  
And, moving back and forth amid his crew,  
Mnestheus urges them on: "Rise to the oars,  
O you who fought with Hector, you, who when  
Our Troy was falling I chose to bring with me  
As my companions. Show that courage and strength  
You showed among the quicksands of Gaetulia,  
And upon the Ionian Sea, and in the surf  
At Cape Malae. I do not any longer  
Seek to be first—Neptune, let them conquer,  
Those to whom you've granted victory— 270

But help us be spared the shame of being last.  
My comrades, let us keep the place we have  
And save us from disgrace." His men, inspired  
To do their utmost in the struggle, bend to the oars.  
With their powerful strokes the brazen Dragon trembles;  
The ocean floor slides backward underneath them;  
Their bodies shake with their gasping shuddering breathing;  
The sweat streams down their limbs. But it was chance  
That brought the glory that they desired to them.  
Headstrong Sergestus drives his prow headlong 280  
In near the rocks, and suddenly collides  
Upon an up-jutting spur; the rock cries out,  
His oars are shattered, the bow of the ship hangs pent.  
The sailors shout, dismayed at being so balked,  
Pick up whatever they can, sharp-ended poles  
And iron pikes, and their broken oars fished out  
Of the swirling water. Mnestheus was overjoyed  
By what had happened to the others and  
With skillful oars and praying to the winds  
Heads round them, and on the smoothly flowing waters 290  
Glides down toward home upon the open sea.  
It is as when a dove, whom something has startled,  
Flies up and away from where her nest and children  
Are hidden in some secret place in the cliff,  
And off and over the fields, making a loud  
Noise flapping, but after a while she sails upon  
The quiet air on still unmoving wings,  
Just so Mnestheus, just so the Dragon, with  
Unlaboring sails is free on the final stretch,  
And speeds along by her own self's speed itself. 300  
Sergestus, left behind, is high on the rocks,  
And stranded in the shallow water around him,  
Crying for help and trying to learn to make  
His broken oars compete again. And then,  
Mnestheus catches up to Gyas's huge  
Chimaera, which, with a helmsman lost, must cede

The race to him. Now, almost at the goal,  
Cloanthus was the only one still ahead.  
Mnestheus heads for getting close to him,  
Trying as best he can. The shouting rises, 310  
Everyone rooting for his favorite;  
The noise is fracturing the sky. They know  
That at this moment they'd give their lives to win  
The glory that they think belongs to them.  
The better they do the stronger it is they feel;  
Their strength is in the strength they know they have.  
And maybe they would have won, for now the prows  
Are side by side, if Cloanthus had not stretched  
His hands up to the gods of the sea, beseeching:  
"You gods whose kingdom is the sea my ship 320  
Is coursing over, I will joyfully slay  
In gratitude at your altars a snow-white bull  
And fling its offered entrails into the flood,  
And pour out offered wine into it too!"  
He spoke, and under the waves the Nereids heard,  
And Phorcus too, and the sea nymph Panopea,  
Portunus too, the father, god of ports,  
Heard and with his huge hand took the ship  
And impelled it swifter than the wind or an arrow,  
And sent it welcome home into the harbor. 330

Then by Anchises' son's command they all  
Were assembled together and the herald loudly  
Sounded the note declaring Cloanthus was  
The victor, and the green laurel wreath was placed upon  
His triumphal head. Each ship was given wine,  
A talent of silver and three bullocks and  
The captains of the ships were each given gifts  
According to their placement. The victor was given  
A military cloak with gold enlaced;  
Inwoven roundabout in a double meandering 340  
Line of Meliboean purple was

The story of the eager royal boy,  
On foot pursuing on leafy Ida the tiring  
Stags in flight from him, and the weapon-bearing  
Eagle of Zeus catching the boy in his talons  
And carrying him away, and, stretching up  
To the stars the palms of their hands imploring,  
His aged guardians, and the sound of the dogs'  
Surprised savage barking rising up.

He gave to the one who won the second place  
A breastplate, coat of mail, with triple golden  
Hooks, the armor that he himself had stripped  
From the body of Demoleos whom he had beaten  
Upon the banks of the fast-flowing river Simois,  
Under the walls of Troy. Such was this breastplate,  
The servants Sagaris and Phegeus together could hardly  
Carry the weight of it on their straining shoulders,  
But it was wearing this breastplate that Demoleos  
Freely running pursued the scattered Trojans.

350

The third prize was a pair of great brass cauldrons  
And goblets made of heavy silver, graven  
With rough designs.

360

Now all who had won their prizes  
And had been given their gifts, were leaving, proud  
Of what they had done and the gifts that they had earned,  
When Sergestus came in, in his laughed-at unglorious ship,  
Free at last of the cruel rocks that held it,  
Having lost its oars and a row of the rowers' seats.  
It's as when a snake, run over in the road  
By a wagon wheel, or left half-dead by the blow  
Of a heavy rock some passerby had thrown,  
Trying to get its mangled body away,  
Wriggling in its desperation, part  
Of it blazing eyes, and hissing neck upraised,  
Defiant, the part where the stone had struck  
Holding it back, struggling in its coils,

370

Getting itself all tangled in itself—  
Laboring in like this with such maimed oarage  
The ship moves very slowly but somehow  
It's under sail and gets itself into 380  
The port at last. Aeneas, happy at least  
That the ship is saved and the crew brought back alive,  
Awards a prize to Sergestus, as had been promised,  
A woman-slave whose name was Pholoë,  
A Cretan. She is good at Minerva's work,  
And she has two infants at the breast, twin boys.

This contest over, Aeneas then proceeded  
To a place encircled all around by many  
Wooded hills, and then, below the hills,  
Deep in the valley that the hills surround, 390  
A theater for the running of the race.  
Here, on a seat raised high, Aeneas sat,  
Many thousands around him, and thus he spoke,  
Welcoming all who wished to compete in the footrace,  
And telling them what the rewards and prizes would be.  
Sicilian and Trojan youths together came  
From all sides, eager for the contest. First,  
The famously beautiful youth, Euryalus,  
And Nisus with him, he who loved him so;  
Diores next, a prince of the family 400  
Of Priam himself; Salius and Patron next,  
Salius an Acarnian, Patron born  
In Tegea in Arcadia; then two  
Sicilians, Panopes and Helymus,  
Acestes' men; and many others, whose names  
Have now been lost in time's obscurity.  
Aeneas said, surrounded by them all,  
“Listen, and be gladdened. Not one of you  
Will leave without a gift. I'll give  
Each one of you two arrows, polished steel, 410  
Made at Cnossus, and a battle-axe,

Two-edged, inscribed with gleaming silver casing.  
Each of you who runs will be given these,  
And there will be prizes for the first three winners,  
And pale-green olive wreathes to crown their heads.  
The first will be rewarded with the gift  
Of a horse with a beautiful medallioned harness;  
The second an Amazonian quiver filled  
With Thracian arrows, and, for carrying  
The quiver, there's a wide gold shoulder belt  
With a buckle studded with gemstones; and the third  
Will be awarded the gift of this Argive helmet."

420

When he had finished speaking, all took their places,  
And then, when the signal sounded, all burst forth  
Like a storm cloud driven before a storm wind, all  
Intent upon the goal. The first is Nisus,  
By far ahead of all the others, faster  
Than the wind or than a bolt of lightning is;  
Salius next, though at a distance behind;  
Euryalus is third, some space between them;  
After him Helymus, and on his heels,  
And pressing upon his shoulder—and if they weren't  
So near the goal, maybe he'll pass him or maybe  
Be neck and neck. And now, as gasping and panting,  
They're almost, almost there, almost at the goal,  
Unlucky Nisus falls down flat on the ground  
Soaked and slippery with the blood of steers  
That had been sacrificed before the games.  
Here, just as he was joyfully about  
To win the prize, he could not keep his feet.  
He staggered and slipped and fell right down in the dung  
And the sacrificial blood. Nevertheless,  
He didn't forget his love for Euryalus.  
As he got himself up he threw himself down again  
In front of Salius, who doubled up  
And fell down in the muck. Euryalus,

430

440

Thanks to what his lover did, raced past,  
And came in first, as the people yelled and cheered.  
Helymus now is second, Diore's third.

Then Salius, outraged, standing in front of the seats  
Where the elders are, fills the whole theater with  
His loud protesting voice, as he cries out  
That trickery had deprived him of the prize.

450

Euryalus is favored by the crowd,  
Because, although with tears in his eyes, his manly  
Bearing pleases all of them, and all  
The more because he is so beautiful;  
And Diore's cries out loudly in his support,  
For he himself had won third prize, but he  
Would lose his place if Salius were restored.

460

Then faithful Aeneas said to them: "Young men,  
No one will change the order of the prizes.  
What you have won are yours. It is for me  
To recompense a friend for what mischance  
Befell him without his fault." Having said this,  
Salius is given the shaggy golden-clawed  
Magnificent pelt of a Gaetolian lion.

Then Nisus said to Aeneas: "If you have shown  
Such pity for mischance and this is what  
The defeated one receives, then what do I  
Deserve who would have had first prize had I  
Not been unlucky, just as Salius was?"

470

And he shows himself to him, his face and limbs  
Covered with filth and blood. The kindly father  
Smiles at him and orders that a great  
Shield made by Didymaon, that the Greeks pulled down  
From Neptune's temple's doorway, be brought forth  
And be awarded to the deserving youth.

The races now being over and the prizes  
Having been given out, Aeneas says,  
"Let him who's brave enough for the fight lift up

480

His arms and hidebound hands to show that he's ready."  
Then he displays two prizes: for him who wins,  
A steer whose head is wreathed with golden ribbons  
And sacerdotal fillets; for him who loses,  
A sword and a noble helmet to assuage him.

Huge Dares at once arises and in his strength  
Comes forward through the murmuring of the crowd,  
And displays himself, who was the only contender  
With Paris in the boxing rink, and who 490  
In enormous power walked toward Butes once,  
Champion of Amycus' Bebrycian race,  
And struck him down so that he, dying, lay  
On the yellow sand near mighty Hector's tomb.  
This is that Dares, he who stands, head high,  
And showing off how broad his shoulders are,  
And ready for the fight, left arm and right arm  
Punching, counterpunching, battering  
The empty air with terrifying blows.  
But not a single challenger in that 500  
Great crowd came forward; there was nobody there  
Who dared put on the gloves and go against him.  
So he, triumphant, sure that the prize was yielded,  
Defaulted to him, stood at Aeneas's feet,  
And with his left hand taking the bull by the horn,  
Said, "Goddess-born, how long must I stand here?  
No one has challenged me. So let me lead  
The prize that I have won away with me."  
All the Danaans roared out their approval,  
Shouting as one that he be given the prize. 510

Acestes spoke in a stern rebuking voice  
To Entellus, who was sitting next to him,  
In the grass beside his seat, "Entellus, you  
Were once the bravest of our heroes, now  
No longer so. Are you content to sit there



And let such gifts be taken, without a fight?  
 What has become of the glory of your master,  
 Godlike Eryx, where has it gone to? Where  
 Is your fame throughout Trinacria, and  
 The prizes hanging from your house's rafters?" 520  
 Entellus replied: "It is not cowardice.  
 It isn't that I've lost my love of glory.  
 It's that the blood in my body has been made sluggish,  
 Chilled and dulled by age; my body's strength  
 Is dissipated. If I still had what he,  
 That boaster there, is glorying in, if I  
 Still had my youth, it wouldn't be for steers  
 Or other some such prizes that I'd fight.  
 It's not for such things that I ever did it."  
 Having said this, he threw into the center 530  
 A pair of enormous heavy boxing gloves,  
 The ones brave Eryx used to wear in the matches,  
 Binding his hands and arms with the leather of seven  
 Oxhides heavier still with deadly slugs  
 Of iron and lead sewn in. The crowd was amazed,  
 And Dares, stupefied by what he saw,  
 Drew back, as if recusing himself from the fight,  
 And Anchises' son, wondering at the gauntlets,  
 Turned them over and over in his hands.  
 Entellus spoke directly from his heart: 540  
 "What if any of you had seen the gloves  
 That Hercules had worn that fatal day  
 In that fight that took place here in this very place,  
 On this shore beside the sea? These are the gloves  
 Your brother Eryx wore; see them, brain-spattered,  
 Blood-stained, see. He wore these when he fought  
 Against Alcides. And when my blood was richer  
 And I was stronger, before the rivalrous years  
 Had snowed upon my head, these were the gloves  
 I wore in my fights. But if this Trojan, Dares, 550  
 Has backed away because of them, and if

Aeneas, the judge, and Acestes, my patron, give  
Their approval to this, let all the odds be even.  
I will abjure the boxing gloves of Eryx.  
Free yourself from your fears, and you yourself  
Strip off your Trojan gloves.” Having said this,  
He throws off his double mantle from his shoulders,  
And bares himself to show his mighty body,  
Great arms and thighs, and stands gigantic in  
The middle of the arena to be seen.

560

Then father Aeneas, Anchises’ son, brought out  
Two pairs of boxing gloves that weighed the same  
And bound their hands so they were armed the same;  
Each stood, undaunted, raising up undaunted  
Challenging hands to the sky, heads high and back.  
And fist against fist, the fight begins, the younger  
Quicker, more agile, cleverer on his feet,  
The other massive in his powerful bulk,  
Yet moving slowly on unsteady legs,  
Knees wobbling, and his huge frame painfully  
Gasping and shaking. Many blows get missed,  
But many don’t. The sound of body blows  
Rings out, the pounding on chests and bellies and sides;  
The hands are jabbing at ears and brows and jaws,  
Punching and feinting, parrying, counterpunching,  
Uppercutting, hooks. Entellus stands still,  
Watchful, fending off blows with his great solid  
Body’s defenses, blocking, warding, and it’s  
As if the other man is attacking some fortress  
High in the mountains, artfully skillfully trying,  
This way, that way, every which way he can,  
And yet not getting in through the castle defenses.  
And then it is that Entellus’s body somehow  
Seems to become still bigger and taller and larger.  
He raises up his giant arm, and the other  
Sees that the blow is coming down upon him,

570

580

Quickly slips out from under and is away.  
Entellus's strength goes out from beneath him as  
His blow falls only on the air and his  
Enormous weight and power falls heavily down. 590  
It is as when a great hollow pine tree falls  
Uprooted on Mount Ida or Erymanthus.  
The Teucrians and Trinacrian youth rise up,  
Wildly excited; the din of their excitement  
Goes up to the heavens; Acestes in great concern  
For his old friend runs to him but Entellus,  
Unhindered and unfrightened by his fall,  
Empowered and inflamed by rage and shame,  
And consciousness of his manhood, gets up and drives  
Dares headlong under his blows, redoubled 600  
And redoubled, now right, now left, across  
The whole arena, no stopping him—as when  
The hail from a great hailstorm pounds down upon  
The roofs of a city, such are the crowds of blows  
Which he hailstorms battering down on Dares's head.

Then father Aeneas, unwilling to let this rage  
And Entellus's brutal fury go on any longer,  
Spoke gently to Dares, in order to save his life,  
“Unlucky man, why should this madness continue?  
Do you not know that the gods have turned against you? 610  
The power is elsewhere. You must accede to the gods.”  
Thus he ended the fight. The faithful companions  
Of Dares were bearing him off to the ships, his legs  
Dragging behind him, head swaying and spewing  
Vomited blood and broken teeth from his mouth.

Then they were called back to receive the sword and the helmet,  
Leaving the palm and the steer to the victor Entellus.  
He, glorying in the victory and the prize,  
Cried out, “O goddess-born and O you Trojans,  
See what strength I had when I was young. 620

And witness the death you rescued Dares from!”  
He turned to the steer that was standing waiting there,  
And raised his mighty gauntleted arm and with  
A single blow between the horns broke into  
Its skull and shattered its brains; the steer, its lifeless  
Body quivering still, lay stretched on the ground.  
He stood above it and poured out from his heart  
These words: “Eryx, in place of Dares’s death  
I offer this better life, and in victory here  
I now give up this gauntlet and my art.”

630

Right away after this, Aeneas invites  
Anyone who might want to contend for the prize  
In the contest of swiftly flying arrows to do so,  
Declaring what the winners’ prizes will be.  
With his powerful hand he raises up the pole  
That was, in the ship race, the mast of Sergestus’s vessel,  
And suspends, tied there by her feet, a fluttering dove,  
High up on the mast to be the arrows’ target.  
The contenders come together, their lots are thrown  
Into a brazen helmet, from which to be drawn.  
The first lot goes, to enthusiastic applause,  
To Hippocoön, Hyrtacus’ son; the next  
Is Mnestheus, wearing an olive wreath,  
He who had just now won in the race of the ships;  
Eurytion’s lot was third, the brother of  
The celebrated Pandarus, he whose arrow  
Broke the truce between the Greeks and Trojans,  
And thus began the war; and finally, from  
The bottom of the helmet basin was drawn  
The lot of Acestes, testing himself to see  
What his elder hand could do against these youths.  
Then all of them, with all their strength and skill,  
Draw back their curving bows and from their quivers  
Bring forth their arrows, and first Hyrtacus’ son’s  
Arrow flew off from the strident twanging string

640

650

And through the air to the target mast and struck it,  
And hung in place in the wood of the shaking pole;  
The terrified dove wings fluttered and flapped; the place  
Was filled with the sound of the crowd's applauding hands.

Then brave Mnestheus, bow bent and aiming  
Skyward, eyesight and arrow together fixed  
Upon the target, fired the arrow, and hit,  
But not the bird herself, cutting the cords  
By which her feet were tied, and free away  
She flew off toward the black clouds to the South.

Immediately Eurytion, his bow  
Already tense and ready, his arrow drawn,  
And calling on his brother with his vows,  
Sighted the dove as clapping her wings she flew  
Exultantly below the dark South clouds,

And hit her; she fell down dead upon the waters,  
Leaving her life up there among the stars,  
And bringing down in her body as she fell  
The arrow that killed her. Acestes now was left,  
And the prize was gone, but he, aiming his bow,  
Drew the string taut, and fired his arrow off,  
And showed them all what skill the veteran has,  
And what the sound was of his sonorous bow.

Then there was suddenly shown to their wondering eyes  
A mighty portent, that after many years  
The seers would read and tell the meaning of,  
As auguries of great events to come.

For as it flew off through the cloudy mists, the arrow  
Burst into flames and as it went it flamed  
Away into nothing, vanishing among  
The winds, as sometimes shooting stars fly free  
On their disappearing way across the skies,  
With streaming hair behind them as they go.  
The Trojans and Trinacrians stood, amazed,  
Transfixed, saying their prayers to the gods. Nor did  
Aeneas fail to respond to the wonderful sign.

He turned to joyful Acestes, embraced him and said,  
“Acestes, father, take these gifts, for the mighty  
King of Olympus has shown us that though the prize  
Was lost these honors are deserved by you.  
Here is a gift of what belonged to aged  
Anchises himself, a figured bowl that Thracian  
Cisseus once gave to him as a pledge of his  
Fidelity and love.” Having said this, he binds  
The temples of Acestes with a wreath  
Of green laurel to show he was first above  
All others in the contest; Eurytion  
Was not aggrieved, though it was he who brought  
The bird down falling from the skies. And he,  
Whose arrow cut the hampering cord, was next.

700

But father Aeneas, even before the contest  
Of archery was done, summoned the faithful  
Epytides, who was guardian of his son,  
And said to him, “Go tell my son, if he  
And the other boys have practiced their horsemanship,  
And are ready to show what they can do in arms,  
To bring them out, in honor of his grandsire.”  
He tells the huge crowd there to move to the sides  
Of the field and leave it clear. In glittering  
Parade the boys appear, and on their bridled  
Horses pass before their fathers and  
The murmuring throng of Trinacrians and Trojans.

710

Each of the boys is carrying two spears,  
Fashioned from cornel wood and tipped with iron;  
Some of them on their backs wear shining quivers;  
According to custom, each boy’s hair is trimmed,  
And crowned with a garland; each of them wears a chain  
Of stranded twisted gold around his neck.  
They comprise three troops of horses, and riding in front  
Of each of the troops, capering to and fro,

720

There's a young captain before them, being their leader;  
Twelve boys behind each captain, and beside  
Each troop as it passes by the admiring crowd  
In orderly elation, its trainer rides.

Of the three young joyful captains capering by, 730

One is little Priam, whose name brings back  
Into the world the famous name of his grandsire—  
Polites, he is your illustrious seed,

By whom the Italian race will grow. The Thracian  
Horse he rides is dappled with patches of white,  
White pasterns flashing as it steps along;

Its brow white too, noble, and high. The second

Captain is little Atys whom Iulus loves  
With boyish love. From his descent will come

The Atii in Italy. Then, third, 740

Most beautiful of all, Iulus rides,

Upon a Sidonian horse that Dido gave,

To show her faithful love. The other boys

Ride on Sicilian steeds from Acestes' stables.

The Dardanians cheer the nervous little boys

As they come riding in, and they delight

In seeing in their faces the faces of

Their fathers who were lost when Troy fell down.

After they had joyfully ridden past

The whole assembly and their kin, they halted, 750

Waiting, until Epytides cracked his whip

And shouted out the signal to begin.

At this the troops, all together in perfect order,

Galloped down to the end of the arena,

There, turning left and right, divided in two,

And galloped back along the sides, and when

The order was given, turned and faced each other,

Each column charging the other with menacing spears.

Next in the lists they move this way, then that

Alternative way, weaving in circles around, 760

Encircling, circling round, mimicking war,

Now laying bare their backs as if in flight,  
Now pointing their spears as in attack, now riding  
Together as in a congenial making of peace.  
It is as when, high up in Crete, there was  
The Labyrinth maze, blind walls in the dark, in which  
By bewildering art the signs of how to go  
Were broken and obscured before you as  
You went there; thus the little sons of Troy  
Entangled how they went this way, then that,  
In a game of playing flight and playing battle,  
Like dolphins sporting in the Carpathian or  
The Libyan waters, gamboling in the waves.  
Thus it was that Ascanius, grown, who built  
The walls of Alba Longa, taught the early  
Latins to celebrate these martial rites  
Of horsemanship, as in his childhood he  
Had done along with his fellow Trojan boys.  
The Albans taught these games to their own children;  
From them the mighty Romans learned them, and  
Today across the years they play the game,  
*Ludus Troiae*, to honor the sacred sire.

770

780

Then Fortune turned her face another way.  
While the dedicated games were going on,  
Near Anchises' tomb, Juno, Saturn's daughter,  
Thinking many things, not having relinquished  
Her ancient grievances, sent Iris down  
On breezes she breathed to waft her through the skies  
And to the fleet below. Iris goes running  
Down along the many-colored rainbow,  
Nobody seeing who this maiden is.  
She sees the people watching the solemn games;  
She looks upon the fleet, and upon the shore,  
And sees the harbor empty, and the ships  
Devoid of crew. But at a distance, on  
The deserted beach there stood the Trojan women,

790



Weeping as they gazed at the boundless sea,  
 And weeping because of Anchises' death. They cried out,  
 All in one voice, "Alas! What waters there are,  
 And what empty seas for those who are so weary." 800  
 They pray for a city, a dwelling in which to be.  
 The effort of all of this is too much to bear.  
 Then Iris, knowing how mischief can be done,  
 And becoming Beroe, the aged wife  
 Of Doryclus of Tmarus, she who once  
 Had had a family, a home, and children,  
 Interposes herself among the mothers,  
 Putting aside the clothing of a goddess:  
 "O miserable women, whom the Achaeans  
 Did not crush to death beneath our walls, 810  
 Unhappy people, what will become of us?  
 The seventh summer is passing now since Troy's  
 Destruction, and we have been pursuing something  
 That flies away before us as through foaming  
 Seas and dangerous rocks and unwelcoming stars,  
 And from land after land we've measured out our journey,  
 Tossed on the deep. This is the country of  
 Our brother Eryx; this is the land of Acestes,  
 And he has shown us hospitality.  
 What is to keep us from raising up walls, and building 820  
 A city here, to give to our people to live in?  
 O our country, our Penates, O!  
 We're carried away from the hands of the foe for nothing!  
 Will there never be a city again called Troy?  
 Will I never see again a Simois or Xanthus,  
 The rivers of our Hector? Come, let us burn  
 These unlucky ships! The image of Cassandra,  
 The prophetess, has come to me in my sleep  
 And held out fiery brands to me, and said,  
 'Here is the Troy you seek; here is your home.' 830  
 Now is the time to act. These omens say  
 The time to do it is now. Behold, four altars

To Neptune are here at hand—the god himself  
Is offering us the flames to do it with,  
And the courage and the will with which to do it.”

And saying this, she was the first to take  
Hold of a blazing torch from an altar fire  
And raised it high, and brandished it, and then  
She hurled it. The Trojan women stand, astonished,  
Stupefied; they don't know what to think. 840

Then Pyrgo, eldest of the women, spoke  
Out from the crowd, she who had been the nurse  
Of Priam's royal sons: “This isn't, mothers,  
Beroe, Doryclus's wife, this isn't she!  
See how divinely beautiful she is;  
See how she looks when she walks, how graceful she is;  
Witness the brightness of her fiery eyes.  
Beroe's back there, I saw her myself just now;  
She was ill, and unable to be here paying Anchises  
The honor that she wished to pay to him.” 850

But the women stood there, looking across at the ships.  
And torn between their love of where they were,  
And the promised kingdom ever calling beyond,  
When, suddenly, the goddess herself rose up  
On her soaring wings and cleaved the huge rainbow in  
The sky above beneath the covering clouds.  
Amazed at this marvelous sight and aroused to frenzy  
By what they saw and by their own confusion,  
The women cried a loud cry. Some of them seized  
And snatched up brands of the altar fires, and others 860  
Stripped the altars bare, and others fed the fires  
With leaves and twigs and branches, and Vulcan caroused  
Among the painted hulls and oars and the wooden  
Benches that the rowers sit to row in.

Eumelus brings the word to those in the seats  
At the theater and by Anchises' tomb,

Of how the ships were on fire; and they themselves  
Could see the black ash floating upward in  
A cloud of smoke, and Ascanius, who had been  
Joyfully leading his equestrian troop 870  
Of boys in the gallant show, was the first—his breathless  
Trainers chasing after him—to spur his horse  
And gallop to where the conflagration was,  
And crying out to the women as he got there,  
“What is this madness? What are you doing,  
My poor sad countrywomen? This  
Isn’t the camp of the Argive foe. This is  
Your future. I am your own Ascanius.”  
And he cast down on the ground before him the empty  
Helmet he had been wearing in the game 880  
Of simulated war. Aeneas and his Trojan  
Followers had rushed there too. But the women  
Scattered and ran away from the shore, and hid  
Wherever they could find, in woods or caves,  
A hiding place to hide in from the light,  
Hating what it was that they had done,  
Once again knowing who their people were,  
And shaking Juno from their hearts. But this  
Did not prevent the flames from burning on  
Indomitably. Beneath the wet oak of 890  
The beams and planks the tow was smoldering  
Alive and vomiting smoke; the heat was slowly  
Eating at the bottoms of the ships,  
A plague that was making its way all through, and nothing  
The heroes’ strength or the water they frantically poured  
Could do any good. Then pious Aeneas tore  
The shirt from his shoulders and lifted up his arms,  
Invoking the gods: “Almighty Jupiter,  
If you do not yet utterly detest  
Every last Trojan that there is on earth, 900  
If still you have your ancient pity for us

And for our troubles, save us Trojans from  
The ruin of our last hopes, oh save our ships!  
Or if I deserve it, may the thunderbolt  
From your right hand bring down to final destruction  
All that is left.” He has hardly finished when  
Thunder suddenly shakes the hills and fields,  
And a dark storm pours its flooding showers down,  
The blackest South Wind tempest filling the ships  
With rain, extinguishing the smoke and fire,  
And all but four of the Trojan ships are saved.

910

But father Aeneas was shocked by what had happened,  
And his mind was confused, this way, then that, between  
Contending thoughts of what he ought to do,  
Whether to stay in the fields of Sicily,  
Forgetting what the oracles foretold,  
Or strive to find his way to Italy.  
Nautes the sage, then, who was renowned for knowing  
The way to summon Tritonian Pallas so  
That she would answer, telling him what the wrath  
Of the gods portended, or what was fated, what  
Its course would be, spoke these words in order  
To steady Aeneas and encourage him:

920

“Let us follow, goddess-born, wherever the Fates  
In their spinning draw us on to go; whatever  
It is that happens, we must endure and survive.  
Trojan Acestes is here, born of a god;  
Let him join with you; ally him in your counsels;  
Trust him to shelter those whose ships were burned,  
And so are left without one; and shelter those  
Grown weary of your venture and its fortunes,  
The old men who’ve already lived their lives,  
And the women who are so tired, and hate the sea,  
And all the others who wish to shun the dangers

930

That lie ahead, and let them have their city.  
If so permitted, let it be called Acesta.”

Aeneas’s heart was excited by what was said  
By the ancient sage, but his soul was still divided  
By all its cares. And when black Night was carried  
Up into the sky in her chariot, and all  
The world was dark, the image of Anchises  
Suddenly seemed to glide down from the heavens,  
And spoke to him:

940

“My son, more dear to me  
Than life when I was living, you, my son,  
So burdened by the fate of Ilium,  
Jove, who from on high had pity on you  
And drove the flames away from your burning ships,  
Has sent me here to tell you, follow the wise  
Counseling old Nautes gives to you.  
You must take with you the bravest of your youths.  
In Latium there are those, formidable tough,  
Fighters raised to be so in their tribes.  
With these you must contend, and you must win.  
But first you must descend through Avernus to  
The halls of Dis below, and seek me there,  
My son. I am not held among the gloomy  
Shades of impious Tartarus; the place  
I dwell in is Elysium, in the company of the blessed.  
The chaste Sybil will lead you there, induced  
To do so by the copious blood of black  
Sheep shed in sacrifice. There you will learn  
The story of your people and of the city  
That will be built by them. And now farewell.  
Now dewy Night has reached her halfway course,  
And she has turned her chariot back again;  
I feel the panting breath upon me of  
The horses of the rising East.” And thus,

950

960

He finished saying what he said and vanished  
Like smoke into the air.

970

“Where are you going?”  
Aeneas cried. “Where are you hastening to?  
Who is it you are fleeing from? What keeps us  
From embracing?”

Saying these things, he stirs  
The embers of the fire, and venerates,  
With perfumed censer and with holy meal,  
The Lar of Troy and ancient Vesta’s shrine.

And then Aeneas summons his comrades together,  
Acestes first, and tells them what it is  
That Jupiter has commanded and what his dear  
Father has told him to do, and how he is now  
Himself determined and entirely resolved.  
His fellows, and Acestes, are in accord,  
The women are made welcome to the town,  
And so are those who do not feel the need  
For glory, and who wish to be set ashore.  
This leaves a band of heroes that is small  
But vitally alive for war and glory.

980

They make new benches for the rowers’ seats,  
And install new beams for those the fire has charred,  
And refit the ships with new riggings and new oars.  
Aeneas marks out with a plow the town’s design,  
Showing where the houses will be built,  
And where the fields will be. The town he builds  
Is called by the name of Ilium, and the fields  
Surrounding the houses are called the Troad.  
Trojan Acestes who is overjoyed  
With his new realm to govern, establishes  
A court of law and a constitutioned senate.

990

1000

High up near the stars on the Hill of Eryx,  
They found a shrine to Venus Idalia, and  
Around the tomb of Anchises, they plant a sacred  
Grove of trees, with an attendant priest.  
And then for nine days there is feasting and  
Offerings at the altars to the gods.  
The winds are gentle and the seas are quiet,  
And all the while the breath of the South Wind calls,  
Urging them to come back to the deep; and yet  
They linger still a night and a day beyond.

1010

But after that, along the shore there's wailing,  
As at the parting time they all embrace.  
Now those, the mothers and those others who  
Had found the sea intolerably cruel,  
Are ready to venture out again and share  
The peril and the exile, but kind Aeneas  
Says consolatory things to them, and weeping  
Commends them to the care of his kin, Acestes,  
Commanding that three steers be offered to Eryx  
And a lamb be sacrificed to the Tempestates.  
And then, his brow enwreathed with olive leaves,  
He stands apart from all the others, on  
The prow of his ship, and flings the offered entrails  
Into the sea and pours the votive wine  
Upon the waters. A rising breeze behind them  
Follows the fleet as on its way it departs,  
His rowers contending with their strokes as they  
Lash the waves and sweep along out of the harbor.

1020

› › ›

Venus, however, speaks from her heart to Neptune,  
Fervently expressing her distress:  
“Juno's immitigable rage and her  
Implacable animus causes me to lower

1030

Myself to plead, O Neptune, with all my heart:  
No matter what time goes by, no matter what  
Piety renders to her, her fury is not  
Quieted down, no, not by Jove's command,  
Nor by the stipulations of the Fates.  
Her fury is unslakeable. It's not  
Enough that she has utterly brought down  
The Phrygians' city to ruin, down to the last  
Rubble of Troy. Her hunger for destruction  
Pursues them to their very bones and ashes.  
She alone knows the causes of her rage.  
You know yourself how she suborned Aeolus,  
To raise up that storm that brought the Libyan ocean  
Up to the sky and brought the sky down to the ocean,  
And dared to do this in your jurisdiction.  
And now, inciting the Trojan mothers, she  
Has burned the fleet and made them leave their comrades  
To linger on unknown shores. I pray that you  
Will grant that those who still go forward will  
Get themselves safely across the seas to where  
Laurentine Tiber is. I ask this if  
It is right to do so, and if the building of  
Those city walls they are going there to build  
Is granted by the Fates.”

The son of Saturn,  
The ruler of the sea, replied to her,  
“You have every right to ask. You are born from the sea.  
And I have earned this too. I have often calmed  
The raging of the waters and the sky;  
And Xanthus and Simois also witness  
That I have had Aeneas under my care  
On land as well. When raging Achilles was sending  
Thousands down to their deaths and hurling the panicked  
Down from their walls, and when the groaning rivers  
Were choked with the dead, so that the river Xanthus



Could not flow because he was clogged with the bodies,  
It was I who hid beleaguered Aeneas away,  
In the cavity of a cloud, outdone as he was,  
In strength and in the favor of the gods,  
Facing Peleus's overwhelming son.  
I did this for him, although it was my desire  
To heave up and to bring down the walls I built,  
Of Aeneas's perjured city. My purpose is still  
The same. Do not be fearful any longer.  
Your prayer is answered. He will in safety go  
To Avernus's haven. There will be only one  
Who, lost in the sea, will not be found among them—  
One life given for the lives of all the others.”

1070

1080

› › ›

And after he had charmed the goddess's heart  
With the words he spoke, and having made her glad,  
Father Neptune yokes his wild horses with  
Their golden harnesses; their foaming bits  
Are in their mouths, and loosely in his hands  
The flowing reins; in his azure chariot  
He skims along the surface of the water;  
The surge beneath his thundering wheels smooths out,  
The clouds absent themselves from the sky around,  
And all his retinue in all their forms  
Then follow—huge whales, Glaucus and all his ancient  
Fishy crew, Ino, Palaemon's son,  
The Tritons and the company of Phorcus,  
And Panopea and Spio, Melite and Nesaea,  
And Thalia and Cymodoce too.

1090

Aeneas's anxieties of mind  
Now in their turn being quieted, the joy  
Of resolution courses through his soul  
And he is ready. He orders that the masts

Be quickly raised and that the sails be spread.  
All his people together obey at once,  
Together unfurl the sails, and all together  
Turn the yardarm ends this way and that  
Till the breeze is caught and all the sails are full  
And bellying out. Leading them all on their way  
Is the helmsman Palinurus. All of them know  
That they must follow where he steers his ship.

1100

Now dewy Night has come to its halfway place,  
High in the sky; the sailors all, relaxed  
In placid slumber, on their hard benches lie  
Stretched out beneath their oars, when lightly Sleep  
Slides down through the dark, slides down from the stars above,  
Passing through shadows, parting them as he comes,  
Looking for you, Palinurus, and where you are,  
And bringing you bad dreams, O innocent one.  
The god sits there beside you on the high  
Ship stern, disguising himself as Phorbas, and  
Playing this part pours forth these words to you:  
“Iasidēs Palinurus, listen to me.

1110

The sea all by itself carries the fleet  
Forward along its way; the breeze is breathing  
Steadily as we go. It’s time for rest.  
Lay down your head and rest your weary eyes.  
I will take over your task for a little while.”  
But Palinurus, scarcely looking aside,  
Replies, “Are you telling me to shut my eyes  
To the sea when all is calm and the waves at peace?  
Are you telling me to trust this monster? Should I,  
Whom a cloudless sky has tricked so many times,  
Entrust Aeneas to the treacherous winds?”  
He tightened his grip on the tiller, not letting go,  
And raised his eyes up to the stars and, steadfast,  
Fixed his gaze on them. But then Sleep shook  
Over his temples a branch dripping with Lethe’s

1120

1130

Soporific Stygian dew, and so,  
In spite of all, his swimming eyes began  
To close. And then they closed. But weariness,  
So suddenly come upon him, had hardly begun  
To cause his limbs to relax, when, leaning above him,  
Sleep seized his body and threw him headlong down 1140  
Into the flowing waters of the sea.  
He fell, and with him the rudder, torn away,  
And a piece of the stern, and he called out for help  
Over and over from where he was, unheard.  
The god himself flew off on his wings up through  
The thin air high above.

Nevertheless

The fleet went on, unknowing and unafraid,  
Safely under the promise of Father Neptune.  
And as it went on it was carried toward and near 1150  
The dangerous cliffs of the Sirens, white with the bones  
Of what had happened there of old to men.  
The hoarse sound of the waves breaking upon  
The sea cliff rocks could be heard from far away.  
When the leader knew that the fleet was wandering on,  
Without her pilot, he took the helm himself,  
And steered the vessel through the waves of night,  
Stunned and grieving, crying, "O you, Palinurus,  
Who trusted in the calm of sea and sky,  
You will lie naked on some unknown shore." 1160

# Book Six

And this is what Aeneas, grieving, cries,  
Then gives their reins to the fleet, and together they glide  
Across to the shores of Euboean Cumae where  
They turn their ships about, prows seaward, and  
Align the curved sterns all along the beaches;  
The teeth of their anchors fasten them where they are,  
And then the young men eagerly leap from the ships  
Onto the shores of Hesperia at last,  
Some of them searching for flint, because they know  
The seeds of fire are hidden there; some ravage  
The woods for the hiding places of game; some look  
For new freshwater streams, and find them. But pious  
Aeneas seeks the hill where Phoebus Apollo  
Sits enthroned in his temple, near which there is  
The enormous cavern, the secret place of the dread  
Sybil into whose being the Delian seer  
Breathes a soul and mind that are the telling  
Of what it is that is going to come to pass.

10

Aeneas and his captains now pass through  
The grove of Diana Trivia and under  
The golden roof of the temple of Apollo.  
The story goes that Daedalus, escaping  
From Minos' Cretan kingdom, dared to entrust  
Himself to the sky on his swift-flying wings,  
And in this unheard-of way he glided northward

20

Toward the cold, and finally alighted  
On the Chalcidian Hill. Having come down,  
Safe to the earth, he dedicated the wings  
That had carried him aloft, to you, Apollo,  
In a beautiful marble temple that he built there. 30  
Upon the doors is shown the killing of  
Androgeos, who was the son of Minos,  
And the punishment for this of Cecrops' children:  
Seven young men to be sacrificed each year.  
The urn, with the lots already drawn, is shown there.  
Opposite this on the doors is the island of Crete  
Arising from the sea; and there's the story  
Of Pasiphaë and the trick of the mating of her  
To the bull's cruel love, and the biform mongrel that she  
Gave birth to, the Minotaur, the product of 40  
The vile coition; also depicted there  
Is the house of inextricable wandering,  
But Daedalus, in pity for Ariadne,  
Untangled the tangled strings, showing blind feet  
The way to follow along their bewildered way.  
And Icarus, you, had grief allowed it to happen,  
Would have been figured there to tell your story.  
Twice, your father's hands were raised to try  
To fashion the gold to show your fall from the sky;  
Twice, his hands fell back; he could not do it. 50

The Trojans' fascinated eyes would still  
Have kept on studying all the stories that  
Were fashioned upon the doors, but now Achates,  
Who had been sent ahead, came back, and with him  
A priestess of Apollo and Diana,  
Glaucus's daughter, Deiphobe, who said:  
"It is not now the time to view these things.  
It is the time to offer seven bullocks,  
And seven chosen ewes, in sacrifice."  
Thus she speaks to Aeneas; nor are the Trojans 60

Slow to obey her holy instruction. And then  
The priestess calls them into the sacred temple.

› › ›

The huge Euboean hill is hollowed out  
Into a cave with a hundred grotto mouths,  
And out of these a hundred voices utter.  
The voices come from the grotto openings  
When the virgin damsel cries, "It is the time!  
The oracles! The god! It is the god!"  
Crying out this before the grotto mouths,  
She is changed in looks, in color, her hair is wildly  
Disheveled, her frenzied bosom heaving; she's  
Suddenly taller than she is; her voice  
Is not the voice of any mortal being;  
The breath of the god is breathing in her body.

70

"Trojan, are you ready to make your vows?  
Aeneas, will you not pray? Until you pray,  
The mouths of the cavern will not open and speak."  
Thus the Sybil said, and then was silent.  
Cold shivering went through the Trojans' bodies,  
And from the inmost being of their leader  
The prayers and vows poured forth: "Phoebus, who always  
Showed pity for the troubles of the Trojans,  
And guided the arrow from the bow of Paris  
That struck the body of Aeacus's scion,  
It is you who guided us across so many  
Seas and to and past so many lands,  
The lands of the Massylian tribes and of  
The quicksands of the Syrtes. Now we have come  
To the ever-retreating shores of Italy;  
Let this now be the end of our long journey.  
You gods and all you goddesses to whom  
The glory of the Dardanians and Troy

80

90

Has been anathema, at last you may  
Release us from your hatred; and, O sacred  
Prophetess who can tell what the future knows,  
You know that I ask for nothing more than what  
Is mine by what the Fates allow to me.  
Grant that at last we Teucrians can bring  
Our wandering tempest-tossed household gods to Latium,  
And in our city I will build a marble 100  
Temple to Diana, and one to Phoebus,  
And establish festal days in Apollo's honor.  
For you, most gracious maiden, there'll be a shrine  
Whose inner room, guarded by chosen sages,  
Will be safekeeping for your oracles  
Of what will come to pass. Do not now let  
The wild disordering wind scatter your leaves,  
But you yourself descant the prophetic song."

Then he was silent. The prophetess, not yet  
Subdued to Phoebus, still wildly raved and gestured 110  
Within the cavern, seeking to shake herself free  
From the mighty god within her, and the more  
She raves the more the god is wearying her,  
Is quieting her, is taming her wild heart.  
The hundred mouths of the cavern all of them suddenly  
Open and through the air there come the words:  
"Though you have survived the great sea-dangers, there  
Are more and greater troubles, upon the land.  
The Dardanians nevertheless will come into  
The country of Lavinia—dismiss 120  
Your fears that this is not to be—but it  
Will not be as they wish. I see dire wars.  
I see the foaming blood in the Tiber streaming.  
There will be another Xanthus in your future,  
And another Simois, and a Grecian camp.  
Even now a new Achilles has been born,  
In Latium, goddess-born like you, while Juno,

Wherever you go, will follow you—and you,  
Among what races and cities will you not,  
In your dire need and hunger, cry for help? 130  
The cause of all this trouble for the Trojans:  
Once more a foreign bride, a foreign marriage.  
Do not give in to the woes that are to come,  
But all the more bravely you must go forth to face them,  
As far as Fortune will allow you to do.  
The way to safety will, to your surprise,  
Be opened to you first by a Grecian city.”  
These are the words in which the Cumaean Sybil  
Chants in her inner shrine, her dreadful riddles,  
In a voice that booms through the cavern, wrapping truth 140  
In what obscures the truth—it is thus that Apollo  
Shakes the reins and goads her resisting sides.

When the Sybil’s raging subsided, and her raving  
Lips were silent, then hero Aeneas spoke:  
“No kinds of woe come to me unforeseen.  
That such as these are going to be, O virgin,  
My mind has known and anxiously thought upon.  
One thing I pray for. It is said the gate  
To the kingdom of the Underworld is here,  
And in the gloom there is the swamp that is 150  
The overflow of the river Acheron.  
I pray that it may be granted that I may  
Go down to see the dear face of my father,  
And be in his sight. Open the sacred gates.  
Show me the way to go. I carried my father  
Through flames and through a thousand showering spears;  
I carried him to safety on my shoulders;  
Weak though he was and old, my father was  
My comrade as we went across the seas,  
Through all that the menacing ocean and sky could do. 160  
It was he who entreated me to come to you,  
And cross your threshold, and ask your pity for



Both son and father. You have the power to grant this,  
For Hecate has given you superintendence  
Of Avernus's sacred groves. Did Orpheus not  
Have power in the music of his lyre  
To summon from below the shade of his wife?  
Does Pollux not, returning and departing,  
By dying once again return to that place,  
Taking his turn to share his brother's death? 170  
And there are Theseus and the mighty Alcides.  
I too have my descent from most high Jove."

Those were the words he, at the altar, prayed,  
And the prophetess replied in these words, saying:  
"Offspring of gods, son of Anchises of Troy,  
The way to Avernus is easy, the door is open,  
Night and day, down to the darkness of Dis.  
But how to come back, how to retrace one's steps  
And return to the upper air, that is the task,  
That is the labor. Only a few have been raised 180  
Up to the heavens, because their virtue earned it,  
Or because, sons of the gods, Jupiter loved them,  
And granted them special favor. Down there are the woods  
Of the Underworld, and folding itself around them,  
The swampy river Cocytus. But if your love  
And your mad desire is such that it is your will  
To swim the Stygian lake two times, two times  
To see black Tartarus, you must do this:  
There is a tree that's hidden in the mists  
Of shadows in the dark of the valleys there, 190  
And growing upon that tree there is a bough,  
Swaying upon its stem, with golden leaves.  
Its golden fruit is sacred to nether Juno;  
No one can pass beneath earth's hidden places  
Who has not plucked the golden fruit to take it  
To the beautiful Proserpina, whose command

Is that this fruit be brought to her as a gift.  
Another one will be there in its place,  
As golden as the first, and new leaves also,  
As golden as before, will be there too. 200  
Look up to find it, and then reach up to pluck it.  
If the Fates are calling you, it will be easy.  
If not, then there is nothing you can do,  
Neither by hand nor knife, that will allow you  
To separate it from its tree. But, oh!  
You do not know it yet! While you stand here,  
Upon our threshold seeking our guidance, there lies  
The dead body of your friend, infesting your whole  
Fleet with the impurity of death.  
The body must be carried to its place, 210  
And buried in its tomb. Black cattle must  
Be sacrificed as offerings of peace.  
This done, then you will see the Stygian groves,  
And the kingdoms that the living may not go to.”  
The lips of the Sybil closed and she was mute.

› › ›

Aeneas walked slowly away, out of the cavern.  
His troubled gaze was fixed upon the ground,  
Thinking about these dark things that the Sybil  
Had said to him; loyal Achates walked  
Slowly beside him, thinking of these things too, 220  
The two together, trying to understand.  
What dead friend was it she had spoken of?  
Whose dead body was it that they must bury?  
And as they walk, suddenly they see  
The body of Aeolus's son, Misenus,  
Haplessly dead, washed up from where he had drowned,  
Lying there on the dry beach, he, whose trumpet  
Summoned the heroes to the battlefield,

And with its sound aroused the god of war.  
He was great Hector's soldier, brave in battle, 230  
With spear and trumpet alike, and then when Hector  
Was killed by Achilles, he, not choosing to choose  
Anyone lesser than what his chieftain had been,  
Joined the comitatus of Aeneas.  
But then there came a day, one day, when he  
Chancing upon a conch shell, picked it up,  
And with it, madman, caused all the sea around  
To ring with the sound of its clangoring bugling music,  
Challenging what the gods could do with it,  
And jealous Triton, according to the story, 240  
Caught hold of him and dragged him into the foaming  
Waters among the rocks, and so he drowned.

Therefore all his fellows, pious Aeneas  
Foremost among them, with loud lamenting cries,  
Together mourned around him. Then, weeping, they,  
Obedient to the Sybil's commands, made haste  
To set about the task of gathering trees,  
With which to build the altar of his tomb  
And raise it high. They enter the ancient woods,  
Which are the wild beasts' haunts; the pine trees fall; 250  
There is the sound of axes striking the ilex;  
They split ash logs and oak logs with their wedges;  
They roll great manna ash trees down the mountains.  
Nor was Aeneas less than first among them,  
Doing this work, using their weapons like them,  
Urging them on, encouraging them, and in  
His grieving heart, thinking over and over  
About what was next to come: "In this immense  
Unending forest, if only the golden bough  
Would show us where it is; for what the seer 260  
Told us of you, Misenus, was all too true."

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No sooner had he spoken these words than, there,  
As if it was just happening by chance,  
Two doves came fluttering down from the sky above,  
And alighted together, before his eyes, on the grass.  
Then the great hero saw that these birds were  
His mother's birds, and he joyfully prayed: "O lead me,  
If there's any way to find it, lead me to where,  
In a grove somewhere the ground is shaded by,  
And made rich by, the fruitful bough is above it! 270  
And goddess-mother, O, do not desert me  
In this my uncertain journey." Saying these things,  
He stood there where he was and watched to see  
What signs he might be given by how they went,  
Alighting to feed a little, then flying a little,  
Alighting a little again to feed on the grass,  
Then flying a little way, and alighting again,  
Then flying a little again, feeding and flying,  
Keeping themselves just far enough ahead  
So that they still can be seen by him who follows; 280  
And then when they come to Avernus' noisome waters,  
Together they quickly rise, and then drop down  
Through the lucid air beyond, and settle themselves  
Upon a tree they chose to settle upon,  
The two of them there, upon the tree, within  
The darkness of whose branches could be seen  
Glimpses of shining gold. It is as when,  
In the dead of freezing winter the mistletoe,  
Engrafted from another tree, brings forth  
New leaves, strange leaves, yellow flowers and yellow berries; 290  
This was what, upon the shadowy ilex,  
The golden leafage on the bough looked like,  
And this was how the gold-foil leaves were gently  
Rustling in the breeze. Aeneas, at once,  
Avidly reaches forth, and takes hold of the bough,  
And plucks it down from where it clung to the tree,  
And carries it back with him to the Sybil's shrine.

The Teucrians on the beach grieve for Misenus,  
 Performing the final rites to the thankless ashes.  
 They build a pyre, of rich pitch-pine and oak logs, 300  
 With interwoven hangings of dark foliage,  
 And with mourning cypress trees set up in front;  
 High up, there hangs Misenus's shining armor.  
 Cauldrons of water are heated on the fire;  
 They lave and anoint with oil the dead man's body.  
 There's ritual wailing, and after the wailing ceases,  
 They lay the body on a funeral bier,  
 And cover the body with the purple robes  
 Appropriate to the rite. Some of them then  
 Perform the ministry—sad ministry— 310  
 Of lifting the heavy bier upon their shoulders,  
 And, as their ancestors did, averting their eyes  
 From what they were doing, lowered their torches to  
 Light the pyre they built. The frankincense,  
 And sacrificial viands, and overflowing  
 Bowls of oil are offered to the flames.  
 After the ashes collapsed, and the fire died down,  
 They poured out wine upon the glowing thirsty  
 Embers of the fire, and Corynaeus  
 Gathered up the bones and put them away, 320  
 In a brazen funeral urn. And after that,  
 Three times he walked around his comrades and  
 With a fruitful olive branch he sprinkled them lightly  
 With drops of the pure water he carried with him,  
 And at the same time he said the farewell words.

But pious Aeneas raised a great tomb there,  
 With Misenus's spear and oar and trumpet upon it.  
 The hill that rises above the tomb is called  
 Misenum, preserving his name for ages after.

Having done this, Aeneas proceeds at once 330  
 To do the things the Sybil told him to do.  
 There was the open mouth of a vast cavern  
 Half-hidden in the shadows of a wood,  
 And near a dark lake, called by the Greeks Avernus.  
 No birds could fly in safety over this lake,  
 Because of the vapors rising from its surface;  
 And here it was that the priestess sets out four  
 Young black-backed bullocks, and then she pours,  
 Upon their foreheads, wine, and then she plucks  
 A bristle from between the horns of each, 340  
 And offers the bristles first, upon the fire,  
 And in a loud voice calls upon Hecate,  
 Whose power's on high and in Erebus below.  
 In bowls beneath the altars others caught  
 The warm blood of the bullocks, whose throats they'd cut.  
 Aeneas takes his sword and slays a lamb  
 Whose fleece is black, and offers it to Night,  
 The mother of the Eumenides, and to  
 Her great sister Terra; and, Proserpina,  
 For you he slays a barren heifer. Then, 350  
 In the darkness he constructs an altar to  
 The Stygian King, and on the flaming altar  
 Lays down the offered carcasses of bulls,  
 Pouring the oil of their fat upon their entrails.

Then, just before the dawning of the sun,  
 The ground began to shake; the woods began  
 To shiver in all their ridges; there was the sound  
 Of howling as of dogs within the shadows,  
 As Hecate came near. The Sybil cries,  
 "Depart, depart, all you who are profane! 360  
 Depart from here who are unauthorized!

And you, Aeneas, unsheathe your sword, go forward!  
This is the time to be brave and strong of heart!”  
And saying this, in frenzy she went forward,  
Into the mouth of the cave, and he with courage  
Went in with her, and followed her footsteps as  
She went before him into the waiting darkness.

› › ›

You gods who rule the kingdoms of the spirits!  
You tongueless shades! You Phlegethon and Chaos!  
You silent spreading regions of the dark!  
By the favor of the gods may I, unharmed,  
Be teller of the things that I have heard,  
And what is wrapped in the darkness here below!

370

› › ›

In the lonely gloom of night two figures walk  
Through the empty rooms of Dis's empty kingdom,  
As if upon a path beneath the uncertain  
Meager light of a moon almost not there,  
At a time when Jupiter has hidden the sky  
In darkness, and black night has taken away  
From all things all the colors that they had.  
Just at the innermost end of the entrance court,  
Just at the place where Orcus's jaws are open,  
There's Grief, there's unrelenting Cares, where they  
Have placed their beds, there's ashen-faced Disease,  
Sad Age, there's Fear, there's Hunger, begetter of crime,  
There's Destitution, shapes terrible to look at,  
There's Death and his brother Sleep, and guilty Desires;  
And on the other side of the open door,  
There's War, dealer of death, and there the iron  
Cells of the Furies, and insane Discord,  
With bloody ribbons in her snaky hair.

380

390

In the midst there is an enormous shadowy elm tree,  
Spreading its arms, and false dreams clinging under  
Every single leaf of its foliage,  
So men say, and also many forms  
Of monstrous creatures, centaurs stabled at  
The threshold there, and biform Scyllas, and  
Briareus, hundred-handed, fifty-headed,  
And the strident hissing Beast of Lerna, and  
The Chimaera breathing fire, and Harpies, Gorgons,  
And he, the three-bodied Shade. Aeneas, trembling,  
Terrified at the sight, unsheathes his sword,  
And turns its edge against them, and he would,  
Had not his sage companion told him that these  
Were bodiless empty images of life,  
Have slashed at fleeting shadows with his sword.

400

› › ›

From here there is a road that leads to where  
The waters of Tartarean Acheron are,  
And where a bottomless whirlpool thick with muck  
Heaves and seethes and vomits mire into  
The river Cocytus. Here is the dreadful boatman,  
Who keeps these waters, frightful in his squalor,  
Charon, the gray hairs of his unkempt beard  
Depending from his chin, his glaring eyes  
On fire, his filthy mantle hanging by  
A loose knot from his shoulders. All by himself  
He manages the sails and with his pole  
Conveys the dead across in his dark boat—  
He's old, but, being a god, old age is young.

410

A vast crowd, so many, rushed to the riverbank,  
Women and men, famous great-hearted heroes,  
The life in their hero bodies now defunct,  
Unmarried boys and girls, sons whom their fathers

420



Had had to watch being placed on the funeral pyre;  
As many as the leaves of the forest that,  
When autumn's first chill comes, fall from the branches;  
As many as the birds that flock into the land,  
From the great deep, when the season, turning cold,  
Has driven them over the seas to seek the sun,  
They stood beseeching on the riverbank, 430  
Yearning to be the first to be carried across,  
Stretching their hands out toward the farther shore.  
But the stern ferryman, taking only this one,  
Or this other one, pushes the rest away.  
Aeneas cries out, excited by the tumult,  
"O virgin, why are they crowding at the river?  
What is it that the spirits want? What is it  
That decides why some of them are pushed away,  
And others sweep across the livid waters?"  
The aged priestess thus: "Anchises' son, 440  
True scion of the gods, these are the pools  
Of the river Cocytus and this the Stygian marsh,  
Whose power it is to make the gods afraid  
Not to keep their word. All in this crowd are helpless  
Because their bodies have not been covered over.  
The boatman that you see is Charon. Those  
Who are being carried across with him are they  
Who have been buried. It is forbidden to take  
Any with him, across the echoing waters  
That flow between these terrible riverbanks, 450  
Who have not found a resting place for their bones.  
Restlessly to and fro along these shores  
They wander waiting for a hundred years.  
Not until after that, the longed-for crossing."

› › ›

Aeneas, child of Anchises, hearing these things,  
Stood still, thinking of what the Sybil had told him,

Pitying them in his heart for their hard fortune.  
And then he sees there, grieving, homeless, two,  
Destitute of the honor that's death's reward,  
Leucaspis, and Orontes, captain of 460  
The Lycian fleet, they who, together, sailing  
From Troy over windswept seas, were overwhelmed  
By the whirling East Wind coming down upon them.  
All of their ships were lost, and all of the men.  
Then lo, there was the pilot Palinurus,  
Who, while he was plotting the stars, so lately  
Fell into the sea from the helmsman's place on the high  
Stern of the ship. When Aeneas at last was able  
To make out who this figure was who moved  
So sadly in the gloom, he said to him, 470  
"What god was it, Palinurus, who took you away  
From us and flung you down into the sea?  
I have never before this found Apollo false.  
Has he this once deluded me? He promised me  
That you would make the journey across unscathed.  
What of his promise now?" But Palinurus  
Replied: "Apollo's tripod did not lie.  
It was no god who threw me into the sea.  
The helm, which I the pilot was holding fast to,  
Steering our course, was suddenly torn loose, 480  
And I fell headlong, clutching it to me as  
I fell, taking it down with me. I swear  
By the violent seas, it wasn't fear of them,  
As I was falling, but fear for the ship, that, losing  
Both helm and helmsman, it might be swamped, and founder  
In the surging waves. Over unmeasured seas  
Three days and nights I was driven by the wild  
South Wind and then upon the early morning  
Dawning of the fourth, I saw, as I  
Was carried up upon the high crest of a wave, 490  
The coast of what I knew was Italy.  
Little by little I swam to reach the shore,

And I was almost safe, just getting my clutching  
Hands upon the jagged cliff-base rocks,  
When I, weighed down as I was by my sea-soaked clothes,  
Was set upon by indigenes with knives,  
Who thought that I was prey. And now my body  
Moves restlessly in the wavelets of the shallows,  
Or it lies, by the wind's impelling, upon the strand.  
O by the jocund light and air of day, 500  
And by your father and by Iulus's hopes,  
O you, unconquered, rescue, rescue me!  
Either upon the Velian shore find where  
My body is, and cast upon it three  
Handfuls of earth, or if your goddess mother  
Will show you a way to do it (for I believe  
That it is not without the sponsoring gods  
That you are seeking to cross the Stygian marsh  
And these great streams and get to the other side),  
Hold out your hand to me in my misfortune, 510  
And take me with you over to there, so I  
At least may find in death a place to rest.”

Thus he spoke, and then the prophetess said,  
“How is it, Palinurus, that your longing  
Deludes you so, to make you think that you,  
Unburied, uninvited, would be able  
To see the other bank of the Stygian waters  
And the River of the Fates? Prayer can never  
Deflect what it is that the gods have decided upon.  
But remember what I tell you, and let your sorrow 520  
Be solaced by it: those native tribes, throughout  
Their villages will be shown by signs and portents  
That they must propitiate your bones and build  
A tomb, bring solemn offerings there, and name it,  
Forever after that, Palinurus, to you.”  
Hearing these words his cares were lifted away,  
And from his anxious heart its sorrow was driven

Off for a little while; he rejoices in  
The headland, Palinurus, bearing his name.

› › ›

So, having begun their journey, they went on, 530  
And soon came nearer to the riverbank.

But when, from where he was, out on the marshy  
Stygian waters, the boatman saw them coming  
Through the silent woods and turning toward the river,  
He called out, in a scolding accusing voice,  
Before they spoke to him, “Who is it who  
Comes armed with weapons here, who may you be?  
Stop where you are and tell me who you are,  
From where you are! This is the land of Shadows,  
The land of Sleep, the land of somnolent Night. 540

I cannot carry those who are alive  
In the Stygian ferry. It brought me no joy when I  
Took Hercules across the lake with me,  
Nor Theseus, nor Pirithous, either, though  
They were unconquered heroes and sons of gods.  
One of them tried to drag our King’s watchdog  
Trembling away in chains; the others tried  
To kidnap our Queen right out of her marital bedroom.”

The Amphrysian Sybil replied, “Be not disturbed.  
No trickery here; our weapons are no threat; 550  
The huge watchdog can scare the bloodless dead  
Forever with his barking; the chastity  
Of Proserpina is safe in her uncle’s chamber.  
This is Trojan Aeneas, famous for his valor,  
And for his piety. He is descending  
Into the shadows of lowest Erebus  
To see his father there. If the example  
Of faithfulness such as this has failed to move you,  
Regard this bough.” She draws the golden bough

From where she had kept it hidden in her robe. 560  
The swelling rage in his heart subsides in wonder,  
When he sees this awful wand, this sacred gift  
So long unseen. He says no more and turns  
His blue boat back and toward the shore, and there  
He expels the other souls who waiting sat  
Upon the cross seats of the boat, and clears  
The way for great Aeneas to come on board.  
The vessel groaned beneath his weight, and marshy  
Water poured in, through the leaky seams and floorboard,  
But at last it carries the hero and the seer 570  
Across unharmed, and lands them upon the slimy  
Mud and sedge grass of the riverbank.

Huge Cerberus, crouching there in the dooryard of  
The cavern he was watchdog of, made all  
The regions round reverberate with the loud  
Barking of his three heads. Seeing the serpents  
Bristling around his neck, the Sybil throws him  
A drugged pellet of meal, drowsed with honey.  
He catches it in his ravenous triple gullet,  
Wolves it down, and at once his monster body 580  
Relaxed, and he sank down, and lay stretched out  
Across the mouth of the cavern that he guarded.  
The watchdog lying there asleep, Aeneas  
Gets in through the entrance to the cavern,  
And leaves behind him the bank of the river that  
No one comes back from ever.

• • •

There is the sound  
Of voices loudly wailing—it is the wailing  
Of little babies whom black day had taken  
From their mothers' breasts and overwhelmed in death, 590  
On the threshold of sweet life they would never share in.

Nearby were those who were wrongly condemned to die.  
Yet not without judgment were they in this place:  
Minos presides, and shakes the urn to call  
A silent jury together, to consider  
What it was their lives had been, what they had done,  
What they deserve. In the next region are those  
Sad beings who in innocent hatred of  
The light of day, had thrown away their lives.  
How glad they would be now to suffer want, 600  
And the hardest toil, if in the light and air.  
But fate bars this. They are imprisoned by  
The dismal waters of the swamp, and by  
The coiling chains of Styx nine times around them.

Beyond this but not far, and widely spread,  
Are the Fields of Lamentation. That is their name.  
Here is where those whom desire has wasted away  
Are hidden in secret walkways, in myrtle groves;  
They cannot give up their longings, even in death.  
Phaedra is there, Aeneas sees her, and Procris, 610  
And mournful Eriphyle, displaying the wounds  
Her son's cruel knife had made upon her body;  
And there's Evadne, and Pasiphaë,  
And Laodamia walking with them too,  
And Caeneus, who was once a young woman, and  
After that was a youth, and then, by fate,  
What he had been at first. Among these others,  
In the great woods wandering, was Phoenician Dido,  
The wound she made upon herself still fresh;  
And when Aeneas came close enough to know 620  
Who this was he was seeing—this form that moved  
So dimly among the shadows—it was like seeing,  
Or thinking you were seeing, the young moon rising,  
In the early days of its month, behind the clouds—  
Tears fell from his eyes and he spoke tenderly  
And lovingly to her: “Unhappy Dido,

Is it true, what I was told, that you were dead,  
And with a sword had brought about your death?  
And was it I, alas, who caused it? I  
Swear by the stars, and by the upper world, 630  
And by whatever here below is holy,  
I left your shores unwillingly. It was  
The gods' commands which have brought me now down through  
The shadows to these desolate wasted places,  
In the profound abysmal dark; it was  
The gods who drove me, and I could not know  
That when I left I left behind a grief  
So devastated. Stay. Who is it you  
Are fleeing from? Do not withdraw from sight.  
This is the last I am allowed by fate 640  
To say to you." Weeping he tried with these,  
His words, to appease the rage in her fiery eyes.  
She fixed her gaze upon the ground, and turned  
Away, and nothing was changed in her countenance,  
As if it were set in stone or Marpesian rock.  
Abruptly, then, she tore herself away,  
And went, his enemy, back to the shady grove  
In which Sychaeus, the lord of her marriage, was,  
Responding to her cares with equal love.  
Aeneas, overcome by the knowledge of 650  
Her unjust fate, followed her as far  
As tears could follow, and pitied her as she went.

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After that, they made their way with effort along  
The road that offered itself before them till  
They came to the farthest field, where there were those,  
Famous for the deeds they did in war,  
Thronging together, apart from the other shades.  
Here, to meet him, Tydeus hastens forward;  
Here was Parthenopaeus, renowned in battle,

And Adrastus's pallid shade; here, fallen in war, 660  
And grieved for on earth above, the Dardanidae.  
He groaned to see them in their martial array—  
Glaudias, Medon, Thersilochus, the three  
Young sons of Antenor, the priest of Ceres,  
Polyboetes, Idaeus, still with his chariot,  
Still with his weapons. The soldiers stood around,  
Congregated in groups, on the right, on the left,  
Looking at him eagerly and longing  
To walk with him and learn why he is there.  
But Agamemnon's soldiers and the Danaan 670  
Leaders, when they saw him, with his weapons  
Shining in the shadows, turned their backs,  
As if to fly, as they had done when trying  
To get themselves back to their ships, and some of them shouted,  
But the cries from their gaping mouths were faint and tiny.

• • •

And here he sees Deiphobus, his whole  
Body mutilated, and his face  
Hideously, cruelly, lacerated,  
And both his arms, his hands, and with his ears  
Torn from the sides of his head, and with his nose 680  
Shamefully lopped off. Aeneas could hardly  
Know who it was, there, trembling and trying to hide  
The sight of what had been done to him, but he  
Cried out to him in a familiar voice,  
“Deiphobus, glorious in the fighting,  
High-born scion of the Teucrians,  
Who did this to you? Who was able to do this to you?  
I was told that on that last night you fell down,  
Finally weary from killing Pelasgian foes,  
Upon a heap of other fallen bodies. 690  
As I was leaving the country, I built upon  
The Rhoetian shore a tumulus for you;



Your name and your arms depicted guard the place;  
And there I cried out three times to your shade;  
I could not find your body itself to bury.”

The son of Priam replied, “You did everything  
That you could do, and that you ought to have done,  
For dead Deiphobus, and for his spirit.

My friend, it was my fate, and the mortal crimes  
Of the Laconian woman that overwhelmed me.

700

It was she who left me looking the way I look.  
You remember that final night, and how, deceived,  
In joy, we spent it. You remember how

It was when the fatal horse climbed over the walls,  
With the weight of the armed infantry in its womb,  
She led a deluded orgiastic chorus,

Not knowing what they were doing, dancing and shrieking  
Around the city streets, and she in their midst  
Raised up a torch that signaled the Danaans,  
From the height of the citadel above the city.

710

I lay asleep in our marital bed, in sweet  
Deep sleep, the image of the sleep of death,  
While she, the unexampled wife, took every  
Weapon that there was in the house away,  
Even from under the pillow that I slept on.  
She took the sword I trusted, and then she opened  
Wide the door and called in Menelaus,  
Hoping maybe that that husband would  
Forget by this the mischief she had done.

But why go on with the story? He and his fellow  
Criminal, Aeolus’ son, came into my bedroom—  
O gods, if you hear my prayer, pay back the Greeks  
With suffering like what I suffered there.

720

But tell me, what has brought you to this place?  
Is it your wandering journey that brings you here,  
Or is it what the gods have told you to do?  
Or what has wearying fortune brought you to,  
That you have come here to these sunless places,

This land of unrest?" While they were talking, Aurora  
Had in her roseate chariot climbed as high 730  
As the mid point of her heavenly journey, and  
They might have spent all their time in such discourse,  
But the Sybil interrupted them to say,  
"The night is coming, Aeneas. We must not spend  
All of the time we have in weeping. This  
Is where the roads divide. The right-hand road,  
Which passes along beside great Dis's walls  
Is that which leads to Elysium, where we are going.  
The one to the left is the busy thoroughfare  
Of punishment. It is the road that takes 740  
The wicked to unpitying Tartarus."  
Deiphobus replied, "I will depart,  
Great priestess; I will complete the roster of  
My brigade and then go back into the dark.  
Go, you who are our glory, on your journey.  
Enjoy a happier fate." And saying so,  
Went back to where it was that he had come from.

› › ›

Suddenly, Aeneas, looking back,  
Became aware that there on the left, beneath  
The overhanging cliffs, there was a great 750  
Castle, triple-walled, and around it, seething,  
A river of torrential fire, sounding  
Upon the rocks. The gate to the castle was huge,  
And built within great adamantine columns,  
Utterly impregnable in war;  
The most powerful army of men there ever was  
Could not prevail upon its battlements,  
Not even the sons of heaven, and, rising above it,  
There was an iron tower, high as the sky,  
Where Tisiphone in her bloody gown keeps sleepless 760  
Watch by night and day over the gate.

Within, the sounds of groaning, sounds of the cruel  
Lash-whipping, sounds of clanking dragging chains.  
Aeneas, hearing the sounds, stood still, in terror:

“O maiden, say, what crimes have been committed?  
What are these punishments? What is this sound,  
What is this sound of wailing on the wind?”

The seer in answer said these words to him:

“Aeneas, famous leader of the Teucrians.

There’s no one who is innocent of crime,  
Who can set his foot upon this threshold, but,  
When Hecate made me prefect of these groves,  
She conducted me through all these scenes and showed me  
The punishments. Cretan Rhadamanthus  
Sits in harsh judgment here, hearing the stories,  
Exactng their confessions of what they did,  
From those who blithely had, in the upper world,  
Concealed their crimes from others until they died.

770

And when the judgment is made, Tisiphone  
Vengefully leaps upon them, her left hand  
Brandishing her scourging whip of snakes,  
And calls her band of sister Furies to join;  
And after that there is the dreadful groaning  
Noise of the turning hinges of the great  
Infernal door as it opens to receive them.

780

Do you know who the sentry is that’s sitting there,  
In the doorway? Do you know what shape it is?  
The monster Hydra, still worse to behold than what  
Has been beheld already, with her fifty  
Throats wide open, waiting for the guilty.

790

Inside, plunging sheer downward in the darkness,  
Twice as far down in darkness than Olympus  
Rises high up in brightness to the heavens,  
There’s Tartarus where, in the lowest abyss, the Titans,  
Primordial brood of Earth, are writhing and turning,  
Down there where Jupiter’s thunderbolt had sent them.  
Myself I also saw the Aloides down there,

The Giant twins, who tried with their hands to bring  
Jove down, and along with him, his heavenly kingdom.  
Salmoneus too was down there paying for what 800  
He did, mimicking Jupiter, and miming the throwing  
Of bolts of lightning and the Olympian thunder,  
Madman in a four-horse chariot riding  
Among the Greeks and through his Elian city,  
Pretending to be a god, waving his torches  
And using the noise of brass trumpets and the clatter  
Of horn-footed horses' hooves, when the Father Almighty—  
No need for torches nor for the smoky glare  
Of pitchy lights—drove him headlong down  
With a single thunderbolt and a wild whirlwind. 810  
And Tityos, child of Earth the mother of all,  
Is there to be seen, stretched out nine acres long,  
With a huge vulture feasting itself upon  
His immortal rich abundant liver and  
His ever-self-renewing viscera,  
Nor ever any letting up of this,  
The vulture's crooked probing foraging beak,  
And the entrails ever growing back again,  
And there are the Lapiths, Ixion and Pirithous,  
And the one the great cliff slab hangs over always 820  
Seeming as if it's just about to fall;  
There are the couches decorated with gold,  
Before their eyes a splendid banquet offered,  
And, reclining at the table, the eldest Fury  
Is ready to spring up screaming and brandishing  
Her torch to keep their famished hands from touching.  
Here there were those who, all their lives long, were brothers  
Hating each other, their brothers, and those who were  
Abusers of aged parents, and those who got  
Their clients tangled in fraud, and those who sat 830  
Alone, transfixed by the sight of their piled-up money,  
And those who gave nothing of what they had to their kin  
(The commonest wrong), and those who were caught and killed

In adultery, and those who followed treasonous  
Banners, betraying their leaders heedlessly—  
All such, in this prison, wait for punishment.  
Too many for you to know what punishment  
There'll be for each of them: some doomed for ever  
To roll a huge stone endlessly, or hang  
Outstretched upon the spokes of the turning wheel; 840  
Unhappy Theseus sits there, and will for ever  
Sit there; most miserable Phlegyas, witnessing all,  
Loudly cries out from where he is in the shadows:  
'Be warned, beware, for this is what justice is.  
Do not despise the gods!' One sold his country  
For gold, and put a tyrant over it, for gold;  
Another worked his country's laws around  
Being bribed to do so, all for gold;  
Another entered by night into his daughter's  
Forbidden bed and made an incestuous union. 850  
All these dared monstrous acts, and, daring, did them.  
If I had a hundred tongues and a hundred mouths  
And a voice as strong as iron, I could not tell you  
All of the forms of crimes or their punishment."

› › ›

This is what Phoebus Apollo's aged Sybil  
Told, and then she said, "Now we must hasten  
To finish the task that you have undertaken,  
I see the walls the Cyclopes forges raised,  
And the porticoed gate, where you must place the gift  
It was required of you to give." She spoke, 860  
And together they went along the shadowed road  
And over the space between where they had been  
And where it was that they were going to,  
And so came near the gate. Aeneas steps forward  
And scatters drops of purifying water

Upon his body, and takes the golden bough  
And places it on the threshold, as he was told to.

’ ’ ’

Having carried out the goddess's commands,  
They entered into a beautiful happy scene,  
Green lawns and blessed groves. Over all this 870  
The light of their own sun shone, and there were the stars  
Familiar to them in their familiar sky.  
The generous air was bright. Some who were there  
Contended in play upon the yellow sand  
Of the wrestling ground; some who were there  
Were dancing and singing together while the Thracian,  
In his priestly robe, accompanied their steps  
Upon his seven-note lyre, now with his fingers,  
Now with his ivory quill, touching the strings.  
Here in this scene there was the beautiful 880  
Ancestral Teucrian throng—magnanimous  
Heroes from the earlier happier times—  
Ilus and Assaracus and Dardanus,  
Founder of Troy. Aeneas, gazing at them  
Across the distance, wondered at the phantom  
Chariots and phantom gear, the phantom lances  
Fixed in the soil, the phantom horses, freed  
Of their phantom bridles, browsing on the lawn.  
They take the same care, down there, under the earth,  
With their horses and their chariots and arms, 890  
To keep them glossy, polished and shining, as  
They did when they were alive. And others, on  
The right and on the left, were picnicking on  
The grassy slopes, or in the fragrant groves  
Of laurel, and sang in a chorus hymns of praise,  
Where Eridanus the ample river flowed  
Through the forest upward toward the upper world.

Here is the company of those who suffered,  
 Fighting for their country, and who died;  
 And those who in their lifetimes led pure lives 900  
 As priests or as chaste pious singers whose  
 Music was acceptable to Phoebus,  
 And those whose arts, zealously and with care  
 Pursued, made life be better for others, all  
 Whose service is remembered with honor, were there,  
 Wearing white headbands, white as the purest snow.  
 The Sybil spoke to Musaeus where he stood,  
 Taller than all the rest, in the midst of that  
 Vast throng of souls pouring around and past him,  
 “Tell us, chief of singers, tell us you happy souls, 910  
 Where can we find Anchises, where does he dwell?  
 It is to find him that we have crossed the great  
 Rivers of Erebus.” The hero replied,  
 “None of us has a dwelling place. We live  
 In the shade of groves and on the riverbanks  
 And in the meadows where the fresh streams flow.  
 But if it is your heart’s desire to find him,  
 Come to the top of this hill, and I will show you  
 The easy way to go.” Having said this,  
 He led them to the topmost of the hill 920  
 And showed them the shining fields beyond. And so  
 They left the heights.

In a green sequestered grove  
 Father Anchises was reflecting upon  
 Those souls still held down there in the world below,  
 Who were destined to return, once more in bodies,  
 To the light of the world above; and at that moment,  
 Was telling himself the number of his dear children  
 And of the beloved children of his children,  
 And what they were going to do, how was it that 930

Their lives would be, what was it that would happen.  
And when he saw that it was Aeneas coming  
Toward him across the greensward, he cried out,  
And weeping stretched out his arms to welcome him,  
“Is it my son who has come to me at last?  
Has what I prayed for finally come to pass,  
To see your face and hear your familiar voice?  
Day after day I have been thinking of this,  
Counting the time, and now it has happened. My son,  
What are the dangers that on your journey you  
Have undergone and suffered from? I have  
Been so afraid that you might come to harm  
In Libya.” Aeneas replied, “It is because  
Of your mournful shade, my father, seen again  
And again, that I have sought to come to this place.  
My fleet is standing on the Tyrrhenian Sea.  
Father, let me embrace you, do not withdraw,  
Let me hold your hands.” This is what Aeneas said.  
Tears streaming down his face. Three times he tried  
To embrace his father and to hold his hands;  
Three times the image, clasped in vain, escaped,  
As if it were a breeze or on the wings  
Of a vanishing dream.

And then Aeneas becomes  
Aware of a grove in this deep secluded vale,  
And of thickets with the breezes rustling through them,  
And the river Lethe peaceably flowing past,  
And hovering along the banks, a crowd  
Of men and nations, more numerous by far  
Than he could possibly count, as if they were,  
On a summer’s day, unnumberable bees  
Alighting on the many-colored blossoms  
And swarming around white shining lily flowers,  
And all the fields around murmured and hummed.  
Aeneas was amazed by what he saw,



And, ignorant of what it meant, he asked,  
“What is that flowing river over there,  
And who are the people, so many, gathering?”  
Father Anchises replied, “They are the souls  
Whose fate it is to be given bodies again,  
And they are there to drink forgetfulness  
From the soothing waters of the river Lethe.  
Indeed it has, long since, been my desire  
To tell the tale of all my seed to you,  
So that you will, with me, be all the more  
Glad that Italy has been found.”

970

“O Father,  
Is it thinkable that any spirits go back  
From this to the upper world and once again  
Into the prisons of bodies? Why do these  
Poor things long so to go back to the light up there?”  
Anchises answers, saying, “My son, I’ll tell you,”  
And he tells him in its order all the truth.

980

“There is a spirit that breathes and moves within  
And nurtures earth and sky and ocean’s wide  
Savannas and the bright sphere of the moon,  
And Titan’s star, the sun; intelligence moves  
Through all there is, all things there are, and they  
Are constituted by it. From this come all  
The races and the kinds of men and all  
The other beings; it is the life of those  
That fly with wings, and those strange creatures that swim  
Beneath the marbled waters of the sea.  
It burns with its own pure fire in all those beings,  
Until the mortality of their bodies clogs  
And inhibits it. And so they fear, and they desire,  
They grieve, and they delight, and in the shadows  
And the blindnesses of what imprisons them,  
Their bodies, the light’s obscured. And more than that!

990

When they come here their souls are tainted still 1000  
With faults that are so deep inhabiting  
And so corroding that they must be punished  
To eradicate these faults from them; for some  
It is to be suspended upon the winds,  
For others, to be washed through with flooding waters,  
For others, it is to be subjected to  
Eviscerating fire, until at last  
Their souls are purified and purged; this must  
For each of us be undergone; and then at last,  
When the time comes round, we are sent to Elysium. 1010  
A few of us there remain, in possession of  
The blessed fields. But after a thousand years  
Those others you see are summoned by the gods,  
To drink from the river Lethe, so that in utter  
Forgetfulness, willingly they will go back  
Into their bodies.”

Having said this, Anchises  
Led his son and the Sybil into the midst  
Of the murmuring crowd and to a place upon  
A mound from which they could see the whole parade 1020  
Of the thronging souls and look into their faces  
And study them as in order they passed by:  
“Now I will tell you, so that you will know  
Your destiny in my words, who these will be,  
Descended from you, and of Italian stock,  
To participate in, and bring about, your glory.

That youth you see there, leaning upon his spear,  
Was chosen to ascend into the light  
Of the upper world to be the first of those  
Of Italian blood, Silvius of Alba, 1030  
Whom Lavinia, your wife, after your death,  
Will bring up in the forest to be a king  
And father of kings, when our descendants will reign

In Alba Longa. The next you see is the glorious  
Trojan Procas, and after him is Capys,  
Then Numitor, and he who will bear your name,  
Aeneas Silvius, renowned for piety,  
And famous equally for his martial prowess,  
If he will ever come to the Alban throne.

Regard them, see how beautiful and how strong

1040

These young men are, wearing on their brows  
The oak leaf honors of their nation. These  
Are the men by whom Nomentum, Gabium, and  
Fidena will be built, and who will plant  
The towers of Collatia on its mountain,  
And Inuus' fortifications, and Pometia,  
Bola, Cora—now not even names,

But famous names hereafter. And there will be,  
In his grandfather's time, a son of Mars,

Wearing the helmet with its double plumes,

1050

Romulus, of Asaracus's line,

And child of Ilia. See how he looks!

The look of majesty his father god

Has formed him with already. Rome will be,

Under his auspices, built on seven hills.

Surrounded by a single wall, and blest

With a genealogy of heroes, while

The Berecynthian mother with her turreted

Crown upon her head triumphally rides

Through the Phrygian towns, rejoicing in her long

1060

Descent of sons and grandsons, all divine,

All citizens of heaven, all dwellers in

The high celestial places.

Now see, with the gaze

Of both your eyes, all those who are going to be

Your Roman people. Here is Caesar and here

Are all those of the progeny of Iulus

Destined to live beneath that widespread sky.

And there is one, who has been promised to us,  
Augustus Caesar, the son of a god, who will 1070  
Bring back for us a golden age, in fields  
Where Saturn reigned. His empire will extend  
Beyond the lands where the Garamantes are,  
And where the Indians are, beyond the years,  
Beyond the ways of the sun and the zodiac,  
Where Atlas bears, upon his shoulders, the turning  
Axis of the stars. The Caspians and  
The Maeotians shudder when their oracles tell  
Of his approach, and all the seven mouths 1080  
Of the delta of the Nile tremble in fear.  
Indeed, not Hercules himself has gone  
So far abroad, not when his arrow slew  
The brazen-footed hind, or pacified  
The Erymanthian woods, or terrified  
The Lerna Hydra; and he has even gone  
Beyond victorious Liber holding his vinous  
Reins and driving his tiger-drawn chariot  
Down from the highest peak of Nysa mountain.  
Have we then doubts about showing what we are worth  
By what we will do, or any reason to fear 1090  
Establishing our home on Ausonian soil?

But who is that who from afar we see,  
Wearing an olive-leaf wreath upon his head,  
And carrying holy vessels for an altar?  
I recognize that he is that king of Rome,  
Gray headed, gray bearded, who will formulate  
The laws for the early city, he who came  
From the little town of Cures and who rose  
To mighty power. Next after him will be  
Tullus who called to arms and war a people 1100  
Long used to peace and long not used to triumphs.  
Right after him there's ostentatious Ancus,  
Whom the populace loves too well. There also see

The Tarquin kings and Brutus the Avenger,  
Who brought the fasces back, and was the first  
To be a consul with the power to wield  
The cruel axes, and, when his sons rebelled,  
It was he, unhappy, who punished them with death,  
So great was his love of country and his desire  
For righteousness. Look there, there are the Drusi, 1110  
There are the Decii, there's Torquatus with  
His own cruel axe, and Camillus, who'll bring home  
The battle standards. Those two you see there in  
Their glittering matching armor, both now at peace,  
Together now, while pent in the darkness here—  
Alas, when they go up into the light  
Of the upper world, what carnage there will be,  
What chaos, when the father-in-law comes down  
In force from the Alps and from Monaco's height  
Upon his daughter's husband's Eastern army. 1120

Do not let civil bloodshed be your custom.  
My sons, be merciful, and do not turn  
Your valor against the vitals of your country.  
Child of my blood, you who descend from the gods  
Of high Olympus, turn away your sword.

That one you see, over there, after having destroyed  
Corinth, will drive his chariot up to the top  
Of the Capitoline, to celebrate in triumph  
How many Achaeans he killed. The next you see,  
In revenge for what was done to his Trojan forebears, 1130  
And for the insult to Minerva's temple,  
Will rip up and tear down Argos, and Mycenae,  
Agamemnon's town, and will even destroy  
One of the progeny of Aeacus's line,  
Seed of Achilles, all-powerful-in-battle;  
And who could pass over you in silence, Cato,  
Or Cossus, you, or the family of the Gracchi,

Or the Scipios, the lightning bolts that brought  
An end to Carthage, or Fabricius, you,  
Austere in power, or, Serranus, you, 1140  
Called to be consul from where you plowed the field.  
O Fabii, where are you taking me in this breathless  
Telling of the story? Here is that one,  
Fabius Maximus, whose tactical art  
Of brilliant inexhaustible delay,  
Wears out the foe, and so will save our state.

There are those, I know it, who by their shaping art  
Will call forth, from the bronze that breathes, the living  
Features of the face; and those who by  
Their art of eloquence argue and prevail 1150  
In courts of law; or those who by their art  
Describe with their pointing wands the radiant wheeling  
Of all the stars in all the nighttime sky,  
And can foretell the moment of their rising.  
And Romans, never forget that this will be  
Your appointed task: to use your arts to be  
The governor of the world, to bring to it peace,  
Serenely maintained with order and with justice,  
To spare the defeated and to bring an end  
To war by vanquishing the proud.” 1160

These are  
The words that Father Anchises spoke to them,  
While they listened to him in wonder. And then he said:

“Look there! Behold! Marcellus comes! See how  
He towers over all the others and  
Is adorned with the glorious spoils that he will win  
When he himself has killed the enemy chief.  
When the Roman state is shaken, tottering, he  
Will hold it steadfast, pursuing and chasing down  
The Carthaginians and uprising Gaul; 1170

And he will offer to Father Quirinus a third  
Rich set of spoils victoriously won.”

As he was speaking Aeneas saw that there,  
Walking beside that hero in procession,  
Was a beautiful young man in shining armor,  
But his face was without joy, his eyes downcast,  
He said, “Who is that, Father, whom I see,  
Walking at the warrior’s side? Is it  
His son or another in the lineage  
Of this great family? What presence he has!  
1180  
What excitement about him there is, in the company  
Of the others who walk with him. But see, how night’s  
Dark mournful shadows play upon his head!”  
The tears starting up in his eyes, Father Anchises  
Said to his son, “Do not inquire too soon  
Into the greatest grief of your people; the Fates  
Will let him only be briefly seen on earth,  
Only a little while permitted to be.  
You gods above, you knew that the gifts that were given  
Weren’t given to them to have for good and all.  
1190  
The Romans would have been beyond themselves.  
What a sound of the weeping of heroes will there be,  
Carried up from the famous Campus to Mars’ great city.  
What a funeral of lamentation, you,  
O Tiber gliding past the tomb they’ll build,  
Will be the witness of. No other boy  
Born of Ilian stock will bring such hope  
To his Latin family; Romulus’ land  
Will never produce again a boy like this.  
Alas for his faithfulness, alas for his truth,  
1200  
Alas for his unconquerable sword.  
There’s no one who could have withstood him in the battle,  
Whether he fought on foot against the foe  
Or spurred his foaming steed. Alas, poor boy,  
Could it have been that you could have broken through

The confines of your unrelenting fate.  
But you will be Marcellus. Oh let my hands  
Strew purple lilies on the image of  
Him who descends from me; O let me at least  
Perform for him this unavailing duty.”

1210

Thus as upon the airy plain they walk  
Together through the region, observing all,  
As Anchises leads his son through all there was  
That was to be seen, exciting in his heart  
A love and incitement for all the future glory,  
And telling him of the wars that there would be,  
And of the Laurentine race and the Latin towns,  
And what he was to avoid and what to confront.

’ ’ ’

There are two gates of Sleep, one made of horn;  
It is the gate through which the true shade may  
Make easy departure to the world above;  
The other, of shining ivory, is the gate  
Through which false dreams go up from the world below.  
And as he tells them these things, Anchises leads  
His son and the Sybil to the ivory gate,  
And ushers them forth from there.

1220

#### Aeneas returns

As soon as he can to his ships and to his comrades,  
And then they sail together along the coast  
To Caieta’s port. The anchors of the fleet  
Are thrown from the prows; the sterns of the ships  
Are aligned in rows in order along the shore.

1230





# Book Seven

Caieta, Aeneas's nurse, here where you died,  
Your name brings fame undying to the shores.

And now, when pious Aeneas had performed  
The final funeral rites and raised for her  
A burial mound, and as soon as the high seas  
Lowered themselves, and when they quieted down,  
He opens his sails, and the fleet departs from the port.  
The wind is steady as the night goes on,  
Nor does the shining moon withhold her favor;  
The moonlight gleams on the trembling water's surface. 10  
They pass close by the shore where Circe, she  
Who is the daughter of the Sun, in her  
Secluded grove sings on unceasingly,  
Her proud house lighting the darkness with lamps of cedar  
Shedding their fragrance on the evening air,  
As her shuttle shrills upon the web she weaves.  
As they pass by they hear upon the shore  
The roaring of lions furious at their chains,  
And the raging of bristling boars and caged-up bears,  
And the ululating howls of enormous wolf shapes. 20  
These are the men whom the cruel goddess Circe  
Had with her herbs and potions turned into beasts,  
Robbing them of their humanness with her witchcraft.  
But Father Neptune, so that the Trojans would  
Not suffer the monstrous fate they would have suffered

Had they been brought into that harbor and  
Had they set foot upon that shore, saw to it  
That they were gotten past those seething shallows,  
Keeping them safe. Then, as the morning's first  
Rays of light were making the waters redden, 30  
And high in the heavens in her roseate chariot  
Aurora shone in the saffron light, the wind  
Dropped suddenly, all the breezes, and,  
Propelled only by oars, slowly they moved  
Themselves along through the marbled quieted waters.  
As they approached, Aeneas, looking toward  
The shore from the sea, saw a great forest, and  
The eddying waters of the beautiful river,  
The Tiber, bursting forth into the ocean  
And pouring its golden sands into the waves. 40  
All kinds of birds, the kinds that frequent a river  
And its riverbanks, were flying above and around,  
And in the groves delighting the skies with their songs.  
Aeneas told his cohort to change their course,  
And turn their prows to land, and so they entered  
The tree-shaded river.

› › ›

O Muse Erato, help me. Who  
Were the kings, who were they, what was it like,  
Back then when the strangers came to Ausonian shores?  
This is the story, the story of the battles 50  
That then took place, and the story of how it all started.  
Muse, come to the aid of your singer. The history I  
Will tell is of the terrible wars and those  
Whose great hearts' courage urged them to their deaths,  
Etrurians and Hesperians in arms,  
In action on the fields. Here in this poem  
A greater ordering of things is being told;  
I enter here upon this greater story.

Now agèd, the king, Latinus, had governed his country,  
 His towns and fields, for many peaceful years, 60  
 He was, it is said, the son of Faunus and  
 Marica, the Laurentine nymph. And, Saturn, the claim  
 Is that the father of Faunus, Picus, was  
 Your son and so you are the founder and  
 Original of the family. Latinus's son,  
 His masculine offspring, was, by the gods' decision,  
 Fated to die while still in the bloom of youth,  
 And so Latinus's daughter was left to be  
 The one to carry forward and preserve  
 The family lineage. She was of age 70  
 To marry now, to be a bride, and there  
 Were many in all Ausonia and Latium  
 Who sought her hand. But of them all the most  
 Beautiful and of noblest parentage  
 Was Turnus. It was he of whom the queen  
 So powerfully wished that he should be  
 Their son-in-law in union with their house.  
 But there were alarming portents from the gods,  
 That stood in the way of this. Deep within  
 The royal house, in the highest inner court, 80  
 There was a laurel tree, with its sacred leaves,  
 Venerated there for many years.  
 Latinus himself, it's said, had planted the tree  
 In honor of Phoebus Apollo when he built  
 His house and raised his towers, wherefore his people,  
 For ever after that, were called Laurentes.  
 High up in the topmost branches, wonderful,  
 Loud humming carried across the liquid air,  
 And, pendant from the leafy laurel boughs,  
 Hanging with feet entwined, a swarm of bees! 90  
 A prophet, seeing them, cried out at once,  
 "There is a stranger coming, and with him many

Others swarming from where it is he comes from,  
Seeking the place he comes to, and will reign  
High up among the towers of this town.”

While speaking thus he takes the sacred torch  
To light the altar fire. The maiden, Lavinia,  
Stands beside her father there, and (oh!)

They saw her long hair (horror!) caught ablaze,  
They saw her ornate headdress caught afire,  
Her hair on fire, and the garland that she wore  
Upon her head, and the yellow light of the fire  
Scattering as she ran through the palace halls.

100

And when this wonder was known it was said by those  
Who heard it that the light of her fame was glory,  
But it boded war that was coming upon the people.

Father Latinus was much concerned by this,  
And so he sought the oracle in the great  
Grove beneath the high mountain, the place where was  
A sacred fountain from whose sounding waters  
Mephitic vapors breathed. It was the place  
Where those whose anxieties sought for aid had come,  
Italians, and from all Oenotria,

110

And where the seer, at night, lying upon  
The fleece of sacrificed sheep, sought dreams, and in  
His sleep the dreams would come, in which he spoke  
To those below in the Underworld, along  
The rivers there; and he in converse spoke  
To Acheron in deep Avernus. And when  
Latinus came to the oracle's place, he slew,  
By the ritual prescribed, a hundred sheep,  
And lay upon their slaughtered fleece, and dreamed,  
And in his sleep he heard, from deep within  
The surrounding grove, a voice that cried, “Do not  
Let her be married to one who is born a Latin.  
O progeny, the marriage bed is not  
Prepared for such. Strangers are coming here

120

To be your sons, and you by them will be  
Exalted to the stars, and as the sun  
Looks down upon the oceans as it passes  
From where it rises up, to where it sets,  
So will your people, like the sun, look down  
Upon the kingdoms they rule, turning below them.”  
Latinus did not keep from the ears of others  
What was told to him, and therefore Rumor, flying  
Everywhere through Ausonia, already  
By the time the ships of the sons of Laomedon  
Had come upon the grassy shore, had told it.

130

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As Aeneas and his companions and beautiful  
Iulus, his son, were reclining under the high  
Trees of the grove, and had spread, as Jupiter  
Advised them to do, their simple meal of fruits  
Upon wheaten cakes, the gifts of Ceres, and when  
These fruits were not enough to satisfy  
Their hunger, with voracious teeth and jaws  
They devoured the wheaten cakes, profaning the fateful  
Circles and quarter-circles, not sparing even  
The broad green leaves the cakes were set upon,  
Little Iulus laughingly said, “Oh ! Look!  
We’re eating the tables too!” When he said this,  
And said no more, their wandering was done.  
Stunned by what the will of heaven was saying,  
Father Aeneas cried out, “Hail promised land!  
Hail faithful gods of Troy. This is our home.  
My father, Anchises, now I remember it,  
Bequeathed to me this mystery of the Fates:  
‘My son, when you have gotten to a place  
Where you are so hungry, so little to eat, that you  
Devour the very plates you’re eating on,  
That is when you will know that you are there

140

150

160

Where you have hope that you have found a home.  
Now you must build, and build with your own hands,  
Though they are weary, your dwelling places there,  
Protected by a mound for battlement.’  
This is that hunger that was prophesied;  
This is the last ordeal awaiting us;  
This is the limit of what we had to suffer.  
So, joyfully when the morning sun comes up  
Tomorrow, let us see what places there are,  
What people in them, what is their principal town,  
And from the harbor let us explore, this way  
And that, discovering where it is we are.  
But now, pour from your cups a libation to Jove,  
And call in prayer upon my father, Anchises.  
Set out before us again the votive wine.”

170

And then he garlanded his temples with  
A leafy branch, and prayed thus to the gods,  
First to the genius of the place, and next  
To Tellus, the Earth, first of the gods, and then  
To the nymphs and to the rivers as yet unknown,  
And he prayed to the Night and to its orbs that rise  
When the darkness comes, and to Idaean Jove,  
And to the Phrygian Mother, all these in order;  
And to his mother and father, the one on high  
In the heavens, the other below in Erebus.  
Then Jupiter thundered thrice, in a clear sky,  
And with his own omnipotent hand shook forth  
A golden shower of incandescent rays.  
Thus through the Trojan host the news was heard,  
That the day had come for building the city that had  
Been promised to them, and so, because of this  
Great sign, in their joy the feasting was renewed,  
And the bowls and the garlanded wine set out again.

180

190

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As soon as day arising began to carry  
Her lamp across the sky, the Trojans set out  
To explore the towns and countryside and shores,  
Here seeing the pools the river Numicus sprang from,  
There the Tiber, and there where the dwellings were  
Of the brave Latins. And then the son of Anchises  
As emissaries chose three hundred men,  
Who represented every Teucrian order,  
Commanding them to go to the august royal  
Town of the king, each of them to carry  
A branch in his hands of Pallas Athena's olive,  
Swathed in wool, and there to seek to secure  
A peaceful welcome from Latinus the king.

200

They hastened to obey and moved off quickly  
To carry out their embassy. Meanwhile  
Aeneas dug a shallow trench to show  
With an outline where the walls were going to be,  
Doing the work himself of preparing the ground,  
And marking there on the coast what was the first  
Settlement of the Trojans, made like a camp,  
Around it a trench and the walls of a battlement.

210

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Now those he had sent before them were approaching  
The city, and saw, rising before them, its high  
Roofs and towers, and so they came near to its walls.  
Here there were boys and young men in their flower,  
Improving their riding skills and practicing  
Driving their dusty chariots back and forth,  
Hurling their whirling javelins through the air,  
Throwing sharp darts, challenging one another  
To race, or to box—when suddenly a scout  
Came galloping up with news for the old king's ears,  
That a number of men in unfamiliar clothes,

220



Big men, were coming near. The king commanded  
That they be brought into the hall, where he  
Seated himself upon his ancestral throne.

The palace, huge, imposing, hundred-columned,  
At the highest point in the town, in a sacred grove,  
Had been the royal palace since Picus's time.

230

It was the place where the succeeding kings,  
From the beginning took up the scepter and rods  
That symbolized their kingship office, and where,  
After the ritual slaughtering of a ram,

To be their meal, the elders sat in council  
At their accustomed places at their tables.

And on the porch, one after another, in order  
Were images of the rulers from the beginning.

Italus was there, and Father Saturn, the vintner  
With his curved pruning knife, old Saturn, and  
Doubled-faced Janus, and all the ancient kings.

240

And there were images too of those who'd suffered  
Wounds in brave defense of their fatherland;  
And hanging from the doorposts of the temple  
Were trophies from the battles of the past,

Chariots, curved axes, great bolts of iron  
Taken from the gates of alien cities,  
Spears, and shields, and broken beaks, the prows  
Of enemy ships. And there was the image of

250

Picus himself, horsebreaker, in his short  
Quirinal robe, white-mantled, and in his left  
Hand holding his crooked augural staff, and in  
His right his little oval battle shield,

Picus, whom Circe, his bride, lusting for him,  
Had struck with her golden rod, and with a potion,  
Changed him into a bird with colored wings.

This was that sacred temple where Latinus,  
Upon the throne of his gods, called in the Teucrian  
Envoys to his presence, and with a placid

260

Countenance spoke first, and gently, to them:  
“Tell me, Dardanians—we are not unaware  
Of who you are; and the journey you’ve been making  
Across the seas is not unheard of by us—  
What are you seeking? What is it that has brought you  
Across the cerulean waters to our shore?  
Is it that you have lost your way, or was it  
Tempests acting upon you (for we are told  
That this has happened to many upon the deep),  
That you have entered in, between our river’s  
Banks, and harbored your fleet within our port? 270  
Do not refuse our welcome. Remember that we  
Latins are of the race of Saturn, who  
Following in the ways of our ancient father,  
Need no external laws to obey or be  
Forbidden by; we act of our own free wills.  
I seem to remember, though the old story grows  
Fainter and fainter as the years go by,  
That the Auruncian elders said that Dardanus  
Was born here, and that he left his Etrurian town, 280  
Corythus, to go to Phrygian Ida and then  
To Thracian Samos, now called Samothrace,  
He who is now admitted to the golden  
Palace among the stars, his altar added  
To the number of the altars of the gods.”

When the old king had finished speaking, then  
Ilioneus said these words: “O king, illustrious  
Descendant of the line of Faunus, it wasn’t  
A black storm of winter nor was it surging seas  
That drove us this way, nor was it that we mistook 290  
A reading of the stars or of a coastline.  
We came of our own free will, having been driven  
Out of our kingdom, the greatest in the world  
That the sun, looking down from Olympus, could ever see.  
We are, from our beginning, of Jupiter’s line;

Dardanian soldiers rejoice at knowing this;  
Our king, Aeneas, is of this highest descent,  
And it is Aeneas the Trojan who has brought us,  
Here to your shores. How terrible was that storm  
That came from savage Mycenae and raged across 300  
The fields of Ida, and we have sailed over many  
Desolate seas, seeking a simple place  
To come ashore and make our dwellings there  
Where the air and the water are open and free to all.  
We bring no harm to you, nor any shame,  
And the glory of your acceptance will never grow dim.  
Ausonia will never regret that we  
Have come and have been welcomed. I swear it by  
The right arm of Aeneas, who by so much  
Has been tested, and been found true, on the battlefield. 310  
Do not scorn us that we come here bringing garlands,  
Petitioning. There are many lands which have sought  
To be allied with us. But the gods have willed  
That these your lands are the place that we must come to.  
This is the land from which Dardanus came.  
Apollo calls us here; he has decreed that we  
Must return to the banks of the Tuscan river Tiber  
And to the spring of Numicus. These poor relics  
Of what his fortunes were, father Aeneas  
Offers, saved from the fires that burned down Troy: 320  
This is the golden cup from which his own father,  
Anchises, poured libations at the altars;  
This is the vesture Priam wore when he  
Sat in assembly to give out laws and make  
His proclamations; this is his scepter, and this  
The diadem, the sacred headdress, woven  
By Ilium's daughters."

Latinus's head was bowed  
As he heard these words; he sat there motionless,

But scanning intently, reading his inward thoughts. 330  
Though he was moved to see the richly woven  
Purple regalia of King Priam, he  
Was moved still more by his thoughts of his daughter's marriage,  
Her marriage bed, and the promises of Faunus.  
This must be the one, the prophesied one, this must  
Be the one declared to come from another place  
To share in the power, and by his glorious deeds  
To bring out future generations to rule  
Over all the world. At last he speaks, with joy:  
"I hope that now the gods are prospering 340  
What we have wished for, and they have prophesied.  
We freely grant what you have asked for, Trojans,  
And we are glad to accept the gifts you offer.  
May your leader come here, if so he wishes, that I  
May welcome him and touch his sovereign hand,  
That peace may be with ceremony pledged.  
So now, return to him, bearing these words.  
I have a daughter, of whom, by the oracles  
Who spoke in my father's shrine, and by many signs,  
It was made known to me that I must not 350  
Wed her to any son of our own race;  
Strangers will come from far away, whose blood,  
They sing, will raise our fame to the stars: and I  
Believe, and willingly believe, that this  
Is he whose coming is promised by the omens."

When he had spoken thus the king commanded  
That from their high stalls in his stables three hundred  
Glossy-coated horses, hooves as rapid  
As rapid-beating wings, caparisoned in purple,  
Their champing mouths fitted with golden bits, 360  
Bridle reins hung with dangled golden chains,  
Should be brought forth and given to the envoys  
In ordered courtesy, and, for Aeneas,

A chariot, in his absence, to it yoked  
A pair of steeds, their nostrils breathing fire,  
Whom clever Circe bred from a mortal mare  
And an immortal stallion stolen from  
Her father's stables. The envoys mounted high,  
With Latinus's words and gifts, carrying peace.

• • •

But Jupiter's fierce wife, borne on the air, 370  
Was coming back from Argos, Inachus' town,  
When from as far away across the sky  
As Pachymus, over in Sicily, she saw  
Joyful Aeneas and the anchored fleet  
And the roofs of houses that were being built.  
And she knew that the Trojans had occupied the land,  
And that the ships were empty there on the beach,  
Because they had come ashore. Shaking her head,  
Full of anger, her heart congested with rage,  
She spoke these words and said: "This cursed people! 380  
How is it that their fate is so obverse  
To what I destined it to be? Why could  
Their bodies on the Sigeian plains not lie  
Forever overcome by force? When Troy  
Was on fire, why weren't they all burned up?  
Through all those spears and fire they made their way,  
They found a way. Now do they think my power's  
Spent? Or that my rage has exhausted itself,  
And that it has quieted down? I've dared to oppose them  
By sea, and from the sky, and everywhere, 390  
And what good have they done, have the Syrtes done,  
Has Scylla done, has Charybdis's vortex done?  
There they are, safe and sound in Tiberside,  
Just as they wanted to be. Mars destroyed  
The powerful Lapiths, and the sovereign god

Himself conceded the Calydonians to  
The anger of Diana. What had the Lapiths  
Done to deserve what happened to them? What had  
The Calydonians done? But I, the wife  
Of Jove, have been defeated by Aeneas,  
And everything I have tried has turned against me.  
But if my goddess power is not enough,  
I'll look for help elsewhere than from above.  
I'll look below, to Acheron. The Fates  
Have decided that Aeneas is in Latium,  
And he will have Lavinia for his bride,  
But I will make them pay. Father-in-law  
And son-in-law may come together but  
The cost will be the blood of both their people.  
Virgin, your dowry will be the blood of Trojans  
And the blood of Rutulians; and Bellona,  
The goddess of war, will be your matron of honor.  
It wasn't only Hecuba, Cisseus' daughter,  
Who dreamed that when she was giving birth to Paris,  
She was giving birth to a flaming torch. Venus, too,  
Gave birth to another torch, another Paris,  
Who'll be the torch that burns down a second Troy."

400

410

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Then terrifying Juno flew down to the earth,  
And from the shades below she stirred up she,  
Allecto, where she was, among the dire Furies,  
She, bringer of grief, who has in her heart all rage,  
Distress of war, vile obloquy, and plot.  
Pluto, her father, hated his monster daughter,  
Her sisters in Tartarus hated their monster sister,  
So many writhing mouthing changes in  
Her savage face, and black snakes sprouting from  
Her head and crawling there. It is to such

420

That Juno spoke to her: “Virgin, begotten  
Daughter of Night, do this for me, what you  
Can do for me, what you know how to do. 430  
See that my fame, my honor, be not damaged,  
And that Aeneas not win Latinus’s favor  
For this marriage. See to it that the Trojans  
Will never find their dwelling place and home  
In Italy. You know the ways to do it.  
You can make brother living in harmony  
With brother in concord turn on each other and bring  
Their house in hatred down around their heads.  
You know the way to bring the funeral torch.  
Your ways to hurt have a thousand different names. 440  
Your heart is full of possibilities.  
Shake them all loose at once. Do all of them.  
Tear peace to pieces. Sow the seeds of war.  
Make all the young men mad to take up arms.”

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Filled with Gorgonian poison Allecto now  
Seeks Latium and Latinus’s high halls,  
And sits on the quiet doorstep of Amata,  
Who was already burning with distress,  
As a woman would, because of the incursion  
Of Teucrians, and what was happening to 450  
The marriage of Turnus. And as Amata was there,  
And Allecto on the threshold, Allecto pulled  
A serpent-tress that grew upon her head  
And put it upon Amata’s unknowing body;  
It got itself to where her heartbeat was;  
It slithered between her snowy breasts; it breathed  
Into her mouth; it moved upon her flesh  
Where it would go; and it became a golden  
Necklace of twisted strands that curled around  
Her throat; it was a long ribbon, binding her hair 460

And hanging down behind; it wandered smoothly  
Upon her body, gliding everywhere.

As yet unknowing, and not yet fully enraged,  
The infection not yet having made its way  
Sufficiently through all her veins and burning  
Around her bones as it would do, she spoke  
To the king still gently and as a mother would,  
Distressed by the prospect of a Phrygian marriage,  
And tearful because of it. She said to her spouse,  
“Is it true that our daughter is to be given away 470  
To one of the Teucrian exiles, to take her home  
As a wife? Where is your pity for her, or for  
Her mother, when, just as soon as there will be  
The first North Wind, this treacherous stranger will carry  
Our hapless plundered virgin away with him?  
Was it not this that the Phrygian shepherd did,  
When he entered Lacedemonia and carried  
Ledeian Helen away to the Trojan cities?  
Where are your sacred vows? Where is your ancient  
Obligation to what has been promised to Turnus? 480  
If it is true that Faunus commanded that she  
Be married to one from elsewhere, and if this must be,  
Then all those tribes around not subject to us  
Are elsewhere, free, other than us; and Turnus’s  
Own origins are from Inachus and Acrisius,  
Deep in the realm of faraway Mycenae.”

As soon as she perceived that her words had not  
Succeeded in changing her Latinus’s mind,  
The poison of the serpent suddenly had  
Its full effect upon her, and within her, 490  
Penetrating everywhere, flowing into,  
And seeping through, her viscera; and then  
This unhappy, frenzied woman, who was aroused  
To madness by the monstrous images



She saw in her head, or that she thought she saw,  
Raged crazily throughout the town. It's as  
When boys, at play, excited to see the sight,  
Have sent a whiptop, struck by the cracking whip,  
Spinning and flying across a courtyard, they  
Gaze in dumbstruck wonder at the top 500  
And what it's doing as it sweeps around  
The curving empty atrial space; they gaze  
Transfixed by what the whirling top is doing  
And what the whip has done to make it do it;  
Like this, like such a top, her fury whirled  
And agitated all the proud towns of Latium.  
Then she became as if she were a maenad,  
And in her madness performed more shocking and  
Impious acts, and she took her daughter away,  
And hid her from sight in a leafy mountain forest, 510  
In order to take the marriage from the Trojans  
And keep the wedding torches from being lighted,  
Screaming "Evoe Bacchus" and crying out,  
"It is only you the virgin is worthy of,  
To carry your torch, and only for you she carries  
The thyrsus in your chorus, only to Bacchus  
She consecrates her unbound hair." The fame  
Of this spreads wide, and burns in the hearts of mothers;  
Aroused to frenzy like hers, they leave their homes,  
Looking for other places to lay their heads; 520  
They bare their necks, let loose their hair to the wind  
And the weather, they fill the air with their howling cries,  
They wear the skins of fawns, they carry spears,  
And in their midst bloodshot Amata sings,  
Wielding a blazing pine torch, fervently sings,  
The wedding song of her daughter and of Turnus,  
And cries out to the others, "Wherever you are,  
You loyal Latian mothers, if you have any  
Pity for me, if you know the rights of mothers  
And if the knowledge gnaws at your hearts, come join 530

The orgiastic rites, let loose the fillets  
That bind your hair.” And thus it was for the queen,  
Out there in the woods among wild animals,  
Goaded to this by Allecto’s Bacchic rapture.

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Then, when Allecto was satisfied that she  
Had disrupted all of Latinus’s plans and turned  
His household upside down, she went aloft,  
And on her dusky gloomy wings she flew  
To the high walls of the brave Rutulians, where  
Danae, when the South Wind brought her there,  
Had founded a town for her Acrisians to dwell in;  
The ancients called it Ardea, “bright shining,”  
“Ardea” still its wonderful name, though fortune  
Has left it behind. There, under this roof, was Turnus,  
Sound asleep in the quiet of the night.

540

Allecto changed her looks, while Turnus lay there  
In deep unknowing. Instead of her detestable  
Face and dreadful Furial limbs she looked  
Like Calybe, old woman priestess of  
Juno’s temple, her face all aged wrinkles,  
Her white hair tied with a ribbon and secured  
With a sprig of olive leaves, and thus she appeared  
Before young Turnus’s sleeping eyes, and said,  
“Turnus, do you not see that all your hopes  
Are lost? Latinus has changed his plans and he  
Is giving away what he owes to you, and what  
Your blood has earned, to the foreign intruders. He  
Is giving away the dowry and the scepter  
Promised to you, and he has sought for a stranger,  
An alien from a foreign land, as heir.

550

You have been treated with scorn. Rise up! Confront  
What’s happening! Demolish the Trojans! Scatter  
Their broken swords and shields upon the field!

560

This is what Saturn's daughter tells you to do,  
As you lie here in the darkness of the night.  
Call up the armies, have them make ready, bring them  
Out through the gates of their towns and into the fields!  
Destroy those Trojans, who have put down their anchors  
Here in our waters! Destroy their captain and  
Burn their painted ships! You must obey  
The commands of the gods above; and if Latinus  
Refuses to give you the bride, as he has promised,  
Confront him with yourself in the armor of war!"  
Then Turnus, laughing at her, replied, in his sleep,  
"The news of their arrival in our waters  
Has scarcely failed to reach my ears; nor is there  
Anything to fear. Juno has not  
Forgotten us, old mother. You are old,  
Old worn-out creature, fooling around with false  
Prophecies and worries. Go back to dusting  
The effigies of the gods in the temple. Leave  
Matters of peace and war to us men who know  
How to deal with them."

570

580

Infuriated by

These words Allecto blazed enraged and he  
Recoiled, his whole body shook, his words died away,  
His eyes were paralyzed by what he was seeing  
Revealed to him, the sight of what she was,  
The snakes writhing upon her head and the writhing  
Countenance of what it was she was,  
Her rolling eyes, the cracking sound of her whip,  
And he fell back in the faltering of his words.  
She pulled from her snaky head two serpents and said,  
"Old woman am I, withered am I, worn-out  
And fooling around am I, did you say, with false  
Omens and prophecies? Here I am! I come  
From where down there the Sister Furies are,  
And in our hands we handle death and war!"

590

Into his sleep she hurled a flaming torch  
Ablaze with infernal darkness, into his breast. 600  
Unholy dread possessed him utterly;  
Sweat poured from everywhere upon his body;  
In the bedroom everywhere he looked for weapons;  
Everywhere in the house he lusted for  
His sword; and he became his ecstasy  
For glory and war. It's as when the sticks and branches  
Beneath a huge cauldron of water are set on fire,  
And there's the stirring, and then the bubbling, and then  
The seething, then the boiling, then the foaming  
Boiling wave uprising and the black 610  
Smoke as it all pours up and out and over.

Despising peace he orders all his captains  
And all their people to arm themselves and march  
Against the alien foreigners and Latinus.  
“Defend our Italy; expel the strangers.  
I am enough, against the both of them,  
The Latins and the Trojans!” He calls upon  
The gods to hear him swear what he will do,  
And all the Rutulians, hearing him, incite  
Each other to war, aroused by Turnus's beauty, 620  
Or by the thought of his ancestral race,  
Or by his glory in arms.

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Then, satisfied  
With what she had done to stir up Turnus and  
All of his people, she flew on dusky wings  
To where the Trojans were. There, by the shore,  
Lovely Iulus was setting out hunting traps,  
And there the Fury roused up the hunting dogs,  
Exciting them by means of the scent of a stag  
She made their noses know about and be 630

Made rabid by. This was the cause of how  
The hearts of those in the fields were inflamed by war.  
The stag they scented was a magnificent creature,  
Beautiful to look at, his head adorned  
With a great panoply of curved forked antlers.  
He had, when a foundling fawn, been brought to their home  
By the little sons of Tyrrhus and been cared for  
By Silvia, their sister, who petted it,  
And combed its hair, and fed it with milk, and bathed it  
In the pure clear waters of a fountain, and 640  
Garlanded its horns with pretty ribbons,  
So, utterly accustomed to his mistress,  
And tamed, the stag would wander in the fields  
By day, just as he would, and then at night  
He'd come back home and enter into the house,  
No matter how late it was, and be at peace there.  
But Ascanius' dogs discovered the wandering stag  
Where sometimes it liked to swim, in the heat of the day,  
Cooling itself in the river's downstream flowing,  
And sometimes resting itself on the verdant bank; 650  
And little Ascanius, eager to be the best  
Hunter among his fellows, pointed his arrow,  
And drew back to tightness the strings of his bending bow,  
And let it go, and the goddess corrected the arrow's  
Wobbling flight and with a great hissing sound  
It struck the animal's flank and went into its belly.  
The wounded creature fled for refuge under  
The roof of the house, the house that it knew so well,  
And sought its familiar stall, where it lay down,  
Beseechingly weeping and weeping and calling out. 660  
The house was filled with its pitiful woeful noise,  
And Silvia, when she saw it and saw what had happened,  
Cried out for help, beating her arms with her hands  
In her distress and calling the farmers, who  
As if spontaneously and unasked for (for

The fiend already was there in the silent woods),  
Came running and shouting, with clubs and poles and knot-holed  
Limbs of trees shaped into weapons. Rage made them  
Find for weapons whatever there was they could,  
And Pyrrhus, who had, with a wedge, been cleaving the trunk 670  
Of an oak into fours, his great chest heaving, shouted  
With fury for all of his shepherds, and took up an axe.

When cruel Allecto, from where she was, caught sight  
Of what was happening, she saw that there  
Was a fresh new opportunity for harm.  
She flew to the very top of the farmhouse roof  
And on her curved war trumpet sent forth a blast,  
A signal, in a Tartarean voice that sounded  
All through the countryside and far beyond,  
A sound unceasing that caused all the groves to tremble, 680  
And was heard in the deepest inwardnesses of woods;  
Its sound was heard as far as Trivia's lake,  
And Nar's white sulfurous waters, and as far  
As the Velinian Fountains, and fearful mothers,  
Hearing it, clutched their children to their breasts.  
And then, in truth, obedient to the dire  
Sound of the hellish trumpet that they heard,  
They all came hurrying from where they were,  
The farmers with whatever weapons they found,  
And the Trojan youths, in aid of Ascanius, pouring 690  
Out through the open gates of the Trojan camp.  
The battle lines were drawn, and now the two sides  
Faced each other, no longer armed with clubs  
Or poles or limbs of trees, but double-edged  
Steel weapons. Now in the cornfield there is a dark  
Forest of swords to be seen and there is a glinting  
Of brass in the sun, reflecting light to the clouds,  
As when, at sea, when the wind grows strong, at first  
The water begins to whiten, then little by little

The waves grow high and higher and higher and higher, 700  
Until at last the whole sea heaves itself up  
In surges from the lowest depths to the highest  
Reaches of the sky. Then the young Almo,  
Tyrrhus's youngest son, was struck by an arrow.  
It got him in his throat, filling with blood  
The path of breath and speech. Among the many  
Fallen bodies was old Galaesus's body,  
Slain while trying his best to keep the peace,  
Galaesus, who was the most just of them all,  
And the richest, with five herds of his coming home 710  
From the fields at night, and five flocks bleating, and  
A hundred plows of his plowing the soil of his farm.

» » »

When the goddess saw how the battle was going on,  
And the two sides evenly matched in deadly conflict,  
She, leaving Hesperia, flew up high in the sky  
To where Juno was, and there she said, in tones  
Of satisfaction about her accomplishment,  
“Lo! here is what I've done. I've caused dire war,  
Bringing them all together against the Trojans.  
Now they have shed the first Ausonian blood. 720  
And if you say I can do it, I will do more.  
Carrying everywhere rumors of war, exciting  
All their hearts with unanimous lust for blood.  
I will sow all the land with blood!” But Juno said,  
“Deceit and terror abound. It is established.  
Face to face they fight, and now the weapons  
That they at first took up by happenstance  
Are stained with crucial blood. This is how they,  
Venus's pride and joy, and King Latinus,  
Will celebrate the matrimonial feast. 730  
It is not Olympus's ruler's will that you

Should wander freely in the upper air.  
Whatever is still to be done, I'll do myself."

The monster lifted up her hissing wings,  
And flew away to seek her home down there  
Beside the river Cocytus. There is a place  
In Italy, high up, famously called  
Amsanctius Vale, still higher hills above it,  
And with a great forest crowding around a river  
That swirls and roars and crashes upon its rocks;  
And in this place there is a horrific cavern,  
From which the dreadful breath of Dis breathes forth,  
And there's a gorge where Acheron spews up,  
And there it was that the horrible Fury hid,  
Relieving earth and heaven when she went.

740

› › ›

Then Saturn's daughter took matters into her own  
Hands and put the finishing touches on  
The mischief. The shepherds all together came  
Back from the fields where the fighting was, and bringing  
Young Almo's body with them, and the body  
Of old Galaesus, its face atrociously mangled.  
The shepherds came calling out to the gods and to  
Latinus, calling on him for justice, and Turnus  
Was there in the midst of all of it, crying out  
Against the killing, and so his rage's fire  
Exacerbated the raging of the shepherds:  
"The Trojans have been called in, into the kingdom.  
Our blood will be mingled with theirs. I've been expelled  
From the house!" And then it was the mothers, those  
Who danced in ecstatic orgiastic dance  
To Bacchus in the pathless woods (it was  
Amata's example that brought them to it). All

750

760



Of these people came together calling for war.  
Importuning they gathered before the house  
Of Latinus. He was as a cliff unmoved by the force  
Of the howling waves that dashed themselves against it,  
Eddying, boiling, sea-weed flung back and forth  
In the violent incoherence of the ocean.  
When he saw that nothing could be done against  
The blind unhearing stubbornness of their rage, 770  
And that savage Juno's rage was having its way,  
He called on the gods and the empty winds to witness,  
And cried, "The Fates have broken us. The storm  
Has swept us away. My miserable people,  
You are going to have to pay for what your poisoned  
Sacrilegious blood is making you do.  
Wicked Turnus, you'll pray to the gods too late  
To escape the punishment that's coming to you.  
As for myself, I have come to the end of my days,  
To the quiet there, but at the portal all 780  
Hope of the happiness of the end is spoiled."  
Having said this he said no more, and went  
Into his palace and shut himself away,  
Letting the reins of governance fall from his hands.

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There was a custom in Hesperia,  
In Latium, later adopted as a custom,  
And a ritual, by the people of Alba, and  
Still later by the still greater city of Rome:  
When the leaders of the city have decided  
Upon a course of war, whether against 790  
The Getae, the Hyrcani or, still farther,  
The Indians, the Land of the Rising Sun,  
Or the Parthians to bring back the martial standards,  
There are twin gates, which are called the Gates of War,  
And are sacred to the god; they are secured

By one hundred bolts made from the strongest iron,  
And Janus, gatekeeper, never leaves his post.

Here, when the Fathers in their Council have  
Decided upon the course of war, the Consul,  
Dressed in the Quirinal toga and Gabinian 800  
Sash of office, approaches the Twin War Gates,  
And opens their locks; slowly they open as  
They turn in their shrieking iron sockets, and then  
The Consul cries out to the people that war is declared.  
Immediately the brazen trumpets loudly  
Sound their raucous agreement that it is so.  
But when old Latinus was urged to open the gates  
Of war in this way, he refused to perform this hateful  
Ministry, and would not touch the bars, 810  
And hid himself in his house, unseen in darkness.  
Therefore the queen of the gods came down from the sky,  
And with a powerful hand she pushed the doors open,  
The doorposts turning slowly in their sockets.  
Ausonia had been peaceful; now it was not.  
Some of them readied themselves to be foot soldiers,  
Others high on their horses getting ready  
To be the cavalry, the dust rising up  
From the hooves of excited steeds; the people were busy  
Making shields and polishing them with lard  
Into brightness; javelins too were shining; 820  
Axes were sharpened, one side and then the other,  
Against the whetstone; there was a general outcry  
Calling for weapons; it was a joy to see  
The banners waving and hear the sounding trumpets.  
Five towns set up anvils and forges to help in the work,  
Ardea, Crustumerium, mighty Atina,  
Proud Tibur, Amtemna with its towers, they all  
Were busy hollowing helmets to make them fit  
For the heads of heroes, framing new shields, breastplates  
Of bronze, greaves fashioned of ductile polished silver. 830

No longer do they honor the pruning knife  
Or the plow; in their furnaces they turn their plowshares  
Into swords. The trumpet sounds, the sign  
For war. A soldier yokes his trembling horses to  
His chariot, excitedly takes his helmet down  
From the roof-tree of his house, picks up his shield,  
Puts on his breastplate, triple-woven gold,  
And buckles on the sword he will rely on.

› › ›

Now is the time to open Helicon,  
O goddesses, and sing the roster of  
What kings have been aroused to battle, and who  
Are those who in their train have followed, filling  
The beautiful land with armies, and to sing  
Of heroes flowering in their shining armor.  
O goddesses, O muses, it is you  
Who have it in your memory and can tell  
The story; the music of it as I try  
To hear it sounds but faintly in our ears.

840

› › ›

The first to take up arms and bring his army  
From the Etrurian coast into the war  
Was he who held the gods in such contempt,  
Mezentius the cruel, and riding by his side,  
Lausus, his son, who is more beautiful than  
Any Laurentian except the beautiful Turnus,  
Lausus, horse tamer and famous wild-beast hunter,  
Deserver of a better father than this.  
One thousand soldiers marched with the fated son.

850

There's Aventinus in his chariot  
Festooned with palm tree leaves and drawn by its

Battle-victorious horses, Aventinus,  
Glorious son of glorious Hercules;  
He carried his father's famous shield, which had  
The emblem on it of the Hydra head,  
The Hydra and its hundred writhing snakeheads;  
His mother, the priestess Rhea, bore him in secret,  
The son of a god and a woman, and brought him into  
The light on the high hill of the Aventine,  
When Hercules came back to Laurentine fields,  
After he killed and did away with Geryon,  
And bathed his Iberian cattle in the Tiber.

860

Aventinus's soldiers carried pikes  
And javelins and Sabine curved-edged spears;  
And he himself was wearing a lion's pelt  
That swayed its frightening mane around his shoulders,  
As he walked in what his father wore, the lion's  
Face, with its terrible gleaming teeth, on his head.

870

Next, two brothers, twins, coming down from walled  
Tibur, the city named from Tiburtus, their brother,  
Catillus and Coras, fierce Argive youths, undaunted  
To be foremost in the missile-showering warfare,  
Down the mountainside like Centaurs born  
Among the clouds they come, as if from Othrys  
Or down from snow-capped Homole, crashing their way  
Through brushwood or past broken or bending branches,  
Down through the hillside woods to join the fight.

880

Nor was Praeneste's founder absent from  
The list, who was, they say, the son of Vulcan,  
Found in a burning hearth, or so the story  
Goes from ancient days; Caeculus was  
A king and a shepherd too, and with him came  
A host of men, recruited from far and wide.  
Some were from high Praeneste, others from Juno's  
Gabii, from Henreica, or from Anio's

890

Streams that scatter their drops like dew upon  
The river rocks, and others from rich  
Anagnia, and Amasenus's fields.  
Not all of them have clanging shields, or swords,  
Or rattling chariots; some of them fight  
With slingshots throwing lead balls, and others carry  
Darts in their hands; still others with hunting spears,  
Two of them, in one hand; each of them wears  
A yellow wolfskin cap to cover his head,  
The left foot bare, the right in a rawhide shoe.

900

But Messapus next, horsebreaker, Neptune's son,  
Whom neither swords nor fire could overcome,  
Has suddenly roused a people up, who were  
Unused to fighting, to take up arms again.  
Here were Fescennium's men, and those from Aequi  
Falisci, from Mount Soracte, Flavina, from  
Ciminia's mountain lake, and Capena's groves;  
They march in regimented order singing  
Of their king who was born of the sea, and who is now  
Leading them into war. It is as if  
A flight of snow-white swans were passing above;  
High in the liquid air their choral song,  
Issuing from their long swan throats, was heard  
As far as Asia's fens, as coming home  
From pasturing on the sea, together they sang.

910

Behold, there's Clausus, of ancient Sabine blood,  
With a great army of men, himself an army,  
Whose Claudian name now spreads through tribes and peoples,  
All throughout Latium, ever since the joining  
Together of the Romans and the Sabine  
People, so many marching with him now,  
The Amiternians and the first Quirites,  
The marchers from Eretum and the olive  
Orchards of Mutusca, from Nomentum,

920

From the Rosean plains of Lake Velinus, and  
From rocky Tetrica and Mount Severus, and  
Casperia, and Foruli, and Hermus's banks, 930  
And those who drink from the Tiber river and  
Its tributary Fabaris, and those  
Who are sent from frigid Norsia, and from Orta,  
And from the oldest Latin tribes there are,  
And from the lands that are divided by  
The river Allia, ill-omened name; they were  
As many as the ocean waves that come  
In onto the Libyan shore as savage Orion  
Hides himself in the winter sea or as  
The scorching sun smites down on the thousand ears 940  
Of corn in Herminus' or Lycia's yellow fields.  
Earth trembles beneath their feet as they march past;  
The clanging sounds of war gear everywhere.

After them came Halaesus, who had been one  
Of Agamemnon's men, and hated the very  
Sound of the name of Trojans, bringing with him  
A thousand fierce warriors, those whose work at home  
Was turning with their hoes the soil of vineyards  
Where the felicitous grape called Massic is grown.  
Others whose fathers had sent them down to the fight 950  
From the high Auruncian hills, and with them others  
Who came from the neighboring Sidicinian plains,  
And others from Cales or else from where the river  
Volturnus runs along its shallow course,  
And marching with them were the Oscans too,  
And the tough young men who came from Saticula.  
Their javelins were strapped to their backs with thongs,  
Small shields to protect their left sides, curved swords ready  
For the man-to-man close combat they were made for.

Nor would you go unsung in these our songs, 960  
Oebalus, whom the nymph Sebethis bore

To Telon, now an old man, when he was king  
Of Teleboean Capri. His son, they say,  
Was not content with the patrimony he  
Inherited, but ruled far wider, over  
The people of Sarrastria, and the plains  
The river Sarnus waters, and the fields  
Of Rufra, and Celemma, and those orchards  
Rich with apples, as close nearby as Abella  
Looks to the hand of him who throws them. Their hats  
Are made of cork-bark; their bronze shields shine,  
Their bronze swords shine in the sun as they march along.

And Ufens, you, famous warrior, who  
Came from mountainous Nersa, and, marching with you,  
Your grizzled Aequicoli comrade mountaineers,  
Famous too as hunters in those forests,  
And for their war gear as they work to turn  
The hard soil of their fields, ready to take  
Whatever they can take as highway plunder.

Next there came Umbro, a priest from Maruvium,  
Who knows, by spells, by chants, by the magic of touch,  
How to teach the viper and hydras how to abate  
Their anger and fall asleep, and by his soothing  
Arts to heal their bites; but there was nothing  
The knowing in his sleep-inducing chanting,  
Or his gathering of herbs on the Marsian slopes,  
Could do to medicate against the sharp  
Bite of a Trojan spear; therefore, Umbro,  
The groves of Angitia weep, for you the pools  
And the glassy waves of Lake Fucinus weep.

Then after him was Hippolytus' beautiful son,  
Whose name was Virbius, the remarkable youth  
Sent by his mother Aricia; he grew up  
In Egeria's humid groves beside the lake

Where an altar was that was pleasing to Diana.  
The story goes that Phaedra, Hippolytus' wicked  
Stepmother, saw to it that his frightened horses  
Suddenly bolted, his chariot overturned,  
And he was killed. And this was the punishment  
His own father had willed. But Diana, and 1000  
The nymphs of Diana, took pity on him,  
And by the arts of herbs and tender care  
He was brought back to life under the stars  
And the gentle winds of the heavens; but Jupiter  
Was enraged that any mortal being should be  
Brought back from the infernal shadows down there,  
And with his thunderbolt therefore struck down  
Asclepius the Healer, son of Apollo;  
But Diana hid Hippolytus away,  
In Egeria's grove, to live his life unseen, 1010  
And changed his name to Virbius; after that,  
Horn-footed horses were banned from being near  
The temples of Diana in the grove,  
Because on the beach beside the lake they'd been  
Suddenly terrified by the sight of monsters,  
And in their terror violently shied  
And overturned the chariot and he died.  
But now his son in a chariot goes by,  
Driving his fiery horses toward the war.

And then, among the leaders, there is Turnus, 1020  
Taller than the rest, and wearing a helmet  
Triple-plumed, on which a Chimaera was  
Breathing forth fire as if it were from Aetna,  
Hotter and more fierce the hotter the fighting,  
And the hotter and fiercer the fighting the hotter the fire  
Spilled forth; and on the shield the big image of Io,  
Horned already, changed already, into  
A bristle-backed cow, and Argus, guarding her,  
And, pouring the water from an urn, her father,



Inachus. And, behind Turnus, like a great cloud, 1030  
A storm coming on, armies of armed men with  
Their spears and armor, Argives, Auruncans, and,  
From their ancient hills, the Rutuli and the Sicani,  
The Sacrae troops in marching order, and  
The Labicians with their painted shields, the men  
Who plow the fields beside the Tiber and  
Along the sacred river Numicus, or  
Those who plow the high Rutulian hills  
Or near the mountain Circaeus, or those whose fields  
Lie under the protection of the mountain 1040  
Of Jupiter of Anxur, or the groves  
Whose verdure is the goddess Feronia's joy,  
Or the black Saturan swamps, where the cold river  
Ufens makes its way through its lowland valleys,  
And disappears at last into the sea.

And finally there was the marvelous  
Camilla of the Volsci, not of Minerva's  
Distaff and her wool and wicker basket,  
But bellatrix, a virgin warrior, who  
Could outrun the very winds themselves across 1050  
The nodding heads of the crop of this year's grain,  
Leaving them all intact, or skimming over  
The swelling waves of the sea, untouched, free.  
The young men all came out from the fields, and all  
Their mothers came out, astonished, from their houses,  
To see her riding by; they're open-mouthed  
With wonder at how her royal purple scarf  
Flows back from her lovely smooth white shoulders, and  
At how her fair hair flows through its golden clasp,  
And her Lydian quiver of arrows and her myrtle 1060  
Shepherd's staff, tipped with the sharp point of a spear.

# Book Eight

When Turnus raised his banner of war above  
His Laurentine citadel, there was the shock  
Of the raucous noise of the trumpet's sound, the sound  
Of horses snorting and neighing and the sound  
Of rattling arms and armor, and all the people  
Were swearing their allegiance to his cause,  
All the youth of Latium going wild,  
Coming together, aroused and raging for bloodshed.  
The leaders that day were Ufens, and Messapus,  
And Mezentius, the disrespecter of gods; 10  
And the fields were wasted and emptied because the leaders  
Had taken the farmers away from the work they were doing.  
And Venulus was sent to Diomedes,  
At his great city, seeking his aid, and telling  
How the Trojan, Aeneas, has come with all his fleet,  
And bringing his homeless defeated Penates with him,  
Settles himself in Latium, and declares  
That Fate declares that he's a king; and there  
Are many tribes that are joining with him, and  
The name of this Dardanian, this Trojan, 20  
Is being heard more loudly every day,  
Reverberating everywhere in Latium.  
What he is up to, what he is hoping for  
From the warfare underway, if the Fates are with him,  
Greek Diomedes will be able to tell,  
Better than King Latinus, or King Turnus.

That's how it was in Latium. And while all this  
 Was happening, the hero, Laomedon's heir,  
 Was all at sea in his mind about what to do,  
 Thinking about the war and what it is, 30  
 What was the plan, what were the dangers, how  
 Was it to go, thinking about these things  
 Over and over, looking this way and that,  
 As when the light on the trembling surface of water,  
 In a bronze bowl in a room, in the dark, reflecting  
 Perhaps the light of a ray of sunlight, or  
 Maybe a ray of moonlight coming in  
 Through a window of the room, is fleetingly seen  
 To touch and show itself on this or that object,  
 Or else on this or that place on the walls of the room, 40  
 And sometimes high above on the ceiling panels.  
 It was nighttime, and the time when all the creatures,  
 The winged ones and all the beasts, were weary,  
 And ready to go to sleep and rest their bodies,  
 And Aeneas, still disturbed about the war,  
 Laid himself down.

After a little while

He dreamed, and into his troubled dream there came  
 The aged god himself of the beautiful Tiber,  
 Rising up from among the poplar leaves 50  
 That floated upon the water; his garment was  
 Thin-linen-woven, gray; his head was crowned  
 And shaded with a wreath of river reeds;  
 He came to help Aeneas, and his words  
 Brought resolution to perplexity,  
 And quieted his disquiet, dispelling his cares:  
 "Seed of the race of the gods, you have brought back  
 Past enemies, our Troy to the Latin fields,  
 And the Laurentine soil waiting for you.

This is the dwelling place for your Penates— 60  
You must not take your gods away from here;  
Don't be afraid of the menacings of war;  
The wrath of the gods against you is now subsiding,  
And this is not the figment of a dream—  
A giant sow in a grove of ilex trees  
Along the shore has given birth just now  
To thirty offspring of her milk-white body—  
White sow reclining now upon the ground,  
White newborn young being nourished at her teats.  
This is the place where your city is going to be, 70  
The place of rest from all you have undergone.  
Here in this place, after the passing of thirty  
Years in their turning, Ascanius will build  
A city called, in glory, 'Alba,' 'White.'  
This prophecy is not uncertain; you  
Must listen as I tell you in few words  
How you will come, victorious, through all  
This present circumstance. There are a people,  
Who, following the flag of their king, Evander,  
Came from Arcadia, descendants of Pallas, 80  
Who when they chose the place upon the hills  
Where they would dwell, and built their city there,  
They named it Pallanteum in their forebear's honor.  
They and the Latins are locked in incessant war.  
Stretch out your hands to them, make them your allies,  
Bring them into your camp, swear fealty together.  
I'll show you how to go, upriver, to find them,  
Rise up from your bed, O goddess-born, when the stars  
Are setting and the day begins, and say  
Your prayers to Juno, with supplicating vows 90  
To win her favor and appease her wrath.  
I will receive from you, when you are victor,  
Your full payment to me of your vows and tributes.  
I am that river that grazes between the banks  
Of the rich fields, touching them tenderly,

I, cerulean river, most favored by  
The heavens looking down. This is my home,  
High cities witness my majestic flowing.”  
He said these things and plunged into the pool,  
Seeking the deepest reach of the river water.

100

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Night and sleep departed from Aeneas;  
He rose up from his bed and looked to the east,  
Toward the rising sun and its ethereal light,  
And then he went to the river and took water into  
The hollows of the upturned palms of his hands,  
And raised them up, according to the rite,  
In offering to the deities of the place,  
And spoke these fervent words in ecstasy:  
“You nymphs, Laurentine nymphs, who dwell at the sources  
From which the rivers flow, and Father Thybris,  
Thou and thy sacred river, accept Aeneas.  
Protect him from the dangers that will come,  
Wherever you are in the pools, or in the streams,  
Whatever the source you flow from in such beauty,  
Pitying us for our troubles. Our offerings  
Will honor you forever, divine horned god  
Of Hesperian waters. Be with me now, and by  
Your presence show that you give us your assent.”  
Aeneas thus in liturgy spoke these words.

110

And then, making ready, he chose two ships from his fleet,  
Biremes, and chose the most skillful crews, and armed them,  
Preparing them for the journey up the river.

120

Then, suddenly, there was a wonderful portent.  
Upon the green bank of the river, in  
A grove of verdant sheltering trees, there lay  
A white mother sow with her newborn young, all of them  
Of the same white color as she; and father Aeneas,

While his chosen comrades witnessed at the altar,  
Sacrificed them as an offering to you,  
Great Juno, in honor of you. And all that night  
The swelling waters of the river were  
Quieted by Thybris, the current reversed,  
And all was almost as if it were a pond,  
And the way upriver upon the changed current was easy.  
And so the journey, long ago begun,  
Continued as with glad cries together they went,  
And as they went the waters they went upon,  
And the woods along the riverbanks, were full  
Of wonder, seeing the unfamiliar sight  
Of gleaming shields, and men in painted boats,  
As they came around a wooded river bend,  
Cutting across reflections of sky and trees  
In the placid water. The sun had mounted to  
His halfway place in the sky when there, before them,  
The Trojans saw a little scene of walls,  
A scattering of roofs, and a citadel.  
It was a scene that, later, Roman power  
Exalted to the skies; but now it was  
The humble town and kingdom of Evander.  
The Trojans turned their prows to the riverbank.

› › ›

It happened that on that day the Arcadian king  
And all his men and his little senate were  
Carrying out the rite of honor to  
The son of Amphitron; the fragrant smoke  
Was pouring from the altar. But when they all  
Suddenly were aware of high boats coming,  
Seeing them as they came, parting the leaves  
That hung down low from the branches of the trees,  
Quietly being rowed in toward the shore,  
They stood up in alarm, the ritual

Interrupted. But Pallas, unafraid,  
Ordered his people to continue the rites,  
And he himself, alone, took up his spear,  
And went toward them, and from a little distance,  
Standing upon a hillock, spoke to them:  
“Why, warriors, have you come by these unknown ways?  
Where is it you are going? Who are you?  
Do you bring peace or war with you?” From his ship  
Aeneas held out toward him an olive branch,  
And replied, in a peaceable tone of voice, “We are 170  
Of the Trojan people; we come in friendship armed  
Against the Latins, who in their insolence  
Have sought to drive us away from where we were.  
We, chosen leaders of the Dardanians,  
Have come to speak to Evander and to offer  
Alliance with him in the war.” Pallas was  
Astonished by what he said, and by the word  
“Dardanians,” and so he said to him,  
“You must come under our welcoming roof, and speak  
Directly to my father.” He held out his hand 180  
And grasped the hand of Aeneas, and together they  
Proceeded away from the river and into the grove.

• • •

Aeneas spoke to the king respectfully:  
“Most honored of the Greeks, Fortune has willed  
That I should come, entreating, and holding out  
To you these branches swathed in woolen fillets.  
I come not out of fear of you, a leader  
Of Greeks, and an Arcadian, nor because  
You are of the blood of Atrides’ sons, but because  
Of who it is I am, and what I have done, 190  
And because of the holy oracles of the gods,  
And because I share with you, whose fame is known

Throughout the world, an ancestry in common,  
That links me to you. And therefore it is that I  
Come willingly in obedience to the Fates.  
Dardanus, Troy's first father and author, was  
The child of Electra, and she was the child, as the Greeks  
Have told us the story, of mighty Atlas, who holds  
The stars in the heavens above upon his shoulders;  
And you descend from Mercury, who was 200  
Conceived and born of radiant Maia, upon  
The cold summit of Mount Cyllene, and Maia,  
If we believe what we have heard, was daughter  
Of Atlas, the very same Atlas who carries the stars.  
It is thus we share the same blood, thus we are kin.  
This gives me confidence. I am not here  
With artful tricks and stratagems of persuasion.  
I am here before you, myself in my own body,  
I am here as I am and here as what I have done,  
A supplicant now at the threshold of your house. 210  
The Daunians have brought cruel war upon us,  
As they have done to you. They think that, once  
They have driven us away, they will yoke all  
Hesperia, and thus possess the seas  
That wash the shores above, and the shores below.  
Accept our friendship. Our hearts are strong in war;  
We have been tried and tested in the fighting.”

Thus Aeneas spoke, and while he was saying these things,  
The light of the gaze of the other to whom he spoke  
Was studying, for a long time, studying the eyes, 220  
The whole body, of Aeneas, and at last he said,  
“I recognized you at once. I welcome you  
With delight. I remember your father's words, his voice,  
His face, the way he looked. I remember a time  
When Priam, Laomedon's son, had traveled to  
Salamis, to visit his sister, Hesione,



And then went on to cold Arcadia,  
Where I, in the bloom of youth, marveled to see  
These Trojan grandees, and marveled to see the son  
Of Laomedon, but most, to see Anchises 230  
Walking there, tallest of all. I yearned  
In my ardent youthful heart to speak to him  
And shake his hand. I approached him eagerly,  
And soon I was his guide in Pheneus' city;  
And when he left he gave me a beautiful quiver  
With arrows in it, a handsome woolen cape  
Interwoven with gold, and also a pair of golden  
Bridle bits, which my son Pallas has now.  
Here is my hand in fellowship and faith.  
Tomorrow morning when the light returns 240  
Back down to the earth, we'll send you forth, happy,  
Accompanied by an escort of troops, and with  
Stores of materiel to support your mission.  
Meanwhile, since when you came we were performing  
An annual rite we cannot defer, we ask  
The favor of having you join us in the worship,  
And after that to join our family feasting."

Having said this, he commanded that the feast  
Should recommence and that the drinking cups  
Should be brought out again; he saw to it that 250  
The Trojans were seated well upon the grass  
And that the guest of honor, Aeneas, was led  
To a maple throne with a cushion of a lion's  
Shaggy hide. Aeneas and his Trojans  
Dined well upon the sacrificial viands,  
And when the communal feast had been concluded  
And everyone's hunger was satisfied, the king,  
Evander, said: "You must not think that this  
Ritual, this customary feast,  
By which our people pay honor to a god 260  
To whom we owe our gratitude is but

A local superstition that ignores  
The reverence that is due to the ancient gods.

Look at the cliff that overhangs us here,  
With all its pending rubble of huge stones  
Fallen down in chaotic ruin. This once  
Was an enormous cave, with its inner chamber  
Recessing as far far back as could be thought.  
It was the dwelling of the semihuman  
Monster Cacus. He lived there in the dark 270  
Beyond what any rays of the sun could reach;  
The ground back there in the blackness reeked with blood;  
And hanging high upon the doors to the cave  
Were pale deliquescing faces of human beings.  
This monster was the child of Vulcan, and,  
Like son like father, out of his mouth black fire  
Spewed as he moved his giant bulk around.

In time help came. It was a god who came,  
Just as he was returning from his glorious  
Triumph over the triple Geryon monster, 280  
Driving before him huge bulls and the oxen he'd won.  
Cacus was raging out of his wits at what  
Was happening, and trying in his mind  
To think what it might be he could do about it,  
To commit what crime or wicked stratagem  
That never had been done before. And so  
He went to where they were stabled and took away  
Four bulls, outstanding in their beauty, and  
Four heifers that were as beautiful too, and hid them  
In the darkness of his cave. But he did so 290  
By walking each one of them backward by pulling it  
By its tail, so that whatever signs of what  
He had done would seem to be the tracks of cattle  
Going away from and not going toward  
The entrance to the cave. But when Alcides was

Driving his cattle forth to go on their way,  
Their bellowing and their mooing filled all the grove  
And echoed back from the hills. But from the cave  
There came a plaintive lowing, replying from  
Deep in the cavernous dark. And so the monster 300  
Cacus's cattle-rustling plan was spoiled.  
When Hercules heard the heifers' plaintive call  
He was enraged. He took up all of his weapons  
And his heavy knotted oaken club, and raced,  
On fire with fury, up to the top of the mountain.  
This was the first time that our people ever  
Saw fear in the eyes of Cacus, who fled, as fast  
As he could go, fast as the wind, fright putting  
Wings on his flying feet, to hide in his cave,  
And once he got there, in a rush he broke 310  
The iron chains by which an enormous rock  
Had been suspended by his father's art,  
And the rock came down behind the mighty doorposts  
And blocked with its size and weight all entrance in.  
Then Hercules arrived, huge in his anger,  
Looking everywhere for how to get inside.  
Three times he walked in fury around and around  
And around and over the Aventine, in rage.  
Three times he tried to break into the cave,  
To force his way by forcing the giant rock 320  
That blocked the entrance to the cave to move  
Enough to let him get himself by, and he failed.  
Three times he sat, exhausted, defeated by what  
He was trying to do and what he was failing to do.  
But there was a leaning spar of flint-rock rising  
Up from the cavern roof, rising up higher  
Than all the rest, a place suitable for  
The foul nests of the carrion birds of the place.  
It leaned over toward the river, and Hercules  
Took hold of it, and with his might he wrenched it, 330  
And bent it back, and suddenly its roots

Tore up, and the river in shock sprang back, and the sky  
Thundered and Cacus's kingdom and all his realm  
Down there below were suddenly revealed.

It was as if the whole of the Down Below,  
All of the things that were hateful to the gods,  
And its pale ghosts, the terrified Manes, were  
Exposed to the scaring light. And there was Cacus  
Bellowing in the unexpected sunlight.

Then Hercules from above bombarded him  
With everything there was to bombard him with,  
Great limbs of trees, and stones as big as mill wheels,  
And everything; and Cacus, caught in the sunshine,  
Walls on every side of him, without any  
Way to get out, knowing that this was final,  
Bellowed as he had never bellowed before,  
Wonder to say it, vomiting forth a great  
Darkness laced with fire, and Hercules,

340

Nothing stopping him leaped down into the darkness  
And through the flames, and seized the monster by  
His hairy throat, throttling him until

350

His eyeballs came out of their sockets and his throat  
Was drained of all of its blood. Then Hercules  
Quickly freed his cattle imprisoned there,  
And dragged the hideous semihuman body  
Out into the light, and there was no one who  
Could leave off gazing at the terrible  
Empty sockets of the creature's eyes,  
And the fur that grew so thick on his beastly chest,  
And at the scorched-out drained-out throat of this thing  
That lay there dead at last."

360

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And after that  
There was a rite of gratitude led by  
The priest Potitius, he who was the first

To initiate the Herculean rites,  
And by the Pinarii, custodians  
Of the altar called by us, and which will be  
Forever called, the Ara Maxima,  
“For Hercules the Mightiest is the hero.  
He is our god.” And then Evander said, 370  
“Warriors, hold out your cups in your right hands.”  
His hair was garlanded with the green and silver  
Poplar leaves, colors of Hercules,  
And in his hand he held the sacred goblet.  
The others poured out libations at the altar  
And offered their prayers to him who is their god.  
As evening and its star were coming nearer,  
The priests, led by Potitius, appeared before them,  
Carrying torches and dressed, as was the custom,  
In animal skins, bringing offerings of 380  
A second feast; gifts were heaped upon  
The altar as the Salii, wearing branches  
Of poplar upon their heads, and singing as—  
A choir of youth, another of old men—  
They moved in dance around the fire-lit altar.  
Their songs were songs of praise of Hercules  
And of his deeds; of how he strangled those  
Two monstrous serpents his stepmother set upon him;  
And how he brought two cities down to ruin,  
Troy and Oechalia, both of them famous in war; 390  
Of how he carried out those hundred labors  
He was fated to be put upon at the cruel  
Behest of the goddess Juno by King Eurystheus,  
“Unconquered, you were the one who slew Hylaeus  
And Pholus, the cloud-born half-men Centaurs, and  
You killed the prodigious monster-bull in Crete,  
And the lions under that cliff in the Nemean desert;  
The trembling Stygian lake was terrified  
Of you, the guardian dog of Orcus, too,  
Lying there in his cave, with his bloody half-eaten 400

Bones scattered around him; whatever Shapes, however  
Terrible, confronting you, you did not lose  
Your courage, not even when it was Typhoeus,  
Tall as the world itself, towering above you  
With all his weapons; you did not waver when  
The many venom-fuming snakeheads of  
The Lernaean Hydra were hissing around you, hail!  
Truly the son of Jove, worthy addition  
In glory to the gods, come to us now,  
Be present at our rites.” Thus ended their song  
With, finally, and above all, what he had done  
To the fire-breathing monster there in the cave.  
The woods and hills were echoing with their song.

410

› › ›

Then, when the altar rites had completed themselves,  
Aeneas, Evander, and Pallas, Evander’s son,  
Walked together back in the little town,  
And walking slowly because of Evander’s age.  
Aeneas was captivated by the charm  
Of what he saw of the town, and by Evander’s  
Narration of how things were, in the olden times—  
Evander who founded the citadel of Rome.  
“These woods were first inhabited by nymphs  
And fauns and by a people who were born  
Of the trunks of oak trees, people who had no culture,  
No habits or methods of work, who didn’t know how  
To yoke their oxen, or how to plant crops, or how  
To save anything they had against the future.  
They lived by what happened to fall down from the trees  
Or what they happened to kill when they were hunting;  
Hunter-gatherers merely. Then Saturn came  
From Olympia, in flight from Jupiter.  
Saturn gave laws and established customs for these  
Undisciplined peoples dispersed among the high hills,

420

430



Believe it is Jupiter himself, and think  
That they have sometimes seen him with his right  
Hand shaking his aegis and bringing on dark clouds. 470  
Moreover you can see the remains of two  
Old towns, the relics of the earlier people,  
The towns Father Janus built, and Saturn built,  
Saturnia and what was the Janiculum.”  
Conversing in this way they made their way  
Down toward Evander’s humble dwelling, and  
On their way they saw the browsing cattle  
In the fields that would one day be the Roman Forum  
And the fashionable Carinae, and heard their mooing; 480  
And when they came to his house, Evander said,  
“When Alcides in triumph came to this place he stooped  
To go in through this doorway. He knew this house  
Was a palace. You are my guest, Aeneas. You must be  
Scornful of wealth; you must be worthy of  
The example the god has set. Enter my house  
And do not look down upon what we have to offer.”  
He spoke, and huge Aeneas went in under  
The narrow sloping roof-tree of the house,  
And lay down on a bed of leaves and under 490  
The cover of a Libyan she-bear’s pelt.  
And after that the night came on, enfolding  
All of the earth in the dark embrace of her wings.

› › ›

But Venus was, as a mother, disturbed by what  
Was going on in Laurentium, the menacing tumult.  
She went to find her husband and met him in  
Her golden matrimonial bedroom, and  
She poured these words into his listening ear  
In amorous tones: “When the Pergamum of Troy  
Was being devastated by the gods, 500  
And the fated towers were falling, I never asked



For any help from you, I never asked  
Anything of your art to come to my aid,  
No matter what I owed to the sons of Priam  
Or the tears I wept for Aeneas, my son, in distress.  
I did not, dearest husband, wish to ask for  
Labor of you that would have been labor in vain.  
But now my son is here on Rutulian soil,  
By Jove's command, and I, a suppliant,  
Am asking you, the god I adore, to make  
Arms for my son to keep him safe in battle.  
Nereus' mother's tears could persuade you to this,  
And the weeping of Tithonus's wife could do so.  
How many nations now are gathered against me  
And sharpening their swords against my people."

510

Having said this, she embraced her husband and took him  
Into her snow-white arms and fondled him,  
And fondled him again. All of a sudden,  
Vulcan began to feel a familiar feeling,  
The heat of the desire coursing everywhere  
Throughout his trembling body and into the very  
Marrow of his bones. It's as when a clap  
Of thunder speaks and suddenly a streak  
Of lightning runs through the clouds. Venus was pleased.  
She knew what it was that was happening to him;  
She was fully aware of her game and of her beauty,  
When Vulcan said, "Where has your faith in me gone to?  
Why do you think you need to ask, my queen?  
Had you but wanted this so urgently,  
Back then, neither the Fates nor Jupiter  
Would have denied to Priam ten years more.  
If war is what you are getting ready for,  
I will do everything I can to help you,  
Whatever it be, arousing fire and breath  
To melt the iron and shape what is desired,"  
And saying this, in their embrace, desire

520

530

Sought and found, in the lap of his wife, completion,  
And after that the peacefulness of sleep.

› › ›

It's as it is when the woman of the household  
Gets up early, before the night is over, 540  
To take up her daily tasks of keeping life going,  
By doing the things she was required to do,  
The work of Minerva, stirring the ashes and  
The sleeping flames of last night's fire, assigning  
Their tasks to her maidens, keeping the maidens busy  
In order to maintain the chastity  
Of the marriage bed; just so with the God of Fire  
Who, night having passed its halfway mark, and the deep  
Sleep of satisfaction over, got up,  
And went about his labor at the forge. 550

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There is a cavernous island in the sea  
That rides between the coast of Sicily and  
Aeolian Lipari. Smoke rises up  
From its rocks, and you can hear, from deep within it,  
Sounds like the sounds that can be heard in the thundering  
Caves deep within Aetna, the hammering blows on the groaning  
Anvils, the hissing of Chalybian iron.  
This is the home of Vulcan and it is called  
Volcania, the place the God of Fire  
Came down to when he came down from up on high. 560  
In the caves down in the depths within the island  
There were the naked Cyclopes, Steropes and  
Brontes and Pyracmon, working the iron, making  
A thunderbolt that would be one of the many  
Thunderbolts that the omnipotent Father  
Hurls down onto the earth from the sky above.

It was only shaped and polished, as yet, and they  
Were adding a twisting pouring down of hail,  
Three storm clouds big with flooding water, three  
Fires pursuing on the East Wind's wings  
And, mingling into all of these, the flashing  
Of lightning, fear, and terrifying noises.  
And in another range of the caverns they  
Were eagerly working together fashioning  
A chariot with its wingèd wheels for Mars,  
With which he'd ride to rouse up cities and  
Their populations of men for bloody war.  
And somewhere else they were polishing the gold  
Scales of the writhing serpents imaged on  
The dreadful shield of Minerva, with its Gorgon,  
Its bodiless transfixing head, its rolling eyes.  
"Suspend what you are doing!" Vulcan cries,  
"Put all these things aside, and put your minds  
To work on this: Make armor for a hero;  
Use all your strength and all your mastery  
For this, and use your hands to do it swiftly.  
Do not delay." And they, at once, together,  
Obeying his command, began the labor.  
Rivers of bronze and gold flowed in the vast  
Furnace as they shaped the wounding steel,  
And shaped an enormous shield, circle on circle,  
Sevenfold circles made, to confront the Latin  
Weapons, one against all the other ones.

570

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While Vulcan was doing his work on his Lemnian island,  
Evander arose and came out of his humble dwelling  
Into the light of the gentle early morning.  
Under the eaves of his house the birds were singing.  
He was wearing a simple tunic, and on his feet

Tyrrhenian sandals; a simple Tegean sword  
Hung by his side; a panther's hide, slung from 600  
One shoulder, and gathered at the other hip.  
Two dogs preceded him as he walked toward the guesthouse  
Where Aeneas was, and thinking of him and of  
The promises he had made the evening before.  
Aeneas, who had gotten up as early  
As Evander had, was walking with Achates;  
Evander's son Pallas was walking with his father.  
They met in a space between the buildings, shook hands,  
And sat down together in the open air,  
And spoke to each other freely. The king spoke first: 610  
"We will never concede that Troy has fallen, as long  
As the great leader of Teucrians is safe.  
The aid we can offer is little compared to our fame.  
The Tuscan river confines us here on one side;  
On the other side the Rutulians press against us;  
Our walls echo back the clangor of their arms.  
But now this unhoped-for opportunity  
Has shown itself to us, I am prepared  
To bring a powerful ally in with us,  
And the camps of their twelve kingdoms. It is the Fates 620  
That have brought you here. Not far away from here  
Is where there was a town, Agylla, on  
The Tuscan heights. It was the city of  
The Lydians, and for many years it prospered  
Until it came to be ruled by a tyrant king,  
Mezentius, whose crimes and cruelties were  
Unspeaking. May the gods bring down those same  
On him and all his ilk. It was his way,  
To tie dead men to living men, together,  
Hand to hand and face to face, and let 630  
The living slowly die in the stench and slime  
Of the decomposing bodies they embrace.  
But then his people had had too much of it.

They armed themselves against him and attacked  
His house and slaughtered his guards and set the roof  
Of the house on fire. But Mezentius  
Escaped from all this welter and fled to where  
The Rutulians were, and there King Turnus took him  
Into his household and shielded him from his people.  
The furious Etruscans wanted him back  
To make him pay for all his horrific crimes,  
And rising up in rage they had become  
A host desiring revenge in bloody war.  
But the oracles spoke to them saying, ‘Maeonian people,  
Mezentius deserves the punishment  
You ask him to have. But the Fates ordain that your leader  
Must come from elsewhere. Etrurians should not  
Be under the command of an Italian.’  
And so their army waits for a leader to come,  
As prophesied in the words of the oracles.  
The army is in the field; their biremes’ prows  
Are drawn up on the shore, ready, but waiting.  
Tarchon, their king, has sent me the scepter and aegis  
Of kingship, but I am old, my feet uncertain,  
My blood too cold for battle. I would have sent  
My son, our hope, our Pallas, but he, the child  
Of Sabella, is half Italian blood. Aeneas,  
It is you who must be our leader, our commander.  
And you must take our Pallas with you, our hope  
And our solace, so that while he is still so young  
He will learn by your example the ways of war,  
Admiring the work of Mars as he observes you  
Going about this work before his eyes.  
And here I give two hundred chosen horsemen,  
The flower of our youth; and Pallas too,  
In his own right, brings the same number with him.”

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And while Evander was telling them these things,  
Aeneas Anchisiades and loyal Achates,  
Their eyes downcast, were troubled in their hearts  
Because of all that they had undergone, 670  
When suddenly there was a sign in the sky,  
Sent there by Venus. A flash of lightning, Tyrrhenian  
Thunder everywhere heard across the heavens.  
Again and again they looked up at the sky;  
Again and again the thunder sounded, and  
In the clear space between two parting clouds  
There was armor shining golden red, and also  
There were the thundering sounds of clashing weapons.  
Troy's hero Aeneas knew what it was, and he  
Said to the others, "Do not be surprised 680  
At what this is, I know these are the signs  
Of my mother fulfilling her promise to me that when  
There is the coming of war she would send down  
Arms for me from on high, and this she has done.  
Now by slaughter the Laurentians will know  
What suffering is. Now Turnus will be paid  
For what he has done by what I will do to him.  
How many shields and helmets and brave men's bodies  
Will tumble in the Tiber's rolling waters?  
Now let them break their treaties. Let there be war." 690

Thus Aeneas spoke, and then he rose  
From his high seat and went to the altar and stirred  
The slumbering fires within the ashes of  
The rites devoted last night to their humble gods,  
The Lares and Penates of the household;  
And Evander and the Trojans worshiped together,  
With the sacrifice, according to the custom,  
Of the chosen sheep. And then Aeneas went  
Back to his ships, and from his warriors chose  
The most valorous to follow him to war; 700

The others he sent to sail peacefully down  
The gentle waters of the stream to carry  
The news from his father to Ascanius  
Of what had taken place.

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Steeds were brought forth  
For the Trojans going to Etruria;  
For Aeneas himself a specially chosen horse  
Whose caparison was the tawny pelt of a lion  
With its dangling ferocious gleaming lion claws.  
Suddenly Rumor was flying through the little 710  
Town, spreading the news that there were troops  
Of horsemen riding away toward the border of  
The territory of the Tyrrhenian king.  
Mothers saying prayers for their sons redoubled  
Their prayers in fear as the prospect of war came closer;  
The image of Mars the god of war grew larger  
And larger and larger as their fear increased,  
And Evander coming forth took hold of the hand  
Of his departing son, and weeping said,  
“If only Jupiter would give me back 720  
The years when under the walls of Praeneste I,  
Victorious, piled up their shields and burned them  
And with my right hand sent to Tartarus  
King Erulus whose goddess mother had,  
When he was born (awful to talk about),  
Given the baby three lives to live, and with them,  
When he was grown, three sets of armor to  
Protect those lives, and I, that day, stripped him  
Naked three times of his armor, and took away  
All three of his lives, I’d never be torn from this 730  
Embrace of father and son, this sweet embrace;  
Mezentius would never have been able

To slay so many with his derisive sword;  
Nor would so many cities have been so cruelly  
Widowed. Almighty Jupiter, have pity,  
This is the prayer of the Arcadian king:  
If it is the will of the Fates to keep Pallas safe,  
And he will return to me, I pray for this,  
And I will suffer hardship patiently;  
But, Fortune, if you threaten me with some  
Unspeakable event, then break off the life  
In me now, while the signs of what is to come are still  
Ambiguous, and while I still embrace  
My son, my only joy, in this my age.  
If what it is is dire, I do not wish  
To know it.” This is what Evander his father  
Said at the moment of their final parting,  
And then his retainers bore him, weeping, away  
From there to his humble dwelling.

740

› › ›

The gates of the town

750

Were open and the horsemen went riding out,  
Father Aeneas and faithful Achates among  
The first, and all the Trojan captains with them,  
And in the midst, there was young Pallas himself,  
Elegant in his war cloak and painted armor,  
Looking like Lucifer, the Morning Star,  
Venus’s favorite of the stars in the sky,  
Whose light dispels the darkness as it rises  
Up from the nighttime waters of the Ocean.  
The eyes of the trembling anxious mothers watched  
The departing horseback riders in the far-off  
Cloud of dust around them where there was only,  
Once in a while, a fleeting gleam of bronze;  
You could hear the shouts as the army column forms,

760



And upon the crumbling turf of the thorn-bush plain  
The sounds of the four-footed galloping as they go.

› › ›

On the banks of the cold river Caere there's a great  
Dark grove of trees with silver bark, that was sacred  
To folk both far and near in ancient days;  
The hills behind it embrace it, and, it is said, 770  
The Pelasgians, who were the original people  
To settle there in Latium, consecrated  
The grove to the sylvan god Silvanus, who  
Was god of the fields and of the browsing flocks.  
A little way away from here was the camp  
Of Tarchon and his Tyrrhenians; they could  
Be seen from the tops of the hills around, stretched out  
Across the wide expanse of valley fields;  
Father Aeneas and the soldiers he  
Had chosen for the war came down into 780  
The camp to rest their horses and themselves.

› › ›

Then there was beautiful Venus, high up in the clouds,  
Revealed by their parting, and bearing in her arms  
The gift she was bringing; and, looking down, she saw  
Aeneas, all alone in a valley, secluded,  
Away from all the others, and suddenly she  
Appeared before her son and spoke to him thus:  
“Here is the gift that was promised, the promise kept,  
Made by the skill and art of my husband the god.  
With these you need not fear the scornful Laurentians, 790  
Nor hesitate to challenge fierce Turnus's sword.”  
She spoke, and embraced her son, and placed the shining  
Armor at the foot of a great oak tree.

Aeneas was overjoyed by the honor of  
His mother's gift and by what it was he saw.  
He could not take his eyes off all these things,  
Taking each in his hands and in his arms,  
Turning them over and over, gazing at each  
In wonder—the terrifying helmet with  
Its plumes pouring forth flames; the sword blade that 800  
Brings death; the blood-red huge bronze breastplate, as  
From a dark-blue cloud the rays from the setting sun  
Blaze forth; the polished gold-and-electrum greaves,  
The spear, and then, before his eyes, the shield,  
Beyond description, whereon the Ruler of Fire  
Who knew the truth of all the prophecies  
Of what was going to come to pass in the future,  
Told on the shield the story of what would be  
The story of Rome and the Roman triumphs, and who  
Would be the sons, Ascanius' progeny, 810  
And their wars.

He told how the mother wolf  
Would peaceably lie on the floor of Mars' green cavern,  
While the little twin boys played fearlessly around her,  
Or suckled at her udders, each taking his turn  
While she looked back at him, her gentle tongue  
Caressing and shaping his body.

Near this on the shield,  
The story of the rape of the Sabine women,  
How, at the Great Games at the crowded Circus, they 820  
Were violently seized and carried away  
By the Romans to be their women, and suddenly  
There was new war between old Tatius' Sabines  
And Romulus's people. After a time  
The warring kings agreed to end the war,  
And they stood before the altar of Jupiter,

Still wearing their arms, and offering him libations  
Pledged to observe the newly recovered peace,  
And sacrificed a sow to seal the pledge.

Then there was Mettus, who should have kept his promise,  
And when he didn't keep it, Tullus Hostilius  
Ordered him tied to four-horse chariots,  
Two chariots, one on each side, and sent them off  
In opposite directions. They tore him in two,  
And Tullus Hostilius carried away with him  
The two halves of Mettus's severed carcass, and,  
As the halves of him went through the woods, dewdrops  
Of blood were scattered upon the leaves.

830

Near this,

Porsenna, he who had sworn to force the Romans  
To take Tarquinius the tyrant back,  
Whom they had overthrown, is shown, with a mighty  
Force attacking the city, and the Romans  
Are shown, Aeneas' descendants, rushing upon  
The enemy swords in the fight for liberty.  
You could see Porsenna, blustering, raging, as  
He stands there futilely watching Horatius Cocles  
Destroying the bridge, and Cloelia, as she,  
Free of her chains, is swimming across the river.

840

And topmost on the shield there's Manlius,  
Standing before the temple on the Tarpeian  
Rock to guard the Capitoline. There's Romulus'  
Palace with its rough-thatch roof, and its golden  
Portico through which the silver goose  
Is fluttering and calling out in its honking  
Voice telling the Romans that the Gauls are coming;  
And down below in the dark, which is the gift  
Of the ending of the twilight, there are the Gauls,  
Climbing up through the underbrush, in their golden

850

Clothes, striped cloaks, and with their golden hair,  
And their milk-white necks adorned with golden chains.  
In one hand each of them holds two Alpine spears,  
And in the other each of them holds a long  
Shield to protect the whole length of his body.

860

There Vulcan also showed in sacred procession  
The naked Luperci and the leaping dancing  
Priests, the Salii, with their conical hats,  
And the ancile shields that fell from heaven, and  
The honored chaste matrons riding in their covered  
Two-wheel chariots to lead the processions.

870

Next, but not near this on the shield, there were  
Images of the high doors of Dis, and of  
The terrible punishment the guilty suffer  
For what they did to deserve it; and, Catiline,  
There's you, hanging from the fearsome cliff  
And trembling before the faces of the Furies;  
And then, apart from this, there's Cato, imparting  
The principles of righteousness to the pious.

Between these representations winds an image  
Of the sea, depicted in gold, but the foaming waves  
Pure white above the blue of the ocean water,  
And in the sea are silver dolphins playing,  
Cutting the waves, beaks first, and coming back up  
To feather with their tails the foaming crests.

880

Then, in the middle, there was Actium,  
And all the frenzy under Leucates Headland.  
The waves shone golden in the famous scene.  
On the one side, in the center, Caesar Augustus  
Standing tall, on the high deck of his ship,  
Directing the battle action being waged,  
And the senate and the people of the republic,

890

And the Lares and Penates, and the great  
Favoring gods, and from the helmet on Caesar's  
Joyful head two joyful flames stream forth,  
And his father's star shines in the sky above him.  
On the other side is depicted, leading his fleet  
Of warships under the sponsorship of the gods  
And the sponsoring winds, Agrippa, upon his head  
The beakèd crown of naval victory.

On the other side, too, is depicted Antony, 900  
Triumphant as he was upon the Red  
Sea shores and over the People of the Dawn,  
And Egypt and all the Orient forces coming  
With him from as far as Bactria, and  
Followed (monstrous) by his Egyptian wife.  
All together they come, in all their varied  
Armor, the spume and foam convulsive from  
Their oars and around their three-beaked plunging prows.  
They're heading for open seas; you'd think you were seeing  
The Cyclades uprooted from their roots 910  
And floating loose upon the churning waters,  
Or mountain and mountain collapsing into each other  
Before your eyes, all those men hurling down  
Flaming torches of tow, and iron missiles,  
And the fields of Neptune turning red with blood.

In the midst of this you see the Egyptian queen  
Not knowing yet about the asps in the future,  
Rattling her inciting brazen rattle,  
Calling all kinds and sorts of her sundry gods,  
And the barking dog-headed god Anubis, to wield 920  
Their weapons against Minerva, Venus, Neptune;  
And there was Mars engraved in iron in  
The middle of all of this, and the grim-faced Fates  
Coming down upon the scene from the skies above,  
And exulting Discord, with her torn cloak flapping,

Walking along, and following her, the Goddess of War,  
Bellona, brandishing her bloody whip;  
And when they saw Apollo drawing his bow  
And targeting them they fled, all of them fled,  
The Arabs, Indians, Shebans, the Egyptians; 930  
The Egyptian queen herself is depicted there,  
Pale with the pallor of death in her future; she's  
Loosening by herself the lines of her ship  
And calling on the winds to come and help her;  
And in all the scene of slaughter the god of fire  
Depicts her with the winds and waves of panic,  
Fleeing toward the sorrowing Nile, who opens  
Wide the foldings of his blue-green cloak,  
To bring his vanquished people home within  
His manifold secret waters where to hide them. 940

But Caesar is depicted as he brings  
His triple triumph home to the walls of Rome,  
Establishing three hundred shrines as he  
Had vowed in homage to the immortal gods;  
Three hundred shrines, in each of them a chorus  
Of matrons singing, three hundred altars, and  
The ground is strewn with the bodies of the steers,  
The sacrificial offerings to the gods;  
At the threshold of the beautiful white temple  
Of Phoebus Apollo sits Caesar himself, receiving 950  
The gifts of the people, and these are being displayed  
Over the doors within; there's the depiction  
Of the long parading lines of conquered nations,  
In their various dress and in their various armor,  
Speaking their various languages. Mulciber  
Is shown there and the Nomads and, in their  
Long robes, the Africans; the Geloni with  
Their bows and arrows; the Carians, the Leleges;  
And the river Euphrates now flowing more mildly, subdued;  
The faraway Morini, and the Danae, 960

Wild, untamed; the two horns of the Rhine; the angry  
River Araxes and the bridge that yokes it.

› › ›

These were the scenes on the shield which Vulcan made,  
His mother's gift for Aeneas to wonder at,  
Admiringly. Although he did not know  
The meaning of what he saw, he took upon  
His shoulders the fame and fate of his descendants.

# Book Nine

As this was going on, elsewhere, Saturnian  
Juno sent Iris down from the sky to seek  
Brave Turnus where he was, by chance, in the grove  
That was sacred to his forefather, the god Pilumnus;  
To him from her rosy lips Thaumias's daughter  
Spoke and said, "Turnus, what none of the gods above  
Would have dared to promise that they would do for you,  
In answer to your prayers, time in its turning  
Has caused to happen, all on its own accord.  
Aeneas has left his city, his comrades, his fleet, 10  
And gone to the Palatine town of Evander, its king,  
And more than that, he has gone as far away  
As Corythus and to the Lydians, to  
Raise up if he can, from the fields, armed bands of farmers.  
What are you waiting for? Call up your horsemen,  
Your chariots, surprise their camp, and seize it!"  
Having said this, she flew away and vanished  
Through the great rainbow colors beneath the clouds.  
Turnus saw who she was, and cried: "Whose voice,  
O you who make the sky so beautiful, 20  
Has sent you down through the clouds, through the air, to speak  
To me thus? How is it that the stormy sky  
Is suddenly now so clear? The clouds have parted;  
I see the stars as they wander in the heavens,  
And I will follow all these signs, obeying  
Whoever's voice it is that calls me to arms."



When he had said these words he went to the river,  
And, stooping down, took water into his hands,  
And standing, raised them up, the upturned palms  
Toward heaven, and offered prayers to many gods,  
And burdened the skies with his ecstatic vows.

30

› › ›

And now it was that the army moved into the open,  
A splendid sight, the horses, and their riders  
In their painted armor, and all the gleaming  
Bronze of weapons shining. Messapus led  
The vanguard as they rode; the sons of Tyrrheus  
Were the rearguard, and in the middle, Turnus rode,  
Commander of the force. It is as it is  
When the seven rivers come together to be  
The Ganges, in a great surging flowing forward,  
Or when the Nile withdraws its waters from  
The rich fields it had been flooding and becomes  
One concentrated forward river purpose.

40

The Teucrians became aware of a black  
Dust cloud out there, on the horizon, and  
That a darkness was gathering on the plain far off.  
Caicus, on the rampart, looking out,  
Was the first to see what was coming, and he cried,  
“What is that great thing rolling toward us, wrapped  
In darkness? Get up on the walls! Grab your weapons! Ho!  
The enemy is coming! Beware!” The Teucrians,  
Making a great noise, rushed in, all of them, through  
The gates of their camp, and got themselves up on the walls,  
Obedient to the commands of Aeneas, the greatest  
Of warriors, who’d told them not to engage in fighting  
Man-to-man with their swords, nor trust themselves  
To the open fields outside the walls of their camp.  
Though half ashamed that they couldn’t do what their fury

50

Urged them to do, nevertheless they did  
What Aeneas told them to do, and manned the ramparts 60  
And waited within their walls for the foe to come.

Turnus, wearing his red-and-gold plumed helmet,  
And riding a Thracian piebald steed, flew forward  
Ahead of the slower moving troops, with twenty  
Young warriors of his choice, and suddenly,  
There in front of the Trojan camp, cried out  
To his young comrades, “Who’s with me now to be  
The first of us to get into the fight?”  
And saying this he whirled a javelin  
High into the air, the sign of the battle beginning. 70  
Shaking, excited, the youths responded with  
A great horrific blood-hungry cry, and followed.

But soon to their surprise they’re left to wonder  
At the Teucrians’ timidity, who won’t  
Commit themselves to the level battlefield,  
And who are men but men who will not fight  
Sword against sword, but huddle down for safety  
Inside their walls. Around and around the walls,  
And back and forth he rides; he’s looking for  
A way to get himself in, not finding any. 80  
He’s like a growling wolf outside a sheepfold,  
Looking for any way, while the wind blows,  
And the rain falls; and in the fold and under  
Their sheltering mother the little lambs are bleating,  
Safe and sound. Left out in the night, the wolf’s  
Tormented by his hunger that has been  
So long unsatisfied, and the back of his throat  
Longs for the taste of blood so long not there.  
How to get in to shake the Teucrians down  
From where they are, and onto the battlefield? 90  
But hah! The fleet is there, behind protecting  
Mounds and beside the flowing river. Turnus

Calls on his cheering men for brands of fire  
To set the fleet ablaze, and leads the attack,  
With a branch of flaming pitch-pine in his hand.

› › ›

Tell me, Muse, what god was it that turned  
The fire away from the ships? Who was it who  
Had power to thrust away such flames from them?  
The story is old but its truth is guaranteed.  
Back when Aeneas on Phrygian Ida sought 100  
The means to build a fleet fit for the high  
Seas they were embarking upon, the Mother,  
The Berecynthian Goddess, came to mighty  
Jove who was her son and said, “My son,  
Now that you rule Olympus, grant your dear mother  
What it is that she asks of you. There was a grove  
Of maple and of pine with their dark branches,  
A sacred place, to which my votaries  
Brought offerings. When the Dardanian warrior  
Needed a fleet, I gladly gave him the wood 110  
To build it, and now I’m anxious and afraid,  
And I pray that these ships be ever kept free from harm  
By the pounding seas, or by any other harms.  
The ships are born from our woods.” He who controls  
The stars and how they move, replied to his mother:  
“What is it that you call upon the Fates for?  
The keel that’s made by mortal hands can never  
Be made immortal, nor can Aeneas ever  
Steer his way with certainty on his  
Uncertain course. Not one of the gods has ever 120  
Been granted this. Oh why should Aeneas be?  
However, when they have reached the Ausonian shore,  
And when the Dardanian leader has finally come  
To Laurentian fields, I will command that those ships  
Which have survived be changed from their mortal forms

To goddesses as Nereid Doto is,  
And Galatea, breasting their playful way  
Through the foaming waves.” He spoke and swore assent  
By the black pitchy waters that swirl and seethe between  
The river banks of his brother’s Stygian river,  
And at his nod, in response, Olympus trembled.

130

The day came when the promise was fulfilled;  
When the primal Mother was warned by Turnus’ attack  
That it was time to save the ships from fire,  
The Fates did what he’d said that they would do.

So in the East an uncanny kind of light  
Appeared and across the sky there came a cloud  
And in the cloud were votaries of the Mother,  
And there was a terrible voice come down from the sky:

“Trojans, you need not fearfully defend  
Your ships; you need not take up your weapons; the sea  
Will burn to a crisp before Turnus’s fire  
Will bring its harm to any one of these;  
Go free, you ships, you goddesses of the sea.

140

The Mother commands it.” At once the ships break free  
Of the ropes that held them fastened to the shore.  
And dip their prows, which are like the beaks of dolphins,  
And dolphin-like they dive into the deep  
And soon, like dolphins, miraculous, come back,  
And as goddesses swim away to the open sea.

150

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The Rutulians were astonished, Messapus himself  
Was terrified, his terrified horse was rearing,  
And the Tiber’s downward flow was shocked, was stopped,  
And reversed itself with a loud raucous noise.  
But Turnus was unflinchingly himself.  
With confident severity he spoke  
To his people and said, inciting them: “These portents

Are signs that Jupiter is cutting off  
The support he gave the Trojans. No need for them  
To await what Rutulian force or weapons would do 160  
To do the work of ruin; they have no way  
To flee from us, they have no place to flee to,  
Their option is taken away, and the land is ours,  
We hold it in our hands, and gathering  
Against them there are thousands of armed allies  
Coming to join us from all Italy.  
Nor am I frightened by what these Phrygians boast of,  
The responses by the Fates or by the Gods.  
What Venus promised and gave was over and done with  
Once the Trojans were allowed to get 170  
To the fertile soil of our Ausonia.  
And I myself have my own fate in mind:  
To slaughter with my sword this wicked race  
Who ravished her away I was betrothed to.  
The Atrides were not the only ones such outrage  
Touched nor were the Myceneans the only  
Ones with such a cause to take up arms  
And go to war. But they have paid for it once.  
That's not enough? It would have been enough  
If they, back then, had thenceforth stayed away 180  
From women and from such outrage once and for all,  
These men so confident behind these walls,  
These walls that are so thin a barrier  
Between themselves and death. Don't they remember,  
It was the hand of Neptune that made the walls  
That later sank in flames? My chosen men,  
Whose sword is ready now to cut its way  
Into this terrified camp? I have no need  
Of armor Vulcan made, nor do I need  
To launch a thousand ships to get at these Trojans, 190  
Nor do they need to be afraid that we  
Will come in furtively to kill their guards  
The easy way and take their Palladium,

Or hide ourselves in the dark of a horse's belly.  
Nor will they be able to say that they are dealing  
With enemies like the Pelasgians or the Danae,  
Held off by Hector for ten long years of siege.

But now the day is coming to its end,  
And so, my men, well done; we must rest our bodies,  
Preparing ourselves for the fight we'll have tomorrow." 200  
Messapus was assigned the task of blocking  
The gates of the stronghold and encircling the walls  
With watch fires; fourteen Rutulian captains, each  
Commanding one hundred soldiers, all of them wearing  
Glittering bronze purple-crested helmets, were  
Assigned to patrol the walls of the Trojan ramparts.  
And as the evening comes in, the soldiers disperse,  
Some to the duties assigned, the others resting,  
Lying around on the grass, drinking their wine,  
Tipping their upturned bronzen flagons back; 210  
The fires burn bright; the soldiers on watch are keeping  
Themselves awake in the night by playing dice games.

› › ›

Meanwhile the Trojan soldiers from their high walls  
Looked down at all of this, and, inside, they  
Were busy behind the walls securing the inter-  
Connecting gangways of the fortress, and  
Bringing up weapons and missiles, getting ready;  
Each man with the task he'd been assigned to do,  
Preparing for the danger that was to come.  
Nisus, son of Hyrtacus, bravest of warriors, 220  
Consummately skillful with javelin and bow,  
Whom Ida the Huntress had sent, because of this,  
To be in the comity of Aeneas's men,  
Was on this night on guard watch at the gate.  
Beside him was Euryalus, a youth

More beautiful in his Trojan armor than  
Any of the Aeneadae; his beardless  
Face was just beginning to show the signs  
Of the bloom of his young manhood. He and Nisus  
Loved one another and together went 230  
With mutual ardor into the fields of battle.  
This night they were together, guarding the gate.  
Nisus said to Euryalus, “Is it a god  
Who puts this desire into our hearts, or is it  
Our hearts that make a god of our desire?  
I feel the need to do great things tonight.  
I’m disquieted to stay so quietly here.  
The Rutulians are so confident and unwary,  
Over there where they’re resting, taking it easy,  
Some just lying around, some of them sleeping; 240  
The gleam of their watch fires thinly scattered now;  
Everything’s fallen silent out there in the night.  
So let me tell you what thoughts there are in my mind.  
Everybody’s anxious, the people are, the elders,  
To call Aeneas back; they’re planning how  
To send men out to tell him what’s happening here.  
As long as you will have what’s promised to you—  
The glory is all I care about for myself—  
I think I know how to get out though the trench  
And make my way to the walls of Pallanteum.” 250  
Euryalus was stunned by the force of the love  
Of glory Nisus’s words had struck him with.  
He said, “Is it really true that you intend  
To go alone without me, into this danger?  
I wasn’t brought up that way. My father,  
Opheltes, taught me to know how it is to be  
One whose habit is to go right into  
The vortex of the fighting, wherever it is,  
Argive terror or the strife at Troy.  
It is glory I seek, contemptuous of what 260  
Would bargain with death just for the light of day.

The loss of life is worth it if it is lost  
For the honor it wins." Nisus replied: "I had  
No doubt of that, your being who you are.  
And it would be right, if Jupiter brought me back  
In triumph; but, as you know, in this there are  
So many perils and uncertainties  
That if by chance or by some god it happens  
That calamity overtakes me, takes me away,  
I want you to survive me, by your youth  
More worthy of longer life, to tend the grave  
In which my body will be buried, or,  
If it's not returned, by courtesy or by ransom,  
Then to pay due honor at an empty tomb,  
To pay due honor to the absent dead.  
Nor do I want to be the cause of grief  
For your poor mother, who was the only one  
Of the women who had no wish to stay back there  
In Acestes' town, and dared to follow her son  
Wherever it was that he was going to."  
Euryalus said to him, "Your argument  
Has no effect at all on my resolve.  
Let us go quickly." He summoned those who were  
The next to take their turn at guarding the gates;  
This being done, Euryalus and Nisus  
Then went together to seek the Trojan prince.

270

280

› › ›

All other beings in the redoubt were quiet,  
Oblivious of their cares, relaxed in sleep,  
But the chosen leaders of the Trojans, standing  
Together, with their javelins and shields,  
In the middle of the camp, were deep in discussion  
Of what to do in their present situation,  
And how to get a message to Aeneas,  
When Nisus and Euryalus, the two,

290



Eagerly sought admission to the council,  
Assuring the leaders that their petition would not  
Interrupt for long the leaders' conference.

Iulus was the first to welcome them,  
Inviting Nisus to speak. And so the son  
Of Hyrtacus spoke: "Aeneadae, listen with open  
Minds to what it is we have to say. 300  
Do not discount it because we are so young.  
The Rutulians are submerged in wine and sleep.  
I know a way, over there, over near the sea,  
Where the line is somewhat broken, where there's more  
Of an interval between the watch fires; and  
The smoke that rises from them toward the sky  
Is blackened. Slaughtering as we go we'd go,  
Gathering spoils and making our way to Aeneas  
At Pallanteum." 310

Then wise Aletes spoke:  
"You gods who are protectors of our Troy,  
I see that you're not ready to let us be  
Abandoned and destroyed, when there are such  
Young men as these, wholehearted in their ardor."  
And saying this and with tears in his eyes, he put  
His arms around their shoulders and embraced them.  
"What can we give, what honors, what gifts, to thank you  
For your wholeheartedness and courage? The gods'  
Approval, and what your own characters are, 320  
Are in themselves reward enough, but surely,  
When he returns to us, father Aeneas's  
Gratitude will be immediate, and  
That of Ascanius here will know no bounds."

Ascanius said, "It's true, there are no bounds  
To what I owe. My father must come back,

Bring him back home to me. My safety and  
The safety of all of us here depends on my father  
Coming back. I swear by the Lares and  
Penates of Assaracus, and by the white-haired  
Vestal Virgin in her shrine, my hopes  
Are all in what you will do. Bring back my father;  
I need to have my father in my sight;  
When he comes back, all will be well again.  
Two silver cups with fine-worked imagery,  
Masterfully inscribed, trophies from where  
My father was victorious over Arisba;  
Twin tripods, two talents of gold, and an ancient  
Wine bowl Sidonian Dido gave to my father;  
But if the victory is complete and if  
The scepter and the rule are fully won,  
And there's a distribution of the spoils,  
Nisus, you have seen Turnus's war horse  
And his gleaming armor and his helmet with  
Its crested crimson plumes. Nisus, all these  
Will be your share; and more than these, my father  
Will give you ample fruitful fields in Latium,  
A generous portion of Latinus's kingdom.  
And, Euryalus, the boy I venerate,  
So near my age, not so much further along  
In life than I, I take you into my heart  
Wholeheartedly in everything I do,  
Comrades together in peace and war, for glory.”

Euryalus replied, “Nothing I do will be  
Unequal in the future to the courage  
Required for what I set out to do this night,  
However fortune falls, for good or ill.  
But there's one thing I beg for, from your bounty,  
Precious above all other gifts. My mother  
Was born of the race of Priam, the best of these.

Neither the land of Troy nor Acestes' walls  
Could keep her from following me to be with me.  
Now I am leaving her, with her not knowing  
The dangers I'm going into. I could not tell her  
Because (let night, and your right hand, be witness)  
I could not bear to see my mother weeping.  
Take care of her, I beg you, comfort her  
If she's made desolate by what happens to me.  
If you will give me hope that you will do so,  
I'll go into the danger all the more boldly."

370

This caused the Trojans, hearing him, to weep,  
Especially fair Ascanius, who saw  
In Euryalus' filial piety for his mother  
The image of his own piety for his father.  
He said to him in response, "I promise all  
That's worthy of the deeds you go to do.  
Except for the name Creusa, your mother will be  
My mother, and fully share, no matter what happens,  
In all that's promised to you when you return."  
Weeping as he said these words, he drew  
A beautiful golden sword from its shoulder belt—  
Lycaon of Cnossus made it, perfectly made it—  
And gave it to Euryalus in an ivory  
Scabbard it fitted perfectly;

380

Mnestheus

Gave to Nisus a bristling lion-skin cloak;  
Trusty Aletes exchanged his helmet with him.  
Armed thus, they set forth on their mission; the Trojans,  
The young ones and the old ones, all went with them,  
Taking them to the gates with their prayers and wishes,  
Fair Iulus the first among them and the chief,  
Already now a man with the cares of a man.  
He gave them many messages to his father  
(Which as they went were scattered to the clouds).

390

Then they went out through the trench and into the shadows,  
 And made their way through the dark and into the enemy  
 Camp, and what they saw were the chariots,  
 Unhitched, unyoked, scattered across the fields,  
 And down among their wheels and hanging straps  
 Rutulians sleeping, soaked in the wine they'd drunk, 400  
 And Nisus said, "Euryalus, this is it,  
 This is the time for daring; this is the place,  
 And this is the way we sought." He kept his voice quiet.  
 "You go over there, to the right, and watch that we're  
 Not noticed by anyone. I will begin  
 The killing here." And so he went to where  
 Proud Rhamnes lay, high up on piled-up cushions,  
 His stertorous body breathing out sleep and wine.  
 He was himself a king, and Turnus's favorite  
 Augurer of things to come, and now, 410  
 Asleep like this, he could not augur his fate.  
 There were three men of his, lying among  
 The wheels and hanging harnesses, drunk and sleeping;  
 And Remus's weapons-bearer and charioteer,  
 Down at the horses' feet. He lopped off their heads,  
 And the head of Remus their lord, whose blood poured out  
 In sobbing pulsations warming the nighttime ground;  
 Next he slaughtered Lamyros where he lay,  
 And Lamus too, and beautiful young Serranus,  
 Who had played the dice game far into the night 420  
 —Victim, alas, of Bacchus and Slumber, slain—  
 Had he played on till dawn he would have been lucky.  
 Nisus was like a lion famished for food  
 Who's gotten into a full sheepfold at night,  
 Tearing the meat from the bodies of the mute  
 Unbleating terrified sheep, growling and snarling  
 Through what was dripping down from its bloody mouth;  
 And over where he was, Euryalus

Was killing too many of them to count, unnamed  
And named, in his own furious rage for glory; 430  
Herbesus and Fadus, in their sleep, he killed,  
And Abaris and Rhoetus; but Rhoetus was  
Still awake when it happened, and when he saw  
The slaughtering, he hid himself behind  
A huge wine jar and Euryalus found him there,  
Cowering in terror, and came close to him,  
And pierced his body through, all the way through,  
The whole length of his sword, and drew the whole length of it back;  
And his soul came vomited out in a gushing of blood  
And the wine he'd drunk. Having done this, Euryalus, 440  
Still in his silent bloodlust rage, went over  
To where Messapus's sleeping soldiers were,  
And where the horses were peacefully cropping the grass  
For their nighttime meal, the watch fires slowly dying.  
When Nisus saw him still at his raging work,  
And that he was at the height of his slaughter rampage,  
He said to Euryalus, "Now is the time to quit.  
Now we have done enough. Our vengeance has made  
A way for us through to where we want to go.  
Daylight is coming and daylight's our enemy." 450  
They left much spoil behind, abandoned arms,  
And silver-wrought armor, and bowls and beautiful rugs;  
Euryalus took Rhamnes' medallions and  
His sword-belt with the silver knobs, the one  
Caedicus gave to Remulus of Tibur  
As a host gift long ago, and when Remulus died  
He left it to his nephew, and when in turn  
The nephew died, the Rutulians took it as  
War booty in some fight. Euryalus slung  
The precious sword-belt over his broad shoulder 460  
(It was never going to do him any good),  
And as they went he snatched up Messapus's  
Gorgeous-plumed helmet and put it on his head.

So they left the encampment and sought to find the path  
To get themselves out of danger and away.

Just then a troop of cavalry came along,  
Sent from Latinus's town to bring dispatches  
To Turnus, the prince, three hundred horsemen riding,  
Volcens their captain, all of them carrying shields.  
As they were nearing the camp and the rampart walls 470  
There was a flicker of light, off to the left,  
A glimmering ray of moonlight in the darkness,  
Reflected from the helmet of Messapus  
That Euryalus had forgotten he was wearing;  
And so they saw Euryalus and Nisus,  
On the road over there, and Volcens, suddenly  
Alert, called out through the dark to the two of them, "Halt!  
What are you doing, over there on that road?  
Why are you armed? Where are you going to?"  
There was no reply from them across the darkness. 480  
The two were startled and fled into the woods,  
Putting their faith in the darkness they fled into.  
The horsemen spread out in an orderly way, to watch  
At every path at its exit from the woods,  
And posting watchers along the pathless sides.  
The woods were thick, with brambles, and thorn, and dark  
Ilex trees, and inside there it was only  
Once in a while a path could be discerned,  
And hardly then, little more than animal tracks.  
Euryalus in these woods and in the dark, 490  
Distracted by his fear and encumbered by  
The spoils he was carrying with him, lost his way.  
Nisus got through, not knowing how he did so,  
Scot-free of the enemy, and in the place  
Called, after the town called Alba, "Alban,"  
The place where Latinus kept his cattle enclosures.  
When he got there he found that his friend wasn't there,

And in his bewilderment, scared, called out to him,  
“Where are you, poor Euryalus, where did I lose you?  
Where is it that you are? How can I find you?”  
He went back into the woods, trying his best  
To retrace his steps and go by the way he came,  
But the paths were never able to tell him the story  
Of how he got to where he got to, or  
Where he came from, and where Euryalus was.  
And all was silent as he went.

500

But then,  
He heard the horses, and then, he heard the noise  
Of what had happened, and suddenly then he saw  
Euryalus, who had lost his way and then  
Been caught by all the troop, and he was being  
Carried away, struggling as he went,  
And overpowered. What could Nisus do?  
What could he do? What could he do to rescue  
His young Euryalus? Hurl himself in  
Among the swords and die a glorious death  
Trying to save his lover from his death?  
Nisus looked up at the moon and, desperate, prayed:  
“O moon, Latona, goddess of the groves,  
Protectress looking down from where you are,  
If ever my father, Hyrtacus, at your altars  
Has offered gifts, and I, seeking your favor,  
Have offered the spoils of my hunting, now from on high,  
Help me, guide my weapons to the mark.”  
And with that he threw his javelin through the night,  
And flying through the shadows it struck the Rutulian  
Sulmo in the back. The javelin splintered,  
A splinter went through his middle from behind,  
And Sulmo fell to the ground, rolling over onto  
His back, the hot blood pulsing out of his chest,  
His mouth choking out its rattling sounds as he went  
Into the cold. The Rutulians in confusion

510

520

530

Looked everywhere to see where the attack  
Was coming from, and Nisus was encouraged  
By his first hit's success and so he aimed  
Another javelin and sent it off,  
And it went hissing through the darkness straight  
To its target, hitting Tagus in his forehead,  
In his temple, and growing warm as it went there,  
Into his brain. Volcens was enraged 540  
But he could not see in the dark from where the deadly  
Shafts had come or where the assailant was,  
And so he cried out to Euryalus, "If I  
Don't see the other one you'll pay for both,"  
And he pulled out his sword and rushed at Euryalus,  
And Nisus, witnessing this from where he was,  
And maddened by his anguish and his terror,  
Came out of the shadows and revealed himself  
And cried out in his grief, "Rutulians,  
Turn your swords against me, not against him. 550  
It is I whose fault it is. I did these things.  
He wouldn't have done these things, I swear by the stars  
And the gods above, he did the things he did  
Because he loved his unlucky lover so."  
But the sword already was thrust full force between  
Euryalus's ribs and broke through into  
His snow-white chest. Euryalus fell to the ground  
Into his death; his beautiful head was lolling  
Upon his shoulder; it was as when a scarlet  
Flower, say, falls gracefully to the earth, 560  
When the tooth of a plow has suddenly cut its stem,  
Or as it is when a poppy flower falls,  
Under the weight of a sudden summer rainstorm,  
Bringing it down. Nisus rushed in, seeking Volcens,  
In his fury thinking only of Volcens, and  
The Rutulians gathered, protective, around their leader,  
And time after time kept Nisus away from him,  
But he with his flashing-like-lightning sword kept fighting



His way toward Volcens and finally, dying, thrust  
His sword into Volcens' open mouth as it  
Was open to shout. And after that, he fell,  
Stabbed through and through by the weapons of the Volscians,  
Upon the lifeless body of him he loved,  
In the stillness of death finding his rest at last.

570

Fortunate both. If my song has any power,  
No day will come when you have been forgotten,  
While Aeneas's house still stands at the Capitol  
And the empire of Rome's father still remains.

When they had won, the Volscians, with the spoils  
They had retrieved, rode weeping back to the camp,  
Carrying Volcens' body. And there was mourning  
Over the bloody corpse of Rhamnes and  
Serranus, and Numa, and those others who  
Had died in the events of this past night.  
A crowd gathered to look at the dead and the dying,  
The blood still pouring out, still warm and foaming,  
From what had been so recently done to them.  
They saw what had been recovered at such cost,  
Messapus's shining helmet and the medallions.

580

› › ›

Then Aurora leaving the bed of Tithonus began  
To scatter her light upon the world, and soon  
Sunlight was everywhere, and all revealed.  
There Turnus in his armor was urging on  
The captains all around to sound the cry,  
“Assume battle formation,” and soon there was,  
In gleaming battle array, the Latin army,  
Their fury for battle aroused still further by  
The stories about the slaughter the night before.  
And, following the battle files, were carried,

590

Impaled on the points of two uplifted spears,  
The heads of Nisus and Euryalus.  
The tough Aeneades behind their trench  
And high up on their turreted rampart walls  
(The left wall side, the river protecting the right),  
In battle order ready for the onslaught,  
Were grieving and shocked at seeing out there the two  
Faces they knew, two heads held high to be  
Shown to the Trojans, waggled before their sight,  
The black gore dripping down from both of them.

600

And then the flapping wings of Rumor carried  
The bad news over to be heard by the ears  
Of Euryalus's mother. Grief's freezing cold  
Took all the warmth away from her very bones.  
The shuttle fell from her hands and the threads revolved  
Backward. She tore her hair, and ululating,  
As a grieving woman does, she went to the ledge  
Of the stronghold tower and, out of her mind, she stood,  
In front of all the watching army, careless  
Of all the danger, careless of everything,

610

"Euryalus, Euryalus, is it you?  
Is this Euryalus I'm seeing? Oh,  
How could you leave me here, alone, oh cruel!  
The only solace of my age? How could you go  
Away from me into such dangers without  
Giving me any chance to say goodbye?  
Somewhere in some strange country your body lies  
To be the food for scavenging dogs and birds.  
I couldn't even go with you to your grave,  
Or close your eyes, or bathe your wounds, or wrap  
Your body in that garment I was weaving,  
Weaving as fast as I could, at the loom, for you.  
Where can I go to find your torn-apart body?  
How can I find you, my child? Is this that I see

620

630

All that's come back to me? For this, for this,  
Have I followed you over the lands and over the seas?  
Rutulians, have pity on me, kill me,  
Or you, the Father of the Gods, send me down  
To Tartarus with one bolt of your lightning.  
How else can I get myself out of this hateful life?"  
This mother's grieving sent a shock through all  
The Teucrians hearing her, and their resolve  
For battle was weakened. Ilioneus and Iulus,  
Who was bitterly weeping, bade Actor and Idaeus  
To bear her away, and they did so, carrying her  
Back in their arms, in under the tower roof.

640

, , ,

The music of the trumpet suddenly sounded  
Its terrible outcry, and a great shout followed;  
The sky above redoubled the bellowing noise.  
The Volsci, under the moving roof of shields  
Upraised and linked together to keep them safe,  
Went forward then, filling the rampart trench  
And hacking at the walls to tear them down,  
Or trying to climb them with ladders just where the line  
Of defenders up there looked thinnest so you could see  
The light of the sky behind them. The Teucrians,  
As they had learned to do in their great war,  
Hurled missiles down from above, and pushed the ladders  
Away from the walls with poles, and, hoping to  
Break up that tortoise-back shield, rolled heavy stones  
Over the rampart edge to come down upon it.  
For a while the Rutulians were happy in  
Their safety under their roof, but not for long.  
The Teucrians rolled over the edge a stone  
So huge that it came crashing ruining down  
Where the mass of attackers was greatest, and it broke open

650

660

The tortoise roof and scattered Rutulian arms  
And bodies everywhere. The brave Rutulians then  
Gave up caring for fighting blind that way, and pelted  
The rampart with missiles; Mezentius, elsewhere,  
A frightening sight to see, brandished a great  
Torch of Etruscan pine, and Neptune's child  
Horsebreaker Messapus was tearing at pieces of wall,  
And crying out to his men for scaling-ladders.

670

› › ›

O Calliope, O Muses, breathe upon  
My singing as I tell how many men  
The slaughtering sword of Turnus sent down to Orcus.  
Unroll for me the scroll that tells the story.

› › ›

There was a high-up tower, good for surveying  
The countryside around, and this the Italians  
Were eager to conquer, dismantle it, destroy it,  
And the Trojans gathered together on the rampart,  
Hurling down stones and missiles through the windows,  
Desperate to defend it, keep it from being  
Brought down. Fierce Prince Turnus it was who threw  
A fiery torch that struck the wall of the tower,  
And fixed itself in the wall, and, helped by the wind,  
Its flames spread out to set on fire the wooden  
Boards and the wooden posts supporting the tower.  
All those inside were terrified and all  
Clustered together as far as they could away  
From where the fire was burning, but then the whole  
Great structure collapsed and there was a sound as of  
The thundering sky being one sound of thunder.  
And many fell, dying, down with the falling structure,

680

690

Bodies impaled upon their weapons as  
They fell upon the wooden shards. Young Lycus  
And Helenor were the only ones who lived,  
Helenor whose father was the king  
Of Moenia and his mother the slave Licymnia.  
He was her secret child, and she had sent him, 700  
Against the prohibition, to Troy, in arms;  
Here he had only his bare unscabbarded sword,  
And his inglorious plain white shield, to protect him.  
Here he was, in the middle of thousands of soldiers,  
Line after line of Turnus's Latins around him;  
It was as when a wild beast, caught, surrounded  
By a circle of hunting spears, leaps raging upon them,  
Knowing full well what it's doing, so the young man  
Threw himself to his death upon the spears  
Around him and exactly where they were thickest. 710  
But Lycus, who was quicker of foot than he,  
Ran through and past the surrounding foe and their weapons,  
And fled to the rampart wall and desperately  
Took hold of the ledge at the top of it and clung there,  
His friends up on the rampart ledge above him,  
Desperately reaching down to try to help him,  
And Turnus, who had been chasing him with his spear,  
Cried out, victorious: "You fool, did you  
Think you could get away from my hands, did you?"  
He tore him away from the wall and tore a great 720  
Piece of the wall away with him too. Turnus  
Was like Jove's arms-bearer eagle seizing a hare,  
Or carrying up to the sky a beautiful swan  
In his eagle claws; or else he was like a wolf  
In a sheepfold seizing a lamb while its bleating mother  
Looks everywhere for where her lamb could be.  
Rutulians were shouting everywhere;  
They filled up the trench; others flung burning pine  
Torches as high as they were able to throw them.

Then Ilioneus threw a huge rock, torn  
From a mountain, down on Lucetius as  
He was getting toward the gate with a flaming torch,  
Then Liger slew Emathion, Asilas slew  
Corynaeus; one was good with the javelin,  
The other good with the arrow shot from far;  
Corynaeus killed Ortygius, Turnus killed  
Victorious Corynaeus, and after that he killed  
Itys, Clonius, Dioxippus, Promolus, and  
Sagaris, and Idas, who was standing high  
Up at the top of the tower battlement;  
And Capys was the one who killed Privernus,  
Who had been grazed by the spear of Themillas, and  
Like a fool put down his protecting shield, so as  
To finger the wound he had gotten from the spear,  
And so the arrow of Capys winged its way  
And struck him in the left side of his body,  
Demolishing all the avenues of his breathing.  
And there was Arcens' son, handsome and tall,  
And wearing an embroidered cloak of several  
Varied colors, bright and Spanish dark;  
Arcens' father had sent him to the war  
From his mother's beautiful grove by the river Symaethus,  
With its bountiful altars to the Palíci, the Twins.  
When Mezentius saw him he put aside his spear,  
And took up his slingshot and whirled it around his head,  
Three times, and the leaden shot went whizzing through  
The air and struck, splitting his skull wide open  
And his body lay stretched out, far from his home.

› › ›

As they tell the story, this now was the first time that  
Ascanius's swift arrow, which only had  
Been used before to terrify wild beasts

As they fled from him, brought brave Numanus down.

Numanus was of the Remuli clan and recently  
Had married Turnus's younger sister and,  
Proud of this new connection with his king,  
Puffing out his chest and striding up and down  
In front of the army, he shouted out loudly things  
Both fit and not: "Phrygians, aren't you ashamed  
To be cooped up in there behind those walls  
The way you were two times before, with only  
Walls you were hiding behind between you and death.

770

Who asked you to come in here to try to take  
Our women away from us? What god was it,  
Or was it only all by itself your madness?  
You won't find any of the Atridae here  
Or storytelling Ulysses either. We're  
The kind of people who take our babies out  
And plunge them into the ice-cold waters of  
Our mountain streams to toughen them up for what

780

Their bodies will endure when they are grown;  
Our boys unwearied beat the woods in the hunt;  
Unwearied they practice their games of horsemanship,  
And stretching the bowstring to ready the arrow for flight;  
We work the fields and learn to live on little;  
Our hoeing shakes and overturns the glebes;  
The sound of our warfare shakes the walls of towns;  
All of us, all our bodies, are bruised by iron,  
The spears we use in the fight, reversed, we use  
To goad the oxen as they plow the field.

But when we're old, old age does not surrender  
To weakness or to compromise our vigor;  
Our helmets hide our gray heads in the fight,  
But you, look at *you*, you love to dance, you love  
To fool around in your saffron-colored or purple  
Fish-dyed shirts, in your helmets which are like  
Pansy bonnets with ribbons hanging down.

790

You're not Phrygian men, you're Phrygian women.  
Go on over to Mount Dindymus where they've got  
Your kind of music, double boxwood pipes  
And tambourines those priest castrati are playing  
Just for the ears of people such as you."

800

Ascanius could not bear what he was hearing,  
The vile insulting words, the ridicule;  
He stood there opposite, the horsehair string  
Of his bow pulled back and held, high as could be,  
In tension with the string and carefully aimed  
As he'd been taught; and prayed, making this vow,  
Beseeching: "Omnipotent Jupiter, if you  
Will nod upon my first attempt in war,  
I promise solemn gifts to your temple and  
Before the altars I will set up a statue,  
A young bullock, now grown as tall as his mother,  
With glistening golden horns, old enough now  
To butt with his horns and kick up the soil with his feet."

810

Jupiter nods, and in the clear sky there was  
The sound of thunder, and then the sound of an arrow,  
Delivering death, a dreadful strident hissing  
As the arrow flew to the targeted Numanus,  
And struck him in the head and then went through  
The hollows of the temples within the head  
And into the brain within. "Go mock the brave  
Down there with words like these! This is the answer  
To the tough Rutulians from us twice-beaten Phrygians."  
The Teucrians shouted with joy; the clamor of it  
Rose as high as to the stars above.

820

It happened that long-haired Apollo heard it,  
Where he sat among the clouds, looking down on all  
Ausonia and its towns and the battle scene.



He saw what Iulus had done and spoke to him:

“You are the son of gods and you will be

830

The father of gods to come. Under the house

Of Assaracus all wars will come to an end.”

And as he spoke the god descended through

The breathing air, parting its whispers as

He went, and as he went, he changed himself

Into the look of old Butes, he who had been

The armor-bearer and faithful doorkeeper of

Dardanian Anchises; in his old age

Aeneas made him companion to his son.

Apollo went to Ascanius, looking like

840

The ancient mentor Butes, in every way—

His face, white hair, his coloring, and the very

Sound of his rattling arrows in their quiver.

He spoke and said these words to ardent Iulus:

“Aeneas’s son, unharmed you have faced Numanus,

And you have brought him down. Now great Apollo

Acknowledges the glory of this deed,

And does not deny that you have done so with

A weapon like his own. It is enough;

For now, boy, it is right for you to refrain

850

From the battlefield.” As he began to say

These things to the boy the god was shedding his mortal

Simulation and was vanishing

Into and through the tenuous air, and the Teucrian

Chiefs were recognizing who it was

As they saw him vanishing and heard the divine

Rattling of his arrows in their quiver;

Therefore they knew that by Apollo’s command

Ascanius was prohibited from the fighting.

And they all, aroused with zeal, committed themselves

860

Full-armed to the battle and all its dangers. The clamor

Was everywhere upon the battlements,

Men everywhere stretching their bows to send off their arrows,

Men twisting the straps of their spears to send them to kill;  
The ground was covered with missiles; sounds of the clanging  
Of swords and helmets and shields were everywhere,  
As everywhere the battle was as when  
The storm of hail from the Hyades pours down  
And pounds the earth with the dreadful noise of its falling,  
And Jupiter brings on the whirling South Wind,  
And the winter winds of Auster, and from above  
His emptying storm clouds bellowing as they burst.

870

› › ›

Pandarus and Bitias, who were the sons  
Of Alcanor of Ida, and Iaera the wood nymph  
Of the sylvan grove of Jupiter,  
Were young men of the hills and woods of their country,  
And tall like the silver trees they grew up among.  
They were so confident of their arms that they  
Opened the gate that they had been keepers of,  
And so they let the enemy in. They stood,  
The two of them, one on the right of the gate,  
The other on the left, their weapons ready;  
They looked like a pair of oaks that you might see,  
Maybe, upon the banks of the river Po,  
Or standing tall above the beautiful river  
Athesis, their high branches nodding in the breeze.  
The Rutulians, when they saw that the gate was open,  
Come rushing in; the first of them were Quercens,  
Aquiculus in his beautiful armor, and  
Headlong Tmarus, and Haemon, son of Mars,  
And all their men, are routed, some of them  
Frantically trying to get back through the gate,  
Others laying their lives down on the threshold.  
Discordant rage rose higher in their hearts,  
And Trojans, seeing all this, came gathering

880

890

To fight where the gate was open, hand to hand,  
And some of them daring to carry the fighting into  
The fields beyond.

› › ›

Turnus was raging, and causing  
Havoc elsewhere in the battle, when 900  
The message came to him that the enemy  
Were lavishly slaying his people over where  
The gate was open. Turnus turned at once  
And went, his savage fury greater still,  
To seek the Dardanian gate and the proud brothers.  
But the first he met was Antiphates, who was  
The great Sarpedon's son by a Theban woman.  
The beautiful lance that Turnus threw was made  
Of Italian cornel wood, and it flew toward him  
Through the unprotesting air and fixed itself 910  
In Antiphates' stomach and traveled up inside  
The bleeding cavity behind his chest,  
Until it arrived to warm itself in the lung.  
Then by hand there was Meropes he killed,  
Next was Erymas, and after him Aphidnus,  
And then there was Bitias, himself, whose eyes  
Were on fire with rage and defensive fury as  
He fell, not by a spear (since no such thing  
Could be enough to bring down such a man),  
But by a great revolving hissing missile 920  
That struck him with the force of a thunderbolt,  
His double bull's hide shield unable to shield him;  
His double golden breastplate could not save him;  
His giant legs gave out from under; he fell  
To the earth that groaned as his body came down upon it,  
His great shield thundering falling down upon him.  
It was as it is at Euboean Baiae where  
They've made a huge pile of stones and pushed it over

The edge of the shore, into the water to be  
The foundation for some great man's villa, and when  
It falls to the bottom the booming sound of it  
Causes Prochyta to tremble; and Ischia,  
Where Jupiter buried Typhoeus, the greatest monster,  
Under the earth; and in the disturbance of waters  
The black sand rises up as if in terror.

› › ›

Then Mars All-Powerful-In-War stirred up  
The Latin men, goading them in their hearts  
And inflicting on the minds of the Teucrians  
Black fear and thoughts of running away; the Latins  
Came in from all sides and gathered themselves together,  
Aware of their advantage, the War God in them. 940  
Pandarus, when he saw his brother's body  
Stretched out on the ground, and saw what his fortunes were,  
And what his own situation was, went to  
The gate and there, with all his shoulder strength,  
He moved the gate to turn it back on its hinge,  
And so, though letting in some who were running toward it,  
Closed it, leaving so many of his own people  
Out there, outside the walls, out in the midst  
Of the enemy all around them. Madman, he didn't 950  
See that he'd closed in the Rutulian king,  
A huge tiger there in a hapless cattle pen.

Light blazed in the eyes of Turnus; the blood-red plume  
That crested his helmet shook; the sound of his armor  
Clashed and rang horrendously; his shield  
Shone as with the fire of lightning in it.  
The Aeneadae were shocked in disarray  
At what they saw and recognized, the face,  
The giant form, a terrifying sight.  
But big young Pandarus stepped forth, in fervid 960

Rage because of his brother's death, and said,  
"Don't think this is the bridal bedroom in  
The palace of your mother-in-law Amata;  
Don't think you're safe and sound behind the walls  
Of your father's house in Ardea. This is  
The enemy camp, with no way to get out."  
Turnus laughed and calmly said to him,  
"If you're brave enough, let the fight begin, and you'll  
Tell Priam there was another Achilles here."  
Pandarus' weapon was a huge raw wooden  
Spear, made with its knot and its bark still on it, and  
He threw it with all his force at Turnus's body,  
But a gust of wind diverted it. Juno had  
Turned it aside, and it struck the gate and stuck there.  
Then Turnus called over to him and said, "This weapon  
I wield is a better weapon than yours; this arm  
I have is a better arm than yours. Get ready."  
And saying this he raises up the spear  
Above his head and throws it and it strikes  
Straight through the foredoomed forehead of the boy,  
Cutting Pandarus's unbearded face in half.  
The wound was terrible. His heavy body  
Fell crashing down upon the sounding earth;  
His limbs collapsed unjointed and moving about,  
Askew, as he lay dying; his blood and brains  
Poured out upon his armor; each half of his head  
Lay bobbing from his shoulders, right and left.

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The Trojans, terrified, tried to run away;  
If Turnus, right then, had thought to force open the gate,  
It would have been the end of the war and the Trojans;  
But he went on, in his ecstasy of slaughter,  
Enraptured by what he was doing, first taking out  
Phaleris, and after him, then, Gyges,

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Slitting his hamstrings as he fled away;  
 And taking their spears from the dead, he hurled them  
 Into the backs of the fleeing others, sending  
 Halys with them, and Phegeas through his shield,  
 Unknowing Alcander, Halius, Prytanis, Noemon,  
 Before they knew he was there inside the walls;  
 Lynceus, calling out for his fellows to follow, 1000  
 As he came down from the rampart tried to rush  
 At Turnus and Turnus stopped him in his tracks  
 As with one single expert swipe of his sword  
 He severed his head from his body and sent the head  
 Flying far off from where the body fell.  
 Next was Amycus, the hunter, nobody better  
 Than he at the art of using his skillful hand  
 To smear the arrow point or the point of the spear  
 With poison to kill the prey; next Clytius,  
 Then after him the turn of Cretheus who 1010  
 Was the lover of the Muses and was one  
 The Muses loved, Cretheus who sang  
 To the constant music of the cithera songs  
 Of war and arms and horses and famous battles.

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The Teucrian leaders, Mnestheus and brave  
 Serestus, heard about the devastation  
 Visited on their people, and so they came  
 To the scene of what was happening and saw  
 Their soldiers scattered in such confused retreat,  
 And Mnestheus cried out, “Where are you going? 1020  
 O countrymen, where else have you to be?  
 What other town do you have, what other walls  
 To protect you? Is it possible that one,  
 Alone, inside your battlement should do  
 Such savage harm to you and go unpunished?  
 That he should send so many of our best

Young men down there to Orcus? Where is your shame?  
Where is your pity for your wretched country?  
Where is it for your ancient gods? Where is it  
For great Aeneas?"

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Hearing these words they were  
Aroused and heartened and came together again,  
Not scattered now but in close formation, and  
As Turnus moved away, little by little,  
Toward the river and toward the place where the river  
Oxbowed around the edge of the Trojan camp,  
The Teucrian soldiers, clamoring, shouting, press  
Around him, leveling spears, and he, like a savage  
Lion surrounded by many hunters, raging,  
Frightened, glaring, backs away, but never  
Turning its back, and yet unable to back  
Swiftly through the press of the hunters and spears,  
Moving slowly, his mind on fire with fury,  
But doubtful of his way, backing away,  
Though twice he lunges and scatters them so they  
Go flying away, but twice again they come back,  
And twice again they come together around him,  
All of them, all of the camp, gathered against him,  
And Juno no longer dared to help him out  
Against his enemies, for Jupiter  
Sent Iris down from the skies to tell his sister,  
In no uncertain terms, that Turnus must  
Take his leave of the Teucrian battlement;  
And Turnus could sustain himself no longer  
Against the barrage of missiles coming upon him;  
The bronze helmet protecting his hollow temples  
Rang, rang, and rang with the constant sound of blows;  
Its bronze was cracked by a rain of stones upon it;  
Its horsehair crest was torn away; the boss  
Of his mighty shield fell in; like lightning bolts  
Striking again and again and again the spears

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Of the Trojans and Mnestheus himself  
Struck down upon him; the sweat poured out, a river  
Of pitch down all of his body, unable to breathe;  
Exhaustion shook him in all of his quaking limbs.  
And then at last Turnus was able to fall,  
In all his armor, into the flowing river.  
It carried him away on its yellow waves  
And, as it carried him gently along, it washed him  
Of all the signs of blood and wounds and brought him,  
Jubilant to the company of his comrades.

1070





# Book Ten

Almighty Olympus opened its doors to reveal  
The gods of the heavens, seated in council, ranged  
To the right and the left of the Father of the Gods  
And King of Men, who, sitting among the stars,  
Looked down the steepness of the sky and saw  
All lands and countries that are there below,  
The Rutulians' army and the Dardanians' camp.  
Briefly he spoke: "Great dwellers in the sky,  
What is it that has caused such contention among you,  
That has led you to raise, on this side, and on that, 10  
These armies against each other? What was it that caused you  
To do this in spite of what I have commanded?  
You knew I forbade the Latins to interfere  
With the Teucrians when they came into these lands;  
No need to hurry it, the time will come  
When the savage Carthaginians will open  
The Alpine walls to let destruction in  
Upon the citadels of Rome. That time will be  
The time for ravage and for hatred. For now,  
Maintain together the peace that I have willed." 20

Then golden Venus replied in words less brief:  
"You are that power that rules over all, all things,  
All men—who else is it for us to pray to?  
Do you not see how the Rutulians mock us,  
And Turnus swollen with glorying in his triumphs,

The gate protecting the fortification open,  
And can't be closed, the Trojans having to fight  
Hand to hand within their own stronghold walls,  
The trench around the rampart flowing with blood,  
Aeneas not there, and knowing nothing of it? 30  
Can you not lift the siege? Troy is trying  
Its best to be reborn and now there's a new  
Enemy, new army, and a new  
Aetolian Diomedes coming from Arpi.  
Am I to be wounded again? It is I, your daughter,  
Threatened by enemy weapons in the field.  
If the Trojans have sought to come to Italy  
Without your blessing, without a god's being willing,  
They should be punished. But if they have obeyed  
Faithfully what they have been told to do 40  
By the gods above and the shades below, then why  
Are those others able to overturn what you,  
Yourself, have commanded? Why are those others allowed  
To define a different fate for us than this?  
Have you not seen the ships on fire upon  
The shores of Eryx's kingdom, my own son's,  
And the Aeolian king's tempestuous winds,  
And Iris being sent, down through the clouds,  
How she was sent to call up from below,  
From the only places where you do not rule, 50  
Allecto, and the mad Bacchantes women  
Through all the towns? I will no longer contend  
For imperial sway. We hoped for that while still  
There was reason for us to hope. But now, I see,  
You wanted the others to win and they have won.  
If, Father, your pitiless wife will not allow  
One piece of ground for those who've come from the smoking  
Ruins of fallen Troy, then I must pray  
To be granted just one thing, by the smoke that rises  
Up from the ashes of the ruined city: 60  
Ascanius, my grandson, keep him safe.

Let him survive. Aeneas may be tossed  
On the dangerous waters of his enterprise,  
However it is that Fortune will deal with him;  
But let me protect this child. My palaces,  
Idalia, high Paphos, Amathus, Cythera,  
Where he can live out the length of his peaceful life,  
Under their sheltering roofs, far from the wars  
And all their terrible glories, his armor unused  
Beside him where he sits and reads his book. 70  
By the authority of your command,  
Carthage will prevail over Italy.  
What has it gotten him to have been taken  
Away alive from the plague of war, and through  
The Argolican fires, only to suffer  
Among the vast wastes and the desolation of  
Foreign seas and alien lands, what has it  
Brought him to be brought to Latium where  
The Trojans seek to find and build a new  
Pergamus for themselves? Instead, ought they 80  
Not have been left back there, where they were, to settle  
Their miserable selves among the smoking  
Ashes of what Troy was, and re-enact  
Again the story of their history?  
Give them back their Xanthus and Simois.”

Then Juno spoke, enraged: “Why is it that I  
Must give words to my anger, in front of all of these,  
Assembled here? What gods or men was it  
Who caused these Trojans to take to war, invading  
Latinus’s kingdom with their troops? It’s said 90  
That the Fates have brought all of this about. Not so.  
It is the raving madness of Cassandra,  
Prophesying. Who was it exhorted him  
To leave his camp and trust himself to the winds,  
Leaving his child in charge, trusting the walls?  
Was it us, were we the ones, who got him to go,

To rouse up the Tyrrhenians and their people?  
 What god was it who led him into this?  
 Was it some sinister power of mine that did it?  
 Where's Juno in all of this, and where is Iris 100  
 Coming down from the clouds to do some mischief?  
 It's wrong of the Latins, you say, to surround with fire  
 The walls of this newborn baby Troy. Is it wrong  
 Of Turnus to stand up for his ancestral land,  
 Land of his fathers, Turnus whose grandfather was  
 Pilumnus, his mother the goddess Venilia?  
 Who was it, who was the one who caused the Trojans  
 To raise the black torch of war against the Latins,  
 To seize and plunder the fields that belonged to others,  
 Felt free to choose what father-in-law to choose, 110  
 Abducting the bride from the bosom of her mother,  
 Proffering a hand as if offering peace, from the stern  
 Of a warship bristling with his weapons of war?  
 You had the magic to spirit Aeneas away  
 From the hands of the Greeks, and where there was a man,  
 There was only a nebulous something in the wind;  
 You have the magic to turn the ships into  
 A fleet of dolphin-like nymphs, swimming away;  
 Is it so wrong to give the Rutulians  
 What help we can give to them? Aeneas is 120  
 Ignorant of this and he is absent.  
 Ignorant and absent let him be.  
 You have Idalia, high Cynara, Paphos;  
 What do you have to do with these cities brimming  
 With warfare and killing? Why do you try the hearts  
 Of these desperate folk? Do you think that it was we  
 Who caused the crumbling walls of Troy to fall  
 Down upon the foundations it was built on?  
 Who was it made the wretched Trojans fall  
 Down abased before the triumphant Greeks? 130  
 Who was it who caused all Europe and Asia to rise  
 In treacherous war, breaking the faith they swore?

Was it I who sent the Dardan adulterer  
To Sparta to steal with the weapons of Cupid your child?  
That's when you ought to have taken care of your people.  
Now you rise up and hurl these ugly lies  
And these accusations."

When Juno finished speaking,  
Saying these things, the heavenly gods were stirred,  
Some in agreement, some disagreeing; it was 140  
As when in a wood there's a quiet stirring in  
The leaves of the trees, as if an unseen little  
Breeze was in them telling sailors that  
Stronger winds were coming, so beware.

Then Jupiter, the ruler of everything, spoke,  
And there was a waiting silence in his palace;  
The sea was quieted, the winds were stilled,  
And the trembling earth attended, the heavens were hushed.  
"Now listen to what I say, and take it to heart.  
You have been busy preventing the concord that 150  
There ought to have been between the Trojans and Latins.  
There is no end to the discord you have fostered,  
I will not discriminate between the two.  
I am the king of all. What happens to them  
Is whatever happens to them on the day it happens,  
Whether it is the Trojans under siege,  
Having come there under false prophecies,  
I will not care; nor will I favor the Latins.  
The fate of each man will be as the Fates decide."

His nod confirmed this by the pitch-black swirling 160  
Waters of his brother's river Styx,  
And all Olympus trembled at his nod.  
There was nothing more to be said. Jupiter rose  
From his golden throne and all the heavenly gods  
Escorted him to the threshold of his departure.

While this was happening the Rutulian  
 Fighters were crowding around the rampart gates,  
 Lusting for killing and to surround the Trojan  
 Stronghold with fire. The Trojans, immobilized  
 Inside the walls, helpless, nowhere to go, 170  
 Were together high up, where the citadel tower was,  
 A thin wreath of defenders around the circling  
 Parapet of the walls of their redoubt.

There was Asinus, the son of Imbrasus,  
 Thymoetes, the son of Hicetaon, the two  
 Assaraci brothers, and old Thymbris, and,  
 In the forefront, next to him, was Castor, and  
 Among them there, the two brothers of Sarpedon,  
 Clarus, and Thaemon who had come with him,  
 Comrades together in the same troop from high 180  
 Lycia in the mountains, and Lymesian  
 Acmon, as big and as strong as was his father,  
 Clytius, or as his brother Mnestheus,  
 Struggling with his mighty strength to carry  
 A huge rock, a piece of mountainside, to the edge.  
 They all were struggling, hurling down great stones,  
 Hurling down flaming torches, fitting their arrows  
 To bowstrings, struggling to defend themselves  
 In the situation in which they found themselves.  
 In the midst of these was noble Ascanius, 190  
 Venus's favorite, as he deserved to be.  
 His head was bare and his beauty that of a gem  
 In a golden setting shining, or an ivory in  
 A pendent framed in terebinth or box.  
 And your admiring comrades witnessed you,  
 Ismarus, intent on your task, applying the deadly  
 Poison to the tips of arrows and

Aiming them at the foe, a scion of  
A noble family of Maeonia,  
Where men were busy plowing and working the rich 200  
Soil of the fields along beside Pactolus,  
Whose waters watered them with gold; and also there  
Was Mnestheus, he, who deserved and won such glory  
For having been the one who drove Turnus down  
From within the stronghold walls; and Capys was there,  
The one who gave his illustrious name to his city,  
Capua, which he founded, in Campania.

That is the way the struggle there went on.

• • •

And the prow of Aeneas's ship cut through the waves  
In the middle of the night as he made his way. 210  
He had left Evander's town and gone to the king  
Of the Etruscans and told him who he was,  
And who were the people he was the leader of,  
And what he had come to offer and to ask for.  
He told him what their situation was,  
Their human plight, Mezentius gathering force,  
In enmity against him, the violence  
That raged in Turnus's heart. Tarchon listened,  
And heard him, and responded at once with help,  
And with a treaty. Thus the Lydian men, 220  
Under the gods' authority embarked  
With Aeneas in his fleet, committed to  
The leadership of one who is foreign-born.

Aeneas's ship went first, its beak adorned  
With two painted Phrygian lions, and above them,  
A delight to the eyes of all the Trojan exiles,  
The painted figure of their mountain, Ida.



At the tiller great Aeneas sat, considering,  
This way or that, what the fortunes of war would be,  
And Pallas sat close beside him, questioning  
About the stars above and about the course  
They were taking through the nighttime waters and  
What it was Aeneas had suffered, by land and by sea.

230

Now goddesses of Helicon, tell us in song  
Who were the men who came from Tuscan shores,  
And with what weapons, and from what places, to join  
Aeneas in this journey upon the seas.

› › ›

There's Massicus, in his bronzen vessel Tiger,  
Bringing a thousand warriors with him, who  
Came from the walls of Clusium and Cosae,  
With bows and, in light quivers on their shoulders,  
Death-bringing arrows; next was fierce Abas, with  
The force he was carrying with him in his ship,  
With its golden Apollo image; six hundred youths,  
All in their gorgeous armor, skillful in arms,  
Whose mother country Populonia sent;  
Three hundred more from the island Ilya of  
Chalybria, profusely generous  
In mineral ores.

240

Then next, the ship of Asilas,  
Interpreter of gods and men, who reads  
Entrails of cattle, and knows what the stars above  
Are telling when they appear, and understands  
The language of the birds, and what the fire  
In the thunderbolt presages when it strikes.  
His ship was hastening to war, with a thousand  
Men with bristling spears, in battle array.

250

They had been sent by Pisa, Etruscan now,  
But whose origin was Alpheus, Olympia's river.

The next was the ship of beautiful Astyr,  
With his many-colored weapons, and the horse  
He rode and trusted so in the pitch of battle;  
Three hundred men, all of one mind and purpose,  
He brought to the war; they came from Caerete and  
The fields of Minio, and feverish Graesca.

260

Nor will I, brave Cunaro, be neglectful  
Of you and your Ligurians as you pass,  
Accompanied in the fleet by Cupavo and  
His little band of warriors. High up,  
Above Cupavo's head, swan feathers float  
From the pinnacle like a banner, image that tells  
The story of how his father, Cycnus, who  
(Amor, it was your doing) was in love  
With Phaëthon, and sang of his loss of him,  
Among the shading leaves of the poplar trees  
That had been Phaëthon's sisters, till in his age,  
And, in the white plumage of a swan, still singing  
Unforgettingly, he left the earth  
And singing flew, a swan, up to the stars;  
It's his young son who now commands the huge  
Ship Centaur, bringing with him a band of fellow  
Warriors as young as he; as the ship goes by,  
Propelled by many oars, the giant centaur  
Figurehead as menacing poised as if  
About to hurl an enormous rock, from on high,  
Down into the waves protesting below, and so  
Its long keel cuts an escaping groove in the sea.

270

280

Next there was Ocnus, who was the son of the river  
Of Tuscany, Tiber, and whose mother was

The prophetess Manto, she who gave her name  
To Mantua and its walls, Mantua, rich  
In its descent but not of one people alone—  
Three peoples, and each composed of four different folk,  
And each of them with their own separate town,  
But Mantua, with its strong Etruscan blood,  
The capital of all. (This also was  
The place from which Mezentius, in the war  
Against himself, was carried with his five hundred  
Warriors in their war ships made of pine,  
Down to the sea by the child of Lake Benacus,  
The river Mincius, veiled in gray sedgy reeds.)

Next, heavily coming along, but rising on  
The waves in rhythm with its hundred oars,  
The churned-up marble waters spuming behind,  
Was Aulestes' enormous war ship called the Triton,  
Scaring the blue sea with its sounding horn;  
Its figurehead down to its shaggy belly was  
The belly of a man, a human being;  
Down below, in the water, its lower half  
Was that of an unknown monster of the sea;  
Half-man half-beast, it moved along on its way.

These were the leaders of the thirty ships,  
Their bronze beaks plowing them through the salt sea waters  
To come to the aid of their Teucrian allies.

› › ›

It was the hour when day was conceding the sky  
To gentle Phoebe; the silent hoofbeats of  
Her horses on their nocturnal journey beat  
As the chariot they are drawing, rising, passes  
Halfway past Olympus; and Aeneas,  
Unable to rest himself in the night, sat holding

The tiller, and tending the lanyards of the sails,  
When midway in the voyage, suddenly, lo,  
There was a company near him in the water.  
It was the nymphs, the nymphs who had been the ships  
Whose bronzen prows had once been moored on the beach,  
And now they were immortal, nymphs of the sea,  
According to the command of kind Cybele.  
They had sighted their king, Aeneas, from a distance,  
And were swimming gaily round him as in a dance.  
Cymodocea, who spoke for them all, approached 330  
The ship at the stern, and took hold with her right hand,  
And rose up from the waves, while with her left  
She quietly rowed, and spoke to unknowing Aeneas,  
“Aeneas, are you awake? Aeneas, wake up,  
Let loose the sails. We were once your ships and now  
As sea nymphs we are once again your fleet.  
When Turnus sought to burn us and destroy us,  
As we lay moored upon the shore, Cybele  
Took pity on us, transformed us, set us free,  
And together we swam away, looking for you, 340  
Seeking you everywhere upon the sea.  
Aeneas, your son Ascanius is surrounded  
By the enemy and his weapons. It is true  
That Etruscan troops and Arcadia’s cavalry  
Are trying to come to his aid, but Turnus is doing  
All he can to keep them from coming together.  
Awake! Hurry to help him! Unless you think  
My words are meaningless, tomorrow there’ll be  
Great piles of Rutulian dead upon the field!”  
Having said this, with her right hand she propelled 350  
The ship upon its way, swift as an arrow,  
While with her left she divided the waters before it.  
The other ships followed in order, close behind.

Aeneas, son of Anchises of Troy, was amazed,  
Astonished by this, and then, by this, aroused

In spirit, and looking up at the vault of the heavens,  
He said this prayer: "O gentle goddess on Ida,  
You for whom towered cities are your delight,  
And taking in your hands the chariot reins  
Of the two yoked lions, lead us, now, we pray;  
Let the omen be fulfilled, be with the Phrygians  
Every step of the way." He said this prayer  
Just as the daylight was growing and night was fleeing.  
And then he told his fellows to prepare  
Themselves in their hearts for what was coming, and follow  
His standard in the field of battle tomorrow.

360

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Aeneas stands on the high stern of his ship  
And sees the Teucrians and their camp, and holds  
High the shining shield in his left hand,  
And when his people on the walls see this,  
There's a joyful clamor rising to the sky,  
And the hope that's engendered is transforming, for they  
Hurl their spears, and it's as when, under black clouds,  
The Strymonian cranes, as they flee from Notus the South Wind,  
Suddenly see the signs that spring is coming  
And they are going home; the noise of their joyous  
Honking fills the skies. When Turnus and  
The Ausonian leaders hear the rising clamor,  
They wonder at it, but when they turn to look,  
They see how the sea is full of incoming ships,  
And how from the crest of the helmet on great Aeneas's  
Head there is a light like flames uprising,  
And how from the golden boss of his shield there's fire  
Vomiting forth, as when in the night there's sudden  
Flux of blood-red fiery comets, or when  
The Dog Star Sirius shows its sinister light  
In the dark of the nighttime sky, and it's the sign

370

380

Of bad luck coming soon, thirst and sickness,  
Coming into the fields of mortal men.

› › ›

But Turnus the brave was not diverted from 390  
His intention of repelling them from landing.  
He cried out to his soldiers, “What you hoped for  
Has come to pass. Mars the god of war  
Is in what your hands will do. Think of your wives,  
Think of your homes, think of the glory of  
The deeds of those your fathers who begot you.  
We’ll attack as their tentative very first steps are taken,  
And Fortune comes to the aid of the audacious.”  
He said this, and in his own mind was thinking about  
Which of his troops should go to the shore and which 400  
Should remain to besiege the walls of the Trojan camp.

Meanwhile Aeneas’s men were getting themselves  
Down out of their ships, by gangways and by ladders,  
And, some of them, by leaping, some of them with  
The aid of their oar blades. But Tarchon, wanting not  
To contend either with waves or the undertowing  
Backwash of the waves, had his eye on the place  
Where there were neither, where the sea washed up  
Untrammelled onto the sand, and he turned the prows  
Of his ships that way. “My boys, bend to your oars, 410  
Pull back and drive, drive hard, bend to the oars,  
Pull back and drive, cut your way into  
This enemy land. Who cares if we shipwreck if  
We make it in there to stay. Let the keels plow through.”  
The oarsmen on his ships responded to him,  
Rising high upon their oars and driving their spuming  
Vessels’ beaks straight forward onto the dry  
Land of Latium, keels plowing the way till they

Settled themselves where they got to, safe and sound—  
Tarchon, all ships but yours, caught on a spur  
In the shoals, and rocking back and forth, impaled.  
At last his ship broke up, and all its oars,  
And thwarts, and beams, and men, together in  
The swirling water pulling at their feet.

420

Fierce Turnus was quick to respond, massing his forces  
Together in battle order upon the shore.  
The trumpet sounded. Aeneas was the first  
To leap onto the shore, a sign of what  
The future was going to be, Aeneas  
The first to attack the Latin farmer-soldiers,  
Rushing against the horde that was massed against him.  
The first he brought down was Theron, the tallest of all,  
Who dared to be the first to challenge him.  
Aeneas' bloodthirsty sword slid through a seam  
In the bronze plates of his shield and pierced his tunic,  
Crusted with gold, and drank from the wound it made.  
Next was Inche, who when he was born had been  
Cut free and alive from the womb of his dead mother,  
And therefore lived as if he were under the safe  
Protection of Phoebus Apollo, the God of Health.  
How long could this keep him from the weapon's edge?  
Next Cissa the tough, and his giant brother, Gyas,  
Clubbing down Trojans on the battlefield:  
What could the arms of Hercules do to save them,  
Or that their father, Melampus, was Hercules' comrade  
While he was performing all his famous labors?  
There's Pharos taunting Aeneas haplessly,  
And Aeneas's javelin whirls at him and gets him  
Right in his mouth as he was calling out.  
And Cydon, there was lust-besotted you,  
Pursuing Clytius, your latest beloved,  
On whose fair cheeks the first blond signs of a beard  
Were just beginning to show. You would have been dead,

430

440

450

Had not the cohort of Phorcus's seven sons  
Gathered together to save you, seven brothers,  
Seven javelins thrown, and some deflected  
By helmet or shield, and one, by kindly Venus's  
Guidance just barely grazing Aeneas's body.  
Aeneas called out to his faithful Achates, "Achates,  
Find me those spears retrieved from the bodies of  
Those Greeks we killed on the plain of Ilium.  
I'll use them now to kill Rutulians."

460

He picked up one of those great spears and hurled it,  
And when, with its great force, it sped to Maeon,  
One of the brothers, it shattered his breastplate and  
His breast at once. His brother Alcanor raced  
To try to help him, holding him up with his own  
Right arm, but, dripping blood, Aeneas's spear  
Full speed on its way went through his arm, and so  
It dangled dying from one shoulder tendon.

470

Then Numitor picked up the spear that had pierced  
His brother's body and hurled it at Aeneas;  
It missed the hoped-for target and only grazed  
The thigh of Aeneas's faithful companion Achates.  
Then there was Clausus of Cures, glorying in  
The strength of his youthful body, who aimed his stiff  
Spear from a distance away at the Trojan Dryops,  
And hurled it and it struck him in the throat,  
Full force underneath his chin, as he was saying  
Something, and so his life and his speaking voice  
Together went away. He fell to his knees,  
His forehead touching the ground, and out of his mouth  
Came vomited thick gouts of pulsing blood.  
Then Clausus killed three Thracian brothers, sons  
Of Ida of Ismarus, exalted Boreans,  
And he took their lives each in a different way.  
Halaesus with his warriors came to help him,  
And Messapus too, the son of Neptune, with  
His famous horses. Now this side, now on that,

480



The two sides at the Ausonian threshold, as  
When, in a great storm, wind contends with wind,  
Wind against sea, and sky, unyielding forces.

490

Thus was it with the sons of Troy and the sons  
Of Latins locked in struggle, man against man.

A ways away from there, wherever a river  
Torrent had thrown down rocks and had broken trees  
Along its sides, the debris scattered around,  
Pallas saw his ignominious warriors  
Retreating, on foot, having abandoned their horses  
Because of the rough terrain; pursued by Latins  
And trying to make their way, back to the shore.

500

All he could think to do was call out to them  
In scolding arousing speech: "My fellow soldiers,  
Where are you going? Why retreating? Why?  
Remember who you are, the courage you  
Have had and you have showed, your victories.  
Remember Evander and his reputation,  
And the glory of your people. Remember me,  
Evander's son, and my desire to win  
A glory here like his. Can it be that you want  
To give it all up and go back to what was Troy?  
The only thing to do is, turn around,  
And go to where the fighting is thickest, and fight!"  
And saying this, he plunged into the fray.

510

First there was Lagus, there by unlucky fate,  
Bent over trying to lift up a huge great stone  
He was going to heave down the hill at the foe; but Pallas  
Hurled his spear at Lagus stooping there,  
And it struck him in his spine just where the spine  
Divides the ribs on each side of the body;  
And Hisbo, seeing this, saw young Pallas, who

520

Was wresting the spear from the backbone where it impaled  
The corpse of Lagus, and Hisbo came rushing down  
To surprise him in revenge for the cruel way  
His friend had been killed. But Hisbo, breathing hard,  
Got there too late, for Pallas saw he was coming,  
And turned, and hurled, and buried his spear in Hisbo's  
Gasping lung. Next he took care of Sthenius;  
Anchemolus next, of the ancient Rhoetian line,  
Who, with his stepmother, profaned his father's sacred  
Marital bed; and you, Larides and Thymber, 530  
You twins, you sons of Daucus, you who were so  
Exactly alike it amused your parents that  
They couldn't tell which one of you was which,  
But Pallas's sword could tell which one was which:  
Thymber, it cut off your head, and, Larides, it  
Severed your hand, and, half-alive, your fingers  
Fingered about in the dust and tried to crawl,  
Trying to find where was the sword they'd held.  
And when the Arcadians saw these glorious deeds, 540  
Shame and remorse rekindled their ardor for war.

As Rhoeteus in his two-horse chariot  
Was fleeing from you, brave Teuthras, and Tyres, your brother,  
His body intercepted Pallas's spear,  
Which Pallas had aimed, from a far distance, at Ilus,  
So Ilus, by this, had only just that much  
Longer to be alive. Rhoeteus, struck,  
Fell sideways out of his speeding chariot,  
And flat on his back; he died. His frantic heels  
Protesting as he died, were drumming on 550  
The Rutulian earth.

It is as when a shepherd  
Has set a few fires in different parts of a woods,  
And then with the help of the summer winds the fires

Come together and together become  
One great oneness of blazing, all of it, and  
The exulting shepherd sits at the top of a hill,  
Joyfully looking down at the flames below;  
Thus, Pallas, your joy in seeing how your comrades  
In the fellowship of courage come together.

560

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But then warlustful Halaesus gathered all  
His formidable strength and went to meet  
The Trojan enemy, and slaughtered Pheres,  
And Ladon then, and then Demodocus, and,  
After them, with one swipe of his sword, cut off  
Strymonius' hand he had raised to protect his throat;  
And after that he smashed a heavy rock  
Into Thoas's face with such force that the blood,  
Mingled with bones and brain, poured out. Halaesus's  
Father, warding off fate, had hidden him in  
The woods to keep his son from war, but when  
The father's eyes sealed over in death, the Fates  
Saw to it that the son was consecrated  
To Pallas's father's spear, Evander's spear,  
Which Pallas was poised to hurl, saying this prayer:  
"If you will grant this missile, Father Thybris,  
Good fortune to go straight into Halaesus's breast,  
His armor will be hung from the branches of  
Your sacred oak." His prayer was heard. Unlucky  
Halaesus was using his shield to protect Imaon,  
So the missile went straight to his own unshielded breast.

570

580

But Lausus, Mazentius' son, in order to  
Prevent his soldiers from being overwhelmed  
With terror at the sight of all this killing  
Done by Arcadian Pallas, desired to set

An example in response to him. First, then,  
When confronted by Abas, who was the foremost master  
Exemplar of Trojan defensive fighting skills,  
He killed him, and then, one after another, he killed,  
Systematically, many others, Etruscan  
Sons, Arcadian sons, and Trojans, you  
Whose bodies had survived the fights at Troy.

590

Two armies, pressed together, leaders and common  
Soldiers, so crowded together that neither hands  
Nor weapons could be raised, the front ranks and  
The rear together, and Pallas and Lausus in  
The center, urging their own, the two of them,  
Almost the same age as each other, both of them  
Beautiful, neither of them to be  
Allowed by Fortune ever to get back home.  
But the ruler of great Olympus on high did not  
Permit their final meeting, saving the death  
Of each of them for someone greater than they.

600

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Meanwhile, when Turnus's sister urged Turnus to take  
The place of Lausus on the field, he went  
In his swift chariot into the midst of the fighting,  
And, seeing his soldiers there, cried out to them,  
"Now is the time for you to suspend the fighting.  
Pallas is owed to me, and me alone.  
I only wish his father were here to see it."  
His people obeyed his orders and stood aside.  
When Pallas heard these arrogant commands,  
And saw the soldiers draw back, and Turnus there,  
He wondered at Turnus's body, the size of it,  
The power. His face was grim and he responded  
This way to what the Rutulian hero had said:

610

“I will win glory today, either by stripping  
His armor from my country’s enemy,  
Or by a glorious death. Whichever way  
Its value will be the same for my grieving father.  
No more insults from you.” And he strode into  
The arena made by both sides having stood down.

620

The blood in the veins of the Trojans, watching, turned cold.  
Turnus leaped down from his chariot, and went  
Rapidly toward Pallas. It was as when  
A lion, from some high place, sees in the distance  
A bull that’s ready for taking. Pallas, maybe hoping  
The gods would favor the lesser man for his daring,  
Went first, calling out to great Hercules on high,  
“By the hospitality of my father to you,  
When you were a stranger and entered under his roof,  
Hercules, help me in this great deed I attempt.  
May it be that Turnus will see, with his dying eyes,  
Who it is who’s stripping his armor from his body,  
And taking the glorious spoils.”

630

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Hercules heard him,  
And groaned and shed a few unavailing tears.  
His father, Jupiter, tenderly spoke to him, saying:  
“Each man has his fated day, and life is short  
When time runs out for each. It cannot be changed.  
But the hero must validate the time he has,  
By the glory of what he does. Many are those  
Who fell before the walls of Troy. Sarpedon,  
My son, was one of them. For Turnus, also,  
The limit of his time has come.” Jove spoke,  
And then averted his eyes from Rutulian fields.

640

But Pallas used all his strength to hurl his spear  
 And drew his shining sword from its hollow scabbard;  
 The spear went flying at Turnus, and it struck,  
 But it struck high up at the upper edge of the shield; 650  
 It made its way in, but only grazed the skin  
 Of great Turnus's body; and he, in turn, as he  
 Poised his oaken spear with its deadly spearhead  
 Above his head, called out, "Let's see if this  
 My spear goes farther in than that," and hurled it,  
 And it struck right through the middle of Pallas's shield,  
 Right through its plates of iron, its plates of brass,  
 Right through its bull's hide coverings and through  
 The breastplate, last protection of the body,  
 And finished, hurtling into his mighty chest. 660  
 Frantic, he wrenched the missile from the hot wound,  
 And with the missile his blood and his life poured out.  
 Pallas fell forward dying on his wound;  
 His armor rang around him as he fell;  
 His bloody mouth was mouthing the enemy earth.

Turnus stood over him then and proudly said,  
 "Arcadians, this message is for Evander.  
 Here is Pallas your son, sent back to you,  
 As he deserved to be. Whatever there is  
 To be done to honor him at whatever tomb, 670  
 By whatever custom there is, I freely grant.  
 But you ought not have welcomed Aeneas into your house,  
 And you will have to pay for having done so."  
 And with that he put his left foot on the dead body,  
 And reached across it to strip from it the great  
 Heavy sword-belt on which Eurytides  
 Engraved in gold the atrocious story of how,

On their wedding night, fifty young men were slain  
By their brides incited by their wicked father.  
Men do not know what fate has in store for them,  
Nor of their exaltation know its end.  
The day will come when Turnus will wish that Pallas  
Was still alive, and he will hate the spoils  
He took from his dead body and gloried in.  
But Pallas's grieving comrades placed his body  
Upon his shield and carried him away,  
And with great honor, to take him to his father:  
One day in war was all there was, but he  
Left many slain Rutulians in the field.

680

• • •

First, rumors of calamity, and then  
An eyewitness messenger bringing Aeneas the truth:  
The line between the Trojans and utter death  
Was thin to disappearing, almost gone.  
There was a desperate need for help. Aeneas,  
Aroused, raged through the ranks of the enemy army,  
Cutting a path of death as he went to find  
Turnus and Turnus's pride in what he had done.  
All he could see in his mind were Pallas, Evander,  
The tables they had sat at, the right-hand hand-clasp  
Pledges of peace there had been. He seized four sons  
Of Sulmo, four sons of Ufens, young men whose blood  
Would later be poured into the funeral flames  
In sacrifice for Pallas at the rites.  
Then there was Magus: when Aeneas hurled  
His mighty spear at him he ducked it, ducked  
Agilely under it, and the spear flew past  
Above his head, and Magus, then, was upon  
His knees before Aeneas, imploring, saying,  
"By your father and by your shades, and by your hopes

690

700

For Iulus your growing son, I pray, spare my life  
For the sake of my growing son, and for my father.  
Our family has a palace, high up in the hills,  
And deep in the palace cellars there are many  
Talents of silver incised with legends, and many  
Piles of gold, both wrought and as yet not wrought.  
Victory for Troy won't be delayed  
By one life left to live, so let me live."  
"Keep your gold and silver for your son,"  
Aeneas said. "The time for bargaining  
Was past when Pallas was killed by Turnus. This  
Is the judgment of my father Anchises' shade,  
And of my son, my Iulus." With his left hand  
He held the pleading head of Magus back,  
And plunged his sword in, to the very hilt.

710

720

Not far away was Haemonides, who was  
A priest in the sacred rites of Diana and  
Of Phoebus Apollo; he wore the white-wool priestly  
Headband, and his armor shone with white  
Insignia of his priesthood; Aeneas attacked,  
And drove him across the field, and when he fell,  
Aeneas, standing over him, cast a dark shadow  
Upon the white battle dress he was wearing, and  
Sent him as an offering to the shades.  
Serestus carried the armor back on his shoulders,  
As trophy spoils in honor of Mars Gradivus.

730

The fight was renewed by two: Caeculus, fierce  
Descendant of Vulcan's race, and Umbro, who  
Had come to the war down from the Marsian hills.  
Aeneas ravaged the two in raging fury.  
His sword had just then severed Anxur's left hand,  
And with the same stroke he shattered Anxur's shield,  
Its oval center useless on the ground—

740



Anxur—he boasted of his great powers and  
He seemed to have believed he really had them,  
And promised himself long life and many years.  
Tarquitus, next, who was the son of Faunus,  
God of the woods, and of Dryope, a nymph,  
Exulting in the boast of his glittering armor,  
Stood right in the way of Aeneas’s scorching rampage.

Aeneas drew back his spear and hurled it at him, 750  
And the spear pinned the shield and the breastplate both together,  
So what could he do, so helpless, but plead for mercy,  
And keep on trying to plead for mercy, as  
Aeneas smashed his severed head to the ground.

As his body rolled aside Aeneas stood  
Over the body and said to the body, his voice  
Full of contemptuous hatred of it, “Lie there,  
Pretense of a hero, your mother won’t be able  
To build a memorial tomb for you, back home.  
Let the wild birds have you, or let you be thrown into 760  
The sea and be washed away in the waves, and as  
Your body tumbles around in the water, let  
The hungry fish lick hungrily at your wounds.”

After that he went after Antaeus and Lucas, two  
Of Turnus’s foremost captains, and then, brave Numa,  
And blond Camers, the son of magnanimous Volcens,  
The richest in fields of all of Italy  
And governor of silent Amyclae.

Aeneas was like the dragon Aegaeon, 770  
One hundred arms, they say, one hundred hands,  
And fifty mouths, breathing out fire, and fifty  
Breasts on fire, and fifty swords and fifty  
Shields against the thunderbolts of Jove.

Then, look, there was Niphaeus’s four-horse chariot,  
The big-chested horses confronting him, but when  
They saw the hero striding toward them and

They heard him roar, in terror they turned and ran,  
Spilling their master out, the chariot  
Rumbling behind them as they raced for the shore.

Right after this a two-horse chariot came  
Into the fighting, in it two brothers, one  
Was Lucagus, holding the reins, the other was Liger,  
Madly waving his sword, kill-ready, flaunting.  
Aeneas couldn't bear this flourishing.

780

Spear poised he rushed to where the brothers were,  
And appeared before them, huge. Liger cried out,  
“These aren't Diomedes' horses! It's not Achilles'  
Chariot you're looking at! It's not  
The plains of Troy you're on! It's here and now,  
The end of you and with you the end of war!”

790

Aeneas didn't answer him with words;  
But with his whirling spear he answered him.  
Lucagus was bent forward, urging on  
The horses with the flat of his sword, and with  
His left foot, getting ready to fight, extended  
Out from the chariot side; the javelin struck  
At the lowest border of his shining shield,  
And went into the groin; Lucagus was  
Expelled from the chariot and rolled across  
The sward and as he died Aeneas said,

800

Taking fast hold of the bridles of the horses,  
“Don't blame your horses; it's you deserted them;  
They didn't bolt away from an enemy shadow;  
You bolted away from your chariot and them.”  
And as he took fast hold of the horses' bridles  
The unhappy brother, having fallen out too,  
Stretched out his pleading hands, and said to him,  
“By who you are, and who it is your parents  
Brought you up to be, great Trojan, have  
Mercy on me, do not deprive me of life.”  
He tried to go on pleading but pious Aeneas

810

Said to him: “This isn’t how you talked just now.  
Brother should not desert brother into death.”  
With the point of his sword he opened up in his chest  
The place which is the hiding place of the soul.

Thus, like a torrent run wild or a black storm wind,  
The Dardanian chief on the battlefield was the cause  
Of so many deaths, and thus Ascanius,  
And the Trojan youths, were freed from within the walls  
Of the stronghold where they were penned, and the siege was over. 820

• • •

Meanwhile, Jupiter said to Juno, his wife:  
“Dear sister of mine and dearest wife of mine,  
You will already have been told that because  
Of Venus the Teucrians have survived, and not  
Because of their valor or skill in fighting, nor  
Because of their patience or their withstanding the siege.”  
Juno humbly replied, “Most beautiful  
Of husbands, why upset me so with these  
Frightening words, when I am worried sick.  
If you still loved me as you used to love me, 830  
And as you ought to still, then why not grant  
What I ask of you, that Turnus be sent home  
Safe and sound to the town of his father Daunus?  
As things are now, let him die, his innocent blood  
A sacrifice to the vengeance of the Trojans.  
But remember that Turnus is of the blood of Pilumnus,  
God of his household, his great-great-grandsire, and  
Your altar has been heavy with his gifts.”  
Jupiter, king of Olympus, briefly replied,  
“If what you ask is for his death to be 840  
Put off for a little while, it shall be so.  
Go rescue him for now from what is now  
Impending. But if there’s more in what you ask,

And in the way that you ask it, that this would change  
The outcome of the war, or what is willed,  
Then what you hope for has in vain been hoped for.”  
Juno, in tears, replied: “But if your heart  
Differs from what your voice is telling me,  
Might Turnus be freed from what I fear for him?  
As it is now, my terror-stricken fears  
Tell me that he is under sentence of death,  
Though innocent; if these my fears are false,  
I welcome mockery; but you are free  
To change it, any or all of it, just as you please.”

850

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Having said what she said, Juno the goddess  
On her storm chariot came down through the clouds,  
And sought the plain between the Laurentine camp  
And where the Trojans were, and there she created,  
Out of the tenuous air a powerless brainless  
Creature made of the airy nothing it was;  
But freakily it was Aeneas' semblance,  
The semblance of his helmet with its plumes,  
The semblance of his shield and of his weapons,  
A creature speaking words that had no meaning,  
Its phantom hand that waved a phantom sword;  
And as this image of Aeneas leaped  
And gamboled, flourishing and challenging, it  
Was like something come back from the other world, or else  
Something in a dream the dreamer was dreaming.  
And Turnus rushed at the creature, and threw his spear,  
And the creature fled away, and Turnus, exulting,  
Drinking deep from an empty cup of hope,  
Pursued it, thinking that victory was his,  
And derisively cried out, “Aeneas, come back,  
You're going to miss your wedding. The bride is yours.  
The land is yours you came across the seas for.

860

870

I have it here in my right hand for you.”  
The winds were scattering what he was saying, as  
He ran pursuing the creature where it went.  
The figment fled toward where there was a ship, 880  
Moored there and tied up to a high rock ledge,  
Its ladders lowered and its planks all ready  
For King Osinius’ troops from Clusium  
To come ashore; and simulating fear  
It fled on board the ship and hid somewhere.  
Turnus, just as fast, raced past or over  
Anything in his way, leaped over across  
To the high prow of the ship, and just as he did,  
The daughter of Saturn cut the cable and  
The ship slid back, taking Turnus on it on 890  
The ebb tide out to sea, and, aboard the ship,  
The airy figment came out of wherever it was,  
And rose and blended into the blackness of  
A cloud above.

Meanwhile in the battle fray  
The real Aeneas was seeking absent Turnus  
To challenge him, and as he fought to do so  
He sent many warrior bodies down to death.  
And Turnus, whom the bewildering wind had carried  
Over the waves to safety, and all at sea 900  
About it all, cried out, “What’s happening?  
What’s happening? Where am I going to?  
What have I done? Omnipotent God,  
What am I being punished for? My soldiers,  
What can they do, who followed me into the battle?  
I see them wandering on the plain without  
The leader who led them there. I see them dying,  
I hear them groaning as they die back there.  
You winds have mercy on me, blow this ship  
On the waves, on the rocks, on the sands, somewhere, somewhere, 910  
Anywhere where there’s no Rutulians there

To see me so disgraced. Where is their Turnus?"  
And so his mind among the winds and waves  
Was fluctuating so, this way and that way,  
Not knowing whether to take his life with his own  
Sword sliding between his ribs, or leap into  
The sea and try to swim to the faraway shore  
To find the Trojans and to find his own people,  
To fight again where he had been fighting before.  
But Juno in her pity prevented him  
From either way, and so he was carried upon  
The billowing waves and the favoring currents, home  
To the ancient royal town of his father Daunus.

920

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But then, at Jupiter's urging, Mezentius  
Entered, violent, into the fight against  
The exultant Trojans, and they, unanimous  
In hatred of him, surrounded him with all  
Their weapons; but Mezentius stood there,  
Like a great cliff standing out into the sea,  
Buffeted by the waves and winds from the sky,  
Uncaring and unyielding. First he kills  
Hebrus, son of Dolichaon, and next,  
Latagus, then, Palmus running away;  
Latagus with a huge rock fragment torn  
From the hillside, smashing his face to pieces; then  
He hamstringed Palmus the runaway so that he lies  
Dying writhing his no-longer-running legs;  
Mezentius gives his armor to Lausus his son  
To carry on his shoulders and wear his plumed  
Helmet on his head. And then it was  
Evanthes the Phrygian, and Mimas who had  
Been Paris's friend when they were children and  
Was brought into the light the very same night  
That Paris's mother, Hecuba, Cisseus' daughter,

930

940

Dreamed she was giving birth to a flaming torch,  
And Paris was the baby she gave birth to,  
Priam's son, and Mimas's friend and comrade.  
Paris lies dead in his father's burned-down city;  
Mimas, unknown, on this foreign Laurentine shore.

Mezentius was like a wild boar driven  
By snapping biting dogs down from the high  
Places on Mount Vetulus or in the reedy  
Laurentian forests where he fed, and finally  
Cornered between the hunters' nets, stands snarling,  
Brave, bristling his mighty shoulders, considering  
Which way to turn to attack to defend himself,  
And all the men surrounding him don't dare  
To run at him or get too close, no matter  
How right the reasons they have for hating him;  
So from a distance they hurl their spears and shout.

950

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And after that there was Acron, the young Greek, who  
Had had to come down to the war from Corythus, before  
His wedding night had time to have taken place,  
And when Mezentius saw him, from a distance,  
Ardently embroiled in the hectic fighting,  
Dressed in the crimson warrior garb, with the purple  
Feathers floating from his helmet crest,  
That his promised bride had joyfully made for him,  
It's as when a famished lion looks across  
The fields and sees a she-goat over there,  
Or maybe a stag, full-antlered, and the hair  
Of the lion's shaggy mane's aroused, and he opens  
His hungry desiring mouth; he feasts upon  
The viscera of the creature, and the gobbets  
Of flesh wash through his bloody mouth. Just so,  
Mezentius, delighted, entered the fray,  
And dying Acron lay drumming his heels, his blood  
Spilling out upon his own broken weapons. Then

970

Mezentius saw Orodes running from him,  
And he thought it beneath his dignity to kill 980  
From behind as if he were a robber, so  
He ran before him and turned around so as  
To kill him man-to-man and face to face,  
And when he stood, with his foot upon his fallen  
Body, and leaning on his spear, cried out,  
“Look, see how I have killed this Orodes, who wasn’t  
The least of you in war. He stood so tall,  
And now does not.” Mezentius’ joyful soldiers  
Cheered, but Orodes, dying, managed to say:  
“You have so little time to rejoice for this. 990  
The time will come very soon when you, like me,  
Will lie here dying.” Mezentius, smiling, and not,  
Said, “That’s for the king of the gods and men to know,”  
And he pulled his spear out of Orodes’ body,  
And iron Sleep closed over his eyes for ever.

Then Caedicus killed Alcahous, and Sacrator  
Killed Hydaspes, and Rapo killed Parthenius,  
And Orses, famously strong; Messapus killed  
Clonius, and Lycaon’s son Erichaetes,  
The one who had lost control of the horses’ reins, 1000  
The other on foot; and Agis the Lycian also  
Was killed as he came on foot, by Valerus,  
Who showed by this he had the family courage;  
And Thronius was killed by Salius,  
And Salius by an arrow sent from far,  
By Nealces who was known to be good at this.

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Mars impartially deals out grief and death;  
Equally they kill and equally die,  
Victors and victims alike; the gods look down  
From Jupiter’s palace above, and pity them, 1010



Sorrowing for the mutual labors of men;  
Venus looks down, and opposite her, Saturnian  
Juno looks down; and Tisiphone down there rages,  
Pale as death among the thousands fighting.

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Then came Mezentius again, gigantic,  
Looking like Orion as Orion's  
Mighty feet step after step strode hugely  
Upon the floor of the sea through waves that, billowing up,  
Couldn't billow high enough to reach his shoulders;  
Or he looked like a giant coming down a mountain, 1020  
So tall, his head in enshrouding mountain clouds,  
And holding an ancient ash tree in one hand.

Aeneas saw him where he was in the long  
Line of battle, and, ready for the encounter,  
He moved to the confrontation. Mezentius stood  
Fearless, as huge as a cliffside, ready, eyeing  
The distance between the two of them to gauge  
How he would throw his spear, and saying to  
Himself, "My god, my right hand, help me now,  
As now I take my aim and hurl my weapon. 1030  
May the armor, stripped from the body of this pirate,  
Aeneas, be worn by Lausus as his trophy."  
And then he hurled it, and it went, revolving,  
Hissing, shrilling, fast, across the distance  
Between himself and Aeneas, and with tremendous  
Force it caromed off Aeneas's shield,  
Fatally striking noble Antores, between  
The groin and the lower flank of him who'd been  
Hercules' comrade, and who had come, a stranger,  
From Argos to join Evander and to settle 1040  
In his Italian town. He died of a wound  
Not meant for him, and as he, dying, lay,

Looking up at the sky, there were pictures in  
His mind of his sweet Argos he had left.

Then pious Aeneas hurled his spear; it struck  
And penetrated three bronze layers of  
The orb at the center of Mezentius' shield,  
And through the three stitched linen-covered bull-hide  
Layers beyond, and pierced, though losing force,  
Mezentius' groin, and settled itself in the wound. 1050  
Aeneas, at the sight of Tyrrhenian blood,  
Excitedly pulled his exultant sword from its scabbard,  
And Lausus groaned and wept at what he was seeing,  
His father, whom he loved, in such distress.  
—Lausus, so men in the far-off future will know  
Of what you did, I will ever tell the story;  
You are a youth the greatness of whose deed  
Is never to be forgotten, the history  
Of how you died, trying to save your father—  
His father, helpless, entrapped by the shield 1060  
He dragged behind him, the spear still hanging from it,  
Was trying to make his way away from this,  
Aeneas standing above him and ready to strike,  
When the son rushed in between them, and hindered the blow,  
And all his comrades shouted, and from their distance  
Showered Aeneas with missiles, and so the father  
Managed to live, for a little, protected by  
The small heroic shield of his young son.

Under this showering onslaught of missiles Aeneas  
Had to take cover under his shield. It was 1070  
As when a storm of rain and hail comes on,  
And all the workers in the fields, and the passers-by,  
Must look for shelter somewhere, under the pending,  
Say, of a riverbank, or the overhang  
Of a rocky cliff, or in a nearby cavern,  
Until the storm is over and it's time

For the interrupted work to begin again.  
So, after having withstood the hail of missiles,  
Aeneas confronted Lausus and said to him, chiding,  
“Why, so young, in such a hurry to die? 1080  
You’re trying to do what you’re not yet able to do.  
Is filial piety making a fool of you?”  
But the youth still exulted in his madness, and  
Terminal anger rose up in the heart of Aeneas,  
The leader of the Dardanians, and now  
It was the time for the Fates to spin the last thread.  
His mighty sword descended on the boy,  
And went straight through the little shield he carried,  
Piercing deep to its hilt in Lausus’s belly;  
The tunic he wore, that his mother had woven with loving 1090  
Threads of gold, was soaked with the blood pouring out,  
And sorrowing life departed from his body  
And through the air flew away to the place of the Shades.

But truly when the son of Anchises saw  
The face, the features of the face, so pale  
With the paleness of his dying, he groaned, and with  
Mournful pity he stretched out his right hand  
As he thought of his own father and his own  
Filial pious love that was so like this,  
And he said to Lausus’s body, “What can Aeneas 1100  
Give, O wretched boy, worthy of deeds  
Like these that you have done? What is it that  
Pious Aeneas can do but send your armor,  
That you so delighted to wear, home with your body,  
To be with the shades and ashes of your people,  
And perhaps it can solace you that they will say,  
‘He met his death by the hand of the great Aeneas.’”  
And then he scornfully called upon the comrades  
Of Lausus to venture nearer, and, himself,  
He lifted up the body from the ground, 1110  
Where the blood has soiled and clotted its beautiful hair.

Meanwhile his father, over by the Tiber,  
 Was leaning against the trunk of a tree, attempting  
 To salve his wound with clear water from the stream,  
 His bronzen helmet hanging from a branch;  
 His armor lying quiet in the meadow;  
 His chosen fellows were standing around him where  
 He sat, bent over, trying to wash his neck,  
 Gasping for breath, the water streaming down  
 Through his great beard and onto his mighty chest; 1120  
 He kept asking over and over for news of Lausus,  
 And sending orders to him, to call him back,  
 But Lausus was dead already, and, even then,  
 Soldiers, weeping, were bearing his body back  
 Upon his armor, a mighty warrior's body  
 Slain by a mightier warrior than he.

Mezentius knew what his mind had already known,  
 As he heard the soldiers weeping as they came;  
 With his hands he despoiled his hair with dust of the earth,  
 And raised his hands to the skies, and then flung himself down 1130  
 Upon the body of his son, and cried out, "Why  
 Did I want so much to be alive that I  
 Allowed my child, my son, to rescue me  
 By putting himself between me and the sword?  
 Were you, my child, the one who lost your life  
 By saving the life of the father who begot you?  
 And the father who soiled the name of the virtuous son?  
 What has happened to you, and the wound I suffered, for which  
 You lost your life, has driven home to me  
 What I have been and what it is I am, 1140  
 In this exile from what I ought to have been and what  
 I ought to have done. For my odious crimes for which  
 My people hated me and drove me away  
 From them and from my kingship, the scepter and rule

Of my fathers, I ought to have suffered the punishment  
That I deserved, but I still live, unpunished,  
Here in the light of day, while you are gone.  
But I will leave this light, I will.” Saying this  
He raised himself up, to stand in spite of his weakness  
And his wounded thigh, and as if not noticing these, 1150  
He called for his horse, the horse he took such pride in,  
The horse he had ridden from triumph to triumph in war.  
He said to his horse, “Rhoebus, we have lived  
Long together, if life is ever long.  
Today we will either win together and you  
Will take revenge with me on him for what  
He did to Lausus my son, and you will carry  
Back with me on your back the armor stripped  
From Aeneas, and with his head; or if we find  
That our way to doing this is blocked, then we 1160  
Will fall together. I don’t think you will consent  
To live to be obedient to some Trojan.”

With that he mounted into the saddle he was  
So used to, and, wearing his bronzen helmet with  
Its horsehair plumes, in both hands javelins,  
He galloped, out of his mind with shame, rage, grief,  
Onto the scene of battle. Three times he calls  
The name of Aeneas out, and Aeneas hears him,  
Joyful at hearing him and prays to the gods,  
“Let the Father of the Gods, and let Apollo 1170  
Be with me now,” and moved toward Mezentius,  
Threatening him with his great spear, and he,  
Mezentius, cried out, “Don’t think that you,  
You savage, can frighten me. Neither my son  
Nor I will bargain with the fear of death,  
Nor of any gods. It is my purpose here  
To die, but first I have these gifts to give.”  
And with these words he hurled a javelin, and  
Then another, and another, and

Another, and another, and Aeneas's  
Great shield withstood them all. Three times  
Mezentius circled around and around him, hurling  
His javelins, and Aeneas, turning with him,  
Withstood them all, and then at last, refusing  
To be defensive any longer, and weary  
Of plucking javelin after javelin from his shield,  
Suddenly broke forward and aimed his spear  
At Mezentius' horse and struck it in the hollow  
Between the temples of its head, and the horse,  
In pain and fear, rose up and with its forefeet  
Kicked at the wind, and pitched its rider off,  
And fell upon his master so he was pinned  
Under the dislocated great horse shoulder.  
The Trojans and Latins shouting inflamed the skies.  
Aeneas drew his sword from its sheath and went  
Rapidly over to where Mezentius lay,  
And said, "Where now is that wild animal power  
You had, that was your soul?" Mezentius lay there,  
Searching the sky with his eyes, and drinking in  
The air; and coming back to his senses, said,  
"You are my enemy, and you have won.  
Why waste your words, threatening me with death.  
I had no thoughts of bargaining for life,  
Nor did my son when he entered into battle.  
It is right that, being the victor, you should kill me.  
I only ask one favor from the winner.  
My people hate me. Protect my body from what  
Their fury would do to it, that it may lie  
Together with the body of my son,  
Under the cover of earth." Having said this,  
In full awareness of what it was he did,  
He offered his throat to the sword, and his life poured out  
In gushing streams of blood upon his armor.



# Book Eleven

Aurora was rising up from the sea, and Aeneas,  
Though grieving in his heart for those who died,  
First made his vows to the gods and then cut all  
Of its branches from a great oak tree, and stood  
Its naked trunk on a mound of earth, and put  
The dead man's shining armor on it, trophy  
To show to Mars All-Powerful-In-War;  
And at the top of it he hung Mezentius'  
Helmet from which dewdrops of blood dripped down;  
In the breastplate that he put on it were twelve 10  
Holes his spear had made, and hanging down  
From the effigy's neck its ivory-handled knife;  
Tied to the left side was the round bronze shield  
Mezentius had carried; on the right,  
Several bronze spears, broken in battle. This done,  
Aeneas spoke to the other leaders, who  
Were gathered around him: "Great things have been achieved.  
There is no need to fear what the future will bring.  
These are the spoils and this is proud Mezentius,  
First fruits of war plucked down by my own hands. 20  
Next we must go to the king of the Latins and  
The walls of his city. Be armed, make ready, give over  
All your thoughts and all your hopes to war;  
Have nothing in your minds that would hold you back  
Or distract you when the signal comes from the gods  
To march the army forth to the battlefield.



Meanwhile we must attend to the burial of  
Our comrades, whose bodies lie unburied here.  
The funeral rite is the only honor that  
Is recognized in the region down below. 30  
Therefore, go,” he said, “and pay what is due  
To these noble spirits who gave with their blood their lives,  
To save their country. But first let Pallas’s body  
Be sent to his father Evander’s grieving city,  
For Pallas was one whose courage never failed him.  
But his black day has carried him away,  
And death has overwhelmed him.”

Thus, weeping, he spoke,  
And then returned to his house, wherein there lay  
The body of young Pallas, attended by 40  
The aged Acoetes, who himself had been  
Arms-bearer to Arcadian Evander,  
And who, now under worse auspices, kept watch  
Over the boy he had been the guardian of.  
Gathered around the body where it lay  
Were a crowd of Trojan soldiers in attendance,  
And Trojan women with their hair unbound,  
According to the custom; and when Aeneas  
Entered the room the great bellowing sound  
Of lamentation rose as high as the stars, 50  
And there was beating of breasts in lamentation.  
And Aeneas, when he saw Pallas’s face,  
And in his snow-white chest the open wound  
The Ausonian had made, burst into tears,  
And cried, “O wretched child, Fortune has kept you  
From sharing in the good things that have happened,  
And now you will not see us in our kingdom,  
Nor ride victorious home to your father’s city.  
This isn’t what I promised to Evander,  
When I was leaving Pallanteum with his child 60  
To take up my great command, and he embraced me,

And warned me at the parting that we were going  
To fight against a dangerous race of men.  
And now, back there, enthralled by empty hopes,  
He's making vows to the gods, and on their altars  
Imploring them with gifts to keep him safe.  
But the body we're bringing back to him owes nothing  
More to the gods than it has given already.  
Is this what it all has come down to? Is this what I  
Have trusted my faith to? But the horrific wounds  
That Evander will see on the body of his son  
Have brought no shame with them. Evander is not  
One of those fathers who'll have to wish that his son,  
Shamefully still alive, had died like this.  
What a great defender Arcadia has lost,  
And, Iulus, you have lost."

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And saying this,  
He ordered that the body be raised, and that  
A thousand soldiers from the army should  
Accompany it in the funeral cortège,  
To share their tears with his father's at the rites,  
As owed to the father, although for such a sorrow  
The payment is meager. A bier was constructed, adorned  
With arbutus and intertwined oak-leaved branchlets,  
And shadowed overhead with many garlands.  
They placed the body high on its bed of straw.  
He looked like a flower a young maiden had picked,  
Soft violet, say, or a hyacinth fallen,  
Not faded, as yet, as yet not having lost  
Its shape, but now, it is true, no longer being  
Fed and fostered by its mother earth.  
Then Aeneas brought out two robes Sidonian Dido,  
Happy at the work of doing so,  
Had made for him, finishing it with lines  
Of threaded gold. His final act of honor  
Was to wrap the body in these funeral shrouds,

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One of them arranged so as to veil  
The hair that will so soon be offered to flames;  
On the bier he piled up many trophies that Pallas  
Had stripped from the bodies of the Laurentians, and 100  
He ordered the captains to carry and display  
Still more of the trophies; and in the cortège there were  
The horses and spears of those whom Pallas had slain;  
And next in the procession were the captives,  
Hands tied behind their backs, whom Aeneas had chosen  
To be sent down as offerings to the shades,  
Their blood to be sprinkled in flames of the funeral fire;  
He ordered his captains after that to parade  
Tree trunks wearing the enemy armor, with names  
Of those whom Pallas had killed affixed to them. 110  
Then came, distraught, disheveled, old Acoetes,  
Beating his face with his fists, or with his fingers  
Tearing at it; he fell, and lay stretched out  
In grief upon the ground. Then they led by  
The chariots of the slain, with the signs upon them  
Of spattered Rutulian blood; and after that  
Came Aethon, Pallas's war horse, naked, without  
Its saddle and bridle harnesses, and, itself,  
Weeping great tears of faithful sorrowing.  
Then, finally, long lines of grieving soldiers, 120  
Teucrians and Tyrrhenians and Pallas's  
Own Arcadians, marching with weapons reversed.  
Aeneas halted, and, sighing deeply, said:  
"The Fates call us to other, and the same,  
Tears of this terrible war. For ever, Pallas,  
Great Pallas, hail and farewell." He turned back toward  
The high walls of his camp, and went to enter there.

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Then envoys came from the city, seeking a truce.  
They were carrying olive branches swathed in wool.

Dead bodies of Latins lay everywhere around,  
And the envoys were asking that they be allowed to take  
The bodies home, so they could be laid to rest  
In their native soil. "The dead," the envoys said,  
"Can no longer harm when they can no longer breathe  
The air and see the light of being alive.  
Spare them, some of them were your hosts, and some  
Might have been fathers of Trojan brides one day."  
Good Aeneas, without asperity, answered them,  
Granting them freely what they were asking for,  
And, further, said these peaceable words to them:

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"How is it that Fortune has gotten you involved  
In this unfortunate war, so now you flee  
From us who are your friends? You ask us to  
Let you bring back the bodies of your dead  
To honor them. I tell you that the peace  
We grant to the dead we would have freely granted  
While they were still alive. The reason we  
Are here is only because the Fates have told us  
That this is where we must come, to find our home.  
I had no hostile intent against your people;  
Your king was our friend, and now your king has chosen  
To put his faith in Turnus and Turnus's army.  
If Turnus desires to send the Trojans back,  
Then he should not have put these lives at risk,  
But only his, with mine, in single combat  
Man-to-man, and let the gods decide,  
Or our right hands decide, which it should be.  
But now, take up your dead and submit their bodies  
To the funeral fires and rites that honor them."

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The emissaries stood looking at one another,  
Open-mouthed, silent, because of what he said.  
Then Drances, who was the senior of the envoys,  
And who had always hated young Turnus and

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Opposed him at every turn, had this to say:  
“O great in fame, prodigious Trojan hero,  
Which praises are the first with which to praise you?  
Which object of our admiration is it?  
Your wisdom, is it, or what you have done in battle?  
We will return to our city grateful for what  
You have granted to us, and if Fortune will find us the way, 170  
May Aeneas and may our king be friends again,  
And may Turnus have to look for other allies.  
And more than that, we will join with you to build  
Upon their predicted foundations, our shoulders helping  
To raise them, the new walls of Troy.” He spoke,  
And with one voice his companions gave assent.

Twelve days of truce were decided, and for those days  
The Teucrians and the Latins worked together,  
Harmless to one another, in the woods.  
There was the sound of axes felling ash trees 180  
And the pines that reached up toward the stars above.  
Together they used wedges to split the oaks  
And fragrant cedars, and in groaning wagons  
Brought logs of the manna ash down the mountainside.

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Then Rumor, first harbinger of woe, came flying  
To the city of Evander and his people—  
Rumor, who had only so recently told  
Of Pallas’s victories on the fields in Latium.  
The Arcadians came to the gates of their town, and as  
Their custom was, took up their funeral torches, 190  
And all along the road, and stretching out  
Beyond, along the borders of the fields,  
As if to mark them out, there was a long  
Processional of grieving flaming lights  
Out there in the dark. Out there the weeping cortège

Of soldiers bringing Pallas's body home  
Met the weeping procession of citizens of the town;  
The matrons came out of their houses and there arose  
The clamor of the sorrow, filling the skies.  
Evander—no power on earth could keep from this— 200  
Came through the crowd of mourners around the bier,  
Shaking, weeping, and threw himself down upon  
The body of his son, and said to the body,  
“Pallas, my son, this isn't what you promised  
To your father; you promised him that you'd be cautious about  
Not getting yourself too close too early to  
The face of Mars. I know too well that when  
The young men go too young into the fight  
They want to get to glory right away.  
Wretched first fruits, gathered of that hard truth, 210  
The lesson that you learned. None of the gods  
Would listen to your father's prayers and vows,  
And you, dear sanctified wife, are kept by death  
From the knowledge of what this is that has happened to us,  
While I the father am left alone in this life,  
Surviving the son. It is I, it is not my son,  
Who should have been the one brought home by this  
Procession of trophies stripped from the bodies of  
These many Rutulians.

But Trojans, I do not blame you 220  
For this, nor do I regret our clasping of hands  
In mutual faith. This death is owed by the Fates.  
And if my child has died, so young, his glory  
Is that he has killed so many Rutulians,  
Helping the Trojans come into their Latium homeland;  
And so he deserves this grateful procession brought  
By Father Aeneas and his Phrygian warriors,  
The Etruscan captains and their men, and our  
Arcadian soldiers who were his comrades in battle.  
And, Turnus, as for you, your headless trunk 230

Would have been standing naked here in the fields,  
If he had had the years to grow to be  
As strong as you. But Trojans, why should my  
Unhappiness keep you here? Go tell Aeneas,  
And do not forget to do so, that all that sustains me  
Here in this wretched life, now Pallas is gone,  
Is what his strength and his right hand will do.  
Turnus's life is owed to the son and his father.  
When this is done I will go down to the shades  
To tell my child down there that the debt is paid."

240

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Aurora rose, spreading her pitying light,  
And with it bringing back to sight the labors  
Of sad mortality, what men have done,  
And what has been done to them; and what they must do  
To mourn. King Tarchon and Father Aeneas, together  
Upon the curving shore, caused there to be  
Wooden funeral pyres constructed, and to which  
The bodies of their dead were brought and placed there,  
In accordance with the customs of their countries.  
The black pitch smoke of the burning of the bodies  
Arose up high and darkened the sky above.  
Three times in shining armor the grieving warriors  
Circled the burning pyres, three times on horseback,  
Ululating, weeping, as they rode.  
You could see how teardrops glistened on their armor.  
The clamor of their sorrowing voices and  
The dolorous clang of trumpets rose together  
As they threw into the melancholy fires  
Spoils that had been stripped from the Latins, helmets,  
And decorated swords, bridles of horses,  
And glowing chariot wheels, and with them, also,  
Shields and weapons of their own familiar  
Comrades, which had failed to keep them alive.

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Bodies of beasts were thrown into the fire,  
Cattle, and bristle-backed swine, brought from surrounding  
Fields to be sacrificed to the god of death.  
And all along the shore the soldiers watched  
The burning of the bodies of their friends,  
And could not be turned away until the dewy  
Night changed all the sky and the stars came out.

270

Over there, where the Latins were, things were  
As miserable as this. Innumerable  
Scattered funeral pyres; many bodies  
Hastily buried in hastily dug-up earth,  
And many others, picked up from where they fell  
When they were slain, and carried back to the fields  
Which they had plowed and tilled before the fighting,  
Or back into the city where they came from;  
Others were indiscriminately burned,  
Unnamed, and so without ceremony or honor.  
The light of the burning fires was everywhere.  
On the third day when the light of day came back  
To show the hapless scene, they leveled out  
What was left of the pyres and separated what  
Was left of the bones, now cold and among cold ashes,  
And covered over the ashes and the bones.

280

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In a house high up in Latinus's rich city,  
There was transcendently the din of grief  
And desolation, outcry of mothers for  
Their fallen sons, young wives for their husbands, sisters  
Heartbroken for the brothers they have lost,  
Fatherless children wailing for their fathers;  
And there was execration of Turnus for  
This war and his marriage claims, Turnus who wants  
The kingdom and all the honors for himself;

290



And Drances weighs in to say, “Yes, all himself;  
If it’s all himself then he himself alone,  
With sword and shield should settle it alone.”  
But there were others there who disagreed,  
And spoke for Turnus, invoking in his support  
The great name of his promised mother-in-law,  
And the fame of his own glorious deeds of war.

300

In the middle of all of this, while the argument  
Was at its height, the envoys who had been sent  
To Diomedes returned, with depressing news:  
Nothing they’d hoped to achieve had been achieved,  
Neither by gifts, by gold, by fervent urgings.  
The message from Diomedes was that the Latins  
Should look for help elsewhere or else should find  
A way to seek to make peace with the Teucrians.  
The king, Latinus, was deeply cast down by this news.  
The Trojans were being favored by the gods,  
Who were showing their anger by all the funeral pyres  
He and the others were seeing before their eyes.  
The king announced he was calling a council together.

310

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All those whose presence had been invoked streamed through  
The streets of the town and entered the palace, where  
Latinus sat enthroned in majesty,  
First among all empowered for government.  
He called upon the leader of the envoys,  
To tell them all what Diomedes had said,  
Leaving nothing out, and Venulus obeyed:  
“Citizens, after a long and difficult journey,  
We reached the camp of Argive Diomedes,  
And clasped the hand that brought Ilium down to the ground,  
In his town in the fields near Mount Garganus, in  
The kingdom of Iapyx, Argyripa, after the name

320

Of his father's Argos. After we were admitted  
To Diomedes' presence we told him who  
We were and offered him our gifts, and spoke  
Urgently from our hearts, about why we had come,  
And the hopes we had for having help from him.  
He listened patiently, and gently replied:

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'O you of the ancient race of Ausonians,  
You fortunate people of the kingdom of Saturn,  
Enjoying such peace and quiet, why has your fortune  
Caused you to stir up war without knowing why?  
Think of our suffering, under the walls of the Troy  
Whose fields we violated. Think of how  
The river Simois's waters were choked with the bodies  
Of Grecians slain, think of us scattered around  
The world to pay for what it was we did.  
Priam, even, would pity us for what  
We have become. The gloomy star of Minerva  
Has looked at us; Euboea's terrible rocks  
Have welcomed us, and vengeful Caphareus;  
Menelaus Atrides is exiled where  
The Protean columns are; Ulysses at Aetna,  
Having to see the Cyclopean monster;  
The Locri cast out on the alien Libyan shore;  
And Neoptolemus, and Idomeneus,  
Both of them overthrown, their kingdoms lost:  
And even the Mycenaean chief, himself,  
The conqueror of Asia, home from the wars  
And crossing his own threshold into his house,  
Murdered by the lover, waiting there,  
Of his own venomous wife; and the gods, offended,  
Denying to me, in exile here, the sight  
Of my wife, my love, and the sight of the lovely  
Landscape of my Calydon. And lately  
I have seen frightening portents, those birds I see,  
In the sky over my head, or along the streams,

340

350

360

Or up on the island cliffs, importunate, crying,  
My comrades, killed in the action, crying, crying.  
And I am haunted too by the madness of  
My fighting against the gods and, with my sword,  
Wounding the sacred hand of the goddess Venus.  
Do not attempt to persuade me to go back  
To such a war, do not, do not, do that.  
We sacked the Pergamum, and the towers fell, 370  
But I don't hate the Trojans, and there's no pleasure  
In my remembering what those bad deeds were.  
Take back the gifts you have brought me from your nation.  
Give them instead to Aeneas. I've seen him fight.  
I tell you what it is to have seen Aeneas  
Rise up above his shield and what it is  
To have seen him hurl his cyclonic whirling spear.  
If Ida's ground had produced two more such men  
As these, the Trojans would have come to Greece  
And would have ransacked the Inachian towns, and Greece 380  
Would be lamenting the turn of fates against her.  
It was because of Aeneas and Hector, those two,  
Great in their courage, great in their skill, and Aeneas  
Greatest in filial piety, it was because  
Of the two of them that it took ten years before  
The walls of Troy fell down. Against such greatness,  
Peace, not war, must be offered.'

Good king, these are  
The answers of the king to whom we were sent."

› › ›

Almost before the envoy had finished speaking, 390  
The disturbed voices of those who heard him were like  
The noises you hear when a swiftly flowing river  
Encounters within its narrow banks the rocks  
Of a rapids, and there's the sound of its swirling and

Along the banks the muffled roaring of  
Its distress; and then when there was a calming and  
The fear in their voices was somewhat quieted,  
The king, first bowing to the gods, replied,  
Addressing these considered words to his people:  
“I would have wished that all of this would have been 400  
Settled before there was any need of a council,  
With an enemy waiting just outside our walls.  
We are fighting a hopeless war. The enemy  
Is invincible, untireable, no matter  
How near defeat, unbeatably resourceful.  
Forget any hope you had for help from Arpi.  
The hope for help you hoped for has come to nothing.  
Look at us with your own eyes. All that you see  
Has fallen down in ruins, all of it, all.  
I do not disparage anyone for this; 410  
What courage was able to do, it has been done.  
Now listen carefully to what I tell you  
About what in my doubtfulness of mind  
I have been thinking. There is, along the western  
Coast, beyond the Sicanian properties,  
A tract of land that I am owner of.  
Auruncians and Rutulians work the hard  
Soil of the lower flanks of its hills, and pasture  
Their flocks and herds above, where the soil is thinner.  
Let us offer this land, and its forests of pine still higher, 420  
To the Trojans if they wish it, with a treaty  
That guarantees friendly partnership with them.  
Or if it is their wish to depart from here,  
We will build, of oak wood from our forests, twice twenty  
Ships for them, to help them on their way.  
One hundred of our foremost men will go,  
Carrying peaceful branches with them, and gifts  
Of gold, and ivory, talents, and the imaged  
Robe and throne which are the insignia of  
My kingly office, to make our peace with them. 430

Consult together, and, I urge you, agree  
That this is the way to rescue us from our weakness.”

Then Drances spoke, malicious as always, obliquely  
Envious of Turnus because of his glory—  
Drances, plenty of money, and plenty of words,  
Though cold in the things of war. He was, in the councils,  
Not ineffectual in argument and  
An arguer for discord always. He was  
The son of a mother whose family was of  
The nobility, although his father came 440  
From a family whose origins were uncertain.  
When he spoke, the words he spoke were loaded with  
Vituperation and anger: “Good king, the way  
Things are, what fortune has brought our people down to,  
Has been obvious to them, though they were afraid  
To speak of it. But now, what you have said,  
And our seeing what has befallen us, makes us free  
To get past all of his blustering heroics  
(I say this in front of this menacing sword of his),  
His reckless actions, his threatening the skies 450  
With his terrifying gestures, all the while knowing  
How to get himself out of it, safe and unscathed.  
Look at the consequence, all of these bodies out there,  
Lying out there in the violated fields.  
Great king, add one more gift to the gifts that you  
Are offering to the Trojan. Give him your daughter,  
A father’s gift to him whose birth and whose  
Outstanding worth deserves it. Do so unfearing,  
Because it is right to do, and because we will then  
Ensure a lasting peace and amity. 460  
But if our hearts are still transfixed by fear  
Of Turnus himself, then we must urge him to  
Appeal to himself to yield his rights, for the sake  
Of king and country. Turnus, you are the source,  
You are the cause, of all the miseries of

The citizens of Latium. Time after time,  
You hurl them into terrible dangers. Why?  
All of us Latins are calling on you for peace,  
And for the one inviolable pledge  
Of continuing peace. There is no safety in war.  
I, whom you imagine to be your foe,  
Come (setting that aside) in supplication:  
Have pity on your people, put aside  
Your pride, admit that you are beaten, quit!  
For we have seen too many bodies dead,  
Too many of our fields left desolate.  
But if glory is still what moves you, that and desire  
For the dowry and the palace, why then, be brave,  
Go forth, onto the battlefield, while we,  
Whose lives are nothing to be reckoned with,  
Lie scattered in the fields, unwept, unburied.  
But if there yet remains in you anything of  
The warrior spirit of your forebears, then  
Meet your foe and look him in the face.”

470

480

Turnus's rage blazed up at what he said.  
Snarling from the violence in his heart  
As he answered: “Drances, you're so good  
At talking big, while you're sitting there safe and sound.  
Call up a meeting, you're bound to be right there,  
Talking away with your famous windbag blather.  
Who needs your big talk, big mouth. Call me a coward?  
Call me that when you've killed as many Trojans  
And gathered as many trophies in the field.  
Go ahead, Drances, show us what you can do.  
Why are you hesitating? Here's your chance.  
The enemy's right there outside our walls,  
And blood's about to flow in all the trenches.  
You say I'm beaten? You lying nothing, who  
Would say that, when they see the Tiber swollen  
With Trojan bodies killed by me, or when

490

500

They see Evander's Arcadian house brought down,  
And all his undone army weaponless?  
Big Pandarus and Bitias can't say I'm beaten,  
Nor any of those thousand men that I,  
With my right arm, sent down to the Underworld,  
That day when I was trapped inside the walls.  
'There's no safety in war.' That's what the twice-beaten  
Trojans should take to heart, those people you praise  
And try to make us afraid of. And now you tell us,  
Diomedes, the Myrmidons, Achilles,  
Are all of them scared to death of Phrygian weapons,  
And the river Aufidus turns around and runs  
Up backward from the violent Adriatic;  
And Drances says he's scared of violent me.  
Drancian trick. Drances, don't be afraid.  
This right hand wouldn't condescend to take  
Away the life of such a thing as you.  
Let it live on hid out in your nothing body.  
If we have no hope for what our arms can do,  
And if we regard ourselves as utterly fallen,  
And without hope that Fortune might change its mind,  
Then let us sue for peace, holding out drooping  
Peace-wanting branches imploringly. However,  
What if there's still something left of the virtue that  
We used to have? The man I praise the most  
Is the one who chooses to fight, and if need be, fall,  
Chewing the ground, rather than be a witness  
To degradation like this. But if we still  
Have warriors and their arms to fight for us,  
And if we still have so many cities and towns  
Of Italy supporting us, and we know  
The Trojans have bought this victory with their blood,  
And they have had to bury as many as we,  
Because the same storm came down on all of us,  
Then why should we give up the fight with them,  
Disgracefully, before it's even begun?

510

520

530

Why do our knees knock when the war horn sounds?  
Many a day, inexplicably, bad luck  
Has changed for the better. Fortune plays games,  
Knocking men over, then setting them up again. 540  
The Aetolian at Arpi refuses to help, so what?  
We have Messapus, and lucky Tolumnius, and  
All those leaders who have sent their people,  
And no small part of the fame will go to Latium,  
And to those chosen from the Laurentine fields.  
And there's Camilla of the great Volscian nation,  
Her cavalry and soldiers in their bronzen  
Shining armor. And if the Teucrians  
Have challenged me alone, and it is thought  
That I am otherwise an obstacle 550  
To the common good, victory has not  
So despised these hands of mine that I should keep  
From daring whatever is so great a hope.  
For I will eagerly fight him, whether or not  
He is as great or greater than Achilles,  
And I will fight him in the armor made,  
Like his, by the art of Vulcan. I am Turnus,  
Of my forebears second to none in courage, and  
I dedicate my life to all of you,  
And to Latinus, the father of my bride. 560  
Aeneas challenges me? I pray that he does,  
And that it isn't Drances, who, by seeking  
To pay them off, appeases the gods, but I,  
By valor and the glory I will win."

› › ›

While they were arguing all of these things, in such  
Confusion, Aeneas was moving his army, and  
Suddenly, wild with excitement, a messenger  
Ran into the palace hall to tell them all  
That a huge number, Tyrrhenians and Trojans,



Were coming along the Tiber valley road, 570  
And the plain was filling up with the enemy.  
The shock of it was everywhere, in all  
Their hearts and minds; and terror roused up anger,  
Calling for weapons, the young men calling “To Arms!”  
Old men, their fathers, weeping and groaning, because  
They knew what was going to happen to their sons;  
Dissension and confusion everywhere,  
As when so many chattering birds are flocking  
Into the tall trees of a grove, or like  
The raucous sound of swans in their excitement 580  
Over how many fish there are in those  
Loquacious ponds there are, near Padua.  
It was Turnus who seized the moment and said to the others,  
Scornfully, “You sit there praising peace,  
While the enemy swords are right outside your walls,  
Invading your country.” That’s all he said to them,  
And rushed out of the palace, shouting out orders:  
“Volcens! Call up your Volscian soldiers! And  
The Rutulians! Messapus, your cavalry!  
Coras, you and your brother, mobilize! 590  
Get your troops out now, lined up and ready.  
Secure the access roads into the city!  
Man the towers! Be ready! The rest of you,  
Follow me, full-armed, and ready to fight!”

Then all the people from everywhere in the town,  
Came out upon the walls. But old Latinus,  
Abandoning all the plans he had spoken of,  
Retired from the council room, and separated  
Himself from all of it, and over and over  
Regretting in himself that he hadn’t accepted 600  
Dardan Aeneas as his son-in-law,  
And hadn’t accepted him into the city. Meanwhile,  
Many men outside the gates were digging trenches  
And carrying in on their shoulders great stones and limbs

Of trees to use as weapons to defend them;  
The blood-filled voice of the war horn sounded loudly;  
A circle of matrons and boys lined up around  
The walls of the city, intending to be, themselves,  
The last line of defense, if they had to be.  
Amata the queen and a crowd of mothers with her, 610  
And with Lavinia, too, the cause of it all,  
Her beautiful eyes downcast, together they went  
Up to Minerva's temple, and at her high  
Altar in the smoke of incense prayed,  
"Tritonian maiden, our goddess of war, break that  
Pirate's spear, stretch his body out,  
Supine on the ground in front of our gates!"

And Turnus in the excitement of his rage,  
Aroused in the joy of fury, was girding himself  
For battle, his red breastplate with copper scales, 620  
Yellow and gold; the greaves he wore were golden.  
He shone like gold as from the tower he ran  
Down on his way to find the enemy;  
He was like a young stallion breaking free, away  
From the confines of his stable, excited by  
The idea of open pastures, where there are mares,  
Or maybe a stream he knows of for a plunge,  
And as he runs his beautiful mane flows back.

Then it was that Camilla of the Volsci  
Came riding to the city gates on horseback, 630  
Leapt down from the saddle, and all her cohort, too,  
Gracefully followed suit, and she said to Turnus:  
"If honor is to be achieved by this,  
Why then I dare to do it. I will go first, alone,  
With my cavalry, to meet the Tyrrhenians;  
And you, on foot, stay here to protect the walls."  
Turnus regarded this wonderful maiden with stunned  
Amazement in his eyes, and said to her,

“How is it I can thank you? How can I show  
My gratitude? For now, I have learned from reports  
Of scouts that while Aeneas has sent his mounted  
Cavalry ahead to shake the plain,  
He himself by trickery is moving  
Toward the city secretly by crossing  
Over the heights of that intervening mountain.  
But I am sending armed men to intercept  
And block them on the mountain paths that they  
Will be coming by. You must stay here with your troop,  
In battle array, and join with Messapus and with  
The other captains.” Having said this, he went  
Up the high mountain to meet the enemy.

640

650

› › ›

Along the side of the mountain there is a narrow  
Valley, winding and turning, an excellent place  
For warfare tricks and deceits; on both sides of  
The valley dense woods slope down, as black as night.  
There’s only a narrow road into and through  
This valley, and above the valley, unseen  
To view from below because of the trees above,  
There’s a little plateau from which, looking down,  
You can see how you could stage an attack from above,  
Or, staying there, how you could roll great stones  
Down on your foe. This is the place young Turnus  
Chose to go to, to lie in hiding, waiting  
To ambush.

660

› › ›

High in the heavens, meanwhile, Diana,  
Latona’s daughter, spoke, and spoke sadly, to  
Swift-running Opis, one of the maidens who

Were her companions in her sacred band:

“The war is cruel that Camilla is leading her troops to,  
And it will come to nothing. My love for her

670

Is beyond my love for any other, nor

Is it new that this is so. Metabus, her father,

Because of his cruel tyrant ways, was driven

Out of his kingdom by his angry people,

And when he fled from his city, ancient Privernum,

He carried with him his child, his baby daughter,

Camilla, named after the name of her mother, Casmilla.

With the vengeful Volsci in full pursuit they fled,

The father and baby, high in the mountain woods,

Until they came to the furious foaming river

680

Amsenus, over its banks because of the deluge

Pouring down from the bursting clouds above.

The Volscians and their weapons were pressing upon him.

The only way to escape was to cross the river.

But love for the child and fear for her safety made him

Hesitate, and try to think of a way

To get her there unhurt; and so, at last

He thought of the great oak solid-knotted spear

He held in his hand, and he took his baby daughter

And wrapped her in a swaddling made of soft

690

Cork-bark, and tied her tightly to the spear;

And then, with his great right hand, he raised the spear

Up high, and said, to the skies above, these words:

‘Gentle goddess, daughter of Latona, who

Dwells in the woods, here is, I make my vow,

A suppliant for your sisterhood, sent by

Her father upon this spear that flies upon

The hazardous winds. Accept her, this I pray.’

He drew back his powerful arm, the muscles tensed,

And sent the missile off; the river roared;

700

Over the rushing waters the baby was flown,

Sent to safety upon the whirling missile.

The great force of the enemy almost upon him,  
Metabus dove into the stream, and on the other  
Side in triumph found the baby safe,  
Tied to the spear, in a soft green tuft of grass,  
The child who was his offering to Diana.

No town would take him in inside its walls,  
Nor would he, in his wildness, go in there.  
He lived his time out on the lonely heights 710  
Of mountains, only shepherds there, where he brought  
His daughter up in the thicketed brambled woods,  
And near the dens of beasts. When she was little,  
Metabus nourished the child with wild mares' milk,  
Forcing the paps between her tender lips.  
From the time she took her own first little steps,  
He had her holding in her hand a tiny  
Spear, and a quiver hung from her small shoulder;  
Instead of a golden fillet on her head,  
And a long robe trailing to the ground, she wore 720  
A hooded tiger skin. She learned to be  
Fluently skillful with her youthful hands  
At targeting her whirling javelins or  
Whirling the sling above her young-girl head,  
Propelling a stone to bring a white swan down  
Or a Strymonian crane. Many a mother  
In mountain towns who saw her wished her son  
Could marry her, but she was faithful to  
Diana and her weapons. I wish she had never  
Gone against the Teucrians. But Opis, now, 730  
Upon your wings glide down to Latium where  
The fighting, under bad omens, is, and with  
This bow of mine, and drawing this arrow from  
Its quiver, see to it that, whoever it is,  
Latin or Trojan, whoever it may be,

Who violates with a wound her sacred self,  
Will pay for what he did, with his own blood.  
Then, in a cloud, I will bear her virgin body,  
In the armor that it wore, to her home country  
And the burial tomb where she will lie in honor.”  
The whirring sound of Opis’s wings was heard  
As she flew down through a shrouding black storm cloud.

740

› › ›

Meanwhile the Trojans and Tyrrhenians were  
Advancing toward the walls of the Latins’ city,  
Their troops of cavalry in marshaled order,  
Company by company by number;  
There were the sounds of the music of the horses’  
Hooves upon the ground, and of the horses’  
Whinnying and nickering, rearing and prancing,  
Asserting themselves against the governance  
Of tight-held bridles, turning this way, then that,  
Everything getting ready, the whole field shining  
With a vast crop of bristling upheld spears,  
Blazing with the light of the weapons’ brightness.

750

Then on the other side there came Messapus,  
Coras, and Coras’s brother, Camilla with them,  
And her cavalry, right arms drawn back and holding  
Long spears protended toward the foe, the sharp  
Tips trembling with their eagerness for the fight.  
The Latin forces moved toward the Trojan forces.  
There was a moment of silent confrontation,  
Only a spear’s-throw distance between the two,  
Spearpoint eyeing spearpoint holding still,  
And then, explosion, imbroglia, shouting, horses  
Suddenly spurred; then as it does, a blizzard

760

Of spears from everywhere showering, under an opaque  
Sky turned blank with the shock of the beginning.

› › ›

Tyrrhenus and Aconteus were the first  
To attack each other with spears, and were the first  
To go down in ruin, their galloping horses crashing, 770  
One into the other, breast to breast, and falling,  
And Aconteus was hurled from his saddle, out  
Into the air with the force of a thunderbolt,  
Or like a stone shot from a catapult, and  
His life was shattered away out there in the air.  
The Latins in panic disorder turned their horses  
Toward their city, and with their shields on their backs  
Went racing for home, with Asilas and his riders  
Galloping after them in hot pursuit;  
But as they get near the city walls the Latins, 780  
With a great shout, changing their minds, turn around  
And, loosening reins, ride back on attack. It's as  
It is when upon the tide the waves boil in  
Upon the shore and over the rocks and in  
As far as to reach the sand beyond, and then  
They turn and rapidly run the other way,  
Carrying tumbling rocks in the undertow,  
Taking itself away, draining the shallows.  
Twice the Etruscans drove the Latins back  
To their city walls, and twice the Latins turned 790  
And drove the Etruscans in turn, back from the walls,  
Their shields reversed to cover their backs, and looking  
Over their shoulders as they rode away;  
The third time, though, the armies came together,  
Man-to-man locked together in deadly closeness,  
And there were the groans of the dying, fallen weapons,  
Dead bodies covered with blood, and half-dead horses

Gesturing with their upraised hooves, imploring,  
Entangled with the bodies of human beings.  
And the battle growing fiercer as it went on.

800

Orsilochus, wary of Remulus's skill,  
Aimed his feathered spear at Remulus' horse,  
And struck it, just below its ear, and the horse,  
In frightful pain, rose up, reared back, its front legs  
Flailing at the sky, spilled Remulus off;  
Catillus then killed Iollas, and after him,  
Herminius, great in prowess, spirit, body,  
His greatness in its innocence such that he  
Was fearlessly unarmored, his golden hair  
Unhelmeted, his shoulders bare; the spear  
Drove through his body and emerged between  
His shoulder blades; Herminius, transfixed,  
Fell doubled up in agony. Black blood  
Was everywhere as in their slaughtering they  
Sought in the blood the beauty of glory and death.

810

› › ›

In the midst of all this killing was exultant  
Camilla, looking like an Amazon,  
With one breast bared, and wearing on her side  
A quiver full of arrows, exuberant in  
The fighting, showering javelins, or, when  
She needs to, killing with the doubled-edged  
Formidable axe; and on her shoulder was  
The golden bow of Diana, ready, and if  
Ever there was the circumstance that she  
Had to retreat, she skillfully could, as she fled,  
Fire backwards with her arrows at her pursuers.  
With her were her chosen maidens, chosen by her  
To be her helpers whether in peace or war,

820



Tulla, Larina, Tarpeia shaking an axe;  
They're like those Amazons in Thrace, with their painted  
Weapons and crescent shields, as if they were with  
Hippolyta or Penthesilea come back,  
Ululating, howling, in her chariot.

830

Fierce maiden, who was the first of the men you killed?  
Who was the last? How many that you brought  
Down to lie dying, out there on the plain? The first  
Was Eunaeus, son of Clytius. When  
Eunaeus turned to face her, Camilla thrust  
Her pine-wood spear straight into Eunaeus's chest,  
And, vomiting streams of blood, he fell, his mouth  
Hysterically gnawing the bloody ground,  
His body turning and twisting on his wound.

840

The next were Liris and Pagasus. When Liris,  
Whose wounded horse had reared and thrown him off,  
And he was unsteadily getting up, and reaching  
Confusedly for the reins, and Pagasus  
Came hastening over to help him, dropping his weapon  
To hold out his hand to help his brother stand,  
Both of them, when struck, fell down together,  
One on top of the other, into death.

850

And after them Amastrus, Hippotas' son,  
And after him, in sequence, Tereus, and  
Harpalycus, Demophoön, and Chromis;  
And for exactly as many javelins  
Spinning away from her virgin hand, exactly  
As many Phrygians died. Next was Ornytus,  
A hunter riding on his Iapygian horse;  
He was strangely dressed for fighting, and strangely armed;  
Over his broad shoulders there was a hide he'd stripped  
From the body of a bullock, and on his head  
A cap that was made from the head of a wolf, its huge  
Mouth open, jaws wide, its white fangs gleaming;  
He carried the kind of little spear, curved-bladed,

860

That rustics are accustomed to use for hunting.  
She saw him from a distance, easy to see  
In the midst of all the others riding, because  
So big and tall and because so strangely garbed;  
And Camilla from a distance brought him down,  
And pitiless stood over him and said,  
“Did you think you were just out hunting in the woods? 870  
How wrong you were to think so, and now you know,  
By the weapons of a woman, how wrong you were.  
But the name you’ll carry down with you won’t be nothing.  
You can proudly tell your ancestral shades that you  
Were sent to them down there by the spear of Camilla.”  
Next, Butes and Orsilochus, who were  
Two powerful brothers, the tallest of the Trojans.  
Butes she got when, idle a moment, he  
Was sitting on his horse, looking away;  
His shield was hanging useless on his side; 880  
And where she got him was the place on the back  
Of his naked neck whose whiteness shone just where  
There was a space between his helmet and  
His cuirass; and then she fled from Orsilochus,  
And he followed her in a great circle of chase,  
But then, with skill, she cut into the circle,  
So, in a smaller circle, she was pursuing  
Him, pursuer pursued, until she caught up with him,  
And while as they rode Orsilochus pleaded and pleaded,  
She struck him again and again with her savage axe, 890  
Which broke through his armor, and broke his bones, and at last  
Broke through his head so his brains poured down his face.  
And then there was, astonished and terrified  
By what he saw, the son of the liar Aunus,  
Ligurian, from up in the Apennines, a place  
Where the Fates have allowed them all to get used to being  
Good at guile and trickery, so when  
He saw he wasn’t going to be able  
To escape Camilla’s attention or his death,

If he stood targeted there, he thought of a trick, 900  
And he said, "Well, what's so great about a woman  
Putting her faith in the getaway speed of her horse?  
Where's the glory in that? Why don't you get  
Down from your horse on foot and, man-to-man,  
So to speak, let's fight each other as equals.  
This way will show how your pretensions to being  
Glorious are as empty as the wind."  
Of course this made Camilla furious.  
Red-hot with anger she got down off her horse,  
And handed the reins to one of her companions, 910  
And stood there, unafraid, with only a naked  
Sword and her small plain cavalry shield to fight with.  
When the Ligurian saw her dismount, he thought  
His trick had worked, and so, as fast as he could,  
He got himself onto his horse and galloped away.  
But Camilla, swifter than anything, swifter than wind,  
Ran after the man and his horse, and when she ran past them  
She turned around, and stopped his horse in its tracks,  
And said, "This will show you how empty your boasts are,  
The lies you learned to tell from your father Aunus." 920  
With that, as quick as the flick of a flame, she seized  
The reins of the horse, and exacted expertly  
His punishment from the blood of her enemy.  
Just as Apollo's bird, the falcon, sees  
From his rock that, high in the clouds, there's a dove, and he  
Pursues it, catches it, holds it, and with his claw  
He tears out its heart as he flies, and feathers and blood  
Come floating down from the sky.

› › ›

Nothing escaped  
The notice of the Father of Gods and Men, 930  
Looking down from where he was seated, high upon  
The summit of Mount Olympus. He called up anger

In Tarchon, the Etruscan king, who went  
Into the midst of things and roused up war  
In the hearts of his wavering army, shouting at them,  
Berating them, some of them even by name:  
“What are you so afraid of, you so-called soldiers,  
You no-good, hang-back, half-ass Etruscans, it’s  
A woman tearing up your crop fields, it’s  
A woman making all of you run away. 940  
What are the weapons you have in your hands for? Use them,  
For gods’ sake, use them. Oh, yes, I know,  
It’s the battlefield of love at night *you* like,  
It’s wine, it’s what the menu is tonight;  
You love the crackling sound of cooking and  
The crooning voice that tells you dinner is ready,  
The feast is ready for you.” Having said this,  
He suddenly spurred his horse and galloped wildly  
Into the battle, at risk for his life, and like  
A whirlwind galloped straight at Venulus, 950  
And, tearing him off of his horse, went galloping on,  
Holding Venulus close to his chest with his great  
Right arm, the man and his armor, and riding he broke off  
The head of Venulus’ spear and probed for bare  
Skin to plunge the beakèd spearhead in,  
And kill. Venulus struggled, with all his strength,  
To keep the searching beak away from his throat;  
It was as when a tawny eagle, high  
In the sky, has a wounded snake in her claws, her talons  
Around its struggling body, the nails of her talons 960  
Digging into the serpent’s flesh, and the serpent,  
Scales erect and bristling, head up-reaching,  
Voluminous folds of the sinuous body twisting  
And turning, the great hook beak tearing and tearing  
The flesh, as the eagle, flapping her wings as she kills,  
Flies on; thus Tarchon galloped away with his prey  
From the Tiburtine lines. The Maeonians follow Tarchon’s  
Example and into the battle rush after him.

Then Arruns, so swift and adept at aiming the spear,  
 More experienced than Camilla in the art, 970  
 Arruns, whose life is owed to the Fates, begins  
 To try what Fortune might facilitate,  
 To circle around her, furtive, secretive,  
 Following her wherever her footsteps go,  
 Circling round her, watching her where she is,  
 Whether she rages in fury in the battle,  
 Or sometimes, after a victory, she, for a moment,  
 Retires, he follows her, quietly turning his reins  
 This way, then turning them that way, circling around her,  
 Ever attentive. His spear, that makes no mistakes, 980  
 Is trembling in his hand, excited, ready.  
 By chance it happened that Chloreus, disciple  
 Of the goddess Cybele, and having been a priest  
 In her rituals, could be seen from far away,  
 In his shining Phrygian armor, spurring along  
 On his snorting horse caparisoned with a hide  
 Adorned with a pattern of bronze feathery scales,  
 And fastened with golden buttons. Himself he was  
 A sight, as if on fire with indigo  
 And purple hues, over his shoulders a saffron 990  
 Cloak whose folds were gathered with a golden  
 Linen sash; golden the Lycian bow  
 That hung from his shoulder, and golden too its arrows,  
 Made in Gortyna; his tunic and his leggings  
 Were stitched with gold. Camilla saw him, and whether  
 It was that she wanted to hang up this armor and  
 These trappings as trophies of war in the temple, or by  
 A desire to wear this gold while hunting, she went  
 Straight toward him through the fighting, blind to all else,  
 Utterly without caution, maybe because 1000  
 Of a female desire for spoils and especially for  
 This particular kind of spoils, and at this moment,

Arruns, seeing his chance had finally come,  
His excited lance raised high, prayed to Apollo,  
“Apollo, high god and protector of Soracte,  
We are the first to worship you, for whom  
We dare in our ardor walk in reverence through  
The burning embers of the pine-wood fire,  
Our bare feet deep in them, Father, we pray, give us  
The power to abolish this disgrace.

1010

I have no wish to take trophies from her body,  
Nor any desire for any spoils at all.  
Glory will come to me by other acts.  
I only desire that this abomination  
Will be obliterated by my bow.

Then I will return to my native town, without  
The glory of what I did, and willingly so.”  
Phoebus Apollo heard him and granted half  
Of what he asked. He granted that, as prayed for,  
Camilla should suddenly be brought down. That he  
Could return to, or ever see, his town again,  
He did not grant. A sudden South Wind gust  
Dispersed into the air what he desired.

1020

The spear he threw went whistling through the air  
And all the Volsci heard it, and saw it, and  
They turned their minds and eyes on the queen, who didn't  
Hear the sound nor thought of anything  
Coming toward her through the air, and the spear,  
Accomplishing what it had been sent to do,  
Struck home just beneath her naked breast and lodged there,  
Drinking her virgin blood. Arruns was more  
Terrified than anyone, though his terror  
Was mixed with joy; and he got himself away,  
Fearing to face retaliatory weapons.  
He was like a wolf who, having killed a shepherd,  
Or bullock, before any weapons could come to get him,  
Immediately flees, through pathless ways

1030

High up in the mountain woods, afraid, and with  
His quivering tail in under his belly, and knowing  
What he has done, and seeking the woods to hide in. 1040  
That is how Arruns went, confused, content  
To have gotten away with it, and disappeared  
Into the battlefield mêlée.

Camilla was trying  
To pull the spearpoint out of her side, but it stood  
Transfixed between the bones of her ribs, and blood-lost life  
Was slipping away, sight slipping away  
Into cold death. Dying, she called to Acca,  
Of all the others the friend most dear to her,  
The one to whom she had told her inmost thoughts, 1050  
And she said: "I can do no more, Acca, my sister.  
The shades are growing darker all around me.  
This terrible wound has destroyed me. You must flee,  
And take these new orders to Turnus. Tell him that he  
Must take my place in the fight against the Trojans  
And in defense of the city." Having said this,  
Against her will she let go of the reins of her horse,  
And slid to the ground, and little by little the cold  
Was freeing her from her body; her neck was drooping;  
And, yielding her weapons, Camilla, captive of death, 1060  
Laid down her head, and life, with a groaning shudder,  
Indignantly fled away to the shades below.

When this was seen a tremendous shouting clamor  
Rose up to the stars. Camilla having fallen,  
The battle raged more furiously still.  
The army of the Trojans, the army of  
The Tyrrhenian kings, the Arcadian squadrons of  
Evander, all rushed in, together, at once.

› › ›

High on the mountaintop Diana's Opis  
Sat imperturbably watching the battle scene; 1070  
But then she saw, in the midst of it down there,  
Camilla's terrible death, and moved by this,  
She spoke from deep in her heart, "Camilla, you  
Have paid too dearly for your challenging  
The Trojans, as you have done. That you have been  
A worshiper of Diana, alone in the woodland,  
Wearing her hunting quiver upon your shoulder,  
Has not protected you from your suffering  
And your death. But now Diana will see to it  
That your death will not be unknown to all the countries, 1080  
Nor will it be unavenged. Whoever it was  
Who violated your body will pay for it  
With his own."

High on a mountainside there is,  
Shaded by ilex trees, a burial mound,  
Of an ancient Laurentian king, whose name was Decennis.  
Beautiful Opis flew to this place, and landed  
Lightly and stood, looking down from that height, and saw,  
On the plain below, in shining armor, Arruns,  
Pleased with himself, and she cried, "So far away? 1090  
Turn your steps this way, this way, this way,  
And come to your perishing, paying the debt you owe  
To the dignity of Camilla. So now you will know,  
You are to die by the weapon of Diana."  
And so she drew a wingèd arrow from  
Her golden quiver and drew the bowstring back  
To its fullest extent of tension until the curved  
Ends of the beautiful bow drew almost together,  
Opis's hands in perfect understanding,  
The one and the other, the left at the arrow point, 1100  
The arrow in perfect intention on its target,  
The right hand perfectly drawing the bowstring back,



Touching her breast, to perfect tensity,  
And holding; and then there was the hissing sound  
Of the arrow, and Arruns heard it as it struck,  
And pierced his body at his breast, and Arruns  
Fell gasping and groaning his last in the dust of an unknown  
Unremembered place as his forgetting  
Oblivious comrades passed him by; and Opis  
Then flew back to Olympus, where she came from.

1110

› › ›

The virgin cavalry of Camilla were  
The first to flee, their leader lost, and then  
The Rutulians in confusion and disorder,  
Then brave Asilas, and all the other captains  
Scattered around the plain, and all their men,  
Turning their horses and racing toward the city,  
Seeking safety there. There was no weapon  
To stand against the Trojans coming on,  
And bringing with them death; their unstrung bows  
Hang loosely from the shoulders of the Latins;  
Their galloping hooves are shaking the dust of the plain,  
And a murky black cloud rises up upon the walls.  
And the mothers, seeing this, and knowing what  
Its meaning is, are beating their breasts and wailing,  
And the sound of their voices rises to the skies.  
When the first of those who were racing for home broke in  
Through the gates of their native city there were galloping  
Trojans too, pursuing Latins, coming in through  
The gates along with them and so, within  
Their walls and in the haven of their houses,  
Latins were dying, gasping away their lives,  
And other Latins, in panic, got the gates closed,  
To keep more Trojans out, and they didn't dare  
In spite of their desperate pleadings, to open them  
Again for comrades who were left outside,

1120

1130

And miserable mutual slaughtering took place,  
Of those whose swords were defending shut gates and those  
Who were desperately fighting to get themselves in, and all  
This under the eyes of their weeping parents. Of those  
Who were left outside, many of them, impelled 1140  
By the unseeing weight of the crowd behind them, fell  
Precipitously into the trenches and perished,  
And others, letting go of the reins of their horses,  
Were wildly blindly battering at the gates  
That were shut against them. Above, their frantic  
Mothers, Camilla their example, were  
With their shaking hands throwing down missiles and logs  
Upon the pandemonium below.

› › ›

When Acca came to tell Turnus how bad it was,  
Camilla killed, the Latins routed, the terrible 1150  
Confusion and the pain at the gates of the town,  
Turnus of course was enraged, and he gave up any  
Idea of ambush, and set out to get down to  
The battleground of war on the plain below.

And at the same time Aeneas and his soldiers  
Were coming through the pass higher up on the mountain,  
Making their own way, down to the battleground.

Each of them saw and heard the other, and both  
Were hastening to make the final face-off,  
But then there were the signs in the sky that the day 1160  
Was coming to an end, and so the two forces  
Bivouacked for the night, waiting, preparing,  
For the next day's confrontation that was to come.



# Book Twelve

When Turnus sees how bad things are, the war  
Going against them, the soldiers losing heart,  
He knows all eyes are upon him, and he knows  
The time has come to keep his promise, and  
His heart's courage is roused. It's as when a lion,  
Out in the fields, having been wounded by  
A hunter's arrow, shakes his mane as if  
In joy and raging wrenches the arrow out,  
And roars through his bloody mouth—so did it swell,  
The violence there was in Turnus's heart.

10

He went to the king and said, in these wild words:  
“Turnus is here. Now the weakling Aeneadae  
Can't retract. They can't get out of it now.  
Turnus is here. Father, ready the rites,  
Draw up the terms of the treaty. Turnus is here.  
Either with my right arm I'll send the Asian  
Refugee down to Tartarus, and while  
The Latins watch, erase our country's shame,  
Or if he wins, he wins Lavinia!”

Latinus replied to him, gently and sincerely,  
“O passionate youth, when your ferocity  
Of bravery explodes this way, it causes me

20

To try to think as calmly as possible,  
To think things out, considering what there is  
In this to be cautious about, and what to fear.  
You have the kingdom of your father Daunus;  
You have the many towns that you have made  
Subject by your skill in battle, and I  
Have wealth and benign intentions on your behalf.  
In the Latin countryside there are many unwed  
Maidens, of suitable rank. It is hard for me  
To tell you this, and hard for you to hear,  
But I must plainly say it and you must take it  
Into your heart: I cannot choose for my daughter  
Any suitor who is native-born.  
The divination singing of men and gods  
Forbids that I should do so, and for that reason  
I have refrained from uniting my daughter with any  
Suitors Italy-born. But overcome  
By love of you, and consanguinity  
Of blood, and by the sorrowful tears of my wife,  
I broke the bonds of what I promised. I took  
The promised bride from the promised son-in-law,  
And entered into impious warfare, and, Turnus,  
Now you see what the consequences are:  
Two great battles leaving the city almost  
Without resources to be Italy's hope,  
The Tiber still warm with our blood, and on the wide plains  
The bones still whitening. Why have I wavered?  
Why have I been so recklessly changeable?  
If Turnus dies (heaven forbid!), I must  
Be prepared to accept an alliance with the victors.  
Why not settle these things while Turnus lives?  
What will your own Rutulians say, what will  
All Italy say, if I barter with your death  
While you are asking for my daughter's hand

In marriage? Think of your aged father waiting  
Apprehensively for news of you in Ardea.”

But the violence there was in Turnus’s heart  
Was utterly unchanged by what he said; 60  
The medicine of Latinus’s calming speech  
Only inflamed what it was meant to quiet.  
When he was able to speak in reply to the king,  
He said, “I beg you to put aside your kind  
Solicitousness for me, O best of kings,  
And leave it to me to bargain with death for glory.  
My right hand knows what it is my spear can do,  
And when it strikes the life-blood pours from the wound.  
His goddess mother is far away from him now;  
She cannot use her feminine tricks to hide 70  
Her runaway in a cloud and save him from me.”

The queen was terrified by the prospect of  
The choice before them. She was weeping as  
She spoke to Turnus pleadingly, saying, “Turnus,  
It is you I have been praying for. If you  
Have honor for me in your heart, listen to me.  
You’re all I have and all that Latium has.  
Do not engage with your body in combat with  
The Trojan. I cannot live, a slave, and having  
To see this Trojan as son-in-law and master.” 80

Lavinia, hearing these words of her mother, wept,  
And her beautiful face, bathed in her tears, was like,  
In its alternate blushing and pallor a garden where  
There are lilies, white, and crimson roses, or like  
An Indian ivory painted with blood-red dyes,  
And Turnus, by the beauty of this lovely  
Virginal face impassioned, is by his passion

Aroused all the more to meet his rival, whom  
He has challenged for her bridal hand; and so  
He spoke thus, briefly, to Amata: "Mother, 90  
Do not, I pray, send me with tears, and with  
Such omens as these are, into the hard  
Encounters of war. Turnus is not free  
To know, or to delay, the day of his death.  
Idmon, go to the Phrygian tyrant and  
Bring him this message, which will be  
Unwelcome to his ears: 'Tomorrow, when  
Aurora in her chariot brings the first  
Reddening of the morning sky, you must  
Not lead the Teucrians into battle against 100  
The Rutulians. The two of us, alone,  
At the risk of our own blood, will end the war.  
He who survives will have Lavinia's hand.'"

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Having said this, he went quickly back to his palace,  
Where he rejoiced to see his chariot horses,  
Neighing and tossing their heads in their excitement  
That he was there. These were the fabulous horses  
Descended from those Ortygia, wife of the North Wind,  
Gave to Turnus's great-grandfather Pylumus;  
These were the Thracian horses, whiter than snow, 110  
And swifter than the swiftness of the wind.  
The grooms were gathered around, combing their beautiful  
Streaming manes, and using the palms of their hands  
To pat and pummel their horses' mighty chests,  
Getting them ready for what tomorrow would bring.

And Turnus himself got ready, over his shoulders  
His leather corselet, gleaming with golden and copper  
Armoring scales; and he took up his two-edged sword,  
And his shield, and his ruby-crested helmet; his sword

Which the potent-in-fire god made for Daunus his father,  
Forging it in the seething Stygian waters.  
Against a column in the palace was  
The spear that was battle spoil of Auruncian Actor;  
When Turnus took it up and brandished it,  
The great spear trembled in his powerful grasp.

120

“This is the spear that mighty Actor hurled;  
Now it is Turnus’s never-failing weapon.  
Don’t fail me now, when I will with my bare  
Hands rip the corselet from this eunuch’s body,  
And will, with this hot iron of mine, mess up  
The hair perfumed with oil of myrrh his heated  
Curling iron had crimped and fussed with.” Thus  
Turnus’s speech, and his face and his eyes were on fire  
With rage, like a bellowing bull, filling his vengeful  
Horns with the power of fury, charging at trees,  
Striking blows at the sky and at the winds, again  
And again and again, pawing the sands, preparing.

130

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And fierce Aeneas, too, was getting ready,  
Rousing up Mars’s fury in his heart,  
And joyful that the war was going to end,  
And going to end by the terms he had proposed.  
He solaced his sorrowing comrades and fearful Iulus,  
Reminding them of what the Fates have said,  
And sending to King Latinus to ratify  
The terms of the treaty and of the peace to come.

140

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The day was just beginning, the morning beginning  
To spread itself across the mountaintops,  
The horses of the sun, riding up from the sea,



Their flaring nostrils breathing out rays of light.  
In the field below the walls of the city, they all 150  
Were getting ready, Rutulians and Trojans,  
Working together, measuring the space  
Where the single combat between the two would be,  
And on grassy plots setting up altars to  
The gods the two communities worship in common.  
The priests, wearing purple aprons and linen hoods,  
Brought pure spring water to the sacred altars;  
The Ausonian soldiers, armed with spears, poured out  
Of the city gates, an army of disciplined men;  
The Trojan forces and the Tyrrhenians came 160  
Streaming in, in their variegated armor,  
Looking as if about to be called by Mars  
To cruel war. And, riding among the thousands,  
The leaders too appeared, Rutulian  
And Trojan, clad in the pride of purple and gold,  
Mnestheus of Assaracus's line,  
And brave Asilas, and Messapus who was  
The son of Neptune and famous breaker of horses.  
The signal was given and each of them found his place,  
Their spears pointed down at the ground, their shields 170  
Reclining at rest by their sides. Old men and women,  
Unarmed, intently watching the scene, were gathered  
On all the rampart walls and tops of the gates,  
And high on the roofs of the houses in the town.

› › ›

From the high top of a mountain, now Albanus,  
But then had neither name nor honor nor glory,  
Juno looked down from that height and saw the field,  
And both of the armies, Rutulians and Trojans,  
Latinus's city and all the gathered people.  
She spoke to the youthful goddess, Turnus's sister, 180

Who was now a deity of lakes and streams,  
For Jupiter, God of the Heavens, had honored her thus,  
In recompense for the virginhood he'd taken;  
And Juno said to her, "Nymph, young goddess of ponds  
And fountains and rivers, you know that of all those others  
In Italy whom all too magnanimous Jove,  
My husband, has taken into our marital bed,  
You are the one, dear to my heart, whom I  
Have welcomed to your place among the gods.  
But I must tell you now what will cause you to grieve, 190  
And do not blame me for it. As long as Fortune  
And the Fates permitted, I protected Turnus  
And the walls of your city. But now I see  
That this young man, your brother, has come up against  
The hostility of his fortune. Decided by  
Inimical Fates, his final day has come.  
Perhaps, if you help him, things will turn out better.  
I can no longer look upon the scene;  
Nor can I any longer interfere  
With the treaty or its peaceable stipulations. 200  
But if you dare to do it, go to your brother,  
To see if there's anything you can do to save him.  
Go. It is right. No time for tears. You must hurry."

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Then was the time for the kings to enter. First,  
Latinus, in his great chariot, seated high,  
His brow shining with twelve gold rays which were  
The emblems of his descent from the God of the Sun;  
Then, in his chariot drawn by two white horses,  
Came Turnus, with two great double-edged spears in his hand;  
Then from the camp came father Aeneas, who was 210  
The founder and source of the Roman stock, and who,  
With his heaven-sent shield and armor, shone like a star;

And beside him was Ascanius his son,  
Who was the second hope of the greatness of Rome.  
And then came a priest, who was dressed in purest white,  
Conducting a yearling ewe and the offspring of  
A bristle-backed boar to the flaming altar, where,  
After they turn to look with reverent eyes  
At the rising sun, the two who are to fight,  
Sprinkle the temples of the sacrificial  
Beasts with meal and salt, and mark with a knife  
The foreheads of the offered, and from goblets  
Pour at the altar libations to the gods.

220

Then, drawing his sword, Aeneas began to pray:  
“O Sun be my witness, and hear my words, O Earth,  
Because in my labors I have endured so much;  
And you, Omnipotent God, and you, his wife,  
Saturnian Juno, Goddess now more kind,  
More kind, I pray, to us; and glorious Mars,  
Whose nod determines all in war; you gods  
Of rivers and lakes, of the high heavens, and of  
The vast cerulean waters of the sea:  
If it should happen that victory should come  
To Ausonian Turnus, it is agreed that all  
The army of the defeated will withdraw  
To the city of Evander, and Iulus will yield  
The fields of battle; nor, after the war,  
Will any of the Aeneadae, rebelling,  
Return with swords provoking war again.  
But if Victory should give the nod to us  
(As I believe will be the case, and I  
Believe that the gods will nod in affirmation),  
I’ll never order that any Latins be  
Subject to the will of any Trojans:  
Two unconquered peoples sharing as equals

230

240

Their equal laws together. I will bring  
The ancestral gods and the sacred rites of worship;  
Latinus the father-in-law will rule the army,  
And the solemn governance of the polity;  
And with my Teucrians I will build our city,  
To which Lavinia will give her name.”

250

Latinus, after Aeneas, spoke these words,  
His right hand raised, his eyes fixed on the heavens:  
“All these I here affirm and take my oath,  
Swearing by earth, by sea, by the stars, and by  
The two deities born of Latona, and by  
The two faces of Janus, and by the Infernal  
Below, and the holy shrine of implacable Dis.

Let the Father of All, who ratifies all with lightning,  
Hear what I swear as I touch his holy altar,  
Calling on all the gods and on this fire

260

To witness: No matter what befalls, this is  
My promise that will never be turned aside from,  
No matter whether earth is brought down into  
The flooding sea, or sky falls into Tartarus;  
It's as this scepter (for in his hand he held  
The royal scepter), which never again will grow  
Green leaves upon the bough as it had once;  
Now separated from its mother, its  
Light leaves no longer shadowing one another  
On the branch but by the hand of the artist transformed  
To bronze, and given thus to royal kings  
From ancient times to carry as their rule.”

270

Saying such words, together they sealed the treaty,  
In the sight of all the leaders of their people;  
And, according to the rites, together they slew  
The sacrificial beasts, cutting their throats, and from

Their bodies took the living entrails, and  
On laden smoking plates together placed them,  
As mutual offering on the sacred altars.

280

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But in truth the Rutulians watching this spectacle  
Had been becoming more and more uneasy,  
More and more worried that the contest between  
The two of them was going to be unequal;  
Seeing the two together they could see  
The differences between them in size and strength.

Adding to this worry was how Turnus  
Looked when it was his turn to pray at the altars:  
Kneeling in supplication, his eyes downcast,  
His boyish face and body, pale, unready.

290

When Juturna, his goddess sister, became aware  
Of how, in the very ranks of their own army,  
People were talking, the murmurings of doubt  
In their wavering voices, she took upon herself  
The guise of Camers, whose family was famous,  
His grandsires and his sire, for valor in war,  
And he the most valorous of them all, and in  
The midst of the army began to stir and increase  
The doubts and fears already in their minds:

“Aren’t you ashamed of yourselves, Rutulians,  
To let one man be sacrificed for all?

300

Are we not more than a match for them, so few  
Of them, the Trojans, the Arcadians,  
That little band of Etruscans hating Turnus?  
We haven’t got enough enemies to go  
Around. Our every second soldier won’t  
End up having anybody to fight.  
He who’s making his vows at the altars now  
Will ascend to the skies and his glory will be told

On the lips of every one of us, but if  
Our country's lost, then we'll be subjected to  
Obedience to arrogant masters, these  
Aliens lounging around in our native fields."

310

Now more and more the murmuring crept its way  
From voice to ear and voice to ear throughout  
The army and to those who had wished for rest  
And safety from the dangers of the fighting.  
Their minds were changing, desire was rising up  
To take up arms, hoping to break the treaty,  
And pitying Turnus.

320

Then she did something else,  
More powerful still. In the sky appeared a portent,  
Nothing there was more potent to confuse  
The Latins about what the meaning of it was.  
High in the sky was Jupiter's golden bird.  
The sight of him was scaring the little birds  
Along the shore, and the clamor of their distress  
Was sounding everywhere, when suddenly  
The eagle plunged straight down to the water and seized  
In his cruel crooked talons the noblest and most  
Beautiful of the swans and carried him off.  
The Italians were astonished at the sight,  
And their amazement grew as they saw the huge  
Flock of panicked birds, which had been fleeing,  
Wheel in their flight and envelop the eagle within  
The flapping of their wings, as in the darkness  
Of a cloud, until at last the eagle, in  
The weariness of defending himself against them,  
Dropped his burdening prey and flew away.  
Then in truth the Rutulians responded  
With clamorous shouting to what they saw in the sky,  
Their enthralled excited hands raised high as if

330

340

In salutation to what the meaning might be,  
And Tolumnius, an augurer, cried out,  
“There it is, why, there it is, it’s what  
I prayed for, it’s what I made my vows for!  
I recognize that this is from the gods!  
The portent is for me, for me, I’ll be  
The leader, with my spear! O my poor fellows,  
This wicked stranger brought war upon us and we  
Were weak as birds when he came pillaging  
Upon our shores. But come together, all  
As one, to fight to rescue our leader, who’s  
Entrapped inside the terms of this so-called treaty.  
When this is done the stranger will sail away,  
Seeking the deepest Profound in the Faraway!”

350

Running he hurled his whirling spear. The sound  
Of its screaming whirling flight was heard by all;  
The troops drawn up in formal ranks were in  
Confused disorder; hearts were aroused for war;  
The spear was flying toward nine beautiful brothers,  
Who were standing together in the opposite ranks.  
They were all the sons of Arcadian Gylippus,  
And their faithful Etruscan mother, and the missile  
Struck one of them, the fairest of them all,  
Who was wearing shining armor; it entered where  
The belt line was, and went between the ribs,  
And into his belly and his life poured out  
As he fell upon the yellow sands of the plain.  
But his brothers, a phalanx fearless and blind in grief,  
Ran forward all together, waving their swords  
Or brandishing their spears, and the Latins ran  
To meet them as they came, and against them came  
The Trojans and the men from Agylla and  
The Arcadians in their painted armor, embroiled,  
One motive in all, to settle this war by blood.

360

370

They tore the altars all to pieces, and  
The sky was a wild tempest of spears and arrows  
And altar bowls turned weapons; it was a storm  
Of steel coming down like rain upon the scene; 380  
And old Latinus himself retired from this,  
The treaty broken, taking his battered gods.  
Everywhere, on both sides, men leaping onto  
Their chariots, or onto the backs of their horses,  
Swords drawn and ready. There was Aulestes, who was  
A Tyrrhenian king, wearing his kingly armor,  
With all the insignia of his kingship, and  
Messapus, in his fervor to break the treaty,  
Rode straight at him, and Aulestes, terrified,  
Retreating backward, crashed down flat on his back 390  
Upon the altar, and Messapus from his horse  
Dispatched him with his great spear, as big and long  
As a roof beam is, killing him as he pled,  
And Messapus said, looking down at dead Aulestes,  
“Look, here, here’s a better sacrifice for the gods,”  
And the Latins ran in to strip from the still-warm body  
Of this king the kingly trophies that it wore.  
Corynaeus, confronted by Ebysus, seized  
A burning torch from off the holy altar,  
And used it to set Ebysus’s face on fire; 400  
His great beard burst into flames and there was the stench  
Of burning as it burned. Corynaeus seized him,  
By the hair on his head, and threw him down on the ground,  
And as he lay there kept him lying there, pressing him  
Down with his knee, and drove his rigid sword  
Into his body. Podalirius with  
His naked sword was chasing the shepherd Alsus  
As he ran through the rain of missiles in the rout,  
And caught him, and stood over him, ready, but Alsus  
Struck him with his desperate country axe 410  
In the middle of his forehead and split his face,



Down to his chin, and Podalirius  
Was laid to rest by this in iron sleep,  
His eyesight gone in everlasting Night.

› › ›

But then Aeneas came forward, head bared, unarmed,  
And, holding out his weaponless right hand,  
Cried out to all of them in a loud voice, “Why  
Are you rushing into this bloodshed? Why suddenly  
This violence? The treaty has been made,  
And it’s agreed that the right is mine alone. 420  
Forget your fears. Leave it to my right hand.  
The sacred rites have given Turnus to me.”  
And as he spoke these words, right then when he  
Was saying these things, an arrow came whining, whirling,  
Gliding at him, and struck him, and nobody knows  
Whose hand it was who sent it, nobody knows  
From whom or what it came, from chance, or from  
Some god, or who, or what Rutulian  
Could claim the glory of being the one who was  
The one who sent the arrow that wounded Aeneas. 430

When Turnus saw Aeneas leaving the field,  
With his comrade leaders so dismayed by this,  
Hope was on fire, suddenly, in his heart.  
He called for his arms and horses all at once,  
And he leaped into his chariot and seized  
The reins and went flying into the enemy ranks,  
Sending to death how many strong-bodied heroes;  
His chariot wheels rolled over how many others,  
Leaving behind him the half-dead fallen and as  
His wheels went over their bodies he seized the spears 440  
From the bodies and sent the spears showering down  
On terrified Trojans trying to run away

From what was coming upon them. It was as when  
Up there beside the icy Hebrus, bloody  
Mavors rattles his shield, and lets the reins loose  
On his war-maddened horse, and all Thrace hears the sounds  
Of their galloping hoofbeats as they gallop racing  
Before the winds, the North Wind and the South,  
Accompanied by his galloping comitatus,  
Black Terror, Treachery, and Rage; like this, 450  
Turnus was lashing his sweat-soaked horses through  
The midst of the battle, his chariot scornfully  
Riding over the miserable bodies of  
The slain, the hooves of the horses scattering  
Gobbets of blood and churning the sand with gore.  
Sthenelus he killed, getting him at a distance,  
Then Thamyrus and Pholus at close quarters,  
Then from a distance both of the Imbrasides,  
Glaucus and Lades, whose father Imbrasmus had  
Brought them up in Lycia to be good fighters, 460  
And furnished them with armor suitable  
For hand-to-hand battle or equally suitable  
For riding on horseback faster than the wind.  
Seen entering the battlefield was Eumedes,  
Named for his grandsire, but, in heart and hand,  
He was the son of his father, old well-known Dolon,  
Who when he dared to offer to spy on the camp  
Of the Greeks, he also dared to ask, as a prize,  
For the horses and the chariot of Achilles,  
But Tydides gave him a different prize, and he 470  
No longer had any wish for Achilles' horses.  
Turnus from far off saw him and sent a light  
Javelin to him across the distance between them,  
And then he went to where Eumedes lay dying,  
And leaped down from his chariot, and stood  
Above him, his foot on his neck, and wrenched the bright  
Flashing sword from Eumedes' dying hand, and plunged it

Deep in Eumedes' throat, and said these words:  
"Here you are now in the field you wanted to win.  
Trojan, this is the prize I give with my sword. 480  
Lie there and measure the fields of Hesperia.  
This is the way the Trojans find their land."  
Then Turnus with his spear sent Asbytes down,  
To keep Eumedes company down there,  
And after that came Chloereus, the priest,  
And next were Sybaris, Dares, Thersilochus,  
And then Thymoetes whose horse, falling down, had thrown him  
Forward over its head. It was as when  
The Edonian North Wind howls and its sound is heard  
Upon the deep Aegean, and it drives 490  
The terrified billows fleeing toward the shore,  
And the gusts pursue the clouds across the sky;  
Just so when Turnus cut his way through the lines,  
The Aeneades fled away before him like  
Waves receding whichways in their terror,  
And he by the purposive force of his shouting rage  
Drove through, the plume on his helmet streaming back.  
His momentum was unstoppable as he killed,  
But Phegeus couldn't bear it, and he leaped  
In front of the chariot as it came on, and tried, 500  
With his right hand, to turn aside the horses'  
Heads by wrenching their foaming bridle bits  
Aside, and as he held on, and was dragged along  
By the harness, Turnus struck him a blow with his sword,  
On his vulnerable side, just grazing the skin  
Where the sword cut through his two-plated corselet, and  
Phegeus tried to turn his body around,  
And with his left hand tried to raise his shield  
To protect himself from Turnus's sword, but he  
Had to let go, and the wheel and the chariot yoke 510  
Buffeted him as he fell and lay on the ground,  
And Turnus from where he rode leaned down and got him

With his sword exactly where there was a space  
Between the lower edge of his helmet and  
The corselet's upper edge, and sliced off his head,  
Leaving the trunk of his body in the sand.

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Meanwhile, while victorious Turnus was dealing out  
Death on the field of killing, Mnestheus and  
Faithful Achates, and Ascanius with them,  
Were helping Aeneas back into the Trojan camp, 520  
Aeneas supporting himself for every other  
Step on his long spear, and raging, trying  
With his own hands to wrestle free from his leg  
The broken arrow shaft, and calling on them  
To find the nearest way, to take a sword  
And cut the flesh around the wound right down  
To the bone to free the shaft from where it was,  
In its hiding place.

Then there came Iapyx, whom  
Apollo had loved with such passion that he offered 530  
To give him all of his powers of divination,  
The lyre he wore, and his quiver full of arrows;  
But Iapyx, wanting to learn how to prolong  
The life of Iasus, his ailing father, piously  
Sought the knowledge that humbler arts could give him,  
Less glorious than the glorious offerings of  
His lover, the God of Arts, and so he made it  
His work to study what were the herbs and plants  
With power to heal the suffering of the body.  
There stood Aeneas, supported as he stood 540  
By his gigantic spear; he was furious,  
Groaning with anger, indifferent to the tears  
Of his leaders and of Iulus, his sorrowing son.

The old man, Iapyx, wearing the kind of robe  
Apollonian healers wore, tried everything,  
Working with his hands with every kind  
Of Phoebus's herbs he knew, to no avail;  
To no avail, trying with his right hand  
To solicitate the arrow from the wound;  
To no avail the forceps; nothing would work; 550  
No prayer to Fortune for help was answered; none  
To his patron Apollo was answered either; and  
Meanwhile the horrors in the fields grew greater,  
And greater, and nearer, and nearer; an enormous  
Cloud of dust was standing in the sky;  
The enemy cavalry were riding in;  
And a rain of missiles was pouring into the camp;  
There was the clamor of young men fighting and dying,  
Young men under the iron laws of Mars.

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His mother, Venus, when she knew of this, 560  
Was made unhappy by the news of her son's  
Injury, undeserved; and, upon the slopes  
Of Cretan Ida she sought a remedy,  
And found it, and plucked it, dittany, a crested  
Plant with purple flowers and downy leaves,  
Of which, it is said, that sometimes mountain goats,  
Wounded by vagrant arrows, ate and were cured.  
Venus, hid in a rain mist, carried it down  
To where a river was, and in a shining  
Bowl poured in, upon the dittany 570  
That she had gathered, juice of ambrosia and  
Of fragrant panacea, and steeping it thus,  
She made the occult medicine that aged  
Iapyx, not knowing what he did, then used  
To bathe the wound, deep in, and made it well.

The arrowhead was freed, and Aeneas was  
As utterly himself as he had been.  
Iapyx cried out, the first to arouse the others  
To what it was that had happened, “Bring him his arms!  
Why are you standing there? Aeneas, it wasn’t  
Me! It wasn’t my right hand that saved you!  
It wasn’t done by a human being! It wasn’t  
My art! It is a god that brings you back  
To your great self to do still greater things!”

580

Aeneas, avid for battle, sheathed his calves,  
This leg, then the other, and scorning delay,  
Was brandishing his sword, and as soon as they  
Fitted his corselet to his back, and as soon  
As his shield was fitted to his side, he turned,  
In his full armor, to Ascanius,  
And put his arms around him, and, through his helmet,  
Kissed him, and said to him, “Learn, my son, from me,  
What courage, and the true labor of courage, is.  
Let others by their example show you what  
It is to be the mere play thing of chance.  
When the years to come have ripened you into your manhood,  
Remember what I have said to you, and may  
Aeneas, your father, and Hector, your uncle, excite  
In your mind the virtue they exemplify.”

590

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Having said these things, Aeneas, huge, himself,  
His great spear brandishing in his hand, emerges  
Through the gates of the Trojan camp, and following him  
The close-packed troops of Mnestheus and Antheus  
Flowed out through the gates; a blinding dust cloud rose  
High and darkened the sun; earth trembled from  
The heavy pulsing of their tramping feet

600

As marching in order they moved into the field.  
Turnus saw it and heard it from the rampart  
Where he was standing; the Ausonians saw and heard it,  
And the blood ran cold in their bodies into their bones. 610  
The first of the Latins to see it and hear it was  
Juturna, Turnus's sister, who fled in terror.  
It was as if a great tempest was coming, and  
A great storm cloud moved in from where it came,  
Far out at sea, and alas the farmers know  
In their shuddering hearts what it is that's going to happen—  
The trees brought down, the crops destroyed, and ruin  
Everywhere. Just so, the Trojan leader  
Was bringing in his army like that storm,  
Shoulder to shoulder marching together as 620  
In wedge formation they came against the foe.

› › ›

Thymbraeus's sword killed mighty Osiris; and  
Mnestheus killed Arcetius, Achates  
Epulo, Gyas Ufens; Tolumnius too,  
The augurer who had been the first to throw  
The spear that broke the truce that day, was killed.  
The clamor rose to the skies; the Rutulian  
Lines gave way and they turned and fled in a great  
Cloud of dust in terror back through the fields.  
Aeneas himself did not condescend to pursue 630  
Any of those who were running away, nor did he  
Bother to meet the challenge of any who carried  
Spears or sought to challenge him as equals.  
It was Turnus he was looking for in the murk  
Of the battle, Turnus alone he was searching for.

› › ›

And then the maiden Juturna, shocked and fearful,  
Because of what she saw that was happening,  
Expelled Metiscus, Turnus's charioteer  
From where he was, holding the reins, and left him  
Back in the field, while, looking exactly like 640  
Metiscus himself, in armor exactly like his,  
She took up the reins, which fluttered in her hands  
As she drove away; it was as if there was  
A black barn swallow flying through the halls  
And atria of a rich man's country villa,  
Looking for bits and crumbs of food to take  
To feed her loquacious younglings in the nest;  
Sometimes you'd think you could hear her voice high up  
In a column in the portico, sometimes  
Somewhere around an atrial pool; just so, 650  
Juturna was carried by the chariot flying  
Among the fighting everywhere; sometimes  
She'd allow a fleeting glimpse of her triumphant  
Brother, but only fleeting as she flew  
Away, keeping him far from the fighting, and  
Aeneas, loudly calling out Turnus's name,  
Kept trying to find him and track him in the track  
Of the orbiting of his chariot's wing-footed horses,  
And every time he saw him and followed him,  
Trying to be as quick, and almost was, 660  
Juturna wheeled again and flew away.  
What could he do, tossing on waters of  
Perplexity in his mind like this, not knowing  
What to do or how to do it? But then,  
Messapus, carrying two spears in his hand,  
And taking careful aim at Aeneas sent  
One of them whining and whirling, and Aeneas,  
Seeing it coming, got down on one knee behind  
His shield, but the spear struck the crest of his helmet, and



Tore off the plumes, and Aeneas, enraged, and seeing  
That Turnus was now too far away to catch,  
Invoking Jupiter and the altars of  
The broken treaty, rushed into the midst of the fighting,  
Like Mars letting loose all the reins on his terrible fury,  
The cause of indiscriminating carnage. 670

What god is it whose song can tell of how  
There was such slaughtering on that bloody ground,  
And how so many died when these two leaders  
Came together to kill; and what were Turnus's  
Deeds on that field of battle and what were the deeds 680  
Of the Trojan hero? Was Jupiter pleased to see  
Two nations in such war with one another,  
Who would at last find resolution in peace?

Aeneas met Rutulian Sucro, who  
Was the first of them to slow the Trojan advance,  
But not for long, because Aeneas's spear  
Went easily between his ribs and easily straight  
To the place where death comes quick; and Turnus met  
Two brothers, Amytus and Dioces, unhorsed,  
And killed them both on foot; Amytus he killed 690  
With his big long spear, as Amytus advanced on him,  
And Dioces he killed with his sword, and, having done that,  
He cut off their heads and hung them dangling from  
His chariot, the blood dew-dropping down;  
And Aeneas brought death to three, all at once and together,  
Talon, Tanais, brave Cethegus, and moody  
Onites who came to the war from Echion's Thebes,  
Peridia's child; and Turnus killed two brothers whose  
Father had sent them there from Apollo's Lycia;  
And then he killed Menoetes, who from his earliest 700  
Youth in Arcady had hated war  
And the things of war, and whose peaceable art was the art

Of fishing the fish-filled rivers and brooks of Lerna;  
He was ignorant of the patronage of the rich;  
His home was poor, his father a tenant farmer.

The way the two, Aeneas and Turnus, were,  
Was as, in a forest, two fires, come in from both sides,  
And blaze with a seething noise in the laurels, or as,  
From a mountaintop come down, two rivers wildly  
Roaring, and as they reach the level ground 710  
Bring everything in their way that there is, to ruin.  
These two, Aeneas and Turnus, rush into the battle,  
Their hearts are bursting with fury, unknowing of  
Anything of defeat; and laying waste,  
Inspired with rage in the landscape of their killing.

As Murranus was bragging about his grandsires and  
All his ancestors and all the kings of Latium  
He was descended from, an enormous rock,  
Thrown by Aeneas, knocked him down and out,  
Under his chariot's reins and yoke, and over 720  
His body the wheels of the chariot rolled as the hooves  
Of the horses trampled him, and the horses' pounding  
Hooves knew nothing of who his ancestors were.  
Howling with rage, Hyllus rushed at Turnus, and  
Turnus hurled a javelin whirling at Hyllus, and  
The javelin went straight through his golden helmet  
And fixed itself in his brain; and Cretheus,  
You bravest of the Greeks, your brave right hand  
Couldn't save you; nor did your gods, Cupencus,  
Protect you when Aeneas saw you and 730  
Your chest was unprotected because you didn't  
Get in behind your shield until too late,  
Poor creature. And you, Aeolus, too, struck down,  
Flat on your back, for all the Laurentians to see;  
Neither the Argive battalions could bring you down,

Nor could Achilles, destroyer of Priam's city,  
But here is the measured ending of your life,  
Whose lofty home was on the high slopes of Ida,  
And now your lonely sepulcher is this field.

Now the two armies were wholly engaged in the warfare,  
All of them, Latins and Trojans, all in the struggle,  
Mnestheus and passionate Serestus,  
Messapus, tamer of horses, and brave Asilus,  
The Tuscan battalions and the Arcadian  
Cavalry of Evander, each army, each man,  
Strength striving with enemy strength, without rest, without end.

740

› › ›

Beautiful Venus, Aeneas's mother, inspires  
In the mind of her son the idea that he should turn  
His attention now away from the battlefield,  
And suddenly bring destruction and panic upon  
The city itself. Aeneas, who had been looking  
Every way, this way and that, for Turnus, searching  
For Turnus in the field, saw, over there,  
The city in its impunity and calm,  
And in his head there was an image of  
A greater possibility in the war.

750

He called his leaders together, Sergestus and  
Mnestheus and brave Serestus, and stood  
High on a mound of earth, with Teucrian soldiers  
Gathered around, a crowd of them, with weapons,  
Their shields and swords, ready for what he would say.  
Standing tall in the midst of them, he said,  
"Jupiter's on our side. There will be no  
Hesitation, none, though this is sudden,  
To act as I command you now to act,  
Today, this day. It is this city which is

760

The cause of war, this city of Latinus  
Himself, it is the cause. If they do not  
Surrender at once and submit to us as their masters,  
I'll burn their houses down to the very ground. 770  
Did Turnus think he'd be able to get away  
With putting off, again, a second time,  
His promised fight with me, promised by treaty?  
Citizens, this is what war is all about,  
The wicked cause of it all. Bring brands of fire,  
We'll sign the treaty with fire!" Aeneas spoke,  
And all of them, roused for battle, were all at once  
Together with this. They formed a wedge, and together  
Moved, a great army, toward the city walls.

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Right away, suddenly, scaling-ladders upraised 780  
Upon the walls were seen, and, as suddenly, flames;  
Many warriors rushing to the city gates  
And cutting down the gate guards posted there;  
The sky was suddenly iron dark because  
Of so many whirling missiles they were hurling.  
In the midst of all this, among his leaders, Aeneas  
Stood, right hand upraised, as he called out  
Loudly the name of Latinus accusingly,  
And called upon the gods to witness that he  
Had had to attack the city because the Latins 790  
Had shown two times that they were enemies,  
And that, the second time, the treaty was broken.  
Discord and dismay among the frightened  
Citizens of the town, some of them wanting  
The gates of the town to be opened wide to the Dardans,  
And the king himself was dragged out onto the walls;  
Others were looking everywhere for weapons  
To help them defend the city. It was as when  
A shepherd might investigate a cave

With a burning torch and disturbs a hive of bees  
With its bitter acrid smoke, and the bees are scattered  
Everywhere, this way and that in the cavern,  
The black smoke curling in all the crevices  
And hiding places and finally blowing away  
In the empty air.

800

› › ›

The fortunes of the wretched  
Latins had fallen away, struck down by blows  
That brought the whole city down to its very foundation.  
And the queen who saw the walls attacked and brands  
Of fire igniting the roofs, and no Rutulian  
Army there to defend them, and Turnus nor  
His soldiers anywhere there, she thought that he  
Must be dead in the battle, and in the wilds of grief  
Amata cried out that it was she who was  
The criminal cause of it all, and she decided  
To die, tearing her regal purple robes  
In unseemly ways, and tying a rope with a noose  
To a high beam in the royal palace; and put  
Her head in the noose, and died a frightful death,  
Throttled and dangling. When the shocking news  
Of this was heard, Lavinia was the first,  
Tearing her golden hair and rosy cheeks  
And uncontrollably weeping, and the palace  
Halls reverberated with the sound  
Of the maddened grief of the women, and when the news  
Spread quickly through the town, it broke the hearts  
Of all the people; and there was Latinus walking,  
His garments torn and rent, the aged monarch  
Dazed by the death of his wife and his country's ruin,  
His shaking hands polluting his head with dirt.

810

820

830

› › ›

Out at the edge of the plain the warrior Turnus  
Was wandering in his chariot more slowly,  
And finding fewer and fewer Trojans to kill,  
And more and more reasons not to be exultant  
About his horses' glorious performance;  
And then the air brought to his ears the joyless  
Sound of terrified voices terrified by  
Unknown unspecified causes. He strained to hear them,  
And knew the joyless sounds came from the city.  
"Oh, what is the reason for these grieving noises? 840  
What is the reason for the sounds I'm hearing?"  
Wildly upset, he pulls on the reins to stop  
The chariot where it is, and his sister Juturna,  
Who had changed herself into the semblance of  
Metiscus, Turnus's charioteer, said to Turnus,  
"Turnus, let's keep on bringing down Trojans here,  
On this field where you've already brought down so many;  
Yes, Aeneas glories in his attacking the city  
And causing havoc there, but there are many  
There to defend the walls and houses and 850  
There's no less glory and honor in what we're doing,  
Sending so many Teucrians down to death."  
But Turnus said, "My sister, I knew it was you  
When you came in, disguised, to disrupt the treaty,  
And then went onto the field of battle yourself.  
This time again I know you're a goddess pretending  
Not to be. What god was it whose will  
Has sent you down from Olympus to suffer the mortal  
Pain of seeing your wretched brother die?  
What can I do? Fortune has no more leeway 860  
To keep me safe. With my own eyes I saw  
Murranus, no one more dear to me than he,  
Fall calling out my name for help. I saw him,  
A mighty warrior felled in a monstrous way.  
I saw unhappy Ufens die, his armor  
In Trojan hands; he died in order not

To have to live to see Turnus's shameful death.  
Shall I stand by while the houses of the city  
Burn and fall? Shall my right hand not keep  
Drances from getting away with what he said?  
Shall I turn my back and let them watch their Turnus  
Running away? Is death as bad as this?  
Be kind to me, O Manes, now that the gods  
Above have turned against me, when I descend,  
Guiltless of any deed unworthy of  
My great ancestors there among the shades."

870

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Just as he was finishing what he was saying,  
Suddenly, on his foaming horse, came Saces,  
Saces, wounded full in the face by an arrow,  
Desperate, coming through the fighting seeking  
Turnus, calling his name, imploring, "Turnus,  
Turnus, help us, help us, Turnus, you  
Are our only hope, our only hope, our last.  
Aeneas's armies are striking like thunder and lightning,  
Threatening to bring the arches down,  
To utterly destroy us and all we have.  
The fire brands are burning in the roofs.  
The faces of all the Latins are turned to you;  
Every eye is looking for you to come;  
The king in his distraction doesn't know  
Wherever to turn, which son-in-law to have;  
The queen, who was unfailingly true to you,  
Is dead; she fled in terror from the light.  
There's only Messapus and brave Atinas holding  
The line together, though we're surrounded by  
Line after enemy line, like a great nighttime  
Crop of bristling weapons risen up  
In the fields of corn, while Turnus, here you are,

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Driving around in your chariot in the deserted  
Grasslands.” Turnus stood there, looking at him, 900  
Stupid, confused, ashamed, in grief, in love,  
In consciousness of his own manhood, dismayed.  
And after he came to his senses from these shadows,  
These images of his being’s situation,  
He looked back, out of the burning orbs of his eyes,  
At the walls of the Latins’ great city in its distress.  
Beholding how the flames were whirling through  
The upper story of a tower, and coiling  
Around the very beams he’d put in place  
When he himself was the builder of it, by hand. 910

He said to his sister, “Sister, the Fates are too strong.  
The time has come. You must leave me, leave me now.  
We must do what the Fates are telling us to do.  
I must meet Aeneas in single combat. No matter  
How bitter it is to die, I must be willing  
To suffer death as willed. Sister, you will  
Not see your brother put to shame again.  
Let me be mad in the madness I know this is.”

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With this, he leaped down from his chariot,  
And rushed away among the enemy, 920  
Leaving his sorrowing sister behind, and ran  
Through all the enemy files and all their weapons,  
To where he was going; it is as when a great boulder,  
High on a mountain, loosened by years of wind  
And rain or just because of long  
Years of eroding soil, suddenly crashes  
Down the sheer face of a rocky cliff and bounds  
With uncontrollable force and crashes through  
The clumps of woods, and flocks, and men, thus Turnus



Rushed through and across the blood-soaked field and under  
The whizzing noise of so many missiles hurled by  
Men at war and reached the city walls,  
Where he stopped and with one hand raised high, cried out,  
In a loud voice, “Rutulians, you,  
And all you Latins, put aside your weapons.  
Whatever fate it is going to be is mine.  
I am the one who must atone for the treaty,  
And be the one who decides it with my sword.”  
Then both sides stood aside and made room for this.

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When Aeneas heard the name of Turnus he  
Was overjoyed and turned his attention away  
From the walls and the arches and all those other  
Things he was doing, and he leaped into action.  
His armor thundered and in the eyes of all  
Those who were watching, it was as if they were seeing  
The mountain Athos and seeing the mountain Eryx  
And seeing beyond even them the highest peak  
Of the Apennines and its great tree-covered side,  
Rising before their eyes, the snowy summit  
Shining with terrible joy; all of them watching,  
Those who, high on the walls, were trying to save them,  
And those, below, who were pounding at the walls  
With battering rams to bring the city down.  
All of them, watching, now put their weapons down.  
And old Latinus was stupefied by the sight  
Of these two great warriors here from the opposite  
Ends of the world, coming together to settle  
Everything with steel.

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And they, as the field  
Is cleared to make a space for the fight, rushed in,

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Casting their spears at one another as  
They ran, and as they came together their  
Great bronze shields resounding, the earth is shaking  
Beneath their feet; then with skill and chance in one,  
They came together with clashing of swords. It is  
As it is when two raging bulls contend  
In violent tremendous altercation,  
Charging with leveled horns, butting and goring,  
The black blood flowing down their sides; their mighty  
Bellowing re-echoes and re-echoes 970  
From the woods up to the top of the nearby mountain,  
On Sila or the summit of Taburnus;  
All of the watching herd in fear are silent,  
Waiting to know which of the two who fight  
Will command the herd, which of the two it will follow.  
So it was, between Trojan Aeneas and the Daunian  
Hero, the clashing of swords, blow after blow  
Repeated and the noise of the clanging shields  
Filling the air.

And Jupiter holds up the two 980  
Scales evenly balanced, and puts the fates of each  
Upon them to show which one is fated to die,  
The weight of his death causing the scale to sink down.

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Then Turnus saw his opportunity  
And confidently raised his threatening sword—  
The shouting around him of the Trojans and  
His anxious Latins, both sides watching him holding  
High his sword—and then, with all his body's  
Strength he struck—and the sword he struck with broke,  
And it fell away, and Turnus was left defenseless, 990  
The unfamiliar handle of the sword

Was gone, and there was nothing to do but run.  
And when he saw what had happened he fled as if  
The East Wind were pursuing him. It is said  
That when Turnus first was setting out for battle,  
Fervent for warfare, in his haste he took,  
By mistake, the sword of his charioteer Metiscus.  
The mistaken sword worked perfectly against  
The scattering of Teucrians out on the plain  
Where Turnus killed them. But here when he thought that he 1000  
Was using the sword that Vulcan made, it shattered  
As if it was fragile as an icicle,  
The broken pieces shining on the ground.  
Desperately trying to get away he tried  
This way then that to get away, but there,  
Preventing, a dense closed ring of Teucrian army,  
And then there were the high preventing walls  
Of the Latin town, and over there then there was  
A miry bog impossible to enter.

But Aeneas was not deflected from what he intended 1010  
To do though the arrow wound had slowed him down,  
Making his walking more difficult for him;  
Yet nothing turned him aside from his pursuit;  
He was like a hunting dog who had, perhaps,  
Seen a stag which had been cornered in the bend  
Of a river, or maybe trapped in its own fears  
By a red-and-white hunting-scare, and the stag  
Terrified by the pursuing barking dog  
Is trapped in the terror of where it is, unable  
To get away, turning and turning, looking 1020  
This way and looking that way and the dog  
Pursuing, pursuing, now sometimes seeming  
To catch him, now sometimes snapping its open jaws  
Now sometimes snapping at empty air. The clamor

Of shouting rose and echoed from river and lake,  
And the sky above resounded with a huge  
Overwhelming noise, and Turnus in terror running  
This way and that way and calling out to his  
Rutulians, some by name, to find and get  
His familiar sword to him before too late,  
And Aeneas, although still hampered by his wound,  
Threatening anyone who came near him with death.  
And terrifying the crowd with the threat that if  
They did not stay away he'd bring the whole city  
Down into final ruin. This was no game.  
The prize for the winner was the life of Turnus.

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It happens that, growing there, there was the stump  
Of a tree, wild olive tree, with bitter foliage,  
Sacred to Faunus, to which it was the custom  
That Laurentine sailors, getting home safe from sea,  
In gratitude to the god for this, would bring  
As votive gifts the sea-soaked garments they'd worn;  
This tree the Teucrians had destroyed, without  
Regard for its sacred character; they did so  
When they were clearing out the space in which  
The ratified single combat would take place.  
Aeneas's spear, thrown with tremendous force,  
Struck—and got stuck—in the tough roots of what  
Had been the tree, and no matter how hard he tried  
To retrieve the weapon in order to hurl it at  
His fugitive target, he wasn't able to do it;  
And Turnus, in the wild distress of fear,  
Prayed frantically to Faunus, "Faunus, have pity;  
O Earth, I have always honored you, and I fight  
Against those Teucrians profaning you,  
Hold tight to that weapon; do not let him have it."  
He prayed and the gods were listening to him,

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For Aeneas's great strength was to no avail;  
He could not free the spear from the roots' tight clutch.  
Then suddenly Juturna, the Daunian goddess,  
Dressed once again as the charioteer Metiscus,  
Ran out from the crowd and gave her brother back  
His proper sword, the sword that Vulcan made  
For their father, Daunus. But Venus, offended by  
The audacity of this, plucked Aeneas's spear  
From the clenching roots of the tree that held it fast.

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Thus both of them, in dignity restored,  
One of them trusting to his faithful sword,  
The other to his formidable spear,  
Were face to face for the fight that was to come.

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Meanwhile, Jupiter, from on high in Olympus,  
Spoke to Juno who was looking down  
At the fight from where she was, in a golden cloud:  
"What's going to be the end of all of this?  
Why are you trying, my wife, to put it off?  
You know, and you know that you know, that Aeneas  
Is fated to be a god and will be raised  
By the Fates up to the high heavens to be so?  
What are you doing, what are you thinking of doing?  
What hopes do you have out there in those chilly clouds?  
Do you think it was proper that the body of  
A god was wounded, or that the fated loser,  
Whose sword that was snatched away from him was given  
Back to him again, and his strength restored?  
How could Juturna have done this without your help?  
Please, now, give up all you have done to not listen  
To all my prayers, and, please, in the future, don't  
Let this frustration gnaw at you, and please,

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In the future don't show me all the time how you  
Are suffering from all of this in silence. 1090  
The end of it all has come. Wherever they went  
You've persecuted the Trojans, by land, by sea,  
Brought houses down in turmoil and destruction,  
Brought grief into the joyousness of weddings.  
I forbid you to try anymore. Enough is enough."

Thus Jupiter spoke, and Juno answered him,  
Bowing her head submissively, and saying,  
"Because it is your will that I must do so,  
I will leave my Turnus and the earth, although  
Reluctantly. If it were not your will, 1100  
You would most certainly not be seeing me here,  
Up here in the air. I would be standing down there,  
In the line of battle, dressed in a garment of fire,  
Dragging the Trojans into the bloody combat.  
It was I, I confess it, who saw to it that Juturna  
Came to the aid of her poor brother, and I  
Approved the lengths of daring that she went to,  
Trying to help him survive. But I did not  
Authorize her to draw the bowstring back  
To send the wounding arrow on its way. 1110  
I swear this on the source of implacable Styx,  
The oath the gods above cannot go back on.  
And now I yield and now, with loathing for it,  
I turn away from the battle, for good and all.

But I ask of your divine majesty that the Latins,  
Their defeat accepted and the marriage accomplished  
—And now I wish it well—not be commanded  
To call themselves Teucrians; that they be called  
By their ancient name, as Latins, and with their own customs,  
And with their own dress, and with their own language, and 1120  
The Alban kings who have always been their kings.

Let all of them be Romans, for Troy has fallen,  
And fallen forever must Troy and its language be.”

Jupiter, smiling, all but laughing, replied,  
“You’re truly Jove’s sister and Saturn’s other child,  
With such familiar surgings of such anger.  
But now, put down the anger that rose in vain.  
Willingly conquered, I yield to what you wish.  
The Ausonians will keep their speech and their ways.  
They will not lose their name. The Teucrians  
Will blend with them and be submerged into  
The one race and its language; and I will give them  
Their modes of worship and their rituals;  
You will see that arising from this mingling of  
Their blood the Ausonian people will surpass  
All men and gods in their devotion, and  
In honoring Juno no other nation be equal.”

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Juno nodded, and joyfully changed her mind,  
And, departing from her cloud, she left the sky.

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This having been accomplished, Jove thought to himself  
Of something else to do, to separate  
Juturna from her brother and his fighting.  
It’s said that in Tartarean night there were  
Twin pestilences who are called the Dirae,  
Twin sisters born together enclustered with  
A third, the fiend Megaera, the three of them; on  
Their backs were growing sprouting coiling serpents,  
And each with a pair of wings of wind, they sit  
On the threshold of the throne of terrible Jove;  
They bring down dread upon terrified mortals whenever  
He decides to visit sickness and death upon  
Mortal men and bring destruction onto

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The roofs of guilty horrified cities at war.  
Now Jupiter sends down from the heavens above  
One of the sisters to be to Juturna an omen.

Obedient down through the sky on a whirlwind she  
Flew like a Parthian or a Cydonian poisoned  
Immedicable arrow, shot and flying down  
Unseen to the earth below, and when she saw  
The Ilian line and Turnus's army there, 1160  
Night's daughter suddenly made herself small, like the bird  
That sometimes late at night bodingly sings  
In the shadows on burial mounds and sometimes on  
The deserted roofs of cities. Again and again  
The monster flitted back and forth close to  
Turnus's face and there was the sound of its wings  
Beating upon his shield; his hair stood on end,  
His limbs went weak with a strange torpor of dread,  
And his voice clung to the inside of his throat.

When unhappy Juturna heard from a ways away 1170  
The screaming of the Dirae and the beating  
Of their wings, she tore with her desperate nails at her  
Disfigured face, and beat her breasts. "Oh what  
Can his sister do to save her Turnus now?  
What art is there left to keep him in the light?  
What can I do against these portents? You  
Boding obscene birds, I hear, I hear  
The death in the beating of your wings, I hear  
The message high-hearted Jupiter is sending.  
O do not frighten me so in what I hear, 1180  
I hear the sound of it. To be a goddess,  
Is this what Jupiter's bargain was, to give me  
Immortality in return for my lost  
Virginity so that I am unable to die,  
So I must live forever not able to go  
Down to the shades in the company of my brother?



Is there no deepest place down there for one  
Who cannot die to go down there to die?”  
And saying this she veiled her head in gray  
And plunged, becoming gone, into the deep  
Lamenting waters of the flowing river.

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Aeneas stood before him, brandishing  
His huge spear that was as big as a tree, and from  
His savage breast brought forth these words to him:  
“Turnus, where have you been? Why have you taken  
So long to get here, Turnus? This wasn’t a race,  
Nor is there any way to get away  
From what this is. Not by flying on wings  
Up to the highest sky, nor hiding away  
Deep in the earth. What it comes down to at last  
Is this: this is the single combat, this  
Is the two of us face to face, with weapons that kill.  
Whatever you still have left of courage or skill,  
Now get it together, the time has come.” And Turnus,  
Shaking his head, replied, “It isn’t your words  
That terrify me, ferocious. It is the gods  
And Jupiter’s enmity I’m terrified by.”  
He said no more, and he looked around and saw,  
By chance, a huge stone lying in the ground,  
Ancient huge stone, a marker of the limits  
Of the fields to show the ownership of one  
And ownership of the other; it was a stone  
So great, as now the bodies of men are made,  
It would take the strength of twelve men to lift it up.  
But Turnus lifted it up in his trembling hands,  
And staggered forward and ran as fast as he could,  
And hurled the huge stone toward the hero, not knowing who  
Was hurling it, not knowing who he was,  
And his buckling knees gave in beneath him and

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The stone fell heavily onto the ground and by 1220  
The impetus of its own great weight it rolled  
And bounced and wobbled its way toward the hero, and stopped  
Before it could reach what he had hurled it at.

It's as in sleep, in the quiet of the night,  
Our languid eyelids close and in their dream  
Won't tell wherever we are nor where we're going  
Or trying to go nor can we get there where-  
Ever where might be, and who knows who it is  
We maybe are, our legs gone weak, no way  
To get there where? It was thus it was with Turnus. 1230  
Wherever he tried to go, the dreadful goddess,  
Up from Tartarus, everywhere in his way,  
Turning him back and around; in his head he saw,  
Or thought he saw, the Rutulians and the city;  
Turnus was shaking in mortal dread at the death  
That was coming; he couldn't find the enemy;  
He couldn't find his chariot anywhere;  
The chariot driver gone, the sister gone.

As in his confusion he was wavering thus,  
Aeneas was watching him and ready with 1240  
His death-bringing weapon to strike. And then he struck.  
It was more than the sound of the catapulted stones  
That bring down the walls of cities, more than the thunder  
Sound of a black tornado whirling in,  
More than the sound of a bolt of lightning smiting  
The nighttime sky, louder than any such,  
Howling, screaming, straight through the sevenfold shield  
And through the lower edge of his body armor.  
Great Turnus doubled over as he fell.  
The spear transfixed in his thigh, the screaming stilled. 1250  
There was a groaning roar from the Rutulian  
Watchers, rising up to the heavens above,  
And echoing and re-echoing through the high

Side-spreading groves behind them. And Turnus, his eyes  
Abased, stretched out his pleading hands, and saying,

“I have done this to myself. I have no excuse.  
Do with me what you will. But if you can be touched  
By any thought of a father—you had a father,  
Your father was Anchises—with pity for fathers,  
Have pity for my father Daunus, old. 1260  
Send me or my dead body back to him.  
You are the victor. The Ausonians have seen  
My hand stretched out surrendering to you;  
Lavinia is yours. Lavinia’s your bride.  
Let this be the end and limit of your hatred.”

Aeneas stood there, fierce, in his threatening armor,  
Rolling his eyes, his right hand on his sword,  
More and more hesitant, little by little,  
As he heard what Turnus was saying to him. But, then,  
Suddenly his eyes saw, high on the shoulder 1270  
Of fallen Turnus the fatal sword-belt with  
The gleaming studs he recognized—sword-belt  
Of Pallas, the boy, whom Turnus had wounded, and when  
He lay there dying on the ground, had torn it  
Off of his body and wore it now as spoil.

When Aeneas saw it on Turnus’s shoulder, shining  
Memorial of the dolorous story, and  
Of his own grief, the terrible savage rage  
Rose up in him, and he said to Turnus, “Did you  
Think that you could get away with this, 1280  
Wearing this trophy of what you did to him?  
It is Pallas who makes you his sacrifice. It is Pallas  
Who drives this home!” And saying this he ripped  
Open the breast of Turnus, and Turnus’s bones  
Went chilled and slack, and his life, with a groaning shudder,  
Indignant fled away to the shades below.

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